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The Spiritualist Newspaper,

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

No. 352.—Volume Fourteen; Number Twenty-one.

LONDON, FRIDAY, MAY 23rd, 1879.

THEOSOPHIC THAUMATURGY.

The following paragraph from *The Bombay Gazette* was copied into *The Friend of India* of April 11th last:—

"Strange stories have, for several years, been rife in the American newspapers about the marvels of Thaumaturgy wrought by the Countess Blavatsky, one of the Theosophical party now in Bombay. If they are credible, the inference would be that a Simon Magus in petticoats had arisen in our days. Some of them stagger belief, as, for instance, her causing music to float through the air in the absence of any comprehensible cause, the instantaneous duplication of documents and articles of clothing, the causing of inscriptions in golden letters, of Oriental texts to appear and disappear on the furniture, the rendering of herself invisible, the production of paintings and writings on paper by the mere placing of her palm upon the same. Yet all these phenomena and many equally strange have been attested by numbers of eye-witnesses, not Theosophists, not even always previous acquaintances. Of one of her magical pictures—the portrait of an Indian *jogi*—Thomas Le Clear, an eminent American painter, and William R. O'Donovan, an equally distinguished sculptor, affirmed, in a London journal, that no living artist could, in their opinion, equal it in vigour, breadth, and uniqueness, while they were both unable to decide upon the nature of the colouring substance employed or the manner of its application."

The same paper proceeds to give an account of somewhat similar feats in Bombay, one "under the very eyes of an assistant magistrate and collector of the North-west Provinces." Another has already been commented upon, in the strain naturally to be expected, by several London newspapers. A gentleman, known to our readers by his contributions to these columns, may perhaps be identified as one of the witnesses to this particular marvel, nothing less than the instantaneous transmission of a glove from Mme. Blavatsky in Bombay to the gentleman in question in London, who received it through the mediumship of a lady, a well-known private medium. As, however, he has publicly explained (while declaring his own entire belief in the fact asserted, and confidence in the persons principally concerned as agents) that in his view the evidence depends for its force on the personal character of the two ladies in question, which the general public cannot be expected to know much about, we agree with him that it does not satisfy the conditions which would make the story suitable for publication. Evidences of spirit agency or of magical power should be quite independent of such assumptions. To personal friends the integrity of individuals may be matter of almost or quite absolute certainty, but for the inexperienced public it is better to exclude injurious suggestions by strict demonstration that they are inconsistent with the facts.

Can a Bombay daily newspaper be delivered in London by occult means on the morning of its publication? That would be evidence adapted to the requirements of the public.

Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood will give evidence before the Psychological Society next Thursday, about phenomena he has observed.

A Psychological Society in Sydney.—The first regular fortnightly meeting of the Psychological Society of New South Wales was held last evening at the Temperance Hall. There was an attendance of about a hundred and fifty members. Mr. E. Greville, M.P., presided. Mrs. Hardinge Britten delivered an eloquent discourse on "The Powers of the Soul." A discussion then took place, in which Mr. Harold Stephen, Mr. A. De Lissa, Mr. Sinclair, and Mrs. Britten took part. The society numbers about a hundred and twenty members. The Hon. J. B. Wilson was appointed president; Mr. E. Greville, vice-president; C. Haviland; hon. secretary, and Mr. M'Donnell, treasurer. The committee comprises ten, and the council twenty members. The society has a good library; it meets every fortnight, and at the next meeting Serjeant Cox's paper on psychology will be read and commented upon. Last night's proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to Mrs. Britten for her able address.—*Sydney Evening News.*

IDEAS ABOUT SPIRITS HELD BY THE CHINESE OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. Martheze has forwarded us from Singapore an interesting book just published there by Mr. J. D. Vaughan, Barrister-at-Law, entitled *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese of the Straits Settlements*, and from it we make the following extracts:—

SIN CHEW.

"The following description of *Sin Chew*, as practised by the Chinese of the Straits Settlements, is taken from the judgment of Sir Benson Maxwell in the suit of Choa Cheow Neoh *v.* Spottiswoode:—

'The word *Sin Chew* is composed of *Sin*, which means a spirit, soul, or ghost, and *Chew*, which means ruler; and the composite word means the spirit ruler, or spiritual head of the house. When a man dies, his name, with the dates of his birth and death, is engraved on a tablet; this is enclosed in an outer casing, on which a new name, which now for the first time given to him, and the names of his children, are engraved. This tablet is kept either in the house of the worshipper, or in that which has been set apart for the *Sin Chew*. It is sacred, and can be touched only by the male descendants or nearest male relatives of the deceased, who alone may look upon the name on the enclosed tablet. It is the representation of the deceased. At certain periods, viz., on the anniversary of his death, and once in each of the four seasons, his son or sons, or if he has none, his nearest male relative, but never his daughters or other females, go to the place where the tablet is, and lay on a table in front of it a quantity of food, such as pigs, goats, ducks, fowls, fish, sweetmeats, fruit, tea, and arrack. They light joss-sticks, fire crackers, burn small squares of thin brown paper, in the centre of each of which is about a square inch of gold or silver tinsel; they bow their heads three times, kneel, touch the ground with their foreheads, and call on the *Sin Chew* by his new name to appear and partake of the food provided for him. The food remains on the table for one or two or even three hours, during which time the spirit feeds on its etherial savour; and to ascertain whether it is satiated or satisfied, two *pitis* (Chinese coins) or two pieces of bamboo are thrown on the table or on the ground in front of it, and if they both turn up with the same face, the offering is considered insufficient, and more food is laid on the table. After the lapse of a sufficient time to allow the spirit to partake of it, the same test is again resorted to, and so on, until the coins or bamboos, by turning up different faces, show that the spirit has had enough. The food is then removed, and eaten or otherwise disposed of by the relatives, but there is no distribution of it in charity or among the poor. Indeed, the Chinese have a repugnance to food which has been offered in this way, except when they are members of the family. The papers which are burnt supply the spirit with money and clothing, the gold and silver tinsel turning into precious metal. No prayers are offered to the spirit; the person who makes the offering of food asks for nothing whatever. The primary object of the ceremony is to show respect and reverence to the deceased, to preserve his memory in this world, and to supply his wants in the other. Its performance is agreeable to God, the supreme all-seeing, all-knowing, and invisible being, who assists and prospers those who are regular in this duty; and its neglect entails disgrace on him whose duty it is to perform it, and poverty and starvation on the neglected spirit, which then leaves its abode (either the grave or the house where the tablet rests) and wanders about an outcast, begging of the more fortunate spirits, and haunting and tormenting his negligent descendant, and mankind generally. To avert the latter evil, the wealthier Chinese make, in the seventh month, every year, a general

public offering, or sacrifice, called *Kee-too* or *Poh-toh*, for the benefit of all poor spirits.' The real Chinaman as well as a few *Babas* remit money annually to China for the performance of the *Sin Chew* at the graves of their ancestors."

WORSHIPPING THE DEAD.

"Every family goes to the graves of its ancestors twice a year. Eatables of various kinds are placed at the foot of each grave with chop-sticks, and joss-sticks are lighted and stuck into the ground round the grave. Each visitor takes a few in both hands and kow-tows to the ground twice, and sacred paper representing money is burnt; for the spirits of the dead are supposed to require money to buy clothes and food in the other world. After burning the paper the kow-towing is repeated, and while doing so each person says 'on such a day we, your descendants or relations, come to worship you; protect and guard us,' or words to the same effect. In the meantime the ghosts of the departed are supposed to enjoy themselves over the eatables. When they are satisfied, their children return home and demolish the food left by the spirits.

"The prospect of death has no fears for the Chinese, and they commit suicide on the slighest provocation. A wife will do it to revenge herself on her husband when she goes to the other world, believing that she will have the power to return at any time to vex and tease her refractory spouse. A coolie afflicted with a troublesome sore that lasts longer than he thinks necessary will coolly go out during the night and hang himself on the first tree he comes athwart. Or a trivial dispute with his master will lead a coolie to take his own life to rid himself of the annoyance. For imaginary or temporary evils they commit suicide hastily, but often will endure for years the greatest sufferings with patience and fortitude. The worship of the dead and the attention paid to their wants in the other world by the living must in a great measure conduce to this callousness of death. They have no definite ideas of what their future state may be, but are convinced, unless very wicked in this life, that they are sure to be happier in the other world than in this. The Christian's ideas are somewhat opposed to this view. However good he may be, the terrors of death and the cruel punishments awaiting him on the other side of the grave, inculcated by a false teaching, render him fearful of the change.

"From the first to thirtieth day of the seventh moon evil spirits, or rather the spirits of the dead, are conciliated or worshipped. During this month the spirits are supposed to wander about the earth, and if not propitiated plague the offenders with divers pains and aches and more serious mishaps. Long tables are spread with all the delicacies of the season, and placed opposite the temples, and in other convenient places, exposed to the open air or under rough sheds erected for the occasion. Amongst the food are conspicuous the animals sacrificed to the manes of the dead, chiefly pigs, goats, fowls, and ducks; which are roasted whole and placed on the tables, in all their hideousness. The tables are ornamented with artificial flowers, fish, and fruits, and are well worth seeing. The spirits feast during the month to their hearts' content, and at the end of the ceremony the viands are disposed of by the living."

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE CHINESE.

"The Chinese people nooks, corner of roads, trees, rocks, and sundry other places with fays and fairies and goblins damned innumerable, and do them worship to propitiate them. Incense sticks, slips of paper, tinsel ornaments, and other gewgaws may be seen at the most out-of-the-way spots, showing that the inhabitants of the neighbourhood have discovered an evil spirit thereabouts.

"Silk cotton trees have invariably a female demon, called *Hantu Puntianak*. These creatures assume the loveliest female shapes, and appear on the high roads, especially on moonlight nights, and allure men to their destruction. They are exorcised by driving a few long iron nails into the tree. If a nail is driven into this goblin's head she immediately becomes human. They sometimes appear at feasts, and eat and drink and enjoy themselves like other people, and win the hearts of the young men.

"There is a legend that, in Malacca once, a young fellow fell in love with one of these goblins at a feast, and knowing her to be a *hantu*, got an iron nail and a hammer and suddenly drove the former into her skull, and she at once became a real woman and married the young man. They had a son, and years after the goblin, having grown tired of her human existence, told her son to feel in her hair that something had got there troubling her; he did so and came upon the head of the iron nail that his father had driven in; his mother told him to pull it out; he did so, and immediately to his astonishment the mother vanished through the roof and was never seen again.

"There is another demon, very tall and ghastly, called *Hantu Gallah*: * he waylays men in out-of-the-way places and takes their heads off. There is one goblin who only has a head and no body—a cherub, perhaps—who also waylays men and destroys them.

"If a man is very ill and other modes fail to cure him, he makes an image like himself in paper, and puts it with some money and food in a paper house, and places it in a tree, and the evil spirit that is punishing him it is supposed will be appeased.

"Nor is the belief in demons confined to the lowest classes. In the garden of one of the richest men in Singapore, at Passir Panjang may be seen an immense granite boulder, supposed to be the abode of evil spirits, enshrined in a handsome temple in which worship is held to appease the demons. They have a strong belief in persons being possessed with devils. At some of the country temples sometimes dwells a demoniac or two, and they are consulted by sick persons. A *Baba* told the writer that he was very ill some years ago with dysentery, and all the Chinese doctors in town (Singapore) failed to cure him; he was advised to visit one of these demoniacs on the Gayalng Road, which he did; the impostor received him with great ceremony, and suddenly began to shake all over as if moved by some spirit, and he then directed the inquirer to do a lot of nonsensical things which he said would cure him. The *Baba* tried the remedies, but without success, and eventually appealed to an English doctor, who successfully cured him; so much for science. The *Baba's* faith in the possessed has ever since been much shaken.

"This man has a strong belief in the return of the spirits of the dead to the earth. He says that if he is tardy in the third and seventh moons to prepare the sacrifices for the benefit of his departed ancestors the spirit of his father appears to him at night, and upbraids him for his undutiful conduct; and he there and then gets out of bed and slaughters fowls and ducks to satisfy the old gentleman.

"Nearly every disease a man gets is assigned to the malignity of evil spirits. If the worship of the dead is neglected or improperly performed the spirits are sure to punish the living. To counteract the influence of evil, *Babas* hang up in their houses sprigs of certain plants—one called *jaringo* and another of the aloes kind; or they nail over the door a picture of a god or goddess; the *keih*, or *patpoh*, as it is called by the *Babas*, is also put up for good luck.

"*Babas* believe in the use of many Malay charms, and tie them on their arms or hang them around their necks. The belief in the *Ubat Gunah*—a spell or charm that wins the heart of a man or woman in spite of all obstacles—is universal; they also believe that the red slips of paper which they buy from fortune tellers, written over with Chinese characters, pasted up on the door-posts of a house, keep away evil spirits. Jade stones are worn as charms; these are supposed to wax whiter when the wearer is about to be unlucky, or reddish when he is to be prosperous; similar to the superstitious belief that coral beads change colour as the health of the wearer varies."

The annual general meeting of the members of the National Association of Spiritualists will be held at 38, Great Russell-street, next Tuesday, at 6.30 p.m.

Mr. E. W. Wallis will give a trance lecture at Mr. Groom's, 200, St. Vincent-street, Ladywood, Birmingham, on Tuesday evening next, May 27th, at eight o'clock. After the lecture Mrs. Groom will give clairvoyant tests. Friends are invited. Collection towards expenses.

Inner Consciousness.—The more I have examined the workings of my own mind, the less respect I feel for the part played by consciousness. I begin, with others, to doubt its use altogether as a helpful supervisor, and to think that my best brain-work is wholly independent of it. Its position appears to be that of a helpless spectator of but a minute fraction of a huge amount of automatic brain-work.—*Francis Galton.*

* *Hantu*, goblin, sceptre.—*Crawfurd.*

THE MORAL TEACHINGS OF SPIRITUALISM.

THE following is extracted from *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, by Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace (J. Burns, London) :—

The hypothesis of Spiritualism not only accounts for all the vast array of phenomena which claims to put us into communication with beings who have passed into another phase of existence (and is the only one that does so), but it is further remarkable as being associated with a theory of a future state of existence, which is the only one yet given to the world that can at all commend itself to the modern philosophical mind. There is a general agreement and tone of harmony in the mass of facts and communications termed "spiritual," which has led to the growth of a new literature, and to the establishment of a new religion. The main doctrines of this religion are: That after death man's spirit survives in an ethereal body, gifted with new powers, but mentally and morally the same individual as when clothed in flesh. That he commences from that moment a course of apparently endless progression, which is rapid, just in proportion as his mental and moral faculties have been exercised and cultivated while on earth. That his comparative happiness or misery will depend on himself; just in proportion as his higher human faculties have taken part in all his pleasures here, will he find himself contented and happy in a state of existence in which they will have the fullest exercise. While he who has depended more on the body than the mind for his pleasures, will, when that body is no more, feel a grievous want, and must slowly and painfully develop his intellectual and moral nature till its exercise shall become easy and pleasurable. Neither punishments nor rewards are meted out by an external power, but each one's condition is the natural and inevitable sequence of his condition here. He starts again from the level of moral and intellectual development to which he has raised himself while on earth.

Now here we have a striking supplement to the doctrines of modern science. The organic world has been carried on to a high state of development, and has been ever kept in harmony with the forces of external nature, by the grand law of "survival of the fittest" acting upon ever varying organisations. In the spiritual world, the law of the "progression of the fittest" takes its place, and carries on in unbroken continuity that development of the human mind which has been commenced here.

The communion of spirit with spirit is said to be by thought-reading and sympathy, and to be perfect between those whose beings are in harmony with each other. Those who differ widely have little or no power of intercommunion, and thus are constituted "spheres," which are divisions, not merely of space, but of social and moral sympathetic organisation. Spirits of the higher "spheres" can, and do sometimes communicate with those below; but these latter cannot communicate at will with those above. But there is for all an eternal progress solely dependent on the power of will in the development of spirit nature. There are no evil spirits but the spirits of bad men, and even the worst are surely if slowly progressing. Life in the higher spheres has beauties and pleasures of which we have no conception. Ideas of beauty and power become realised by the will, and the infinite cosmos becomes a field where the highest development of intellect may range in the acquisition of boundless knowledge.

It may be thought, perhaps, that I am here giving merely my own ideal of a future state, but it is not so. Every statement I have made is derived from those despised sources, the rapping table, the writing hand, or the entranced speaker. And to show that I have not done justice either to the ideas themselves, or to the manner in which they are often conveyed to us, I subjoin a few extracts from the spoken addresses of one of the most gifted "trance-mediums," Mrs. Emma Hardinge.

In her address on "Hades," she sums up in this passage her account of our progress through the spheres :—

"Of the nature of those spheres and their inhabitants we have spoken from the knowledge of the spirits, dwellers still in Hades. Would you receive some immediate definition of your own condition, and learn how you shall dwell, and what your garments shall be, what your mansion, scenery, likeness, occupations? Turn your eyes within, and ask what you have learned and what you have done in this, the schoolhouse for the spheres of spirit land. There—there is an aristocracy, and even royal rank and varying degree, but the aristocracy is one of merit, and as the wisest soul is he that is best, as the truest wisdom is the highest love, so the royalty of the soul is truth and love. And within the spirit world all knowledge of this earth, all forms of science, all revelations of art, all mysteries of space, must be understood. The exalted soul that is then fully ready for his departure to a higher state than Hades must know all that earth can teach, and have practised all that Heaven requires. The spirit never quits the spheres of earth until he is fully possessed of all the life and knowledge of this planet and its spheres. And though the progress may be here commenced, and not one jot of what you learn, or think, or strive for here, is lost, yet all achievements must be ultimated there, and no soul can wing its flight to that which you call, in view of its perfection, Heaven, till you have passed through Earth and Hades, and stand ready in your fully completed pilgrimage to enter on the new and unspeakable glories of the celestial realms beyond."

Could the philosopher or the man of science picture to himself a more perfect ideal of a future state than this? Does it not commend itself to him as what he could wish, if he could by his wish form the future for himself? Yet this is the teaching of that which he scouts as an imposture or a delusion—as the trickery of knaves or the ravings of madmen—modern Spiritualism. I quote another passage from the same address, and I would ask my readers to compare the modesty of the first paragraph with the claims of infallibility usually put forward by the teachers of new creeds or new philosophies :—

"It is true that man is finite and imperfect; hence his utterances are too frequently the dictation of his own narrow perceptions, and his views are limited by his own finite capacity. But as you judge him, so also ye 'shall judge the angels.' Spirits only present you with the testimony of those who have advanced *one step* beyond humanity, and ask for no credence from man without the sanction of man's judgment and reason. Spirits, then, say that their world is as the soul or spiritual and sublimated essence of this human world of yours—that, in locality, the spirit world extends around this planet, as all spirit spheres encircle in zones and belts all other planets, earths, and bodies in space, until the sphere of each impinges upon the other, and they form in connection one vast and harmonious system of natural and spiritual worlds throughout the universe."

The effects of vice and ungoverned passions are thus depicted :—

"Those spirits have engraved themselves with a fatal passion for vice, but, alas! they dwell in a world where there is no means for its gratification. There is the gambler, who has burnt into his soul the fire of the love of gain; he hovers around earth's gamblers, and, as an unseen tempter, seeks to repeat the now lost joys of the fatal game. The sensualist, the man of violence, the cruel and angry spirit—all who have steeped themselves in crime or painted their souls with those dark stain spots which they vainly think are of the body only—all these are there, no longer able to enact their lives of earthly vice, but retaining on their souls the deadly mark, and the fatal though ungratified desire for habitual sin; and so these imprisoned spirits, chained by their own fell passions in the slavery of hopeless criminal desires, hover round those who attract them as magnets draw the needle, by vicious inclinations similar to their own. But you say the soul, by tempting others, must thus sink deeper into crime Ay, but remember that another point of the spiritual doctrine is the universal teaching of eternal progress."

And then she goes on to depict in glowing language how these spirits too, in time, lose their fierce passions, and learn how to begin the upward path of knowledge and virtue. But I must leave the subject, as I wish to give one extract from the address of the same gifted lady, on the question, "What is Spirit?" as an example of the high eloquence and moral beauty with which all her discourses are inspired :—

"Small, and to some of us even insignificant, as seems the witness of the spirit-circle, its phenomenal gleams are lights which reveal, in their aggregate, those solemn truths to us. There we behold foregleams of the powers of soul, which so vastly do transcend the laws of matter. That soul's continued existence and triumph over death; our own embodied spirit's power of communication with the invisible world around us, and its various occult forces. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, prophecy, vision, psychometry, and magnetic healing; how grand and wonderful appears the soul invested, even in this earthly prison house, with all these gleams of power so full of glorious promise of what we shall be when the prison gates of matter open wide and set the spirit free! Oh! fair young girls, whose forms of supreme loveliness are nature's crowning gems, forget not, when the great Creator's bounteous hand adorned your blooming spring with the radiance of summer flowers, that He shrined within that casket of tinted beauty a soul whose glory shall survive the decay of all earthly things, and live in weal or woe, as your generation stamps it with beauty or stains it with sinful ugliness, when spring shall no more return, nor summer melt in the vast changeless evermore. Lift up your eyes from the beautiful dust of to-day, which to-morrow shall be foul in death's corruption, to the ever-living soul which you, not destiny, must adorn with immortal beauty. Remember you are spirits, and that the hours of your earthly life are only granted you to shape and form those spirits for eternity. Young men, who love to expand the muscles of the mind, and wrestle in mental gladiatorial combats for the triumphant crowns of science, what are all these to the eternal conquests to be won in fields of illimitable science in the realms of immortality! Press on through earth as a means, but only to attain to the nobler, higher colleges of the never-dying life, and use moral aims as instruments to gild your souls with the splendour that never fades, but which yourselves must win here or here-

after, ere you are fit to pass as graduates in the halls of eternal science. To understand that we are spirits, and that we live for immortality, to know and insure its issues: is not this, to Spiritualists, the noblest though last bright page which God has revealed to us? Is not to read and comprehend this page the true mission of modern Spiritualism? All else is but the phenomenal basis of the science which gives us the assurance that spirits live. This is one great aim and purpose of modern Spiritualism, to know what the spirit is, and what it must do—how best to live, so that it may most surely array itself in the pure white robes of immortality which is purged of all mortal sin and earthly grossness."

The teachings of Mrs. Hardinge agree in substance with those of all the more developed mediums, and I would ask whether it is probable that these teachings have been evolved from the conflicting dogmas of a set of impostors? Neither does it seem a more probable solution, that they have been produced "unconsciously" from the minds of self-deluded men and weak women, since it is palpable to every reader that these doctrines are essentially different in every detail, from those taught and believed by any school of modern philosophers, or any sect of modern Christians.

This is well shown by their opposing statements as to the condition of mankind after death. In the accounts of a future state given by, or through the best mediums, and in the visions of deceased persons by clairvoyants, spirits are uniformly represented in the form of *human* beings, and their occupations as analogous to those of earth. But in the most religious descriptions, or pictures of heaven, they are represented as *winged* beings, as resting on, or surrounded by clouds, and their occupations to be playing on golden harps, or perpetual singing, prayer, and adoration before the throne of God. How is it if these visions and communications are but the re-modelling of pre-existing or preconceived ideas by a diseased imagination, that the popular notions are never reproduced? How is it that whether the medium be man, woman, or child, whether ignorant or educated, whether English, German, or American, there should be one and the same consistent representation of these preterhuman beings, at variance with popular notions of them, but such as strikingly to accord with the modern scientific doctrine of "continuity"? I submit that this little fact is of itself a strong corroborative argument, that there is some objective truth in these communications.

All popular religions, all received notions of a future state of existence, alike ignore one important side of human nature, and one which has a large share in the happiness of our present existence. Laughter, and the ideas that produce it, are never contemplated as continuing to exist in the spirit world. Every form of jovial merriment, of sparkling wit, and of that humour which is often akin to pathos, and many of the higher feelings of our nature, are alike banished from the sectarian's heaven. Yet if these and all the allied feelings vanish from our natures, when we "shuffle off this mortal coil," how shall we know ourselves, how retain our identity? A poet, writing on the death of Artemus Ward in *The Spectator*, well asks:—

"Is he gone to the land of no laughter,
This man who made mirth for us all?
Proves death but a silent hereafter,
From the sounds that delight and appal!
Once closed, have the lips no more duty,
No more pleasure the exquisite ears;
Has the heart done o'erflowing with beauty,
As the eyes have with tears?"

Now it is noteworthy that the communications which the Spiritualist believes to be verily the words of our departed friends, gives us full assurance that their individual characters remain unchanged; that mirth, and wit, and laughter, and every other human emotion and source of human pleasure are still retained by them; and that even those small incidents of the domestic circle, which have become a source of innocent mirth when they were with us in the body, are still capable of exciting pleasurable feelings. And this has been held by some to be an objection to the reality of these communications instead of being, as it really is, a striking confirmation of them. Continuity has been pre-eminently the law of our mental development, and it rests with those who would abruptly sever this continuity to prove their case. They have never even attempted to show that it accords with the facts or with the analogies of nature.

Equally at variance with each other are the popular and Spiritualistic doctrines as regards the Deity. Our modern religious teachers maintain that they know a great deal about God. They define minutely and critically His various attributes; they enter into His motives, His feelings, and His opinions; they explain exactly what He has done, and why He has done it; and they declare that after death we shall be with Him, and shall see and know Him. In the teaching of the "spirits" there is not a word of all this. They tell us that they commune with higher intelligences than themselves, but of God they really know no more than we do. They say that above the higher intelligences are others higher and higher in apparently endless gradation, but as far as they know no absolute knowledge of the Deity himself is claimed by any of them. Is it possible, if these "spiritual" communications are but the workings of the minds of weak, superstitious, or deluded human beings, that they should so completely contradict one of the strongest and most cherished beliefs of the superstitious and the religious, and should agree with that highest philosophy (of which most mediums have certainly never heard), which maintains that we can know nothing of the almighty, the eternal, the infinite, the absolute Being, who must necessarily be not only unknown and unknowable, but even unthinkable by finite intelligences?

I would point to the thousands it has convinced of the reality of another world, to the many it has led to devote their lives to works of philanthropy, to the eloquence and poetry it has given us, and to the grand doctrine of an ever-progressive future state which it teaches. Those who will examine its literature will acknowledge these facts. Those who will not examine for themselves either the literature or the phenomena of Spiritualism, should at least refrain from passing judgment on a matter of which they are confessedly and wilfully ignorant.

I maintain, therefore, that whether we consider the vast number and the high character of its converts, the immense accumulation and authenticity of its facts, or the noble doctrine of a future state which it has elaborated, the study of modern Spiritualism is calculated to add greatly to our knowledge of man's true nature and highest interests.

THE PALL MALL GAZETTE ON CLAIRVOYANCE.

The Pall Mall Gazette of May 17th, says of "Gipsy's" book, *A Marked Life; or, The Autobiography of a Clairvoyante* (Sampson Low and Co.):—"If this volume contains—as it is alleged to contain, and as the publishers' note prefixed to it implies that they have ascertained that it does contain—a true account of the experiences of a clairvoyante, assuredly the disbelief that at present exists concerning this and other mystic crafts must soon disappear. Society has of late been brought to look upon second sight and Spiritualism as species of fraud nearly akin to fortune-telling; and the exponents of these arts, whether they be spirit-media who exhibit their powers at a guinea a head, or wandering gipsies who extort shillings from credulous maidservants, are even sometimes prosecuted and punished. The confessions of 'Gipsy' must, however, convince all those who believe in them that these people have been most unfairly dealt with. 'Gipsy' does not, indeed, attempt to ascertain or explain the origin of her power; but if it has any existence at all it surely must be attributed to the assistance of spirits. By merely shutting her eyes and waving her hands before her face she is able to dip into futurity and conjure up at will complete visions of coming events. It certainly seems a little unfair to the world that one so gifted should have confined herself to foretelling the success of a theatrical company during a provincial tour, or 'fixing' the position of a coin which has been hidden under a sofa. How many calamities might have been averted if only 'Gipsy' had devoted her powers to the world! After having once convinced the public of her genuineness, than which surely nothing would have been more easy, she might have started as a sort of universal prophetess, and have regulated all the greater concerns of human life. She, however, limits the exercise of her powers to her own affairs; and from what one reads in her biography, she has not, even with their assistance, managed to pass through life without encountering more serious misfortunes than fall to the lot of the most commonplace people. At the age of fifteen she elopes with a man of more than double her age, who during their married life constantly threatens to kill

her, who once or twice savagely assaults her, and who on one occasion attempts to confine her in a lunatic asylum. Three times she is ruined and turned out in the world penniless, and once she is burned out of house and home. Her husband is nearly killed in the civil war of America, while she herself is within an ace of being drowned in a boating expedition on Lake Erie. At last she is divorced from her husband, after having secured his acquittal on a charge of felony; and she goes upon the stage, where, as manageress, proprietress, and leading actress, she achieves a brilliant success. Tired of this, she leaves America for London, being shipwrecked and again nearly drowned *en route*. Some of these adventures are disclosed to her in previous visions, but her second sight does not much assist her in avoiding them. A more adventurous biography if true, and a more audacious one if false, it has never been our lot to read. Trouble is heaped up on trouble in a most startling manner; and the style in which the history is related does not tend to increase its verisimilitude. Moreover, the belief in second sight is too much a thing of the past. In the Highlands of Scotland and in Scandinavia the belief was widely indulged in about a hundred years ago. But all faith in clairvoyance seems to have disappeared from Scotland when MacCulloch wrote his *History of the Western Islands*, sixty years ago; and there is not much probability of its ever being revived, either there or elsewhere—except, indeed, as a method of obtaining money by false pretences."

THE ANTIQUITY OF SPIRITUALISM.

Not a few ardent followers believe that Spiritualism will be the religion of the future; certainly it was of the far distant past. In that wonderful people, the enormous antiquity of whose complex civilization is now firmly established, who, more than two thousand years before our era, had covered the valley of the Nile with works which we could not rival, though the unknown God and Lord of Life was worshipped under various names and attributes, the popular religion and household cultus was a Spiritualism the same as is now developing amongst ourselves. Last year, Professor Max Müller opened the series of Hibbert Lectures with a most valuable survey of the Religion of Ancient India: this year, Mr. le Page Renouf has undertaken to set forth the results of the latest and fullest researches in the Civilization and Religion of Ancient Egypt. On Thursday, the 15th ult., in Steinway Hall, on the platform now familiar to many London Spiritualists, he dealt with the popular views of the spiritual composition of man current among the Egyptians five thousands years ago. This, it must be observed, is no matter of surmise or inference from a few disputed passages or obscure texts. The Egyptians have left their belief written at large in endless inscriptions and records upon all conceivable subjects and in all conceivable forms, from royal edicts to private prayers and memoranda. A principal and pervading tenet amongst them was the double nature of man. Every human being had his double, wraith, or astral spirit, as much a part of him as his fleshly frame, at times and in certain conditions, independently visible and palpable. The Egyptian name for this was *kâr*, a word exactly corresponding to the Latin *imago* and the Greek εἴδωλον. Through this mystic companion individual separate existence was continued and carried on after the dissolution of earth-life, and the communication with it by survivors formed the greater part of that ancestral worship and reverence for the dead that so remarkably distinguished Egyptian social life. Indeed, communion with the departed, care for their remains, and elaborate arrangements for preserving their memory, formed the principal occupation of domestic life in all classes, and was probably carried to a height and perfection of which some recent addresses and communications in *The Spiritualist* afford an imperfect glimpse. Now, with wonder and astonishment, we are painfully recalling and struggling back to powers and conditions that were the familiar possession and privilege of ages that were grey before the birth of Moses. Then the veil between this life and spiritual life was thin, transparent, and more easily lifted, and the passage from sphere to sphere less impeded. Another point brought forward by Mr. le Page Renouf was the frequency and recognition of "possession" in ancient Egypt; and he cited a large portion of a royal inscription recording how a princess had become possessed by an adverse deity, to eject whom the highly sacred image of one of the great gods was brought in solemn state, and placed by the afflicted princess in presence of the king and his army, who with awe and terror—so powerful was the possessing demon—witnessed the expulsion of the evil influence. Possession and obsession in all places were familiar and recognised phenomena, and scientifically dealt with.

The above is but an imperfect reminiscence of the points fully treated by Mr. Renouf, and it may be added that in the other primeval empire whose antiquity approaches nearest to that of Egypt—the Assyrian—the worship of, and communion with, the departed, was as largely practised and as well understood as in the Nile Valley. There, too, both spheres and states of existence stood nearer one another, and communications and passages from one to the other were not such matters of wonder, doubt, ridicule, and suffering, as in later ages; then, too, the departed had more power and direct influence, and were held in higher reverence. In the Ishtar tablets of B.C. 2250, it is written:—

> "I will raise up the Dead, devourers of the living;
> Over the living the Dead shall triumph."

Again, in the same record, there appears a trace of the occurrence of "Materialisation":—

> "The spirit of Heabani, like glass, transparent from the earth arose."

W.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

The fifth annual meeting of this Society took place at 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, on Thursday, the 15th inst.

The president (Mr. Serjeant Cox) and the hon. treasurer and secretary (Mr. F. K. Munton) were unanimously re-elected for the ensuing year.

Lord Borthwick, Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., and Mr. George Harris, LL.D., were re-elected as vice-presidents, and the retiring members of the Council were again appointed. The Hon. Percy Wyndham, M.P., was elected to the seat on the Council vacant by the resignation of Mr. Dunlop, C.B.

We extract from the hon. secretary's annual report the following announcement as to the Society's future plan of action:—

"Several members having intimated their opinion that the debates might now assume a more practical character, the Council have conferred with the Investigation Committee with the view of arranging a series of discussions not confined to mere theory. I am instructed to say that the labours of the Investigation Committee have been but partially successful, but enough has been elicited to demand further inquiry. It is suggested that this may be better pursued by the common aid of the whole Society; and that such an investigation of psychic phenomena as is demanded in the interests of psychological science can only be satisfactorily made by collecting facts through the direct evidence of competent witnesses on personal examination. The Council therefore recommend that the Society should invite *viva voce* communications of observations made by intelligent and reliable witnesses of the phenomena presented within their personal experiences, that minute particulars may be elicited and the accuracy essential to scientific inquiry secured.

"The Council propose to devote the greater portion of the next session to the accomplishment of this design—one of great interest and importance if conducted in the spirit of free and impartial inquiry—and to this end they ask all who have evidence to give to proffer it frankly for examination. The plan suggested is as follows:—The business will commence, as now, with written communications of psychological phenomena; witnesses who have volunteered their evidence will then be invited to give it in the formal shape of an examination; questions for elucidation will be permitted; and, at the expiration of a limited time, the taking of testimony will be adjourned, and the remainder of the evening will be occupied with discussions upon any matters suggested by the evidence received. Those who desire to communicate any psychological facts and phenomena presented *within their personal knowledge* (hearsay will not be admitted) are requested to notify the same to me, and an intimation will be given when their presence will be required.

"The first evidence meeting will be held on an early day, and the plan will be continued at each subsequent meeting until further notice. As the attendance of members at this inquiry will probably be large, the rule as to the limited admission of friends will have to be strictly observed, *and none but members will be allowed to put questions to the witnesses or take part in the subsequent discussion.*"

The following is stated in the letter of a special correspondent of the Philadelphia *Times*, dated New York, May 4th:—"The talk of the town in educational and literary circles is the surprise which Superintendent Kiddle has executed on his friends and the public. Mr. Henry Kiddle has been for about nine years superintendent of the Public Schools of this city. He grew up in the profession of teaching, and has for nearly forty years been identified in one way and another with the Public Schools. He is a scholarly gentleman of about fifty-five years of age, exceedingly courtly in his manners, and a most diligent worker. As an organizer of educational affairs he has probably few superiors. Religiously his affiliations have been with the Protestant Episcopal Church. Mr. Kiddle now astonishes everybody by proclaiming himself a Spiritualist."

A TEST MANIFESTATION.

At a recent meeting of the Investigating Committee of the Psychological Society, a chair was threaded upon the arm of Mr. Serjeant Cox while he was grasping the hand of Mr. C. E. Williams, the medium. The chair was afterwards examined, and the joints of it found to be firmly fastened. When the manifestation was effected, Mr. Serjeant Cox's arm was below the *second* of the cross-bars of the back of the chair, so that if his arm passed through the wood *via* the top of the chair, it must have passed through two bars,—one four inches in depth, the other three-quarters of an inch in diameter. Mr. Serjeant Cox asserted positively that he had not released the hand of Mr. Williams for an instant. He took it before the light was extinguished, and when the light was struck again, the chair was there, hanging on his arm.

INTERESTING PUBLIC *SEANCES.*

Mr. F. O. Mathews, test and clairvoyant medium of Birmingham, was recently engaged by the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, to which he gave nine public *séances;* he gave several private sittings in the city as well, and he sustained the good reputation which had preceded him. His first sitting was given to the Association on Sunday morning, May 4th, at 11.30 a.m. While the members were engaged in singing, he passed into the trance condition, and addressed the meeting at some length, and while doing so left the impression that "oratory was not his forte." We were rewarded for our patient listening by a change of control, and the giving of a series of unmistakable tests to many of the sitters. Mr. Mathews had never been in the room before, and was a total stranger to all present. The medium—whose eyes were shut—turned to a lady near him, and said :—"Madam, there is a spirit here who wishes me to thank you for your kindness to Mary. Mary is not in the spirit-world. The spirit who communicates is related to you and to Mary, and now in spirit accompanies Mary on her journey." The spirit was recognised by the person addressed. Her niece, Mary, had sailed twenty-four years before to America, and the spirit communicating was Mary's mother, the departed sister of the listener. He then walked to another lady and said :—"Your little girl is here, and says you will know who she is, for you have a lock of her hair in your pocket, where it has been ever since you took it down to look at it." This was quite correct; the lady had the lock of her deceased child's hair in her pocket.

He said to Mr. Walker, the president, "Good morning, my old friend. Betty says she sits here with a white cap on, grey hair straggling out, and a cane by her side." Mr. Walker did not recognise the person, and said so. "Oh yes, you do," exclaimed the medium; "she is offering you a pinch of snuff, as of old." Mr. Walker then admitted that he knew the spirit well; at first she had escaped his memory, for Betty was the last "body" he should have thought about. Some of his tests were not recognised at the time they were given, but were afterwards verified.

Speaking to a gentleman, Mr. Mathews said:—"John, your father William desires me to deliver to you a peculiar message to this effect:—'My son, be careful what you are about. You intend to read this book (here the speaker lifted the Bible off the reading desk) through from Genesis to Revelations, and to ponder well its contents. Have a care that you do not give a false interpretation or undue weight to the words, *Eternal, Everlasting, Hell,* and *Damnation,* and thereby follow my example and come to a premature grave.'" The gentleman said that the test was wonderfully true; he intended to act as described, and his father had died of religious mania brought about by fear of eternal punishment.

Speaking to another, the medium said:—"Sir, you have a heavy payment to make to-morrow, which must be attended to; the papers connected therewith are now in your pocket." Many other tests of a most satisfactory description were given. I have had two private sittings with Mr. Mathews, and whether the communications were pleasing or the reverse, they were true; I have no hesitation in stating that Mr. Mathews is possessed of excellent clairvoyant powers, manifested in all degrees from sympathy and mind-reading up to those higher grades, and taking cognisance of the spiritual and material alike. J. Coates.

65, Jamaica-street, Glasgow.

A CURIOUS PHENOMENON WELL CERTIFIED.

The following is from *Mind and Matter* (Philadelphia, U.S.A.), May 10th, 1879 :—

Spiritual Conference at Lyric Hall, No. 259½, North 9th Street, April 27, 1879.

Report of the Committee appointed by the "Keystone Association of Spiritualists" to investigate the phenomenon of denominated spirit-writing in Wm. H. Powell.

The Committee was appointed on Sunday, April 6th, 1879, and consisted of W. Paine, M.D., chairman; Reuben Garter, M.D.; B. F. Du Bois, H. H. Clayton, Francis J. Keffer, John P. Hayes, and A. Lawrence.

According to arrangements, the Committee, in connection with Mr. Powell, met at the office of Dr. Paine, No. 250, South Ninth-street, on Thursday evening, April 8th, 1879.

Mr. Powell passed into a state of somnambulancy, or catalepsy, that he denominates spirit control, when his pulse became more full; respiration increased from 18 to 25, face flushed, the carotid vessels throbbed, and the heart had a laboured action.

In the course of three or four minutes he signified the want of a slate, and commenced to write with his index finger. This finger was then washed with strong soap and water, and the entire Committee examined it to see that there was nothing on it previous to the effort to write.

After writing messages on slates, this abnormal condition disappeared, and Mr. Powell, conscious, talked as freely as before. In order to make a more careful test of this peculiar phenomenon, his sleeves were rolled up, his hands, arms, and face were washed in strong soap and water, then in a solution of muriatic acid of sufficient strength to destroy any calcareous substance that might be secreted about him. His finger nails were pared and carefully scraped; perfectly new slates were furnished, and a brilliant light; every possible precaution was taken to detect fraud or deception. In a few moments Mr. Powell passed into a similar condition to that previously mentioned, and with his finger extended, in view of all, there appeared a soft, pulpy mass with which he could write with perfect freedom.

The experiment was repeated seven (7) times, and in every instance with the same results.

He also took hold of the index finger of a member of the Committee, and there appeared upon the end of his finger a similar substance, with which he could write with his finger, as well as with his own. The moment he let go of the finger the substance would drop off, but in most instances was retained as long as he had the finger grasped between his own.

The finger nails of the member of the Committee through which he wrote were also washed and scraped, and carefully observed; the Committee are positive they did not come in contact with any substance after the washing and scraping, until they were applied to the slate, where the substance exuded and writing was executed.

The slates were washed with acid water, and every precaution taken so that no substance was on the slate at the time of the application of the finger. The substance could be seen exuding from the finger while Mr. Powell was in this state, and several pieces were obtained and subjected to careful chemical and microscopic examinations.

The microscopic appearance was that of albuminous cells filled with a pigment. There were also fragments of cuticle and epiphytal structures. The chemical analysis showed the substances were composed of albumen, starch, phosphate of lime, and phosphate of ammonia, with an amorphous pigment matter without any traces of lead, slate, or other substances ordinarily used for writing on slates. During the experiments the hands were covered with towels, handkerchiefs, &c., and yet the substance would appear through them.

The Committee have also resorted to all other accessible means to account for this phenomenon, on other principles than those claimed by Mr. Powell, and their efforts have been entirely unsuccessful, so that they are perfectly satisfied that there is no deception or fraud, and that Mr. Powell is not conscious of the production and nature of the phenomenon.

We, therefore, submit that it is one of those peculiar physiological manifestations that we cannot account for, and as such respectfully present it.

WM. PAINE, M.D.,
B. F. DU BOIS,
JNO. P. HAYES,
ALFRED LAWRENCE,
REUBEN GARTER, M.D.,
FRANCIS J. KEFFER.

MESMERIC EXPERIMENTS.

PERHAPS one of the greatest wants at the present time, is the resuscitation before qualified observers of the mesmeric experiments so common half a generation ago. Little progress in investigating spiritual phenomena can be made, without re-examining those of mesmerism. Could not the Psychological Society undertake this useful work? The last chapter of the forthcoming book, *Spirits Before our Eyes*, will show that the key to the solution of some of the most perplexing problems in Spiritualism is to be found in a particular class of mesmeric experiments.

PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUALISM.*

BY LOUISA ANDREWS.

(Concluded.)

THE last series of sittings I had with Dr. Slade (no one being present but my sister and myself) took place just before he left for England, and some of them were marvellous in the amount of power displayed.

Persons often object to dark *séances*. I do not myself regard them as by any means necessarily objectionable or unsatisfactory. Although few, perhaps, have seen more in the light, some of the sittings I have had in darkness have been among the most convincing and satisfactory I ever enjoyed. I have talked with seven different spirits in an evening, some speaking (as did William White, of the *Banner*) in a loud, clear, natural voice, and others lower—a few with great apparent difficulty. One Indian, speaking his own melodious language, had the most wonderfully beautiful voice I ever heard. It was a delight to listen to it, simply for its musical sweetness, though we could not understand a word.

When very forcible demonstrations were expected, the medium had to be made unconscious, as there was no other way of keeping him still. Either I or my sister, when he leaned back, entranced, in his chair, so that we could not reach his hands, always kept our feet upon his.

Both in these evening sittings and in some I have had in the daytime, the house has been so shaken that the pictures swayed upon the walls. On one evening, especially, this shaking was so violent that the chandelier in the room below had its pendants loudly tinkled in striking together—the doors and windows rattled as if a high wind were blowing through the house, and the ceiling and floor were jarred as by the firing of cannon. This motion lasted so long that it produced with me a feeling of nausea. There seemed to be crowds dancing and pounding upon the floor with bare feet—hands were loudly clapped, and tremendous blows, as from a mallet, threatened destruction to the table on which our hands rested. The piano, which stood five or six feet from the medium, was strummed upon, and to add to the awful din, one end of the instrument was lifted and allowed to fall again with heavy thuds. While all this was going on, spirits crowded all about us, their hands grasped our shoulders and arms, drapery was drawn across our faces, garments rustled against us, and dark forms, passing between me and the windows like pillars of cloud, shut out the light which came between the cracks of the closed shutters. In the midst of this tremendous demonstration, and while numberless feet were still stamping about the floor, a loud, shrill Indian war-whoop was heard, as if proceeding from some one flying through the air, now close to our heads, and now high up towards the ceiling, now at one end of the long room and then at the other. These whoops were repeated in the shrillest tones, and in literally breathless succession, during many minutes, while all the time voluminous drapery, some light and gauzy, and some substantial and heavy, swept over our shoulders and heads, and what felt like trailing tresses of long dry hair fell upon our faces—all this to the weird accompaniment of the trembling and quaking, which never ceased till silence was restored. Altogether, the power displayed was such that I can really give you no idea of it by attempting to describe the indescribable. I confess that although my nerves were pretty well inured to sights and sounds of this nature, they were, during that sitting, strained rather tightly and thrilled like harp-strings in a storm. Sometimes, in these evening sittings, spirit voices rang close around and above us. Once, what seemed to be a bodiless head passed to and fro, singing, and its long beard swept over my sister's face. She said, "Why! it feels like a beard." The singing head replied, "*It is my beard.*" A tall form standing behind me, and speaking in deep, clear tones, said, "*Do not fear me, I will not hurt you,*" and placing his hand on my forehead, he bent my head back till it rested on his breast, then, lifting me from the floor, by grasping the back of my chair with one hand and the rung in front with the other, he swung me, with long sweeps, from side to side through the air.

Once, when the form of a man had been for some minutes standing near my right arm and talking, this spirit exclaimed, with some impatience, "*These children interrupt me!*"

I said, in reply, "If they are my little boys, please let them come!" When, in an instant, the pattering of little feet was heard upon the floor, my arm was tightly grasped by small eager hands, and a baby voice called out "*Mamma, mamma!*" while that of the older brother whispered, "*Mother, dear mother! it is I! Harold.*" The sweet chorus, "*Mamma!*" "*Mamma!*"—"*Dear, dear mother!*" lasted for some moments, while the feet were dancing about gleefully and the tones of voice expressed the most joyous excitement. I fear to have worried you by so much narrative, for I know flowers freshly gathered are not more unlike those pressed in a book, lifeless and dry, than were those experiences to me from the poor bald record of them, which is all I can give to you. But when I hear persons deny phenomenal Spiritualism, I feel little sympathy with them, for so many of my most precious treasures have come to me from that storehouse. No facts can be more to us, spiritually, than we are willing and able to make them. If the phenomena remain, to our apprehension, mere sights and sounds, curious and amazing, like empty shells upon the beach, which we pick up idly only to let them fall again when we are weary of looking at them, we cannot, of course, become wiser or better by means of these manifestations of spirit power. We cannot grow fat and strong by lying in a harvest-field and admiring the grain as it ripens in the sun. It must be reaped, and separated from the chaff, ground into flour, and made into bread, and then eaten and assimilated, before it can nourish us. And yet all the nourishment was stored in those little grains of wheat. It needed only to be got at and made use of to become the staff of life. What I find most objectionable is, not that physical manifestations, as such, do not take their right and subordinate place with some who have never been in the habit of thinking deeply on any subject (this is inevitable), but that so many who consider themselves to have passed beyond the phenomenal stage, and to be no longer in need of learning anything through the medium of their senses, let go the substance to grasp a shadow, so vague and distorted that neither they themselves, nor others through them, can possibly be in any way benefited by their supposed exaltation into the sphere of philosophy. What they dignify by that name is too often but the reflection of their own fantastic imaginings, being devoid alike of sound common sense and of true spiritual insight. They have left facts behind them, without getting hold of truths in their place. In America the (so-called) inspirational speakers and writers, who prate by the hour of the "beautiful spirit-land," piling up artificial flowers and tinsel stars of rhetoric in illustration of its charms, would, in my opinion, be better employed in striving to understand the simplest of the phenomena, studying humbly and patiently those object lessons which it is not easy for the wisest to master. There is a mine of wealth yet unworked, and if we had more earnest, persistent, intelligent seekers after its hidden treasures of knowledge, and fewer self-elected teachers, it would be better for Spiritualism. When Balaam's ass spoke, it was to serve good purpose; but to-day there are, I

* A paper read before the National Association of Spiritualists.

am afraid, many inspired donkeys who might have confined themselves to inarticulate braying without impoverishing the world.

This may seem severe, but in America we are so overwhelmed by avalanches of this shallow, trashy, and pretentious talk that I think a little severity in denouncing it is excusable. Far be it from me to depreciate those who really teach the world what Spiritualism means. To such we owe a debt of respect and gratitude which I hope we shall all, and always, be ready and glad to pay; but the good that able workers in the lecture-field and with the pen achieve would be much greater if there were not so many conceited and incompetent talkers and writers, who weary and disgust those who really desire and seek help and light.

In England people are (very happily in certain cases for you) rather less fluent than with us—for this fluency gets to be mistaken for eloquence, with disastrous results.

Men and women pour out floods, *torrents*, of words; and there are some who appear content, and even pleased, to sit, like, what Carlyle calls "passive buckets," to receive these gushing, inexhaustible streams, being so astonished and bewildered by the amount they get in a given time that they forget, apparently, to criticise its quality.

Then, besides this class of talking philosophers, there is that still larger one—the men and the women who have their own little private inspirations from exalted sources. I knew an old lady in America who would hardly go out for a walk, or get up to poke the fire, unless Napoleon Bonaparte signified to her inner consciousness his approval of that particular action. This kind of delusion is the most common and the most mischievous, as it seems to me, which Spiritualism has to contend against. Facts *are* facts, and can hardly fail to prove, in the end, more or less instructive to persons who delight in them; but these superstitions are altogether hurtful and enervating to the intellectual and moral nature of those who take them for spiritual realities. It is the fantasies I dread, and not the physical facts. Facts! are they not Divine truth taking upon itself visible, audible, tangible forms?

> "Are not these, O soul, the vision of Him who reigns?
> Is not the vision He? though He be not that which He seems?"

Our heavenly Father has given us the senses for our teachers in this life, and from them we learn as from no other masters. Logic may deceive, and faith may fail, and in our agonized longing we cry aloud:—

> "O for the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still!"

These reach both mind and heart as no mere argument, no plausible theories and no inspired eloquence can. Spiritualism without phenomena would be a soul without a body—a mere form of religious belief, and (judging from present appearances) a peculiarly indefinite form—an amorphous ghost, hard to recognise! Swendenborg saw, and strove to disseminate, many of those truths which we must value, and which, through Spiritualism, millions have been led to receive and rejoice in; but he and his followers had only words by which to make these truths manifest to the world—and how few comparatively have come to a knowledge of them through this verbal teaching! Of one tiny rap—one touch of a spirit hand—one whisper of a spirit voice, we may truly say, as Tennyson says of the little flower:—

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies;
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is!"

In our phenomena lie hidden the secrets af spirit and matter, of life, death, and immortality; and only through the careful study of these indubitable facts can we learn to value the problems that now perplex us: for though the lips of the Sphinx be silent to those who, in the inscrutable face and the weird, hybrid shape, see only a strange, fantastic form, behind which lurks no vital mystery, they are ever ready, and waiting, to whisper in the ears of wise and earnest seekers after truth, the words of eternal life; and they who learn to answer rightly the questions thus propounded, will be those who, in the end, shall read the riddle of the ages.

AN EXTRAORDINARY MESMERIC *SEANCE*.

Last week's *Truth* contains a most interesting article about a public mesmeric *séance*, held "not long ago" at "Leamington," in which Mdlle. Lucile was the sensitive. Last autumn we described one of Mdlle. Lucile's *séances* which took place in the Salon Louis Quinze at Paris, and the narrative in *Truth* alleges that the same facts were observed somewhere, with a few new ones in addition. The writer describes how, as in Paris, a pin was run through the arm of the sleeping sensitive, who thus spiked walked about among the observers, who were satisfied as to the reality of the fact. The writer adds:—

More wondrous things were to follow. Mdlle. Lucile received orders to stare into the eyes of one of the dandies on the stage, and she did stare so fixedly that nothing he could do would divert the direction of her gaze. He put his hand up; she slapped it down. He tried to turn round, but with a grasp stronger than a man's she collared him and wheeled him round to the position of "eyes front." Another of the crutch gentlemen sought to interpose his body between the pair, but he was caught round the waist with no more ceremony than a bundle of linen, and sent sprawling backwards over a chair.

All the others who tried to repeat the experiment were dealt with in the same fashion. After this M. Diablentrain selected the toughest and brawniest of the sporting contingent—a stalwart dragoon officer, six feet high—and made him stand back to back with Mdlle. Lucile. From that moment the somnambulist seemed riveted to his shoulder-blades. It was in vain that he struggled, writhed, jumped, ran round the stage, sat down, and tried in every way to rid himself of his burden—the pretty sleeper, with her features set in an immutable expression of serenity, adhered fast to him. Finally, the young giant, streaming with perspiration, lay down on his stomach with his hands spread out; but she reclined on the top of him with her hands folded across her breast, coolly, as if she were on a couch.

It is not necessary to recapitulate all the tricks which M. Diablentrain made his pupil perform. Enough that by the end of the proceedings the whole audience was convinced that they had seen physical forces at work which there was no explaining. The eight gentlemen of the toothpick and crutch agreed that M. Diablentrain was a "rum 'un." There lingered in them, however, just enough scepticism to make them desirous of seeing M. Diablentrain perform "off the stage;" so having reached their hotel they hovered about the doorstep, resolving to invite the Frenchman and his attractive pupil to have some supper with them, and afterwards to perform a queer prank or two in private.

Now, a Frenchman never refuses an invitation to supper when courteously tendered. When M. Diablentrain descended from his fly escorting Mdlle. Lucile, who was closely muffled up, he bowed civilly to the gentlemen who had assisted him during his performance, and gracefully accepted the hint of the dragoon, who acted as spokesman, that champagne *ad libitum* and other good things would be spread for his entertainment.

So soon as he had got to be thoroughly festive, M. Diablentrain naturally acceded to the proposals which his host made him for giving them a little performance in private. "Vell, shentlemen," drawled he, rather unsteadily, "what you wish me to do? I send Mademoiselle to sleep again here, and what next? Shall we stick three pins in her arm, or will a carving-knife——?"

"No, nothing of that," answered one of the sportsmen. "All we want to know is whether Mam'selle could do to any chance stranger she met in the streets or in this hotel what she did to us—stare in the eyes, you know, and get stuck to one's back?"

"You doubt it?" asked the Frenchman. "Hark! I hear a noise of wheels. Perhaps it is a traveller coming to the hotel. Will you that Mademoiselle shall go down and stare at this traveller, then stick to his back, notwithstanding his screams?"

"If he screams that would be howling fun," replied the dragoon, and so concurred they all, laughing.

"Vell, then, silence, shentlemen!" said M. Diablentrain;

and, obedient to a wave of his hand, the French girl pushed back her chair and looked hard at him. In a moment the magnetic fluid which this devilish man seemed to possess had wrought its usual effect, and she was asleep.

Now, it so chanced that the Lord Bishop of Leamington coming to hold a visitation of his clergy was the occupant of the carriage whose wheels the mesmerist had heard. His Lordship was arriving to sleep at the hotel after a hard day's preaching, lunching, and dining in divers parishes of his diocese. Ascending the staircase, followed by his chaplain and an obsequious array of waiters with luggage, the Bishop met half-way the fair-haired, open-eyed, somnambulist, who gazed at him with the fixity of a statue. "Good evening," muttered the Bishop, astonished, and he timidly fingered the brim of his shovel-hat; but with a sharp slap Mdlle. Lucile knocked his hand aside, and sent the episcopal headdress flying over the balusters. "God bless my soul!" stammered the Bishop as he stooped; but grasping him tightly by the throat, the somnambulist forced his right reverend head up, and stared at him till he hallooed in terror. Of course his trusty chaplain rushed at once to the rescue, but a back-hander, dealt with no feminine lightness, made him stumble down three steps, he bawling, "Oh, oh, my jaw!" Nothing better happened to a pair of waiters who held a portmanteau between them, for this weight upsetting their equilibrium made them roll from the top of the stairs to the bottom, as soon as Mdlle. Lucile had pushed one of them on the chest. Meanwhile, the noise of this unholy shindy attracting many residents in the hotel, the passages and staircase were soon filled with a crowd of ladies, who recoiled scandalised at seeing their reverend Bishop—a most austere man—struggling and whining on the stairs with a girl who, for greater convenience, had now grasped him tight by both ears, and held his head at arms' length like a pitcher of water, or a lamp full of explosive oil.

The gentlemen of the toothpick and crutch had not bargained for teasing a bishop, and they thought it high time to stop the fun. But M. Diablentrain had vanished. Oppressed by the heat and the champagne, and losing all recollection, he had retreated to his bedchamber and bolted himself in, nor knocks nor supplications could avail to draw him out. "To-morrow, shentlemen; no more wine to-night, thank you," he kept on repeating; and he might have left the Bishop in his unpleasant predicament all the night had not his lordship himself, galvanised by terror, leaped clean out of Mdlle Lucile's grasp, and bounded off with the agility of a football, till he reached a room, whose door he locked. The somnambulist followed him, and thumped at the door, but she could not force it; and there she remained hammering till M. Diablentrain, having at last been drawn out by coaxings and threats, came out, rubbing his eyes, to break his spell over her.

Leamington has been talking ever since of this queer affair. As for M. Diablentrain and his pupil, they made a pot of money on the next night, and all subsequent nights of their performance at the Assembly Rooms.

DR. SLADE.—Dr. Slade returned from Sydney about a fortnight since. During his stay there he has been very fully occupied, and his *séances* highly satisfactory. Among those who have been convinced through his mediumship is Mr. E. C. Haviland, of *The Australian* magazine. He accompanied Dr. Slade to Melbourne, and having written and sworn to a circumstantial account of his experiences with Dr. Slade, he asked its insertion in *The Argus*. That journal refusing to insert it as correspondence, he paid for it as an advertisement, and it duly appeared in the issue of the 18th February, occupying one and a quarter columns of small type. From it it appears that although Mr. Haviland's visit to Dr. Slade was unpremeditated, his late wife immediately communicated to him, and gave him tests of her identity. Subsequently the spirit of his wife's father, who had been a captain, tied two knots of a peculiar nature in a handkerchief, which knots were identified as corresponding exactly with knots he was accustomed to tie when in the body. Equally startling manifestations occurred when the medium visited Mr. Haviland's own house. Dr. Slade will finally leave Melbourne for Sydney, *en route* for San Francisco, in the course of a few days. Since his return here he has not given many sittings, his health having suffered from overwork whilst at Sydney; but those he has given have been of a very satisfactory nature, writing between closed slates (in two instances without the slate being touched by the medium), test messages, the levitation of chairs, table, and walking-sticks without contact, and many other marvellous phenomena. It is Dr. Slade's intention to pay another visit to Australia in the course of one or two years, when the reputation he now leaves behind him will ensure his meeting with large success, and adding still further to the Spiritualistic ranks.—*Harbinger of Light* (Melbourne, March 1st).

A DEATH-BED VISION.

AN old man died the other night—died in his bed. The papers say he was a poor old man, friendless, living on charity, and that his life had been drear and full of bitterness. The old man died alone, the darkness of night hiding the darkness of death until his eyes opened to the brightest, fairest vision human eyes ever beheld. There was a kind and tender smile on his pale face when they found him dead. Men wondered at it, knowing how sadly and hopelessly he had fought the battle of life, and women whispered to each other:—"Perhaps an angel's hand smoothed down his grey locks as the dampness of death gathered on his wrinkled forehead."

There were men there who had given him money, and women who had fed him. They knew that he was old and weak and poor, but they had not thought of his dying, and his white face shocked them. They had not stopped to think that one could not go on fighting hunger and poverty for ever. The old man's heart was like a flint. He did not seem thankful for the food given him, and sometimes he was harsh to the children as they blocked his path. But when men, women, and children walked softly in to look upon the dead, they forgave him everything, forgot everything, and said:—"He was a poor old man, and we sorrow that his life was not full of sunshine."

It was not strange that the face of the dead wore that smile. When the human heart had been embittered against the world—when an old man has been wronged by men, followed by hunger and driven to despair, he cannot die with that burden on his soul. Heaven's gates must be opened a little to let the glorious light of Paradise shine into the dying man's eyes, and soften his heart until he will say, "Men have not dealt by me as they should, but I forgive each and all."

When the old man awoke in the darkness and felt the touch of death at his heart there were no tears in his eyes, and he grimly rejoiced that his aching limbs were to find rest at last. He did not care whether any one missed him, or what men would say when they entered his desolate room and found his corpse on the bed of straw. Then the angels threw back the gates and the light came. They came with it, singing so sweetly and tenderly that the old man started up in fear that he might lose a single note. They walked around him, they floated above him, and all the while his hard heart was growing softer and filling with such feelings as it had not known for years.

"Men have sneered at your grey locks and trembling limbs, but you must forgive them," whispered the angels.

"I can—I do!" he replied.

"Poverty has oppressed you, misfortune has walked with you, woe and sorrow have been your companions, but you must not blame the world," they whispered.

"I forgive all men," he answered.

"Behold the light from heaven—listen to the music which is never heard outside the golden gates except by the dying—look yonder and tell us what you see."

Peering into the glorious light, while the film of death gathered over his eyes, the old man read:—"None so old and poor and hopeless that heaven's gates are shut against them."

A spirit soared away with the flood of light, and it was only clay which the men and women looked upon next day. They wondered at the tender smile on the white face—they had not heard the music nor seen the flood of glory which lighted up the bare old room.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal.*

CAPTAIN JOHN JAMES'S book, *Mesmerism, with Hints for Beginners*, was published last Tuesday.

DR. CARTER BLAKE'S lectures at the British Museum will commence next Tuesday. Supplementary discourses will also be given by H. St. Chad Boscawen, Esq., M.A., on "The Bronze Gates of Balawat, Assyria;" by Dr. R. S. Charnock, F.S.A., late president of the London Anthropological Society, on "The Populations and Antiquities of Cyprus," and by others.

THERE is a great want in London, just now, of a medium who obtains manifestations in daylight, and a general desire exists for opportunities of examining new orders of physical phenomena. Cabinets are gradually falling into disuse, to the great advantage of mediums, investigators, and Spiritualists. Strong mediums obtain good materialisation manifestations while they are held by both hands at dark *séances*, and the chief effect of using a cabinet is to expose them to suspicion and to strain the faith of observers.

A LETTER TO A VISITOR.

(To the Editor of "The Spiritualist.")

Sir,—At the risk of again bringing before the notice of Spiritualists a personal matter, I beg of you to publish the enclosed letter received from a member of Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists, as I am ignorant how far he was authorised by the Council to write thus to an occasional caller at the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists.

My acquaintanceship with Mr. Bennett was of the slightest and most official character; and so far as I remember, this was the first note I ever received from him.

As a matter of fact, I have not, as was my custom, frequently visited the rooms during the last two months, nor was it my intention to do so, for reasons which are, I trust, intelligible to my friends. I can only call to remembrance two occasions on which I have stepped inside the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists since the date I have given. But on those occasions the traditional courtesy was extended to me by the officials in charge; and I hope that other inquirers will continue to receive the same.—Yours truly, C. Carter Blake.

The Mansion, Richmond-hill, near London, April 28th, 1879.

Dear Sir,—There is a feeling among some of the members of the B.N.A.S., and it is shared by more than a few, that the influence of your visits to the reading-room is to a certain extent prejudicial to the interests of the Association. I should feel very sorry for you to feel personally annoyed by any expression of the kind; and it is with the hope of avoiding this that I venture to send you a few lines, which I hope you will kindly accept in the spirit in which they are intended.—I am, yours faithfully,

Edward T. Bennett.

Dr. Carter Blake.

RELIGIOUS MANIA.

From "Mind and Matter" (Philadelphia), May 10th.

On the 4th instant, public attention was arrested by the announcement that Mr. Charles F. Freeman had, while labouring under religious delusion, taken the life of his little daughter, at Pocasset, Mass. For this insensate, cruel act, he and his wife were arrested and taken to Barnstable, where they were lodged in jail. While under arrest, and on his way to the latter place, Freeman addressed the passengers in the car, loudly reiterating his convictions that he had obeyed a divine mandate, his wife seconding him, and both expressed no anxiety as to the future. A correspondent of *The Times*, of Philadelphia, writing from Boston, says:—

"Freeman was arraigned at Barnstable to-day, in company with his wife. Both maintained their composure and insist that God will justify their action and relieve them from all human penalties. Freeman says that for thirty-six hours it had been impressed upon him that he must kill one of his family, but he was doubtful whether it should be himself, his wife, his oldest daughter, or the little girl. Finally the Lord made it clear to him that it must be the little girl. He did not tell his wife at first. He waked up at half-past two on Thursday morning and told his wife what he was going to do. They talked it over together and both agreed that it was right. They then knelt by the bed and prayed. He did not tell his wife at first, because Abraham did not tell his wife when he went to sacrifice Isaac. After they had agreed to kill the child, both went into the room where the two little girls were sleeping together. The man went out to the shop and procured a large sheath-knife with a long blade, singing all the way out and back. He said he never felt so happy in his life. He set the lamp in the chair and his wife stood by the bed looking on. He turned the bed-clothes down to expose the child, and stabbed her in the left side. She awoke, turned toward her father, stretched up her arms, and said, 'Oh, father.' He took her and held her till she died, which was in about five minutes. The older girl became partially awake, and the mother carried her out of the room before she knew of her sister's death. Freeman then got into bed with the dead child in his arms and stayed until after daylight; then he dressed and went to the station for the mail, which he carries. Meeting Alvin Wing there, he asked him to notify the Second Adventists in the neighbourhood of a meeting at his house at three o'clock that afternoon. The Adventists came, supposing it was a farewell meeting before Freeman went on his tour as preacher. In the meeting, Freeman told the story of killing the child, and showed the body to them all. Strange as it may seem, they all kept the matter secret, and told no one after the meeting dispersed.

"Great indignation exists against Freeman and all the Adventists. The latter stick together, and even now have the effrontery to defend Freeman. Freeman said before his arrest that if those who do not believe in God would come to his house they would see the wonderful works of Almighty God; that the child would be raised on Sunday morning and would help him preach. The extremest fanaticism, almost beyond belief, seems to inspire the Adventists. When one of the neighbours first saw Mrs. Freeman, she answered all inquiries about Freeman by saying: 'The Lord will take care of that; Abraham's God will raise her.' Freeman says he never felt so tenderly toward his children as on Wednesday evening when they were put to bed, and he kissed them before he struck the fatal blow. He hoped that God would stay his hand, as he did Abraham's, but since the death of his child, he says that the revelation has come that the child will be raised; if she is not raised by Sunday morning he will despair. Freeman is thirty-four years old. Before he became an Adventist he was a Methodist probationer. The officers have the knife with which the murder was committed. Mrs. Freeman is slight in form, and thirty-two years of age. Neither of the two show any fear. Freeman said he had a chance of making a convert by killing his girl, and thinks he is a second Abraham; says he loves his daughter better than himself. Mrs. Freeman echoes all her husband says. Many of the neighbours of Freeman sustain him in his course, many of them being well-to-do farmers. An effort will be at once made to arrest some of those who were present at the meeting at Freeman's house on the charge of being accessories to the deed."

PERPETUAL DIRECTORS.

Seventeen retiring members of the Council of the National Association of Spiritualists have been nominated for re-election, two other Spiritualists have been nominated in addition, and the system is such that the members are *obliged* to elect all the nineteen, whether they like to or not.

The reason of this is, that the number of seats vacant is twenty-six, and nineteen candidates only having been nominated, there is no election, and they will walk straight in.

We do not say that they are not all very suitable persons, but point out the utter helplessness of the members, under the present regulations, to select the managers.

To have brought about a contested election for one seat only, it would have been necessary to have nominated eight more candidates, seven of whom the members would have been obliged to appoint to fill up the twenty-six vacancies, but the additional man would have caused a contested election for a single seat.

All this arises from a small public body having an enormous Council of seventy-eight members, one-third of whom retire every year, and are eligible for re-election. Most of these are absentees at the meetings, the real government being carried on by twelve or fifteen, who attend regularly, and four-fifths of whom have rendered no public services of importance to Spiritualism, and are almost unknown to the majority of the members.

The remedy would be to reconstruct the Council by reducing it to, say, twenty members in all, after which a general election would place in office those in whom the members at large have confidence, and who are known for their public services.

There is wide discontent with the present system of management among the members. Mr. Martin Smith, Mr. Massey, Mr. Fabyan Dawe, and Mrs. Makdougall Gregory have left the Association altogether, several others have resigned their seats on the Council, being afraid to have their names committed to its acts, various private members have written to us expressing their desire to have a new organization, one or another calls upon us almost daily expressing dissatisfaction, and for three or four months past increase in the number of members has been practically at a standstill, in this the best part of the year.

All could be put right, and harmony in an otherwise good organization be established, by placing the whole case in the hands of the members, and having a general election, resulting in a Council of reasonable size. But as inaugurating a free and full election would be a "happy despatch" on the part of three-fourths the present working rulers, no such highly necessary step is likely to originate in that quarter. Members outside the Council do not care to take action, because of the inharmony and abuse which would be incurred in doing such useful work, so there is a dead-lock, and a widespread want of enthusiasm and interest in the welware of the organization. The annual general meeting next Tuesday will probably be a thin one, and the members of the Council will have it pretty much to themselves. There is no power to do anything at the meeting, no special notices of motion having been given in.

It is a great pity that the members at large cannot put everything right by means of a general election. Something ought to be done to abolish the prevalent discontent and chilling apathy.

In *The Spiritualist* of May 9th will be found a series of fourteen motions, now entered on the minute-book of the Council and signed by the Chairman, the decisions of the Council over all of which we have asserted to be opposed to the interests of the members at large. It was our bounden duty to point this out, and the official motions are there for the members to examine for themselves. But the Council, in return, is doing *The Spiritualist* all the harm it conveniently can. After its last meeting, it resolved to cut down its advertisements in this journal to next to nothing at the expiration of the present term, but had previously made us an offer almost worthless to a weekly journal with a circulation, but adapted at every point to the requirements of a monthly journal with no circulation at all. The offer was probably made to us as a matter of show, for the purpose of being rejected. It also gave us notice to quit the little branch office we have on the Association's premises, on the ground that more rent would be gained by letting all the rooms together. But now it is not letting them together, and is accepting the same rent as offered for them before and from the same tenant, namely, £60 a year from Mrs. Maltby. The General Purposes Committee did not even think it necessary to make any explanation or to apologise to the Council for the difference between its former estimate of increased rental and the present result of a heavy loss by the departure of a tenant.

Dr. Carter Blake.—Dr. Carter Blake, whose British Museum lectures were recently honoured by a notice in the *Times*, is lecturer on Comparative Anatomy at Westminster Hospital, and was formerly Secretary to the Anthropological Society of London. He has often publicly attested the genuineness of the phenomena of Spiritualism, but we believe is in doubt as to their source or sources. He has done a vast amount of honorary work for the National Association of Spiritualists, and recently worked daily for one or two months in drawing up a most useful catalogue of the books in the library of the Association. He frequently took charge of semi-public *séances* under the direction of the *Séance* Committee, and in that responsible position helped to satisfy strangers, quieted enemies, and was always on good terms with the medium. He has acted on the Research Committee since its formation, and was present when it obtained most of its best tests. He explained to foreigners the objects of the Association; and when Don Rafael Parga, of the Spanish South American Society of Bogota, was in London, he received him, and translated his conversation for others. Published papers show that he has studied Spiritualism at intervals from the year 1856, and he was publicly one of the truest friends of Dr. Slade, attesting in print wonderful manifestations he had seen in his presence, standing by him when he was attacked in a police-court, and volunteering to appear as a witness in his defence. Dr. Carter Blake is a Catholic.

HEALING MEDIUMSHIP.

THE following paragraph from *The Medical Press and Circular* of May 1st, is headed "Spiritualistic Quackery":—

"A sickening exhibition of the most unblushing quackery is being weekly made in certain so-called Spiritualistic newspapers. These contain, many of them, numerous advertisements from persons who arrogate power of the most absurd description to themselves; one, more believing in the credulity of his victims, or more despicably daring in his pretensions, announces 'healing by the laying on of hands,' and 'magnetised fabric for the alleviation or cure of disease, 5s. per packet; renewal, 5s.' Another advertises, 'Developing and healing. Medical advice to ladies and children. *Terms modified to suit circumstances.*' Anything more atrociously disgusting than this array of rascally cheating it would be difficult to conceive; and in view of the grave harm that may be daily inflicted on the innocent but superstitious victims of their base deceit, it becomes a pressing duty to devise some effectual means of opposing a system vicious in intent, and degrading in fulfilment. It is a disgrace that the state of our law is such as to permit these vampires to pursue their course unimpeded; but this being so, it is the more a duty that the profession should in some way expose the serious nature of the practices that are carried on by these human leeches. We purpose devoting some attention to the subject in a series of articles and exposures."

All the mesmeric healers we know anything about have, like the late Drs. Elliotson and Esdaile, in many cases cured inveterate diseases by mesmerism where the ordinary medical professors had failed; they can produce plenty of certificates of this, and have influential private supporters quite educated and critical enough to sift evidence and observe facts. *The Medical Press*, in its officiousness and want of knowledge, will merely raise a vast amount of prejudice against the medical profession among a large body of people if it begins an attack on healing mediums. Medical orthodoxy is getting tyrannical, especially in killing children wholesale by erysipelas brought on by vaccination, and then entering on the certificates used for statistical purposes "died of erysipelas," and omitting all mention of the initial act which resulted in death.

With one part of *The Medical Press* paragraph we agree—namely, that about "magnetised fabrics." In the first place, magnetism has nothing whatever to do with the subtle forces at work in mesmerism, and, in the second, mesmerised fabrics (supposing them to exert a healing influence on people who are psychically sensitive) are so cheaply produced that they might very well be supplied for nothing, instead of by their sale offering temptation to people who possess no healing power, to imitate the financial part of the system, and to defraud the public. For this reason we have always refused to insert advertisements about "magnetised fabrics" when they have been tendered to *The Spiritualist*.

Nevertheless, both in ancient and modern times, people have been cured of diseases occasionally, by healing mediums sending "aprons to the sick." Doctors know that infectious diseases might be transmitted in this way, but they are ignorant about the transmission of infectious health. From the scientific interest of the subject we shall be glad if independent observers in private life will send us for publication, with their names and addresses appended, certificates about the cure of diseases from a distance by the method just stated.

The Medical Press seems to be horror-stricken by the words, "Terms modified to suit circumstances." Perhaps the public may not regard the system of charging a labouring man and a millionaire at the same rates, from the professional and trades-union point of view of the critic now under notice.

SALEM WITCHCRAFT.

UNDER the above heading the Newburyport *Merrimac Journal* of the 5th instant informs us that "Rev. Dr. Fiske closed a series of lectures before the Athenæum last week with a description of the feeling, humiliation, and *bitter remorse* which followed the persecution and execution of the (so-called) Salem witches." The following extract from the discourse will give our readers some idea of the "repentance" that came too late:—

"With the change of views came bitter repentance. The judges made their public confession; the jury made their confession; ministers and churches made their confession. The general court made its confession by appointing a day for public fasting, humiliation, and prayer in view of what had happened. And it was on that Fast Day that Judge Sewall, whose conduct especially challenges our respect and admiration, rose in his pew in the old South Church, in the presence of a large assembly, and proceeding to the pulpit handed to the minister a written confession, in which he acknowledged and deplored the error into which he had been led, and prayed for the forgiveness of God and of his people, and earnestly requested the congregation to unite with him in devout supplications that it might not bring down the Divine displeasure upon himself, his family, or his country. During the reading of this paper the good man stood with bowed head and tearful eye; and during the remainder of his life he annually kept a day of fasting and prayer, in which he renewed his penitence and confession for the part he took in the great delusion."

No wonder "the sober second thought" of these people changed their views and brought bitter repentance, when the fact became generally known that *twenty-four innocent persons were put to death in Salem* (1692) *as witches*, who were simply spiritual mediums. The heavens are again opened, and light and knowledge are flooding the earth; yet bigotry is not dead, and the poor mediums of this age are persecuted in many ways. They need defenders more than ever at this very time, for they are martyrs, more or less, every one of them. Spiritualists, protect your mediums, if you desire God to protect you.—*Banner of Light.*

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.*]

THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

SIR,—I desire to thank very heartily, through your pages, the kind friends who, sympathizing with our Cambridge work, have given us help by sending us worthful books and encouraging letters, since my time will not allow me to thank them individually. I long that we may go forward together bearing the shield that Florence bore long ago, parted pale gules and argent, head and heart defending the things that we are certain about, leaving opinions to take care of themselves. Thus and thus only will spiritual knowledge be increased to us, making good use of what we have already.

J. A. CAMPBELL.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

SIR,—I see in the report of Steinway Hall meetings, several tests were given to which no response is made. I will, for the benefit of the public, state that they were recognised, and the people came to me directly after service. Many of these tests are of too private a nature to appear, even in print, while many of those receiving tests have a decided objection to having their names brought forward in any way, which is not to be wondered at, since Spiritualism is so little understood.

I will only add that these meetings have been attended by the greatest success from the first, and will continue for the present.

J. WILLIAM FLETCHER.

Saturday, 4, Bloomsbury-place, W.C.

LETTERS FROM "OUTSIDERS."

SIR,—I read "Outsider's" letter in to-day's *Spiritualist* with much satisfaction. It so completely embodies my own views, and I believe those of a large number of earnest inquirers standing, as it were, on the "borderland," that I can only heartily echo his wish that some of our leading Spiritualists should give us more aid in our search after truth.

Lectures are valuable, especially in arresting popular attention to the subject of "Spiritualism," but it seems to me that we require more *séances*, or circles where, on payment of a moderate fee to cover expenses, they whose attention has already been interested may, on showing "*bona-fides*," attend and judge for themselves.

Outsider asks for "facts;" but if I were to give in detail the results of my own limited experience they would, I fear, possess but little interest to many of your advanced readers, who would probably look upon them as the mere A B C of the subject. If, however, you can spare me space to mention briefly a few of the facts that have come under my own notice it will best illustrate the need and present position of myself, and I cannot help thinking many other "outsiders."

About two years ago the subject was brought before my notice in conversation with a friend, in the course of which it transpired that he had seen some most extraordinary phenomena, and was himself—though he had never made any professional use of the fact—a medium. I was greatly surprised, for I knew him to be a truthful, clear-headed man, and, moreover, I had no right to treat his belief as a delusion, for we were equals in position, I being head-master of a London Board school, and he holding a similar post in a Church school in the same district. He was willing to be tested, and accordingly we arranged a small circle, and met at my house. We soon obtained "results."

Incidents that had occurred in my family twenty years before, and which could only have been known to my wife and myself, were given with names and dates in a marvellously accurate manner by means of a code of signs shown by "table tilting."

I was literally "staggered," and resolved to follow the matter up.

We met after this frequently, and though at times mistakes were made, always with increasing success.

One incident I shall never forget. Only three, Mr A—— (the medium), Mr. B——, a gentleman of position in the parish, and myself, were sitting at a small work-table. The spirit of a dancing-girl was said to be present, and after sundry tiltings of the table it began to keep time by tapping on the floor with its three legs, and showing a disposition to cross the room. We allowed it to do so, and followed it, simply keeping our fingers lightly pressed on the top, when it literally danced round the two rooms, keeping time with its "one, two, three"—"one, two, three," in a fashion that would have satisfied the most exacting M.C. Being somewhat suspicious of my friend, the medium, he left the table at my request, and sat at the further end of the rooms apparently unconcerned. Still the dance went on with but little decrease of vigour, Mr. B—— and myself barely touching the table with our fingers until we were obliged to give it up.

After this Mr. B—— became developed, as my friend Mr. A—— termed it, into a writing medium.

At first his whole frame would seem to be convulsed, and he would strike the table so rapidly and violently that we were sometimes obliged to hold his arm to prevent his doing himself injury; and on our placing a sheet of paper on the table and a pencil in his hand, he would strike the table so fiercely that the lead was literally crushed. After a time, however, his arm seemed to become more under control, until at length we used to get short encouraging sentences, written in a peculiar jerky hand; and he assured us (and I who know him well believe him implicitly) that the words were written apart from any effort of his own will, by some power which seemed to make his hand form the letters required.

I am sorry to say that these "sittings" used to exhaust him so much that, acting on advice, he gave them up, and left us with regret. My friend, the "medium," accepted a post in another part of England; and I hear from him now and then as to the communion he has with spirits, apart from any connection with table or circle.

So our little circle was broken up, and I have not amongst my own personal friends those whom I should care to ask to pursue the investigation of the subject in a proper spirit.

For myself, I must candidly confess that beyond a slight, pleasant, thrilling sensation, which always seems to pervade my body when at the table, I have only once felt any direct "control," and I may say *en passant* that I am of anything but a nervous or hysterical "temperament."

We had been sitting at the table one evening, when without any apparent cause—for we had been unusually cheerful—I commenced "crying." The tears rolled down my cheeks, and (as one of my friends remarked) "I blubbered like a child." After the sitting we went for a short walk, when feeling a strange, but not unpleasant sort of influence about my forehead, I stopped, placed my hand on my friend's shoulder, and again "sobbed bitterly." I felt much relieved afterwards, but no clue was given then or since, and the matter has remained a mystery.

Now, Mr. Editor, I am one of the most non-lachrymosal mortals in the world, so much so, that in solemn moments of my life, when my deepest feelings have sought relief, I have been unable to shed a tear.

This, then, is my position. I have passed through the phases in which this subject is treated with indifference, ridicule, contempt, or idle curiosity, and I stand at this stage of my investigation perfectly unprejudiced, willing to accept "Spiritualism" as a Divine truth if I can get further proof, equally willing to accept any sound scientific reasons for such phenomena as—although I have given deep consideration to such theories as "hysteria" and "unconscious cerebration"—are at present beyond my ken.

My anxious desire is to "go on."

I have read much of the literature of Spiritualism, and as far as I have gone have found nothing in its doctrines antagonistic to revealed religion as generally received.

But truth is great, and it must prevail; and if in the course of my investigation I should find that its doctrines are true, and that they do clash with my present religious convictions, why, so much the worse for my orthodoxy.

As a mere novice, therefore, I place myself beside "Outsider" and his friends, and ask for more "light"—for more ready means of gaining it from those who have tested the theory of "Spiritual communion," and found it to be true. EARNEST.

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