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

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Wednesday, 19th.—General Purposes Committee, at 7 p.m.
Friday 21st.—Library Committee, at 6.30 p.m.
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Tuesday, 25th.—General Purposes Committee, at 5.15 p.m.
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LONDON, FRIDAY, JUNE 14th, 1878.

THE VALUE OF TESTIMONY IN MATTERS EXTRAORDINARY.*

BY CHARLES CARLETON MASSEY.

THE proposition that evidence, to command assent, should be proportioned to the probability or improbability of the fact to be proved, is constantly appealed to as the rational foundation of sceptical or negative judgment. I ask you this evening to come to close quarters with it, to consider what it means, and whether it is legitimately applied. There are perhaps no two words in the language more liable to abuse, or more frequently abused, than probability, and the word expressing that upon which probability is said to be founded, namely, experience. For there is here no question of those definitely-ascertained probabilities which result from the computation of known chances, and which are, therefore, not matters of experience at all. It is by reference to these, however, that we shall have the principle in question most clearly before us. Suppose, for example, evidence of such a character and amount that the chance against its being forthcoming for what is not true is as 5 to 1, and that it is given for an event against which the chance is as 10 to 1, the resulting probability is 2 to 1 against the evidence. Now it is said that the inductions from experience afford us a similar, though not equally definite, measure of proportion between the probability of facts and the value of evidence.

And as to a large class of alleged facts, we are met at the outset of our inquiry by the previous question, whether testimony in relation to them has any value whatever? The probability in favour of testimony, even at its best, it is said, can never equal that which results from the uniform negative experience of mankind. Our faith in testimony is based on the same principle of experience, and therefore testimony can never prove a fact which is contrary to a wider induction. This is the extreme application of the principle, as we find it in Hume's celebrated argument against miracles. It is not quite the same, though practically it has the same effect, as that absolute *à priori* denial of the possibility of the facts attested to which few scientific minds will explicitly commit themselves. It does not say that our inductions as to what is possible, or *in rerum natura*, are certain, but that they have a greater force than any testimony which can be adduced against them, which therefore is not entitled even to consideration.

Now, in the first place, I would invite you to consider when it can and when it cannot be said with accuracy that an alleged fact contradicts experience. In one sense, of course, it cannot be accurately said at all. Your experience that contact with fire has always burned you remains unchallenged and uncontradicted by any assertion of mine that on one occasion or on half-a-dozen occasions it has not burned me. But experience is a term used loosely to denote our inductions from experience; and this is the first thing I ask you to mark. What, again, is a fact in relation to experience? If you and I have seen the same object, and you describe it as of one apparent dimension, and I describe it as of another and vastly different apparent dimension, does my experience contradict yours? Not necessarily; for we may have both described the apparent object abstracted from the conditions of distance under which we severally saw it. This tendency to abstract from the context of experience, in other words, to ignore conditions, is just what distinguishes the popular from the scientific conception of a fact. And until we know *all* the conditions under which anything is said to

have occurred, we cannot properly speak of it as opposed to our own experience. The next remark I have to make is that, *à priori*, we do not know which of the circumstances attending even the most familiar facts of experience are conditions, and which are entirely irrelevant. Transport yourself to an imagined infancy of experience, and you could not predict from the fact that fire had burned you in one place or time that it would burn you in another, or that it would burn me. Difference of place, time, or person might, for all you could know beforehand, provide entirely new conditions. Now if it was asserted, as in fact it is asserted with regard to a large class of alleged phenomena, that personality, that specialities of human organism do introduce new conditions, resulting in these unusual phenomena under certain other conditions not scientifically known, this would not be and is not to contradict the common experience which, *ex hypothesi*, knows nothing of these exceptional personalities. Bearing in mind, then, that no experience or amount of experience has the least relevance to an alleged fact except under the exact conditions, inclusive and exclusive, of its occurrence, and that we cannot say beforehand what are conditions and what are not, the experience argument, in relation to the phenomena in question, resolves itself into this: that inasmuch as the alleged personalities which, as the one constant element must be regarded as the condition, are exceptional and abnormal, therefore their existence is so improbable that testimony cannot prove it. What is this but to say that the abnormal can never be proved by testimony? Nay, more, that testimony can never make such a provisional and *prima facie* case, as to justify a reasonable man in seeking for the higher evidence of his own experience; in other words, in investigating for himself? For such a *prima facie* case is a probable case, and here it is said that the balance of probability is largely against the fact. I am endeavouring to get at the precise point in issue; and I say that the man who exclaims, "Objects moving without physical contact! writing read without eyes! matter passing through matter! writing without hands! these things are opposed to all human experience!"—is talking wildly and loosely. What, if he would condescend to be exact and logical, he really means is that it is opposed to a negative induction from the absence of experience that individuals should exist who can provide new conditions of physical operation. But the question is, Is this induction to be regarded as final? And as we are dealing with the experience school solely with its own weapons, let us see what experience says to that. And I should have thought that if there was one induction from experience historically and scientifically valid it was that other inductions from experience—and especially negative inductions—are *not* final. Our widest inductions are precisely those which we make in the infancy of experience and science. Science advances by the discovery of new conditions which limit general rules. What was rejected as abnormal yesterday is found to have a law of its own to-day. In a word, if the widest and highest experience of mankind can afford us a canon of probability it is this—that testimony, otherwise sufficient, to the exceptional, the abnormal, the strange, and the new, is probably true, and not probably false. Set side by side the cases in which new facts of nature have been asserted and proved to be true with the cases in which they have been well asserted and yet disproved, or not proved, and who that is acquainted even superficially with the history of science and discovery would hesitate to say which list affords us the best foundation for an induction?

I submit, then, as the results of the foregoing considerations—1. That testimony to the extraordinary, of which the phenomena referred to may be taken as a type, is falsely

* A Paper read before the Psychological Society of Great Britain on Thursday, last week.

opposed to experience. 2. That what it is opposed to is simply a negative induction from the absence of experience. 3. That a more general experience teaches us that such negative inductions cease to be probably true, so soon as they are opposed to testimony of a character sufficient to establish any other fact.

It is a great satisfaction to me to be able to state that since the above was written I have found the distinction between positive and negative experience, and the character of the inductions from each, very ably and elaborately explained in a long note by Mr. Starkie, in his *Treatise on the Law of Evidence*. I do not quote this note *in extenso*, because I hope the distinction is already obvious to all. Mr. Starkie's observations refer expressly to Hume's principle of incredulity; and he shows, as Mr. A. R. Wallace has also shown, that pushed to its logical consequences that principle would be absolutely fatal to all scientific progress. One could almost imagine the following passage to have been written in prophetic protest against the appeals to Hume by the sceptics who treat with contumely and derision every testimony to the occult phenomena of the present day. "Experience, then, so far from pointing out any unalterable laws of nature, to the exclusion of events or phenomena which have never before been experienced, and which cannot be accounted for by the laws already observed, shows the very contrary, and proves that such new events or phenomena may become the foundation of more enlarged, more general, and therefore more perfect laws." And in the text Mr. Starkie says—"As experience shows that events frequently occur which would antecedently have been considered most improbable, and as their improbability usually arises from want of a more intimate and correct knowledge of the causes which produced them, mere improbability can rarely supply a sufficient ground for disbelieving direct and unexceptionable witnesses of the fact, where there was no room for mistake."

And again, "Mr. Hume's conclusion is highly objectionable in a philosophical point of view, inasmuch as it would leave phenomena of the most remarkable nature wholly unexplained, and would operate to the utter exclusion of all inquiry. Estoppels are odious even in judicial investigations, because they tend to exclude the truth; in metaphysics they are intolerable. So conscious was Mr. Hume himself of the weakness of his general and sweeping position, that in the second part of his 10th section, he limits his inference in these remarkable terms, 'I beg the limitations here made may be remarked when I say that a miracle can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion; for I own that otherwise there may possibly be miracles or violations of the usual course of nature of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony.'"

Now this limitation, by which Hume reduced the breadth of his original proposition, is simply a too arbitrary application of a principle of criticism of testimony, in itself entirely unobjectionable, and upon which, indeed, it is one of the objects of this paper most strongly to insist. Obviously, what is regarded in the proposition thus limited is not the improbability of the fact at all, but the temptation of the witnesses to deceive, or their liability to be deceived. That is a legitimate and necessary consideration, resulting from our experience of human motives and of the effect of prepossessions, in the estimation of testimony. If the object of the witness, as of the early Christian, for example, is to persuade the world of the divine authorship of a religion, that object, and the heat and zeal with which it would probably be pursued, might undoubtedly supply a motive, proper to be taken into account, for statements of miracles performed by the author of the religion. And so the preconception of His divine powers would predispose to a facility of accepting appearances as miraculous, quite inconsistent with the cool and scientific observation which we desiderate in the witnesses. These considerations undoubtedly go to weaken the force of testimony; whether they do so in such a degree as to deprive it of all value is really a matter of individual opinion, and certainly, apart from the circumstances of each case, cannot pretend to the dignity of an universal principle of judgment. Hume has few greater admirers than myself; but I am forced to the conclusion that the celebrated *Essay on Miracles* which he put forth with almost exulting confidence

is one of the weakest, the most ill considered, and the most inconsistent pieces of reasoning with which I am acquainted. It has been completely overthrown by three writers who have dealt with it, and of whom the later do not appear to have met with the earlier refutations; by Mr. Starkie, by Mr. Babbage, in the *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, and by Mr. A. R. Wallace, in the introduction to his *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

I have endeavoured to point out the fallacy of what seems to me a false application of the principle that evidence should be proportioned to probability. I will now attempt to state, in an abstract form, what I submit is its true result in our experience of testimony. If it is possible to assign a ratio of probability to a fact, not being one subject to exact computation, it is also possible to assign a similar ratio to the value of evidence, for the value of evidence is just the probability against its being forthcoming for that which is not a fact. If it is legitimate to consider the probability of a fact apart from the evidence for it, so it is legitimate to consider the general value of a particular quality and amount of testimony apart from the probability of any special fact to which it may be applied. No antecedent preference is due to the one probability over the other if they are equal, but the result is that precisely in proportion as both the fact is improbable and the evidence is probable, *you will not get* the evidence for the fact, that is to say, just in that proportion you are *unlikely* to get it. And if we find, and find often, evidence which we deem to be good, for a fact which we deem to be improbable, of one of two things we may be certain, either we have miscalculated the value of the evidence or the probability of the fact. Now in relation to facts new to our experience, to facts of which the proof of their possibility is also the proof of their existence, which of these alternatives is the most probable? Whatever induction experience may afford of what may be called the abstract value of evidence—that is without regard to the antecedent probabilities of the fact to be proved—is positive and affirmative. It is constantly being verified. It depends on tests and criteria, the efficiency of which are also being constantly guaranteed by experience. How stands the case with that other negative induction to which it is opposed? The probability in its favour is just the probability that good evidence will not be forthcoming to contradict it. It is a probability which arises entirely from the absence of evidence. It is impossible to conceive more vicious reasoning than that which would make it a ground of rejecting evidence. It depends on the proposition: "If this were true, we should have had the evidence before"—which amounts to this, as has been pointed out by Mr. Starkie, and by Mr. A. R. Wallace, in the admirable introduction to his book, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, that no new fact can ever be proved by testimony. And I cannot conclude this part of the argument better than by quoting that writer's neat dilemma in reply to Hume: "If the fact were possible, such evidence as we have been considering would prove it; if it were not possible, that evidence would not exist."

Something remains to be said on the effect of cumulative evidence. The late Mr. Babbage, in the *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, has worked out an elaborate mathematical refutation of Hume's principle. And he concludes that if any definite measure of improbability, however large, be adopted, that is to say, if the improbability be short of infinite (and no one has ever contended that it is this—or, in other words, that the fact is *impossible*), a miracle, so called, *can* be proved by testimony. Taking *m* as the measure of improbability, he says, "It follows, therefore, that however large *m* may be, however great the quantity of experience against the occurrence of a miracle (provided only that there are persons whose statements are more frequently correct than incorrect, and who give their testimony in favour of it without collusion), a certain number, *n*, can always be found, so that it shall be a greater improbability that their unanimous statement shall be a falsehood than that the miracle shall have occurred." Taking the case of only six witnesses who will speak the truth, and are not themselves deceived in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, Mr. Babbage deduces the result that the improbability of their independent concurrence in testifying to what is not a fact is five times as

great as an assumed improbability of two hundred thousand millions to one against the miracle which they are supposed to attest, or it is one billion to that number. And it hardly needs demonstration that the same result is arrived at by increasing the number of witnesses in proportion to any deduction from the value of the individual testimony of each. To this scientific authority I will add a legal one to the same effect. "It would," says Mr. Starkie, in his treatise on the *Law of Evidence*, "theoretically speaking, be improper to omit to observe that the weight and force of the united testimony of numbers upon abstract mathematical principles, increases in a higher ratio than that of the mere number of such witnesses. Upon these principles, if definite degrees of probability could be assigned to the testimony of each witness, the resulting probability in favour of their united testimony would be obtained not by the mere addition of the numbers expressing the several probabilities, but by a process of multiplication." Now it is obvious that in applying these principles to a class of alleged facts denied on the ground of antecedent improbability, we ought to take, in computing the cumulative force of testimony, not simply the testimony which this or that fact of the class can adduce, but all the testimony which exists for all similar alleged facts comprised in the class. Let *M* represent the class, comprising under it *a b c d*, particular alleged instances. We may state the result in either one or two ways. Either we may oppose the improbability of (class) *M* to the cumulative evidence of *a b c d*, taken together; or, taking *a* by itself, we may say that the improbability against *a* is the improbability of *M*, the class, minus the probability resulting from the cumulative testimony in favour of *b, c, and d*, taken together. Now to apply the foregoing considerations to cases of actual occurrence. I could not go into details here without protracting this paper beyond reasonable limits, but the cases I shall take are already familiar to many in this room, and as they are on record, with the utmost particularity of description, others may be referred to the printed accounts. I select then a number of testimonies to distinct facts of the same class, namely, of physical effects produced by means unknown to science, and each depending on the introduction of new physical conditions by special human organisms, which, as before stated, and not any particular effect, is the fact really, if at all, opposed to experience. Let me again request you to keep this clearly in mind. If I say that an effect depends upon the powers of a certain person, your experience is evidently not opposed to the effect except so far as it is opposed to the existence of such powers in members of the human race. Your experience of the uniform course of physical nature is wholly and absolutely irrelevant. Nobody has ever asserted that these things would occur in your presence alone. If you are to bring the experience argument to bear at all, it must be in denying the alleged conditions of their occurrence—the chief of these conditions, in this case, relating to the personality of individuals. That premised, the several alleged facts, I take, belong to the same class—namely, those that depend on the presence of persons reputed to be *psychics*, or mediums. The first is the experiment recorded in the April number of the *Quarterly Journal of Science* of Professor Zöllner and other German scientists with Dr. Slade. In this, as in the other cases to be presently mentioned, I have taken the testimony of well-known men of scientific eminence, because although their veracity may not be worth more than that of other witnesses to these facts, it may be called a *known quantity*. The improbability of Zöllner's *lying* would, I imagine, be admitted to exceed Mr. Babbage's 100 to 1. And so also of the others to be named. But how are we to assign a value to the improbability of his being deceived? Now here, I must remind you, the improbability of the fact attested is wholly beside the question. That is a matter to be taken into calculation subsequently. For the present purpose the probability of his being deceived or mistaken is just what it would have been if he was performing the most ordinary experiment in the world, under the same conditions of observation, and with, of course, the same suppositions of a motive and design to deceive him. When we have got this value, then we will set off against it the improbability of the fact. But to consider the latter at present would be

just as if, having to subtract an unknown quantity, *x*, from a given number, say 10, we began by subtracting 10 from *x*, and so made the problem $10 - (x - 10)$ instead of $10 - x$, an algebraical begging of the question. Regarding, then, the experiment without this prejudice, I should say no numeral would be considered quite high enough to express the improbability of Zöllner's being deceived. Add to this, the improbability of his coadjutors also being deceived. But whatever value we determine upon, is it to be opposed by itself to the improbability of the fact, which would then be proper to be considered? No; for look at the next case of the same class. That shall be the electrical test experiment of Mr. Crookes with Mrs. Fay, at his own house, assisted by several Fellows of the Royal Society, as well as by our president, Mr. Serjeant Cox, who all agreed in the conclusive nature of the experiment. Lying again is out of the question, practically. Deception by the medium? Inaccuracy of observation? A scientific test, devised by the most competent experts, the nature of it not explained to the medium till she, who may almost be assumed to be a scientifically ignorant young woman, is in the house (that of Mr. Crookes), the apparatus unknown to her, and its working watched and recorded from minute to minute. The results beyond all explicable power of production even had the medium been herself an accomplished electrician, and intimately versed with the apparatus. In calculating probabilities, the same observations are applicable here as to the case of Professor Zöllner. But the improbability of deception here must be added, in the ratio pointed out by Mr. Babbage and Mr. Starkie, to that of the former case. Take yet another, and here again one at least of the witnesses is a man of high scientific standing—Lord Lindsay, who has recently been elected on the Council of the Royal Society. He describes the levitation of Mr. Daniel Home and his floating in and out of a window seventy feet from the ground by bright moonlight. I will read the account in Lord Lindsay's own words:—

I was sitting with Mr. Home, and Lord Adare, and a cousin of his. During the sitting Mr. Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about 7 feet 6 inches, and there was not the slightest foothold between them, nor was there more than a 12-inch projection to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on.

We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in the air outside our window.

The moon was shining full into the room; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window-sill, and Home's feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room, feet foremost, and sat down.

Lord Adare then went into the next room to look at the window from which he had been carried. It was raised about 18 inches, and he expressed his wonder how Mr. Home had been taken through so narrow an aperture.

Home said, still entranced, "I will show you," and then with his back to the window he leaned back, and was shot out of the aperture, head first, with the body rigid, and then returned quite quietly.

The window is about 70 feet from the ground. I very much doubt whether any skilful tightrope dancer would like to attempt a feat of this description, where the only means of crossing would be by a perilous leap, or being borne across in such a manner as I have described, placing the question of the light aside.

LINDSAY.

July 14th, 1871.

I will call one other witness before you, likewise of distinguished scientific position and attainments, begging you to remember that these are only specimen cases. It is Dr. Lockhart Robertson, one of Her Majesty's Commissioners in Lunacy. Among other phenomena which took place in his own house, in the presence of himself and his own friends, the medium being a Mr. Squire, Dr. Robertson describes the following:—"A heavy circular chair, made of birch and strongly constructed, was lifted a somersault in the air and thrown on the bed, the left hand only of Mr. Squire being held on the surface, his other hand held, and his legs being tied to the chair on which he sat. The table was afterwards twice lifted on to the head of the writer and of Mr. Squire. . . . At the writer's request this table was afterwards smashed and broken, and one fragment thrown across the room, the table at the time being held by the writer and Mr. Squire. This occurred in half a minute. The writer has since vainly endeavoured with all his strength to break one of the remaining legs. The one broken was rent across the

grain of the wood." Dr. Robertson states that all this took place in the dark, but probably, looking at the nature of the phenomena and the conditions described, most candid persons would be of the opinion he concludes by expressing "that fraud was utterly and entirely impossible and impracticable." I will add just one other testimony of Lord Lindsay:—"A friend of mine was very anxious to find the will of his grandmother, who had been dead forty years, but could not even find the certificate of her death. I went with him to the Marshall's, and we had a *séance*; we sat at a table, and soon the raps came. My friend asked his questions *mentally*; he went over the alphabet himself, or sometimes I did so, not knowing the question. We were told the will had been drawn by a man named Walker, who lived in Whitechapel; the name of the street and the number of the house were given. We went to Whitechapel, found the man, and subsequently, through his aid, obtained a copy of the draft. He was quite unknown to us, and had not always lived in that locality, for he had seen better days. The medium could not possibly have known anything about the matter, and even if she had, her knowledge would have been of no avail, as all the questions were mental ones."

If you would be rational, do not laugh at these cases one by one, but study the evidence for each of them separately, and then appreciate their cumulative force, as belonging to the same class. Then, if you please, set off the improbability arising from your own and others' ignorance. I don't know if you will estimate that at Babbage's two hundred thousand millions, but if so, you are bound to show—mind, once more, without any reference, express or tacit, to the improbability of the facts—why the evidence should be estimated at less than Babbage's billion, or rather, since we have here more than six witnesses whose testimony for any ordinary fact would have so great a value, at this billion multiplied in a greater ratio than my small mathematical powers could easily calculate.

But, in fact, I place the argument far higher than either Mr. Starkie or Mr. Babbage, though I believe I am in accord with Mr. Wallace. Both the former assumed that there is an antecedent improbability to be deducted from the value of the positive testimony. I deny that altogether. I say that an improbability arising from want of evidence—which is the nature of these negative inductions—is just the improbability that evidence will be forthcoming. When you have got the evidence the improbability vanishes just in proportion to the value of the evidence *per se*. What you mean by the improbability of a fact beyond experience is that it is probably impossible, or not *in rerum naturâ*. What conceivably legitimate measure of this probability can you adopt than that which also determines the relation between evidence and fact? The fallacy consists in assuming any numerical value whatever for such antecedent improbabilities apart from this relation. Say that the best single human testimony has a value of 100 to 1. Now to-day, because I have never had that evidence, I say the probability against the fact is represented in my mind as 1,000 to 1. To-morrow I get the evidence of that intrinsic value of 100 to 1, and I say, "Oh, but the adverse probability is 1,000 to 1, and the value of this evidence must be reduced accordingly." This surely is unreasonable. But I may quite logically say, "Inasmuch as this 100 to 1 evidence has never been forthcoming, it raises in my mind a presumption worth 1,000 to 1 that such evidence never will be forthcoming." If the evidence arrives after all, there is no presumption against its *truth*. We have a right to our surprise, but not to our incredulity. Because there was no evidence, we thought there was no fact. We had a right to think so. But the moment we have evidence we are in the region of evidence whose intrinsic value we have to estimate, all presumptions being henceforth merely impertinent. The case is, of course, very different when we are dealing with actual, ascertainable probabilities, as the probability of a given ball being drawn by chance from a hundred others. Then the chance being real, and not merely supposititious, we properly set it off against the evidence. But in the other case the evidence destroys the supposition, precisely in proportion to its own intrinsic value.

But even allowing the presumption to co-exist with the

evidence, it has appeared that if no other evidence of similar facts had existed from the beginning of recorded time to the present besides these three cases I have mentioned, the probability in their favour would still be greater than the probability against them. You are instinctively repelled by this statement; so am I. We all feel that there must be something wrong somewhere. And so there is. It is not that the hypothesis is an impossible one. Mr. Babbage has made a very ingenious supposition. He has conceived the course of nature to be like a machine constructed on the principle of his own calculating engine. A thousand revolutions of the wheel shall bring up only square numbers, but the machine shall be constructed so that the thousand and first shall show a cube number—a "miracle." We can conceive that certainly. And so a man might be born to-day who should be the first of mankind born with these abnormal powers we have been considering. But all observed analogies protest against this supposition of a purely exceptional fact, even though we may conceive such a fact to be subsumed under a higher law of extremely rare application. If we have once proved the fact under its own conditions, it is in the highest degree probable that the law of its occurrence is in constant operation. To suppose that it is not is to encounter a new improbability, and it is this new improbability which repelled us just now in the supposition that no other similar cases had existed in human experience. We should expect to find them in every age. See now how we have shifted the onus of improbability. The proved case in the present makes such cases in the past highly probable; in other words, experience cannot have been truly opposed to that which has just been proved on the assumption that experience is opposed to it. And what do we find in fact? Why, that records of occult phenomena, and especially of such as occur through the mediation of particular individuals, form an appreciable part of the literature of every generation of men since the invention of printing, and anterior to that we have, besides the manuscript accounts of antiquity, the universal belief of mankind, which must presumably have rested on experience. Addison, indeed, speaks of the "general testimony of mankind" in favour of those facts to which 18th century scepticism—a product of intellectual causes which have been traced by Mr. Lecky—has unwarrantably opposed that very general testimony. I have said nothing of the innumerable mob of witnesses in the present time, and in almost every country in the world, to whose separate and individual testimony we are unable to assign a positive value. I have said nothing even of that respectable array of known and in various ways distinguished witnesses whom we have still among us, or who have recently deceased. I have said nothing of the admission of experts in the art of conjuring—that art to which such illimitable powers are ascribed by the credulity of the incredulous—of the celebrated conjurer Houdin, of the celebrated conjurer Bellachini, of the celebrated conjurer John Nevil Maskelyne, the latter of whom I publicly challenged in the *Examiner* newspaper to explain away, if he could, certain printed and published admissions of his own to the existence of phenomena of this class not produced by trickery.* I am not attempting the prodigious task of estimating in figures the cumulative evidence for the phenomena called Spiritualistic, a Pelion piled upon an Ossa of testimony, and which would crush any logical resistance, but not the illogical power of that against which, it is said, the very gods strive vainly. I charge this stupidity with gross ignorance of the principles upon which evidence should be estimated. And I have traced this ignorance to four fallacies: First, to the confusion of the positive affirmative induction which we legitimately draw of the course of nature under ordinary conditions of observation, with the negative induction from inexperience, of the non-existence of other conditions. Secondly, to the assumption that this inexperience, in fact, exists, as the ground even of this negative, far more limited, and far less valid induction, an assumption which is made by an arbitrary rejection of historic evidence. Thirdly, to the assumption that antecedent improbability thus arising

* Notice of the terms of the above reference to Mr. Maskelyne was sent to the latter, with a card of admission to hear the paper read, available for Maskelyne himself, or for any friend by whom he might wish to be represented, and who might make any statement by permission of the chairman.

can co-exist with testimony of a certain assignable value. Fourthly, to neglecting to estimate the *cumulative* force of testimony.

That these fallacies are, nevertheless, sanctioned by common consent, and by authority, need not surprise us. It is a popular error that priests have been the greatest enemies to science. It has been the "common sense" of each generation, supported and sanctioned by the highest scientific authorities of the day, that has always been found opposed to the reception of evidence conflicting with presumptions which have their origin in ignorance. It was not a Churchman, but a very learned professor, notorious for his anti-religious tendencies, who refused to look through Galileo's telescope. Was it religious persecution or popular and scientific ridicule that Harvey, Jenner, Franklin, Young, Stephenson, Arago, and Gregory, encountered for their respective discoveries and ideas? It is significant that in an American book, called the *Warfare of Science*, that was republished in England last year under the avowed patronage of Professor Tyndall, there is much that is well and eloquently told of the wrongs of science at the hands of religious bigotry, but not one word of the constant and determined obstruction of scientific men.

To avoid misapprehension I wish to add one remark. In speaking of the abstract value of testimony I have not for a moment meant to imply that testimony, or evidence generally, can be appreciated without reference to the nature of the fact attested. It is only the assumed improbability of the fact which I have regarded as a separable factor. But in accounts of the extraordinary these are undoubtedly elements of fallacy which only a very inexperienced judge of testimony would ignore. For instance, we may almost appropriate a special set of motives to such narrations. The mere vanity of producing an impression of wonder, or of making out an unanswerable case, is responsible for many a false or highly coloured account. There is the temptation to support a hasty exaggeration by a specific falsehood, or by a suppression of truth. Then, again, the fact may be of such a nature that the whole value of the testimony depends on minuteness and accuracy of observation. Regard to time prevents my doing more than advert to these considerations. Only to each case as it arises can their proper weight be assigned. Unfortunately there is assigned to them an enormously exaggerated weight in general, without reference to particular cases at all, and this because it is assumed to be more probable that the evidence is thus vitiated than that the facts attested are true. No doubt the presumption that evidence is not good is a far more rational presumption than that evidence, however good, is false. And, moreover, it is one which can be brought to the test of examination, whereas the latter cannot. We can show whether evidence does or does not come up to a certain standard, and if it does the presumption is falsified; but to the man who says, "I won't listen, and I don't care how good your evidence may be," we can have nothing further to say.

In conclusion, I will lay down the following proposition broadly. A negative probability, by which I mean an inference of non-existence from the absence of evidence, cannot in the least affect the value of positive evidence of existence. It is only provisional. It vanishes at the touch of sufficient evidence; and sufficient evidence I define, for this purpose, to be evidence which would establish a fact—having strict regard to the nature of the fact—as to which there was no antecedent presumption or probability for or against. Would I therefore accept the statement of a casual stranger as to some unheard of marvel with the same facility that I would accept his statement as to its having rained somewhere yesterday—a fact which may be said to answer the description of having no antecedent presumption either way? Certainly not, for I have said that the nature of the fact is to be regarded, not as probable or improbable, but as communicating elements of fallacy to testimony. Thus understood, I say that the evidence is our whole concern, and that if it stood every test and every criticism which experience could suggest, I would accept on the strength of it any marvel in the *Arabian Nights* or *Gulliver's Travels*. And I submit that the man who would not is the creature of prejudice and the victim of prepossessions.

THE IDEA OF SPIRITS.

THE idea that the spirits in heaven are interested in those here on earth has somehow found a sure lodgment in the human mind. The great poets, whose genius is so near akin to the inspirations of the prophets and the apostles, have all along held to this glowing thought. We recall that sweetest verse of Spenser:—

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want;
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant.
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant,
And all for love, and nothing for reward."

And those more stately lines of Milton:—

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

They are unseen, for these eyes of ours are only for material objects. But this presence is not the less real, no less real than God's own presence, than the spirit's own influence which you and I have never seen, but the power of which we never doubt. This partition wall which separates the two worlds is very thin; and what is this partition wall except this veil of flesh, which holds our spirits only for a time, and which is so soon to be rent, when our spirits shall go forth to mingle in the innumerable throng which people the air around us? And is this veil, which now holds our gaze, impenetrable to them? It is not wholly so, even to us! Though now we are, at so many points, shut in from one another by material walls, though so much of our communication with one another is restricted to these channels of sense—to speech, and touch, and sight, and hearing—yet it is not altogether so. Our minds hold communication with each other through viewless avenues, and we impress our thought upon another, sometimes with mightiest power, when every channel of sense is closed. It is a thin partition which separates us, our spirits, from another, even when we are both here in the flesh. How much thinner this partition to that one who has broken through the outer wall, and is free from these physical laws which surround us! Such beings may easily hear our voice of praise and prayer which we from this side lift to God. Such beings may easily look through and witness to our trials and struggles, and may communicate to us of their strength and courage.—*The Rev. George B. Spaulding.*

WHEN an author or a "spirit guide" defines the Deity and the principles of construction of the universe, either the definer is in the position of a flea which believes it can expound the philosophy of Kant, or the Almighty is comprised within insignificant limits. When a mortal sends us communications for publication telling us all about the nature of God and His angels, we consider the value of the manuscript as small as the self-confidence of the sender is large. Was it not Dickens who said that street-preachers talked as if they were as familiar with the will and thoughts of the Almighty as they were with their own greasy gloves?

AN AMPUTATION PHENOMENON.—Mr. Van Dorn complained on Sunday that it seemed to him that something was wrapped tightly about the thumb on the arm which was removed by amputation on Saturday, and on examining the arm, which had been laid by Dr. Stannard on a board in the rear room of the store, it was found that a thread had accidentally become entangled about the thumb, and that in the swelling of the thumb the thread had made a crease around it. The thread was removed, and Mr. Van Dorn, not knowing that the string had been around the thumb, said that it felt much better. Soon after, Dr. Stannard made an experiment to further test the curious phenomenon. He tied the thumb and little finger firmly together, and laid a hatchet on the hand. Van Dorn soon began to complain of pain in the hand, and finally that the thumb and little finger were tied together. The string was removed, and the hand straightened out again, when the patient, with no knowledge of what had been done, said that the arm felt better than it had at any time since the amputation had taken place. The above are the facts of the case, upon which we have no theory to advance.—*Chagrin Falls (O.) Exponent.*

RECOGNITION OF THE CHARITABLE WORK OF A SPIRITUALIST.—*L'entente cordiale* really means something more than Prince of Wales's speeches, dinners, and exhibitions. Our amiable neighbours have not only taken to applauding our politics, trying to speak our language, and to analysing and imitating, if not to liking, our plum-pudding, but are actually holding "May meetings" and giving us *couronnes civiques* for our good doings. The *Société Nationale d'Encouragement de Bien* held its anniversary last week, and after awarding gold medals for poetry, gold medals for prose, rewards for twenty-two books *utiles à la propagation des bonnes mœurs*, and decorations to domestics for supporting their broken-down old masters, to orphans for acting as heads of families, to poor women doing the nursing of the aged, sick, and imbeciles, to sons for paying the debts of their fathers, to soldiers on service for putting by their *sous de poche* to send to their infirm parents, to ladies for having cut the telegraph wires in Prussian occupation and pocketed their military despatches, and to gentlemen for having got across Africa, for having put the Japanese up to the French system of farming, and for having imbibed so much of the principles of humanity as to become the friends of Beranger, Lamartine, Gautier, and Raspail—have crowned with their greenest laurels one of our countrywomen, M^{me}. Georgina Weldon, for having founded an orphanage where she rears a large number of children at her own expense. After all, would it not be as well to return the compliment by sending every now and then a batch of the little vagabonds to help fill up the gaps in the French census.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

ORGANISATION CONSIDERED AS THE DUTY OF SPIRITUALISTS.

THE lower nations are in the scale of existence, the greater is their incapacity for efficient organisation. Thus savages and semi-civilised peoples, like the ancient Jews, usually have a tyrant to rule over them—a man who is imperfectly kept in check because of their inability to organise with sufficient efficiency to maintain their individual rights. When the despotic ruler of such primitive nations becomes so troublesome as to be unbearable, he is disposed of by insurrection or assassination, but another tyrant is set up in his place, the multitude not having grown to that altitude which enables them to construct or maintain a free government. Highly cultured people, on the other hand, are good organisers. This may be seen clearly in ascendant political circles in England; and all those nations which possess most liberty, owe their position to an efficient system of representative government, by means of which they elect or remove their own rulers, instead of bowing down to an irresponsible monarch, who tries to break up all attempts at union and self-government among his subjects. Thus is the general principal established, that when people are so mentally constituted that they cannot organise efficiently, are so at variance with each other that they cannot unite, are so unruly that each man will not, for the general good, yield one jot of his desire to have his own way, such an agglomeration of individuals is of a lower type than a multitude of men and women belonging to a movement which is competent to establish law and order in its own ranks, and thereby to take a higher position in the world.

For the above reasons those who promote organisation promote the public interests of Spiritualism, and those who do not do so, lower the general standard of the movement. Thus this question is not one of the personal liking or disliking of individuals to combination, but it is a question of the performance or non-performance of a duty, of the infliction of an injury or the conferring a benefit. The question at issue is, whether History shall or shall not chronicle—"The Spiritualists of 1878 belonged to an uncultured phase of society, not yet developed to the orderly stage, consequently they were not competent to organise efficiently, and because of their disintegration were unable to take a strong position in the community."

In the days of old, organisations have been used for bad purposes. So have steam-engines when used in unjustifiable naval warfare. An organisation, like a steam-engine, merely gives power to its possessor; the good or bad use of that power depends upon those who control it, not upon the thing itself. Just as steam-engines can now be made and used with safety, so can organisations now be kept well under the control of those who construct them. At the present day, if a man does not approve the work done by his organisation, he leaves it, and ceases to pay his subscriptions; in the days of old, if he left his organisation—the Church, of which he was a compulsory member—he was branded as a heretic, and roasted or made otherwise uncomfortable. Thus there is an essential difference between organisations constructed before men understood the principles of self-government and those constructed now.

As savage and primitive people cannot construct steam-engines, and are afraid of them until they become familiar, so unprogressed people cannot organise with efficiency, and are afraid of organised powers. The human mind must grow till it can construct and govern such powers without fear, and incapacity so to do betokens a lower stage of development. A good organisation is a colleague and not a master.

These remarks apply to all organisations, and not to one in particular. Furthermore, if in any organisation a few men make themselves discordant, jarring elements, they should see that it is better they should form another of their own, wherein they can pass lives of harmony, rather than throw a working machine out of gear in their attempt to get their own way, to the discomfort of themselves and everybody else. Thus may all varieties of opinion be harmoniously represented and strife avoided.

The quality of an organisation depends upon the quality of its managers; if these have outgrown the elemental stage,

and deal with great principles to the exclusion of personalities and contention, work can be done which an inferior organisation cannot touch. When orderly and contentious individuals are mixed in an organisation, the former have a tendency to withdraw from a sphere to which they are foreign; but, sometimes, as an act of painful self-sacrifice, remain in contact with the atmosphere of strife to promote the public welfare. They follow the path of duty, instead of the path of inclination.

Descending now from general principles, which are true and unalterable, we instance an attempt to put them into practice. Whenever principles have to be carried out, human imperfections creep into the work, so reasonable approximation to the ideal is all that can be expected.

What has our solitary large Spiritualistic organisation, established in the face of every kind of opposition, done within a few short years?

1. It has demonstrated that all Spiritualists do not belong to that undeveloped stage of being marked by incapacity to organise efficiently.

2. It has done its best to carry out the principle of friendly union among Spiritualists, interfering with the liberty of conscience of nobody, and performing work respecting the utility of which all are agreed. The simple basis of union is acknowledgment of the established facts of Spiritualism; any attempt to coalesce on religious grounds would, of course, be the signal for dissension, and the splitting up into innumerable sects.

3. It has rendered tyrannical leadership impossible, by substituting temporarily elected representatives for self-appointed masters.

4. It has further increased freedom among Spiritualists, by giving all its members a power of control of the public affairs of Spiritualism, and placing the expenditure of their own funds in their own hands, whereby the maximum amount of benefit is gained from the minimum expenditure of means. Thus is economy promoted.

5. It has established the finest library in the world of books relating to Modern Spiritualism, and this library being public and not private property, Spiritualists at large cannot be deprived of its use. It is a centre for the collection of psychological books from all parts of the world.

6. By establishing systematic original research, it has already given new knowledge to the world, in such a way as to raise the prestige of British Spiritualism all the world over.

7. By organisation Spiritualists ascertain the capacity of each other for public work, so as to be able to put the right man in the right place in times of difficulty and danger. Without this particular knowledge, and acting upon general knowledge only, there was, before the period of organisation, great possibility of putting the wrong man in responsible positions.

In short, organisation means power, order, law, reputation, and freedom; disorganisation means weakness and incapacity. Hence this question of organisation or disorganisation is a question of personal duty respecting which every Spiritualist is obliged to take up a definite position, and according to the position he takes, so does he of necessity weaken or strengthen the movement. By means of original experimental research, ten times more might have been done for Spiritualism than has been done under difficulties, had all Spiritualists grown to that stage at which alone men can organise with efficiency.

THE last number of *The Truthseeker* (Trübner and Co.) contains an able article by Mrs. Lowe on the "Lunacy Laws, and the Work of the late Parliamentary Committee in relation thereto." Much matter-of-fact information about abuses is given, and the cases ought to be authoritatively investigated.

A SPIRIT MESSAGE—The following communication was recently given to Mrs. Makdougall Gregory:—"Oh, beloved mother, rejoice with me, for I am very happy, having lately passed into a higher sphere of being. The chief teachings of this sphere are that all things are intermediate; God alone is first and last, and creation moves in concentric circles within his open words. The first life of spirits in the spheres is that of preparation; in natural bodies on earth it is probation, and this latter state is everlasting, but not as a punishment, which I once thought it was. No! it is a blessed state, for you feel yourself enfolded in God's love, which burns up all that is evil in your nature, at the same time filling you with holiness and bliss. Father sends his love."

THE BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

LAST Tuesday evening, at the ordinary monthly meeting of the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists, Mr. Alexander Calder, president, occupied the chair. The other members present were Mr. C. C. Massey, Dr. Stanhope T. Speer, the Rev. W. Stainton-Moses, Mr. March, Mr. and Mrs. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, Mrs. Fitz-Gerald, Mrs. Maltby, the Rev. W. W. Newbould, Mr. Cornelius Pearson, Mr. Withall, Mr. Pearce, Mr. Dawson Rogers, Mrs. Lowe, Mr. E. T. Bennett, Miss Houghton, Mr. Algernon Joy, Mr. Reimers, and Mr. W. H. Harrison.

Mr. Alexander Calder was unanimously re-elected President of the Association with acclamation. He briefly returned thanks, saying that the position was one of considerable responsibility.

Three new ordinary members were elected, one of whom was Mr. Ch. Cassal, LL.D., Professor of French in University College, London, Examiner at the University of London, Royal Academy, Woolwich, Indian Civil Service, &c., &c.; and two honorary members. There was one resignation.

The President read the report of the Finance Committee, which set forth that the balance in hand was £115 16s. 1d.; it recommended payments to the extent of £29 17s. 8d., and estimated the outstanding liabilities of the Association at £5.

After the reading of an application, it was resolved that the usual notices of forthcoming business of the Association be furnished to a paper represented by Mr. Blyton.

Dr. Carter Blake sent in a respectful resignation of his seat on the Council, to which he had been recently elected. Captain Rolleston resigned, on the ground that most of his time was spent abroad.

The vice-presidents of the Association, and the members of committees, were then unanimously re-elected, also the treasurer and auditor.

The question of engaging one or more mediums at a regular salary, raised by the president, was referred to the *Séance* Committee, important legal and other points being involved.

On the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee, it was resolved that new members who join at £2 2s. per annum after July 1st shall be required to pay £1 1s. only for the current half-year.

The *Soirée* Committee reported a balance of profit on *soirées* of £6 13s. 1½d., which it was resolved to expend in carpeting one of the smaller rooms.

A vote of thanks was given to the Misses Withall for their attention to the musical arrangements at the *soirées*.

It was then resolved:—"That the General Purposes Committee be instructed to inquire into and report to the Council upon the working and tendency of the Lunacy Laws in relation to Spiritualism, having especial regard to the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, and to any cases in their judgment well authenticated which may be brought to their notice."

The following notices of motion were then given:—

1. *By Mrs. Lowe*.—"That in future the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists be closed on national holidays until further orders."

2. *By Mr. E. T. Bennett*.—"That it be considered a breach of privilege on the part of any member of the Association to make public criticisms on the proceedings of its committees, and on the action of individual members on those committees, except as far as they are brought before the Council by their own reports or otherwise."

3. *By Mr. A. Joy*.—"That it is the opinion of the Council that when a member has been proposed for election on the Council at the annual general meeting, it is competent for him to withdraw his name before the scrutiny, even though he shall have previously consented to its being proposed; and that when the scrutineers have official knowledge of the withdrawal, they ought not to take that name into consideration at all, but should make up the required number without it (that is, of course, supposing there are enough candidates on the authorised list)."

4. "That no payments on account of services rendered after this date, in any way to the Association, be in future made, directly or indirectly, to *The Spiritualist* newspaper so long as its editor and proprietor continues to be a member of the Council."

5. "That it is inexpedient that the proceedings of committees appointed by the Council be open for the inspection of any person not a member of the Council."

6. "That those members of Council who have not paid the subscription for the current year should be struck off the list of the Council."

7. *By Mr. W. H. Harrison*.—"That the side on which each member of Council votes at all divisions at Council meetings be recorded, and published in the proceedings of the Association."

8. "That the side on which each member of a committee votes at every division of a committee be recorded in the minutes; that the minutes of all committee meetings be open to inspection for public and other purposes by any member of the Association on demand; and that the votes at divisions of committees shall be published in the proceedings of the Association whenever, at the discretion of the chairman of the committee, they are deemed to be of sufficient public importance."

9. "That a Stock Account of the property belonging to the Association be kept and presented monthly to the Finance Committee. That it shall show all changes in the stock during each month, and the causes thereof. That the Finance Committee shall report monthly to the Council the value of the stock belonging to the Association."

THE LAST SOIREE OF THE SEASON.

The last of the series of *soirées* at 38, Great Russell-street, for this season, closed with a well-attended meeting on the 5th inst. A new and pleasing feature of the evening was the exhibition of a small but choice collection of pictures by artist-members of the Association. Signor Rondi sent several exquisite miniatures after the old masters; a full-sized water-colour, copied from a Madonna by Carlo Dolci, attracted

especial attention. Miss Florence Claxton sent one of her well-known female heads, and Mr. Cornelius Pearson three excellent landscapes of English scenery. Madame de Steiger exhibited two Oriental subjects, painted from life, remarkable alike for truth and for their rich harmonious colouring; and Mr. H. E. Frances sent two *genre* pictures. Some medial paintings by Mrs. Hallock and Mr. H. P. Cotton were of interest. Mr. J. W. Fletcher gave the company a graphic account of his travels in Egypt. Amongst the guests were Dr. H. J. Billing and Mrs. Hollis-Billing, who have lately arrived from America to take up their residence in this country. The musical part of the evening was well sustained by Mrs. Weldon, Miss Younge, and Mrs. Limpus.

A MEETING NEXT MONDAY.—On Monday evening next, at eight o'clock, the last of the fortnightly meetings this season of the British National Association of Spiritualists will be held at 38, Great Russell-street, London. Mr. Stainton-Moses—who has had the arrangement of the meetings and subjects, and has performed his duties admirably—will give a *résumé* of the work done and subjects considered during the past session. As this will also probably be the last opportunity the members of the Association will have of meeting in general assembly before next winter, there should be a large attendance.

A JESUIT'S OPINION OF SPIRITUALISM.—The following is the opinion which a learned member of the "Society of Jesus," Father J. P. Gury, gave in his *Compendium Theologicæ Moralis*, 8vo, Ratisbon, 1874, p. 132. The original and a translation are given:—"Neque fas est, tabulas aliasve res hujusmodi interrogare experimenti aut joci gratia. Etenim non licet in re evidenter mala experimentum tentare, nec de ea recreari." "And it is not a sin to inquire of tables or other things in this manner for experiment or for amusement. But in an evident case [of sin] it is not lawful to attempt a wicked experiment, nor to amuse ourselves with it." Father Gury's work is commonly used by students of the theology in the Roman Catholic Church.

SCANDINAVIAN MEDIUMS.—Modern Spiritualism is not so modern after all. The student finds traces of it everywhere. We are told in Scandinavian history that the Norse chief Ingimund shut up three Finns in a hut for three nights that they might visit Iceland and give him information concerning the country in which he proposed to settle. Their bodies became rigid, they sent their souls on the errand, and, awakening after three days, gave an accurate description of the country. We are also told by Jung Stilling that examples came to his knowledge of sick persons who, longing to see absent friends, fell into a swoon, during which they appeared to the distant objects of their affection. In our modern language we use the term "beside one's self" with something of the old meaning.—*Merrimac Journal*.

LUNACY LAW AMENDMENT SOCIETY.—A meeting of this society was held at Exeter Hall on Tuesday last week. Reports and cases were read by the secretary. Mr. J. Lobb, editor of the *Christian Age*, occupied the chair. Effective speeches were made by several ministers of the Gospel and members of the "Lunacy Law Amendment Society." The narrative of an escaped alleged lunatic from Bethlehem Asylum, Mr. Atkins, created much excitement. Mrs. Weldon gave a concise, but graphic, account of her narrow escape from the clutches of the lunacy doctors. Mr. Crutwell and Mr. Moseley (two barristers), Mr. Plumridge, the treasurer of the society, and others, made some valuable remarks. The meeting, which was a lively one throughout, though the attendance was small, terminated at a late hour.

"PSYCHOGRAPHY."—The long-announced volume under this title, by one of the most devoted and accomplished students of Spiritualism, has been received from England. It forms an elegant volume of one hundred and fifty-two pages, well bound in ornamented cloth. Of the importance of this remarkable work to Spiritualists and investigators we need not speak at this time; we shall in our next call attention to some of its strong points. Suffice it to say for the present that it places the great fact of psychography, or writing independent of any known human or mechanical means, upon the most impregnable grounds, and makes it a demonstrated and demonstrable fact which modern science can no longer reject. This great phenomenon once established, the cognate phenomena of materialisation must soon be placed in the same scientific category. If you want something wherewith to stop the mouths of all cavillers who ask, "What proved phenomena can you adduce?" buy a copy of *Psychography*, and carry it in your pocket as your all-sufficient answer to all doubters and to all adversaries of the facts of Spiritualism.—*Banner of Light*.

SPIRIT RAPPING IN JOHN WESLEY'S FAMILY.—All the principal sounds produced by spiritual agency in our time were heard in the house of Rev. John Wesley, at Lincolnshire, England, in the early part of the last century. Those illustrations of the presence and power of spirits first occurred in 1716, one hundred and sixty-two years ago. A partial enumeration of the different phases of the phenomena embraces the following:—Mysterious knockings at the doors and elsewhere in the different apartments; the moving of ponderable bodies; opening and closing of doors; sounds of footsteps in the hall, and the rustling of flowing garments; heavy footfalls on the stairs—as if persons were ascending and descending—accompanied by a tremulous motion of the whole house. Thundering sounds whenever Mr. Wesley prayed for the king; sounds such as are produced by shifting the sails of a windmill; the apparent falling of metallic balls among glassware or fine porcelain, and of huge pieces of coal, which appeared to be broken into many fragments and scattered over the floor; rocking the cradle, and lifting the bed with Nancy Wesley on it; and the rattling of silver coin, which appeared to be poured over Mrs. Wesley, and to fall at her feet.—S. B. BRITAN, M.D.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF LITERARY CULTURE.

BY J. T. MARKLEY, AUTHOR OF "STUDIES OF CHARACTER," AND "STRAY THOUGHTS."

AN able writer, in paying a tribute to the memory of the noble Leigh Hunt, says:—"Literature is the solvent which melts the rigours of party antagonism, and makes all men kin. It survives the misunderstandings of personal conflict, and unites above the grave the representatives of opposing creeds." Would that we were justified in saying as much of theology, which, above all things that are many-sided, should teach an example in the matter of cool passion, humane feeling, and the charity which smacks of a better world. Alas! the history of rival creeds speak a sad tale. Earnest men, labouring for the regeneration of society, have, in every age, hated each other whilst discussing themes spiritual; and many an unexpressed curse has disturbed the quiet of bosoms where only affection, good wishes, and brotherly interests should have dwelt. Most people seem to forget the great social law of mutual dependence—the more sacred and comprehensive purposes of existence. We somehow despise the idea of a broader well-being, which Longfellow has not inaptly poetised:—

Not chance of birth or place has made us friends,
Being oftentimes of different tongues and nations,
But the endeavour for the selfsame ends,
With the same hopes, and fears, and aspirations.

We must in all fairness confess that the Literati, as well as the students in theology, politics, and the sciences, are not minus the disposition to carp, hate, plead, or fight for an enemy's blood; but of those who write epigrams, relate histories, conceive parables, or court the Muses, may it be affirmed more than of others, that they show, "The animosities are mortal, but the humanities live for ever." Milton, Bunyan, and De Foe were Radical politicians of an unmistakable type, and of course maintained a theory of legislation anything but similar to the high-class Toryism of the nineteenth century; but because they were men of original genius, and given to much sweetness of phrase, their political bias, however intense, is forgotten by Conservative journalists and men of letters, who constantly refer to, and as brother penmen, seem proud of, the imaginative gifts of their departed countrymen. The staunch old "obstructionists" of a bygone age, who possessed commanding intellect, and could gracefully wield a quill, are remembered and spoken of with special reverence by the scribes of the current era, even by those who live and swear by a converse creed. The glorious book-makers of the Elizabethan reign, the bards of the sunny meadows, the lyrists of domestic philosophy, the classic caterers for the stage, and the men who advanced the ideal, to bless and elevate their fellows; old Raleigh with his burning convictions, and Shakespeare with his fund of immortal sentiment and knowledge of the mysterious in character—speak without hindrance, and with effect, to all conditions of people. We bury prejudice, and give thanks for the legacy of big and beautiful thoughts, which come from individuals whose personal beliefs we perchance cannot welcome, whose faults we condemn, but whose mental endowments we—whatever may be our honest opinions in regard to life, things inevitable, or destiny—can appreciate, and are ready to applaud.

It is also not a little remarkable that the sacred writers, the men of intense poetic feeling and sweep of imagination, whose thoughts ran in no narrow groove, are—it may be unconsciously—much admired by the sworn infidels who pretend to hate, and not seldom read, the Scriptures to their own moral destruction. Notwithstanding that the kindred of old Israel were extremely jealous of their national glory, corporate peculiarities, and hereditary creed, they—the nobler spirits—manifested not a little affection for the lofty in thought, the pure in feeling, and the wonderful in skill, even when found among alien tribes, whose acquaintance was made by the events of commerce or militant collision. The bards, orators, and men who made a chronicle of what the gods performed in the remote periods of classic Greece, showed a respect for similarities of imaginative endowment which is no less surprising than true. The eloquence of the enemy, however withering, was counted for its worth; the poesy of the verseman—many times poisonous in its

sweetness—had untold charms for some cultured, but blood-desiring foe; the music of the warrior-minstrel was not at all times unwelcome to the opposition camp; indeed, people then, as now, assumed a desperate antagonism to each other, a rivalry strong and devilish; but possessed ever an hidden force of sympathy, not always controllable, begotten by the grand in sentiment, or the skilful in art. In the Church, more especially, men of a warm literary temperament are the most brotherly, noble, courteous, and humane. They honestly examine before they condemn the conflicting philosophies of the age. They possess their souls in patience, and seldom swear against a theory they cannot accept or fail to understand. They cultivate two opposite but necessary virtues—the serpent's wisdom, and the powerful tenderness of the dove. With them all men are not liars, nor is every fool an infallible oracle.

As a matter of etiquette they listen to, if they laugh at, "old wives' fables;" and it would require abundant strength of testimony to make them believe that Jonah swallowed the whale. If they chase butterflies, or the streaks of the summer sun, or deign to fall asleep under the May-bushes, it is because they are haunted with a poetic frenzy, and are wont to dream of the "oaten lute," the swordless army of cowslips, and the Almighty "mirrored in the glossy depths," and not from weakness of brain or lack of earnestness in character. The literary parson is notably generous to his opponents in theological debate. His colours, when painting the likeness of an enemy, are more from the rainbow tints than from the sombre hues of the bottomless pit. Difference in creed is no barrier to a recognition of personal worth or mental splendour in a contemporary. Unlike the advocates of one idea, these men of refined disposition claim, and allow others to have, a measure of truth, which would not be the case if they were disrespectful to the broader charities of being. They are the saviours of social life; they are the salt of religion. Without them the Church would become the arena of denominational malice; piety would be vague and ugly in its varied expression; and the liturgy of confessors become a vehement confusion of tongues. But even authors have devoured each other, and critics have tried to kill, with a desperate vengeance. Happily this is exceptional. It bespeaks an untamed humanity. The gifted young Keats was unfairly slain, but his censor could only rejoice in having the strength of the brute. Byron was too strong in the terrible faith of genius to fear his assailant Jefferies; he flung brimstone at his vain accuser, and then sang the pleasures of conquest. Invariably a literary temperament breeds a deep sympathy, and is accompanied by feelings which are lofty, warm, and comprehensive. Wit, humour, imagination, taste, and the minor virtues of intellectual culture make most men generous, however much they may disagree professionally in religion, politics, or science.

71, Penton-place, London, S.E.

BABYCULTURE BY PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

THE following squib is from the *New York Times* :—

It has long been the belief of many eminent scientific persons that the various forms of religion now prevailing are the direct results of different kinds of food. There have hitherto been insuperable difficulties in the way of demonstrating the truth of this theory, but that a man's religion depends upon the kind of food that he uses, and is modified to some extent by the climate in which he lives, nearly all advanced thinkers are convinced. It is pleasant to be able to announce that at last all possibility of doubt on this subject has been removed by a series of successful experiments narrated by Professor Huxley in his contemplated book on vegetable and alcoholic religions.

Some time ago Professor Huxley was so fortunate as to obtain possession of a large litter of young children, the property of a positivist, who desired to devote his whole time to the study of gin, and who held that, inasmuch as there is no hereafter, it was not worth while for him to trouble himself about his children. The latter, who were to a great extent twins, and were all under eight years of age, were perfectly free from all religious prejudices, and although the oldest swore with much fluency, he had no thought of the possibility of the existence of a God. Placing them in strict confinement, where no human being but himself and a deaf and dumb nurse could obtain access to them, Professor Huxley began a series of experiments with their food, which produced the most satisfactory and valuable results.

The oldest child was fed exclusively upon Swiss cheese, and was allowed to drink weak brandy and water. He was kept in a room where the temperature was a little above the freezing point, and was constantly exercised in climbing artificial precipices made of trunks and book-cases. Like the rest of the children, he was taught to read and write, but received no other instruction. At the end of three months Professor Huxley was delighted to find him making preparations for a bonfire, in which he proposed to burn his nurse, on the ground that she did not believe certain doctrines which he believed. A month later he constructed a rude pulpit, in which he constantly preached sermons denouncing flies and gnats, who were his only hearers, for their fondness for sunshine. Before the end of the first year he had formulated a creed which Professor Huxley found to bear a very strong resemblance to that of John Calvin. It thus became clear that a diet of Swiss cheese, combined with brandy and water, and modified by a low temperature, is the immediate cause of Calvinism.

Meanwhile, another boy had been fed upon oatmeal and whisky; made to live in a damp room, and frequently sprinkled with a fine spray of water, closely resembling a Scotch mist. The boy soon acquired a peculiar broad accent, and showed a disposition to preach sermons several hours in length. He displayed a violent aversion to pictures of all sorts, to scarlet, and to the sound of an organ. A very short time was all that was needed to develop him into an unmistakable Scotch Presbyterian. The experiment was satisfactory in demonstrating the truth of the materialistic theory of the origin of religion, but the unsatisfactory feature was the unconquerable tendency of the boy to throw things at the professor whenever the latter incidentally mentioned that there was no God.

The third boy was kept in a hot room, and fed upon macaroni and light wines, and compelled to constantly grind a small hand-organ. This experiment also was a complete success. The boy became an unmistakable Roman Catholic, and displayed a degree of devoutness, joined to a fondness for sticking his penknife into the professor's legs, which filled the latter with scientific delight.

As for the next boy, he was treated with special care, with the view of making him an earnest and able scientific person. His diet consisted of roast beef and ale, and his playthings were slates and pencils, mathematical instruments, specimens of minerals and fossils, and anatomical drawings. Three times every day he was taken to the open window, and held, with his mouth open, exposed to the east wind. Every afternoon, two well-behaved little scientific boys were brought to play with him, and the three were accustomed to play pitch and toss with a pocket Bible for several hours. It was confidently believed that under this treatment he would become an eminent scientific person, but Professor Huxley was bitterly disappointed. The boy became a most impertinent and malicious little wretch. His self-conceit grew intolerable. It was his delight to pick in pieces and spoil every beautiful object that came within his reach, and to throw stones and to hoot at every respectable person who passed near his window. It is true that he did not believe in the existence of God, but this was a very slight consolation to Professor Huxley when the latter was called a bigoted idiot by this wretched boy, or told by him that he was a stupid automaton, and he would like to disarrange his internal mechanism with a knife. The boy did not, as need hardly be remarked, resemble a modern scientific person in the remotest degree, and Professor Huxley confesses himself unable to account for the failure of his experiment.

Nevertheless, in his contemplated volume, the learned professor has been able to give the several formulæ for the production of Swiss Calvinists, Scotch Presbyterians, and Italian Roman Catholics, and by these, establish beyond controversy his assertion that religion is the result of diet.

GLIMPSES OF THE WORLD UNSEEN.—The *Pall Mall Gazette* has a notice of a work by the Rev. Frederick George Lee, entitled *More Glimpses of the World Unseen*. The following is a specimen of its criticism:—"If a Pope has published a bull against necromancy and intercourse with demons, this (according to Dr. Lee) is sufficient proof of the reality of such evils; and the very existence of old Christian forms of exorcism makes it obvious that exorcism was 'at once sorely needed and frequently practised.' 'Who will then venture (he exclaims) to declare that in these latter days the necessity no longer exists because the cause has been surely removed? Not I.' Dr. Lee lays much stress, as we might expect he would, on the efficient performance of Church rites. A ghost is permitted to appear to a lady who had faithfully attended to her Easter duties; and he notes that out of twenty-seven 'mediums' with whom a friend had come into contact, only one had received Christian baptism, and that in a sect where it is often 'ministered with singular want of care.' 'Spiritualism (he observes) is obviously paving the way for the coming and reign of Antichrist,' since it is blinding the eyes of weak persons 'hitherto satisfied with the empty husks and miserable negations of Protestantism.' That demons do arise at the demand of mediums he has no doubt whatever; and a friend of his, a well-known beneficed clergyman, is convinced that the moving power of the planchette is supernatural, although 'some High Church physiologists scout his conviction.' But then this poor man has very remarkable fingers. Whatever he takes in his hands has a way of talking to him; if he holds his eye-glass by its cord, the results are 'as singular and distinct as with planchette or a pencil,' and 'if at any time (he adds, pathetically) I balance a pencil or pen so as to leave the point close to the paper, without my asking any question mentally or vocally, it is sure, after a time, to form the word 'Ask.' Surely the spirits are not so bad as Dr. Lee considers them, when they treat a weak-minded clergyman so gently and considerately. But we have said enough of a foolish book."

Poetry.

SONG.

From *The Triumph of Love*, by ELLA DIETZ.

Thy soul hath brought me to my God,
I have found Him in finding thee,
Before I knelt beneath His rod,
But now His love alone I see.

Earth holds me not; in Paradise
I dwell for ever; hear the Voice
That spake of old and made men wise;
Who hath true wisdom may rejoice.

And all my ways are full of peace,
My heart is one with God and Thee,
And still must thankfulness increase
Till life one hymn of praise shall be.

SONG.

From *The Triumph of Love*, by ELLA DIETZ.

O TOUCH me not, unless thy soul
Can claim my soul as thine;
Give me no earthly flowers that fade,
No love, but love divine:
For I gave thee immortal flowers,
That bloomed so rare in heavenly bowers.

Look not with favour on my face,
Nor answer my caress,
Unless my soul have first found grace
Within thy sight; express
Only the truth, though it should be
Cold as the ice on northern sea.

Oh never speak of love to me,
Unless thy heart can feel
That in the face of Deity
Thou would'st that love reveal;
For God is love, and His bright law
Should find our hearts without one flaw.

SUMMER MEADOWS.

BY J. T. MARKLEY.

I.

IMMORTAL Flora! breathe upon the scene!
And thou Pomona linger to inspire;
'Tis meet some goddess or charmed Fairy Queen
Should now come forth in heaven-touch'd attire,
Attended by the music of Apollo's lyre—
The soft and sanctified outflow of sound,
Such as the cherubim might e'en desire
In the sweet spheres above—where bliss is found,
And beauty circulates through angel-haunted ground.

II.

No common consecration hath the flowers,
Elysian meads reveal nought false and low;
The quick'ning morning dew, or evening showers
On herbs, rich fruit, and cool green ferns bestow;
No blessings undeserved, nor sun's warm glow
Expend in vain its life-promoting smile,
O'er perfumed lawns where motley flowerets grow,
But through the prairie waste and sea-washed isle
Eternal wisdom guards and shapes each tint and style.

III.

On flowery Grecian plains fair Daphnë's breast
Assumed the foliage of the fadeless bay,
And praise rush'd through her lover's lute—confessed
Mad passion for the evergreen display—
Drove the poor minstrel's fragment chords away,
And brought a holier music into birth—
Songs of grand garlands that defied decay,
That swell'd triumphantly in fruitful worth—
Voicing to heaven's height the humbler poesy of earth.

IV.

Not sylvan groves or scented herbs alone,
Not fabled plants or silken orchard bloom,
Or tasselled moss upon the antique stone
Shall chain man's love! the wild rose on the tomb,
And gilliflowers that gracefully assume
A majesty they modestly sustain;
Preach by the incense of their own perfume
The sweet life fostered by the April rain,
And various charm of tint, they from stray sunbeams gain.

71, Penton-place, Newington, London, S.E.

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. Preference is given to letters which are not anonymous.]

CHRISTIAN HEINRICH HEINECKEN.

SIR,—Though not myself doubting the good faith of the medium through whom your correspondent "A. T. T. P." obtained the remarkable communication purporting to come from the German *Wunderkind*, I was yet, for the purpose of evidence, rather disappointed to find that there was an account of him in the well-known English book *Knight's Encyclopædia*. I referred to that account, but also to the German *Cyclopædia* of Ersch and Gruber. And the result is that I am able to

supply your readers with what to my mind is a most striking confirmation of the authenticity of the communication. It will be remembered that one of the particulars given by the spirit was that throughout his short second earth life he had to be fed by his nurse. *There is not one word of this trifling fact in Knight's account*, but from the German account I translate the following:—"Still, he had always been suckled by a nurse, partly on account of his weak constitution, but partly also because he showed a disinclination for every other nourishment." It is added, "when he was at length weaned, his health appeared to improve, . . . but the weakness returned unexpectedly, so that the boy himself remarked his approaching end, without, as it is related, letting himself be disturbed by this all too early fading away." The boy was born 6th February, 1721, and died 27th June, 1725. His life, therefore, lasted four years and nearly five months. The evidence for his existence, precocious powers, and early death seems unexceptionable. His biography was published at Lübeck in 1726 by his tutor, Christian von Schöneich. His fame was widely spread during his life, and he was carried to Copenhagen by desire of the King of Denmark. For other authorities Knight's notice of him may be consulted.

The improbability that the medium (who is well known) got his information from a German source seems to me very great, and unless it is shown that there exists an English version giving the above fact of the child's life, I think we, whose similar affirmative experience has so largely reduced the adverse presumption which others must or, at least, will set off against evidence, must accept the communication of it as strong corroborative evidence of spirit identity. I confess I have rarely been so much impressed by any fact tending to this conclusion.

On referring again to "A. T. T. P.'s" letter I see the duration of the child's life was given through the medium as five years and nine months, being one year and four months more than the time included between the dates of birth and death as given in the printed accounts—a noticeable discrepancy.

C. C. MASSEY.

Temple.

NIRVANA.

SIR,—Pray allow me to thank Dr. Carter Blake for his suggestions in the last *Spiritualist*, though I do not think that they will be of any use to me, seeing that I do not desire to have anything to do with "devilry." From the tone of Baboo Peary Chand Mitra's paper I infer that the rites mentioned by him are of a religious nature. But if they are not I do not wish to have anything to do with them.

ONE WHO DESIRES NIRVANA.

BLOOD-WRITING PHENOMENA.

To the Editor of "The Banner of Light."

SIR,—As every phase of spirit manifestation is of interest, I consider one that has just occurred, which is of somewhat a unique character, to be worth recording. I therefore give you the particulars.

The subject of the phenomenon is the wife of Mr. Henry C. Lull, at whose house I am residing. This lady, though not professedly a medium, evidently possesses the requisite organisation to develop into one. Rappings attend her, by means of which she is enabled to communicate with her sister, who passed away a few months ago.

Mrs. Lull had noticed a peculiar sensation in her arm, above the elbow, which was not only unpleasant, but painful. This increased to such an extent as to cause her to examine it. It was found to be very red. While looking at it, and wondering what was the matter, the letter H appeared and then faded away, and another letter was formed in the place of it, and in this way the name of her sister was given in capital letters resembling type, about an inch in height, the whole process lasting about five minutes.

Spirit-writing on the arm is not a very common manifestation. It occurred with the late Mr. Colchester; and Mr. Foster is, I believe, now the subject of it; but in these cases the writing, I think, has been in scarlet with white ground, while in the present case the letters were white on a red ground. There is also another difference to be noted. Usually the name appears in full at once, but in Mrs. Lull's case the letters appeared singly, one taking the place of the other, thus doing away with the theory generally employed to explain this form of manifestation, viz., preparation. During the occurrence loud rappings were heard about the room.

ROBERT COOPER.

943, Washington-street, Boston.

THE MISSION OF MRS. WILKES.—Mrs. Wilkes, who is encouraged in her work by Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mr. A. Calder, and several other Spiritualists, sends us the following circular:—"Scorn her not, but help her.—This cannot be called a society, but a fund is required to gather some 'friendless and fallen women'; in some cases to place them in temporary homes, sometimes to send them to their friends, often to draw upon as subscriptions to the institutions already at work, and which need help; but more especially to open a door in large cities where the 'unfortunate' may be spoken with. They are a difficult class to reach, for their position makes it hard for some who would help them to gain an introduction and interview. A small shop, to be kept by one interested in the work, is to be opened, so that easy access may be gained to many who would not care to go to a private house. In time this shop may be made almost self-supporting, and, it is hoped, will be of much service. In the spring of 1874 I began this work in Bristol. In November, 1875, I was able to publish a report of seven saved from the streets of that city by giving them, not charity, but honourable occupation. I now ask aid to begin my work anew in London. Subscriptions will be received by the ladies of the committee, and by myself at 42, Gower-street, W.C., London.—ANNA WILKES, 4th June, 1878.

HUMAN IMPERSONALITY.

BY EPES SARGENT.

Do those critics who reject the notion of a divine personality ever trouble themselves with the question, whether a perfect personality can be predicated of man himself? It is hardly necessary for us here to go into the etymological history of the word *person*; but we will glance at it in passing.

Personal in Latin (from *per* through, and *sonare* to sound) meant the mask worn by an actor on the ancient stage, within which the sounds of the voice were concentrated, and through which he made himself heard by the immense audience. From being applied to the mask it came next to be applied to the actor, then to the character acted, then to any individual of the human race, and then, according to the definition of Locke, to "a thinking, intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking being in different times and places."

This definition is too limited. More in harmony with modern thought is that which defines personality as having for its elements (1) existence, (2) consciousness of existence, (3) control over the manifestations of existence. Under this last comprehensive definition we justify our conceptions of the divine personality.

Applying this higher definition to the case of man, how imperfectly appears his personality, looked at in its strictly normal exercise and relations. Of many of the processes of his physical and psychical being, he is wholly unconscious; nay, he may be often unconscious of his own existence. Only partially has he the manifestations of existence under his control. The voluntary and involuntary muscles in man, his conscious and his automatic actions show what a mere fragment of actual personality he has in his normal state. Even when he is at his highest, and trying to take cognisance of his own thoughts—when he would be at once subject and object—how hard it is for him to so far abstract the conscious from the unconscious elements of his nature as to recognise with clearness the dividing line! Man is therefore largely impersonal, and it is only in a limited sense that he can be said to have personality.

Only that being whose cause of existence is within himself—who exists necessarily and not contingently, who has the manifestations of his existence under his own control—can be said to have personality in the highest sense. And even he, having the manifestations of his existence under his own control, may voluntarily sink into impersonality in some of those manifestations. He may be, of his own volition, impersonal in the on-goings of nature. He may have what Schelling calls "a limiting and denying energy" by which his full personality is kept in reserve. Like man he may have distinct states of consciousness. Imminent in nature, he may be above and beyond nature, free and transcendent, just as we conceive of the spirit of man as transcending his physical and corporeal limitations.

To say, therefore, that the divine personality is an "absurdity," is to have but a narrow conception of a Being infinite in the highest sense, and free from all infirmity and imperfection. He may be not only personal and super-personal, but impersonal also in some of his manifestations. The infinity of his nature may take in more phases of manifestation and of activity than it is possible for us to conceive. He may stoop to hear the prayer of a little child, even though the child's conception of him be anthropomorphic and confused. He may give beauty to a flower. He may be able to cause the universe to roll up like a scroll, and vanish into the invisibility whence it came forth.

Even atheists admit that a will and an intelligence are manifest in the operations of nature; but that will and intelligence, as here displayed, may be merely a partial—possibly an unconscious—manifestation of that supreme conscious power, infinite, personal, and omniscient, which we call God; for God in the highest may be personal, while God, in lower manifestations of His being, may be impersonal. Thus may the theistic and the pantheistic theories be harmonised; distinct, and yet one, like the convex and concave of the same curve. The conception does not lack analogy with what the psychology of Spiritualism reveals to us of the distinct state of consciousness in man.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

A NOISY GHOST AT POLLOKSHAW.—For two nights past the minds of people resident in Main-street, Pollokshaws, have been much exercised concerning a loud knocking heard in the property there at Mr. G. Dalrymple's public-house. The knocking began on both occasions about nightfall, and continued till after midnight. About 1,000 persons congregated at the place on Tuesday night, and much excitement prevailed, so that the police had some difficulty in clearing the street. Endeavours have been made to account for the noise, but without success.—*Glasgow News*, June 7th, 1878.

SPIRITUALISM AND MATERIALISM.—Deeply sensible of the Titanic struggle that is now in progress between materialism and the spiritual aspirations of mankind, our constant endeavour has been to gather into our several chapters, like weapons into armouries, every fact and argument that can be used to aid the latter in defeating the former. Sickly and deformed child as it now is, the materialism of to-day is born of the brutal yesterday. Unless its growth is arrested it may become our master. It is the bastard progeny of the French Revolution, and its reaction against ages of religious bigotry and repression. To prevent the crushing of these spiritual aspirations, the blighting of these hopes, and the deadening of that intuition which teaches us of a God and a hereafter, we must show our false theologies in their naked deformity, and distinguish between divine religion and human dogmas. Our voice is raised for spiritual freedom, and our plea made for enfranchisement from all tyranny, whether of science or theology.—*Isis Unveiled*.

THE WEIGHING OF MEDIUMS DURING MANIFESTATIONS.

THE new discoveries recently made by the Research Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists have been widely circulated, to the extent of 3,500 additional copies, of which 500 were sent abroad, and nearly all the others distributed in the West-end of London.

The Religio-Philosophical Journal (Chicago), has reprinted the description of the experiments in full, but without diagrams, and in the absence of these much of the text is confusing to readers.

The following is from *The Banner of Light* (Boston, U.S.), of May 25th:—

To the Editor of "The Banner of Light."

SIR,—My attention was called to the issue of *The Spiritualist* of May 3rd by a brief notice in the last *Banner*. I procured a copy of the same, and have read with deep interest the lengthy article by Mr. Harrison upon weighing a medium during the production of spiritual manifestations, especially those of materialisation, and recording the variations from the normal weight of the medium. This experiment was tried three or more years ago in this country by Col. Olcott, Dr. Storer, Mr. Geo. A. Bacon, and myself, with Mrs. Markee, the noted medium, then of Havana, N.Y., and more recently at Rochester, N.H., by E. Gerry Brown, of Boston, with the now famous medium, Mrs. John R. Pickering. These variations were found to range from twenty to sixty or seventy pounds, demonstrating the wonderful fact that during the transpiration of these phenomena the body of the medium actually suffers this immense temporary loss of vital forces—of solid substance, may we not say?

In the light of this fact, can any one fail to see the possible danger to the medium should anything interfere with the return of these forces to the source from whence they were borrowed—even the possible extinction of life itself?

We have fresh in memory the frantic struggles of the psychic form that was rudely and brutally grasped at a *séance* given by Mrs. Markee in Rochester, N.Y., in its efforts to reach the cabinet in season to render back these borrowed forces before fatal results should accrue to the medium. By partially de-materialising in the hands of its captor it succeeded in regaining the medium in time to save her life, but not in time to prevent a great shock to her system, so that for days and weeks her life was despaired of, and she was rescued from death after great suffering only by the most assiduous care and attention.

It seems to me that Spiritualists themselves are strangely insensible to the wonder of these marvels that are transpiring so generally throughout the world, and most unaccountably indifferent to the effects of the phenomena upon the mental and physical organisation of the media.

While I fully admit the importance of protecting ourselves in every possible manner against being imposed upon by unprincipled charlatans in the sacred name of mediumship, I do not believe we have any right to approach mediums in an arrogant or dictatorial spirit, assuming them to be impostors. Nor do I believe that we have a right to dictate to the spiritual world the terms and conditions upon which we will consent to receive its revelations, as if we were conferring upon it an infinite condescension in deigning to receive the most inestimable boon that can be vouchsafed to humanity. I believe there is altogether too much of this spirit abroad. It was said by one of olden time who was wise in spiritual things, and who manifested a deep insight into the workings of spiritual laws, "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." The law holds good through all the ages. To enter the kingdom of spiritual truth to-day there must be in some degree the humble, trusting, teachable spirit of a little child.

The editor of the London *Spiritualist*, in the article to which we refer, evidences that he recognises the importance of this law when he says, in reference to the medium through whom he was about to make these deeply-interesting experiments, "One element of success was that he should be quite happy and contented with his sitters, so that he could pass calmly into the trance state satisfied that they were not likely to play him any tricks."

Accordingly, he invited a gentleman who was selected by the lawyers to give testimony in the Slade case, and who almost invariably gets good manifestations. And why? Simply "because he behaves in a kindly way to mediums, and does not go about thirsting for their blood." In other words, does not approach a medium bristling with the assumption implied, if not expressed, "You are a fraud, and I know it, and am going to prove it."

Approaching the investigation with something of the spirit of little children, these gentlemen obtained the results the narration of which makes this article so deeply interesting, corroborating as it does the experience of investigators in this country, who, however, conducted their experiments in a much less accurate and scientific manner.

Mr. Harrison says truly that "Every new discovery spreads fresh rays of light upon previous known facts."

More than twenty years ago, at the house of Mr. Daniel Farrar, in Hancock-street, Boston, I was levitated and floated above the heads of more than twenty persons within a foot of the ceiling. My sensations I shall never forget. My body felt as light as a cork, or a bladder filled with air, and I believe that could it have been weighed during the occurrence of that phenomenon, it would have been found that its weight had been reduced by this mystic process to a very low minimum, and I believe that by a continuance of investigations like these instituted by the London Spiritualists, very many of the phenomena of mediumship that now excite the hostility of scientists, because of their

seeming infraction of known laws, will be found to occur in perfect harmony with those laws.

This entire article of Mr. Harrison's is pregnant with interest. I am glad to learn that you have an extra supply of the issue.

F. L. H. WILLIS, M.D.

As regards the first paragraph of this letter, we are not aware of changes in the weight of a medium during manifestations having been previously discovered and published anywhere.

Mr. E. G. Gerry Brown, of Boston, U.S., has printed a theory new to this country, namely, that the record contains no evidence that the medium did not manipulate the indicating apparatus in the dark. Each diagram printed with the record being of the right length, and indications being registered at the very moment of particular manifestations, this theory is equivalent to stating that while the medium was swinging a musical-box two or three yards in front of the cabinet, he was also drawing in the dark at the back of the cabinet, and with apparatus he had never handled before, some scientific diagrams perfectly accurate in time and space. And these wonders, it is assumed, he may have performed without discovery in the midst of sceptical witnesses, some of them so close to the apparatus that they could constantly hear it steadily at work.

The frequent publication by enthusiastic witnesses of wonderful form manifestations, not produced under test conditions, has encouraged so much imposture in Spiritualism in the United States, that the whole subject, as well as an alleged particular case, recently came under consideration at a public "indignation" meeting of Spiritualists in Chicago. The proceedings were fully reported in the *Chicago Times*.

GHOSTLY "MANIFESTATIONS" IN AN ENGLISH VILLAGE.—Great alarm has prevailed in the village of Goathurst, a few miles from Bridgwater, during the past fortnight, in consequence of the belief that a farmhouse there, in the occupation of Mr. John Shattock, a well-to-do yeoman and a representative of the parish at the board of guardians, was haunted. It is alleged that every night loud raps were heard at the front and back doors, that articles of furniture and crockery were shifted from one portion of the premises to another, and that, although many of the inhabitants and some members of the county constabulary were on the watch both inside and from without, and a large mastiff was stationed just outside the front door which was rapped at, the "manifestations" continued, and no clue could be obtained as to who or what was the cause of them. It is positively asserted "by some of the more respectable inhabitants" that the knocks at the door, apparently from the outside, have been heard by them while they have guarded all the approaches to the premises, and that immediately on hearing these raps they have fired pistols in the direction of the door, but without effect. The alarm was increased by a straw-rick close to the dwelling-house, and belonging to the same owner, having taken fire and been totally destroyed, the ignition having taken place quite unaccountably, and whilst the neighbours and friends of the farmer were on the watch. The district superintendent of police, who visited the premises by night on two occasions, had, however, it seems, after the manner of police officers, formed a certain "theory" of his own, and this has resulted in the apprehension of a girl named Ann Kidner, aged fourteen years, a domestic servant in the employ of Mr. Shattock, on a charge of setting fire to her master's ricks. It is suspected that this girl, although she strongly protests her innocence, is concerned in the "manifestations," if she has not been the direct and sole cause of them.—*Glasgow News*, May 20th, 1878.

THE ACTION OF THE PULSE IN PHRENO-MESMERIC EXPERIMENTS.—Several experiments were once made by Dr. J. R. Buchanan before the Phreno-Mesmeric Society of Cincinnati, attended by Judges McLean, Rowan, and Walker, Bishop Purcell, Prof. Matthews, Drs. Marshall, Bonner, Latta, and others. Mr. Valentine, a gentleman of large brain and highly impressible temperament, was operated on with prompt results. In one of the experiments, "alimentiveness" being strongly excited, Mr. Valentine, rather than wait for the arrival of food, commenced eating a tallow candle. The experiments on the pulse, as published in the *Journal of the Society*, were reported as follows:—"Dr. Buchanan then proceeded to some experiments upon the pulse, Drs. Bonner and Latta being placed one on each side of Mr. Valentine in order to observe the state of the pulse previous to the experiment and the changes that might occur during its progress. Before commencing the pulse was observed to beat seventy-two in a minute, and to be full, soft, and easily compressed. The head was then touched on various parts of the frontal and occipital regions, and as the hand of the operator passed from front to back and from back to front, the character of the pulse rapidly passed through every change of quality, from full, soft, and compressible, to tense, wiry, and diminished volume, irritable and irregular, being also much diminished in velocity in the one case and accelerated in the other; sometimes beating only sixty and then in a minute or two increasing to eighty. These experiments were very marked and decisive in their results. During the whole course of these experiments on the pulse the physicians who observed and reported the results sat with their back to the operator, and one of them requested him not to name the parts of the head touched in succession. In this situation of things the changes of the pulse were announced, and were observed to follow quickly the change of the position of the operator's hand; the soft, full, slow pulse corresponding to the excitement of the frontal region, and the quick, thin, wiry, and irritable pulse that of the occipital and basilar regions. The change of pulse usually became evident to the physicians in about one minute from the time when the hand was transferred to a different region, and each spot that was touched invariably produced the same effect when excited the second or third time as when manifested at first."

THE GHOST OF VASQUEZ.

THE *San José Mercury* of October 21st, 1877, contains the narrative of a reporter's experience in a cell which is said to be haunted by the ghost of Vasquez, the bandit, who was hanged for murder within the walls of the County Prison. Criminals who have been placed there since his execution have begged to be removed from the scene of its nightly visitations. Strange and chilling stories are told of what they have seen and heard. The *Mercury* says:—

About twenty minutes after we had taken our places in the cell, and had made considerable noise in moving around, we heard Madden call to his room-mate, saying, "Bernal, there is some fellow in the Vasquez cell." Then followed a conversation between Madden and us, in which particulars were given of our assumed crime, departure from San Francisco, particulars of capture, and when this information was received the young man subsided into silence. None of the other prisoners appeared to be awake, and all was as silent as the tomb. We lit a candle, and sat down upon the prison bunk awaiting developments, and in our uneasiness in waiting for the appearance of ghosts, arose and walked to the wicket and the grating and peered out into the corridor and passage. Everything was silent, not a sound to break the stillness. Under the impression that light was unfavourable to the ghostly visit, it was blown out, and we were left peering into the darkness of the dungeon, whispering to each other. To one unused to darkness a feeling of utter loneliness takes possession of him, and even the human voice, so comforting under almost all kindred circumstances, sounds strangely unnatural in its suppressed whisperings. Soon we realised this, and our whisperings ceased, and we, in conformity with everything around us, relapsed into a gloomy silence, continuing until about half-past eleven, when we were startled by a quick, crashing sound, such as is produced by throwing a glass bottle against a wall. This proceeded apparently from the west corner of the prison, and was immediately followed by two similar crashes in the south corner, and a fourth and louder similar crash against the east side of the wall, while immediately following the last was heard at our cell door a low, monotonous thundering sound, as of some dull instrument striking against the door about a foot from the bottom. What wild fancies flitted through our minds we do not now remember, but we felt the plot deepening, and the ghostly visitant growing more familiar. We called to the prisoners to tell us what was the cause of the noise, when Madden, the only one who appeared to be awake, answered, "That's Vasquez's ghost, you are in the haunted cell," and while he poured out the tale of his experiences with the shade, the knocking slowly grew louder, but retaining the same monotony until it made the cell vibrate with the noise of the blows. We went to the wicket and looked out, up and down the corridor, but could see nothing.

We could not look to the foot of the door, as the wicket was too small, but ran out a hand and reached down as far as was possible without detecting anything or causing the noise to cease. It began, however, gradually to decrease in power or volume, falling slowly, until it died away. Again all was silent, remaining so for some time, and all at once broken by the deep clank of a chain, as if a shackled foot was being raised from the ground, the chain dragged along and the foot placed down, causing the chain to rattle and clash. After the first four or five sounds of the chain the rapping at the door recommenced. One of us sprang to the wicket, another to the gratings. The rapping at the door was the same as before, while the noise of the chain appeared to come slowly up the passageway between the cells with slow and measured pause, as of a person walking to the rear of our cell. Then the clanking ceased, suddenly to be recommenced, as if on the return. The noise of the rapping and the clanking of the chain up and down the passageway continued for upward of an hour, with short pauses. The sounds of the chain were real and natural, and as it came slowly and steadily up the passage for the last time of the first performance, it seemed to pass up the iron guards at the end of the passage, over on the top of the cell, around and down again, and slowly passing down the passage be lost as if in distance. The rapping, which had continued during the performance, died out in a few minutes.

With the ceasing of the rapping and the clanking of the chains all was again silent for about five minutes, when in the distance was heard a low deep noise, as of the baying of a hound. It began to sound nearer and nearer, gradually increasing in power, and came suddenly in a deafening and piercing wail, apparently through the top of the prison, descending and screaming around the corridors again and again, closing in a suddenly unnatural appalling shriek, such as is imagined to be the last utterance of a damned spirit cast over the battlements of heaven headlong into hell. It was a sound calculated to freeze the blood, and, though it came frequently during the night, instead of becoming in some manner familiar, became more horrid and fearful, dreary and desolate at each utterance. Immediately following this came again the clanking of chains and the rapping, now low, now hard, and again deafening. This was continued until about two o'clock in the morning, when the clanking of chains and shrieking entirely ceased and were heard no more. The rapping continued, and almost an hour was passed in what is called spirit conversation, the ghost, if ghost it is, answering the majority of questions put. At three o'clock, when we were led to believe the ghosts had departed, we returned to rest, and were just dozing away, when the rappings recommenced, continuing about ten minutes, and then ceasing altogether, leaving us to sit up until half-past seven o'clock yesterday morning, when we were released no wiser than when we came in, except in the matter of satisfying ourselves that the noise prisoners claim to have heard we also heard. How they are produced we do not pretend to say. These are the facts; each one can form his own opinion. As for us, we are undetermined as to what is the cause of that above narrated.

A HAUNTED HOUSE SUITABLE FOR INVESTIGATORS.

(From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.)

I HAVE been an investigator of the phenomena of spirit intercourse for the last thirteen years, and have seen it in its various phases, and have attended *séances* in almost every State from Maine to Tennessee; but never before I came to this part of the Old Dominion have I seen the signs of it so strong as I have during the past three and a half years. I will specify one particular experience which occurred during the latter part of April and the first of May, 1875. I was then boarding in a small, old-fashioned cottage farmhouse, that stands on or near the shore of Chesapeake Bay, nine miles north of Fortress Monroe, and five miles north-east of this home. The house stands near the banks of a stagnant salt water creek, through which no fresh tides ever sweep, except during a strong easterly wind. A narrow beach, covered with a fine grove, separates the creek from Chesapeake Bay. In the house are three rooms on the ground floor and two above, and a small holo under the house about four feet square, used as a cellar. The nearest neighbour's house is about seventy-five rods west of this house. This cottage where I was stopping stands on the eastern border of a forty-acre open field, and the only trees near are a few apple and cherry trees. The family which then occupied the house consisted of an old soldier friend of mine (who was an inmate of this Home), and his wife and two little girls. Previous to my going there to board, I had been there on short visits of a day or so at a time. The invisibles would open the doors, no matter how securely fastened, at all hours of the day or night. The front door was secured by a heavy white-oak bar, in addition to a heavy lock. The rear door of the kitchen was fastened with six hasps secured by heavy screw staples. Well, this made no difference with the evil spirits, for they would open the front door with such a jerk that the taken bar would be hurled clear across the room, and the key bolt shot back far quicker than it could have been by a key. In addition to opening the door, they would make such frightful shrieks in the atmosphere outside that they would almost make one's hair stand on end. Then again they would shake the house as though with the throes of an earthquake. They would stamp around the house at all hours of the night, and make noise enough for a crowd of men clad in armour.

The family owned at that time two courageous watch-dogs, which would never allow the approach of any mortal after dark, but when these manifestations were going on they would not venture forth from under the kitchen, but lie there and whine and bark.

All the above manifestations occurred so often that we got used to them, but on the evening of May 1st, while we were trying to hold a circle, they made such uncommonly strong demonstrations that it threw one of the dogs into convulsions, from the effects of which he died in less than twenty-four hours. But now comes the last night of my stay there. About midnight, of May 3rd, a racket was produced that awakened me out of a sound sleep, and aroused all the rest; a noise at the front door sounded as though there had been a load of bricks dumped on to the front porch. Every door flew open at once; the crockery ware tumbled out of a closet on to the floor and broke; the hasps were torn out of the kitchen doors. My friend seized an old U.S. musket that was heavily loaded with buckshot and went out in the kitchen, and behold the door was shut, and he could not open it; but he opened the upper half of the wing door and looked out, and then called my attention to the visible presence of all this devilry. It was a bright moonlight night. There, at just two rods from the door, walked a thing, an apparition of a tall man, bare-headed, looking exactly as if he had just got out of a coffin—looked, in fact, just as a galvanised corpse would if walking. My friend jumped out over the half-door, and the spectre suddenly disappeared for a moment. He then saw it again about forty rods from the house in an open field. He then took deliberate aim at it and fired. With an unearthly yell the form turned into a blue vapour, assumed a spiral shape, and shot up into the air out of sight. This I saw with my own eyes. I shall never forget it as long as I live. That was the only visible manifestation while they lived there, but the other disturbances drove them away. They are now living in the village of Hampton, Va., and can substantiate all of the above incidents.

The old house has stood empty ever since they left, now about eighteen months. The owner can get no one to occupy it, and the rent for the whole farm is only forty dollars a year.

CHAS. A. FISKE.

National Soldiers' Home, Elizabeth City, Va.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. D., Naples.—Your reply is absolutely just, but as no public instruction would be given, and as answering abuse merely keeps strife alive, you had better let the matter pass without public notice. Aggressors and evil-tempered people who care more to have their own way than to advance the public interests of Spiritualism should be dealt with in private by letter or otherwise, and prevented from airing their evil disposition in public to the injury of everybody, more especially of themselves. We do not answer and put right every potty wrong; it is better to let small things pass for the sake of that peace which undeveloped communities cannot attain.

B.—All reports by a witness who says that he has seen the medium and a spirit at the same time, are comparatively worthless when he does not state whether he saw the living flexible features of both of them at the same time, and whether the rest of the observers present saw what he did. A witness who keeps silence on these points, and substitutes a vague general statement instead of minutely setting forth what was seen, does not induce conviction in the minds of readers, and acts disrespectfully to them by withholding details essential to sound judgment.

F. S., New South Wales.—We do not desire anti-theological articles from your district; they can be written at home if wanted. Local psychological news would be valued, especially if it has an instructive tendency.

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