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ON THOUGHT-READING.*

BY EDWARD W. COX, SERJEANT-AT-LAW, PRESIDENT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

It is the misfortune of psychology that the greater portion of the names given to its phenomena are terms that express some foregone conclusion. It is a too common error in all science. Scientific names should express nothing but the fact. They should studiously avoid anything that, however remotely, appears to assign a cause for, or the source of the fact.

Such a term is thought-reading. It implies that one mind reads something that is in another mind. The term is misleading. It is understood often by those who use it, and always by those to whom it is addressed, as being identical with reading a book or viewing a picture. The common conception of "thought-reading" is that thoughts are things—words printed somehow upon the mind or brain—which the person having the faculty of thought-reading peruses, precisely as he would read a book; or that it is a picture positively painted upon one mind and actually viewed by the other mind.

With such a name and such conceptions of the thing, it is not surprising that the fact itself should be received with incredulity as wholly inconsistent with what we know of brain structure and mental action. Thoughts are not written upon the brain, and if they were so written, the eye of another person could not read them there. Even the overwhelming evidence of the existence of the phenomenon has not sufficed to remove the prejudice caused by the unfortunate name inflicted upon it. At some risk, I prefer to throw aside that familiar but misleading name, and to substitute for it one that precisely expresses the fact, without appearing to affirm the cause or source of the fact, or the means by which it is produced. I, therefore, adopt the descriptive but not prejudging title of mental sympathy and communion, as being the mental action intended to be designated, whatever may be the true explanation of it.

The fact is that, under certain unknown conditions, one mind can communicate ideas to another mind through some other medium than the bodily senses. Emotions can be communicated in like manner. Sympathy of emotion between minds has been recognised long ago, not only by poets but by philosophers. The fiercer passions were known to be contagious. The contagious influence of the gentler emotions was acknowledged under the name of sympathy. But so far as my own researches have gone I have found no endeavour to trace the mental or physical process by which this phenomenon is produced. By many it is assumed to be excited only by some outward expression of the emotion in face, form, or voice which, being perceived by the senses of the other party, excites in him the corresponding passion or emotion by simple suggestion. But a larger survey of the phenomena contradicts this conclusion. It is within the experience of all careful observers that sympathies are often excited without a visible or audible sign. A striking instance of this is shown in panic. A sudden fear seizes on a multitude. It may be wholly without cause, or if there be a cause it is known only to a few. Nevertheless it is felt by all, being communicated so instantaneously as to appear simultaneous. Ask why they fly, nine out of ten will answer, "I do not know; I felt an ungovernable terror; I lost self-control; I rushed on I cared not where, nor how, nor why." And this sympathy seems to be multiplied by the number of communicating minds. A fear that would not turn one man pale will make half-a-dozen men tremble and put a hundred men to flight. The influence of sympathetic emotion upon public assemblies is too familiar to need description. It is exhibited in the remarkable phenomena

of that which has been so absurdly called electro-biology. It is seen in natural somnambulism and its allied abnormal conditions, treated of in a later chapter. But while sympathy of mind is undisputed in relation to emotions, there has been no distinct recognition of a similar community of ideas.

Yet does it exist. There are few who could not tell of its frequent occurrence within their own experience. Who has not many times found some thought straying into his mind apparently without a cause and associated with no previous thoughts (perhaps on a theme long forgotten), and the friend by his side has been thinking the same thought? The saying "Talk of the devil and you see his horns" is the embodiment of a fact so common as to have become a proverb. A person of whose very whereabouts you are ignorant, and who had not "been in your mind" for years, suddenly comes into your thoughts without any perceptible cause, and presently he appears. Such an instance occurred lately within my own knowledge. A near relative had heard nothing of an old schoolfellow for fifteen years, did not even know if she was living, nor had that friend of long ago been once in her thoughts. At breakfast she said, "It is very odd, I have been thinking all the morning of Mrs. D—. I had quite forgotten her." That very day's post brought a letter from the long-forgotten friend. This is surely something more than a coincidence. But similar cases scarcely less striking in their circumstances are continually occurring to all of us.

I venture to suggest if something like the same phenomenon may not exist in the lower animals? Is it certain that they do not communicate thus? All who have observantly noted their ways agree that they do in some unknown manner exchange ideas as well as sympathise with emotions. All bird communities that flock together, such as rooks, starlings, plovers, and the like, have leaders, and obey commands that certainly are not conveyed by the voice. Ants and bees silently carry to their fellows notice where rich spoil is to be obtained. Dogs are often seen to meet, put their heads together, and then depart on a common expedition of plunder. I have a pair of ponies who silently say to each other as plainly as by words, "Faster," "Slower." Observe any of our domestic animals. Can you doubt that they possess some faculty that performs for them some such process for communication of ideas and thoughts as speech does for us? Certainly their converse is neither by sounds nor by signs. May it not be by that communion of mind which we find to exist among ourselves, and which, abnormal now and of infrequent occurrence, may once have been the means of intercommunication with ourselves also? It is consistent with the theory of evolution. Is what is so absurdly called "Thought-reading" a survival from a time when it was with us—as it is now with the lower animals—the sole means of mental communication?

This is, however, merely a suggestion thrown out to the thoughtful, for as yet it is little more than a reasonable and probable conjecture.

I am referring strictly to that sympathy and communion between minds which are found in the common intercourse of the world under purely normal conditions, and which probably occur very much more frequently than our consciousness informs us. We are, in truth, quite ignorant how ideas and emotions come into the mind. It may well be that many, if not most of them are prompted by the imperceptible influences of other minds about us. You suddenly think of something because my thought has suggested your thought. If, when three or four persons are together, what is passing at the same moment in each mind could be revealed on the instant, doubtless some curious and instructive discoveries of simultaneous ideas would prove

* A paper read at a recent meeting of the Psychological Society

the fact that there is between these minds an unconscious communion and sympathy.

No supernatural power need be invoked to explain this phenomenon. Physiology will assist psychology to a solution of the problem. The brain is the material—that is the molecular—organ by which the operations called mental are conducted. This brain is constructed of a countless multitude of fibres, so fine that many millions of them are contained within the compass of a sixpence. These fibres are instruments of infinite and inconceivable delicacy. They vibrate to waves of the atmosphere and respond to vibrations of other brain fibres that are imperceptible to any sense. Even the vastly coarser strings of a harp take up waves of the atmosphere that our senses do not perceive, and echo the sound made by other harp-strings in motion.

But the atmosphere is not the only medium for transmitting motion. Itself floats in a more pervading fluid which physicists have agreed to call “the ether.” Any person who has witnessed the experiments of Professor Tyndall with sensitive flames, showing how the atmosphere in a large room cannot be stirred so slightly that the flame will not betray the motion, will readily understand how the vibration of the finest brain fibre may be communicated to other brain fibres. The telephone is a still more startling illustration of the multitudinous atmospheric waves imperceptible to our very obtuse senses, which can perceive only the smallest fraction of the things and motions that surround us. But infinitely more delicate must be the waves of the ether. They must penetrate the most compact substance—solidity being only a human conception, not a fact in nature. Brain action is brain motion. When any mental act is done, the fibres of the brain are set in motion, and of these motions the conscious self takes cognisance. The psychological conclusion from this physiological fact will be at once apparent. An idea or thought in my mind is attended with certain molecular movements of certain fibres in my brain. The motion of those fibres in my brain is communicated by ether waves to the corresponding fibres in your brain, setting up in them a similar motion, precisely as the harp that is played upon evokes the same tone from the strings of the untouched harp. Those motions of my brain impart to your brain identical impressions, and consequently we think and feel in unison—not, of course, always in concert, but in the same direction.

These impulses communicated from brain to brain are not perceived at all times, because we are constructed to be conscious of one impression only at one instant of time, and for the most part consciousness is engaged in taking cognisance of some other more vivid impressions. Moreover, some brains are less sensitive than others—have coarser fibres—and therefore are more slow to catch the finer impulses. Let it be understood that this explanation is presented to society not as the assertion of a proved fact, but merely as a suggestion of the manner in which the undoubted phenomena of mental communion and sympathy might be accomplished by purely natural means, without attributing them to the supernatural, the miraculous, or the spiritual.

That it has a distinct existence as a distinct mental or psychological faculty, is proved abundantly by the numerous cases reported in the medical journals, and recorded by eminent physicians of all countries, attesting an extraordinary power of perception in patients suffering from cerebral or nervous excitement. A few of the multitude so recorded will suffice to satisfy society that like cases, occurring in other abnormal conditions, are not necessarily untrue because they are strange, and because physiology cannot at once explain them.

A great service will be done to science if the abundant proofs of natural exhibition of the phenomena should incline the student not summarily to dismiss, as being delusions or frauds, the like phenomena when produced artificially.

As already stated, the mechanism of man is constructed for the support of his being in this molecular world. It works in compliance with certain conditions imposed upon it by the physical laws governing that world. The individual whose mechanism is in its normal state can receive intelligence from the external world only through the media of the senses. He can perceive nothing of whose presence and qualities the senses do not inform him. The eye conveys

forms and colours, the ear sounds. But in certain conditions of the organism, when the machine is more or less disordered, and its parts thrown “out of gear,” perception by the self appears to occur directly, without the intervention of the senses. The evidence of this phenomenon is overwhelming. No fact in science is supported by a larger array of proofs. Ingenuity has exhausted itself in endeavours to find other explanations of these phenomena. But the proofs are too many and too well attested by competent observers to be accounted for upon any theory of imposture or delusion.

If the cases reported in the medical journals and by qualified observers were collected, they would fill many volumes. Restricted space compels the selection of a few, gathered from the multitude that offer themselves to the student of psychology.

Considered in its physiological as in its psychological aspect, two differing explanations have been suggested for scientific inquiry.

The physiological explanation is the same as that offered in explanation of somewhat similar phenomena occurring in somnambulism.

The psychological process may be suggested as thus. If the conscious self be an entity distinct from the body, which is merely the material mechanism for communication between the self and the material world, it is a reasonable assumption that, when released from the conditions of its world life, it will exist under the altered conditions of a changed stage of being. Whatever the form in that new existence, its structure will certainly be something other than molecular, and therefore subject to such new conditions as may be demanded by a new form of atomic structure. It is not in itself improbable that, in this stage of being, in certain abnormal states of the mechanism, the relationship between the component parts of the triune structure—body, mind, soul—may sometimes be so dislocated that the conscious self can have a partial release from the conditions imposed by the material mechanism, and obtain perceptions by impressions directly made. Certainly it will be so under the conditions of a new state of being, which is not a process of transformation, as is the vulgar notion, but of evolution, as is the scientific view of the scheme of creation. If this be a reasonable suggestion, it is not unreasonable to ascribe the proved facts of mental communion of ideas and of supersensuous perception to a like direct perception by the conscious self without the interposition of any sense.

The following case was reported to me by a surgeon of the Royal Artillery. It occurred some years ago.

A party of children, sons and daughters of the officers of artillery stationed at Woolwich, were playing in the garden. Suddenly a little girl screamed, and stood staring with an aspect of terror at a willow tree there. Her companions gathered round, asking what ailed her. “Oh!” she said, “there—there. Don’t you see? There’s papa lying on the ground, and the blood running from a big wound.” All assured her that they could see nothing of the kind. But she persisted, describing the wound and the position of the body, still expressing her surprise that they did not see what she saw so plainly. Two of her companions were daughters of my informant (one of the surgeons of the regiment), whose house adjoined the garden. They called their father, who at once came to the spot. He found the child in a state of extreme terror and agony, took her into his house, assuring her that it was only “a fancy,” and having given her restoratives, sent her home. The incident was treated by all as being what the doctor had called it, and no more was thought of it. News from India, where the child’s father was stationed, was in those days slow in coming. But the arrival of the mail in due course brought the information that the father of the child had been killed by a shot, and died under a tree. Making allowance for difference in the counting of time, it was found to have been about the moment when the daughter had the vision at Woolwich.

This case is of exceptional value, inasmuch as it occurred in the presence of a large party, from two of whom I received it, and was vouched to me by the medical man who heard the assertion of the child and treated it as a waking dream.

As nothing was seen by her companions, it was clearly not a ghost story. It admits of explanation as a case either of supersensuous perception or of mental communion. The child was (as in so many other instances of which the evidence is overwhelming) in an abnormal condition. The conscious self had power of perception by some other means than the ordinary machinery of the senses. She perceived her father himself, as he was, and not his ghost. To what extent mental communion and sympathy may operate in the

directing of such a perceptive power, or if it may not be the sole agent, is a question that well deserves consideration.

A gentleman of my acquaintance has, from childhood, possessed this faculty in a very singular form. Deaths of relatives are known to him, however distant they may be. These are not, as are so many of such cases of supposed clairvoyance, impressions remembered after the event or suggested by previous knowledge of illness. He names at the moment the impression upon his mind. His father died suddenly while he was at Winchester School. He felt the warning intimation, and told his schoolfellows that he was sure his father was dead. A telegram afterwards arrived calling him home, but announcing only severe illness of the father. In fact he was dead, as the boy had declared. This is not an accidental incident with him. It has occurred many times.

The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend has reported the following, which might possibly be the result of excessive exaltation of the senses, but was more probably an instance of supersensuous perception:—

The Chevalier Filippi, of Milan, doctor of medicine, and a most determined opponent to mesmerism, has acknowledged to me that some of his patients, more particularly women after their confinement, when suffering from nervous excitement, have distinguished the smallest objects in darkness which appeared to him complete. The same physician related to me the following occurrence:—Visiting a gentleman who had an abscess, he found that the patient had not many hours to live; this, however, he did not tell him, but answered his inquiries about himself as encouragingly as he could. Taking his leave, he shut the door of the sick chamber, and passing through two other rooms, the doors of which he also carefully shut, entered an apartment where some friends of the patient were assembled. To these he said, speaking all the time in that low and cautious tone which every one in a house where illness is unconsciously adopts, "The Signor Valdrighi (that was the name of the invalid) is much worse. He cannot possibly survive till morning." Scarcely had he uttered these words when the patient's bell was heard to ring violently, and soon after a servant summoned the doctor back again into his presence. "Why did you deceive me?" exclaimed the dying man; "I heard every word you said just now in the further apartment." Of this extraordinary assertion he immediately gave proof by repeating to the astonished physician the exact expressions he had made use of. Subsequently, upon Dr. Filippi testifying his surprise at this occurrence to the servants of Signor Valdrighi, they declared that their master's hearing had become so acute since his illness that he had frequently told them all they had been talking of in the kitchen, which was even more remote from the sick room than the apartment before alluded to.

Perception by the mind through some other medium than the senses could not be better authenticated. They are not ghost stories, like so many that are presented to us. No form was actually before the child in the garden. There were, at least, twenty witnesses to the first who saw nothing, though their attention was strongly directed to the imaginary object.

Had the child been alone at the moment of the vision, and credence been given to her statement of what she had seen, it would have gone forth to the world as a wonderful ghost story verified by the event. Nobody would have doubted that the spirit of the father had appeared to the child. But the noonday light and the presence of so many companions prove that it was only a vision of the mind, which perceived what, through the limited sense of sight, it could not possibly have seen. Doubtless a vast number of the best authenticated ghost stories are to be explained in the same manner.

Having devoted much time and care to the inquiry, I am satisfied that an experiment probably often witnessed by the reader is explicable by supersensuous perception. It had been exhibited in private rooms, but it was first introduced as a public exhibition by Houdin. It was afterwards shown in London by Anderson and his daughter. Other cases of the possession of this faculty have been discovered since. The most satisfactory (because of the conditions under which it is produced and a great number of persons who witness it together) is that of Little Louise, lately exhibited at the "Royal Aquarium."

She is blindfolded and seated on a chair raised upon a pedestal just above the audience and in the midst of them, so that many persons are surrounding her throughout the experiment. She is about twelve years old. Whatever the communication, certainly it is not by sight; for even had she the use of her eyes, nine-tenths of the objects "described" by her are beyond or out of the range of vision. Her father goes among the seated audience, and asks to be shown something. He says (and Anderson so informed me) that it is a condition

of the experiment that the object should be seen by him. I was desirous to detect the trick, if such it was. I tried various tests, producing a variety of articles in different parts of the room of my own choosing. No objection was ever made to my standing anywhere. Thus it was: I produced a key. "What is this?" "A key, papa." "Anything on it?" "Yes, 36, Russell-square, on the handle." Right. This was answered without hesitation. Then a railway ticket. "What is this, Louise?" "A railway ticket, papa." "From where to where?" "From Marlow to Paddington, papa." "What number?" "Two thousand one hundred and fifty-eight, papa." Right also. I produce a letter. "What is this?" "A letter, papa." "What is the address?" "Mr. Serjeant Cox, Moat Mount, Mill Hill, N.W." Right. "What is the postmark?" "Hendon, N.W." Right. Next a seal. "What is this?" "A seal, papa." "What is on it?" She described the crest correctly. "Any words?" "Yes, 'Onward, Upward,' papa." Once more, a coin. "What is this?" "Money, papa." "What is on it?" "A lot of queer marks, papa; I cannot make them out." It was a Chinese coin. I tried many more, but these suffice to show the character of the exhibition. She never made a mistake—never hesitated or paused for an answer. That the answer came from her lips is certain, for many were close to her and saw and heard her, as I did when the experiment was being tried by others.

How is this communication effected? Is it a clever trick, or is it supersensuous perception, or mental communion, or marvellous memory?

Many suggestions have been offered on the assumption of trick. When I first witnessed it with Anderson and his daughter, I suspected ventriloquism. She was placed upon a stage, far from the audience, with her back turned to them, and I surmised that Anderson's voice was directed so as to appear to the audience as an answer returned by her. He at once satisfied me that this conjecture was wrong by permitting me to stand at her elbow during the performance. The voice, beyond question, came from her lips, for I saw them move, heard the sounds, and when I placed my hand on them the answer was stopped. Another suggestion is that the floor is supplied with communicating wires which, when pressed by the foot of the father, convey to the child by signs the answer to be given. The objection to this is that it is much too ingenious. Objects are inspected in at least twenty different parts of the large room of the Aquarium, and so many points of communication could not be concealed. To test this I continually changed my position. But everywhere the answer was given as rapidly and unerringly. Moreover, the experiment, tried in a private house where no apparatus can possibly be introduced, is equally successful.

The most plausible suggestion has acquired some importance, because it was asserted by Houdin himself. He states in his memoirs that his son was educated to the work by an elaborate system of pre-arranged signs. The tones of the voice of the questioner indicated the answer. The signs were, he says, arranged thus: They stood before a shop window, for instance, and agreed upon a different intonation or expression for each familiar article there exhibited. Thus, by the special manner of pronouncing in French the words, "What is this?" he suggested the desired answer. Obviously this would not explain the doings of Miss Anderson, Mademoiselle Prudence, Little Louise, and others of Houdin's successors. It is possible, but not probable, that a vocabulary of tones and words might be agreed upon to indicate a certain number of familiar objects—such as a watch, a seal, a hat, a letter, and articles that an audience would be likely to have about them. But no pre-arrangement could possibly anticipate the number upon a door-key, the motto on a seal, the address of a letter, or the places and numbers on a railway ticket. If a child of twelve years could be taught the infinite variety of ideas that were to be expressed by an equally infinite variety of mere tones, in simply saying, "What is this?" it would certainly be far more miraculous and really more interesting to mental philosophy and psychology than the assigning of it to the abnormal condition in which supersensuous perception and mental communion certainly occur.

The psychological explanation is simple, intelligible, and rational.

The case is one of what is commonly called "thought-reading," but which is more correctly termed "mental sympathy."

The mental impressions (that is, the motions of the fibres of the brain that attend every mental act) of the father are communicated to the brain fibres of the child; for as the harp-strings vibrate in unison, so do the brain-strings. Identity of brain action is identity of idea. Therefore, when the father read the seal in my hand, the impression of it was conveyed to her by the process of (1) motion of his communicating nerve of sight; (2) this motion communicated to the connected brain fibres; (3) perception of this by the conscious self. Identical motions being set up on the child's brain, they produced in her identical mental impressions. Thus what he saw she perceived, and doubtless these impressions presented themselves to her conceptions as being the results of actual vision.

The facts that prove a power of perception by some other process than the medium of the senses are so numerous, that a collection of them would fill many volumes. It is not found in the condition of hypnotism alone. It occurs, as already described, in natural somnambulism. It attends occasionally upon fever. It has been seen, though rarely, where no

abnormal state of the mechanism can be detected. There is some ground for concluding that it is a faculty possessed by all human beings in varying degrees, but called into action only under conditions of rare occurrence.

Physiology offers but an imperfect explanation of these phenomena. It attributes them, not unreasonably, to an excited state of the brain, consequent upon some diseased condition of the structure, by which its sensitiveness is increased to an extent that appears miraculous as compared with the limited action of the healthy brain. This argument is supported by reference to facts familiar to all, as, for instance, the painful effect of very slight sounds upon fever-patients, and in many nervous disorders. Each sense is undoubtedly capable of an excitement that largely multiplies its capacity, and if the cases of supersensuous perception had recorded nothing more than instances of extreme sensitiveness to external impressions, the physiological theory might be accepted as a complete solution of the problem.

In truth, but a fraction of the phenomena can be thus accounted for. Allot to hysteria, to fever, to nervous excitement, all the cases in which the senses could have been acted upon directly, there will be a residue of still more numerous cases that admit of no such explanation—cases in which the nerves of the senses could not have been acted upon, at least according to any known physical law.

"Mental sympathy and communion" will explain many more of these cases. The motions of one brain setting up like motions in another brain will account sufficiently for many of the recorded instances of supposed supersensuous perception. In such cases the patient has not perceived the object itself, but only the reflection of it, as it were, from the brain of the person *en rapport* with him. But after these also have been eliminated, there will be found a large number of well-authenticated instances of perception of things beyond the utmost range of the senses, however exalted, and certainly not within the knowledge of any person present.

Such cases have been unfortunately classified with others partially resembling them, under the general name of clairvoyance. But this, like so many of the terms used in mental and pneumatological science, implies an unproved cause, and, therefore, is open to the grave objection, that it takes for granted a certain state of things which probably is not the true one. "Clairvoyance," or in plain English, "clear seeing," assumes that the phenomena so designated is an act of vision; that it is an abnormal exercise of the sense of sight. The unhappy consequence of this and similar terms implying foregone conclusions is that they provoke prejudices not afterwards easily removed. When the phenomena so termed are reported, it is contended, not unreasonably, that inasmuch as we know the mechanism of vision and the functions of the organ of sight, we know that the sense cannot extend so far or be exercised at all under the conditions stated in the alleged phenomena. These are, therefore, summarily rejected as delusions or frauds, instead of being investigated, with purpose to ascertain if there be any and what truth in them, and what their value and their sources—as science would have been done eagerly if the name had provoked no prejudices.

In this instance it will appear that the name has been too hastily given to the phenomena; that they are not abnormal operations of the sense of sight; that the objects are not seen by the organ of vision; that the process is by a mental perception obtained by some other medium than the eye; consequently that it is not "clear-seeing" at all, nor are the bodily senses in any manner engaged in the process—that, in truth, it is a supersensuous perception. Its sources and how it is exercised are not yet discovered, but the proofs of its existence are potent and abundant.

The existence of such a process of mental perception, not alone without the aid of the senses, but under conditions in which the senses would be impotent, is established by overwhelming evidence. No person who has carefully and extensively examined the phenomena of somnambulism, whether natural or artificial, has failed to find multiplied proofs of it. The cases medically reported supply conclusive evidence that supersensuous perception is naturally developed in natural somnambulism. Very little experience of the phenomena exhibited in artificial somnambulism will satisfy

the most incredulous that what is thus naturally exhibited in the one condition may be reproduced by art in the other condition. The physical or psychic causes of the phenomena are, it is true, undiscovered as yet. But so are the causes of many other facts in science, which nevertheless are accepted as facts. After centuries of experiment, we are wholly ignorant now, as ever, by what process the magnet lifts the steel; by what formative force our bodies are moulded; what life is; by what power a scratch is healed. We do not deny nor dispute facts because we cannot explain them. The facts of somnambulism are not in themselves one whit more wonderful nor more inexplicable than any other unexplained facts—only they are not daily presented to us for explanation.

Like all other asserted facts, they are questions of evidence alone. Three such volumes as this would not contain all its recorded cases. If every scientific observer of psychological phenomena were to report only his own experiences, the records of supersensuous perception would fill a library. I have personally witnessed many hundreds of instances, exhibited under the most careful tests, in the presence of the most competent observers. In this treatise, a few only have been presented, not for lack of matter, but for lack of space.

The explanatory theories have been many, but although even the best of them are conjectural merely, they are of value as showing that the phenomena are not supernatural, but capable of being brought within the domain of science.

First, it is urged that they are not necessarily supersensuous perceptions, but may be accounted for by abnormal exaltation of the senses, such as is sometimes seen in fever and other excited states of the brain and nerves.

The answer is decisive. The special perceptive power now under consideration is not merely an extension of the senses; it is found under conditions that preclude the exercise of the senses. The sense of hearing might conceivably be so excited as to recognise a footstep distant by a mile, the ear being practically converted into a microphone. The sense of sight might conceivably discern an object so far off or so small as to be imperceptible save by an abnormally sensitive nerve. But no such explanation will suffice for things perceived through opaque substances, or placed out of the line of vision, unless we can conceive of opaque substances being penetrable by some rays of light which, though imperceptible in the normal condition of the senses, are perceptible in some abnormal states of sensibility.

The recent discovery of the microphone may not improbably suggest a solution of this, as of some other problems in psychology. That curious instrument proves the presence about us of innumerable waves of sound, so slight as to be inaudible to us. It reveals to the ear a new world, as the microscope has opened a new world to the eye. This revelation is another proof of the fact, so important to psychological science, that our senses are constructed to perceive only an infinitesimal portion of the sights and sounds about us; that the invisible and inaudible world by which we are surrounded, and of whose very existence we have no knowledge, is infinitely more populous of forms, of sounds, of life, than the world which our senses reveal to us. Therefore, that it is mere folly and presumption to pass an *a priori* judgment, and to pronounce of anything that it cannot be. Still more presumptuous is it to assert that molecular matter, which alone is perceptible by the senses, is all that exists in this world, remembering that those senses cannot perceive a thousandth part of that which we know to be, and that if our eyes had been microscopes and our ears microphones we should be actually seeing millions of things in that which now is solitude, and hearing millions of sounds in that which now is silence.

Another theory has been advanced, having better claim to acceptance. The mechanism of man, it is contended, in its normal condition, permits of perception by the conscious self of external existence through the evidence of the senses alone, which are the mechanism specially constructed to receive impressions from the outside world and convey them through the nerves to the consciousness—whatever that may be. If vision be the sense so impressed, the conveyance of the impression made upon the recipient nerve is subject to certain restrictive conditions. Sight is conditioned upon the passing rays of light from the object to the retina;

and these rays are themselves subject to conditions, one of which is that they cannot pass through certain substances, which are therefore called opaque, as substances through which they can pass are called transparent. But light is not the only force in action about us. There is another force far more penetrating—the magnetic force—which permeates all molecular structure. If, therefore, an intelligence can be conceived having a mechanism contrived to receive the impressions of the magnetic force, as the mechanism of man is contrived to perceive the rays of light, to such a being what we call “opacity” would not be. To him all would be transparent. There would be no obstacle to his perception, but diminution of size by distance, and it is problematical if even such an obstacle could impede a perception which would be almost boundless.

Psychology suggests, for as yet it is unable to prove, that in this may be sought the solution of the problem of supersensuous perception. May it not well be that the conscious self has, in certain abnormal states of the mechanism, capacity to obtain perceptions of external objects directly, or through some other medium than the mechanism of the body. For an instance. Isolated from the influence of the bodily senses and the conditions of their action (which is the actual condition in somnambulism), may not the conscious self be enabled to exercise its own larger percipient powers somewhat as they may be expected to exist when that self is wholly severed from the body? May it not conceivably—nay, probably—be enabled then to obtain perceptions of external objects by means of the waves of the magnetic or electric force, as in the normal condition of the mechanism it sees by perception of the waves of light? Again; is it not reasonably probable that in some conditions of the mechanism there may be perception of the waves of the ether (the senses can perceive only the waves of the atmosphere)? In either of such cases, to the conscious self there would be no opacity. Every substance would be transparent, and no interposing molecular matter would suffice to prevent that perception. This must be the future condition of soul, if there be a life hereafter. May not that power of independent perception be exercised more or less here, under certain abnormal conditions, when the mechanism is thrown out of gear and the conscious self is partially emancipated from the restraints and conditions imposed upon it by the needs of its present state of evolution?

Thus does another stage of our examination of the mechanism of man in action compel us to the same conclusion—that the man is not material, that is to say, of molecular structure, merely; that the conscious self is a definite existing entity, distinct from the molecular structure, exhibiting its individuality and independence in a continuous series of extra-corporeal perceptions and expressions, presented in the familiar phenomena of dream, as in the other more rare abnormal conditions of delirium, insanity, somnambulism, catalepsy, mental sympathy, and communion and supersensuous perception? In all of these we find the common feature of a severance, more or less, of the conscious self from the influence of the senses—a loosening of the links that bind it to the material structure, with a temporary exercise of that independent action which may be reasonably looked for when the severance is completed by the dissolution of the molecular mechanism with which the soul (or self) is clothed for the purpose of existence in a molecular world.

CAPE JASK.

SPIRITUALISM has taken root at Cape Jask, on the borders of the Persian Gulf, and in one of the hottest regions on the face of the earth. A correspondent sends us the following description of the place:—

Jask, or Jashk, appears as a small coast-“town” on the borders of Beloochistan, in any ordinary map of Asia, in (approximately) lat. 25° 45' N., long. 57° 15' E. In reality Jask is an unpretending Belooch village, presided over by the usual “Sheikh”; its inhabitants are more or less nomadic; and their huts—while they last—may sometimes number one hundred. This village is situated in a rather deep bay, and is twelve miles from our own telegraph station, which, for political reasons principally, was located on the narrow neck forming the promontory termed Cape Jask. We established ourselves here in 1868, as

the spot offered, I believe, more conveniences in every way than our previous station, Mussendom, on the opposite coast, a spot devoid of everything but pure and simple rock and sea. When we arrived, even this place presented nothing enticing; in place of the highlands of Mussendom we found lowlands of sand, which we built and vegetated on. The station being, as I said, a dozen miles from the village of Jask—the only place where supplies could be procured in quantity—you can imagine how badly everyone of us fared for the necessities of life. However, as money is apparently the same in all lands, money soon induced first one and then another of the villagers to bring in supplies to satisfy the ordinary wants of nature; and as they found the British raj, or prestige, great (by reason of a never-failing supply of coin), and that labour was required, it was not long before quite as large and as worthy a collection of huts on the promontory appeared as had existed since the days of Alexander, and that, too, months before our own were finished.

Our own buildings were, for reasons not generally known, but which may easily be guessed, very massively built, low, and with a breast-high parapet running all round the perfectly level roofs.

The telegraph village, which has sprung up since our arrival, consists of about 150 huts, with a population of perhaps 500 souls. The latter are permanent residents, as they in the main comprise the Government menial establishment, together with their wives and belongings. A number of outsiders are gradually drawing nearer day by day to the boundary line dividing the British limits and Persian land. The natives suffer most atrociously at the hands of their own sheikhs and sirdars, who do not scruple to pillage them of nearly all they possess whenever an opportunity offers; hence their anxiety to get within British jurisdiction, for they are perfectly well aware of the fact, patent to every one in India and the East, that security and peace are always found inside English limits. Prudence forbids any such near acquaintance in quantity; for although the Beloochee at a distance is generally of commanding appearance, I regret to say that any admiration for him is entirely dissipated immediately he takes your hand with the usual “Salaam Ali-kum” or “Bismillah.” He smells horribly, and is fearfully uncanny in his behaviour. For instance, a Belooch chief, or any of his suite (ill-clad warriors of the Red Indian type, but without their grace or beauty), does not hesitate, should the introduction go beyond mere formalities, to squat on the cleanest linen you have, or stain your newly purchased couch with his unshod feet, or soil your last and treasured photographs. When I say that a Belooch is never washed but once in his life, and that at his birth, need I say more? I could give your readers some rather good anecdotes of these people. I may, some day.

Those who are not British subjects acknowledge Meer Abdul Nubi and Meer Ali as their chiefs. These two are subject to the Governor of Bunder Abbas, who is himself appointed by the Shah. Meer Abdul and the other grandee cordially hate each other, and are always “looting” one another’s followers. Should the people “looted” be unable to gain redress at the hands of the looters, they come to us for justice, which means support enough to go and loot in return. Of course we decline promptly. Abdul Nubi goes out occasionally on exploring excursions, either along the coast, or into the interior. His domicile is at Jask, where he has a so-called fort, mounting one gun, which is supposed to have been a bit of plunder too. While away his dame, a lassie averaging forty-five summers, assumes command of the fort and gun, and, if rumour speaks the truth, she makes a far better soldier than her husband. Meer Ali, chieftain No. 2, is not always to be found near Jask. His explorations are of a more unassuming character; that is to say, he forages in a more quiet and unostentatious style. Both chiefs visit the telegraph station whenever they are advised that our usual supplies of European stores have arrived. H. H.

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WAS GEORGE COMBE A MEDIUM?—At page 181 in first vol. of the *Life of George Combe*, it is stated that he considered his “Essay on Responsibility” as an effusion, rather than a scientific paper. Writing and reading it afforded him the greatest delight he had ever experienced in this world. Writing about it to the Rev. Dr. Welsh, 11th February, 1826, he says:—“Right or wrong, it was the spirit of inspiration that produced it, for it poured forth in torrents from the pen, at the rate of four and a quarter pages of my close MS. per hour, without premeditation, and almost without requiring a word of alteration in the style.”

PUBLIC TESTS.—Last Sunday week, after Mr. J. W. Fletcher had finished the ordinary service at the Cavendish Rooms, he, through his mediumship, began to tell those present what spirits he saw. The following were some of the cases:—1. I see a boy in trouble; now he is on the sea, dressed like a sailor; he is much larger now. Again he appears. I see him walking down the street; he staggers and drops dead. The name of “James” appears. He is near that gentleman (indicating a gentleman at the back of the hall, a stranger to the medium). The test was recognised. 2. An old man walks up and down the aisle; he looks eighty years old; he comes to some one whose name is Frederick; his own name is William P—; and his coming is in answer to a desire on the part of that gentleman. After a short message, the spirit was recognised by his son. 3. A young girl comes to her mother; she has been gone some time; she wishes to comfort her mother over recent troubles, &c. I see “April 28th, 1861,” after which is “Annie.” Recognised as being the daughter of a lady present, the date given being the day of her death; the communication correct in every particular. 4. A gentleman spirit, whose name is Henry B—, comes to his two brothers, Charles and Philip. Recognised by a gentleman present. 5. Sister Mary, a lovely spirit, comes to her two sisters. Recognised by a lady. Mr. Fletcher is now regularly conducting a Sunday school, or Lyceum, in the morning, and a service in the evening, at the Cavendish Rooms.

## DR. HALLOCK'S LAST LETTER HOME.

THE following is an extract from the last letter of Dr. Hallock to Mrs. Hallock. It was dated New York, January 17th, 1879, that is to say, the day before he died:—

You must know that I have been dabbling to the extent of one dollar in a benevolent lottery, and, moreover, that I have drawn the prize against forty competitors for it. Do you know what is an "Afghan?" I do not, but I have reason to believe that it is a worsted fabric more or less artistically constructed for the purpose of spreading over the laps of well-to-do ladies when they take carriage exercise for the purpose of getting up their appetites for dinner. Now for a full and complete understanding of my interest in this work of art, I must refer you to the two numbers of the *Spiritualist*—one for December 20th, and the other for December 27th—containing a very interesting account of a Miss Fancher. Blind, with but one hand to work with, and with the work done over the back of her head, where mortal eyes would have been of no use had she been able to see with them, the colours all selected by herself and worked into the fabric with great taste and skill, *that Afghan as a physical fact* has a value that cannot be measured by money. I have seen the girl. I think there is not a greater marvel to be found in any of the well-attested records of human experience. Now, as the Afghan has been exhibited at the Conference here, and also at the Republican Hall, two or three times at each place, it occurred to me that the best use that it could be put to would be to send it to you (should a convenient opportunity offer), that you might leave it for a reasonable time on exhibition at the rooms of the British Association of Spiritualists, or do with it whatever else your better judgment may suggest. I think such of our British friends as take an interest in the narrative of Miss Fancher, as contained in the *Spiritualist*, will be glad to see this specimen of her work. It was after much persuasion that Mr. Partridge prevailed upon her to allow him to dispose of the work for money; but having gained her consent, he took this method, which resulted in forty dollars for Miss Fancher, and the ownership of the Afghan by Doc.

## THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

Mr. C. C. MASSEY has sent the following letter to Mr. Harrison:—

MY DEAR HARRISON,—I see that the Council has adopted the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee, relating to the termination of your tenancy, after having its attention distinctly called to the circumstances under which the committee entertained and decided that question.

I have, therefore, written to the secretary withdrawing myself from the Association, and it is my intention to transfer my subscription for the future to the "Guarantee Fund of *The Spiritualist*" newspaper.

There is an error which I should be glad to have corrected. Mr. Stainton Moses, in his kind remarks about me with reference to my retirement from the Council, is reported to have said that my "decision to leave the 'Association' was final." That is, no doubt, a mistake in the report. When I wrote my letter which was before the Council, I had no intention whatever of leaving the Association, though I wished to retire from active participation in its business. I must, however, add that at no time would I have remained a member after it had once become evident that the influence which seems to be at length predominant, must prevail. But upon that subject, since I have now ceased to be interested in the principles upon which the affairs of the Association are conducted, I have as little right as inclination to enlarge. You are at liberty to publish this letter.—Yours very truly,

C. C. MASSEY.

Temple, February 15, 1879.

Mr. Harrison has sent the following letter to Mr. Alexander Calder, President of the Association:—

11, St. Michael's-terrace, Folkestone, Feb. 17, 1879.

DEAR SIR,—I believe that you did not like my applying the words "*trick*" and "*subterfuge*" to the motion of Mr.

Dawson Rogers at the Council, which was so worded as to cover subjects which the Council while passing it never intended, and my applying them also to the motions in committee of Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Rogers, dealing with the said subjects which the Council never intended, and in the absence of members of the committee who would have liked to have voted thereon had they known what was under consideration. I now write to publicly withdraw the two words "*trick*" and "*subterfuge*," my reason for so doing being personal respect for you, sir, and because you are President of the body in which these things took place.—Truly yours,

Alexander Calder, Esq.

W. H. HARRISON.

At the formation of the National Association of Spiritualists, and in consequence of the semi-mistake of establishing a very large Council, not a few persons who had never made any mark in the movement were put on the managing body, simply because each of them was proposed by some personal friend. In the subsequent working, the majority of well-known Spiritualists have been absentees at Council meetings, especially of late, and the untried people who were put on in the way already mentioned have been having everything their own way. Matters might be put right by reorganising the Council, reducing its number to, say, twelve efficient persons appointed by a general election. We have no doubt that three-fourths of those who are now practically managing the Association would not be chosen by the members. At all events, nobody has any right to object to the putting of this question to a full and free vote.

## MR. TYERMAN IN ENGLAND.

THE Rev. John Tyerman, who has done some of the hardest work in connection with the pioneering of Spiritualism in Australia, is now in England, and lectured last Sunday at the Doughty Hall, London. We believe his stay in this country will be brief, and hope that before he departs, this faithful worker will tell us much about Spiritualism at the Antipodes.

## HEALING AT A DISTANCE.

THE New Testament tells how St. Paul sent "aprons to the sick," and they recovered. Are there many authenticated cases of persons having been similarly cured by mesmerised fabrics? We quote the following from the *Banner of Light*:—

"While reading the *Banner* of July 13th, I noticed an article concerning Dr. J. R. Newton, the healer, of Yonkers, N. Y. And I would like to add my testimony to the long list of persons who have been benefited by his treatment, hoping to encourage some poor sufferer to make the trial that I did. After a long and painful illness, and after many previous discouraging trials and failures with other physicians, I concluded to write to Dr. Newton, describing my disease, which was perhaps the worst case of lameness on record, caused by cancerous affections of the right foot, limb, arm, and wrist, with the most excruciating pains in the bones and all through the body; nodos gathering and breaking, indurated ulcers three and a half to four inches, &c., &c., preventing sleep for weeks. I was perfectly helpless, and when I could walk at all was obliged to use crutches. I had been a great sufferer for four years.

"After receiving two mesmerised lotters from the doctor I was enabled to go about considerably at ease, to sleep and eat well; and ere three months had passed I was enjoying myself, travelling with ease, and I feel that I can now safely say that I am well, quite well. It is impossible for me to describe what a sufferer I was, and the benefit and relief I have experienced through this treatment, and wholly at a distance from Dr. Newton, and not having seen him. Words fail to express the gratitude and unbounded pleasure I feel.

13, Stuyvesant-avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.

"MRS. CORDELIA R. RAY.

A SPIRIT MESSAGE.—Men will soon recognise the fact that every human being has an immortal soul; that that soul cannot be lost, nor, indeed, was ever in danger of being so, and that that soul is capable of improvement without limit. When they perceive these great truths, your prisons, your penitentiaries, your gaols will be doomed, and in their place will arise those great moral hospitals which will do so much to regenerate mankind. There men will be first taught to earn their living, and to pay by their labour for their own support, whilst they will be able to accumulate such excess as they may earn for their own use when they are fit to be trusted again amongst their fellow men. Instead of by prison rules and harsh regulations, the prisoner will be won over to virtue by the actual love of those who endeavour to help him; he will have every incitement, every inducement to pursue a life of virtue, whilst preparing himself to renew the battle in the outside world. Men will then be sentenced, not to penal servitude or solitary confinement, but to be sent to a hospital until reformed.—*Harbinger of Light* (Melbourne).



## HENRY SLADE IN AUSTRALIA.

THE highly successful career of Dr. Slade in Australia has, as usual, raised up professional imitators of genuine manifestations, whereby some excitement has been caused. The following is from *The Melbourne Evening Herald*, of November 26th, 1878:—

PROFESSOR BALDWIN AND DR. SLADE.

There was a large attendance at St. George's Hall last evening to witness the clever entertainment of Professor and Mrs. Baldwin. One of the items in the programme was the slate-writing of Dr. Slade, and considerable curiosity was manifested as to how this was done. As will be seen later on, during the *exposé* of the Slade writing the audience were treated to a sensational item not on the programme. Professor Baldwin, on Saturday night, had denounced Slade as an impostor and a humbug, and challenged him to a public test of his slate-writing. Last evening, just before exposing the slate-writing, Mr. Baldwin again denounced Slade, and others like him, who prey on the sorrows and sufferings of poor weak women. Professor Baldwin declared that he discovered Slade's *modus operandi* by means of a mirror in a locket, and that when in America he used a table similar to that now on the stage. The table was not unlike that used by Slade, but something smaller. The leaves were, however, supported by an arm, which, when they are let down, fits into a slot; and when the leaves are up, the place into which the arm fits presents an opening of about four inches, into which a small slate can be placed, and held while the writing is done. Mr. Baldwin states that tables of a similar kind are much used in America, but that the slot or opening was not necessary for the performance of the trick. Mr. A. P. Martin sat at the table, and the audience saw how easily the slate-writing was done. The sound as of a pencil writing was produced, as the *Herald* stated some time since it could be, by the finger-nail. The illusion was complete, and the sitters at the table with the professor was much puzzled, while the audience were thoroughly enlightened. After the operation Mr. Terry, at whose premises Dr. Slade performed, and who was on the stage as one of the committee, rose and said that the earlier part of the entertainment was a fair representation of the Davenport *séance*, but that the slate-writing was but a miserable imitation of Dr. Slade's *séances*, and that Mr. Baldwin had made misstatements about Dr. Slade; further, that there was no slot in Dr. Slade's table; that he had a larger slate, which was covered with writing. Mr. Winter, who sat in the body of the hall, said that he and another pressman had attended Slade's performances on three occasions, and had arrived at the conclusion, published at the time, that the whole affair was a clever trick; that Professor Baldwin's *exposé* was a fair duplication of the slate-writing which he (the speaker) witnessed at Slade's; that there was no slot in Slade's table, but that Mr. Baldwin had just stated, and had demonstrated to him in private, that a slot was not necessary; that the slates he brought to Slade were small, and that at two *séances* only two or three words were written on the slate, such as "We will try," "We cannot;" that these words were very indistinctly written; but that at the third *séance*, in the evening, at which three persons besides Dr. Slade were present, a long message was given on a slate picked up by Dr. Slade from behind him, and that it was the unanimous opinion of the three investigators that that message, which was a general one, and written clearly and well, was on the slate before it was used by Dr. Slade. After Mr. Winter sat down, Mr. Baldwin said the discussion could not then be continued, but that he would be glad to pay half the expenses of that or any other hall for Sunday evening, and would discuss spiritualistic phenomena with Mr. Terry or any one else. He then took from his pocket a roll of notes, and said, "I have here about £25 or £30. I will place this sum in the hands of any respectable man, and if Dr. Slade will give a sitting to Mr. Winter, Mr. Terry, and myself, I will give him £5 for every word he writes on a slate. My manager will give Dr. Slade, or any other medium, £20 to come on the stage and get any manifestations." Further, the Professor said he would give £50 to every medium who would do anything which he could not do and explain after witnessing it three times. Turning to Mr. Terry he said, "We have a simple way of doing these things in our country. When any money is at stake we say, 'Put up, or shut up.'" The performance then went on, some persons chaffing Mr. Terry, when Mr. Baldwin at once interfered, and reminded his audience that Mr. Terry was his guest on that stage, and should be treated like a gentleman. During the evening Mr. Baldwin indicated how mediums got their feet free, and stated that he had shown to two gentlemen from the *Herald*, how by means of a pair of "box" shoes, he could get his feet out, and yet the shoes remain as firm as though his feet were in them; so that any person who kept his feet on top of such shoes would believe that the medium's feet were in them, while they were out producing manifestations all the time.

After the performance, Mr. Winter asked Mr. Terry whether he had any objection to allow him to again examine Dr. Slade's table. Mr. Terry very courteously offered to show it at once, and to permit Mr. Baldwin to examine it, and a start was made for that gentleman's place of business in Russell-street, which was found closed and in darkness, but which he opened and lighted up. Mr. Terry was most courteous to our representative during the evening (for which we thank him), and is evidently an earnest and sincere believer in Dr. Slade's mediumship and spiritual phenomena generally. The table was examined, and found to be larger than that used by Mr. Baldwin. There was, however, no slot in it. The arm, which in Baldwin's table is movable, so that the leaves of the table may be let down, is in Slade's table a fixture, so that there is no need of a slot for it to fall into, as the leaves cannot be closed. Baldwin, however, pointed out at once that this fixed arm formed an excellent support to place a slate against; and while it was held there by the little finger of the right hand a few words can be readily and quickly written by the thumb and fore-finger with a small piece of pencil—the smaller the better.

He further declared that to-night he would not use the slot in his table, but would do the trick without it. He said, moreover, that he would make a declaration, before any magistrate, that he discovered how Slade did the writing by means of a locket mirror, and that it was a trick, and that the table used by Slade in New York was similar to that which he (Baldwin) had used that evening at St. George's Hall. Mr. Winter, being a justice of the peace, was prepared to take the declaration, when Mr. Baldwin went on to say that Slade was a swindler and an impostor. At this, Mr. Terry fired up, and declared that no such language should be used in his room, as he knew well that Slade was as honest a man as Baldwin, if not more so. Baldwin was ready to reiterate his statement, and Terry was ready to champion his friend's cause by doing battle for it. Coat sleeves went up a little, and matters looked ominous. It seemed as though the room was to be cleared for action, and Mr. Winter got ready to take the dying depositions of one or both of the champions. However, the storm blew over, and quiet reigned again. Baldwin asked where Slade was, and was informed that he had left for Ballarat that morning, and would probably be absent for about a week. The *séance*-exposer then repeated his previous offer to put up £25 or £30, and pay Slade twice the usual fee, if he would give a sitting to Mr. Winter, Mr. Terry, and himself; and also to give Mr. Slade five pounds per word, for every word he wrote upon a slate, while held by him (Baldwin). Further, to tie two slates together with a bit of string, and to give Slade five pounds for every word he wrote within the two slates. Baldwin pointed out that as Slade worked for money—so much per sitting—he was afforded an opportunity of making a considerable sum, if his manifestations are not the results of trickery and fraud. One of the Spiritualists present, a thorough believer in Slade, thought this a fair offer, and considered that the *séance* should be arranged for. The question of Dr. Slade's manifestations now narrows itself down to a very small point. Baldwin declares that the writing can be done by pressing the slate against the arm of Slade's table, and we have ascertained by experiment that this can be done. To do this, however, it would be necessary that Slade's hand, with the slate on it, and a portion of his arm, should be under the table. The believers in Slade, of whom there were two present, declared that at no time is his hand out of sight. Our representatives, one and all, aver that, at every *séance* at which they attended, Slade's hand and arm were under the table for some seconds, under pretence of asking the spirits if they "would write for the gentlemen," and that, during this time, there was noticeable a peculiar gurgling and coughing noise in Slade's throat, which was no doubt adopted partly to drown any sound raised by the pencil writing, and partly to distract the attention of sitters. As Slade is still giving sittings, there should be no difficulty in ascertaining whether or not his hand, with a slate in it, is ever under the table, even for a second. If it be, then the trick is very easy, as any one can write a few words in the manner shown by Baldwin. If long messages are wanted, a pin, spirits of wine, or sleight of hand and cheek are all that are necessary to produce them. These are only attempted when believers are present. Our representatives say they were not favoured with a slate full of writing.

In order to call to mind the view which our representatives took of Slade's performances at the time, we publish condensed reports of the *séances*, which appeared in the *Herald*. Let it be remembered that the articles were written before the arrival of the Baldwins in Melbourne, and if the suggestions as to the mode of doing the trick made therein are similar to those now publicly made by Professor Baldwin, the coincidence arises from the fact that these were the rational solutions of the so-called phenomena, and that where these could be accounted for by natural means, our representatives preferred accepting that solution of the mystery to rushing off for an explanation to the supernatural. As these articles have appeared before, we print them now in small type. Those who are interested in the subject will no doubt overcome the difficulties of reading it, while there will be all the less to skip for those who do not care for Slade or Sladeism.

On the 30th August we published an account of our first *séance* with Slade, from which we extract the following:—

"In response to an invitation from Mr., or, as he is known to the Spiritualists, 'Dr.' Slade, the writer and another member of the *Herald* staff attended at the establishment of Mr. Terry, bookseller, &c., in Russell-street, at ten o'clock on the morning of the 21st inst. We found Mr. Slade to be a young man of some thirty years of age, an American, but muscular and powerfully built, with nothing of the lank and lean appearance which Britishers usually ascribe to Americans. We were duly ushered in a small, neatly-furnished, well-lighted room upstairs, with one large window in it. In the centre of the room was a table of rather peculiar make, inasmuch as the legs were close together in the centre, the sides extending beyond the supports. The table was not unlike an ordinary dressing-table, on the frame of which a cover much too large had been fixed. A careful examination failed to show any concealed works, nor is it probable that there are any.

"In answer to an inquiry, Mr. Slade stated that he did not promulgate any theory as to how the manifestations which took place in his presence were accounted for. He said, however, that they were not produced by him. At a subsequent sitting he intimated that he employed his talents as a medium in obtaining messages from deceased friends and relatives of those who choose to consult him.

"On being seated, Mr. Slade was at one end of the table, opposite the window, and just in front of the legs of the table. As a rule, he sat sideways on the chair, so that his legs were not under the table; but their position was frequently changed. It may be mentioned, *en passant*, that he wore slippers, which could, if necessary, be slipped off and on easily. One of us sat at the side of the table on his right hand, in such a position that his feet could be occasionally seen. The other sat with his back to the window, opposite the medium.

"Our hands were placed on the table, touching. Soon raps, of a muffled and somewhat peculiar nature, were heard, which were accepted

as evidence that spirits were about. We had brought with us two new slates—one a small folding-slate, the other an ordinary child's slate. The slates were marked, so that they could not be changed. On the face of the slate was placed a small piece of slate pencil, about the size of a grain of wheat. The slate was then placed under the table, and there held by Mr. Slade with his right hand, his left being on the table, touching ours. Soon after, the sound as of a pencil writing on a slate was heard, and on the slate being produced an indistinct written message was found upon it. We were informed that the writing would improve, and subsequent messages, of which there were several, were somewhat more legible. Mr. Slade then handed the slate to us to hold, but no writing was effected on it, and the mysterious power intimated, on another slate, held by the medium, that it could not write for us. Meanwhile, Mr. Slade informed us of the wonderful feats occasionally performed in his presence, keeping up what sceptics irreverently term 'conjurers' patter.' The one nearest to Mr. Slade then held the slate in his right hand under the table; but there was no writing, though, on one occasion, the slate was jerked in a violent manner from the table. A piece of pencil was next placed in the folded slate, the covers of which were closed by the medium, and the slate placed on the shoulder of the person sitting next to Mr. Slade. A sound as of writing was heard, and on opening the slate a few words, in answer to a query by the medium, were found written. A small slate was placed under the table, Mr. Slade holding it in his right hand, and the person sitting next to him pressing it close to the under side of the table with his left hand; sounds of writing were again heard, and on the slate being produced, a message was written upon it. The chair of the person next to Mr. Slade was suddenly and violently pushed back a few inches, and, so far as any manifestations to us were concerned, they were invariably vouchsafed to the one sitting close to the medium; whether it was because of his proximity, or in consequence of his greater disposition to believe and praise, rather than to sneer or scoff, neither of us has yet determined.

"A small mark was then made on the slate, and the piece of pencil placed on this mark. A full-sized wooden pencil was then laid on the slate, which was held under the table in one hand by Dr. Slade. In a few seconds the large pencil was seen flying across the room, and on the slate being produced, the small pencil was found on the mark where it had been placed, the inference being that it was impossible for Mr. Slade to have thrown the other pencil without disturbing the smaller one, which, by the way, does not follow.

"One of us asked if the power would not move the pencil slowly, so that we might see it moving about the room; and although the medium informed us that this was sometimes done, the pencil moving so slowly that it might be caught in the hand, no such convincing proof of mysterious power was afforded us. At some small distance away was an ordinary toilet table, and we were told that the power occasionally levitated articles of furniture. We asked that this table might be moved. Mr. Slade then asked the power if this could be done, and placed the slate under the table with the small piece of pencil on it for an answer. On being produced, the words, 'We will do all we can,' were found written on the face of it. The table was not moved, nor was the pencil levitated slowly, as requested. We were, however, informed that these manifestations would be given on some future occasion, as the power increased with repeated sittings. We frankly admitted that we were unbelievers, and asked that some unmistakable demonstration of mysterious power should be granted to us, but it came not.

"Once, on raising our hands slowly together, the table rose a few inches from the ground, remained poised for a second or two, and then descended suddenly. During the time the table was being moved, the person sitting next to Mr. Slade kept his foot on the medium's feet, and he declares that he did not feel them move. So ended the first *séance*.

"Looking at the conditions to ascertain if one of us would be permitted to sit away from the table, we found it distinctly set out that all present must join hands. Shortly after being seated at the table raps were heard, and Mr. Slade informed us that the force was strong. Soon after, the table behind, and at some distance from the medium, was thrown over with great force. Very little writing was done, the power not being propitious. Both of us again held the slate, but were, as before, informed on a slate held by Mr. Slade that no writing could be done for us. The chair close to one of us, and at a considerable distance from the medium, quite beyond the reach of his feet or hands, now turned suddenly over. We asked to have the gymnastic movement repeated, and though the power, as at the previous sitting, promised to do all that he, she, or it could, the chair was not again moved. Shortly after, a slate held by Mr. Slade under the table seemed to dart suddenly forward. The slate, indeed, often did this, the medium declaring that it was pulled by some invisible power, and that he could not retain it. On the present occasion, the slate moved with great violence, but did not leave Mr. Slade's hands. A loud crash was heard, and the slate, on being again produced, was found with a large hole punched in its centre. An accordion was now produced and placed under the table, and while waiting for some music, celestial or infernal—it mattered not which—Mr. Slade's cane suddenly fell into the room from an opposite corner to that at which he was sitting. The medium had placed his hat, coat, and cane in a corner of the room, from which the cane appeared to have travelled unbidden, and in a most demonstrative manner. Altogether, the spirits on this occasion were boisterous in their manifestations. The force was unmistakably strong, and the medium appeared from time to time much agitated. A bell was now placed on the floor under the table. Mr. Slade sat sideways, one foot away from the table, and on the other one of us placed his foot. The power had promised us to play the accordion, but did not keep his word. While the instrument was under the table the sliding top was wrenched off and jerked across the room. Some few notes were touched, but no tune was played.

The bell here suddenly made its appearance, coming up between Mr. Slade and the person who sat next to him, striking the latter on the shoulder, and falling on the table. The small table again turned turtle, and the medium appeared greatly frightened and distressed. Here the *séance* ended, Mr. Slade inviting each of us to drop in some evening, when he would be more at liberty than in the daytime, and when he believed we should witness the manifestations which we so much desired. With respect to the levitating of the furniture, Mr. Slade believes that can be accounted for by the electricity engendered in the atmosphere, but the writing he declares to be directed by some higher intelligence. He appears to regard it as his greatest feat, and it certainly is marvellous."

The *Herald* then adds another of its reports, describing a *séance*.

#### TRACES OF LAW IN THE APPEARANCES OF SPIRITS, EMBODIED AND UNEMBODIED.\*

BY W. STANTON MOSES, M.A.

THE chief value of these meetings has always seemed to me to be that they afford a regular and simple means of interchange of thought and experience for those who are interested in a common pursuit. Here we may bring our ideas, our experiences, our difficulties, and our theories, with the certainty that they will meet with patient attention and careful sifting. As an educational process this is simply necessary.

At the present moment it is simply invaluable. And this view it is that influences me in doing what I can to keep up the interest in these meetings. We have come to a crisis in the public-mind, not at all in the domestic or private—development of Spiritualism. That has come to pass which they, whose eyes have been open to the tendency of events, have seen to be inevitable.

A constant repetition of phenomena, unexplained by a coherent philosophy; the reiterated discovery of fraud; the wide prevalence of folly; the frequent suggestion of untruth, have shaken the popular mind. Phenomenal Spiritualism does not satisfy; and there has gone up, there is going up all round us, a cry, which to me is one of most pathetic earnestness, for something that shall satisfy the inner yearning that cannot feed on these husks.

Phenomenal Spiritualism not only does not satisfy this craving, it introduces a gradually-increasing element of uncertainty and perplexity into the mind. The border-land between the world of matter, and that to which the gates that are set ajar give access, is a land of fantasy: a land where human judgment finds itself without a standard to which it can always appeal; a land where the canons of human criticism are little worth, and where human experience ransacks the past in vain for precedents, and finds (as George MacDonald puts it in *David Elginbrod*) that "verisimilitude is no essential element of truth."

The mental attitude engendered by this introduction to a new order of things is one of insecurity. The mind was never yet constructed, I believe, which (being healthy and sound) can continue to observe a number of phenomena without seeking to discover the law that governs them. The time comes to all of us—to some later than to others—when we must strive after this law. Its discovery, however, is no easy matter.

For, first, it is not easy to know *what is a fact*—to differentiate the true from the false when we have no known standard, and when what seems true shades so imperceptibly into what seems false. It is not easy, when one has not the key, to unlock the secrets that accumulate around us, and cause bewilderment and anxiety by the very consciousness that we have in us that *we can't unlock them*. It is not easy, in many cases, to get face to face with the intelligent operator, and one feels rather as if one were the victim in a game of spiritual blind man's buff.

Then fraud and trick and buffoonery step in to complicate matters still more, and to make the phenomena (which in their proper place, as the signs that testify to the underlying philosophy, are beautiful and true) mean, and contemptible, and puerile, and ludicrous, by divesting them of their true significance, and linking them with the accidents of imposture and deceit.

And so it has come to pass that those who have devoted most time and pains to the subject have reached a point—whether spirit-guided I do not presume to say—where they

\* A paper read before the British National Association of Spiritualists at last Monday's Fortnightly Discussion Meeting, February 17th, 1879.

must take a new departure. Their mental estimates have been changed. They must construct a new scale. Their philosophy has been shattered. They must reconstruct a new scheme from new experience. Their religion, in its *external* form, has been modified, shaken, shattered, perhaps annihilated. They must look for another system. They must seek, if haply they may find a truer, nobler faith, suited to the greater light that is in them. Whether that system be one already existent, or whether it be evolved from the necessities of the yearning spirit within, or whether it be suggested in germ by the ever-watchful guardian, and moulded by the pressure of circumstances; or whether, like the holy city, the New Jerusalem, it descend out of heaven from God, with a beauty not of earth, and a Divine adaptation to extraordinary needs, such as was the voice of inspiration to the prophet of old, all this will depend chiefly on idiosyncrasy.

But in some way, and at some crisis in the experience, all earnest thinkers, children of the new dispensation, who come within the sphere of this spiritual influence, will be driven to correlate their facts with a philosophy, and with some form of religion. To these it will matter little, once they have grasped the phenomena and made them their own, whether they are ever represented. The external system, the concrete system, typified by the phenomena, may die. Nay, it may be in some cases, the Pauline analogy will be true. It will not be quickened except it die; but dying, it will bear abundant fruit. That which is of the earth, earthy, must give place to the reign of spirit, and the physical be superseded by the spiritual, in just such sort as the physical body, dead and buried, is replaced by the resurrection body of the new life.

Now, some of us have reached this place where two roads diverge. Some of us, I say, for we must not expect that there will ever come a time when the simplest and most elementary phenomena will not be necessary to some, aye, to many for whom they form the only adit to spiritual knowledge. For some, I verily believe, during the whole period of their bodily life, these phenomena, appealing as they do to the bodily sense, will be as essential as the daily meal to the physical system. The members of the one body have varied needs, and the wise agencies of the all-wise Father have various ways of satisfying them.

But for some of us the time has come, by a beautiful and orderly evolution, when the cry for spiritual enlightenment is bearing its fruit. The husk is being cast aside, because the time of germination has come, and it is the spring-time of spirit.

This has been very clear from the tone of the papers that have lately been read here, and especially from the correspondence that they have elicited in the *Spiritualist*.

The papers which Mr. Harrison, Miss Kislingbury, and I have lately read here have been concerned with the action of embodied and unembodied, or, perhaps, disembodied spirit. I spoke of the action of disembodied spirit through a medium, Mr. Harrison of the action of unembodied spirit without a medium, and Miss Kislingbury of the rarer and less-known action of the embodied human spirit.

Can we discern any underlying law that governs these phenomena? Miss Kislingbury described some of the phenomena which she recorded as apparently objectless. (I do not profess to quote her exact words.) They were, as I may say, the vagaries of a wandering spirit, in some cases at least.

Perhaps some light may be thrown upon such phenomena by the community of sensation which has been observed in the case of those between whom there is a strong natural or induced rapport, such as that which exists in the case of persons twin-born, and between a powerful mesmeriser and his subject. Dr. Passavant records such a case of sympathy between a sister and her twin-brother. She was suddenly seized with unaccountable horror, followed by a strange convulsion which, the doctor said, resembled the struggles and sufferings of a person in drowning. Her brother, then abroad, was drowned at that precise time, as was afterwards ascertained. There the accident of birth provided the intimate rapport.

The same phenomenon is frequently observed in the case of a mesmeriser and his patient.

[Transcorp. Action. *Human Nature*, July 1877, p. 297.]

In the cases recorded by Miss Kislingbury it may be that there was a magnetic rapport between the persons of whom she speaks. Strong community of feeling, identity of interest, an interblending of the personality might set up conditions in which the astral spirit might make itself temporarily manifest. The link is often too subtle for us to discover; but I believe that we shall find a link in all cases. None of these things are objectless. It is that we are too dense to discover the rationale.

Nothing, indeed, is more curious than the strange links of attraction that we can discover. The depths of the nature when stirred seem to cloud the spiritual faculties and to defeat the desired object by the very intensity of the forces that are set in action, but causes the most trivial will operate when the power of transcorporeal action is present.

There is a familiar story of a cook in the Sister's House at Ebersdorf, whose double was constantly seen by the herb-bed, her natural body being in the kitchen, when she wanted some herb for her stews. "There you were again by the onion-bed" was a standing joke against her. Her mind, directed to a very trivial matter, caused an apparition of herself to be seen, and that, apparently, by a number of persons.

This same projection of thought, intensified by mental anxiety, has, in many authenticated cases, produced an apparition. Dr. Kerner (in his *Blatter aus Prevozt*) records such a case.

[Transcorp. Action. *Human Nature*, July 1877, p. 298.]

We have then got thus far.

1. *There is an observable community of sensation in the case of some persons such as twins.*

2. *Where the power of disengaging the spiritual body exists either naturally or by development, very simple causes will set it in action.*

3. *This power is intensified by any mental anxiety.*

This transcorporeal action exists with much frequency during sleep.

Sir Humphrey Davy records such a case of himself. He was in bed asleep, and dreamed that he was ill in Italy. The details were most vivid—the room, furniture, his nurse, a young girl whose features he remembered distinctly. He thought no more of it, but the details were imprinted on his mind. Some years after he was actually taken ill while travelling in Italy; he did occupy the very room he had seen in his dream or vision, and was nursed by the very same young woman whose features he remembered so well.

We must all know or have read cases in which the spirit, liberated during the sleep of the body, remembers more or less perfectly what it then experiences. In this category come all the cases of prophetic dreams and warnings which, however little we may be able to explain them, are too numerous to put aside as coincidences.

Cases of activity of spirit outside of the sleeping body present less difficulty, it may be admitted, than do those equally authenticated cases where the body is active as well as the spirit, but in different spheres of action. Many such cases are within my knowledge, and they are to me inexplicable, except on the hypothesis of a sub-division of consciousness, or of the control of the body by an external spirit, or, alternatively, of the personation of the spirit of the individual whose apparition is recognised by another spirit. Unless we admit a sub-division of consciousness, an external agency must be postulated.

We go one step further, then.

4. *This power exists naturally and frequently during sleep.*

Many recorded cases also point to its action during abnormal states of the medium.

Judge Edmunds records that a circle at New York used regularly to evoke the spirit of the medium then sitting at a circle in Boston, and obtain communication from him, and *vice versa*. His daughter, in certain abnormal states, had the power of projecting her spirit. So had Mrs. Tappan, and Mrs. E. Hardinge Brittain, and other mediums of my acquaintance. It would seem that one note of mediumship is the facility with which the spiritual body is disengaged from the trammels of the physical body, and that in a high degree of development the spirit suffers no lack or cessation of consciousness.

One point more, therefore.

5. *This power is an attribute of what we call mediumship, and exists in the highest degree in those in whom psychic power is most developed.*

We shall be prepared, by what we have now observed, to lay down one more law, or rather to note how the stirring of the inner nature under the influence of affection produces these phenomena. Love is the strongest motive-power that spirit knows; and the cases are very numerous when it has caused an objective appearance. Such a case is recorded very circumstantially in *Glimpses of the Supernatural* by the Rev. F. G. Lee. It is too long for quotation, but the facts are these: A lady and her husband were returning from India in 1854, when she was taken dangerously ill in Egypt. She was aware of her danger, and had one desire only—to see her children who were in England. On the day of her death she fell into a deep sleep, from which she woke suddenly, saying that she had been and had seen her children. Shortly after she departed. At the time of her sleep it was ascertained that the children, then at Torquay with a friend, were playing in the house during a thunderstorm. All were in one room, and each, together with a nursemaid, saw a lady in white come into the room, and slowly glide by and fade away. The three elder children recognised their mother. The date, September 10, 1854, and time were noted, and the two events above recorded were found to have taken place simultaneously.

I need not multiply instances. They are on the tongue of every one who has paid attention to these subjects. Referring in passing to one of the most remarkable cases of the kind, which I recorded on the authority of Mr. Coleman, in *Human Nature*, July, 1877, p. 295, I pass on to note

6. *The most active cause of such appearances is the Law of Love.*

We have seen that the spirit wanders readily while the body is asleep. There is another state, akin to sleep, in which it also finds it easy to manifest at a distance from the body. Before and at the time of death, as well as for a variable period after death, the spirit frequently leaves the body and follows its impulses of anxiety or affection. It seems as though it were hovering between this world and the next, not yet free, yet not so closely prisoned as before. Numberless cases of death warnings, death compacts, and of apparitions at the time of death are recorded, and that on testimony the most authentic. In many such cases the wandering spirit is moved by care. Worldly affairs need settling; an injustice has been done, and must be remedied; sometimes even the most trivial business will, being "on the mind," suffice to send the spirit wandering. Or, again, affection is at work, and drives the spirit to visit those loved friends or relatives from whom it is to be shortly separated, or whom it has left behind. Many such apparitions occur at the time of death, or very shortly after, before the spirit takes its leave of the earth, and "goes to its own place." This leads us to another law.

7. *The time of death is one when the spirit is most free to wander, and most frequently manifests its presence at a distance from the body.*

What has been said applies chiefly to cases where the apparition is that of a spirit still in the flesh. I believe the laws that govern the return of the departed are much the same, save that with them there is one more motive to be superadded, viz., guardianship over those committed to their care, and the fulfilment of the mission with which some of them have been entrusted. In some cases, too, it would seem that the spirit that manifests its presence in a manner which our superior wisdom would call objectless, is really occupied in a process of purification—is working out its salvation, and rising, through labour and suffering, to a state of greater progress.

Many cases of the return of departed spirits that have occurred in my own experience have been referable to the commands of a spirit higher than themselves, who directed their action for a special and beneficial purpose.

Hauntings are referable, usually, if not always, to the action of earth-bound spirits. In some cases, "where the treasure is, there is the heart also;" in others, a crime

has been wrought, and the spirit is linked with it till expiation has been made. In others, cupidity and avarice have survived, and bind the spirit to earth. The laws are in all cases to be found in the affections, the desires, or the passions, or else in the effects of deeds done in the body. No doubt we may discover stories of apparitions for which no adequate motive can be discovered; but first of all we must be sure that, in such cases, the appearance was objective, not the fancy of an excited brain or the mere projection of thought acting on a sensitive, but a positive objective presentation. In such a case the reasons discoverable in almost all cases may well lead us to believe that there is a motive, only lying too deep for us to discover it at once; and that one or more of the motive-springs of spirit has been secretly touched.

The sum of what I have said may be stated thus:—

1. We have general indications of what we may expect in our search for law in the observable community of sensations, *e.g.*, in twins, and between the mesmeriser and his subject.

2. So far as we can see, the power of action independent of the body is inherent in spirit; only some are more closely prisoned than others.

3. It apparently exists in the highest degree in those whom we call mediums.

4. In all cases it operates freely during bodily sleep, or when the body is in repose.

5. It acts more freely still in a medium who is in a state of entrancement.

6. It is especially active immediately before, at, or just after the time of death.

7. Very trivial causes—a mere desire to get something that is wished for—will suffice to liberate the spirit and allow it to appear apart from the body.

8. Any disturbing cause that stirs the depths of the spiritual or mental being, such as mental anxiety, acts more powerfully still.

9. But the most potent motive-spring of all is affection.

10. The return of the departed would seem to be affected by—

(a) Mental anxiety, *e.g.*, about worldly business that has been left unsettled.

(b) Affection for those left behind.

(c) Guardianship.

(d) Distinct mission of mercy or instruction entrusted to "ministering spirits" by those higher than themselves.

Lastly. Haunting spirits are usually earth-bound, and even bound to certain localities with which their earthly life has been associated.

In some cases they would seem to exercise a certain monitory care over certain families, manifesting themselves only before death of certain members of them, or at epochs in the family history.

They are usually unhappy, and may frequently be released by the presence of a medium or by prayer.

I have, no doubt, omitted much; I have designedly confined myself to brief notices of what I have dwelt upon; and I do not presume to do more than suggest material for reflection.

## 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.]

### MEDIUMSHIP AND MEDICINE.

SIR,—A few remarks contained in a letter received from Dr. F. L. H. Willis, of America, some months ago, relative to the exhaustion sustained by mediums, and the action of homœopathic medicines upon them, has struck me might prove useful to some of your readers.

Dr. Willis, who visited this country several years ago, is known to be a medium of eminently refined power, and his reputation as a physician in America is on a par with the best, some of his cures having been most remarkable.

My object being only to circulate information of a physiological fact regarding those who have for a long period been under the immediate sensible action of spirits, I hope I shall be acquitted of egotism when those remarks apply more particularly to myself. The same law holds good, more or less, for all; and a knowledge of those laws which are essential for the preservation in health of a body changed as the bodies of mediums sooner or later become, will obviate much dangerous blundering.



I append those portions of Dr. Willis's letter which may be useful to many:—

"For a long time your forces have been drawn upon by spirits and mortals both, with no commensurate return, and the result, as is always inevitable in such cases, is that at the great nerve centres there is exhaustion of nervo-vital force and functional derangement of all the organs controlled by the nerves that meet at those centres. Especially is this the case with liver, spleen, stomach, and heart; they are all functionally disordered from failure of force in the governing nerves of each, especially the heart and spleen.

"When a person has been long subject to spiritual influences, the body itself becomes spiritualised to a greater or less extent, and cannot bear crude drug forces. This is eminently the case with you. You should never think of taking anything below the thirtieth attenuations of homœopathy; from the thirtieth to two hundredth. These are so spiritualised or dynamised by the process of attenuation that they act as spiritual forces in the system, and are readily assimilated by the spirit as aids in controlling the body."

Thus crude drugs, and sometimes the lower attenuations of homœopathic preparations, become *obstructions*, painful, and perhaps equivalent to disease, to the healthful or preservative action of the *spirit* upon its earthly tenement—an action strengthened and intensified as the body, losing its grossness, becomes more amenable to those laws controlling more especially the spirit. And the coarse, violent action of crude drugs must necessarily have a destructive effect upon bodies which are undergoing, or have undergone, this species of change, sapping the very foundations of life. CATHERINE WOODFORD.

90, Great Russell-street, February 16th.

#### A REQUEST.

SIR,—May I ask any of your readers to assist my astrological studies in the following way? I am endeavouring to prove (or disprove) the signification of "houses" in one particular branch of astrology (solar revolutions) by a strictly inductive method. For this purpose, I require a greater number of instances than I can obtain by private application to friends and from published nativities, and an appeal through your columns may possibly bring me a larger supply. What I want is the time of birth within an hour; the place of birth; and the dates of any bereavement (including fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, and wives) of any serious illness of the person giving the information, or of any of the above specified relatives. Also of marriage, birth of children, appointment to office, promotion, &c. I do not ask for names, as your paper does not circulate among people who are likely to practise any silly hoax upon me. Anonymous information on a post-card to the subscribed address will be gratefully received.—Yours,

C. C. MASSEY.

4, Harcourt-buildings, Temple, E.C., Feb. 17th, 1879.

#### STRANGE ASSERTIONS THROUGH MEDIUMSHIP.

SIR,—The *Primitive World* is, properly speaking, a highly interesting medial dictation, wherein the origin of our globe is clearly traced out. Three planets in process of formation, while wandering through space, were hurled one against the other, and became united in the shock of meeting. Chance played no part in this amalgamation; it was brought about by the law of attraction. This triple origin has determined the triplicity of the human peoples, who are always the visible manifestation of latent forms. As matter, although one in essence, becomes differentiated in combination, each of these globes impregnated in different proportions with the inherent forces of matter brought its contingent of energy, and introduced into the whole dissimilarities which were faithfully reproduced in the constitutional aptitudes of each race. The indigenous races of each planet lived at first on the soil that had witnessed their birth, then, increasing in numbers, they spread about, and eventually came in collision with their neighbours, as their respective planets had done with each other, when, after fighting and struggling with one another, they became united, without, however, losing the distinctive stamp that marked their peculiarities. The history of the planet runs in parallel lines with that of its inhabitants; the same universal law inexorably calling for implicit obedience is seen everywhere. If man, who is but a microcosm, is obliged to develop and suffer in order to rise to the height of his capabilities, so it is likewise with the earth, which also lives an existence proper to itself. Its infancy is marked, like man's, with exuberance of uncultivated growth, and no progress can be made but at the price of anguish and suffering, as shown by the periodical cataclysms separated by intervals of 30,000 years of tranquil development. Each cataclysm is followed by a step in advance, and humanity, which has, like the earth, to pass through periods of confusion and disturbance, can only rise through suffering to a higher state. Such is the law which rules us still, for after having traced upon a blank map the principal geographical lines of the ancient world, where the Mediterranean is represented by a river, where Plato's Atlantis is seen approaching to the centre of what afterwards was to be America, and after having mentioned the submergence of this Atlantis, which disappeared in the depth of the ocean to allow America to grow up out of the water in its place, the inspired medium foretold us of new disasters. In six thousand years the inclination of the earth's axis will be again changed. England will be, as it was formerly, reunited to France, and the Atlantis resuscitated, like the island of Santorin, will reappear radiant in beauty, while New York will join the infinite number of cities, whose names even have not reached us, that lie at the bottom of the sea. I only indicate here briefly the chief features of this book, which is calculated to excite the greatest interest, for every one must wish to know how the planets are formed and the history of the stars, and will pause to consider the certainly strange theory of the androgynal man that preceded bi-sexual humanity. By a curious chance I find myself in a position to be able, perhaps, to supply some evidence in favour of

the assertion of the spirit. I brought with me from Mexico, among other curious things, several statuettes of Aztec deities; among the number there is one which so unmistakably marks a complete her maphrodeity, that upon reading the *Primitive World* my attention was drawn to it. May it not be that in this little figure of the greatest antiquity there is shown the recollection of a tradition referring to the revelation of the existence of these primitive androgynes? All Spiritualists know M. Pierart, the founder and almost the only writer in the *Revue Spiritualiste*, *le Concile de la libra pensee*, and *le Benedictin de St. Maur*. A single-minded man of vigorous temperament, incapable of compromising the truth, the love of which he pushes to its extreme limit, he has defended Spiritualism for thirty years. He is loved by all who know him, and appreciated by all who have read him. He was about to finish his labours by founding a little society of sympathetic Spiritualists, who would work together for the propagation of truth. The idea is praiseworthy, and if the ill health of the founder has delayed its execution, let us hope that upon recovering his strength he will be able to carry it out. Such a revelation as that which I have just sketched could not fail to greatly impress an investigator of M. Pierart's stamp. Although he may allow his thoughts to soar in the supernal regions, he does permit himself to be unduly carried away by enthusiasm. His disposition would be sceptical were not his faith so great. The intellectual scalpel is his favourite weapon; and what is not less curious than the revelation itself is the patient investigation he has made, and the scrupulous exactness he has employed, to corroborate, by quotations from authors of undisputed authority, the statements of his medium. Every chapter dictated to him is followed by another intended to elucidate the communication, and it is marvellous to see savans, both ancient and modern, with investigators of acknowledged merit, called upon by M. Pierart to give their testimony in favour of his statements. Our friend has promised us a series of publications in continuation of the *Primitive World*. Let us hope that his restored health will enable him to keep his promise, and that I shall have to draw the attention of the readers of *The Spiritualist* to other wonderful things.

F. CLAVAIROZ.

Paris.

#### SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA IN BIRMINGHAM.

SIR,—I send an account of a few of our sittings. The circle is held at 57, Vyse, Birmingham. Mr. John Summerfield and Mr. Thomas Horton are the mediums. A *séance* is held every Monday evening, and is free to all earnest investigators, who are proposed and accepted by the members of the circle; but all friends from a distance calling will receive a cordial welcome. A second *séance* is held every Thursday, but is strictly private. At our first *séance*, January 6th, 1879, the light was turned out, and two bells, a violin, and tambourine were played upon, and floated round the room all at one time; the sitters were touched by materialised hands, and beautiful lights were seen in all parts of the room. A chair was carried from one end of the room, over the table, to the other end. At our subsequent sitting materialised forms were felt, and heard walking about outside the circle, at the far end of the room, away from the medium, the medium meanwhile patting his hand on the table to show us that no trickery was being enacted. The violin was played upon and floated from one end of the room to the other, the spirits rapping it against the wall to inform us where it was. A pair of large tongs were taken from the fireplace, and beat time to the singing in all parts of the room.

At our next sitting, and according to a promise made by the controls, three wild birds were brought into the room and given to the sitters. One sitter, who was not sitting in the circle, had his necktie taken off, and a lady her brooch from her dress; the brooch was handed to her husband at the other side of the room. A little girl, the medium's daughter, was lifted from her chair and placed on the table.

At our private *séances* the members number nine persons. We have had some wonderful manifestations, such, for instance, as materialised forms standing on our shoulders; the hands allowed us to give them a firm grasp, and to examine the muscles and the beating of the pulse. At our next *séance* this was repeated, but instead of the feet and legs of the forms being clothed they were naked. Bare arms have been felt to the elbow.

At our next *séance* a naked foot was felt by some of the sitters. The foot was icy cold, but flexible; one of the outside sitters felt four different hands at one time, and the feet, and at least a form of great weight stood on his knees. The naked foot was placed on the head and forehead of one of the sitters.

I may say that we place the utmost confidence in the medium, several of the sitters having been present at many of the tests he has been subjected to; and in every case, when physical manifestations are going on, his hands are heard beating the table. As we progress we will forward anything we may think will be worth your readers knowing.

JOHN COLLY, Sec.

312, Bridge-street, West, Birmingham, Feb. 17th, 1879.

THE first pamphlet, or booklet, ever published in connection with modern Spiritualism was by a Mr. Lewis, shortly before Mr. Capron's book was issued in the United States. Its title was, *A Report of the Mysterious Noises heard in the House of Mr. John D. For, in Hydeville, Arcadia*.

IS IT A TRUE PROPHECIC DREAM?—The *Daily Chronicle* of last week (Tuesday) says:—"Yesterday morning the Deal magistrates sentenced a seaman, named George Wylds, to two months' imprisonment for refusing to proceed to sea in the barque *Umzinto*, on a voyage from London to Port Natal. The man told the magistrates that he was satisfied with the ship, officers, and food; but he had had a dream that the ship would be lost, and would not go to sea in her for any amount of money. Once before he had a dream that a vessel in which he was sailing would be lost, and it was lost."

## SPIRITUALISM IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

In the account of the conversion of Catherine de Sandoval, the following incident is related :—

"Soon afterwards [*i.e.*, after her first call to the religious life] she was favoured with a remarkable vision which, nearly twenty years afterwards, she related to St. Teresa. 'She told me,' says the saint, 'that she went to bed one night, desiring to discover the most perfect religious Order on earth in order that she might enter it; and she dreamt that she was going along a very narrow path, in the greatest peril of falling down deep precipices which lay on each side of her, when a person, in the dress of a friar, said to her, "Sister, come along with me." He took her to a convent in which were many nuns, and where she saw no light except that which came from the candles in their hands. She inquired to what Order they belonged. All were silent; but they lifted up their veils, and, smiling, showed her their happy countenances. The Prioress took her by the hand and said, "My child, I wish you to be here," showing her, at the same time, the rule and constitutions.'

"From this time, 1565, Catherine persevered in her purpose to enter religion in the Order which had been thus revealed to her; and after eighteen years of painful trials, arising from the apparition of friends, and long and severe illness, from which she was at last miraculously restored, she ascertained from one of the Jesuit fathers that the vision which she had seen had reference to the new Carmelite reform.

"In the Lent of 1575, permission having been with great difficulty obtained from the Knights of St. James for the foundation [of a new convent], St. Teresa began her journey to Veas, with Mother Anne of Jesus, whom she summoned from Salamanca to undertake the government of the new convent.

"As the travellers were passing the high mountain peak of the Sierra Morena they lost their way, and came to a point where it seemed equally perilous to advance or to recede. The Saint enjoined her sisters to recommend themselves to God and to St. Joseph in a strait where human aid seemed hopeless. A voice, as from the highest peak, answered them: 'Stay where you are; if you pass on you will be dashed down the precipice.' The muleteers instantly stopped, and asked the friendly voice to point out to them the way of safety. They were directed along a path so precipitous, that nothing short of a miracle could have enabled them to follow it. When the fearful passage had been safely made, some of the party wished to go in search of their benefactor. 'I do not know,' said St. Teresa to the nuns, as the men set off upon their search, 'why we have let them go; for it was my Father, St. Joseph, whom assuredly they will not find.' In fact, they returned after a fruitless search, and from that moment the mules travelled with such rapidity that the muleteers swore they went rather like birds than beasts, as if the rugged rocks had been changed into a smooth and easy road. On February 18th the party reached the entrance of Veas, where the principal citizens, who had come forth on horseback to do them honour, brought them in triumph to the church, where the priests in their cottas were waiting for them, and preceded by the cross, and accompanied by the two ladies of Sandoval and other nobility of the place, they were conducted in procession to the house of Doña Catherine. As soon as she was alone with the nuns they raised their veils, and the joy of that faithful and long-suffering heart was full, for she recognised the faces she had seen in her vision. She recognised also the friar who had guided her in her dream in the person of the venerable brother John of Misery, who had come to meet the holy mother at Veas.

"The convent of *St. Joseph the Deliverer* was founded on the feast of St. Matthias, in the house of the ladies of Sandoval, who on the same day received the religious habit, with the names of Catherine and Mary of Jesus."—From the *Life of St. Teresa*, edited by Cardinal Manning.

At the reading of the paper of Mr. Stainton Moses, before the National Association of Spiritualists last Monday night, Mr. H. Wedgwood occupied the chair. The speakers were Mr. G. R. G. Tapp, Mr. J. W. Fletcher, Dr. Carter Blake, Mr. R. A. March, and Mr. Wedgwood, who proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Stainton Moses, seconded by Mr. F. W. Percival.

## SORROW.

BY DOLLIE MAITLAND.

THERE'S a beauty in sorrow that joy cannot give,  
When the soul seems to fly to her Maker above,  
To ask for the pity that nowhere can live,  
Except in the birthplace and cradle of love:  
'Tis a chain that unites the child to its home,  
A chord which is touched by the angels in heaven,  
A guide, that our feet may not wander or roam,  
A taste of the happiness yet to be given.

The links of the chain are slender—slender,  
They are gently joined by the angels' tears;  
And their touch on the chain is tender—tender,  
As they sigh to our hearts that the Father hears.  
We feel our hearts stirred by the distant whisper,  
We are filled with the breath of the spirits above,  
And the chords in our hearts softly move to the murmur,  
When we gaze on the faces and scenes that we love.

The beauty that moves us speaks ever of sorrow,  
It fills us with sadness, though dimly sweet;  
'Tis the sigh of the angels our trembling hearts borrow,  
For they know that our pleasures are never complete.  
The soul ever longeth—it yearneth and pineth  
For the home and the beauty from which it was torn,  
And the shadow of splendour that round it extendeth,  
Makes it sigh for the beauties to which it was born.

Will be ready in a few days,

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3. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is weakening.
4. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature.
5. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first indications will probably be table tiltings or raps.
6. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion let one person only speak; he should talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three raps be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.
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