

The Spiritualist,

AND JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

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"THE SPIRITUALIST" NEWSPAPER:

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

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July, 1876.

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WHICH was given for and against Dr. Slade 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. B. 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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A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism.

VOLUME TEN. NUMBER EIGHT.

LONDON, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd, 1877.

THE PROSECUTION OF MEDIUMS BY A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT.

THERE are some serious questions in connection with the recent prosecutions of mediums, for the solution of which Spiritualists are looking to the organised bodies which have the public business of the Spiritualistic movement in hand. A letter from the Secretary of State has been sent to the National Association of Spiritualists, intimating that no unusual steps have been taken by the Government in relation to the prosecution of mediums. But is it not a fact that when a Justice's decision is appealed against, the usual custom of the Treasury is to employ but a single ordinary barrister at a moderate fee, and not two celebrated counsel—one of them a member of Parliament—at great expense to the nation? Further, when such large expenses are incurred, is it not usual that the Crown shall allow but an ordinary counsel's small fee, and leave the prosecution to pay the balance? Again, in the Lawrence case there was no appeal; and is it not a fact that at the last Clerkenwell Sessions cases of fraud involving large sums of money were heard without the Government taking up the prosecution at all; whereas, when Lawrence was accused of cheating a man out of a shilling, not only did the Crown take up the case on the opposition side, but at very great expense to the nation? If these things be so, the further question arises, how much of the public money has been thus spent over the Lawrence, Monck and Slade cases, and over the forthcoming proceedings in relation to the Slade case, inaugurated by Mr. Staveley Hill? In all these instances not only the sums paid to the Crown barristers, but to the solicitors should be ascertained. If these financial particulars are not easily accessible to the public, the serious political question will arise: "How is it that the Government of the day does not render up an account of its stewardship to the owners of the property entrusted to its care, namely, the taxpayers of this country?" There is no more unprofitable and unsatisfactory way of spending the national funds, contributed by the industrious, than in law, and as there are too many lawyers in the legislature, it would be well to examine the public accounts in relation to legal expenditure.

After the answers to these questions have been ascertained, and if it should become clear that a very unusual course has been taken in relation to mediums, it will be necessary to consider in what way the facts of the case shall be dealt with. Possibly the Government may not be aware of any mismanagement in some of its departments, in which case the proper authority to which to resort is the present Cabinet, which as yet, so far as we know, has had nothing to do with any dishonourable line of conduct in relation to Spiritualism. But if an unusual line of action, of an unjustifiable nature, has been taken, and afterwards officially endorsed by the Government, the further question will arise, whether representations on the subject shall be made to Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party, or whether, by pamphlet and by placard, the particulars shall be published all over the country for the information of the public; or, again, whether Spiritualists shall take political action, and make their influence felt at elections by their votes. At present the latter course of action is to be deprecated, for it would be better to continue to work upon the old plan of letting Spiritualism be dealt with as a science by thoughtful people who do not care for notoriety, and who avoid the arenas of theological and political contention.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE SPIRIT OF A DYING WOMAN.

To the Editor of the "Spiritualist."

SIR,—Having seen in the *Spiritualist* an account of the apparition of Major Blomberg, it reminded me that I had an account in my possession of a similar event, which occurred in 1705. The account is given in an old work entitled "*The Christian's Defence against Death*, with seasonable directions how to prepare ourselves to die well, by the late reverend divine of the Protestant Church of Paris, Charles Drelincourt, with an account of the author and his last minutes, and a true revelation of the apparition of Mrs. Veal after her death to Mrs. Bargrave." Such is the complete title-page of the work.

The printers of the book were Nuttal, Fisher, and Dixon, Duke-street, Liverpool, and mine is the twenty-ninth edition. The account of the apparition follows the preface to the work. It is not Drelincourt himself who writes the account, but the apparition in conversation with Mrs. Bargrave recommended the work of Drelincourt for perusal, so it appeared wise to the publishers to print the narrative about the apparition in the said edition. The following is the full version:—

"A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal, the next day after her death, to one Mrs. Bargrave, at Canterbury, 8 of September, 1705, which apparition recommends the perusal of Drelincourt's Book of Consolations against the Fears of Death.

"This relation is matter of fact, and attended with such circumstances as may induce any reasonable man to believe it; it was sent by a gentleman, a Justice of the Peace at Maidstone, in Kent, and a very intelligent person, to his friend in London, as it is here worded, which discourse is attested by a very understanding and sober gentlewoman, a kinswoman of the said gentleman's, who lives in Canterbury, within a few doors of the house in which the within-named Mrs. Bargrave lived; who believes his kinswoman to be of so discerning a spirit as not to be put upon by any fallacy; and who positively assured him that the whole matter, as it is related and laid down, is really true, and what she herself had in the same words (as near as may be) from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth, who, she knows, had no reason to invent and publish such a story, or any design to forge and tell a lie, being a woman of much honesty and virtue, and her whole life a course, as it were, of piety. The use which we ought to make of it is to consider that there is a life to come after this, and a just God, who will retribute to every one according to his deeds done in the body; and, therefore, to reflect upon our past course of life we have led in the world, that our time is short and uncertain, and that if we should escape the punishment of the ungodly and receive the reward of the righteous which is the laying hold of eternal life, we ought for the time to come to return to God by a speedy repentance, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well; to seek after God early, if happily He may be found of us, and lead such lives for the future as may be well-pleasing in His sight.

"This thing is so rare in all its circumstances, and so good authority, that my reading has not given me anything like it; it is fit to gratify the most ingenious and serious inquirer. Mrs. Bargrave is the person to whom Mrs. Veal appeared after her death; she is my intimate friend, and I can vouch for her reputation for this last fifteen or sixteen years, on my knowledge, and I can confirm the good character she had from her youth to the time of my acquaintance with her, though since this relation she is calumniated by some people that are friends to the brother of Mrs. Veal who appeared, who think the relation of this appearance to be a reflection, and endeavour what they can to blast Mrs. Bargrave's reputation, and to laugh the story

PASSED TO SPIRIT LIFE.—On the 11th instant, at home (Veles, Snodland, Kent), after fourteen days' illness of rheumatic fever, Charles Townsend Hook, eldest son of Anna Maria and the late Samuel Hook, beloved and lamented by all who knew him.

out of countenance; but by the circumstances thereof and the cheerful disposition of Mrs. Bargrave, notwithstanding the ill usage of a very wicked husband, there is not the least sign of dejection in her face, nor did I ever hear her let fall a desponding or murmuring expression—nay, not when actually under her husband's barbarity, which I have been witness to, and several other persons of undoubted reputation.

"Now you must know Mrs. Veal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty years of age, and for some years last past had been troubled with fits, which were perceived coming on by her going off her discourse very abruptly to some impertinence. She was maintained by an only brother, and kept his house in Dover. She was a very pious woman, and her brother a very sober man to all appearance; but now he does all he can to null or quash the story. Mrs. Veal was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Bargrave from her childhood; Mrs. Veal's circumstances were then mean, for her father did not take care of his children as he ought, so that they were exposed to hardships, and Mrs. Bargrave, in those days had an unkind father, though she wanted neither for food nor clothing, whilst Mrs. Veal wanted for both, inasmuch that she would often say: 'Mrs. Bargrave, you are not only the best but the only friend that I have in the world; and no circumstances in this life shall ever dissolve my friendship.' They would often condole each other's adverse fortune, and read together *Drelincourt on Death*, and other good books, and so like Christian friends they comforted each other much in their sorrow. Some time after Mr. Veal's friends got him a place in the Custom House at Dover, which occasioned Mrs. Veal little by little to fall off from her intimacy with Mrs. Bargrave, though there never was any such thing as a quarrel; but an indifference came on by degrees, till at last Mrs. Bargrave had not seen her in two years and a-half, though about a twelvemonth of the time she had been absent from Dover, and this last half-year had been in Canterbury, about two months of the time dwelling in a house of her own.

"In this house, on the eighth of September, one thousand seven hundred and five, she was sitting alone in the forenoon, thinking over her unfortunate life and arguing herself into a due resignation to Providence, though her condition seemed hard. 'And,' said she, 'I have been provided for hitherto, and doubt not but I shall be still, and am well satisfied that my afflictions shall end when it is most fit for me,' and then took up her sewing work, which she had no sooner done than she hears a knocking at the door. She went to see who was there, and this proved to be Mrs. Veal, her old friend, who was in a riding habit. At that moment of time the clock struck twelve at noon.

"'Madam,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'I am surprised to see you; you have been so long a stranger;' but told her she was glad to see her, and offered to salute her, which Mrs. Veal complied with, till their lips almost touched; and then Mrs. Veal drew her hand across her own eyes and said, 'I am not very well,' and so waived it. She told Mrs. Bargrave she was going a journey, and that she had a great mind to see her first. 'But,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'how came you to take a journey alone? I am amazed at it! because I know you have a fond brother?' 'Oh,' says Mrs. Veal, 'I gave my brother the slip, and came away, because I had such a great desire to see you before I took my journey.' So Mrs. Bargrave went in with her into another room within the first, and Mrs. Veal sat down in an elbow chair in which Mrs. Bargrave was sitting, when she heard Mrs. Veal knock. Then, says Mrs. Veal: 'My dear friend, I am come to renew our old friendship again, and to beg your pardon for the breach of it; and if you can forgive me you are the best of women?' 'Oh,' said Mrs. Bargrave, 'do not mention such a thing; I have not had an uneasy thought about it; I can easily forgive you.' 'What did you think of me?' says Mrs. Veal. Says Mrs. Bargrave: 'I thought you was like the rest of the world—that prosperity had made you forget yourself and me.' Then Mrs. Veal reminded Mrs. Bargrave of the many friendly offices she did her in former days, and much of the conversation they had with each other in the time of their adversity, what books they read, and what comfort

they in particular received from Drelincourt's book on Death, which was the best, she said, on that subject ever written. She also mentioned Dr. Sherlock, the two Dutch books which were translated, written upon Death, and several others; but Drelincourt, she said, had the clearest notions of death and of the future state of any that had handled that subject. Then she asked Mrs. Bargrave if she had Drelincourt; she said 'Yes.' Says Mrs. Veal, 'Fetch it,' and so Mrs. Bargrave goes up stairs and brings it down. Says Mrs. Veal, 'Dear Mrs. Bargrave, if the eyes of our faith were as open as the eyes of our body, we should see numbers of angels about us for our guard; the notions we have of heaven now are nothing like what it is, as Drelincourt says; therefore be comforted under your afflictions, and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard for you, and that your afflictions are marks of God's favour, and when they have done the business they are sent for they shall be removed from you. And believe, my dear friend, believe what I say to you. One minute of future happiness will infinitely reward you for all your sufferings; for I can (and then clasps her hands upon her knees with great earnestness, which indeed ran through most of her discourse) 'never believe that God will allow you to spend all your days in this afflicted state; but be assured that your afflictions will leave you, or you them, in a short time.' She spoke in that pathetic and heavenly manner that Mrs. Bargrave wept several times, she was so deeply affected with it. Then Mrs. Veal mentioned Dr. Horneck's *Ascetic*, at the end of which he gives an account of the primitive Christians. Their pattern she recommended to our imitation, and said, 'Their conversation was not like this of our age, for now,' says she, 'there is nothing but frothy, vain discourse, which is far different from theirs; theirs was to edification and to build one another up in faith, so that they were not as we are, nor we as they were; but,' said she, 'we ought to do as they did. There was a hearty friendship amongst them. But where is it now to be found?' Says Mrs. Bargrave: 'It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days.' Says Mrs. Veal, 'Mr. Norris has a fine copy of verses called *Friendship in Perfection*, which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book?' says Mrs. Veal. 'No,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'but I have the verses of my own writing out.' 'Have you?' says Mrs. Veal, 'then fetch them,' which she did from above stairs, and offered them to Mrs. Veal to read, who refused and waived the thing, saying holding down her head would make it ache; and then desired Mrs. Bargrave to read them for her, which she did. As they were admiring friendship Mrs. Veal said: 'These poets have such names for heaven.' She would often draw her hand across her eyes and say: 'Mrs. Bargrave, do not you think that I am mightily impaired by my fits?' 'No,' says Mrs. Bargrave; 'I think you look as well as ever I knew you.' After all this discourse, which the apparition put in much finer words than she, Mrs. Bargrave, said she could pretend to, and as much more than she could not remember (for it cannot be thought that an hour and three-quarters conversation could be retained, though the main of it she thinks she does), she said to Mrs. Bargrave she would have her write a letter to her brother, and tell him she would have him give rings to such and such, and that there was a purse of gold in her cabinet, and that she would have two broad pieces given to her cousin Watson. Talking at this rate, Mrs. Bargrave thought that a fit was coming upon her, and so placed herself in a chair just before her knees to keep her from falling to the ground if her fits should occasion it (for the elbow chair, she thought, would keep her from falling on either side), and to divert Mrs. Veal, as she thought, took hold of her gown sleeve and commended it. Mrs. Veal told her it was a scoured silk, and newly made up; but for all this Mrs. Veal persisted in her request, and told Mrs. Bargrave she must not deny her, and she would have her tell her brother all their conversation when she had opportunity. 'Dear Mrs. Veal,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'this seems so impertinent that I can't tell how to comply with it, and what a mortifying story our conversation will be to a young gentleman. 'Why,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'it is much better, methinks you should do it yourself.' 'No,' says Mrs. Veal, 'though it may seem impertinent to you now; you will see more reason for it hereafter. Mrs. Bargrave

then, to satisfy her importunity, was going to fetch a pen and ink. 'But,' says Mrs. Veal, 'let it alone now, but do it when I am gone, but you must be sure to do it,' which was one of the last things she enjoined at her parting, and so she promised her.

"Then Mrs. Veal asked for Mrs. Bargrave's daughter. She said she was not at home, 'but if you have a mind to see her I will send for her.' 'Do,' says Mrs. Veal, on which she left her and went into a neighbour's house to see for her, and by the time Mrs. Bargrave was returning Mrs. Veal was got without the door into the street, in the face of the beast market, on a Saturday, which is market day, and stood ready to part as soon as Mrs. Bargrave came to her. She asked her why she was in such haste. She said she must be going, though, perhaps she might not be going her journey until Monday, and told Mrs. Bargrave she hoped that she might see her again at her cousin Watson's before she went whither she was going. Then she said she would take her leave of her, and walked from Mrs. Bargrave in her view till a turning interrupted the sight of her, which was three-quarters after one in the afternoon. Mrs. Veal died on the 7th of September, at twelve o'clock at noon, of her fits, and had not above four hours' senses before death, in which time she received the sacrament.

"The next day after, Mrs. Veal appearing, being Sunday, Mrs. Bargrave was mightily indisposed with a cold and a sore throat, and she could not go out that day; but on Monday morning she sent a person to Captain Watson's to know if Mrs. Veal was there. They wondered at Mrs. Bargrave's inquiry, and sent her word that she was not there, nor expected. At this answer of Mrs. Bargrave, she said the maid had most certainly mistook the name or made some blunder, and though she was ill she put on her hood, and went to Capt. Watson's herself, though she knew none of the family, to see whether Mrs. Veal was there or not. They said they wondered at her asking, for that she had not been in town; they were sure if she had she would have been there. Says Mrs. Bargrave, 'I am sure on Saturday she was with me almost two hours.' They said it was impossible, for they must have seen her if she had. In comes Captain Watson while they were in dispute, and said that Mrs. Veal was certainly dead, and her escutcheons were making. This strangely surprised Mrs. Bargrave, when she sent to the person immediately who had the care of them, and found it true. Then she related the whole story to Captain Watson's family, and what gown she had on, and how striped, and that Mrs. Veal told her it was scoured. Then Mrs. Watson called out 'You have seen her indeed, for none knew but Mrs. Veal and myself that the gown was scoured, and Mrs. Watson owned that she described the gown exactly, 'for,' said she, 'I helped her to make it up.'

This Mrs. Watson blazed all about the town, and avouched the demonstration of the truth of Mrs. Bargrave seeing Mrs. Veal's apparition, and Captain Watson carried two gentlemen immediately to Mrs. Bargrave's house to hear the relation from her own mouth. And when it spread so fast that gentlemen and persons of quality, the judicious and sceptical part of the world, flocked in upon her, it at last became such a task that she was forced to go out of the way, for they were in general extremely satisfied with the truth of the thing, and plainly saw that Mrs. Bargrave was no hypochondrine; for she always appears with such a cheerful air and pleasing mien that she has gained the favour and esteem of all the gentry, and it is thought a great favour if they can but get the relation from her own mouth. I should have told you before that Mrs. Veal told Mrs. Bargrave that her sister and brother-in-law were just come down from London to see her. Says Mrs. Bargrave: 'How came you to order matters so strangely.' 'It could not be helped,' said Mrs. Veal; and her brother and sister did come to see her, and just entered the town of Dover when Mrs. Veal was expiring. Mrs. Bargrave asked her whether she would drink some tea. Says Mrs. Veal: 'I do not care if I do, but I'll warrant you that this mad fellow (her husband) has broken all your trinkets.' 'But,' says Mrs. Bargrave, 'I'll get something to drink in for all

that.' But Mrs. Veal waived it, and said: 'It's no matter; let it alone;' and so it passed.

"All the time I sat with Mrs. Bargrave, which was some hours, she recollected fresh sayings of Mrs. Veal's. Mrs. Bargrave never varies in her story, which puzzles those who doubt the truth, or are unwilling to believe it. One material thing more. She told Mrs. Bargrave that old Mr. Breton allowed Mr. Veal £10 a year, which was a secret, and unknown to Mrs. Bargrave until Mrs. Veal told it her. A servant in the neighbour's yard, adjoining Mrs. Bargrave's house, heard her talking an hour of the time Mrs. Veal was with her. Mrs. Bargrave went out to her next neighbour's the very next moment Mrs. Veal was parted with her, and told her what ravishing conversation she had had with an old friend, and told the whole of it. Drelincourt's book of Death is, since this happened, brought up strangely, and it is to be observed that, notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue Mrs. Bargrave has undergone on this account, she never took the value of one farthing, nor suffered her daughter to take anything of anybody, and therefore can have no interest in telling the story. But Mr. Veal does what he can to stifle the matter, and said he would see Mrs. Bargrave, but yet it is certain matter of fact that he has been at Captain Watson's since the death of his sister, and never went near Mrs. Bargrave. Some of his friends report her to be a liar, and that she knew of Mr. Breton's £10 a year, but the person who pretends to say so has the reputation of a notorious liar amongst persons which I know to be of undoubted credit. Now Mr. Veal is more of a gentleman than to say she lies, but says a bad husband has crazed her; but she needs only to present herself, and it will confute that pretence. Mr. Veal says he asked his sister on her death-bed whether she had a mind to dispose of anything, and she said, 'No.' Now the things which Mrs. Veal's apparition would have disposed of were so trifling that nothing of justice is aimed at in their disposal; the design of it appears to me to be only in order to make Mrs. Bargrave so to demonstrate the truth of her appearance as to satisfy the world of the reality thereof, as to what she had seen and heard, and to secure her reputation amongst the reasonable and understanding part of mankind. And then, again, Mr. Veal owns that there was a purse of gold, but it was not found in her cabinet, but in a comb-box. This looks improbable, for that Mrs. Watson owns that Mrs. Veal was so very careful of the cabinet that she would trust nobody with it, and if so, no doubt she would not trust her gold out of it. And Mrs. Veal drawing her hand over her eyes, and asking Mrs. Bargrave whether fits had impaired her, looks to me as if she did it on purpose, to remind Mrs. Bargrave of her fits, to prepare her not to think it strange that she should put her upon writing to her brother to dispose of rings and gold, which looks so much like a dying person's request. It took accordingly with Mrs. Bargrave, as the effect of her fits coming upon her, and was one of many instances of her wonderful love to her, and care of her, that she should not be affrightened; which, indeed, appear in her whole management, particularly in her coming to her in the day-time, waiving the salutation, and when she was alone. And then the manner of her parting, to prevent a second attempt to salute her. Now, why Mr. Veal should think this relation a reflection (as it is plain he does by his endeavours to stifle it) I cannot imagine, because the generality believe her to be a good spirit, because her discourse was so heavenly. Her two great errands were, to comfort Mrs. Bargrave in her affliction, and to ask her forgiveness for breach of friendship, and with a pious discourse to encourage her; so that, after all, to suppose that Mrs. Bargrave could hate such an invention as this from Friday noon to Saturday noon (supposing that she knew of Mrs. Veal's death the very moment) without jumbling circumstances and without any interest to, she must be more witty, fortunate, and wicked, too, than any indifferent person, I dare say, will allow. I asked Mrs. Bargrave several times if she was sure she felt the gown. She answered modestly, 'If my senses may be relied on, I am sure of it.' I asked her if she heard a sound when she elapped her hand upon her knee. She said she did not remember she did, but said that she appeared to be as much

a substance as I did who talked with her, 'and I may,' said she, 'be as soon persuaded that your apparition is talking to me now, as that I did not really see her,' for I was under no manner of fear, and received her as a friend and parted with her as such. 'I would not,' says she, 'give one farthing to make anyone believe it; I have no interest in it; nothing but trouble is entailed upon me for a long time; for aught I know, and had it not come to light by accident, it would never have been made public.' But now she says she will make her own private use of it, and keep herself out of the way as much as she can, and so she has done since. She says she had a gentleman who came thirty miles to hear the relation, and that she had told it to a room full of people at a time. Several particular gentlemen have had the story from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth.

"This doing has very much affected me, and I am as well satisfied as I am of the best grounded fact. That we cannot solve things of which we have no certain or demonstrative notion, seems strange to me. Mrs. Bargrave's authority and sincerity along would have been undoubted in any other case."

AN INVESTIGATOR.

County Durham.

Correspondence.

Great freedom is given to correspondents, who sometimes express opinions diametrically opposed to those of this journal and its readers. Unsolicited communications cannot be returned; copies should be kept by the writers.

THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.

SIR,—Many of your readers will be pleased to know that T. L. Harris is engaged in publishing some new works. Two have been already issued. The works are to be given to friends who desire them. According to the printed notice, communications from their friends may be addressed, if from gentlemen to Mr. T. L. Harris, and if from ladies to Mrs. Lily C. Harris, Fountain-grove, Santa Rosa, California.

These works are far in advance of any yet published, and are most deeply interesting and instructive.

E. W. BERRIDGE, M.D.

4, Highbury New Park, N., Feb. 8th, 1877.

THE MEDIUM INFLUENCING SPIRITS.

GLENDOWER: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

HOTSPUR: Why, so can I, or so can any man;

But will they come when you do call them?

1st Henry IV., act iii., sc. 1.

Conjure with them;

"Brutus" will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.

Julius Cæsar, act i. sc. 2.

SIR,—In respect to Mr. Lawrence I see it stated that "No medium is able to call up spirits; the spirits call up their mediums." But may not some mediums, like the Witch of Endor, be able to do this in some cases? We know that, under certain mesmeric or other conditions, one person does influence another, a great distance away, to think and act as required; acting, no doubt, through an intervening spiritual or etherial elastic medium, like that which brings the light and heat in each other's embrace from the sun.

H. G. ATKINSON, F.G.S.

Boulogne-sur-Mer, France.

SPIRITUALISM POPULARISED: WHAT THEN?

SIR,—Whilst I contend—from the investigator's standpoint—that "Spiritualism" has received, and is receiving, more vulgar brutality from popular journalism than perhaps any other legitimate "faith" has ever yet received from the press, I must also say that I, for one, should not like to see the new science popularised among the uninformed masses of society. The result of such a psychological victory would be fearful to contemplate. It is well known that the unlettered multitude will believe *anything* which a shrewd, fluent, and over-confident teacher places before them. Hence the headstrong progress of the most absurd and extravagant faiths in all countries. Let me here ask a fair question? How many of us have been more than disgusted with the blind and excited credulity of commonplace, unintelligent people whom we have accidentally met at *séances*? One will scream out at the slightest unavoidable movement of a gentleman's foot when it is changed conveniently from a cramped position under the table. Another will weep at the sighing of the wind through the keyhole, and promptly affirm that he can recognise the once well-known voice of a departed grandmother!

Again, what a number of badly disposed people there are in the world, ready to turn mediums, with no other claim to be mesmeric sensitives than a selfish disposition to dupe the "great unwashed" of all towns and villages. Once let Spiritualism spread among the unschooled thousands of our English population, and soon the country would be flooded with sham mediums in all directions—men who have neither conscience nor character, but who might soon cultivate a hellish mimicry, and simulate the real article for a marketable remuneration. Added to this are the dangerous teachings and pranks of your demons, which latter might soon become the "gods" of the unthinking and the incautious million. If Spiritualism could be publicly, as it is privately, demonstrated, in the present condition of the uninformed and superstitiously inclined masses, Humbug would soon be crowned King, and lower-class society might, perchance, become self-destructive. By all means, let the investigation be limited (as far as possible) to the

intelligent sections of private society. At present the masses, so-called, do not need *séance* revelations of the mysteries of Being, simply because they can, unlike their intellectual brethren, accept without questioning the theological statements of our earnest popular churches, which, to say the least, are not to be despised as helps—important ones—in the work of regenerating society.

Spiritualists may blame themselves, in a great measure, for their current troubles. They have been too aggressive. The *séance*-room has been thrown open too incautiously to the vulgar crowd—to plebeians with their harsh disposition, to "professors" with their over-confident and dogmatic bearing towards the sensitives through whose organism the phenomena have been evolved. Money should be the least, and, if possible, the last influence for an introduction to high-class mediumship. Acquaintance previously with the delicate laws of psychology should be a chief individual recommendation. If there is any truth in Spiritualism it can only be traced out by the thoughtful classes, be those classes represented by a Kensington Countess, or by a country cobbler of superior intelligence. To the ignorant and the specially "emotional" amongst us, Spiritualism may become a dangerous element of modern opinion. The recent Tichborne craze among the masses, the fatal spell of quack doctors' pills upon the minds of the half-informed, and the general excitability of the English people in the industrial ranks, prove the danger of popularising *séance* experiments.

J. T. MARKLEY.

Peterborough, February 5th.

THE MENTAL OPACITY OF ONE MIND TO THE THOUGHTS OF ANOTHER.

SIR,—The remarks quoted below contain a valuable lesson for Spiritualists. They are extracted from a letter of O. B. Frothingham in the (Boston) *Index* for Dec. 21, 1876. Although addressed to Radicals, a very few verbal alterations will adapt them precisely to Spiritualists.

"To pass outside of my own mind so far as to recognise the fact that other minds are in very different states, is a difficult thing to do. People of clear persuasions and strong feelings seldom do justice to persuasions of another kind, and are always inclined to suspect the equally decided but opposite feelings of their neighbours. That all reasonable people think, and must think as we do, is a common illusion which goes far to explain the fact that parties and cliques remain so blandly and guilelessly ignorant of all beliefs but their own. Honest conservatives fancy that none but weak, visionary, or bad people are radicals, and radicals imagine that their ideas are shared much more widely than they are; that intelligence is more extensively diffused; that the spirit of inquiry is more generally on the alert than the truth warrants us in believing. A professor in a divinity school told his class that in preparing sermons they must study simplicity, must be very plain, and must not be afraid to say an important thing several times over; for, he added, you cannot overestimate the stupidity of congregations. Radicals are greatly in danger of underestimating the slowness and indifference of the general Christian public, forgetting, what it is surprising they ever can forget for a moment, that they are a very small minority; that their means of communicating with the large and unsympathising public are slender and exceedingly limited in compass; that their ideas are strange, none too easily apprehended by the willing, and actually repulsive to the disinclined. The extent to which these ideas are unknown, even to those who should be well-informed, is really surprising. Having eyes, people see not; having ears, they hear not, neither do they understand. The centres of independent thought—the great centres—are but a score or two all over the civilised world; and in these centres the truly independent minds may be counted by tens. The multitude is not so much unintelligent as incurious—occupied with habitual prepossessions that yield slowly to the general intellectual growth in the community." V.

A THEORY RELATING TO EVIL INFLUENCES.

SIR,—The subject of "evil" influences is a momentous one, and the angel world is drawing mortals towards a solution of the problems connected therewith. The peculiar way in which attention is elicited thereto is very little noticed, except by such minds as are seeking to understand the supernal laws governing spiritual phenomena, independently of evidence gleaned from books and the teachings of men. I wish to call your attention to the influences now impelling some mediums to trickery, and otherwise to deviate from true moral rectitude. I cannot believe otherwise than that angel guides do, in wisdom, bias mediums, as well as others, from the path of moral rectitude, as an indispensable means of intellectual and spiritual development. Temptations and deceptions will continue to bias mediums, as well as all others, who are selfishly inclined, until such inclinations are overcome, or until the fear of the penalty of transgression induces an effort to overcome them, and moral strength gains the victory. Spiritual phenomena, in one sense, are principally deceptions, and, when they are so understood, the investigator will progress much more rapidly, as he will learn, with this fact in view, that a wise motive prompts the production of deceptive manifestations, or, if you chose to call them, false or representative effects.

The investigator, for instance, supposes that he is getting communications from some near and dear relative, when such relative or friend is only represented by angel guardians, who are as familiar with the characteristics of such friend or relative as we are ourselves; therefore, representations by what are called "materialisations" are now in vogue throughout the principal nations of the earth. Not one out of a hundred believers takes a thought that when he beholds a "materialised" representation of a dear one, that such form is a *spiritually manufactured automaton*, which is produced by wise angels for a wise purpose. It is now a well-ascertained fact that, in most cases, at least, the materialised form is clothed with fabrics of mundane manufacture. The fact that spirits can convey material objects from place to place, and through the open doors of cabinets and other apartments, unper-

ceived by mortal eyes, is now indisputable, and thus all the "materialisations" and "de-materialisations," so-called, can be accounted for without the hypothesis of improvising from the elements.

The fact that spirits are in possession of the art of rendering material objects invisible at their discretion should always be considered in the investigation of the materialising and dematerialising phenomena. I expect to work on and on as a medium so long as life lasts, and I dare not shrink from the requirements of my spirit guides, to the peril of my spiritual treasure—soul-unfoldment and consequent felicity, the result of victory over the *leadings* and *misleadings* of my spirit guides. What I wish to make understood, above all things else, is, that guardian spirits *do* sometimes play the parts of "diakka," or "devils," in the processes of developing the minds of the mortal world. All the spiritualistic influences called "evil," or such as are said to be of a "low order," or "undeveloped," are influences brought to bear upon the human mind directly from angel guides, and are directed by more than mundane wisdom for the development and unfoldment of the immortal soul. "Undeveloped" spirits have no part nor lot in the matter; such spirits are wholly unqualified to be guardian spirits, and go immediately to their proper spiritual sphere, where they are educated in the things of the supernal world. Guardian angels sometimes *represent* such in all their characteristics, and in numerous ways. Supernal law gives such guardians a perfect right to perform such representations. Let this be fully understood. D. G. MOSHER.

Mosherville, Hillsdale Co., Michigan, U.S.A.

A FABLE.

SIR,—The *Revue Spirite* has for some time past given us a monthly fable in verse. I have attempted to translate the one in the January number.

A hungry goat once with a cabbage meeting,
The latter felt it would it were not there;
But making still the best of the affair,
Tremblingly said, "I am not good for eating!"
The goat insisted that was all a fudge;
And said that vorduro was his natural diet.
Just then a poodle dog stepped up as judge,
And thus decidedly pronounced his fiat:

"Nothing so wrong can be as strife and bluster;
Take then my counsel, nothing can be juster.
Your covetousness, goat, quite makes me laugh;
Would you have all? No; be content with half."

You, cabbage, can afford well, if you choose,
Some of your outside leaves, for peace, to lose,
And still preserve intact your noblest part,
My gentle cauliflower, I mean your heart."

The goat indignantly then bleated "Blow it!"
"No, not," the cabbage murmur'd, "if I know it."

We fear the hope must always be remote
Of pleasing both the cabbage and the goat.

A LETTER FROM M. LEYMARIE.

SIR,—I am free. After a little indisposition, which was to be expected after the change to the free air from nine months' residence in a cell, I have resumed my usual life of conflict with the world.

I desire to extend to you the hand of brotherly affection, and to ask you to express my gratitude to my brethren in Great Britain who showed me so much sympathy in my trouble. Convey to them cordial greetings from the French Spiritualists, and from Madame Leymarie, who will never forget the kindness with which you, sir, lent *The Spiritualist* to forward the interests of my cause.

May we all be united in the defence of the great truth, whatever may be the personal divergences in matters of belief. In nature, there is harmony in diversity, and man cannot escape from the action of this universal law, which is both the conservation of physical force and the vitality of moral force.

P. G. LEYMARIE.

Revue Spirite, Paris, February 19th, 1877.

DR. SLADE.*

(To the Editor of the "Times.")

SIR,—There are two or three points in your article on Dr. Slade's case upon which I think your sense of justice will allow a comment. In calling attention to the fact that the defendant has escaped upon a point of law, and in saying that the facts as decided by Mr. Flowers remain undisproved, it would be only fair to remind your readers that this decision was arrived at by the rejection of evidence declared by the magistrate himself to be "overwhelming," and to afford a "crucial test" with reference to suggestions which the prosecution had been allowed to make in anticipation of that evidence. Moreover, a decision based upon "the known course of nature" effectually prejudices the case. It is difficult to see, upon this ground, why Professor Lankester and Dr. Donkin should have been put to the trouble of detailing their experiences beyond the allegation of a pretence by Slade which must have been assumed to be false. You speak in your article of the rebutting evidence which might have been adduced on the Appeal, but it was just this kind of evidence (though it has greatly accumulated since the conviction) which was dismissed from consideration at Bow-street. I am therefore justified in saying that the case of Slade has never been heard and determined on the merits.

Allow me also to protest against your assumption that Spiritualists accept the messages which commonly come upon Slade's slates as satisfactory proof of the agency of their deceased friends. Some, it is true,

have obtained evidence of this which it is extremely difficult to resist but so far from experience in this investigation tending to make men credulous, the best informed Spiritualists are the most exacting of tests of identity, and most disposed to suspect other occult agencies besides those to which we are popularly supposed to refer all the phenomena. Very early in my investigation with Slade, and long before another witness (who regarded the result as *per se* conclusive of fraud), I tried the experiment of writing a fictitious name. Not to take up your valuable space with a detail of my exact observations, I say, generally, that most assuredly Slade did not see what I wrote, nor the motions of my pencil in writing, and that it was absolutely impossible that he could have written one letter of the message which I afterwards found on the other side of the slate, signed, as I had expected, by the name I had given.

In fact, the emotional element in Spiritualism has retired much into the background, and has given place to a critical appreciation of the facts. For some time longer, I suppose, we must submit to be called fools and dupes; but already the grudging admission of a "residuum of truth" is laying the foundations of a science which it will be impossible for a new generation of scientific men to ignore.

C. C. MASSEY.

Temple, January 30th, 1877.

PUBLIC READING ROOMS.

SIR,—Some months ago I suggested to Mr. Hartley, of Hyde, a plan to promote intellectual progress in general, which would draw attention to Spiritualism, without the slightest trace of propagandism in this particular direction, namely, a reading and conversation room, furnished with books and periodicals chiefly devoted to subjects out of the beaten tracks; in fact, a kind of "free exchange" of thought, in contradistinction to a central meeting-place for business transactions. I was glad to find Mr. Hartley met me half way, in further suggesting the avoidance of any title or name in connection with Spiritualism, in order to secure sympathy on the broadest scale, and so prepare a basis for the natural development of the plan. We agreed that every town could furnish such a place, apart from the area of prejudice and ignorance, without great trouble and expense; and, I believe, as soon as people learn (and that time is near) that there is a mighty enemy, even in the shape of the law, in the field against intellectual progress, numbers will flock to the standard of truth. The excellent letter of Thomas Pattison in your issue of Feb. 2nd, confirms my view that such an institution on neutral ground would be useful. If my present method of inviting abler pens to put this plan in practical shape should succeed, the insertion of this letter will have answered its purpose.

C. REIMERS.

2, Ducie-avenue, Manchester, Feb. 18th, 1877.

MEDIUMS AND THE LAW.

BY CHARLES CARLETON MASSEY.

THE suggestion thrown out by your correspondent "Lynx," very early engaged the attention of those who had to consider all the legal bearings of the Slade case. But in fact the resemblance of the case of mediums to that of the Roman Catholic priesthood, so far as the law of false pretences and the Vagrancy Act are concerned, will not bear examination. The prosecution has to prove that the pretence was false to the knowledge of the accused, or that "the subtle craft, means or device" was designed to deceive. Apart from statute there is no presumption of law against what is commonly called the supernatural—certainly none against the *bonâ fide* belief of the pretenders to supernatural powers. Take away the Vagrant Act, and the law of false pretences will be powerless, for example, against fortune-tellers; because it could neither be assumed that the power did not in fact exist, nor that the prophet did not believe himself to possess it. But, possibly, proof that former predictions of the defendant had failed might be received as evidence that he could not believe himself to possess the power. Your correspondent asks: "If any such priest were cited before Mr. Flowers, how could he prove that the deceased person had been benefited in any way?" (by the saying of masses for his soul.) The simple answer to this is that the priest would not have to prove that there was any benefit, but the prosecutor would have to prove that there was not; and, further, that the priest knew there was not. True, Mr. Flowers went unnecessarily out of his way in talking of the "known course of nature"; but there were facts before him from which he might, if he chose to disregard, as he did, the proofs of inaccurate observation and incorrect statements by the witnesses, have come to the same conclusion without any arbitrary assumptions. Apart, however, from intention to deceive, there is one particular in which, from the anti-spiritual point of view, the case of the priest is far more within the intention of the statute than that of Slade, and in which it more nearly resembles the specified case of the fortune-

* This letter was sent to the *Times*, but not published therein.

teller. The priest and the fortune-teller alike appeal to faith or credulity. Slade made no such appeal; the very suggestion that he is a conjurer is almost inconsistent with the supposition that he did, or at least that he relied on the superstition of his supposed dupes. The mission of a "medium" is to *convince* people of spirit agency; he does not appeal to a belief already in their minds. I regret that this important distinction was not pointed out in the argument on Monck's case. Mr. Mathews need have been in no difficulty, as it appears to me, in answering the question which was put to him from the bench. "To what cases, if not to this, would you say the words 'or otherwise' apply?" Having regard to the admitted rule that they must be construed *ejusdem generis* with palmistry, fortune-telling, or divination, it is clear that the subtle craft, means, or device, must be such as depends for its effect upon the superstitious belief of the dupe, not upon his defective observation or ignorance of conjuring tricks. No doubt mediums assert (I hope when there are strangers present they will leave off asserting) the agency of spirits; but they do not pretend to other means of knowing this fact than those they present to the investigator himself. The latter is either a Spiritualist already, or he is not; in neither case is he influenced in his opinion of what he witnesses by anything the medium says. This talk, which runs with studiously offensive iteration through newspaper comments and counsels' speeches, of mediums imposing upon credulous people, and of the necessity of protecting the latter from themselves is the veriest nonsense, when used with reference to mediums who submit their powers to investigation.

Since writing the above I have again examined the judgment of Barons Cleasby and Pollock in the Huddersfield case, and the fallacy that underlies it, though not at once apparent, is logically demonstrable. To bring a case within the Vagrancy Act there must be an attempt to deceive by certain specified means or by other means *ejusdem generis* with these. Now, inasmuch as the deception attempted by palmistry, is the false belief in the (so-called) supernatural powers pretended to, any attempt to produce a false belief in other (so-called) supernatural powers, such as those of mediums* may very naturally be described as *ejusdem generis* with that. The fallacy, however, consists in this. What the Statute requires is not that the nature of the deception should be *ejusdem generis* with that effected by palmistry, but that the means employed should be *ejusdem generis* with the means specified, i.e., with palmistry. An attempt to deceive "by palmistry or otherwise," does not mean an attempt to deceive into the belief that I possess the power of divination by inspection of the palm of the hand, or some other power analogous thereto (which might, perhaps include any so-called supernatural power), but that the means employed are like palmistry. In palmistry there is no attempt to deceive the senses, nothing upon which the observation and judgment of the dupe can be exercised. The "medium" on the other hand may cheat, but he does so under peril of instant detection. In distinguishing the case of Johnson v. Fenner (33 Justice of the Peace Reports) Baron Cleasby said, "In such a case no peculiar power is pretended, like telling fortunes or palmistry, to impose on the credulous, but a great skill of manipulation and sleight of hand, and persons are found confident enough to back their eyesight against the skill and dexterity of the performer." Now, this is just the case with those who investigate medial phenomena, and it is only by mixing up wholly different things—the nature of the pretence, and the means employed to obtain credit for it, that this judgment can be upheld.

DARK SEANCES.—A correspondent writes:—"As one of the subjects proposed for consideration at a discussion meeting of the British National Association of Spiritualists was, 'The Best Tests of the Genuineness of Physical Phenomena,' perhaps I may be allowed to offer a suggestion. May we not utilise the condition of darkness, so frequently objected to at physical circles, by endeavouring to devise more 'tests' in the shape of feats which could not be performed in the ordinary course of things without light? For instance, could we not give outline drawings to the spirits, and ask them to cut them out with scissors in the dark? This has been done on several occasions."

* The power of mediums is an altogether erroneous and misleading term, but I use it as a convenient expression in this place.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION SEANCES.

LAST year a very useful and successful course of *séances* was instituted by Mr. Charles Blackburn, at 38, Great Russell-street, London, under the management of the *Séance* Committee of the National Association of Spiritualists. Between eighty and ninety inquirers were admitted to these circles, which were held under test conditions, and the manifestations, which took place in the light, and were comparatively elementary in character, were on all occasions satisfactory.

Finding that these *séances* are a means of usefulness, as affording the best introduction to Spiritualism (excepting home circles) which have yet been devised, Mr. Martin Smith and Mr. Blackburn have this year combined to provide another course to be held weekly, during a space of not less than three months.

The great necessity for keeping circles for the advanced manifestations quite free from the "stranger" element, being recognised by the Committee, a second series of *séances* has been instituted for members of the Association only. Particulars may be ascertained on application to the Secretary.

INQUIRERS' SEANCES.

BY ELIZABETH FITZ-GERALD.

THE first *séance* of the series for inquirers was held at the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, London, on Thursday, the 15th inst. Mr. W. Eglinton was the medium. There were sixteen in the circle; the proceedings were conducted by Dr. Carter Blake.

The medium having been secured by sewing his coat sleeves together behind him, his coat was also sewn in front, and over it a kind of Holland bib was tied, thus preventing the possibility of the coat being removed. A gentleman present had brought his own cotton, some of which he twisted round the medium's hands and shoulders; the medium was then placed in a chair within the cabinet, his head and shoulders only being behind the curtains, and his knees and feet in view the whole time, in good gaslight. Across his knees was placed a book, the Oxford chimes, a sheet of paper, a pencil, and some wooden rings. A hand was presently thrust out between the curtains, and began to write, but as the paper slipped about very much a voice asked one of the sitters to hold it while the writing was done. All the sitters could see the hand writing. The book was opened and shut, taken from the medium's knees, and thrown on the floor; the musical instrument was drawn into the cabinet, and played upon within. A spirit voice kept up a lively conversation with the circle, and requested the tying committee to inspect the medium. On their doing so they found Mr. Eglinton secured as they had left him. As soon as they had withdrawn, and before they were seated, hands were seen protruding from the curtain, above the medium's head. The spirit next took all the things out of the medium's pocket, and threw them on the floor. After giving a little more music he told us he could do no more, as the power was exhausted, and he bade us all good night. On the medium's bonds being inspected, he was found secured as at first.

The sitters were all very friendly and harmonious, and to this cause is doubtless to be ascribed the success of this interesting and convincing *séance*.

6, Loughboro'-road, North Brixton.

DR. SLADE.—At the present time Dr. Slade and Mr. Simmons are at the Hague; the former had been ill ever since he left England till within a few days ago, when his health began to improve. Dr. Slade and Miss Slade intend to go on to St. Petersburg, and Mr. and Miss Simmons will return to the United States. Wherever they go they are sure to find plenty of friends, in consequence of the persecution they have undergone. Mr. Simmons has forwarded us a testimonial, sent to Dr. Slade from Wilmington, Delaware, U.S., dated January 30th, 1877. Among other things, the memorialists say, "All we know of you we learned at your *séances*, and our experience is contrary to that of your persecutors. We are heart and soul with you in your troubles, and wait to receive you with open arms on your return to your native land." This little memorial is signed by Christian Clavey and family, George B. Baugh, Samuel Marshall, John S. Rowbotham, Wm. H. Bradford, George Everett, A. J. Van Duzee, F. Johnson, Mrs. S. A. Johnson, W. H. Gardner, Wm. Murphy, and C. Harlan, M.D. Dr. Slade has received large numbers of letters of sympathy.

"THE SPIRITUALIST" FUND.

THE Spiritual periodicals are partly supported by public subscriptions, but in consequence of our dislike to that system, and preference rather for the plan of selling periodicals at a remunerative price, *The Spiritualist* for three years would have nothing to do with the plan, but stood single-handed against large public subsidies, and paid out the consequent expenses. When this position grew too unfair to this journal, the subscription system was occasionally adopted to a moderate extent. In future we shall be glad if the public will support the weekly Spiritual periodicals equally, and a subscription list on behalf of this journal has just been opened, as will be seen on reference to our advertising columns.

DR. MONCK.

About ten days ago, Dr. Monck was imprisoned at Wakefield, as the result of the sentence passed upon him in the Huddersfield case. There are some points connected with the legal proceedings against him to which we intend to call attention when more space is at disposal. Whatever Dr. Monck's faults, there is no doubt whatever that he is a strong medium, because in strange houses, and in the presence of responsible witnesses, it has been a common thing for solid objects to move about in a strong light in his presence, under conditions altogether beyond his control.

Once, in a speech at the Doughty Hall he made some curious statements that deserve investigation. He asserted that several strange things took place while he was in custody at Huddersfield. He said that once—at night—the constable, on going his round looked through the hole in the cell door, saying, "Well, Doctor, how are you?" A broom was outside; the constable moved it some distance away; in returning later on, the constable, whose name is Roberts, was considerably astonished to find the aforesaid broom on Dr. Monck's bed. The cell door was locked securely, and Roberts had the key, and he, Dr. Monck, could not reach the broom in any way. On another occasion, when securely locked in his cell, his tea-cup and saucer, and a jug containing milk, were carried from within the cell, and placed on a window-sill in the yard some distance off. The cup was found placed in the saucer, and the milk in the jug alongside had not been spilt.

Information has reached us that there is foundation for these statements, and that experiments have been since tried inside the police-station to find out whether the results could be produced by artificial means. It is said that a person shut up in the cell managed to place a cup and saucer on the shelf mentioned, by first sticking them in the end of a stiff folded newspaper, by which means the shelf was reached. Whether a jug of milk was placed there in this way by the later experimentalist without being spilt, and whether Dr. Monck had a newspaper in his cell at the time, is not stated. The indirect information which has reached us is also to the effect that in no way could the transportation of the broom be accounted for. The real circumstances ought to be officially verified or contradicted.

EXPERIENCED Spiritualists somewhat generally hold the idea that spiritual manifestations are stronger in the spring of the year than at any other time. Attention may well be directed to this question.

THE Rev. H. R. Haweis, Incumbent of St. James's, Marylebone, is now preaching every Sunday morning at St. James's Hall, and drawing full audiences. In his sermons he vigorously attacks the greatest abuses and social shams of the day. The service begins at eleven o'clock.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—Mr. C. H. Doty, of Atkinson, Ill., writes:—I received the following statement from Mrs. Sargent, the widow of Capt. Sargent, master of the vessel spoken of in this incident: "My husband had made a trip to the West Indies, a very quick trip, being only seven days and a half from Cuba. I was not expecting him so early, when all at once I saw his vessel, just at daylight, in a dense fog, near the shore, close to the breakers. The fog lifted suddenly, and the mate says, 'We are all lost!' I heard it as distinctly as though I had been there. Capt. Sargent said, 'Wear the vessel!' They did so, and entered a little cove. The mate said, 'We are saved!' I could see and hear everything. They were near Kennebunk, on Wood Island, near the lighthouse. The cove was not large enough for them to turn around, and they had to come to Portland to get a tow boat to get them out. My husband went to Saco, took the train, and arrived very early, about eight o'clock. As he entered the house I said, 'Why, Eli, where did you come from? I was with you this morning.' 'Well, you were in a pretty tight place, then,' says my husband. 'Yes, indeed,' said I, and went on to give a relation of what I saw and heard. 'If you had been on board you could not have described it more accurately,' said he, but made no further comment, for he was not fond of encouraging my gift." The lady who gave me the above is still living. The same lady also gave me the following:—"My cousin, Mary Holland, and I, went to the Odd Fellows' picnic at Orchard Beach. While waiting in the dépôt, my cousin went to the mirror to adjust something about her hair, and laid her veil in a chair. When she looked for it, it was gone. Search was fruitless, and I persuaded her she had left it in the cars. In going to the grounds, a lady was sitting where we passed her. By a sudden impulse I could not resist, and at which I was much frightened, I put out my hand to her, and said, 'I will take that veil.' She said, 'Yes, I did find one in the dépôt.' Putting her hand in her pocket, she took out the veil and handed it to me, and we passed on.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

On Thursday evening, at the ordinary fortnightly meeting of the Psychological Society, held at 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, London, Mr. Serjeant Cox presided.

SYNCHRONOUS DREAMING.

Mr. F. K. Muntion, honorary secretary, read a communication from Mr. E. P. Toy, stating that the writer and his wife were in the habit of dreaming upon the same subject at the same time; this did not arise from mere coincidence, or in consequence of certain matters being naturally uppermost in their minds, for trifling things were dreamt of which had not been in their thoughts previously. One night he dreamt that he had been charged by a bull, and so did she; on another occasion he dreamt that he was at the funeral of a favourite child, and he did not grieve, although he liked the child very much; his wife dreamt the same thing, and they often had similar experiences. He added that in Pitman's *Phonographic Reporter* a case was narrated of a man reporting an important speaker in Parliament, and gradually ceasing to hear what the orator was saying; afterwards the reporter discovered that he had unconsciously taken down every word which the speaker had uttered.

CEREBRAL PSYCHOLOGY.

The Honorary Secretary next read a paper by Mr. Charles Bray, on "Cerebral Psychology." The paper recognised phrenology as a truth, and set forth that as the only channels of communication with the outside world were the senses, which also were limited in number, men might have a very imperfect knowledge as to the real nature of that outside world.

The Rev. W. Stainton-Moses, M.A., remarked that it was impossible to discuss a paper like that directly after it had been read by the secretary. The members of the Society ought to have an opportunity of perusing the papers, and of speaking of the contents at subsequent meetings. He thought that Mr. Bray had opened out the whole subject of Berkeleyism. It should be remembered that influences from the outside world impinged not only on the sensations of one individual, but upon many in the same way, except where there was disease, and the exception in this case, as in others, proved the rule. He thought that phrenology was not as certainly established as other branches of physiology. These might or might not be small flaws in the carefully written paper, which he should be glad to have had an opportunity of reading.

Professor Plumtre said that if he remembered rightly the figures given by Mr. Bray, he set forth that in fishes the proportion of brain to nerve was as two to one, in reptiles three to one, in birds four to one, in higher animals six to one, and in man twenty-three to one. If he remembered rightly the proportion in birds was very much larger than that given by Mr. Bray. The wonderful intelligence of the parrot was in consequence of the enormous development of its brain in proportion to the rest of its nervous system. He thought that the proportion between the brain and nervous system of the higher apes must be more than six to one.

The Chairman thought that the best answer to Mr. Bray's theory was that, if he were right, the world was made for man, and not man for the world; if so, there was no real, definite, external world. It had been said that there was no evidence of the existence of colour, and that colour consisted merely of brain impressions. This was well answered by the information Sir John Lubbock had given, that insects play the largest part in the fertilisation of plants, and he had proved that colour attracted insects to flowers. Professor Ferrier had, of late, been trying some curious experiments on the brains of animals, chiefly of the dog and monkey. He did it in a cruel way, such as he (Mr. Serjeant Cox) thought to be altogether unjustifiable, notwithstanding the end in view. It was true that he gave the animals anaesthetics, but he could not keep them for weeks in the state that he did without their suffering great pain; and he could not justify such torture to animals, even to gain knowledge. (Applause.) Nevertheless, as Professor Ferrier had gained the information, the world was at liberty to make use of it. The professor had cut away both the frontal hemispheres of the brain, to find out how the back brain would act by itself, and what were its functions? The animals then lost all self-consciousness, but all the functions of life went on as before. They lived, and appeared to enjoy perfect health, but had lost their intelligence—they were mere vegetables. He discovered one of the ganglions to be the centre of the external senses. On cutting away this ganglion, and leaving only the *medulla oblongata*, he discovered that its functions were to govern external action; the animals would still take food and walk accurately. He then applied a red hot iron to destroy different portions of it. The brain was double on each side, and when one side of the brain was stimulated it acted upon the contrary side of the body. His general conclusion was that the cerebrum governed the action of the body, that the next ganglion governed the action of the senses, and gave knowledge of the external world, and on this rested two other ganglions, which gave intelligence. He found that he could destroy the sensations one by one—the sense of sight and so on. The rising scale seemed to be—first vegetables, then animals, then man. The hemispheres of the brain of a monkey are identical with those of man, and differ from them only in size. Professor Ferrier could not tell what influence the different parts of the upper brain exercised upon the mind, because he could not perform these experiments upon men, who could tell him when they lost various mental powers one after the other. The question "What is consciousness?" was an important one; it might be due to something outside the brain and body. He should like to have an evening's discussion devoted entirely to this question, without any paper upon the subject being read.

Major Owen remarked that he was once phrenologically examining the head of a young man, and pointed out to those present that there was something peculiar about the organ of colour; the organ was well

developed, but there was a narrow indentation across it. This young man could not tell green from red, and he (Major Owen) did not know of this peculiarity before he made the phrenological examination.

Professor Plumtre wished to know whether Ferrier thought that the more convoluted the brain the higher was the intelligence. Some of the lower animals had no convolutions at all.

The Chairman replied that Mr. Ferrier admitted that fact. The convolutions in the monkey were of the same number and form as in man, but smaller.

Mr. Stainton-Moses—Have they more convolutions than the dog?

The Chairman—Yes.

Mr. Stainton-Moses—Then the dog makes better use of his. (Laughter.)

Lieut.-Colonel Hartley remarked that all that Bray and Berkeley asserted was that man perceived with the mind, and in any argument which might be raised it was impossible to advance beyond that position, consequently the speakers were probably reasoning in a circle. He thought that a paper like that could not be fairly criticised without being studied, and that it could only be fairly dealt with by first accepting the facts of the lecturer, and then examining them from his point of view. He was, therefore, rather in favour of the suggestion made by Mr. Stainton-Moses, that papers should be published before they were discussed. He had been inspecting a lunatic asylum the day before. Some of the patients wished to speak to him, and the assistants wanted him to go on, but he wished to stop and talk. One of the lunatics said to him, "I am badly mixed. Everybody has their forefathers, their grandfathers and their grandmothers, mixed up in them, and I am not well mixed." (Laughter.) There was a good bit of sense in that remark, after all.

The Chairman stated that one day Mr. Warren was questioning a lunatic, who said, "I am Julius Caesar." "Why," said Mr. Warren, "when I last saw you, you were Napoleon Bonaparte." "Ah!" replied the lunatic, "you are right, but it was by a different mother!" (Laughter.)

The proceedings then closed.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS FOR 1877.

We now publish the conclusion of the report of the proceedings of the National Conference of Spiritualists, in continuation of the first portion, which was printed in these pages last week.

On Friday, February 9th, the morning proceedings were concluded under the chairmanship of Mr. C. C. Massey.

A PAPER BY MR. A. J. SMART—EXPERIENCES WITH HAUNTING SPIRITS.

The following paper by Mr. A. J. Smart was then read by Miss Kislingbury, the secretary:—

Now that Spiritualism is showing itself to be a power in the land, now that it can no longer be conveniently sneered down, now that the forms which it assumes are so varied that the mind stands amazed at its far-reaching heights and depths, and the seeming infinity of its ramifications, which spread in every direction in a vast and magnificent panorama of cause and effect—now that it is commencing to form for itself a more definite philosophy,—and, above all, now that recent events have brought it so prominently before the world that the effect which has been created can never altogether die out, it behoves those on whose shoulders rests in this day the burden of sowing for the benefit of posterity the seeds of advanced truth, to look carefully before them into the future, and to consider in what directions, and by what methods, the work may best be pushed forward, the ground which has been secured maintained, and additional ground cleared for further active effort.

Just now the enemies of progress are triumphant in the thought that Spiritualism is doomed, and the faint-hearted are wondering whether this may not be so. The future shall prove to these how mistaken they were, for it is just now that fresh starts are being made in every direction by those who have in hand the work of gathering up and storing knowledge for the use of later generations; it is just now that more determination than ever to this end is evinced; and it is just now that new fields of thought and effort are opening up to these workers every day.

To deal as a whole with the future work of Spiritualists would be a subject by far too vast for my present limits; but, if in the light of my own personal experience, I venture to point out one important direction in which effort may and must be turned, it is in the hope that others besides myself may be induced to direct their attention to the same work, and thus help to cleanse the Spiritual atmosphere of this planet, so that "light, more light," may descend upon the masses. My experience has been strange and, I believe, unusual, and without doubt will interest many whose minds are prepared, by the systematic study which they have given to the laws of Spiritual existence, to appreciate it.

For some months past I have had the pleasure of being a member of one of those private circles, the existence of which throughout the world has done so much to establish Spiritualism on a basis which no amount of prosecution of public mediums can shake. The few of us who compose the circle have persevered through difficulty and discouragement, and great has been our reward. Our experiences have been fraught with peculiar but instructive lessons, some of which may see the light some day. But those I am about to relate exceed all the rest in strangeness and rarity, and give the key to some of the more wonderful of the laws which govern spirit.

One or two of the members of our circle visiting, one day, in company with their mediumistic friend, the ruins of an ancient castle situated some seven miles from our *locale*, we were informed on our return by the controls of the medium, that in a dungeon into which we had penetrated there cowered a poor, miserable creature, chained and manacled, the spirit of one who had perished from starvation. This we thought curious, but little did we dream of the grand vista of knowledge and usefulness to which this little incident opened the way. The controls further evinced a desire that we would assist them to remove this individual, to which we readily consented.

At the next favourable opportunity we performed our promise, and again wended our way to the spot. Entering the dungeon, the condition and surroundings of the miserable being were described through the medium, and the practical work for the time necessary was done, which appeared to consist in putting the subject of our efforts into a kind of mesmeric sleep by means of an influence taken from ourselves. At our circle, held on our return, in the afternoon of the same day, the prisoner (as we called him) was brought and placed in control of the medium. The medium, or rather the control, then exhibited signs of distress, complained of hunger, and besought food. The wrists of the medium became fixed, one across the other exactly as if manacled, and so tightly that it was not without great effort

that they were forced asunder. By forcing the wrists and the ankles apart, the chains which the imagination of the spirit had created or woven around himself (corresponding with those in which his material body had been bound (vanished from his sight, and the unequivocal signs of joy which he exhibited at this result were unmistakable.

The most singular facts in connection with this are these:—That he was quite unaware he had died,—that he asserted he had been imprisoned about ten years previously (further inquiries discovered that he had been thrown into prison as a suspected spy some two or three hundred years ago), and imagined he had been brought out to be killed,—that he stated there were many others in the same condition in the dungeon from which he had been taken,—and that after it had been impressed upon his mind that he was a disembodied spirit, he imagined us all to be denizens of the spirit-world also. It is also a significant and suggestive fact that, ignorant of the real nature and after-results of death, and unaware of its kindly intervention having freed him from his bonds, he still conceived himself enchained, with so strong a conception that the chains were perceptible not only to himself but to other spirits who approached him. The question arises, was his imagination sufficiently powerful (filled as it was with the idea of his surroundings before death) to actually create these chains out of the spiritual atmosphere surrounding him after death? Were they subjective or objective? The "prisoner" was at length after his release taken by the controls to one of those sanatoriums which we are given to understand abound in the spirit-world.

What is the explanation of this? I will give it in a condensed form as we received it in answer to our inquiries from the controls who took the work in hand. Over the surface of this globe, particularly in juxtaposition to places around which old historical associations hover, battle-fields, ruins of ancient castles, prisons, fortresses, abbeys, and the like, there are scattered thousands upon thousands of spirits who have passed over to the other life in that state of intense mental and spiritual darkness in which the masses were in times past immersed, and from which they are not even yet relieved. Totally unacquainted with the laws and conditions of spiritual life; never, perhaps, having given a thought to after-existence, or having but the vaguest ideas concerning it,—when death transpired and these beings woke up in spirit-life, everything around them was so real and life-like that it could not for an instant enter their heads that they had left the material world. Kept down by the darkness of their ignorance of spiritual laws, they were unable to rise beyond the earth-sphere, and lapsed into a dreamy semi-conscious state, miserable indeed, though not necessarily involving positive pain or suffering. There they have remained and will remain until the spiritual atmosphere of the earth shall become so impregnated with spiritual light and energy that it will be a physical impossibility for them to remain bound down any longer.

The good work has since been continued, and many of these beings have been removed from the old historical places with which the neighbourhood of this locality abounds. We are working in conjunction with intelligences of a high order, who have initiated this class of effort, and who have provided a place for the reception of our patients, where they are carefully tended, instructed, and started on the high road of progression. Our plan is to visit a locality, and then the controls, having established a psychological connection between the medium, one or more of those whom they find there are enabled to bring the latter to our circle at home. Some of the revelations which have from time to time been made concerning Spiritual laws have been marvellous.

But few of those who thus come under our observation are aware of their physical death, and in this connection I have to present the most extraordinary part of my narrative, by the description of a process which, so far as I have been able to ascertain, has not hitherto come within the experience of any other circle, and to which, therefore, I wish more particularly to call attention.

It is absolutely impossible to make many of these people believe they have actually left the material body, by simply telling them so, because everything is so real to them. Yet, until this idea is impressed upon them, they cannot advance.

The process by which the controls impress them with this knowledge is very singular and very effectual. After putting the subject in control of the medium, they bring vividly to his memory the last agonies of his death. The sight is a solemn and impressive one to the spectators. The medium is apparently struggling in the grasp of death, yet so carefully and skilfully do the controls work, that not the least danger is to be apprehended. At length the medium appears actually to die to all intents and purposes, the body becoming rigid, and the heart and pulse beating feebly. This, however, is but a sign that the spirit undergoing the operation is being gradually withdrawn from control, and animation is never really suspended for a moment. Indeed, the controls, if they choose, can so manipulate the organisation of the medium, that for a time the pulsation of the heart would not be perceptible, and death would be pronounced to have supervened by those given to hasty decisions. All this without the least danger.

As soon as the spirit is withdrawn from control, he awakes with the impression that he has just died, and imagining himself to be in heaven, or hell, or wherever else his inmost beliefs and the verdict of his conscience direct his thoughts. He speaks and acts as an inhabitant of the spirit world, and treats us as inhabitants thereof also, frequently speaking of "some people who took his chains off just before he died," or otherwise relieved him, and not recognising us as the same. He is also able to perceive objects and individuals which the gross cloud of matter previously surrounding him prevented him from seeing. If his life has been good, he sees his friends; if evil, his enemies; and the emotions exhibited correspond to these mental states.

Under this process the medium, for a brief period, displays all the symptoms of a person dying the death previously suffered by the spirit undergoing the operation. We have thus had vividly presented before us the symptoms of death by starvation, stabbing, decapitation, and drowning, besides others. Many have been the tales of suffering we have listened to, and the narratives of barbarous cruelty perpetrated upon unoffending persons in the "good old times," and striking and impressive the scenes we have witnessed, although somewhat trying to the nerves; and I would advise none to undertake this department of work who are not prepared to take it up in grim earnest. Scenes the most affecting and painfully pleasurable have also transpired, when we have had the gratification of beholding those we had helped to free in the enjoyment of happiness, and reunited to the lost objects of their humble affections, from whom, perchance, they had been ruthlessly torn and cast into prison for no fault of their own. It is a joy, indeed, to use one's self, and the knowledge one gains, for the benefit of his fellow creatures, whether in this world or the next.

I may notice, *en passant*, the curious fact that, in after visits to the circle, these spirits have hitherto referred to their death as happening when first brought to the circle, while the circumstances of their actual death centuries ago they refer to as "a dream which they had." The real state of the case is, however, dawning upon some of them, under the tuition of their kind instructors in spirit-life.

It appears that so long have these poor creatures haunted the places in which their last hours faded away, that the surroundings have become thoroughly impregnated with their influence to such an extent that they are literally tied by the attraction to the spot, and cannot get away without help. It further appears that so thick and gross is the aura round them that they are unable to perceive those brighter intelligences who are trying to lift them up; and these elevated beings cannot approach them, or make any sufficient impression upon them, without the assistance of an ordinary medium, by the aid of whose more material powers they can establish a more intimate rapport between themselves and the spirit they are endeavouring to assist. By means of the influence derived from the medium and circle, they are able to approach closer to the gross, low-conditioned spirit, and thus impress him with the knowledge of his actual condition and opportunities, and eventually to remove him to a better state. This is the philosophy of the work we are engaged in. The material aura of the medium enables them, as it

were, to cut or pierce through the dark and comparatively material aura of the spirit.

It is manifest that the laws of spirit existence, concealed behind what has been advanced, are numerous and perplexing, but the time has hitherto been too much occupied in accumulating and recording facts to allow of any attempt on our part at establishing a philosophy of the subject. The future will no doubt disclose many deeply interesting laws at work to produce such a state of things, and also laws which may be put to use to work out a remedy.

Much might be learnt from a consideration of the power which imagination exhibits of creating round a spirit like those we have dealt with, appearances exactly resembling his surroundings prior to death, for a long period subsequent to death, so that he conceives himself to be chained and imprisoned within walls, though if he did but know it, he might be free as air. We have found beggars haunting the spot where they had been accustomed to offer their petitions for relief; we have found ancient soldiers still occupied in guarding castles long before crumbled into the dust, or performing their accustomed military rounds; we have found troops of "holy friars" still from time to time silently wending their way in solemn procession to the accustomed place of worship (still, to them, existing by virtue of the creative power of the mind), and bearing aloft the sacred "host"; and whenever any of these have come to the circle, they have invariably spoken of persons and places as they were at the time they passed over, and as, to them, yet existing.

Wherever we have turned, we have been compelled to realise that in the sphere immediately contiguous to the earth there dwell the spirits of thousands who passed away in the dark ages, and this locality, rich in historical interest, is also rich in mysteries of this kind. And we are told that until this dark influence, which is pressing down like an incubus upon the spiritual bosom of this planet, is to some extent removed, the light from the higher spheres can neither flow into this world freely, nor penetrate it deeply. And here lies work in the future for Spiritualists.

Thus, while the enemies of truth have been triumphantly anticipating the final collapse of Spiritualism, there has been quietly initiated a phase which I am confident is destined to spread its influence over the world. Literally following the example of that very Jesus whom these same enemies swear by, we have gone forth and preached to the "spirits in prison." Religion and science have been truly wedded, for while charity impelled us, our knowledge of spiritual laws enabled us to free these poor creatures from the consequences of their total ignorance of the conditions of spirit-life. The fashionable "ministers of religion" of the present day, appointed to instruct their flocks in spiritual things, are ignorantly striving to obstruct the very light which can dissipate the gross darkness which covers the people. There are also those in the spirit-world who try to prevent any being rescued from the darkness in which we find them.

We are determined to persevere in our work, and have already made arrangements for prosecuting the "holy crusade" during the approaching summer months; we are also making preparations for carrying out the needful processes in a more scientific manner.

I should hope that other circles all over the country, with their controls, may be induced to follow our example. They will not regret it, for not only will they be gladdened by the gratitude of those whom they succour, but they will necessarily become acquainted with many curious spiritual laws, and possessed of a knowledge which will enable them to become saviours to their fellows. Startling discoveries, which space does not allow specific reference to, will spring up in their path, and nothing will be more vividly brought home to their minds than the truth of Milton's lines—

"Millions
Of spiritual beings walk the earth,
Both when we wake, and when we sleep,
Unseen."

The advantages of a widespread area of effort in the direction pointed out will be the removal of much of the dark and spiritually-stifling influences which now crowd around the earth, obstructing the descent of knowledge from the higher spheres. The souls of men will breathe more freely and become more receptive of the light which the spirit-world is endeavouring to throw upon them. The consequence of this will be the inauguration of a new era of progress in every department of science and knowledge, while true religion will be the more manifest. In addition to this, those who will have been rescued from a miserably dormant state to a life of happy activity will become the willing servants in the hands of those who saved them, and will no doubt become a vast power under the direction of the higher intelligences of both worlds, for the purpose of proving to incredulous mankind the truths of Spiritualism in a way which shall come home to the mind of the most stubborn materialist. We expect great things in this way from our own *protégés*.

Any queries relating to the above will be readily answered, and further particulars given in course of time.

Let every Spiritualist press steadily and hopefully forward in his peculiar work, and leave the so-called "men of science" to jeer and jibe as they may. "Truth is immortal and cannot die."

THE DISCUSSION—HOUSE HAUNTINGS AT PORT GLASGOW—AN OBSESSED MEDIUM.

Mr. John Rouse said that he had had experiences, agreeing to a large extent with those in the paper, so accepted the facts contained therein as true.

Mr. Morse: Personal experience alone can throw light upon this subject. I think that the paper records facts, and facts that are more general than commonly supposed. Mr. John Scott, of Belfast, I have heard, tells startling narratives about haunting spirits. It is evident that we make spiritual conditions for ourselves in the next world by our lives and conduct here. We should, therefore, be as aspirational as possible.

Mr. H. T. Humphreys said that Lord Dunraven told in a book he had written about Spiritualism, how he had had a *seance* in the old abbey of Adare with Mr. D. D. Home, and had manifestations there from an old monk whose spirit had been there for two or three centuries. Swedenborg also stated that some people had been in the spirit world for a hundred years without knowing it.

Mr. Glendinning: Haunting spirits come back sometimes to give warnings by noises or otherwise. There was a house-haunting case at Port Glasgow, the particulars of which will be found in the Report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society, and when the spirit was asked what was his object in making the disturbances, he said that he merely wished to draw attention. The noises were heard by from fifty to three hundred people at a time, and while several policemen were walking about among them. Some of us wished to hold a circle in the house, but the superintendent of police thought that there ought to be no Spiritualism there; the tenant was a quiet gardener, afraid to try experiments in opposition to the wishes of the police. The spirit who made the noises fully proved his identity; the dates of occurrences and the description given of the spirit by one of our mediums proved to be accurate. Whilst the house was full of people pieces of coal and solid objects would fly about, and occasionally noises were heard as if made with a hammer. The spirit said that he had died in the house thirty-three years before. There is a person living in London now who once dwelt in that house, and he heard noises while he was living in it, but they were not so strong. Thus the hauntings appear to have been irregular.

Miss Kisingbury: I know a lady who holds circles constantly for the benefit of earth-bound spirits, who say that they gain much by her ministra-

tions; they all appear at first to be unruly and ignorant, but gradually improve. In France it is a common thing to hold circles for this purpose, and a book, a translation by Miss Blackwell of one of Allan Kardec's works, will shortly be published, containing many interesting records of this kind. The Baroness von Vay relates similar circumstances. Once I was in a room where I was told that a heavy wardrobe was continually moved out of its place at night, and sometimes the candle belonging to the person who slept in the room was blown out by some invisible agency. We held a *seance* in the room, and the entranced medium said that a spirit had done these things to attract attention; it was bound to the room by a crime, and could not leave it until she had "passed through a medium." Several sittings were held, at which the spirit entranced the medium, after which she said she could leave the locality, and since that time there had been no disturbance of any kind in the room. I have heard an account of friars passing through a room in monastic habits, but am not sure whether the circumstances were subjective or objective.

Mr. J. J. Morse: Once I passed through a low neighbourhood in Bethnal-green, and was seized by a low spirit who communicated in a more intelligent manner at Mrs. Main's circle. The spirit said she was a female who had lived a dissolute kind of life. She possessed me for three or four days, much to my disgust; I felt ill and sick all the time. Then she left me, but returned a few weeks later greatly troubled in conscience at the agony she had inflicted upon me, but she said that the effect of having controlled me for a time was that she had been able to cut the cords which bound her to disagreeable conditions. There is much danger to mediums if they are surrounded by bad conditions. It was a very awful experience to me, and I do not wish it to be repeated. In the book entitled *Life Beyond the Grave*, you will find that a spirit makes the statement that there are spiritual parts of houses which sometimes remain after the material parts have been pulled down.

The Chairman: I can quite accept statements about spirits being confined to the states in which they die, because it would be unnatural if death could release people from the effects of life-long habits.

The meeting was then adjourned until the evening.

A PAPER BY MRS. LOUISA LOWE—THE ENDS, AIMS AND USES OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM—SPIRITUALISM IN ITS RELIGIOUS ASPECTS.

At the meeting of the Conference on Friday night, February 9th, Dr. George Wyld presided, and the following paper was read by Mrs. Lowe, Secretary to the Lunacy Law Reform Association:—

There are probably few subjects connected with the great modern revival of external manifestations of spirit force on which a greater diversity of opinion prevails than on its aims, ends and uses, and it is because these appear to me in a light somewhat different from that to which they have appeared to many with whom I have conversed on the subject, that I venture now to address you. Not that I would claim the slightest superiority, or even any balance of probability, in favour of my own view, but simply because I believe it to be good and right that every conviction or opinion honestly held should be openly expressed, fearlessly cast into the crucible of public discussion, that its dross may be consumed, and the little residuum of truth, if such there be, garnered into the storehouse of human thought. The aims, ends and uses of Spiritualism appear then to me to be mainly twofold. First, the refutation of the materialistic theory that thought, in which, for the present argument, I include all moral and intellectual operations, is merely an outcome from humanly material brain; and, secondly, to overthrow all external authority in matters of thought: to free mankind from religious dogma and the trammels of priestcraft—in a word, to teach the individual to make his own reason an ultimate court of appeal in all matters of personal concernment. To many I know this view will appear miserably narrow and inadequate. To such it has been given to see in the marvellous manifestations of occult intelligence, which to me have only confirmed the existence of such intelligence, proof of the continued separate existence of those that they have loved and lost here below, and the firm assurance of their own individual immortality. To me these manifestations have brought no such conviction. I can, as I before said, only find in them proof that some intelligence or intelligences do exist and act apart from ordinary matter, and the inference that, since we everywhere behold analogy in nature, all intelligences confined in mortal bodies will survive separation from them; but whether as separate entities, or as parts of one greater intelligent aggregate, I know not—almost could I add I care not. Whether our future is to be one of individuality akin to that on earth, or whether the spirit that is in us shall, when severed from the body, merge itself into some great life ocean, whence future races shall be quickened, no less must it be our duty, our glory, and our joy, so to live and labour that the tiny drop may depart from us purer and nobler than we received it. Contrary opinions to these, however, are so widely held, and were at no remote period so ably advocated, in my hearing, by one of our most honoured members in this very room; scepticism as to the possibility of identifying the communicating intelligence as that of some departed child of earth, will seem to many so irrational, that a few words must be said in its justification. I am not ignorant of the test system whereby the communicating intelligence is asked for a sign, or for information presumed to be known only to the questioner and the individual spiritually personated, and I fully admit that an amount of evidence of identity is thereby obtained which, in the case of living persons, would be perfectly overwhelming and absolutely conclusive. We must, however, bear in mind this great difference: in all cases of disputed identity here below, the claimant and his examiner are alike embodied, they cannot read in one another's brain, or, except by collusion, become possessed of one another's hidden knowledge; but in inter-communication between the embodied and unembodied, this position, as regards the latter at least, is totally reversed. The fact that answers are given continually to mental interrogations conclusively shows in the interrogated a power of thought-reading which, for aught we know, is absolutely without limit, and which, therefore, in my opinion, renders all tests utterly valueless as proofs of identity; for it is clear that, speaking generally at least, the questioner must either know the answer to his own question, or, at any rate, how to get at it, and that, therefore, the questioned, with his powers of thought-reading, and as it also appears of inconceivably rapid locomotion, or of vision unrestricted by space, need never be at a loss for the knowledge required. If it is objected that this theory presupposes man to be surrounded with false and lying spirits, and refers Spiritualism to the origin ascribed to it by churchmen, namely, Satan, or the Principle of Evil, I entirely deny the inference. Even on earth we do not hold the law of truth to be literally and verbally binding in all cases. By common consent the essence of falsehood is held to consist in an intention to deceive, and thereby attain some desired object, and its unspeakable evil consists in the injury done to society by destroying the mutual confidence of its members. The most rigid moralist does not condemn fictitious narratives that can have no such effect, and the greatest of moral teachers has taught us by His example the use of religious fable and allegory. Granted that there exists an intelligence higher than our own, to whom the education of this race is entrusted, it seems to me that his use of personations and fictions in inculcating needful lessons is not necessarily less pure, than a mother's use of allegory in instructing her child. But although, for the reason above given, I hold tests to be utterly valueless as proofs of identity, and I will presently show why I think we should rejoice if such is the case; scientific tests are perfectly invaluable in showing the *reality* of some extraneous force or intelligence; and the deepest gratitude is due not only from this association, but from society in general, to our Research Committee, for their

unwearied patience and skill in bringing forward fresh and irrefragable proofs of this great fact.

The second main end and use of Spiritualism appears to be the abrogation of miracle as a sanction of doctrine, and thus the utter overthrow of all authoritative revelation. These use the word miracle in its ordinary acceptation, as something out of the usual course of nature, as *apparent* contradiction or arbitrary overriding of its laws. In the earlier ages of the world, when the Creator was held to speak directly to man, every such incident was ascribed to His direct interposition, and the human channel in any way concerned in its occurrence, or the medium as we should now call him, became at once invested in popular esteem with a right authoritatively and infallibly to declare the will of the Deity, in special union with whom the floating of an iron axe-head or other abnormal incident had proved him to be. The repugnance of many of these teachings, not only to modern science, but to modern morality, coupled with apprehension of a renewal of similar claims, have probably mainly inspired the extreme virulence with which the whole doctrine of miracles is assailed. It is for modern Spiritualism to abate that virulence by showing conclusively that so-called miracle is not, and never has been, any true sanction of doctrine, for that it pertains exclusively to no time or race, but is equally the heritage of Jew and Gentile, whatever his colour, his language, or his creed. In one word, to us Spiritualists is entrusted the noble mission of freeing mankind from the tyranny of superstition and of theological dogma. That the Spiritualistic manifestations of to-day effectually do this cannot be denied, since it is clearly impossible to assert that because the Evangelist Philip or his compeers was abnormally carried from Gaza to Azotus his doctrines are infallibly true, and of perpetual obligation, or mankind without affirming the same proposition concerning all to whom similar incidents have occurred—a proposition so palpably absurd in the face of present experience as not to require refutation. Paradoxical as the assertion may seem, it is in the impurities, and above all, the inconsistencies and the incongruities of modern revelation that I find its chief value. Were the communications made to us through direct or through passive writing, or any other extra mundane channel uniformly consonant to our reason and moral sense, it might be possible to forge thereout fresh theological chains to impede progress in the future, as similar chains have done in the past; while if uniformly bad their rejection would be absolute, and the hold on the human mind of ancient Scriptures would not be hereby weakened. How essential that weakening is to human progress can scarcely be over-estimated. Whence have come the cruellest wars and fiercest persecutions that have so often desolated mankind save from this chimera of reliably infallible external revelation? Why are we, as a nation, still worshipping a book, in parts, it is true, grand and sublime, but in others equally obscene and depraving? Why are our young children's minds to be polluted with graphic and loathsome tales of vice which, if they occurred to-day, would be tried in the judge's private room, except that man has gone on from age to age trusting to miracle rather than reason as the test and sanction of doctrine? It would not be easy to gauge either the mischief this trust has wrought, or the benefits likely to accrue from its overthrow. Till that overthrow is complete, till the bulk of the nation is emancipated from slavish subjection to the Bible, I, for one, dare not hope for great or rapid social progress. Whatever its uses may once have been, it is incontestable now that the Bible is a mighty obstruction to the removal of some of our worst social abuses. Who has not heard the words of a Peter or Paul quoted in support of woman's degradation and the iniquities of our marriage laws? Who, when his heart and voice have cried out at sight of the misery of the masses, has not been told that it is God's will that "the poor be ever with us," and therefore that the hope and struggle for universal well-being is rebellion against Him? Truly were modern Spiritualism to do nothing else than show to man that revelation, by which I mean communications from other than human sources, is not necessarily divine, it would have conferred an inestimable boon upon the world. But I am far from saying that the aims and uses of Spiritualism are purely destructive; on the contrary, even to myself in former days, when I largely practised passive writing, there was given a theology, in my judgment, far more in harmony with the thought and aspirations of pious minds to-day than is that of orthodoxy, and I know one instance in which an elderly person fast bound in the narrow fetters of sectarianism, and cut off from all mundane aids to mental growth, was in a few months, through passive writing alone, landed on the broadest platform of religious and social reformers. Some private mediums, whose high spirituality claims a respectful hearing, predict a rapidly approaching period when, to each child of man, shall be granted a spirit-guide to counsel and aid him to an upward course, and certainly the revelations directly made to myself countenance this opinion. Personally, I lean much to the opinion that the time is come at least for the more advanced races, when, emancipated from the child's servitude, we are to walk in the adult son's liberty, and with head erect exchange the revelation of command for that of companionship and counsel. Be this as it may, however, our present task is manifestly to assure unto mediumship free and fearless exercise, safe alike from prosecutions in the law courts and persecutions in the mad-houses. To this end let us turn a bold and, above all, a united front to the foe. Let us make them feel that, in attacking the very meaneast of our brethren, so he be honest, disinterested and true, they are attacking us all; that there is not one among us who would not go to prison, and, if need were, to death, in vindication of our grand new charter of free thought, unconventuality, and universal toleration. Let us press onward to its legitimate outcome of universal brotherhood—in one word, let us stand fast by that glorious Gospel of Emancipation—Modern Spiritualism!

THE DISCUSSION—THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM.

Mr. Shorter agreed in the main with the paper, but did not think that Spiritualism had been required to show that miracle was no proof of doctrine. The Bible did not assert anywhere that its own doctrines were infallible, and all the more advanced theologians had long ago abandoned this teaching. He thought one of the chief uses of Spiritualism was its relation to science; it opened up new fields of research, and finer physics and subtler laws than any at present known. What explanation had science yet given of the movement of solid objects without contact? of knocks, raps, and other sounds? No laws of acoustics were at present known which could account for their origin. Again, with regard to history, one of the chief uses of Spiritualism was to explain many hitherto inexplicable events which modern critical historians had been obliged to reject on their present theories. In addition, Spiritualism threw light on the interesting question of inspiration and miracles, not to mention immortality, the most important of all, and which he considered that it established beyond a doubt.

Dr. Carter Blake thought that Spiritualism had little influence on our ideas about a future life or theological dogma. To him Spiritualism offered a number of physical facts, perfectly true, in which he did not see any moral bearing whatever. Identity appeared to him to be unproved, except in the rarest instances, but he had had a certain amount of proof in a message given by a friend of his own on a slate through Dr. Slade's mediumship. He thought Mrs. Lowe's paper indicated the judicious minimum that Spiritualists as a body should, would, could, or ought to believe respecting the physical facts.

Mr. Rouse agreed with the strict scientific treatment of Spiritualism, and he thought that it was the only way in which the world at large would accept it. He had a good deal of mediumship in his own family, and he had always found that the physical fact of a table rising in the air was the best way of convincing inquirers. With regard to the religious question, the general teaching in our schools and elsewhere to the young was that the Bible is

infallible, otherwise why do people commonly say that these manifestations are from the devil? Where did they get this notion, if not from the Bible?

Mr. Glendinning was of opinion that Mrs. Lowe had gone out of her way in attacking the Bible. He thought Mr. Morse had shown in his remarks on the previous day that Spiritualism had a strong influence on the religious character, and he thought it unwise in our advocacy of Spiritualism to introduce that which might give offence to large numbers of persons.

Mrs. Halleck had to thank Spiritualism that she was on the side of the Bible. Mrs. Lowe had no doubt suffered from the attacks of the orthodox, and therefore felt strongly on that side of the question. She found that women were respected in the Bible generally, but she thought the gospel of Eve had been left out. (Laughter.) Mrs. Lowe had been in bad company at the Dialectical Society, and as for Dr. Carter Blake, he was an out-and-out heathen, who only understood Greek. (Cheers and laughter.) With regard to identity. It was difficult to prove it to others, but she had had many proofs of it, and had been able to give them to her friends. She thought Spiritualists now were chiefly wanting in spirituality, and it was to this they had to look for an extension of their influence.

Mr. Morse said he should protest against Mr. Rouse's theory of scientific Spiritualism. He wanted his soul to be elevated, and he quite agreed with what Mrs. Halleck had said about spirituality. He would divide theology from religion, and judge of dogma from the spiritual more than from the intellectual standpoint. Spiritualism had explained more to him in the Bible than any other teacher. The great use of Spiritualism in his idea was to make our lives better.

Mr. Joy said that the various kinds of spiritual phenomena acted differently on various minds. Physical phenomena had had no effect in making him a Spiritualist, but the mental phenomena—such as written messages, proving identity, trance communications, and so on—had brought conviction to him. He thought it best to leave theological discussion out of the question; it only gave offence and did no good. The great use of Spiritualism was its moral effect, but it was a great mistake to suppose, as some Spiritualists seemed to him to do, that a mere belief in Spiritualism was alone any kind of safeguard against moral obliquity or any atonement for it.

Dr. Wyld said that the adverse views held by some Spiritualists regarding the Bible and Christianity, had evidently been derived not from careful study, but from the distorted teachings of narrow-minded sectarianism. For himself he found the Bible the most profoundly interesting of all books, and Christianity as exhibited in the life and teachings of its divine and miraculous Founder, the perfection of religion and morality. This religion and morality are thus expressed by Christ himself:—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and strength and mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two hang all the law and the prophets, and none other commandment is greater than these." Dr. Wyld could not conceive of any religion and morality higher than that. The love of God is religion, the love of our neighbour, our brother and sister is morality. If analysed it would be found that all immorality is only self-indulgence at the expense of others, but he who loves his brother and sister as himself cannot be guilty of these immoralities. But although modern Spiritualism had not taught him any higher truths than those he arrived at some thirty-five years ago by a long and prayerful study of the mind and life of Christ, still it had given him this blessing, that it had by facts and revelations confirmed him in his belief. The grand object of Spiritualism seemed to Dr. Wyld to be that its facts at once and for ever refuted the nonsense of materialism—the superstition of materialism as Mr. Harrison had so well put it. In his brother's book, *The World Dynamical and Immaterial*, the author attempted to show, chiefly by reasoning on the instability of matter as illustrated by chemical changes, formations and transformations, that matter is only an appearance assumed by forces, and that forces are only the directions taken by the mind and will of God. Spiritual phenomena would seem to confirm this view, and our experiences regarding the passage of matter through matter, and, more astounding still, our experiences regarding the dissolution, reformation, and transfiguration of human beings would go to confirm the idea that there is a spiritual chemistry analogous to inorganic chemistry and applicable to organic structures, and even to the bodies of human beings. These astounding facts were surely miracles, if Dr. Wyld's definition of miracle be correct, that it is the power of spirit over matter. And as regarding miracles themselves, although miraculous powers, possessed as they are by evil spirits, are not necessarily proofs of a divine revelation, still Dr. Wyld could not conceive of the divine and miraculous man Jesus Christ apart from his miraculous works, these being a necessity of his nature, and a demonstration of his law of faith. He would now call upon Mrs. Lowe to reply.

Mrs. Lowe replied to those who had taken part in the debate *en masse*, and observed that she did not presume to speak for the scientific. Being herself one of the great unlearned, she addressed herself to her equals, and asserted again that for the bulk of the nation the Bible was in theory at least an absolutely divinely inspired book; that moreover such was its legal status, the articles of the Church of England declaring it to be binding as such on all men, and that on no other ground was it possible for the clergy to justify the giving to the young of many portions that were read publicly before the late reform in the calendar. She deprecated the idea of being held to undervalue the Bible as a grand book, partially inspired; but repeated that belief in its infallibility greatly hindered social reforms, and that it seemed to her as irrational to think that any revelation made to a progressive race could be final and all-sufficient, as to try to educate a man for life with the primer of his infancy.

A PAPER BY MR. G. F. GREEN—THE IDENTITY OF THE COMMUNICATING SPIRITS—WHAT CONSTITUTES EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY?

Mr. G. F. Green then read the following paper on "The Identity of the Communicating Spirits":—

The most important question which presents itself to the inquirer, who has passed the threshold of Spiritualism, and assured himself of the genuineness of the phenomena, is, that of the origin of the communications. There will soon come to the unprejudiced observer, evidence which will satisfy him of the existence of an intelligence distinct from that of the medium, or of the other persons sitting in the circle. I know there are a few, amongst whom I may name Sergeant Cox, the President of the Psychological Society, who stop short of this conclusion, but I shall take it for granted nevertheless, that the distinct individuality of the intelligence, whatever it be (which for brevity we will call spirit), is a thing already sufficiently proved. It would be unprofitable here, to attempt to make good, grounds upon which the majority of Spiritualists are agreed. But the moment we leave this conclusion, we are treading on slippery places, and it behoves all who would follow the light of reason, and avoid the reproach of blind fanaticism, to consider well their position.

I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion, that the greater part of the communications, purporting to come from departed persons, are of doubtful origin, that the identity claimed by spirits is often demonstrably false. It may be said that these are mere truisms, and no experienced Spiritualist has need to be reminded of them. The more, however, I consider the difficulty of discriminating between the trustworthy, and the untrustworthy in these spirit messages and teachings, and the almost impossibility of obtaining such a thing as a perfect test of identity, by the aid of our natural powers, alone, the less am I inclined to coincide with that opinion. It must be admitted that there is much loose reasoning on this subject, and very inconclusive evidence is often accepted as sufficient, especially if it occurs at a private circle of Spiritualists.

The element of possible deception on the part of the medium, being eliminated, the Spiritualist is very apt to argue thus with himself: "It is true personating spirits are commonly enough attendant at mixed circles, but this is the natural result of the frame of mind in which the sitters approach the subject. Frivolity and undevelopment attract like qualities, but to those who are earnestly seeking for truth, serious and good spirits will be drawn by affinity, which is one of the most constant laws of the spiritual world." There appears to me to be a grave error in this belief, if we may reason at all from the analogies of this life. We do not find that the innocent and credulous, however benevolent and truth-loving they may be, are, as a rule, more exempt from imposition than others being much the reverse. The law of affinity, however, is not inactive, but low, selfish, unprincipled spirits in the flesh will come to such persons nevertheless, in obedience to another law, the nature of which it is not necessary here to examine. I do not believe the law of affinity is the *only* law in the spiritual world, any more than it is here.

We must find some other theory to "justify the ways of God to man" than this of supposing exemption from error and imposition follows directly from good intentions alone.

None are exempt from imposture, and none from error, except those who use the proper means of sifting the evidences of truth, whether the question be one of physical, or moral, or spiritual knowledge.

There is another objection which I believe has weighed with some to prevent a very rigorous inquiry into the proofs of identity. It is the fear of offending the spirits by the expression of doubts. I remember a passage in one of Allan Kardec's books, in which he states that communicating spirits are as liable as mortals to take offence at the suspicion of imposture, which is always implied in the desire for tests and proofs. This certainly seems plausible, and it may be true in certain cases, but it is evidently not a sufficient reason for renouncing necessary credentials. What should we say, if an annuitant took offence at the formalities of identification required by the law, which are necessary for his own protection. Are we then to suppose that the spirits of our departed friends would be offended at our asking for, nay, insisting upon, like proofs. If, seeing and knowing, as the beloved ones who have passed away must see and know, the agony of doubt and hope which prompt our demands, they refuse on such paltry grounds to satisfy us, they are assuredly not our friends at all; they have lost the identity we know them by. There may be, and I have no doubt there are often difficulties in the way of granting us the particular tests we desire, but I cannot believe that they proceed from this cause. Even if it were so, we could do no other than continue to demand tests of identity, for it would be better to offend some than to believe *all* spirits promiscuously. In the absence of any means of verifying communications which relate to the spiritual world (I speak of normal methods of investigation), their value must depend entirely upon their origin. In like manner messages of affection, advice, or consolation, are only valuable as coming from an authentic source. We cannot judge of these things by their intrinsic merits, for they relate to a life we are totally ignorant of. We now come to the question, What are the proofs of spirit identity which we ought to accept as sufficient? A few general observations of the meaning to be attached to the words "proof" and "identity" may be useful here. The word "proof" is sometimes taken to have a meaning which it does not properly bear. Proof is the evidence which is sufficient to carry conviction to the mind. But the nature and amount of evidence necessary to bring conviction vary greatly with different individuals. What we call "absolute proof" is the evidence which (it is believed) would convince every sane mind. But as this quality of a so-called absolute proof can never be thoroughly tested, the very strongest and most undisputed "proof" is nothing more than a high degree of probability. The nearest approach to absoluteness of proof which is ever attained, is when a truth after its first demonstration or manifestation remains quite undisputed. This definition, if we think of it, embraces but very few of the articles of faith (sometimes called knowledge), upon, and by the strength of which, we direct our daily lives. It is clear, therefore, that the practical value of proofs depend upon the state of our knowledge at the time; and a truth which may seem to be sufficiently proved to-day, may be nevertheless the subject of reasonable doubt to-morrow. For an example I may cite the proof of identity offered by Christ to the doubting apostle Thomas, "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side." This was a sufficient test to Thomas, and removed his doubts; but it would not be a conclusive proof of identity, taken alone as an isolated fact, to a modern psychologist, who was familiar with the phenomena of materialisation. If the materialised form is as we have good reason to suppose, only a made up body,* which can be modified and changed at the pleasure of the spirit manifesting, where is the proof of identity? It will be evident, from what I have said, that I do not regard the proofs of identity which I shall advance, as finally conclusive (because there can be no finality of proof as long as one doubter remains), but as being strong presumptive evidence upon which belief in any other matter would be reasonably accorded.

Absolute identity (or sameness) like absolute proof, is really never to be found except as an imperfect figure of speech. We lose a portion of our identity every day we live, every time we breathe. Similarity is not identity, but identity is an inference from similarity. It matters not for our purpose here, whether there is an unchangeable something which Spiritualists call soul, or whether there is no real identity, but only the appearance of it (as the materialists maintain), produced by the persistence of form and position, in the changing atoms of which living organisms are composed. If the latter theory be true, then the inference from persistent similarity is wrong, but the laws of the evidence of this similarity remain the same. What we have to deal with is the proper appreciation of these laws, in the case of intelligent beings, whose existence we know of only by inference, and not directly through our senses. This observation does not apply solely to spirits. I know a lady who has been in correspondence with a dear friend for forty years, but who has never seen her face, or even any presentment of it, nor has she ever had any direct sensuous evidence of her existence. In considering the question of the origin of the so-called spirit communications, which are given to us through various media, and not directly through our own perceptions, everything depends upon the justness of the inferences which we draw. Since the object of tests is to prove the fact of spirit communion to those who are not gifted with any special power of spiritual perception, it is evident that the visions of seers can only be admitted as corroborative testimony. If then objective nature could be demonstrated, what further proof would be necessary? But it is impossible to convey impressions so received to others, except by tropes and symbols, which afford but a glimmer of light to the ordinary intelligence. I shall, therefore, try to follow out the path of strict inductive reasoning, and take nothing for granted but what may be arrived at by the ordinary methods of per-

ception and generalisation. If it be admitted that the intelligence manifested at a circle is not that of any of the sitters, whence can it emanate? Are there any *prima facie* probabilities which affect the case? I think there are. First there is presumptive evidence that it emanates from a being, or beings, akin to humanity. The faculties of memory, reflection, foresight, and calculation are human faculties; and since we have had no experience of such qualities apart from humanity, it is perfectly fair to presume, all evidence to the contrary failing, that where these qualities are manifested there is an entity allied to the human entity. Secondly, if intelligences can exist apart from the human material form, there is presumptive evidence that human intelligences may so exist; and such would presumably be more interested in mundane affairs than any other possibly existent intelligences, and would, therefore, be the most likely to enter into communication with men. These are the *a priori* grounds on which expectation may be rationally based; and it is not irrational when once the existence of a distinct intelligence is proved, to incline to the belief that that intelligence is of human origin.

It would be irrational only if we were to rest satisfied with rational presumptions, where we might obtain the higher degree of probability which we call proof. We must grasp the *general* before we can understand the *particular*, but we must also seek in the particular, confirmation of the general. In the case before us nearly every particular instance of spirit communication confirms the opinion that the spirit is a human being. (1) The spirits almost invariably claim a human origin. (2) They display a knowledge of human affairs and human nature. (3) They appear to exercise human powers. (4) We have the evidence of seers, that they are endowed with spiritual bodies, though the natural eye cannot see them. To any mind not prejudiced by foreign conclusions as to the limits of existence, these various considerations should, I think, be regarded as amounting to proof of the proposition "that the intelligences who manifest their presence at our circles are, at least in most cases, human beings."

It still remains to be seen by what proofs the particular identity of a spirit may be known. There are some persons who go with us so far as to admit the human origin of the so-called Spiritual phenomena, but they say, no wonder they should appear to be of human origin, for they proceed from the unconscious action of the minds and organic powers of the sitters themselves. I have not attempted to deal with this view of the question, because, as I said at the beginning of my paper, there are very few who seriously hold it.

It may be shown to be not only a difficult theory, but one that is utterly inadequate to explain all the facts. At the same time it invests the human organism with powers of duplex action far transcending anything that the most credulous Spiritualist could entertain as probable. The mind, acting consciously and unconsciously at the same time—displaying intelligence, and obtaining information consciously through the bodily organs, and unconsciously through a different medium at the same time. Such a proposition is so unthinkable that I cannot regard it as the offspring of reason, but rather as the child of phantasy, mated with prejudice.

To return from this digression, what are the particular proofs of identity which should be deemed conclusive? (1) Are the assertions of the spirits themselves sufficient? No; because experience shows they are often false. (2) Is the knowledge of names and facts unknown to the medium sufficient? No; because this knowledge may be obtainable by other spirits. (3) Is the knowledge of anything known only to one of the sitters sufficient? No; because under certain conditions, spirits possess the power of thought-reading. (4) Is a written communication in the characteristic handwriting of a deceased person a sufficient proof of identity? No; because handwriting may be counterfeited. (5) Is a spirit photograph proof of identity? No; because it is only a picture, we know not how produced, and may as well have been produced by indirect, as by direct means. (6) Is a materialised spirit-form a proof of identity? No; because we have no sufficient reason to believe that such forms could not be produced artificially by other spirits than those they are supposed to embody.

None of these things, taken separately, is a sufficient proof of identity to be perfectly convincing; yet, taken together, they offer precisely the same kind of evidence that we are in the habit of accepting of the identity of men in the flesh, whom, perhaps, we have never seen, or had lost sight of for many years.

For instance, a son leaves his father's house at an early age, and goes into a distant country to seek his fortune, and all trace of him is lost. After a long lapse of years he is heard of once again. The information of his existence comes by a letter (which may be a forgery), it is followed by another, and another; but the parents, having believed him to be dead, require some further confirmation of their revived hopes. It is true the letters appear to come from some one who is well acquainted with their history, and are full of affectionate remembrances and kind messages. There is no apparent reason for deception, but the parents are still in doubt, for they cannot overcome the long-settled conviction that their son is dead. Then, perhaps, they receive a photograph which is like, yet in some respects unlike, what they remember him to have been. It too may be a forgery! Where shall they look for absolute proof that their son is not really dead, but living? I need not continue the picture any further. Each one can fill in the details as he pleases. There is little doubt in my mind that, under such conditions, the son would finish by proving his identity to the satisfaction of his parents, simply by the perseverance in the same kind of proofs as those which at first failed. Now, the only difference to be discerned between this case and the case of a son who had passed into the spirit world, lies, not in the nature of the evidence which can be given, but in the amount. Evidence which is constantly repeated, acquires, by the sole fact of its reiteration, a potency of conviction, which it would not otherwise possess. We come at last to believe a thing which may be in itself by no means self-evident, if it is only reiterated often enough in our ears. It is to the multiplication of proofs that we must chiefly look for evidence of the identity of our friends departed. If I am expected in this paper to name any single test, which in itself would be absolutely convincing, and silence all doubters, I say such a thing is impossible. Give me any single test which would suffice to identify a spirit in the body in the case which I have imagined, and then I will seek for one to try the spirits by. I consider the tests, and most valuable tests of spirit identity, are dependent on the permanence of moral and mental characteristics, and the memory of former surroundings, and circumstances unknown to the sitters. The best safeguard against deception, is the determination to believe nothing which is opposed to the light of reason; to try every statement by this test; to entertain at the same time a humble opinion of our own powers, and to beware of the spiritual pride which "precedeth a fall."

While there are abundant reasons for accrediting the proofs of spirit identity in many cases, there are also ample reasons to believe that personation is a frequent occurrence. It is, however, generally easy of detection, for some blunder must sooner or later expose the deception. The experienced Spiritualist is not much troubled by wilful deception, but he may be deceived by the teachings of spirits, if he regards them as authoritative. Again, the communications are often vitiated by the medium through which they flow. It is not prudent to yield implicit faith to any communications, unless they come to us through mediums of undoubted truthfulness; and even then, in cases where identity is of importance, not without corroborative internal evidence. It is a very difficult matter to obtain convincing proofs of spirit identity by means of our ordinary faculties, and so long as our spiritual faculties are undeveloped, it is best not to rely on spirit communications too much, lest we should find that we had abandoned a short-sighted guide—reason—for an utterly blind one—credulity. Inferences drawn from the evidence of our own senses are quite as often erroneous as those which are accepted without this kind of proof. "If ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye believe though one rose from the dead."

* Mr. Tapp related, at a recent discussion meeting of Spiritualists, that the materialised form of Katie King at one of Professor Crookes's sances, was observed by two of the sitters (himself and Dr. Gully), to have no bone in her wrist. On this being noticed to her, she replied, "O, I can soon make one," which she very quickly did.

THE DISCUSSION—APPEARANCE OF THE SPIRITS OF PERSONS STILL LIVING IN THE BODY.

Dr. Wyld narrated a fact regarding spiritual apparitions, as given to him a few hours ago. The young lady who gave him the facts was pre-eminently truthful, wise and logical; and her testimony was, therefore, all the more interesting and instructive. She said: "About fifteen years ago, I was walking home, after a long, laborious and exhausting day, passed among the poor, feeling cold and weary, and feeling how delightful it would be to get home and go into the kitchen to warm and comfort myself. At this moment, two servants being in our kitchen, one saw the door-handle turn and the door open of itself, and the other saw her young mistress walk into the kitchen, and proceed at once to the fire to warm herself, when, suddenly, the apparition disappeared. The servant, in great alarm, proceeded upstairs to her mistress, and said, 'Oh, something must have occurred to Miss —! I saw her as distinctly as I see you, walk into the kitchen and go up to the fire, and she had green gloves on!' The mistress replied: 'Oh, you must be wrong; my daughter never wears green gloves.' The servant returned to the kitchen, and shortly afterwards the Miss — walked in bodily towards the kitchen fire. Sure enough, she had green gloves on her hands, which she had bought that day, not being able at the shop to get the black gloves she usually wore. Here we have an instance of the spirit of a living person assuming at a distance the ghostly form, and the proof of identity was perfect. He (Dr. Wyld) had always held the idea that, as we were spirits, there existed no reason why our spirits should not be able to perform all the wonderful works performed by the spirits of the departed. The above narrative confirmed this idea; and, not only so, but proved that the spirit of the individual may perform these works unknown to the human individual. Hence, at *séances*, we cannot ever be certain that the phenomena may not be produced by the spirit of one or other of those present. On the other hand, as the identity of the spirit of a being in the flesh is proved by the above narrative, there exists no reason why the identity of spirits not in the flesh should not be equally capable of proof. The proof, however, although amply sufficient for those immediately concerned, may yet be of too subtle a nature to be accepted as a demonstration by those who receive it secondhand.

Mr. Joy thought this case was hardly to be called materialisation, as the lady had projected her double, or "spook," from a distance, and it was more probably a subjective appearance only.

Mr. Rouse said that, about four years ago, he was a member of a circle in London, and had to leave to go to Norwich. When walking on the high road one evening, he saw in the distance a lady coming along the road; he took her to be at first a country woman walking into Norwich, but when he got nearer he saw she was in evening dress. He then found her to be a lady he knew in London, a member of his circle; she held out her hand to him, and seemed about to speak. A ringing noise on some railway near caused him to look round, and she was gone. He wrote to know if anything had happened to the lady, and he learned she had at that time passed into a deep trance, from which she was only brought back with difficulty. Other like cases had come under his personal notice.

Mr. Glendinning said that the best cases of identity were generally given in private life, and were connected with incidents that could not be made public. He had been told by a medium that a friend of his in Japan, whom he believed to be alive and well, was present at a circle; shortly afterwards he received a telegram announcing the death of that friend.

Mr. Shorter said he had been told of apparitions of himself which had been seen by his friends, generally preceding his actual arrival at their house; physical sounds, such as his footsteps on the stairs, had been heard at the time. He quite agreed with most of the statements in Mr. Green's paper, and he thought it unnecessary to go out of our way for new hypotheses, when proofs of a simple and rational one are constantly forthcoming.

Mrs. Lowe said she could not agree with the essayist, that no one proof of identity could be given. In the case referred to by him, of a son long absent from his home, perfect knowledge of the occurrences and more secret incidents of his childhood would prove him to be the person he stated. She thought, in the discussion, there had been a good deal of begging the question. It was assumed that the manifestations certainly came from spirit entities; that might be the case, but it was equally possible that they might be the manifestations of some great spirit power above our ken. She did not see what good would arise from proving identity, even if it were possible. We were in England far too subservient to authority in those matters, and it would be good to judge communications by their nature, and not by their alleged origin. We were always looking for the "stamp of the mint." One great lesson of Spiritualism, she thought, would be to teach us to walk by our own reason, and to listen to the inner voice of conscience.

Mr. Morse proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Green and Mrs. Lowe for their interesting papers; also to the Chairman for his kind services in presiding.

This was seconded by Dr. Cartor Blake, and carried with acclamation.

The proceedings of the 1877 Conference thus closed.

Poetry.

"YOU ASK ME WHY?"

You ask me why I dwell alone
While beauty may be wooed,
And I might win some loving one,
To cheer my solitude?
Ah! there's a world beyond the tomb,
Superbly bright and fair,
Where death can nevermore consume,
And she I loved is there!

To some the happiness is given
To claim the dear one theirs;
But mine was from my young life riven,
And caught to angel spheres.
And now beyond the tomb she waits,
With arms outstretched wide,
To meet me at the golden gates,
My soul's eternal bride!

G. ASHWORTH.

A SPIRIT FORM.

SOME interesting *séances* have been held recently with public and private mediums, at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, 21, Green-street, Grosvenor-square, London. Last Monday evening ten or twelve friends sat round a large circular table, with their hands joined, under which conditions, Mr. W. Eglinton, the medium, was held on both sides. There were no other persons in the room than those seated at the table. An expiring fire gave a dim light, permitting only the outlines of objects to be visible. The medium sat at that part of the table which was nearest to the fire, consequently his back was to the light. A form of the full proportions of a man, rose slowly from the floor to about the level of the edge of the table; it was about a foot behind the right elbow of the medium. The other nearest sitter was Mrs. Wiseman, of Orme-square, Bayswater. This form was covered with white drapery, but no features were visible. As it was tolerably near to the fire, it could be seen distinctly by those near it. It was seen by all who were so placed that the edge of the table or intervening sitters did not cut off the view of the form; thus it was observed by four or five persons altogether, and was not the result of subjective impressions. After rising to the level of the edge of the table, it sank downwards and was no more seen, having apparently exhausted all the power. Mr. Eglinton was in a strange house and in evening dress. Altogether it was a test manifestation which could not have been produced by artificial means. Among those present at this *séance* were Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, the Rev. C. Maurice Davies, D.D., Mrs. Davies, Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. C. C. Massey, Dr. Wyld, Mrs. Wiseman, Miss Poyntz, and Mr. W. H. Harrison.

In America Spiritualists have been somewhat annoyed by demoralised physical mediums, who have been going about showing real mediumship as conjuring tricks, and who call themselves "exposers." It will be easy to deal with such persons in England if they spring up, by the prosecution of them at once by those who attended at their *séances* on payment in the belief that the phenomena were genuine.

PREMONITIONS.—Many well-authenticated evidences of remarkable presentiments of coming disaster are recorded, and one that is unusually surprising is the case of a Mr. Feese, of Ohio. A few years ago he was away from home with his wife and children. When about to return, a strange disinclination seized him to go by a certain train, and his mind was weighed down by a powerful impression of some impending calamity. Not long before he had a kind of waking dream, in which he saw his wife and children in coffins in a church, as distinctly and vividly as though real, and yet he was wide awake. But he thought it would be foolish to be influenced by such impressions, and went on. The result was a railroad disaster, in which his wife and both his children were killed. He resolved then that if he should ever have another premonition of the kind he would heed it. Just before the late terrible disaster near Ashtabula, on the Lake Shore Railroad, he was away from home with his family, having married again, and was intending to return on the train which was destroyed, when the same presentiment came over him as before, and he went another way, and so escaped that terrible calamity.—*Boston Herald*.

MEDIUMSHIP AMONG THE AMERICAN INDIANS.—Daniel Bacon, of Boice City, writes:—"The Indians of Idaho recognise the presence of their spirit friends, and have many phases of mediumship. During the Modoc war, we invariably obtained news of engagements, as well as results of battles, from friendly Indians, six or seven days in advance of the mails, there being no telegraph here at the time. Three years ago I had in my employ an old Indian; one day after finishing his labours he came to me and clapping his hands together as if handcuffed, said, 'Me see um soldiers tyum three Salt Lake Indians. What for? Me no say!' Knowing the troops were scouting for Barock Indians who had murdered some whites near Fort Hall, I said, 'May be they are the Indians who killed the white men in the mountains last summer.' He replied, 'No, Salt Lake Indians no killum white men. Barock Indians killum white men.' It was several days before the mail brought the news that the supposed murderers were captured and taken to Fort Hall: but on their examination they were acquitted. The following account I received from the wife of one of the officers of Fort Boice: 'Several days before the telegram bringing the news of Custer's death was received, an Indian went into ecstatic fits, dancing and pointing towards the Black Hills, while he kept reiterating the words 'Way up.' He was thought to be insane, but after his excitement had subsided, he informed them that the Indians were killing the whites way over t'other side of the mountains.' These Indians believe that in the event of war with the whites, the spirits of their dead relatives will come to their assistance, and they will be so charmed that the balls of their enemies will have no effect on them. They practise the spiritual mode of healing, are very healthy, and the happiest mortals on earth.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

The Marylebone Society of Spiritualists holds a tea-meeting next Sunday evening.

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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 mediocrity 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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