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"THE SPIRITUALIST" NEWSPAPER:

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

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, PRICE TWOPENCE.

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January, 1877.

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The Spiritualist Newspaper,

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

VOLUME TEN. NUMBER NINE.

LONDON, FRIDAY, MARCH 2nd, 1877.

INQUIRERS' SEANCES.

BY C. CARTER BLAKE, DOCT. SCI.

THE second of the above series was held on Thursday, February 22nd, under the mediumship of Mr. W. Eglinton. There were fourteen present in the circle, many of whom were strangers.

The medium's coat-sleeves were sewn behind him, his coat sewn in front, and the holland pinafore placed round his shoulders, and tied over all. A tape was passed by me inside the loop formed by the connected wrists, and affixed to the back of the chair, so that it would be impossible under any conditions for the medium to slip his arms around his body. The muscles of the upper arm were also tied by me and a strange gentleman to the chair. Under these conditions, a book upon his knees was frequently opened and shut, and afterwards taken into the cabinet. The musical box placed on the knees of Mr. Eglinton was played slowly or quickly at the direction of a voice, and an object was protruded under the curtain over the springs which stopped the tunes of the box. A hand was frequently shown at the aperture of the curtain. This hand wrote on a piece of paper held by a lady present, the words (to me unintelligible) "Neider dan Saxifraga" in a legible and flowing handwriting, unlike that of Mr. Eglinton. The hand appeared destitute of wrist or arm, and it threw a distinct shadow on to the red curtain in a dim light. Mr. Eglinton was inspected during the progress of the *séance* and afterwards, the sewing and tying being found to be intact. The gaslight throughout was fair. The curtains were often moved at a distance which Mr. Eglinton could not have reached, with his outstretched arm, even had it been liberated from the sewing and tying without changing the position of his feet and legs, which were always in full view.

The inquirers appeared to be thoroughly satisfied with the *séance*.

SPIRITUALISM AND INSANITY.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

BY EUGENE CROWELL, M.D.

"This form of delusion (*Spiritualism*) is very prevalent in America, and the asylums contain many of its victims; nearly ten thousand persons, having gone insane on the subject, are confined in the public asylums of the United States."—*Dr. L. S. Forbes Winslow, of London.*

"There is not an insane asylum from Maine to Texas which does not contain victims of Spiritualism."—*Rev. Dr. Talmage, of Brooklyn, N. Y.*

The following are the facts:—

The number of asylums, or institutions for the insane, in the United States, July 1, 1876, according to the *American Journal of Insanity*, was, State institutions, 58; City and County, 10; Incorporated Charitable, 10; Private, 9; total 87; and eight others were then in process of construction. The whole number of patients in these 87 institutions at that date, as estimated by the same authority, was 29,558.

In December last, 1876, I addressed the following questions to each of the medical superintendents of the institutions for the insane in the United States:—

1st. The number of patients admitted to, or under treatment in your institution during the past year; or if this has not yet been ascertained, then during the previous year.

2nd. In how many cases was the insanity ascribed to religious excitement.

3rd. In how many to excitement caused by Spiritualism.

In answer to these questions I have received, either written replies, or published official reports—generally both—from 66 superintendents, but of these only 58 are available for the purposes of this exhibit, the remainder not furnishing the information required. The information obtained from the 58 reports, and written replies, is here given in a tabulated form, and every fact and figure bearing upon this question—favourably or adversely—in the reports and letters received, is here presented.

The Institutions—Where Located—The Total Numbers of Patients during Periods Stated; and the Numbers of those whose Insanity is Ascribed Respectively to Religion and Spiritualism.

	Year.	Whole Number Admitted or Treated.	Number from Religious Excitement.	Number from Spiritualism.
Maine Insane Hospital, Augusta, Maine	1875-6	374	4	6
Vermont Asylum for the Insane, Brattleboro, Vt.	1875-6	222	3	...
N.H. Asylum for the Insane, Concord, N.H.	1876	268	3	3
State Lunatic Hospital, Taunton, Mass.	1876	583	7	1
Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Mass.	1876	829	10	...
Shady Lawn Insane Asylum, Northampton, Mass.	1876	23	3	1
Boston Lunatic Hospital, Boston, Mass.	1876	248	...	...
State Lunatic Hospital, Northampton, Mass.	1876	470	9	1
Butler Hospital for the Insane, Providence, R.I.	1876	198	...	...
Conn. Hospital for the Insane, Middletown, Conn.	1875	616	4	...
Retreat for the Insane, Hartford, Conn.	1875	233	...	...
N.Y. City Asylum for the Insane, Ward's Island ...	1875	401	...	...
N.Y. City Lunatic Asylum, Blackwell's Island	1875	412	...	...
Bloomington Asylum, N.Y.	1875	287	...	...
State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, N.Y.	1875	1,004	...	...
Monroe County Insane Asylum, Rochester, N.Y. ...	1876	250	4	...
N.Y. State Asylum for Insane Criminals, Auburn ...	1876	88	...	...
Sanford Hall Insane Asylum, Flushing, N.Y.	1876	48	2	...
King's County Lunatic Asylum, Flatbush, N.Y.	1876	751	8	...
State Homeopathic Asylum, Middletown, N.Y.	1875-6	281	...	...
Private Insane Asylum, Pleasantville, N.Y.	1876	6	...	...
N.Y. State Lunatic Asylum, Trenton, N. J.	1876	487	...	8
Western Penn. Hospital, Dixmont, Penn.	1875	170	4	...
State Lunatic Asylum of Penn. Harrisburg, Penn.	1875	167	1	...
State Hospital for the Insane, Danville, Penn.	1875-6	620	9	1
Insane Dept. of Philad. Hospital, Philadelphia, Penn.	1876	383	7	...
Friends' Asylum for the Insane, Philadelphia, Penn.	1876	122	...	...
Penn. Hospital for the Insane, Philadelphia, Penn.	1876	268	...	...
Insane Asylum, College Hill, Ohio.	1876	95	3	...
Western Ohio Hospital for the Insane, Dayton, Ohio	1875	826	20	...
Longview Asylum, Carthage, Ohio	1876	767	5	...
Cleveland Hospital for the Insane, Newburg, Ohio.	1876	763	13	2
North-Western Hospital for the Insane, Toledo, Ohio	1876	158	8	5
Michigan Asylum for the Insane, Kalamazoo, Mich.	1876	850	8	2
Wisconsin State Hospital for the Insane, Mendota.	1876	181	6	...
Northern Hospital for the Insane, Winnebago, Wis.	1876	530	...	1
Iowa Hospital for the Insane, Mount Pleasant, Iowa	1874-5	1,016	7	1
Hospital for the Insane, Independence, Iowa.	1874-5	464	17	3
St. Vincent's Institution for the Insane, St. Louis, Mo.	1874-5	427	7	...
St. Louis County Insane Asylum, St. Louis, Mo.	1870-5	721	28	1
State Lunatic Asylum, No. 2, St. Joseph's, Mo.	1876	126	20	1
Northern Hospital for the Insane, Elgin, Ill.	1875-6	755	18	1
Ill. Central Hospital for the Insane, Jacksonville, Ill.	1875-6	995	13	2
Bellevue Place Asylum, Batavia, Ill.	1876	50	2	1
Ill. State Hospital for the Insane, Anna, Ill.	1876	146	8	3
Ind. Hospital for the Insane, Indianapolis, Ind.	1876	489	...	...
Minnesota Hospital for the Insane, St. Peter's, Minn.	1876	253	16	...
West Ken. Lunatic Asylum, Hopkinsville, Ken.	1876	541	6	...
Alabama Insane Hospital, Tuscaloosa, Ala.	1876	95	...	...
Central Lunatic Asylum, Richmond, Va.	1871-6	537	49	...
Eastern Lunatic Asylum, Williamsburg, Va.	1876	377	4	...
Western Lunatic Asylum, Staunton, Va.	1876	423	...	...
West Va. Hospital for the Insane, Western, West Va.	1876	408	11	...
Insane Asylum of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.	1874-6	115	11	...
Maryland Hospital for the Insane, Baltimore, Md.	1876	168	1	...
Texas State Lunatic Asylum, Austin, Texas.	1876	109	8	...
Nebraska Hospital for the Insane, Lincoln, Neb.	1876	133	9	1
Insane Asylum of California, Stockton, Cal.	1876	1,201	36	15
		23,328	412	59

From the above tables it will be seen that of 23,328 insane persons now, or recently, in 58 institutions, 412 are reported insane from religious excitement, and 59 from excitement caused by Spiritualism.

Assuming that in December last there were 30,000 insane persons in the various institutions in the United States (an increase of about 450 since July, 1876), according to the above figures, there should be of this entire number 530 insane from religious excitement, and 76 from Spiritualism; and whether we regard the relative numbers in the above table, or as estimated in all the institutions in the country, we find there are seven insane from religious excitement for every one insane from Spiritualism. It will also be seen that while there are 87 asylums there are only 76 insane Spiritualists within their walls—not one to each institution.

The following table presents the statistics of this subject, for long terms of years, of thirteen institutions, as taken from their official reports, the other reports being deficient in like information:—

	No. of Years.	Whole Number Admitted or Treated.	From Religious Excitement.	From Spiritualism.
Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Mass.	44	11,302	885	65
Conn. Hospital for the Insane, Middletown, Conn.	9	1,272	24	...
State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, N.Y.	32	11,831	247	32
Penn. Hospital for the Insane, Philadelphia, Penn.	35	7,167	212	...
Western Penn. Hospital, Dixmont, Penn.	19	2,981	70	7
State Lunatic Asylum of Penn., Harrisburg, Penn.	25	3,988	10	4
Longview Asylum, Carthage, Ohio	17	3,579	154	12
Western Ohio Hospital for the Insane, Dayton, Ohio	20	3,818	196	12
Iowa Hospital for the Insane, Mount Pleasant, Iowa	16	3,028	112	12
Eastern Lunatic Asylum, Williamsburg, Va.	8	554	20	...
Alabama Insane Hospital, Tuscaloosa, Ala.	15	1,205	54	1
Ind. Hospital for the Insane, Indianapolis, Ind.	28	6,701	459	82
Minnesota Hospital for the Insane, St. Peter's, Minn.	10	1,449	71	2
		58,875	1,994	229

Here we have records of 58,875 patients, of which number the insanity of 1,994 is ascribed to religious excitement, and that of 229 to the excitement of Spiritualism. According to these figures, 30,000 of these patients (the present number of inmates of our asylums) would show 1,016 insane from religion, and 117 from Spiritualism, and the relative numbers of those whose insanity is ascribed respectively to the excitement of religion and Spiritualism in former years, and at the present time, appear as follows:—

In 30,000 patients in former years, from religion, 1,016, from Spiritualism, 117.
 " " at present time, " " 530, " " 76.

Showing a diminished number of cases from both religion and Spiritualism at the present time.

An important fact should here be noticed, which is, that as the knowledge of Spiritualism has extended, and the number of its adherents has increased, the records show, not only a comparatively, but an absolutely less number of cases in which Spiritualism is assigned as the exciting cause of insanity, and it is a question whether the greater comparative decrease in the number of cases ascribed to religious excitement may not justly be attributed, at least in a great degree, to the influence of Spiritualism in disseminating more correct, rational, and, consequently, less revolting ideas of the nature and extent of future punishment.

Seventy-six insane from Spiritualism at the present time, out of a total of 30,000 inmates of our asylums, are within a fraction of one in 395, and *one quarter of one per cent.* of the whole number in the asylums, instead of 33 1-3rd per cent., as asserted by Dr. Forbes Winslow.

In 42 of the published reports of institutions for the insane, which have come to hand, there are tables showing the previous occupations of the patients admitted, or treated, within one or more years, and from these I find that out of a total of 32,313 male patients, 215 are set down as clergymen, while in same reports the total number of male and female Spiritualists is only 45. Insane clergymen are here in the proportion of 1 to every 150 inmates, while the proportion of insane Spiritualists is only 1 to every 711.

If we estimate the number of Spiritualists in the United States as low as 2,000,000—which I believe to be less than their actual number—we are entitled to a representation in the lunatic asylums of 1,333, while the number actually there, according to official reports, is only 76. Thus we are taxed for the support of these institutions without fair representation, but as we are taught by our religion to exercise charity towards all men, we are willing that clergymen, and the members of their congregations shall have the lion's share of the advantages these institutions afford. Their needs are greater than ours.

Dr. M. Reaney, superintendent of the Iowa Hospital for the Insane, in which in 1874-75 more than 1,000 patients were treated, says, in his letter to me, that there is not at the present time one Spiritualist under his care.

According to the report of the Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, Massachusetts, in which in 1876 829 patients were treated, no Spiritualist has been a patient in the institution during the last three years.

Dr. John Curwen, superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in which during the past twenty-five years 3,988 patients have been admitted,

says, in his letter to me, that "we have not had for a long term of years any cases caused by Spiritualism."

In the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica, New York, 11,831 patients were admitted during the past thirty-two years, the insanity of 32 of them being ascribed to Spiritualism, but all these were admitted within the period of five years from 1849, when Spiritualism was in its infancy, and comparatively little understood, and since 1853, or for twenty-three years, not a patient has been admitted in whose case Spiritualism was assigned as the exciting cause of the insanity.

Dr. B. A. Wright, Superintendent of the North-Western Hospital for the Insane, at Toledo, Ohio, writes me:—"The cause of the mental derangement of eight patients (in 1876) was religious excitement. Many more act as though religious excitement had been the cause of their insanity, but this is not so stated in the committing papers.

Dr. J. B. Cooker, now, or recently, City Physician of New Orleans, in a letter to the Rev. Dr. Watson, of Memphis, says:—"I have been in charge of the lunatic asylum of the parish of New Orleans some seven years, and out of a large number that have been admitted and discharged in that time have never had one case of insanity on account of Spiritualism, but several cases of insanity of other forms of religious belief."

The following is an extract from a letter received from Dr. C. H. Nichols, Superintendent of the Government Hospital for the insane, at Washington, D.C., in which 931 patients were treated in 1876:—

"I see a paragraph, attributed to Dr. Forbes Winslow, is going the rounds of the newspapers, stating that there are ten thousand lunatics in the United States, who were made insane by Spiritualism. My observation leads me to suppose that there may be *one per cent.* of truth in that statement."

The doctor's estimate is very nearly correct. Instead of there being one per cent. of truth in the wild assertion of Dr. Forbes Winslow, there are *only three-fourths* of one per cent.

Dr. J. W. Ward, superintendent of the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum, at Trenton, writes:—"We have eight cases said to have resulted from Spiritualism, but whether Spiritualism was the cause, or the result, of insanity in these cases it is difficult to tell. Friends in giving histories of cases are very prone to mistake hallucinations, etc., expressed after insanity is established, as the cause of the malady itself."

Dr. D. R. Burrell, resident physician of the Brigham Hall Asylum, at Canandaigua, N.Y., says: "Statistics in regard to religious excitement and Spiritualism as causes of insanity, are of little account at present. Friends often speak of these as causes, when they are merely *results*, as you learn upon obtaining, after weeks or months, a fuller history of the cases. Many of the so-called 'religious' cases I have met did not think of religion, or become religious until after they were touched with insanity. Cannot the same be said of Spiritualism as a cause?"

Dr. H. R. Stiles, superintendent of the State Homoeopathic Asylum for the Insane, at Middletown, N.Y., writes: "All of us have a touch of supernaturalism in our make up. Is it surprising then, that when bodily and mental disease, conjoined, have slackened the rein which common sense (the will of our daily lives) holds upon this lingering relic of supernaturalism, the confused mind, not comprehending its changed relations with the outer world—seeing and hearing many things which seem strange, and (in its then state) fearful, and foreboding, naturally revives what it has heard of Spiritual influences, and the patient rants and raves about, and attributes his troubles to Spiritualism. But these delusions generally appear *after* the insanity is recognised, so I am inclined to acquit religion and Spiritualism of this blame to a large extent. At least my own personal experience does not induce me to charge it upon them."

Dr. B. D. Eastman, superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital, at Worcester, Mass., in his report for 1873, says, of the causes of insanity assigned by the friends of patients, as stated in the tables in the published reports, that, "tables of this character are very unsatisfactory. The friends of

patients, from whom the statements of causes usually come, sometimes purposely practise deception, and often display great ignorance, by assigning as a cause some comparatively trivial circumstances attendant upon the beginning of insanity, or some symptom of the already fixed malady."

It can readily be understood how appropriately these remarks must apply to persons who exhibit insane symptoms, and who previously have been more or less interested in Spiritualism. Its unpopularity, together with the impression so prevalent that Spiritualists must necessarily be to some extent unbalanced in mind, render it more easy and natural to attribute the mental aberration to this cause than to any other, and thus, doubtless, a certain proportion of the small number of inmates of our asylums, upon whose warrants of committal Spiritualism is inscribed as the exciting cause, are in no degree indebted to their belief for the cause of their affliction.

Dr. John P. Gray, editor of the *American Journal of Insanity*, says in his report: "Every great religious movement, indeed, from John Knox and John Wesley to Moody and Sankey, has been accompanied with its percentage of insanity; but that only shows that there is in every community, at any given period, a certain amount of constitutional or incidental morbidity, ready to be developed into insanity by every suitable occasion, and religious excitement only stands prominent among the number of moral influences."

These remarks also apply to Spiritualism, though not to the same extent.

Dr. J. Ray, the eminent authority in medical jurisprudence, and who has made a special study of insanity, remarks in the *American Journal of Insanity* for October, 1867: "It is to be regretted that the prevalent tendency is to ignore them (the facts of Spiritualism) entirely, rather than to make them a subject of scientific investigation. It is surprising that physicians, especially with such well-recognised affections before them as catalepsy, somnambulism, ecstasy, and double consciousness should jump to the conclusion that all the facts of Spiritualism and animal magnetism are utterly anomalous and impossible."

Contrast these wise and cautious words of one of the most experienced specialists in this country with the unsupported assertions and blind generalisations of Dr. Forbes Winslow and Rev. Dr. Talmage.

Brooklyn, New York, February, 1877.

ANCIENT THOUGHT AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

PART II.

BY C. CARTER BLAKE, D.D., SCI.

SINCE I read the first part of this paper, the discussion has comprised many interesting questions, to some of which I have tried to reply in my verbal remarks.

Let me, in passing, just notice the good-humoured criticism which my friend, Mr. H. G. Atkinson, has given in the number of *The Spiritualist* for January 26th. When I spoke of "the universal solvency of time," I merely referred to time not as an entity, but as an *edax rerum*. How many theories time has devoured and cast into what Professor Owen calls "the limbo of all hasty blunders," the student of mental philosophy alone knows, and it will be my object by-and-by to gauge whether the modern theories will hold water better than those of our ancestors.

The reference to "materialists" had no personal bearing towards Mr. Atkinson, whose support I wish I had, and to whom we all owe gratitude for his kind reception of our friend Dr. Slade at Boulogne. In fact, his most unjust assailant could hardly call him a materialist.

Leaving, therefore, this personal matter, I now proceed to inquire what service was rendered by the New Academic School to elucidate some of those phenomena which we term "spiritual."

The doctrine of *acatalepsy* recalls to us the stoical doctrine of catalepsy or apprehension, to which it is the antithesis. The cataleptic phantasm was the true perception according to the Stoics, and according to the Academicians all perceptions were acataleptic—i.e., bore no conformity to the objects perceived, or, if they did bear any conformity thereto, it would never be known.

Arcesilaus saw the weak point of the stoical argument. Zeus pretended that there was a criterium which decided between science and opinion, which decided between true and false perceptions, and this was the assent which the mind gave to the truth of certain perceptions; in other words, common sense was the criterium. "But," said Arcesilaus, "what is the difference between the assent of a wise man and the assent of a madman? There is no difference but in name." He felt that the criterium of the Stoics was itself in need of a criterium.

Chrysippus the Stoic combated Arcesilaus, and was in turn combated by Carneades. The great question then pending was this:—

What criterium is there of the truth of our knowledge?

The criterium must reside either in reason, conception, or sensation. It cannot reside in reason, because reason itself is not independent of the other two: it operates upon the material furnished by them and is dependent upon them. Our knowledge is derived from the senses, and every object presented to the mind must, consequently, have been originally presented to the senses: on their accuracy the mind must depend.

Reason cannot, therefore, contain within itself the desired criterium. Nor can conception; for the same arguments apply to it. Nor can the criterium reside in sense; because, as all admit, the senses are deceptive, and there is no perception which cannot be false.

For what is perception?

Our senses only inform us of the presence of an object in so far as they are affected by it. But what is this? Is it not *we* who are affected—we who are modified? Yes; and this modification reveals both itself and the object which causes it. Like light, which, in showing itself, shows also the objects upon which it is thrown. Like light also in this, that it shows objects in its own colours.

Perception is a *modification of the soul*. The whole problem now to solve is this:—Does every modification of the soul exactly correspond with the external object which causes that modification.

This is the problem presented by the Academicians. They answered, but they did not solve it. They left to their adversaries the task of proving the correspondence between the object and subject. And this was proven by the Alexandrians.

The great and predominant idea of the philosophy of Plotinus was this identity. The identity of subject and object—of the thought with the thing thought of—is the only possible ground of knowledge. This position, which some will recognise as the fundamental position of modern German speculation, is so removed from all ordinary corruptions that we must digress awhile, in order to explain it. Neo-Platonism is a blank without it.

Knowledge and Being are identical; to know more is to be more. We do not of course maintain the absurd proposition that to know a horse is to be that horse; but we maintain that all we know of that horse is only what we know of the changes in ourselves occasioned by some external cause, and, identifying our internal change with that external cause, we call it a horse. Here knowledge and being are identical: we really know nothing of the external cause (horse), we only know our own state of being; and to say, therefore, that "in our knowledge of the horse we are the horse" is only saying, in unusual language, that our knowledge is a state of our being, and nothing more. The cause must remain unknown, because knowledge is effect, not cause.

An apple is presented to you: you see it, feel it, taste it, smell it, and are said to know it. What is this knowledge? Simply a consciousness of the various ways in which the apple affects you. You are blind, and cannot see it; there is one quality less which it possessed, i.e., one mode less in which it is possible for you to be affected. You are without the nerves of smell and taste: there are two other deficiencies in your knowledge of the apple. So that, by taking away your senses, we take away from the apple each of its qualities; in other words, we take away the means of your being affected. Your knowledge of the apple is reduced to nothing. In a similar way, by endowing you with more senses, we increase the qualities of the apple; we increase

your knowledge by enlarging your being. Thus are knowledge and being identical; knowledge is a state of being knowing.

"If," said Plotinus, "knowledge is the same as the thing known, the Finite, as Finite, never can know the Infinite, because it cannot be the Infinite. To attempt, therefore, to know the Infinite by Reason is futile; it can only be known in immediate presence, παρουσία. The faculty by which the mind divests itself of its personality is Ecstasy. In this Ecstasy the soul becomes loosened from a material prison, separated from individual consciousness, and becomes absorbed in the Infinite Intelligence from which it emanated. In this Ecstasy it contemplates real existence; it identifies itself with that which it contemplates."

And the means by which this ecstatic state is reached are described by Plotinus in language of the most beautiful character, which I do not scruple to quote: God our Father, pitying us, has made the mortal bonds which attach the soul to the body, and from which we suffer, fragile and delicate, and in his goodness he gives us certain intervals of respite. "Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ ἄλεσας πονουμένας ὀνῆτα αὐτῶν τα δεσμά ποιῶν περὶ αὐὰ πονοῦνται, δίδωσιν ἀναπαύλας ἐν χρόνοις" (Plotinus). Such philosophy has a real consolatory and moral influence as indicating the connection of the soul with the body, and has the same beautiful ring as the words of Bernard of Cluny.

"Patria luminis, inscia turbinis, inscia litis,
Cive replebitur, amplificabitur, Israelitis."

The conditions under which a real beatific vision may be seen are such as reduce the mere body to its lowest physical status. Who, at present, can define the conditions of ecstasy more exactly than did Plotinus?

And this is the application. We feel the grasp of a "spirit hand," but such sensation, true though it is of itself, is no proof of the existence of the "spirit" any more than it is of our own existence. All that it proves is that certain lines of force which originate from within us are met by other lines of force which originate from somewhere else. The reality of the object can be no more surely predicated than the reality of the subject. An appeal to fallible sensation, in itself ἄλογος, will bring us down to the level of too many scientific men in this miserable nineteenth century of fatuity. However, the application of the Nominalist doctrines of the Middle Ages will convince our intellect of the truth of what our senses have observed, but with this enormous subject I shall deal in a future paper.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

THE last fortnightly meeting of the National Society of Spiritualists was held on Monday, 19th Feb., at 38, Great Russell-street, London, Mr. Desmond G. Fitz-Gerald, M.S.Tel.E., in the chair.

ANCIENT THOUGHT AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

As the discussion was an adjourned one on "Ancient Thought and Modern Spiritualism," Mr. Fitz-Gerald said he would call on Mr. Stainton-Moses, who had been the chief speaker on the last occasion, to give a summary of his arguments.

Mr. Stainton-Moses, M.A., then said: I have no desire to maintain any other position than these:—(1) The ancients knew much respecting the occult phenomena of spirit, which we might study with advantage. (2) The method of the ancients is one which we might adopt with advantage, in combination with our own. (3) The blots in our own modern method might be advantageously remedied by study of what the ancients knew and practised. 1. The writings of the school of Neo-Platonists, of the Hermetic philosophers, of such men as Iamblichus and Cornelius Agrippa contain hints and suggestions which repay perusal. 2. The method of the ancients was esoteric, that of the moderns exoteric. I believe in a combination of the two. Popular Spiritualism is not scientific; it does very little in the way of scientific verification. Moreover, exoteric Spiritualism is, to a large extent, devoted to presumed communion with personal friends, or to the gratification of curiosity, or the mere evolution of marvels. It is only very lately that scientific research has dealt with the phenomena of Spiritualism, and the great danger is that scientists trust to the methods found useful in physical science, but which are worthless in dealing with spirit. A familiar instance is the tying of a medium with ropes in a dark closet for the purpose of securing him while form manifestations are in process. Such method is illusory, for the instantaneous release of a medium from bonds is matter of common knowledge. The attention of experimenters should be devoted to the abolition of cabinets, and such tests as are suitable only to the researches of the physicist. Such experiments may well form a subsidiary branch of investigation. The truly esoteric science of Spiritualism is very rare, and not more

rare than valuable. To it we must look for the origination of knowledge which may be developed exoterically. It flourished far more with the ancients; in fact, exoteric Spiritualism was unknown among them. 3. Plain blots which might be remedied by knowledge such as the ancients possessed. (a) We proceed too much on the lines of the physicist; our tests are crude and often illusory; we know too little of the Protean power of spirit. Here the ancients were far ahead of us, and can teach us much. (b) We have not introduced any certainty into the conditions—a necessary pre-requisite for true scientific experiment. This is largely owing to the fact that our circles are constructed on no principle, and are not kept free from disturbance and change. The principle of the lodge remedied this. (c) We have not even mastered the elementary truths which the ancients knew and acted on, e.g., the isolation of mediums. (d) We have been so occupied with wonder hunting that we have hardly tabulated the phenomena or propounded one theory to account for the production of the simplest of them. Raps are certainly not made in all cases by a hand. (e) We have never faced the question, What is the intelligence? This is the great blot, the most frequent source of error, and here we might learn with advantage from the ancients. There is the strongest disinclination among Spiritualists to admit the possibility of the truth of occultism. In this respect they are as hard to convince as is the outer world of Spiritualism. Spiritualists start with a fallacy, viz., that all phenomena are caused by the action of departed human spirits; they have not looked into the powers of the incarnate human spirit; they do not know the extent to which spirit acts, how far it reaches, what it underlies. The truth is neither with Occultist nor Spiritualist exclusively. Spiritualist says—All is done by human spirits; Occultist—All, or nearly all, by elementaries. The truth is, spirit acts in the widest sense. For these reasons, to exclude others which are obvious or comparatively unimportant, I desiderate a study of ancient writers, and an adaptation of ancient knowledge and ancient experimental method to the more exact processes of modern thought. The ancients knew nothing of our exact scientific method of investigation. We know almost nothing of their research, which was in many respects far superior to ours. In the union of the two methods, the purging away of ancient error, and of modern fallacy, and the widening and deepening of our spiritual perceptions while we retain all the exactness of our scientific method of experiment, lies the *via media* we require.

MODERN SCIENCE versus ANCIENT PHILOSOPHIES.

The Chairman: Dr. Blake, in his paper on "Ancient Thought and Modern Spiritualism," said that "modern Spiritualists may be ranged between the two standpoints of the Epicurean and the Socratic philosophies." By this he would be understood to mean that the physical phenomena of Spiritualism must be ascribed either to "forces" emanating from the body of the mediums, or to the action of an independent agent, viz., a spirit. And he concluded his very suggestive remarks by the statements that "The nineteenth century is not that which has observed the genesis of new, nor the completion of old, methods of thought," and that "If our speculations have any value they must be pursued in relation to the thoughts of the great men who have preceded us in the world's life history, and if not they should be left to the universal solvency of time, undisgraced by the approbation of modern materialists." In regard to the first point, if we were confined to the two systems of philosophy mentioned, I should opine, with Mrs. Hallock, that it is possible to be both a Socratean and an Epicurean, or, rather, that Spiritualists, having to account on the one hand for the mechanical energy and, on the other, for the intelligence involved in the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, are bound, in defiance of the ancient schools of thought, to avail themselves of the privilege of eclecticism, and thus to follow in the wake of Bacon, Descartes, Hegel, and Victor Cousin. But I do not intend to insist upon this point, for, in regard to the statements last quoted, I will venture to take up the gauntlet thrown down by Dr. Blake to the modern inductive or scientific method of thought, and to uphold the major proposition that—In view of the great discoveries of modern science, the perfection of its methods, and the previously unknown degree of accuracy in its results, a new science, such as Spiritualism or Spiritual Psychology, should be pursued, in accordance with the lines of thought which have proved so fertile in the domain of physics, rather than in relation to the views and notions of any ancient authorities. In taking up this position, I do not intend to fall into the error of supposing that because modern science has made such great progress in one direction it possesses any present competence, any right to judge *ex cathedra*, in regard to facts which it has not yet investigated—in the vast and almost unexplored fields of human inquiry, of which the existence at least has been realised by all large-minded thinkers of old as well as of modern times. As I have said elsewhere, "Grand though it be, modern science is not even semi-science—it is *tertia pars scientia*—the smallest third of the science to which we may look forward." But since all truths are related, I hope to be able to show that, in the discovery of great physical truths, modern science may have laid a secure basis of universally-applicable principle, upon which, when we have postulated the fact of the tripartite nature of man, we may raise the edifice of Spiritual Psychology. This much, indirectly and inadvertently, modern science may have done for Spiritualism: history will record as a disgrace, from which a few only of its votaries, such as Crookes and Varley, can be exempted, that, in a new region of experimental fact, it has done no more. Still, modern science, though it has generally tabooed all investigation in this direction, has done something even for Spiritualism. One school at least of those who have carefully examined into this matter are in truth the representatives of modern science, and will undoubtedly be claimed and absorbed by it when the fact is perceived that they have acted in the true scientific spirit, whilst most of the accepted leaders of science have, not for the first time, been false to their own accepted axioms and to the teachings forced upon them by every great discovery

that they at first ignored. No doubt our present knowledge of Spiritualism is very imperfect; but it seems to me that, in a few years, we have attained more than was ever mastered by the ancients in the course of centuries. This, I think, would be seen if our results and theirs were tabulated together. And the character of our results, generally, the accuracy with which they can be defined and stated, would at least exhibit a decided superiority. Without knowing it, sometimes, we owe much to the "mental atmosphere" which science has created around us. I know several investigators whose habits of mind are essentially scientific, and who yet take every opportunity of depreciating or ignoring the results of scientific method. I have admitted that the knowledge which now constitutes modern science is limited in breadth and scope—that real science is, in fact, in its infancy. Its distinguishing characteristic, I hold, is its *accuracy*. It has been stated that "each new theory of science is rejected by the next generation, until the conflict of beliefs has itself become one of the most marked phenomena of our age." But at the same time it is admitted that modern science deals very little in theories; its theories, since the time of Newton, have mostly been built up of solid verifiable facts connected here and there by links of hypothesis which can be loosened, shifted, or strengthened as our appreciation of the facts grows more perfect. As a matter of fact, these links are every day being extended, but do not very often require to be shifted or altered. Modern science is not very old, and I am not very young, yet the theory I learned in my boyhood will generally serve me now, and in most cases bids fair to hold good to the end of time. True, the chemical formula for water used to be HO, it is now H₂O; but then in the latter case O signified 16 parts by weight of oxygen to two parts of hydrogen, whilst in the former case O represents eight parts of oxygen to one of hydrogen. Here is an example of a theory in exact science that was rejected by the next generation. The formula HIO is still correct according to the equivalent notation; though the expression H₂O is to be preferred, since it almost certainly expresses the relative weight of the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen, as well as their equivalent weights. Applied to the hypotheses of the ancient poets and philosophers (they really had no theories properly so-called), the statement I have quoted would be a tolerably correct expression of fact. Homer and Hesiod represented the earth as a disc, surrounded on all sides by a winding river they called Ocean; above this the sky was arched like a vast dome, and was supported by two massive pillars, resting on the shoulders of the god Atlas. In this dome, or firmament, the stars were fixed (probably by means of some adhesive material!). They were extinguished at sunrise and rekindled at sunset. Not very dissimilar was the idea entertained by Moses, who held, however, that there was water above the firmament, as well as below the earth; the former being fitted with windows, and the latter with fountains, through which the water could be admitted *à discrétion*. Thales, the chief of the Ionian school of philosophy, held that the earth floated on a "humid element," and, six centuries later, Seneca reproduced the hypothesis of the Greek philosopher. Diodorus countenanced the notion of the Chaldeans that the earth was a hollow vessel, like the half of an egg-shell with its concave side uppermost; and Heraclitus, of Ephesus, introduced this doctrine into Greece. Anaximander, a great authority in the Ionian school, represented the earth as a cylinder, of which the upper face alone was inhabited. This hypothesis was supported by details and measurements, the cylinder being one-third of its diameter in height, and floating freely in the midst of the celestial vault. This was perhaps the reason why it was adopted by the "good old Greek philosophers," Leucippus and Democritus—to whose "Atomic School" we Spiritualists have the option of belonging—as well as by Heraclitus and Anaxagoras. Anaximenes and Zenophanes, without pronouncing dogmatically on the form of the earth, represented it as resting—the one upon compressed air, the other upon roots which were prolonged *ad infinitum*. At a later period Plato gave to the earth the form of a cube. Plutarch, with a cutting sarcasm which has frequently been similarly employed against Spiritualism, says that "Philosophers, rather than renounce a favourite hypothesis, would make human beings crawl on the lower face of the earth like worms or lizards." Lactantius, a Christian apologist of the third century, says, in his work *De Falsâ Sapientiâ*, "Can there be anything more absurd than a belief in the existence of Antipodes, of inhabitants with their feet opposite to our feet, of people who walk with their feet in the air, and their heads on the ground? that there is a part of the world where everything is inverted, where trees throw out their branches from top to bottom, while it rains and hails and snows from bottom to top?" And Saint Augustine declared such a belief incompatible with the dogmas of the faith; for to admit the existence of inhabited lands on the opposite hemisphere, would be to admit the existence of peoples not descended from Adam, since it would have been impossible for him to traverse the ocean lying between Asia and the Antipodes. To this Columbus replied by discovering the New World. The main characteristic of the knowledge possessed by the ancients appears to me to be its *inaccuracy*, its sublime independence even of readily observable facts, the blending together of fact and fancy, or the gratuitous substitution of fancy for fact. Some few amongst them, I freely admit, arrived at a knowledge of the great truths which are now in some degree susceptible of direct demonstration, and which appear to have been shadowed forth with more or less distinctness to every earnest spirit who has learned to commune with Nature, and to aspire to Nature's God. They cultivated the intuitions which are the inheritance of all such spirits; they laid themselves open to spiritual influences, and rose above the narrow dogmas, finite philosophies and vulgar creeds of their time to gaze with the poet's eye down the dim yet glorious vistas of infinite possibilities. Of Socrates I would speak with uncovered head, and with all the respect due to the foremost leaders of mankind in the paths of truth, justice, goodness, duty, loved for their own sake, and for the sake of our brother man. Each one of us has from him a precious legacy—the precept "That men should think for themselves, and accept nothing as true

that contradicts the moral and intellectual principles of their being." He was a man who regarded the great object of philosophy to be "the attainment of correct ideas respecting man's moral and religious obligations, and the perfection of his nature as a rational being." And he was a man who recognised what Carlyle has termed the "eternal duty of silence" in relation to things about which we have no true knowledge—a man who could say the hard word *nescio*, whilst guarding himself and others from the "double ignorance" that mistakes itself, and is so often mistaken, for learning or wisdom. To him, to Plato, and to some others amongst the ancients, the existence of an immortal and immaterial principle constituting the *man*, as distinguished from his temporary integuments, was as much a fact as though it were susceptible of mathematical demonstration. But these few are the exceptions, and even these were profoundly ignorant of every unerring law, of any accurate fact, in relation to the immensities which were unveiled to them. Their mistake, I think, was a contempt for details, for those minor secrets of nature which are to be wrested from her only by experiment, continued with patient, humble and laborious endeavour. The great majority of the ancient philosophical writers, so far as I know them, appear to me as mere empirics, dealing in learned emptiness, and trading, to an almost incredible extent, upon the credulity, ignorance, and what Dr. Carpenter would term the "gullibility" of mankind. Dr. Blake has defended Aristotle from the charge of being ignorant of the fact that the mole has eyes. I will not insist upon this point; but I have not quite done with the mole. I will give you some information respecting it, on the learned authority of Pliny. He says, in his *Natural History*—"Since this animal has been doomed to a perpetual blindness, and lives interred beneath the surface of the earth, like the dead, he possesses, by way of compensation, some extraordinary qualities. His subterranean existence renders him of all animals the most capable of religion (*nullum religionis capacius animal*). To acquire the gift of second sight, you must eat the heart of a mole while still beating, and freshly plucked from the animal's body. (Was any more atrocious suggestion ever made by the lowest of obsessing spirits?) To cure tooth-ache suspend to your neck the tooth of a live mole. (Another horrible suggestion in the way of dentistry.) Lymphatic people will gain in strength if sprinkled with a mole's blood. The ashes of a mole are a sovereign remedy for scrofula; some recommend for this disease the animal's liver, some the right foot (the left would not be equally efficacious!), and others the head. The earth of mole-hills, fashioned into pastilles, and preserved in a tin box, is an excellent cure for all kinds of tumours, and especially for abscesses on the neck." In all this, I would ask, is there one single vestige of truth? Is there not, rather, evidence that such an authority could only by accident state any truth? And would any one of such statements be possible on the part of any modern authority in philosophy or science?

Dr. Carter Blake then read the second portion of his paper, which is printed upon another page.

Mr. A. H. Louis said that he doubted whether the line of physical science is that on which spiritual manifestations can be studied. He was of opinion that the suggestions made by Mr. Moses were sound, and that there should be a distinction of method, as there is a distinction of object. The absolute transcendence of conditions marked the attitude of Spiritualism in relation to physical science. With regard to the present condition of science, he thought that investigators into transcendent phenomena had so much to do in protecting themselves from the foolishness of their contemporaries, as to have no energy left to criticise that of ancient thinkers. Mr. Fitz-Gerald had said that modern science was wholly on the ground of fact, but Mr. Louis feared he had come to a different conclusion. Scientific men were to his mind in the greater majority on the ground of hypothesis, and persistently set aside all personal experience not in conformity with their own. Spiritualistic inquiry should therefore be pursued in a view of indifference to their dicta. As to the method of inquiry, he thought a distinct line of demarcation should be drawn, and that we should proceed on esoteric methods. Organic phenomena did not belong to the region of the ponderable, fixed, and mechanical; unlike physics, modern spiritualistic phenomena were organic, moral, and not producible to order; therefore the standard of the unalterable could not be applied to them. Spiritualism could not be entered on the ground of formula and controversy, and its integrity, and health, and future progress depended entirely on the right appreciation of these truths.

Dr. Carter Blake remarked that, even granted that the ancients had often committed verbal errors in trifling matters of fact, such were on the whole not greater than the constant tendency to originate error by the moderns. He would not follow Mr. Fitz-Gerald through physics or chemistry, but would prefer to select examples from zoology, anthropology, geology, and anatomy. Some years ago there was a lecture delivered on the "Ethnology of the British People." The lecturer founded an argument on an alleged fact that the *Siluri* were a race of Britons who, under Caractacus, inhabited South Wales. The statement might have been considered valueless by those who had heard of the *Silures*; and as Welshmen and sturgeons were not the same, and as the singular of *Siluri* might have been *Silurus*, he was thankful that the author of this extraordinary statement had declared that he felt no interest in Spiritualism. The same author, in a paper on *Belemnorrhoeus*, spoke of the vomer as an outside bone of the skull. Such statements were not mere incautious slips, such as any author might have easily made without discredit, but were employed as the groundwork on which a superstructure of argument was based—a theory brought forward; and the poor scholar who ventured to question the infallibility of the modern trader on the ignorance, or, as Dr. Carpenter called it, the "gullibility," of the masses, had to bow in silent acquiescence. He might multiply similar instances by the score, but merely wished to show that the modern scientist, if his labours were critically tested, occasionally sunk below the intellectual level of the Helot. That such men should feel no interest in Spiritualism was



much to be thankful for. If they were to feel an interest, they would probably degrade it. Yet their existence, unnecessary though it might appear, was not without giving us a practical lesson. An all-wise Providence had created them for some purpose within His knowledge; and had also endowed us with devotional feelings of thanksgiving that we were not created like them.

The proceedings then closed.

MR. AND MRS. C. F. VARLEY are travelling in Italy.

MR. GERALD MASSEY is now in London, busy on his forthcoming book *The Origin of Myths*, on which he is expending an amount of honest work unprecedented in these days of superficial book-making.

THE next fortnightly meeting of the National Association of Spiritualists will be held on Monday next, when Mr. Fitz-Gerald will read a paper on "Physical Science and Spiritual Psychology."

THE reprinting of the standard book on Mesmerism by the late Professor Gregory, issued under the auspices of the Duke of Argyll, is now going on with rapidity, and copies will be obtainable in a few weeks' time.

DR. SLADE is still in Holland, giving splendid test *séances* to critical observers. Mr. Martheze has just received a letter from M. Bourbon, stating that utter disbelievers are now commonly getting messages on their own slates, without Dr. Slade touching the slates at all.

MODERN POETRY.—A series of selections of "Modern Poetry," with critical comments, will shortly be read by the Rev. C. Maurice Davies, D.D., at the residence of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, 21, Green-street, Grosvenor-square, London, commencing at 9.30 p.m. The following is the programme:—April 11th: *Vers de Société*; April 18th: Humour: English and American; April 25th: Pathetic and Devotional Poetry; Vocal Illustrations by Miss K. Poyntz, and Mr. Augustus H. Tamplin (harmonium). Admission by ticket.

THE effect of shutting out from public *séances* disbelievers who break necessary conditions—a plan we have always advocated on scientific grounds—has wonderfully increased the power and precision of the manifestations, which are now worth observing, even by the experienced. In private life plenty of new circles have been formed; members of the nobility, barristers, and various kinds and conditions of people are obtaining results, some of which have frightened even those through whose mediumship they have been evolved.

MRS. S. C. HALL.—The *Court Journal* tells us that "Her Majesty has sent a portrait of herself, with an autograph letter, to Mrs. S. C. Hall, who is in feeble health." The gift was not only a portrait of Her Majesty, as the following letter will show:—"The Queen has the greatest pleasure in presenting to Mrs. S. C. Hall a portrait of herself, and also portraits of herself and the Prince." We venture to characterise this as "true royalty;" it is an act that does honour to the donor, as well as to the recipient. A mere petty potentate would not venture so far to set aside conventionality. A really great sovereign has no consciousness of stooping in thus rewarding an honoured subject for a life's work, devoted to man's good and God's glory. That work is matter of history. We have but to take down from our shelves the volume of the *Cyclopædia* containing Mrs. Hall's name, to see the long list of her literary triumphs. Her *Sketches of Irish Character*, and *Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, are English classics. Her numerous novels may be described, as a terse English writer characterised those of a distinguished French contemporary, saying that they "left a pleasant taste in the mouth." They have been translated into foreign languages, an honour not accorded to ephemeral fiction. Her pen has never been idle in the cause of charity. She is an accomplished dramatic writer. In a word, Her Majesty, in paying this graceful tribute to Mrs. S. C. Hall, has shown that nice discrimination of literary taste and talent which always characterised her and her husband, the late lamented Prince Consort.—*Kensington News*.

SPIRITUALISM IN NEWCASTLE.—A special meeting of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Society of Spiritualists was held at their rooms, Weir's-court, on Thursday evening, February 22nd, called on the requisition of sixteen of the members. Mr. Mould was voted into the chair, and Mr. Kersey stated the object of the assemblage to be the consideration of the relationship existing between the medium, Miss Fairlamb, and the society.—Mr. Marchant objected to Mr. Armstrong, the president, discontinuing the Thursday evening *séances* on his own authority, and desired to know whether Miss Fairlamb was the society's medium or not; he thought when he joined the society that he was entitled to attend two *séances* per week, and he strongly objected to the present method of management.—Mr. Armstrong then detailed the terms of the agreement of Miss Fairlamb with the society, signed by him as president, and stated that the agreement ended at any time the society did not pay her, and, as the members were so few in number, and the *séances* not well attended, those circumstances justified the position he had taken.—Considerable discussion then took place.—Mr. Kersey read a letter from Miss Fairlamb offering fresh terms to the society.—Mr. Compton considered that the members had fallen off on account of the bad management at the *séances*. (Cries of "No, no.") Another thing he had to complain of was that the officers of the society did as they liked, and were not responsible to the members; he thought there ought at least to be a quarterly meeting.—Mr. Rhodes remarked that the society at present depended for existence upon one medium; when Miss Wood left the members dwindled away, and if Miss Fairlamb now left what was to hold them together? They must thoroughly reorganise the society on a broader basis, so that it should not depend for existence upon any one medium.—The meeting was adjourned for a week.

THE LITERATURE OF SPIRITUALISM.

EXPERIENCED Spiritualists frequently remark that all attempts to injure Spiritualism result in its advancement, and that idea was never more fully verified than in the results of the recent persecution of mediums. Spiritualism being true, and founded upon facts which anybody may verify in his own home, anything which calls attention to the subject, of course results in benefit to the movement. During the last few months, about 30,000 large leaflets, instructing the readers how to form circles in their own homes, and containing other useful information about Spiritualism, have been circulated in this country, chiefly in the provinces. Within the last few weeks, about 5,000 copies of *The Spiritualist* have been posted to residents in the South Kensington district, and other parts of the south and south-west of London; this has been done partly by the National Association of Spiritualists, partly by Mr. Charles Blackburn, and partly by Mr. W. H. Harrison. The attacks upon mediums caused the circulation of *The Spiritualist* to rise at an unusual rate last autumn, and during every London "season" it always rises to a considerable extent, since the journal tends to meet the requirements of those who at that time take up their residence in the metropolis. The circulation is assuming a decidedly international character, the demand for *The Spiritualist* in foreign countries being largely on the increase.

SEANCES AT MRS. MAKDOUGALL GREGORY'S.

INTERESTING private *séances*, with Mr. Eglinton as medium, are held weekly at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory's, 21, Green-street, Grosvenor-square. Last Monday night some materialisation, or transformation, manifestations were witnessed; they were stronger than on previous occasions, but not yet sufficiently advanced to afford a foundation for public description. Those who saw a form under test conditions at Mrs. Gregory's, as published by us last week, were Mrs. Davies and Mr. W. H. Harrison, who were so placed as to have a full view of it; also Dr. Davies, who was so seated that he could see the top of it, as it rose above the level of the edge of the table; and Mrs. Wiseman, who saw a portion of it by turning her head, the form being a foot or so behind her left arm.

Poetry.

YE LANKESTERIAN SYSTEM.

A SPIRITUELLE SONGE.

THERE was a time, not long ago,
When here in England merry,
Within domestic castles, folks
Were free, and easy—very.

But, one by one, each privilege
We've gradually missed 'em,
Since England has been subject to
A "Lankesterian" system.

The Board School officer at first
Produced a mild revulsion;
But all will soon be forced to act
St. Thomas, on "compulsion."

First, Father Tooth experiences
Penance's care parental,
Since in his genuflections he
Became too transcen—dental.

Poor Slade is forced to flee, because
A young "Professor" cranky,
Envied the guineas fairly earned
By a rival doctor Yankee.

For, oh! that apple-faced one feels
A consciousness distressful;
In L. S. D. his family tree
Has not been quite successful.

And Dr. Monck finds English law
Uncomfortably plastic,—
It lands him oakum-picking in
A Wakefield cell monastic.

While every medium, like some chap
Who prigs what isn't his'n,
Policeman X will soon make preach
Unto "the spirits" in prison.

We all shall be "shut up"—although
In England it seems funny—
If Lankester and his mamma
Think we make too much money.

The prospect, every one must own,
Particularly nice is,
For lazy folks who pocket swag
By "craftiest devices."

The bishops tremble in their shoes,
And dread lest they may rue it,
Netting their thousands as they do
To find how "not to do it."

While Government officials fear
To quit their land of plenty,
If once it's ruled folks shan't be paid
For *dolce far niente*.

Young Angelina, never more
 Urged by your ma, miss, try
 To book your heir. Such airy tricks
 Amount to "palmistry."
 Or if this term won't cover quite
 The way you trap your prizes,
 Some other wise "Professor" has
 No end of "otherwises."
 Policeman X is everywhere
 To see that folks don't work ill;
 In fact, there's nothing nowadays
 Like a "domestic circle."
 Espionage is all the rage,
 So since it strikes me—heigho!
 We're drifting back perceptibly
 To the days of Galileo,
 I'll seek a land where no régime
 Like that at home one sees, is:
 But every one, with Uncle Sam,
 Can do as he "darn pleasees."

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.]

THE OBSOLETE ACT OF GEORGE THE SECOND.

SIR,—Some apprehension has been expressed that the old Act of 9th Geo. II., cap. 5, against the pretence "to exercise or use any kind of witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration," may be put in force when evidence is not forthcoming upon which to convict a medium of fraud. If the enemy is prepared to go this length—to take up the position that Spiritualism is not to be proved, but to be assumed to be false in the court of law—he would be a rash lawyer who, after the decision in a Vagrancy Act, would pronounce with confidence that we are in no danger from the older and more arbitrary statute. If the real value of mediumship—or, at least, what mediumship professes to be—was understood by or could be explained to a legal tribunal, it would be seen that there is no pretence of a power which can be voluntarily exercised, such as witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, and conjuration appear to imply. But we must remember that the conviction of Lawrence was owing to this very distinction having been overlooked. In that case, the false pretence laid in the indictment was that the prisoner "had power to communicate with the spirits of deceased or other persons." (!) the only evidence of any pretence being the fact of manifestations occurring, and some talk about spirits and "genuine manifestations." In any ordinary case such a variance would have been held fatal, and an acquittal for want of evidence of the pretence laid would have been directed; so we cannot be sure that evidence of spirit manifestations professedly occurring would not be held sufficient evidence of pretence by the medium that he had evoked them; nor, probably, would any formal disclaimers avail. And, supposing the Act to apply, there would be little difficulty in putting it in operation. As it would be unnecessary to prove that the manifestations were not genuine, any believer could be made to give evidence that would convict the medium, and thus precautions against the admission of strangers would cease to be a protection. The danger is real, but I think the enemy will be well advised to keep this engine of persecution in reserve. In the present temper of the public, they can secure a conviction for false pretences or under the Vagrant Act upon very slight evidence of trickery, thus gaining the benefit of a presumption which, if nakedly invoked in criminal proceedings, might provoke a reaction. But the inevitable growth of the movement will probably exasperate them beyond the bounds of prudence. In the meantime, we have only to wait patiently. The day of their confusion will surely arrive. C. C. MASSER.

Temple.

UNION VERSUS DISINTEGRATION.

SIR,—Among several interesting letters which I have received since our Conference, is a stirring epistle from "a friend;" and, as he treats of a subject of some general importance, but has omitted to give his address, I venture to claim the privilege of a small space in your columns for a reply.

Possessing abundance of lofty sentiment and right feeling, it is a pity that the views of our friend cannot be gratified in this age. The time is yet far distant when things may be obtained for the asking; but in this dull nineteenth century his warm expressions of astonishment that the British National Association of Spiritualists does not open its doors to all comers, without payment, is surely more poetical than practical. If no better objection could be urged, the simple fact that there would soon be no space to accommodate the multitude under the roof of the actual premises of the Association should suffice. We do not exactly live under circumstances and conditions where we may all sit down on the grass, order loaves and fishes, and be filled. The economical principles of our friend, who desires to have something for nothing, are manifestly unsound.

The same misapprehension prevails as to the real objects and modes of working of the Association. A few words of explanation may help to enlighten those who think us "too exclusive," confining our privileges to a favoured few, and exacting terms beyond the means of the great mass of Spiritualists. Our main objects, as set forth in our prospectus and rules, are—to unite Spiritualists of every variety of opinion in an organised body for their mutual aid and benefit; to aid students and inquirers in their researches into Spiritual phenomena; and to take such action as may be considered conducive to the promotion of Spiritualism, and to the protection of Spiritualists. Further, it is among our

objects to establish a central place for public meetings; to open lecture rooms, libraries, reading rooms, and *séance* rooms and suitable offices; to collect statistical facts concerning Spiritualism; to keep a register of mediums; and to afford facilities to foreign investigators visiting this country. Now, it is clear that these objects cannot be carried out without material support; and it is fair that those who contribute to the funds of the Association for carrying out these objects should know how their money is expended, and should have some voice in the management. This is the meaning of "membership"—that much-misunderstood term. And, as money tests are always to be deprecated, the subscriber of 5s. a year has equal rights with the subscriber of £50 a year—that is to say, he or she is eligible for every office, from that of the president downwards; and each has only one vote at the general meeting. Generally speaking, members subscribe as they are able, or as they are disposed: some give one guinea, some two guineas, others five, five-and-twenty, or fifty pounds annually. The privileges of the library—which entail outlay of funds on our part—are the only ones not extended to subscribers of less than half-a-guinea a year. Many of our meetings are open to all Spiritualists, whether members or not, and all are cordially welcomed whenever they attend. For my own part, I know of no society so general in its invitation, and so liberal as regards the privileges it confers; the rich being content to give their support for the benefit of the less wealthy. And, as regards opinions, the utmost freedom prevails. No one is asked to subscribe to any doctrine, or belief, or theory: opinions are freely exchanged and discussed, and no one set of views predominates over any other.

It is, perhaps, not sufficiently well known that, besides members, we have what I may call a second order, who are simply subscribers. These are committed to no share in the work of the Association, and can join for a few months at a time. Their names are not made public, and they are not suspected of being Spiritualists. Their privileges are the use of the library, and attendance at certain *séances*. The subscription is one guinea a year, payable quarterly if desired. This arrangement is much used by inquirers and persons visiting London or passing through the country from abroad, and is found to work admirably. In conclusion, let me make it plain that all Spiritualists are welcome at Great Russell-street, whether subscribers or not; but I would recall to their sense of justice that those who support us with their heart and purse, have a natural right to the privileges which they help to procure; and that any charge of exclusiveness on this ground is irrational. If any have a right to complain, it is those who have prepared the feast, and not those who refuse to partake of it. If the invitation which we extend to all is not yet so widely responded to as we should wish, we can only hope that in time, when those who have borne the heat and burden of the day have perhaps passed from earth to a higher sphere of usefulness, the Association they have striven to uphold will be as they intended it, the ingathering of all who desire the best interests of this great Spiritualist movement; and that it will be regarded as the stronghold of purity, freedom, truth, and spirituality.

ALEXANDER CALDER, *President of the British National Association of Spiritualists.*

INSTANTANEOUS SPIRIT POETRY.

SIR,—I have the pleasure to send you a copy of the lines you desired to have the other evening. It may be as well to add that they were written off with almost incredible rapidity, and not only was the impromptu part astounding, but a circumstance quite as curious was that Miss Showers was talking during the time her hand was used for the communication, and begging that it might be more slowly and legibly written, in order that she might be able to decipher it afterwards. I had hurriedly gathered up three or four sheets of note paper from the adjoining table, and they were lying scattered before my daughter. The pencil dashed out a few words on one piece, then on another; back again; then across, without any order or arrangement whatever, and the specimen piece I enclose (which is the only bit I have, the rest having been distributed among my friends) will enable you to form an idea how utterly illegible the writing was. These rhythmical answers are given *instantaneously*, without the slightest deliberation or premeditation, and are always full and satisfactory replies to the questions asked. I am obliged to transcribe them as quickly as possible *before* the spirit pronounces the *séance* closed; after he bids us adieu the writing becomes unintelligible to my daughter, and through omissions on my part the results of many interesting sittings have been lost to us. Any person who wishes to follow the manifestations given to us by John King would do well to get numbers of *The Spiritualist* for the end of December, 1874, and for January, 1875, in which his earliest communications are recorded. The spirits are working according to a definite plan, and the most insignificant of the manifestations will turn out to be of far more consequence than some may now imagine.

On the evening of the 28th ult., I proposed that we should sit for "John King," and my daughter, who was the only other person present, readily acceded to my request. It is not my purpose to record all the versified replies we got, as they related more particularly to matters connected with myself, but I may mention that we commenced with a brief prayer, and then got the following couplet almost directly:—

Command me and I will obey,
 'Tis right that you for me should pray.

I had not prepared any questions, and hardly knew what I had better ask; at last on inquiring why we never got communications from our own departed friends, it was answered:—

Their natures differ from those of mortals,
 And it hurts them to enter the earthly portals.

Did you profess the Christian faith when on earth?

There was much in the faith that did me appal,
Still I clung to that faith as a vine to the wall.

Has Peter lived on earth?

Incredible as it seems to you,
Peter has lived and suffered too.

And you, have you suffered?

Yes, I have bent in anguish
O'er a well-loved form—then clay—
And watched in hopeless misery
The dawning light of day,
Which seemed to mock me as I knelt
Alone with death and God,
Alone with all I loved, which soon
Must mingle with the sod.
And then my whole soul burning
With that sorrow so intense,
It made me long for anything
To end the dread suspense,
Despairingly I turned to Him;
He heard my broken prayer,
And stealing o'er my stricken soul
The answer came, "She's there!"
And there, beyond the wear and tear,
Of this dark world below—
Beyond the sensuality,
The weariness, the woe—
I found her whom I mourned as lost,
In many a day long past:
Our hands are linked in Spirit-land,
For ever linked, at last.

I was so powerfully affected by this wonderfully given communication that I forgot to ask whether it referred to the spirit who wrote with John King and signed herself "Ada Evangeline" in the verses that were published in *The Spiritualist* three years ago, but I suppose it to be the same, and have no doubt we shall hear more yet. What are we to say of those who are striving so earnestly to keep the knowledge of this faith, which enables us to look confidently beyond time and death, from the lonely and the miserable? I obtained this reply on the evening of the 28th January, about eight o'clock. Twelve hours afterwards a lady threw herself out of her window in Berkeley-square, and it transpired at the inquest that she had been driven to suicide by grief at the deaths of her husband and daughter.

FREDERICA SHOWERS.

THE LEGAL LIABILITIES OF MEDIUMS.—TRUSTWORTHY ADVICE.

SIR,—The spirit of persecution is not laid, and if any medium brings himself within the grasp of the authorities he will receive neither justice nor mercy.

I would, therefore, recommend mediums to adopt the most stringent measures for self-protection.

In all cases a ticket of admission should be given to each of the persons present. The face of this ticket should contain the following printed notice:—

NOTICE.

This ticket admits the bearer to a *seance* with Mr. — to witness such occurrences as may transpire in his presence. But it is expressly declared that the causes or sources of such occurrences are in no way asserted. The visitor must form his own judgment upon them. The production of phenomena of any kind is not guaranteed.

As an additional protection a book should be provided, having printed upon it at the head of each page the following declaration, or to the like effect; and every person permitted to be present should be required to sign it before the *seance* begins:—

We, the undersigned, hereby accept the terms of our admission to the *seance* of Mr. —, as being that no occurrences are guaranteed, and that the causes or sources of anything that may be witnessed are not in any way affirmed to us by him, and that we are required to form our own judgments as to the origin and nature of whatever may be presented to us. Dated this day of

These precautions would preclude the possibility of prosecution. The signing of the "Attendance Book" would exclude foes in disguise. No honest inquirer could object to sign such a declaration, and they who do so are better absent.

Such precautions might diminish the attendances at public *seances*, but this would be an advantage, and, if receipts be also diminished, the loss might be compensated by a higher fee for admission.

I would also recommend that these books and tickets should be provided and sold at a small charge, with blanks for the name of the medium, to be filled up when used.

I can add my professional opinion that absolute security would thus be provided.

It should be adopted by all *paid mediums*, public or private.

A LAWYER.

Temple, Feb. 8th.

THE APPARITIONS OF PERSONS LIVING IN THE BODY.

SIR,—The reading of Dr. Wyld's narrative respecting the appearance in the kitchen of the double of the daughter of the master of the house, whilst the same lady was at the very moment on her way home, brought to somewhat painful remembrance a similar vision I had myself.

I was sitting last summer, on a nice and clear day, in my mother's house. At about six o'clock in the afternoon my mother turned to look through the window, when she exclaimed, "Here is Isaac," meaning my youngest brother. I turned round, and, recognising my brother, said, "So it is." We sat down, and naturally expected him to enter the room in which we were, but nobody came. My mother looked into the yard, and into the neighbour's house, but could not find him. After half-an-hour's time we saw my brother come from the same direction, but this time he entered the room and saluted us. He looked careworn

and ill, and took to his bed for weeks, suffering from gastric fever. He recovered.

When my mother first saw his apparition she believed he would die. My mother is an anti-Spiritualist. She remarked, after seeing my brother's double, "If that is your Spiritualism, don't let's have any of it here." We were all very glad when my brother recovered.

My husband once saw an apparition—a double. He saw a shortish woman, about fifty years of age, dressed in black, with a healthy complexion, and carrying a teapot in her left hand. A day or two afterwards the very woman came with a teapot, asking me to let my husband mend it. Some people may say it was a dream, but it was not, because my husband gave me the description of the woman whilst he saw her with his eyes open.

(MRS.) A. WALTER.

Ormond-street, Birmingham, Feb. 26th.

MRS. VEAL.

SIR,—The author of the work, entitled *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal, the next day after her death, to one Mrs. Bargrave, at Canterbury, the 8th of September, 1705*, 8vo. 1705, and which was afterwards subjoined to the subsequent editions of *Drelincourt on Death* (I refer more especially to the editions of 1719, 1720, 1732, 1751, 1756, and 1810, which are before me), was Daniel Defoe, the accurate and veracious biographer of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, *The Devil*, and other persons *ejusdem generis*. The circumstances under which Defoe invented the story, with a view to effect a sale of the copies of *Drelincourt on Death*, which had for a long time been lumbering the publisher's shelves, were well detailed in the *Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott*, 8vo, Edin. 1841, Cadell's edition, p. 171, to which I must commend your readers for detailed proofs of the concoction of a joke which bore solid pecuniary fruit. The covert advertisement by Mrs. Veal, after death, of Drelincourt's book on Death as "the best book on the subject ever written," should give us a hint in the present days of advertising. To use the words of Mr. John Forster—*Daniel Defoe*, 8vo, London, 1855—"The book has been popular ever since. More than fifty editions have not exhausted its popularity. Mrs. Veal's ghost is still believed by thousands; and the hundreds of thousands who have bought the silly treatise of Drelincourt (for hawking booksellers have made their fortunes by traversing the country with it in sixpenny numbers), have borne unconscious testimony to the genius of Defoe."—(p. 105.)

I may also refer to Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature*, 8vo, London, 1834, vol. ii., page 562, for further evidence.

C. CARTER BLAKE.

SIR,—I have been informed that Defoe is said to have invented the story of Mrs. Veal as a joke. If the personages mentioned in the story were real, and living in Kent, how was it that the falsehood was not discovered at once? Did Defoe ever admit that it was an invention? Or was he so ridiculed by the ignorant that he thought it well not to deny the charge of its being a joke, especially as in those days—as in this—people were liable to imprisonment for advocating anything unpopular? The precedent of the Cock Lane Ghost should not be forgotten; the facts were explained away at the time, but have recently been proved to be genuine phenomena.

P.

SIR,—I am anxious that a contradiction of the Drelincourt ghost story (as a *bonâ fide* narrative) should come from a Spiritualist.

The story of the fiction was well known fifty years ago; it is no doubt forgotten by many people now.

When Drelincourt's book upon death was first published it did not find purchasers, and the author, being very low-spirited, complained to Daniel Defoe of the failure of his work. Defoe told him that he would make his book sell fast enough, and, taking his pen, wrote off the clever story of Mrs. Veal and Mrs. Bargrave (both Canterbury names), which he told Charles Drelincourt to insert in his preface to another edition, or to add a new preface containing it to the unsold copies, I am not sure which. This was done, and *Drelincourt on Death* became a popular book. Your correspondent's edition is the twenty-ninth; whether the volume went through more editions I do not know. No doubt you will be overwhelmed with letters giving this explanation; but I hope the story will not be brought against us as an instance of readiness to accept a marvel without authentication.

Any honest person not knowing the facts, would readily believe that a religious writer on a serious subject would not descend to such dishonest means of ensuring literary success. The disgrace, if any, belongs to the Rev. Charles Drelincourt. As to Daniel Defoe, he was not expected to be scrupulous, and I daresay thought his performance a bit of harmless fun to serve a friend.

S. E. DE MORGAN.

8, Cheyne-row, Chelsea.

DR. CARPENTER ON SPIRITUALISM—CURIOUS STATEMENTS ABOUT THE ACTION OF THE DIVINING ROD.

SIR,—In the February Number of *Fraser's Magazine*, Dr. Carpenter has been again working away in his old profitless style, at his old impossible task—that of attempting to give a low materialistic interpretation to high spiritual phenomena. I am sorry to say that he has made little or no progress during the last twenty years, and as I wish to use appropriate language, I may naturally ask—How could a man without the requisite mental originality, and without sufficient capacity for receiving or appreciating any new ideas, ever become an enlightened philosopher?

It is rather dreary work—and I must confess I am heartily tired of it—that of perusing Dr. Carpenter's essays on the subject of the spiritual faculties and endowments of humanity. In the first place, he literally knows little or nothing about the subject he so pertinaciously discusses; and, in the next place, he as constantly reproduces the same

arguments which have so often been refuted, and the same illustrations, which have as often been exposed. Like an ambitious, unskilful, conceited knight, he is continually complacently rushing into the tilting yard to raise his puny lance against that giant-champion, Truth; and though our inane knight is soon invariably hurled to the ground, he is quickly up again, because he is mercifully allowed to fall on the soft saw-dust of literary controversy. Let us see if he cannot be made to feel a little sterner usage on a more stony soil.

Dr. Carpenter boasts that he has been engaged for forty years as a "scientific expert" in investigating mental and, so-called, spiritual phenomena, and that he has arrived at the conclusion that they can all be explained by his borrowed materialistic theories of "hysteria," "mental disturbance," "reflex action," and "cerebral forces." As far as Spiritualism is concerned these phrases are merely scientific gibberish, and convey no explanation whatever. Now, as we ought always to call things by their right names, I must commence my attack upon this technical "expert" by telling him frankly that he has not shown himself to possess the necessary accuracy, the patience, the intelligence, or the faculty for investigating anything whatever of profound and original importance; and while he pursues his present "method," with no more than his present amount of candour and acumen, he will never accomplish any satisfactory result, if he lives and investigates for another period of forty years. I will give the reader a single specimen of how Dr. Carpenter conducts an examination of the phenomena of Spiritualism, and I speak from personal knowledge. In this *Fraser* article he says that when the phenomena fail to appear, he is "told that he has brought an 'atmosphere of incredulity' with him which prevents the manifestations."

In the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1871, Dr. Carpenter attributes this silly opinion to me. In my little work on *Apparitions* I exposed his inaccuracy, and although so renowned an "expert" may not have seen my obscure production, anyone intelligently acquainted with Spiritualism could have corrected his absurd mistake. It is, therefore, evident that he has not studied the literature of Spiritualism, and that he is ignorant of the A B C of its precepts. This ignorance is further revealed by his apparently slight acquaintance with its more important phenomena. He seems to have heard of those special manifestations which were so discussed that they "went the round of the press," and which any lazy reader could know who casually glanced at the columns of a newspaper, but of thorough experience he appears to have had none, and we can easily account for this deficiency when we learn the perfunctory mode which he pursued in his "studies." He goes to a gentleman's house to witness some spiritual phenomena, which disappoint him and every one else who is present. Why? Because directly any of the required conditions are established, and feeble manifestations begin to appear, Dr. Carpenter immediately disturbs these conditions by proposing other conditions, which he terms "a test"; he places himself in a controversial and hostile attitude towards the medium, and the result is that the manifestations which do appear are not calculated to convince any one possessing the slightest intelligence. Dr. Carpenter takes his leave, never comes again, gossips over his "experience" with a friend, misrepresents what occurred, and calls his host a "simpleton." So much for Dr. Carpenter's "method" of scientific inquiry, and his plan of conducting his "studies." Now, under such circumstances, any experienced Spiritualist would deliver the following advice:—

"Dr. Carpenter, the manifestations you have witnessed this evening are very feeble and unsatisfactory, as they generally are on a first occasion. They would not convince me, and I cannot expect them to convince you. To get at the root of this mystery you must not expect to see through it all at once, or desire to establish test conditions with a medium on your first visit. Go to this investigation steadily, patiently, and laboriously; and then, after studying the subject for a few months or years, you may be qualified to give an opinion about it. Your 'atmosphere of incredulity' has nothing whatever to do with our present failure. Every intelligent inquirer ought to come at first with an 'atmosphere of incredulity.' What you want is an atmosphere of refined and cultivated common sense—that is all. Our medium is uneasy and excited; and this is the reason why the manifestations have been so poor. I would recommend you to cultivate the friendship of several mediums; make it worth their while to devote themselves to your researches. When you become a practised and developed observer, and your mediums are on good terms with you, the manifestations will probably become astounding. You will then be able to succeed in establishing any 'test conditions' which your skill or scepticism can devise. I have no doubt that the result will reward you by revealing, not a new subtle order of forces, for they have existed ever since humanity was created, but the agency of angelic and spiritual ministrations and beings, which are calculated to illuminate the history and mystery of the past, and charm us into a grand belief of a sublime future."

In estimating the spiritual manifestations, Dr. Carpenter has, with his usual want of consideration, made no allowance for the anxiety of the medium, and yet this mental condition is generally fatal to the exhibition of satisfactory phenomena. Why? because on the principle that spirits of a certain kind are attracted to us by a corresponding disposition in our own natures, anxiety is one of those morbid states which invite the co-operation of evil and error-producing spirits. When a medium is subjected to "tests" in any special performance of his power, and on account of the novelty of the occasion and the expectation of the observers, he becomes nervously anxious to succeed; failure is generally the impotent result. Notably is this shown in the use of the divining rod; the mode of carrying it is not quite correctly described by Dr. Carpenter; the two prongs of the forked hazel twig ought to be held in the hands of the diviner, and closely pressed to his sides, so that the rod may be carried steadily. Under these circumstances the projecting stem is sometimes so bent downwards in the act of divination that the bark is ruptured—an act which could not be performed by

hands placed at the other extremities of the rod; but Dr. Carpenter's facts are so superficially, idly, and ignorantly told, that there is no dependence to be placed upon them.

How then is the divining rod really made to act properly? The diviner is necessarily a medium, and the rod is moved by a spirit appointed for the purpose, and in attendance on the medium. Like all other mediums, this one for water or metal finding is liable to have his success entirely foiled by the intrusion of anxiety or apprehension into his mind, inviting the co-operation of an undeveloped spirit which frequently succeeds in frustrating the manifestation. The most successful manifestations are generally those which are accompanied by calmness on the part of the medium; excitement is always an injurious condition.

If we had time and patience we could go through the whole of Dr. Carpenter's article, paragraph by paragraph, and expose its shallowness and error; but the game is not worth the candle. The wave of Truth will some day rise and wash away such conventional lumber and sand-written literature; but unfortunately for our resignation this wave of Truth takes a long time to rise and do its wholesome work of consigning to oblivion such worthless records.

As private families do not like their homes converted into arenas for scientific research by strangers, in future one of the greatest obstacles in the way of "experts" investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism will be the present state of the law as interpreted by judges who know nothing whatever of the manifestations on which they are required to adjudicate. In their eyes, for a medium to put another person in communication with a spirit for a money payment is sufficient to bring such medium under the lash of the Vagrant Act as a rogue and a vagabond. A hired medium is placed in the same category with a fortune-teller. But why should fortune-telling be thus treated as a crime? I can testify that it is not necessarily or even generally fraudulent, but a real, genuine gift—a form of mediumship possessed by some people to a very remarkable extent; and the attempt of the Legislature to put down the exercise of this faculty, only shows the blundering stupidity which law-makers can perpetrate. I know that the law on this point is systematically set at defiance, and it is rarely appealed to except for the purpose of revenging oneself by a spiteful and malicious prosecution. Out of ten thousand instances in which the law is broken, not ten cases find their way into our police-courts. I have been personally acquainted with several fortune-tellers whose faculty was indisputable, and they exercised a sound influence; the advice they gave their clients was generally wholesome and judicious, and the practice of their power was greatly in request. Why then should a law be retained which is so constantly defied? We are told that it is necessary "to protect" ignorant servant maids against the wiles of artful deceivers. We have yet to learn that fortune-telling is a deception; but why, we would ask, are ignorance and folly to be placed specially under the protection of the law? By all means let fraud be punished when it can be proved, but palmistry and fortune-telling and "otherwise," are no more fraudulent than horse-racing or athletics or the practice of medicine, although all three of these pursuits may occasionally be conducted in such a manner as to produce injurious and even fatal results. There are impostors in every occupation and grade of life. The law does not interfere for the protection of fools who back themselves to walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours; and why should the law throw its sheltering aegis over the fool who goes to consult a fortune-teller? In fact, the effect of the law is to drive the public practice of those occult arts, palmistry, fortune-telling, astrology, and "otherwise," into the hands of a low and unscrupulous set of performers. We must also observe that the law is not resorted to by the ignorant class, for whose protection it is supposed to have been enacted, but by enlightened philosophers, who, by blundering and ignorant evidence on a subject they do not understand, secure the conviction of their victims. To enact a law which is never obeyed except in a disgraceful manner, and to perpetuate that law when its spiteful operation is so clearly manifest, is a mode of behaviour unworthy of any nation, however collectively dunderheaded that nation may be. Many persons who possess a real gift of telling fortunes by astrology or "otherwise," judging character by handwriting or palmistry, or of producing overt spiritual manifestations, are wonderful in their way, and they are often not fit for any other occupation. If their services are used, why should they not be remunerated? Their patrons will soon find out whether they are worthy of their reward. No one remains a dupe long. For these reasons I regard the law affecting these matters to be entirely ineffective for any purpose but an evil one; and I advocate "free trade in fortune-telling," and in all the other occult arts.

NEWTON CROSLAND.

Blackheath, February, 1877.

MESSAGES BY WRITING MEDIUMSHIP.

SIR,—I send the enclosed spirit messages, thinking you might like to insert them in your paper. Before I received the gift of writing mediumship, I had read very little about Spiritualism; the only book I think I read through was a work of Judge Edmond's. It came very quietly in my own home, and, I may say, unsought. I tried the planchette at different times, but with no marked success. One evening suddenly, about two years ago, on taking a pencil, a few words were written. Since then I have heard from many dear ones in the spirit world.

October 13th, 1875:—"Endless torment. Ah! never let that false teaching for one moment be countenanced by you; rather speak strongly against it, as utterly inconsistent with the known love of God and His justice. Altogether, a teaching ended, or only used as an instrument for causing fear, and a means of power used wrongly. You are surprised that I should thus impress you. Well, the thought was strong with me, as so utterly opposed to all we know of truth; and in the light of God's love, which shines upon us here, it is so un-

speakingly terrible as well as false. No, the Father has other thoughts in His enduring love for His children. Yes, it is indeed God who can alone know all the servants of His manifold creations, and He will lead them all to Himself. I would impress you with the belief that God's love is boundless, and so each grain will be gathered up and formed into the perfect man. Through such enduring very sharp punishments as He sees necessary, all, even the most hardened, will be gathered into the heavenly garner, and not one grain of pure wheat lost; but all the chaff, the evil in each plant will be destroyed, and thus bring fruit to everlasting life, and to the praise of the great Harvestman."

November 10th, 1875:—"We learn various things. I learn to understand the mystery of life. Wonderful even to the smallest particle; and there can be nothing lost, or fail of the purpose for which given existence. I mean all life, even in things material, we find here, in what are supposed to perish finally. But it is not so; they are reproduced here, in the spirit world, though the form may be different. It is the real life here, of which the earth forms are only the image. And so you will understand how greatly the study adds to God's love and power, all things having a high meaning and satisfying. All is well balanced, and crooked things on earth made straight in the spirit life. In all kinds of animate life, not only human beings, the soul of things we find here."

EDITH L. STONE.

Shute Haze, Walditch, Bridport.

SHELLEY'S MEDIUMSHIP.

SIR,—In the *Shelley Memorials*, edited by Lady Shelley (H. S. King, 1875), there are some interesting revelations concerning that mystical and wonderful poem, *Epipsychidion*, which I have only now read. In a letter to his publisher, Shelley writes:—"It (*Epipsychidion*) is to be published simply for the esoteric few, and I make its author a secret to avoid the malignity of those who turn sweet food into poison." Again, he says:—"The *Epipsychidion* is a mystery; as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles; you might as well go to a gin shop for a leg of mutton as expect anything human or earthly from me."

The fact is, "The vision veiled from him so many years," which "At length into the obscure forest came," was nothing more nor less than the spectre of a living person, which, commonly as such sights are acknowledged to be seen during the body's sleep in the present wave of Spiritualism, certainly, in those days, could only safely be hinted at to the esoteric few. Here is the history, which shows that Shelley "did not deal in flesh and blood," and that one accustomed to visions of the dead as he was, saw the spirits of living persons also:—"In 1821 Shelley wrote that piece of radiant mysticism and rapturous melody, *Epipsychidion*. The subject of this poem, 'the noble and unfortunate lady, Emilia N——', was the daughter of an Italian count, and was shut up in a convent by her father until such time as he could find for her a husband of whom he approved. In this dreary prison Shelley saw her, and was struck by her amazing beauty, by the highly cultivated grace of her mind, and by the misery which she suffered in being debarred from all sympathy." He saw much of her. She was subsequently married, and died early, but her death occurred long after Shelley's.

Here are two specimens of his visions of the dead. In Mr. Williams' diary, that of the gentleman who was drowned with Shelley, is found the following:—"After tea, while walking with S—— on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the water, he complained of being unusually nervous, and, stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared stedfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he was in pain; but he only answered by saying, 'There it is again! there!' He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (Allegra, who had recently died) rise from the sea, and clasp its hands as if in joy, smiling at him." Allegra was a daughter of Byron. Again:—"One night loud cries were heard issuing from the saloon. Entering the saloon, the Williamses found Shelley staring horribly into the air, and evidently in a trance. They waked him, and he related that a figure wrapped in a mantle came to his bedside, and beckoned him. He must then have risen in his sleep, for he followed the imaginary figure into the saloon, where it lifted the hood of its mantle, ejaculated, '*Siete so dispatto?*' (are you satisfied?) and vanished." Thus was Shelley practically clairaudient and clairvoyant.

Here is something that looks very like Byron being a powerful psychical medium. Shelley's unhappy widow—she was a daughter of Godwin, and the author of *Frankenstein*, and many other works—thus writes of Byron, whom she calls "Albè":—"My feelings have no analogy either with my opinion of him or the subject of his conversation. With another I might talk and not for a moment think of Shelley—at least, not think of him with the same vividness as if I were alone; but when in company with Albè—Byron—I can never cease for a second to have Shelley in my heart and brain with a clearness that mocks reality—interfering even by its force with the functions of life—until, if tears do not relieve me, the hysterical feeling, analogous to that which the murmur of the sea gives me, presses painfully upon me."

SCRUTATOR.

SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS IN OLDHAM.

SIR,—It is only fair to so talented a physical medium as Mr. Willie Eglinton to say that, during his recent visit to Oldham (when engaged by a private party and not by the society) he gave entire satisfaction. Séances were held on three consecutive evenings, and each séance was attended by phenomena more or less striking. The direct voice was heard on several occasions, and on the second night quite a speech was given by Ernest in the direct voice; Joey also made his presence known

in the same manner. Dr. Monck's incarceration was the subject of their conversation, and it was rather refreshing to hear how the spirit world seemed to sympathise with that unfortunate medium. I may remark that the spirits tied one gentleman fast, round the neck and arms, to the medium, and he—the gentleman—was somewhat surprised to find himself helpless. I should say he was quite convinced there was "something in it." During one of the sittings a heavy piano was lifted violently from its place, and the keys were fingered repeatedly; several chairs were also found upon the table when the gas was relighted, for these were dark séances. On the last evening there were two séances, one dark and one light. The light séance was an extraordinary one, from the fact that the medium was so carefully tied. Joey performed some very clever feats, and his materialised hand was shown repeatedly through an opening in the cabinet. The medium's finger rings, watch, and chain were taken from his person by the materialised hand, and given to sitters in the room. A small bell on the knees of the medium, whose extremities were in full view, was also rung by Joey, whose hand was plainly seen by all present. The company, with perhaps a solitary exception, gave unequivocal expression of their confidence in the medium and the genuineness of the manifestations.

SAMUEL H. QUARMBY.

31, Plane-street, Oldham, February 22nd, 1877.

SPIRIT RAPS.

SIR,—I have read with great interest the account of one of your discussion meetings. In the remarks about how spirit raps are produced, Mr. Harrison said that he thought that they are given by "materialised, or partially materialised, hands rapping with their knuckles on the table." No doubt this may be one of the means employed, but I think it does not go far as an explanation; and if all these spirit rappings are given *via* electricity, that does not explain much more definitely, because, of course, the questions then arise as to what electricity really is, and how it is used? But one interesting little incident came into my mind as I read the remarks, and I just write you these few lines to tell it to you.

Some years ago, when the Davenport Brothers were in London, a friend went to one of their séances, accompanied by a "seeing medium" and a "sceptical investigator." As soon as the Brothers were fastened in the cabinet and the doors closed, the sceptical gentleman rushed forward, whether to open the doors or to be sure they were closed, I cannot remember; anyhow, he was close by the doors of the cabinet, underneath the aperture in the upper part of the doors through which spirit hands used to project. As he was standing there, my friend—as well as the seeing medium, who was sitting by her side—saw a long spirit hand and arm thrust itself out of this aperture, and from the finger-tips were flowing streams, apparently of electric sparks, which fell directly upon the head of the sceptical gentleman. He did not see the spirit hand, but on his return to my friend he said, "I have had a good hard knock on my head." So, in this case, it is certain that the knock came to him by the means of these electric sparks. I could (as, no doubt, could anyone else) find similar proofs of this being a very usual way used by our spirit guides to convey their communications, whether by raps or writing, but will not now take up more space in your journal.

F. J. THEOBALD.

Lewisham, February 4th, 1877.

MR. SMART'S PAPER.

SIR,—I venture to suggest that such facts as those recorded in Mr. Smart's paper are likely to prove of great historic value, as they certainly are intensely interesting. I hope the author of that paper will favour the readers of *The Spiritualist* with more records of his séances, and especially state the names, dates and places given by the spirits released. The light which such revelations would throw upon the hidden mysteries and long-forgotten facts and customs of former times could not fail to be extremely interesting, and would render the pages of *The Spiritualist* more engrossing than any romance. I have seldom read a more interesting paper, but its chief defect lies in the absence of all details of dates, names and places. If the circle in question could afford to take a reporter with them on their expeditions, and interest some gentleman of antiquarian research in the investigation, the results would be most valuable.

F. A. B.

Manchester.

"A MUSICAL PRODIGY."

SIR,—In a recent number of *The Spiritualist*, I noticed an account from an American paper, under the above heading, of a little musical genius, under five years of age, who is able to play simple tunes on the piano after hearing them sung or whistled by others. As instances of such early development of the musical gift are very rare, I thought an account of my own little boy, six years of age, would not be uninteresting to your readers. He commenced harmonising on the piano at three-and-a-half years of age; before he was four he could play simple tunes; from four to five he acquired numbers of popular airs and hymn tunes, including all the favourites of "Moody and Sankey;" at five he began to play at public concerts and soirées; he also played the harmonium at the day school where he attends. He could then play all kinds of music—songs, dances, jigs, hymn tunes, and anthems. Up to five-and-a-half years he never received the least instruction from any one; but I was once told by one of our local mediums, while under control at one of our private sittings, that he is under the guidance of a once celebrated German female musician who has long since passed away.

I once asked him how he learnt his pieces; he said very innocently, "The angels tell me which keys to touch." He can play simple airs without hesitation in seven different keys. He can tell the name of any note in the scale by the sound, either on the piano or any other instrument, without seeing the keys, or the notes sounded by the church bells,

always without hesitation. He can play almost as well with his eyes and ears tightly bandaged. Indeed, if I mentioned all the phases of his wonderful talent it would scarcely be credited. He is now under a first class teacher, and, if spared, will be devoted to the musical profession.

As he does not now play in public on account of his health, he may be seen at home any evening by any friend who wishes to witness his remarkable talents.

CHARLES W. SAVAGE.

313, Upper Parliament-street, Liverpool.

A SUGGESTION.

SIR,—It has occurred to some friends of Spiritualism that we should get up a farthing subscription to purchase a few leaden medals, to present to certain notable people (or people who think themselves notable) who have lately dignified themselves in London, and elsewhere, as the champions of persecution; men who would take us back to the dark ages, back to the martyr fires, the gallows, or the minor degradations of the stocks, the pillory, and the ducking-stool. Is it possible that such noble-minded men can be allowed to exist without some public recognition of their services? Shall we not write their names in sand?

Barrow-in-Furness.

SPIRITUALISM IN GLASGOW.

SIR,—You have not recently heard, as far as I am aware, any news from the Society of Spiritualists or the condition of Spiritualism in Glasgow.

In December last Mr. Cross gave an able reply to Mr. H. A. Long, a local opponent of Spiritualism, in the Albion Hall. We regretted not having a greater attendance on the occasion, and feared that the public interest had lessened, although numbers of inquirers have found their way this winter to our own hall in quest of information. However, it would appear that it is mediumship after all which the public desire, rather than local debating.

Mr. Morse gave an admirable address on Sunday, 11th February, in the Trades Hall, which was crowded, some six hundred people being present. They were attentive throughout. The subject—"Spiritualism; an Analysis of its Present Position, a Criticism of its Opponents, and an Indication of its Future"—was handled by Mr. Morse's guides in their best style.

On the Tuesday following we had a *soirée* in our own hall; Mr. Morse was again present, and it was considered the best we have had. Mr. Morse gave trance speeches. Messrs. Walker, Cross, and Nisbet also contributed by speeches and readings to the entertainment, which was interspersed with abundant songs throughout the evening, under Mr. Bowman's superintendence. The president, treasurer, and committee are doing their utmost to carry on the movement in Glasgow, and we hope, by perseverance in a good cause, to make our position as Spiritualists better than it has been at any previous time.

JAMES SIMPSON, Sec.

141, Elderslie-street, Glasgow, Feb. 15th, 1877.

PUBLIC READING ROOMS.

SIR,—I notice with pleasure the remarks of Mr. C. Reimers, of Manchester, on this subject, as being the outcome of our conversation and suggestions. I at once hasten to give my views in support of his letter, not so much in connection with Spiritualism as with its side issues—the freedom of mankind from orthodox slavery, the principles of truth, and the rights and privileges of man on a basis of Freemasonry, stripped of its rites, ceremonies, and periodical feasts, to be coupled with an open and intellectual freedom of inquiry into subjects calculated to add to the knowledge of the investigator. The organic system would have to be founded upon a similar basis to that of many Spiritualist and other societies, but would be different in its principles—the one advocating the almost threadbare system of propagandism, the other opening a legitimate channel for the acquirement of knowledge in whatever branch or degree. Spiritualism comes to many not as a religious "ism" in the ordinary construction and meaning of the word, but as a desire to "know thyself and thy nature." The "Institute of Knowledge" (I cannot give it a better term) would embrace these ideas, and the many subjects that are the outgrowth of the parent stem, "Spiritualism." No such organised body, I believe, exists at present in Manchester. If, through the medium of your paper, Mr. Reimer's remarks and my own should arouse the sympathy of the people of Manchester on this subject, after further ventilation, a meeting might be called to confer as to the best means of establishing such an institute. There are many Spiritualists in Manchester who, I believe, would be glad to assist in such an undertaking.

JOHN HARTLEY.

Brooklands, Mottram-road, Hyde, Manchester,
February 24th, 1877.

TEST SEANCES.

SIR,—I learn down in the country that spirits, able at times to materialise in full form will sometimes, to save themselves trouble, or for other causes, dress up the entranced medium and show him for a ghost instead of themselves, however tightly the medium may have been bound; and when they have shown him will, in a trice, return him to his fetters as before. As a medium cannot be responsible for his actions when entranced, and since no man who is not a conjuror can desire to be known publicly and privately as a double dealer, I feel sure that any medium who can follow his own wishes or the wishes of his friends on this side the river Styx would willingly consent to submit to some method by which his own good name would, under any circumstances, be guaranteed; a method which might prove effectual in preventing substitution, and by which his own bodily comfort would be certainly secured during the *séance*, while giving, at the same time, the spirits every chance of working honestly and with facility also. I would

venture, then, to suggest that an iron cage might be tried, with bars at top, bottom, and at the four sides, one of which sides should form the door. The cage should be sufficiently large for the medium to sit in at his ease, or better, to lie down in on a sofa. The whole of the door or gate should be seen by the audience, and if the hinges were at the bottom and the gate opening like, say, that of an inverted live rat-trap (without the paraphernalia used for holding the toasted cheese), it could shut in the curtain which separates the medium from the audience, and which forms a "cabinet," giving the spirits darkness. This gate should be partly closed by a horizontal bar or bars, which should also be in sight. Small apertures should be made in the curtain, so that the ends of bars from within might protrude outside, to which the horizontal bars for fastening the cage's door outside should be attached, thus securing the door outside in the sight of all. The medium would be thus quite at his ease in his cage, the bars of which might be even sufficiently far apart for him to put his arm through; and in that case, I should infer, no reasonable spirit could allege that there was not room for the whole of his more ethereal presence to pass through. It would be interesting and profitable, after a good materialisation, to find the medium *in statu quo ante*. One of two things must then have occurred; there must have been either a true materialisation, or the medium must have been twice drawn through iron bars far too narrow to admit of his passing through in the usual manner. The medium, in his cage, should be provided with a "knuckle duster," or some such blunt weapon, to use for self defence whenever an infuriated rush should be made at him from without, after a successful *séance*.

AN OLD MAN FROM THE COUNTRY.

SIR,—A correspondent has given you a test for dark *séances*, viz., to cut out from paper outline figures. How would it do to ask the spirits to play a game of chess? This would at once give a test for clairvoyance (materialisation, perhaps), and an intelligence behind.

There are many critical moves in a good game of chess. The light could be uncovered after each move.

But this would probably open up a new phase of mediumship, and it may be that concentration of thought on the chess board would prove an obstacle.

Z.

CEREBRAL PSYCHOLOGY.

SIR,—The Rev. W. Stainton-Moses, M.A., in the course of the discussion on this subject before the Psychological Society, is reported to have remarked "that phrenology was not as certainly established as other branches of physiology."

If a sensitive be placed in the mesmeric trance state, and the operator, taking a phrenological chart in one hand, with the other excites in turn, by contact, the various organs, the subject will exhibit by gesture, speech, and the emotions depicted on the countenance, indications characteristic of and corresponding with the nature of the sentiment of which the part of the head touched is alleged to be the seat. If "spirituality," or "veneration," at the apex of the brain be excited, the expression of countenance, the folding of the hands as if in prayer, and the few words uttered, are all in accordance. If "benevolence," "friendship," "conscientiousness," or "firmness," the emotions exhibited invariably correspond. If "destructiveness" over the ear, or "combateness" at the back of the head, then the operator must beware. If "language" beneath the eye, there is an instantaneous impulse to speak, though what is uttered is meaningless and fragmentary, unless a bias be given to the brain by the previous excitation of another organ, in which latter case the utterances are in accordance with the alleged nature of such organ.

Is not this to be regarded as conclusive proof of the reality of phrenology? Or will it be said that the operator's mind, being in a state of expectancy of a certain result, influences the mind of the subject to exhibit indications correspondent to the result anticipated?

Against this latter theory, it may be urged that these indications are too decided in character and particular in detail to arise from a general state of expectancy on the part of the operator.

A. J. SMART.

Cardiff.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

SIR,—Among many spiritual experiences of R. H. F. Rippen (author of *Victor*) related in the fifth volume of the *Spiritual Magazine*, is the following:—"Since beginning to write this narrative, I have dreamed that in some future period there would be another war between Austria, Russia, and Turkey; I saw a terrible battle fought, but I am not aware of the result."

W.

FORGETFULNESS PERHAPS?

SIR,—Dr. Sexton lectured here last night under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, on "Twenty Years' Experience of Scepticism and Sceptics." The powerful and indefatigable exponent of Spiritualism embraced the opportunity of not saying one word on the subject of modern spiritual phenomena, and their influence on his thoughts.

F. N. BRODERICK.

Ryde, Isle of Wight.

MR. WILLIAM LAWRENCE.

SIR,—Having been for some time a disbeliever in the mediumship of Mr. W. Lawrence, I had an opportunity last Thursday to put him to the test, at a circle in a friend's house. The result has been that, in justice to Mr. Lawrence, I withdraw my former opinion. As an account of the matters witnessed would be rather long for publication, suffice it to state, that we sewed both sleeves of his coat (his arms, of course, being in them) together, behind his back; then sewed his coat up in front; an overcoat was thrown over all, and a large comforter round his neck. He was placed in a chair in one corner of the room, closely

guarded by myself and Mr. Elson; we, too, having secured any accomplices that we expected might have been there. Then the best phenomena I ever witnessed were produced.

Looking to the fact that this was in a private room, with no platform or cabinet, and that it was quite an accidental meeting on my part, I must say that it gave us all great satisfaction. J. CAIN.

142, Burdett-road, London, February 26th.

[This letter has also appended to it the names of witnesses—J. Elson, Commercial-road, E.; Sarah Price, Commercial-road, E.; S. Buckle, Jamaica-street, Stepney, E.; S. Ayers, 45, Jubilee-street, Stepney, E.]

MASSSES.

SIR,—The letter of "Lynx" involves several points of theology and law, which are rather beside discussion in your columns.

Let me tell him, therefore, that no Roman Catholic priest, who may receive money from members of his congregation (or even others) undertakes a contract to relieve from the pains of purgatory any individual soul (whether "friend or relative") or others, who is dead. He merely contracts to offer the Adorable Sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the dead in general, with special mention *sub voce* under the prayer *memento etiam*, or even (under episcopal license) by the use of a particular collect, for the purpose of the intentions of those who wish its being granted. The small fee which is often paid does not cover the expense of candles.

And those priests (who are many) who say the same prayers without the receipt of money, exercise their supernatural privilege without fear of a second Elizabethan persecution being directed against them.

Reference to the rules of many orders which carry out the Maccabean principle, "It is a holy and just thought to pray for the dead," may take up your space. I could prove these at my leisure. The ideal case of "Auxilius," put as the 36th in Pontas' *Dictionnaire de Cas de Conscience*, vol. ii. p. 153, may be taken as an example of the whole series of cases which imagination may adduce. I quote the 1847 edition in 4to, as it is well known and conveniently accessible to many. But as thousands of men in England are now associated with each other, under the confraternity of the "*Bona Mors*," to attend the prayers for a happy death, such prosecution as "Lynx" suggests may be commenced with lay, and not with clerical victims.

It would be idle to argue that any layman, who at the close of Complin repeats the words "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*" should be guilty of a criminal offence. A PAPIST.

THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE VERSUS THE NEWSPAPERS.

SIR,—I venture to inquire through your columns, whether or not it is within the province of the Defence Committee to take some steps for the moral defence of Dr. Slade and of other mediums, about whom the most false and extravagant reports are in circulation, in relation to the recent "police protection" of scientific investigators!

Through the monstrosity one-sided statements of the papers, it is currently believed, for example, that Dr. Slade is only feigning illness, and that (to use the popular phrase), he has "bolted."

A brief, but extensive, contradiction of these and similar falsities through the public press, or in any other efficient manner, would constitute a "defence" morally, of perhaps more significance than any merely legal victory; would show the unreliability of the newspapers in reference to the controversy; and would, therefore, be a legitimate appropriation of some of the Defence Fund.

I would remind you, sir, that the Spiritualistic journals can hardly be said to reach the community at large, and that no amount of "telling each other" the facts by Spiritualists will avail as a means of disabusing the public mind. WILLIAM VOLCKMAN.

43, Victoria-road, Kensington, W.

FREEDOM PROMOTED BY ORGANISATION.

SIR,—Perhaps the circumstance that organisation so greatly promotes freedom is one of the strongest arguments in favour of co-operation among Spiritualists, next to the fundamental principle that it is a moral and religious duty to unite rather than to quarrel, to promote order rather than anarchy. "Taxation without representation" is a principle no wise man will admit to be good, hence the necessity for union, that those who subscribe funds shall have a voice and a vote in their expenditure, and shall receive properly audited and published accounts. Those who speak of the despotic priestly organisations of the past, rather than the temperance and other useful organisations of the present, omit to state that the more ancient corporations did not rest upon the anti-tyrannical foundations of vote by ballot and voluntary subscriptions, whereby every member can withdraw at once if the managers elected by himself pursue a line of action which he thinks to be wrong. OBSERVER.

MR. WILLIAMS'S SEANCES.

SIR,—I was present at a remarkable *séance* with Mr. Williams on Saturday. The power was abundant, and the results very striking. Four very distinct spirit voices conversed with us, and three hands, of separate characteristics as to shape, size, and temperature, gave me every opportunity of examining them. The full form of John King was very plain, and his rising to the ceiling, and sinking till his lamp rested on the floor, was more distinctly shown than I have ever before seen it.

I need not detail to your readers the familiar phenomena of these *séances*. My special object in writing to you is to ask for space to appeal to Spiritualists to support mediums at the present juncture. The recent persecution has made investigators afraid of meddling with the subject. They are fair-weather birds at best, and are always ready to take flight. So they have retired for a time, and, when the storm is past, they will come again to poke and to pry, and to say, "How curious!" Spiritualists, as a rule, do not need the evidence that open

circles furnish. They have satisfied themselves, and are content. So it comes to pass that between two stools the poor medium comes to the ground. I was grieved to find how scantily Mr. Williams's *séances* are attended. And it is in the belief that thoughtlessness frequently causes this neglect that I appeal to Spiritualists to remove this blot.

Now is the very time when mediums need support, and they must have it from Spiritualists. Surely those who have means might engage public mediums for private investigation, and so secure to them a regular income on which they can count. Surely, too, Spiritualists might agree among themselves to secure a certain and steady attendance at Mr. Williams's Saturday *séances*. One cannot always go, but a little planning would secure a fair muster. The fact of strangers being excluded will raise the character of the manifestations, and make them more deserving of attention. M. A. (OXON.)

February 25th, 1877.

SEVERAL letters are kept over this week for want of space.

MR. J. M. PEEBLES has left San Francisco for Australia on another tour round the world, to observe the progress of Spiritualism in various countries.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION SOIREE.—The usual monthly *soirée* of the National Association of Spiritualists will be held on Wednesday next, the 7th inst. Mrs. F. A. Nosworthy, who has so freely devoted her literary talents to the benefit of the Liverpool Spiritualist Society, has kindly promised to give a recitation and reading from the poets. As Mrs. Nosworthy has another engagement that evening, her reading will commence at 8 o'clock precisely. The musical programme announces a set of *Original Waltzes* by Mrs. T. H. Edmonds, copies of which will be sold for the benefit of the Association. A *Gavotte*, composed by Mr. J. N. T. Martheze, is also on the programme, besides some part singing and pianoforte music by Miss Withall's choir.

SPIRITUALISM IN MANCHESTER.—Mr. Mahony, of Birmingham, delivered, on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 18th, in the Spiritualists' meeting room, Manchester, a discourse on the "Philosophy of Spiritualism." He began by defining the philosophy of Spiritualism as the outcome of the large range of manifestations, especially in our time, of the nature of spirit, a knowledge of which had been obtained by long years of observation and study. This philosophy had a basis as full in its promise and potency as any the world had ever seen. There were very many men in the orthodox world who were trying all they could to redeem man, and he thought and spoke kindly of their efforts; but the spiritual philosophy was much superior to theirs, which it sought to supersede in its purity of design and endeavour, and by convincing man he must be to a great extent his own saviour, and work out his redemption, and elevate himself by his own exertions. This philosophy was based upon human experience, and upon inspiration given to different peoples in all ages. The groundwork on which the Bible rested existed now, and had existed before the Bible was written; the book was full of Spiritualism, but forms and ceremonies had shrouded spirituality from sight. Humanity needed inspiration, and was never left without it.

SPIRITUALISM IN DALSTON.—Mr. E. W. Wallis, of 15, St. Peter's-road, Mile-end, visited the rooms of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, 74, Navarino-road, Dalston, London, on Thursday evening last week, when an interesting trance discourse, upon "Experiences in Spirit Life," was given through his mediumship. In the course of the address it was stated that the present movement of modern Spiritualism was discussed and influenced by a number of spirits, who had organised a plan for demonstrating the existence of a future life on a more universal scale than had hitherto been attempted, so that the experience of spirit action might not be restricted to a few, but might be distributed over the whole world. The more general diffusion of spiritual gifts, it was said, would tend to prevent the recipients of inspiration from being deified, as in former times, and, as the conditions became better understood, the communicating spirits would be enabled to give clearer communications on spiritual matters. At the close of the discourse, which was listened to with interest by the meeting, questions from different members were answered, and, after a vote of thanks had been unanimously accorded to Mr. Wallis for his friendly visit to the Association, the proceedings closed.

THE LIVERPOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—On Sunday evening last, February 25th, Dr. William Hitchman, President of the Liverpool Psychological Society, delivered an address on "The Liturgy of the Human Race; or, the Natural History of the Established Religious Formulas of all Nations." He pointed out that the original worship, whether public or private, of all known primitive peoples, was a rude unspiritual polytheism. Its crude doctrines had no sort of relation to morality, but authorised such barbarous customs as human sacrifices, cannibalism, the assassination of twins, and other savage ordeals. Caribs, Mexicans, Peruvians, and several American tribes have an intensity of religious feeling, and at their sacred festivals observe protracted fastings and self-abnegation to such an extent that they often become ecstatic and entranced, having celestial gorgeous visions, in which they are said to confer with gods. The belief in spirits existed, he said, among all races of men of which anthropologists have attained scientific acquaintance. At the same time, religious faith, unless duly governed by philosophical knowledge, had almost always degenerated into blind superstition, and thus retarded the progress of mankind by establishing a liturgy of false dogmas as fixed spiritual principles, and investing the most absurd doctrines with a halo of divinity, in order to render them unassailable. The lecturer expressed a hope that the time was not far distant when the ministry of angels, in the providence of God, and the moral and religious elevation of man, shall unite each bright and beautiful hymn, prayer, and maxim, in one magnificent liturgy of the human race, the practical spirituality of which shall realise the devout aspiration of a noble poet—

Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance, not the appearance chose.

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HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES AT HOME.

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

Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cool rather than warm—let arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.

Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm, but when one of the sitters breaks the circle by leaving the table it sometimes, but not always, considerably delays the manifestations.

Before the sitting begins, place some pointed lead-pencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table, to write down any communications that may be obtained.

People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well-developed physical mediums; it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is frequently found to be a weakening influence.

Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature.

The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.

When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion let one person only speak; he should talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three signals be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

Afterwards the question should be put, "Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?" Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will afterwards be strengthened. Next ask "Who is the medium?" When the intelligence asserts itself to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as the alleged spirits are found to exhibit all the virtues and all the failings of humanity.

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