

# The Spiritualist,

## AND JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

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

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## SPIRIT IDENTITY.

Father Ignatius, as will be seen from a letter in another column, is satisfied that the apparition of the Veiled Lady at Llanthony Abbey must be that of the Virgin Mary, because a marvellous cure of disease has been wrought by the application of leaves from a bush near which the spirit form was seen. But what proof is this of the personal identity of the spirit? Similar and much more numerous cures have been effected at Knock under the supposed influence of the Virgin, but there doctrines are taught which Father Ignatius repudiates. Does the Virgin Mary endorse both sets of doctrines? If cures of diseases prove this to be so, she must also be the patron of the celebrated American healing medium, Dr. Newton, who by spirit-power is enabled to cure five or six times more diseases daily, than are cured at Knock and has a larger museum of trophies in the shape of discarded crutches and bandages than at Knock. Dr. Newton is so unorthodox that even Unitarians would hesitate to let him enter their flock, and Trinitarians of all shades would abominate him. He has but the uncreedal unselfish religion of Love to God and Love to Man, expressed in the deeds of his daily life, but not a shred of ecclesiastical doctrine or dogma of any kind in his whole composition. If miraculous cures prove the presence of the Virgin Mary in the one case, they do it in all.

The general principle runs through all these psychological phenomena, as may be proved by hundreds of practical examples, that the higher spirits are, by eternal law, *obliged* to externally manifest on the earth plane by the use of the highest aspirations and ideals of mortal devotees. Proof of actual identity is thus exceedingly difficult to obtain. But if good is done, and high spirits are unwillingly obliged to manifest through the fallible conceptions of uncompromising mortals, does it matter much, regrettable though it be?

THE hearing of the case of Miss M. Houghton, medium, prosecuted by a conjuror for, among various alleged acts, administering homœopathic pills, is postponed because of her serious illness.



## SOME OF OUR MISTAKES.

BY CATHERINE WOODFORD.

This is the age for diving into the hoary past, for turning up to the light things long laid aside as belonging to the region of superstition, and, as we have thought in our intellectual pride, of ignorance and darkness. But Time, whilst whirling us onwards is ever pointing backwards to the wonders we have left behind. This has at least the salutary effect of correcting our self-conceit, for the more we search into the past the more we have reason to be astonished at what was known to races long since vanished from the face of our planet, in comparison with which our knowledge seems but infantile. We feel like children sitting at the foot of a venerable sage, and treasuring up the words of wisdom which fall from his lips.

Amongst some of the marvels known to the ancients, and which in our modern times are again reappearing in society as a novelty, are the extraordinary powers hitherto called supernatural, but which we are learning occur "under laws as natural as those which regulate the ebb and flow of tides." The science of the occult laws of nature was known to the ancients, and is still in possession of eastern adepts. It is more than probable that all the extraordinary manifestations of spirits at our physical *séances* come under this head; and other phenomena called spiritual, are merely the hidden powers of the soul or spirit of man, which transcend the confines and limits of the material plane and control matter, liberating themselves from all the restraints of time and space.

Moses performing his wonderful miracles before Pharaoh, presents a stately picture of the transcendent powers of the human spirit, and he seems to stand a god in the midst of the universe, controlling creation. Other great beings have risen to similar heights of spiritual grandeur, as the history of many nations reveals.

We Spiritualists are dabbling in this great science, and the spirits have necessarily been our teachers by the abnormal aid of individuals amongst us called mediums. But as yet, we are toying with a thing we scarcely understand, which we have not fully learned to handle in such a way as to render it harmless, and at the same time useful in the highest sense. We have committed many mistakes, and the methods of research we commonly pursue are capable of vast improvement.

Those who frequent physical *séances* for the

purpose of scientific study alone are wise in their generation, and to them we are indebted for many firmly established facts which will serve as a solid foundation for the grand superstructure of the future. There are some amongst us, however, who make physical manifestations the all in all of their Spiritualism, expecting that they will introduce to them the *summum bonum* of life; and finding only disappointment from this faith built upon the sands, they become as utterly lost as wanderers in a desert without compass, or any other means of finding their way.

Others, again, perpetually attend *séances* as a pastime. They do not seek to advance themselves or their neighbours. They appear not to have the smallest conception that they are merely playing with a great science, whose ultimate aim is to lead them nearer God by revealing more of the wonders of His creation enshrined in the microcosm, Man. Thoughtless, and looking no deeper than the surface, they are contented to linger in the outskirts of that spiritual kingdom they are invited to enter and possess; and they continue to amuse themselves with babyish playthings, satisfied if they are amused or astonished, and caring for nothing else.

If instead of contenting ourselves with these infantile steps in the knowledge of spiritual things, we sought that which would feed the better part of us, we should become giants in spirituality of thought and life, which would appeal far more potently to the intellects and better feelings of those we would seek to draw into our belief. The external manifestation of spirit presence and power, would then take its proper place in our gatherings, and we should have the *éclat*, the soul-elevating, and satisfying radiance of a higher order of manifestations employed only to illustrate or enforce the teachings of truths. Our meetings would become centres of intellectual and spiritual force, instead of being as they now are, a species of play-ground, in which the efforts of our teachers often go no higher than displays of strength, or dexterity, accompanied too frequently by jests one would expect to meet with in the circus ring. Intellects of the higher order amongst us draw back with loathing from this sort of thing, and it is not surprising that the spirits manifesting are thought by refined strangers to be low and evil. It is a shame to us Spiritualists that God's truth should be held up amongst us after this fashion for the contemplation of our fellow men.

Another mistake we make is that we do not



look for spirituality, and sad to relate, in some cases, not even morality, in our mediums. All we seek is powerful, or startling mediumship. We speak with smiles of delight of the "wonderful tests" we have received; but it matters not to us if the poor creature through whom the more earthly spirits are able to produce such wonders, be a drunkard, or otherwise leading a life contrary to morality. We only seek to have our sense of the marvellous tickled. It is all very well for the outside world, who think a medium must be something *outré*, uncanny, even evil:—"it is only fortune-telling, you know!"—and their delight consists in going just to a short safe distance beyond the pale of conventional propriety in consulting a "*meejum*." It is a new sensation, an exciting novelty, and even should they think they have been robbed, that would only make it more *piquant*, and they expected it. But for Spiritualists who have caught glimpses of heaven through the higher teachings their souls have thankfully received—for these to be test and marvel-hunters only, is small and debasing. A mind which feeds upon such husks alone, becomes poor and attenuated.

A spirit who is clever in giving tests, can seldom give the higher teachings—I do not say never, but seldom. A facility for test-giving, as it is called, argues a propinquity to earth in the spirit, for it is not the medium who gives the tests; he is merely the empty doorway for the time being. The higher the spirits ascend, the less they are able to see or know earthly things; and the less they are able to exercise that astuteness belonging more especially to the external plane of being, which ferrets out earthly secrets, or things known only to one, or a few individuals. It is their joy to escape all materiality; like birds of paradise their thoughts remain in the upper air, and never touch the ground. Moreover, we seek for tests of identity from our risen friends, whilst the spirit is ever losing an earthly to put on a heavenly identity. We drag them back to that vesture they have gladly put off; to the old states of thought from whose narrowness they have joyfully escaped. If they have been very spiritual in earth-life, if they have been long emancipated from the flesh, they have attained a higher identity than our poor earthly sense can conceive. They have lost even the names by which they were known on earth, and the old material lower self, with its infirmities, its mental crotchets, its narrowness, and darkness has been lost to them for ever. They can join

themselves only with that which is spiritual in us, and if we loved to give them pleasure we would seek them only upon that plane. For we should ever reach upwards to them, and not seek to drag them downwards to ourselves. Earthly affection is ever selfish, but there is that higher love, which loses all the requirements and demands of egoism in a grand universality.

We are ever seeking the lower and outer, hence there is a greed for materialisations. It will not suit us unless our spirit friends take again upon themselves a "muddy vesture of decay," and we are not over careful as to the vessel through which this extraordinary effect of spirit power is produced. A materialised spirit necessarily brings us a very inadequate expression of its true self—if indeed it is possible for it to be true at all to itself as it is known in the higher spheres of life. We expose ourselves to all the accidents attendant upon the material plane of life as regards the medium, and we cannot possibly be certain as to how much, or how little of the medium we are beholding, or it may be embracing, as the purest embodiment of those we should hold too pure for such a forced assumption, although only temporarily, of gross matter drawn out of or through the body of, at the best, only a frail mortal. Our mental tone should be higher than to demand the merely sensual gratification of seeing, and feeling. We should be more enamoured of the purely spiritual, and less selfishly material in our desires.

The mentality of the materialised spirit cannot possibly transcend that of the medium: it is even narrower, and more circumscribed than that of the medium in his ordinary life,—it cannot be otherwise. But we have perceived that the incorporated spirit will take on and express the mental infirmities of the medium with much more ease than his higher characteristics, which well-known fact should prove to us that we are treading upon very deceitful ground when we are trusting to get that which is spiritually truest and purest—that is free from adulteration of the medium—by one of these materialisations. It is the old mistake of preferring the shadow to the substance, the outer shell to the inner kernel.

It is a different thing again when the spirits who compose the especial band of the medium, materialise through him for the purpose of exemplifying a wonderful and mysterious fact. They are engaged in carrying out their work, and we accept the fact that they are able to do this thing without



caring how much or how little of their true selves they can exhibit. If we detect but a slight adulteration of the medium, we may congratulate ourselves; if more, we excuse it as unavoidable. But when it comes to one we love, whose pure spirituality is dearer to us than life, then we should hesitate before we demand it, and especially should we shrink from it through a medium whose mental and spiritual status is low. We then drag our friends down to a level that must be revolting and painful to their high spiritual natures; the highest and best of them is left above, and we have merely a vitalised shell, a simulacrum more or less gross, which can only confer pleasure upon the outer senses, and which must ever be more or less disappointing.

A frequent attendance upon physical *séances* under all conditions, and associated with a variety of persons, affords vast opportunities for obtaining very useful knowledge, and although one perceives much that is beautiful, satisfactory, and perfect as it is possible to be, yet on the other hand, a cool and discriminating observer, who is not blinded by enthusiasm, or the fanaticism of medium-worship, notices many things that might be improved, or utterly discarded as unacceptable. The extent to which the spirits "take on" the peculiar conditions of the medium is brought to one most objectionably at times. Odours of tobacco, wine, or brandy, or of that high scented vegetable which for the sake of contrast is called "*violets*," the medium having perhaps had a salad for supper, are scarcely acceptable adjuncts to the breath, hands or robes of corporealised friends from the higher spheres; and we should feel only intense pain that they have had to enter such an atmosphere. But even if we have only that which is agreeable and flattering to our senses, we cannot be at all sure of an incorrupt identity, under any circumstances of materialisation, at least at the present day. When the sight and hearing are opened, and we have visions of supernal beauty in the shape of risen friends; when with our inner hearing we hear words of heavenly wisdom and purity far removed from any taint of earthliness, it is by no means desirable to meet with a complete transformation, a coarsening of our high ideals in a materialisation; and the small accidents I have enumerated above should only serve to teach us not to pin our faith too firmly to a materialisation as giving the *ne plus ultra* of perfection in our friends from above—into which error falls many an unreasoning enthusiast. Time will inevitably

prove to us, that many a thing said by a materialised voice, and which we had blindly accepted as absolute truth, was largely due to the medium's mind, or some predominating influence in the circle. The wise take these things *cum grano salis*.

We are all far too prone to remain contentedly in the outer vestibules of our temple, and do not seek to enter to the holy of holies within, for which self-purification is necessary. We make the external manifestation of spirit power the all in all of our belief and seeking; but our own spiritualisation by the complete subjugation of the flesh, engages but little of our attention and life-effort. History presents us with many exemplars which we should do well to follow, and our humble efforts should ever be directed toward the closest imitation possible of the divinest model the world has ever known—Jesus the Christ. The ultimate tendency of the teachings of Spiritualism is the realisation in each man of his highest divine nature, until the world shall be peopled with embodied angels, and the angels of heaven shall mingle with those still in the flesh, clear to sight and hearing; but our very planet itself will then be spiritualised. This blessed time is a long way off, but are we Spiritualists, as a general rule, diligent to advance it?

Looking about us in the world we might behold outside our ranks many much more deserving the title of "*Spiritual*" than the majority of us are: those in whom the angel has already had its birth, frequently through long lives of meekly borne sufferings, in which they have learned to subdue self, the grand obstacle to heavenliness: those who through lowly lives of constant labour, and service of others, have been schooled in self-denial, until it becomes second nature: those who voluntarily separate themselves from the world, and its pompous, vain shows, the ease of wealth, and the fascinations of the senses, to live in poverty, often in the midst of squalid scenes, for the good of others, holding close to their faithful hearts the image of the Divine Master, and finding in it the only comfort they seek. A few little eccentricities of dogma, or creed, are but specks upon the spiritual refulgence of such angelic natures: we may not think as they do, but our minds are dazzled by the clear brightness, simplicity, and sweetness of their lives, and our hearts are drawn to love them, for they "have done that which they ought to have done," they have preferred God to the world and self. It matters not in what country, or in the profession of what religious belief



we find those shining lights of true spirituality; whether the Indian ascetic, who retires to the mountains surrounded by impenetrable jungles filled with ravenous beasts, where he remains lost to earth, absorbed in the contemplation of Brahm; or whether it be a Roman Catholic nun, monk, or priest, a sister of charity, or a missionary—all are in the highest degree spiritual; and whereinsoever they *are* spiritual we, who have not yet striven to attain such an eminence, might be proud to follow them. In contrast to such true grandeur, the spectacle of our own merely external work of exemplifying the power the inhabitants of the other world possess over inert matter, our signs and wonders, without any heavenly teachings, is comparatively poor and sordid, and rises perhaps but a step higher than the show a conjuror provides for his audience. I allude to the *séances* ordinarily sought by Spiritualists, not those private gatherings where the minds and hearts of the sitters are filled with religious feelings, and the spirits who minister to them produce all that is delightful, elevating, refreshing, and strengthening in their manifestations, and leave the hearts of those who have sought them brimming over with a thankful, peaceful joy nothing else on earth can produce. The mistake is that the generality of Spiritualists do not seek this sort of thing, and the consequence is the highest uses and beauty of the physical *séance* are not known. In this respect we have “not done that which we ought to have done.”

September 26th, 1880.

#### THE APPARITIONS AT LLANTHONY ABBEY.

The special reporter of the *South Wales Daily News* writes in that journal of the 1st October last:—

In consequence of my recent investigations respecting the alleged apparitions at Llanthony monastery, which have been the subject of two special reports in these columns, Father Ignatius has favoured me with the following startling communication as to a supposed miraculous cure, which quite eclipses all previous claims as to the healing properties of the “holy bush” in the Abbot’s meadow where the apparitions invariably vanished.

JESUS ✠ ONLY.

PAX.

Llanthony Abbey, September 27th, 1880.

Dear Sir,—A more astounding fact—that no most cynical critic can gainsay—has now taken place—a person, an incurable cripple, of 37 years’ suffering, has been instantly

cured; abscesses flowing with matter instantly stanchd; the shrunken limb that prevented the heel from reaching the ground has been *restored*; the swelling instantly disappeared from the diseased hip; in fact a more astounding and complete *miracle* of the most supernatural magnitude has taken place.

The cripple had asked for a leaf from the Holy Bush where our Lord and Blessed Virgin had appeared.

This leaf she was anxious to possess for simple love and reverence of the apparition of our Lady. After she received the leaf she kissed it, and put it reverently away.

She has been in perfect agonies of pain since last July, when a fresh abscess which had been forming burst—splinters of the diseased bone constantly, about twice a year, coming away.

Of the day of the cure she writes, after a day of agony and pain, to use the cripple’s own words: “I could not stir without the weakening discharge pouring from my broken abscess, and every moment our Lord’s words were ringing in my heart, ‘Be it unto you according to your faith.’ The abscess was in the hip. It had been discharging badly ever since July last, day and night.” “As I was ready to go to bed,” the sufferer continues, “I kneeled down with your letter and the leaves in my hand and said part of the rosary. Then I said a short prayer, and simply told my Lord that though I knew He could use those leaves for His own purpose, yet I was afraid I had not faith. But I begged him to do what would bring glory to Him and praise to His Sweet Mother. I then simply laid the leaf—dry, just as it was—on the abscess. My Father! *Instantly all* the pain left me, from the hip joint (where it had been worst) right down to the knee. The swellings round the abscess disappeared; the discharge ceased. I stood upright in sheer astonishment. However, I began to thank God and laid me down. I found I could rise on my bed without any pain or trouble, which I have not been able to do *as long as I can remember*.

But this is not all. Ever since I had the accident that lamed me for life—38 years ago—the knee of that leg has been so contracted underneath as to prevent my ever putting it out straight, and in consequence I have never touched the ground with the heel of that foot. I suddenly found a peculiar feeling as if something had got *undone*, and I could (after 37 years) stretch that knee joint as straight as the other.”



The rejoicing grateful soul thus cured by stupendous miracle of the most profound magnitude, writes:—

"Could I use a thousand pens at once, they should all write the precious words, Jesus, Mary."

And now, beyond the reach of all the scepticism of modern infidelity, here is the presence of the miraculous power of Jesus Christ in our midst before our eyes.

This lady can be spoken to by any one who wishes to ask for her testimony *viva voce*, as she has here given it in writing. Her medical men who knew her case, and how incurable it was, must say how, apart from the supernatural power of God, a simple leaf from a common bush could cure a disease of 38 years' standing. To find an equivalent to this case you may read St. John v., 5; Acts iii., 2. We say, over and over again, that the Virgin Mary the Mother of Jesus Christ, has appeared to us here in glory, and that miraculous power fills the leaves of the bush where she stood in glorious shining light from Heaven.

Praised be Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully in Jesus Christ,

IGNATIUS, O.S.B.,

*Monk of the Church of England.*

P.S.—Our Lady of Llanthony has indeed proved that she is verily the Mother of God.

#### EXPERIMENTS AT NEWCASTLE.

In the course of a communication to us, Mr. John Mould, of 12, St. Thomas Crescent, Newcastle-on-Tyne, says:—

Through the kindness of Mr. Charles Blackburn, of Manchester, the executive of the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society have had presented to them a very valuable weighing machine, and this morning I attended a *séance* at Weir's Court purposely to test the weights of the forms as they appeared. Fifteen persons were present, seated in a circle round the cabinet.

Miss Wood, the medium, was weighed, and found to be 7st. 3lb. She then went into the cabinet in which she was securely fastened by screws from the outside. Respecting this cabinet, I may remark that during the last week it has been most minutely examined by a gentleman from Birmingham, whose function it is to construct cabinets for professional conjurors, and at the conclusion of a series of sittings he admitted that he could find no defect in it such as would allow the medium

to get out. To ascertain *that*, it should also be stated, he would require to take the cabinet to pieces and reconstruct it himself, which there was not time to do.

The weighing machine is placed against the wall, about four and a-half feet from the closet door, and I, along with Mr. Walton, the circle manager, sat close beside it to watch the registration.

We sat for nearly an hour before there were any symptoms of anything likely to occur, when a form appeared, and at our request it walked towards and subsequently got on to the scales. With the dim light we had great difficulty in reading the register, so it was arranged for the forms to retire behind the curtains, and that we should light a taper so that we might make no mistake in the figures.

The medium weighed 7st. 3lbs. and the first form weighed 5st. 3lbs. We then requested the weight to be reduced. On the form returning it appeared diminished in bulk, and on reading the register we found the weight reduced to 2st. 7lbs. We requested the weight to be still further reduced, and on the re-appearance of the form again there appeared a diminution of volume, and we found it weighed 1st. 3½lbs. A much more fully developed figure then appeared weighing 6st. 10lbs., and after that a very portly form presented itself which weighed 7st. 12½lbs. When Miss Wood's "familiar" came in our midst, on mounting the scale we found it to weigh 2st. The medium was weighed at the end of the *séance* by the managers of the circle and found to weight only 6st. 12lb.

#### A CONJURING EXHIBITION.

Last Monday and Tuesday evenings, at the Steinway Hall, Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who we believe was formerly in the employment of Mr. Bishop, the American conjuror, gave a conjuring entertainment entitled, "Spiritualism Exposed." The attendance was miserably thin on both occasions, although several were present with free orders. On the Monday the proceedings evoked occasional hisses, also some disparaging criticisms from non-Spiritualists, but on Tuesday the performance passed off better. It began with some simple conjuring tricks, the method of which was easily seen through, but towards the close one or two of a little cleverer nature were exhibited. At rare intervals some of the imitations bore a feeble resemblance to the real thing, but if Mr. Cumberland exhibited the



best which conjuring can do, conjuring performances have a tendency to strongly confirm confidence in the genuineness of manifestations produced through real mediumship. He fully explained how all his little tricks were done. On the Tuesday Mr. Dunphy and Dr. Maurice Davis were among those present in the two-thirds empty hall. In his remarks Mr. Cumberland two or three times advertised Dr. Forbes Winslow.

#### THE PROSECUTION OF MEDIUMS BY SPIRITUALISTS.

The Fletcher trial, in Boston, was postponed from September 16th to September 29th, and the latest information we have received from America is dated September 24th. At that time exertions were being made by some Spiritualists to get the matter settled by arrangement, out of Court, whilst on the other hand, there was opposition from another quarter to such a mode of settlement.

#### SPIRITUALISM IN NOTTINGHAM.

The Nottingham Association of Spiritualists writes that Mrs. Cora Richmond delivered five trance addresses in Nottingham, during the four days beginning Sept. 26th, and that on each occasion the attendance was large, many being unable to obtain admittance, whilst those more highly favoured were much pleased. On the 28th, sixteen subjects were named by the audience to be spoken upon; the chairman, Mr. W. Yates, selected eight, and the ten-minutes' remarks on each were loudly applauded.

One pleasing feature in connection with Mrs. Richmond's visit was that an arrangement was made for the Nottingham mediums to meet and take tea with her. Several mediums were controlled, and the spirits exchanged mutual greetings with "Ouina."

At the close of the services Mrs. Richmond was presented with the following written resolution:—

#### NOTTINGHAM ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

The Committee of the above Association in behalf of the Nottingham Spiritualists desire hereby to sincerely express their thanks to Mrs. Richmond for her great kindness in accepting their invitation to visit Nottingham, and their admiration at the manner in which her guides have treated them to such a feast of reason and flow of soul. And they sincerely desire that her life may long be spared, that angels, and loving spirits may accompany her, assisting and encouraging her in her work of faith and labour of love; and they devoutly pray that, when her work on earth is accomplished, loving spirits may welcome her into the "Summerland!" and that the Master may say unto her "Well-done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Signed on behalf of the Association.

WILLIAM YATES, *Hon. Sec.*

#### SPIRITUALISM IN CARDIFF.

A few days ago, we had the pleasure of seeing and hearing something of the position of Spiritualism in Cardiff, aided by facilities kindly given by Mr. Rees Lewis, president of the Spiritualistic Society in that town.

Sunday evening meetings are held at West Pelton Street, Cardiff, at which Miss Samuels, a rising young trance medium, chiefly officiates. She says that she is not unconscious while speaking, but that her utterances are involuntary. In the course of a public address on the Improvement of the Position of the Spiritualist, she said, in substance, that the best thing to do was to make a careful study of the medium, his sensations and his surroundings, and that as conditions were given assisting him to rise, Spiritualism would rise with him. Some knotty questions to answer were given her by some of the listeners present, namely:—(1). Is the Earthly Body the First Body of the Spirit? (2). Does the Spirit Mould the Earthly Body, or is it obliged to Inhabit it as it found it? (3). Whence does the Individual Spirit obtain the Knowledge necessary for the Development of its Earthly Body? (4). Has the Spirit an Individual Existence before entrance into the Earthly Body?

At our first and only *séance* with Mr. Spriggs, a physical medium in Cardiff who has been engaged to give *séances* in Australia, a few of us sat in the light, round a table at the house of Mr. Rees Lewis. While all hands were on the table, and everybody was motionless, noises were heard under it, and specimens of fruit fell beneath, including walnuts in their husks. Of course it would be troublesome both to medium and visitors to arrange to get such a manifestation under absolute test conditions, but Mr. Spriggs had all the appearance, as indicated by external characteristics, of being a powerful physical medium. Mr. Lewis kindly offered a cabinet *séance*, but after studying some hundreds of them in years gone by, we did not care to join a sitting in which a cabinet is brought into play. Unless absolute security is given that a medium's body cannot be used by spirits while he is in a trance, it is waste of time to join cabinet sittings. They sooner or later bring mediums to grief.

Altogether, it was pleasing to see how earnestly Spiritualism is promoted in Cardiff, and we have to thank Mr. Lewis and Mr. Spriggs for the facilities given for observation.



## Correspondence.

MR. MASSEY'S ACCUSATION AGAINST MR. FLETCHER.

Sir,—Having now again read over the entire series of letters in last year's *Spiritualist*, and having also before me Mr. Massey's latest communication reiterating and enforcing his accusation at considerable length, I am prepared to explain the reasons for my own view, which, that the original accusation against Mr. Fletcher of having alluded to Slade in his remarks to the *Whitehall* writer is not only unproved, but is also *prima facie* improbable, and that, consequently, after Mr. Fletcher's positive denial that he did refer to Slade, the repeated statement that he has been "convicted" of "wilful untruth" in this matter is an outrage on justice and a gross perversion of the meaning of words. For surely "convicted" means—"found guilty by some impartial and competent tribunal," whereas here it is the accuser alone who is both judge and jury, and his judgment is, as I shall show, not in accordance with the evidence.

The above accusation rests entirely on two assumptions made by Mr. Massey,—that "it is *simply incredible* that Mr. Fletcher had any other American medium in his mind than Slade,"—and that it was—"so interpreted by *all the world*." As to the latter assumption we have not a particle of evidence adduced. So far as the evidence given to the public goes "all the world" means Mr. Massey and the Editor of the *Spiritualist*; for it must be noted that the anonymous W. C. P. who began the correspondence says—"To whom is Mr. Fletcher supposed to allude? Surely not to Slade, &c.," implying at all events that he did not think it *incredible* that it could have been someone else. I am further authorised by Mr. Desmond G. Fitzgerald—one of the Vice Presidents of the B.N.A.S.—to state that he never believed the remarks to apply to Slade, and that they were "generally understood" to apply to the Holmeses. Another well-known Spiritualist gives me similar information, and it is therefore certain that this rhetorical expression "all the world" has no foundation in fact.

There remains therefore the alleged "incredibility" that any one else could have been referred to, and to this question I shall now address myself, asking only for a fair consideration of the facts and arguments I shall adduce, and that it shall be assumed, as a possible hypothesis until the contrary is proved, that Mr. Fletcher *may* have told the truth when he declared that he did not refer to Slade.

Now, as this is a question of the *necessary meaning* of certain words and expressions, it is most important that we should have them exactly before us, and should not lay stress on any one portion of them without considering their relation to the rest. I therefore give the sentence quoted from the *Whitehall Review* by W. C. P., the general accuracy of which has not been impugned by Mr. Fletcher. Its form shows that it was the conclusion of a discussion or exposition:—"It is the true view. There are men—not necessarily impostors, but charlatans—who have disgraced our creed. For my own part, when I learned that an American had rendered Spiritualism detestable and contemptible in this country, I at once resolved to come over and wipe out the disgrace. I have partly succeeded." Here is first a general statement, evidently pointing to more than one person, (and those not necessarily mediums) who were *perhaps* impostors, *certainly* charlatans; and next a reference to an American who had rendered Spiritualism detestable &c., and by Mr. Fletcher's reply it is clear that this American was a medium, and it may

be fairly inferred that the *medium* and the *charlatan* were either one person or closely connected.

Now it is clear that the person or persons here referred to as "possible" impostors and "actual" charlatans, were such in the opinion of Spiritualists; for to non-Spiritualists all mediums are impostors and Spiritualism itself is a standing disgrace. There must, therefore, have been *doubt* as to the genuineness and honesty of the person referred to, even among Spiritualists. Were there any such doubts about Slade either in America or England? Certainly not; and therefore he could not be the person referred to as "not necessarily an impostor!" But is he a charlatan? Charlatan means a quack, a boaster, and implies some amount of trickery, with puffery and efforts at notoriety. Does this apply to Slade? Was he not quiet and gentlemanly in his manners? Did he puff or advertise himself, or in any way put himself prominently before the public? Certainly not; and therefore the word charlatan does not apply to him. Of course it will be said by Mr. Massey that this makes it all the worse, and applying such terms to Slade becomes a slander. Very true, if the words were applied to him *by name*; but when it is merely *inferred* that they so apply, in the face of a direct contradiction by the person who used them, the fact that they are really quite inapplicable must be encountered by very strong and direct evidence on the other side. Then again, was Spiritualism rendered "detestable and contemptible" by Slade's trial? Surely not so. The opportunity it offered for such men as Mr. R. H. Hutton (Editor of the *Spectator*), Mr. Massey and others, to give evidence on oath in favour of the reality of the phenomena—evidence admitted by the magistrate to be "overwhelming"—is generally held to have done far more to advance Spiritualism than the prosecution itself did to injure it; while the fact that nothing whatever was proved against the character and antecedents of Slade, and that his supporters were at least equal in position and attainments to his accusers, would tend to elevate the status of Spiritualism in public opinion. Here again, therefore, the actual words used do not apply to Slade.

But, says Mr. Massey, who else can they apply to? I believe that even to some of those names Mr. Massey rejects the words used do apply far better than to Slade, and they were actually supposed by many Spiritualists to apply to the Holmeses, but there is another party to whom they apply with such remarkable accuracy that I think every impartial reader will acknowledge that they were probably so meant to apply. I allude to Colonel and Mrs. Fay; and to show their application in this case, we will take the terms used *seriatim*.

"*Not necessarily impostors.*" Mrs. Fay was exhibited in London by Colonel Fay in an equivocal character as neither conjuror nor medium. Dr. Carpenter says:—"The 'Colonel' candidly informed his audience that he purposely abstained from saying anything about the nature of the manifestations; he did not claim for them a 'Spiritualistic' character; on the other hand, he did not present them as conjuring tricks." The Fay performance was a set one, got up to look like conjuring; and notwithstanding the remarkable tests to which the lady was afterwards subjected by Mr. Crookes, many Spiritualists believed, and probably still believe, that she was a skilful sleight-of-hand performer as well as a powerful medium. The phrase "not necessarily an impostor" is therefore strictly applicable to her.

"*But charlatans.*" This term exactly describes the Fay performance. It was puffed and advertised. It was sensational in its get-up; and it was in every way



conducted in a manner the direct opposite of that adopted by the quiet unpretentious Slade.

"An American had rendered Spiritualism detestable and contemptible in this country." These words may be too strong as applied to any one medium, but they are certainly more applicable to Eva Fay than to Slade. First we have the exhibition as a conjuror to the public, and as a medium to Spiritualists; then the offer of her business agent to Mr. Maskelyne that—"for an adequate sum of money the medium should expose the whole affair, scientific tests and all." (Carpenter, in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1877, p. 553); then her exposure by Mr. Bishop, who was supported by many eminent men in America (including Oliver Wendell Holmes); and all this made public in England by Dr. Carpenter in so widely read a periodical as *Fraser's Magazine*, must surely have had to a considerable extent the effect described. In this case we have no mitigating circumstances or countervailing benefits. The main facts cannot be denied, and the evidence that Mrs. Fay was really a powerful medium only adds to the injury the whole affair did to the cause.

It is true that Dr. Carpenter's article was not published till after Mr. Fletcher's arrival in England, but Mrs. Fay's performances in London were in 1875, and her exposure in America extended over a large part of the year 1876, and this exposure was made widely known by the *American Graphic* and other newspapers, and through them to the English public. Besides, as Mr. Fletcher's words were spoken at a later date, they might very well have been influenced in their tone by the effects of Dr. Carpenter's attack.

I have now shown that the words used by Mr. Fletcher are, in their entirety, totally inapplicable to Slade, while they are strictly applicable to Eva Fay; and when to this we add that Mr. Fletcher not only denies that they were meant for Slade, but goes further and says—"I have never had any but the highest opinion of Dr. Slade and his great gifts"—it seems to me a strange obliquity of judgment to maintain that Mr. Fletcher *must* tell a double falsehood because it is "incredible" to Mr. Massey that the words apply to any one else!

As to the inference attempted to be drawn from Mr. Fletcher's somewhat evasive answers at first, not the slightest weight can be attached to what is a mere matter of temper and judgment. An innocent man often behaves as if he were guilty, while on the other hand a guilty person often exhibits all the prompt indignation and loud denial of conscious innocence. Many persons think that a false accusation which seems to them almost absurd in its inappropriateness, had better be treated with contempt, and the *manner* in which this accusation was first made fully justified, in my opinion, such treatment of it. For, as I have now shown, the words used by Mr. Fletcher were all of them totally inapplicable to the admitted character of Slade, to his manner and his proceedings, while they were strictly applicable to the Fays, and in a less degree to several other American mediums. Yet from the first Mr. Massey used language which implied a *certainly* that Slade and no other was meant, and which even, to any one reading his first letters by themselves, implied that Slade had been referred to by name. He speaks in his very first letter of "a scandalous aspersion on Slade;" then that Fletcher had told the interviewer "that Slade was a charlatan," and that he "vilified Slade for his own glorification;" and the only justification of this language is that "all the world" understood it to be Slade and that it was "simply incredible" that any other person could have been meant! Both these pleas I have now shown to have

had not the slightest foundation in fact. People as well acquainted with Spiritualism and its history as Mr. Massey never so applied it, and many others will now be satisfied that the "incredibility" is quite the other way. To make such positive assertions on so slender a foundation, and to accuse a man of wilful falsehood on an untenable interpretation of his words which he himself denies, is to my mind far more reprehensible than any errors of judgment or of taste which have been charged against Mr. Fletcher in this matter.

In conclusion, I would point out, that my condemnation of the reckless accusation of untruth made against Mr. Fletcher does not in the least depend on his having consciously referred to Eva Fay. We often draw our conclusions from a combination of circumstances, and Mr. Fletcher may have had several American mediums in his mind and referred to their combined effect though speaking partly in the singular. But, as the accusation rests entirely on the alleged *impossibility* of any other than Slade having been referred to, it is completely answered by showing that there is another person to whom all that was said may be applied at least *as well* as to Slade; whereas, I have gone further, and have shown that while the actual words used do not apply to him, they do most strictly and accurately apply to the Fays.

I have brought forward these facts and remarks in the cause of simple justice, and I now submit them to the careful consideration of English Spiritualists.

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

#### MR. WALLACE'S MISTAKE.

Sir,—The mystery of Mr. Wallace's defence of Fletcher, which astonished me and filled "Lex" with dismay, is now explained. His "careful" reading, ten or eleven months ago, of a correspondence in which Fletcher's admitted words are *twice* set out at length from the original and authentic source, has resulted in Mr. Wallace now accepting, upon "good" authority, a perfectly fictitious version of those words. In contending that a hypothetical reference to American mediums in general is not specially or exclusively applicable to one in particular, Mr. Wallace has given himself quite unnecessary trouble. Only a malicious fool would adopt such a construction, or found a charge of falsehood on its repudiation. Apparently, this obvious consideration did not suggest to Mr. Wallace the propriety of verifying his information. Whether there was anything in my known antecedents to justify such neglect, it is of course not for me to say. Pending any further public communication which Mr. Wallace may now think it right to make, I need add nothing more, except to thank "Lex" for his too kind and generous allusions to myself.

C. C. MASSEY.

Sir,—Mr. Wallace seems in some respects to have made matters worse. If the quarry had been less noble, his last letter might have been left to answer itself. But it is impossible to treat your illustrious correspondent with the forbearance which might be charitably displayed towards common men. His great eminence, which, by the way, involves a corresponding responsibility, gives to his words a weight which makes it necessary to notice them.

I must therefore, though very unwillingly, ask your readers to compare Mr. Wallace's two letters, dated respectively September 20th and 27th. In the former he says, "I read the whole of the correspondence and accusation with great care." In the latter he says, "The words used," by Fletcher, "were (as I am informed on good authority) if American mediums have ruined Spiritualism, &c." Now in the original cor-



respondence an exact reprint of Mr. Fletcher's words, as given in the *Whitehall Review*, twice occurs, and it must be remembered that the accuracy of the report was never doubted. Mr. Wallace, therefore, having twice read with great care the words which were really used, and on which the whole gravamen of the accusation rests, is still content to impugn the intelligence and fairness of a writer whom every one knows to possess both qualities in a conspicuous measure, upon the footing of a wholly garbled version derived from mere hearsay, when with a little trouble he might have refreshed his memory by referring to the original report. Considering the character of the man whom he assailed, it is surprising that he did not take the precaution of so doing.

Then Mr. Wallace gives a list of American mediums, and states that it was "to the last four or some of them" that he and many other Spiritualists "at once understood Mr. Fletcher to refer." Now, if words have any meaning, we are to understand that immediately on the question being raised, while the actual phrase was fresh in Mr. Wallace's mind, he thought that the words "an American" could mean at least two persons, and that Mr. Fletcher's prompt resolve could reasonably be taken to bear reference to exposures which had taken place years before.

Further, Mr. Wallace says that Mr. Fletcher denied that he referred to Slade, and that that ought to have closed the controversy. This is begging the question with a vengeance. Why, the very charge made against Mr. Fletcher is that he *did* deny such reference. Mr. Fletcher was no doubt rebuked for attacking Slade, but the far graver charge was that his public denial was a cowardly falsehood. This was the real gist of the matter in which Mr. Wallace still seems to hint that Mr. Fletcher "was quite free from blame."

I can only shrug my shoulders and wonder whether such methods of argument are commonly adopted by scientific men of the very first rank.

LEX.

Lincoln's Inn, October 2nd.

#### THE MEMORIAL TO THE HOME SECRETARY.

Sir,—The memorial to the Home Secretary, in the last number of the *Spiritualist*, contains an error which should be corrected. Our friend, the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, was United States Minister to Portugal some time before the War of Secession in America, and was never connected in any way with the Confederate Government.

T. L. NICHOLS.

32, Popstone Road, Earl's Court, London,  
September 30th, 1880.

#### AN EDITOR'S DREAM.

Once upon a time—as the fairy tales have it—a local editor, relieved for a time from the importunities of the foreman printer, and worried by a mass of misplaced adjectives and wrongly-spelled nouns with which a country correspondent had favoured him, dropped asleep in the editorial chair, and dreamed that he had quitted the world of paste-pot and scissors. Whilst on his unknown journey he approached a stately city, and knocked for admittance at the gleaming gates. The only response he met was a score of heads appearing above the wall on each side of the gate.

On catching sight of him the owners of the heads set up a dismal howl. One yelled out

"Why the blank space didn't you notice the big egg my chicken laid?" Before he could find words to reply, another voice shrieked, "Why didn't you leave it out of the paper as I asked you, when I was fined 5s. for not keeping sober?" and another, "Why the deuce didn't you write a par about the paint of my new gate?" Whatever answer he was going to frame to this appeal was cut short by the following query: "What did you spell my name wrong in the programme for?" and the miserable man turned to flee, when he was rooted to the ground by this terrible demand: "Why did you put my marriage among the deaths?" and he was on the point of saying the foreman did it, when a shrill voice madly cried, "You spoiled the sale of my horse by publishing that runaway!" and another said, "If I catch you alone, I'll lick you for what you said about me when I was before the Police Court!" and another, "Why didn't you show up the school system when I told you?" This was followed by the voice of a female hysterically proclaiming, "This is the brute who blotched my poetry, and made me ridiculous!" Whereupon hundreds of loud voices screamed, "Where is my article? Give me back my article!" and in the midst of the horrid din the poor wretch awoke, perspiring at every pore, and screaming for help.—*Press Gazette*.

#### A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY.

BY FRANK PODMORE, B.A., (OXON), F.C.S.

I have lately been occupied in the study of a certain character. The man of whom I speak was a Spirit-medium, and, by common repute, one of the most gifted of the fraternity. It seems certain that he on more than one occasion predicted the future, and that he gave other remarkable proofs of clairvoyance, if not of actual communication with the spirit-world. He was thoroughly conversant with the principles of the occult sciences; he had received a good education; he had acquired by some means the external characteristics of a gentleman; and he was united to a wife, of good personal appearance, and only less gifted than himself.

By force of these accomplishments, this pair, having left their native land, had, before they reached middle life, constituted themselves the Hierophants of a new Revelation; the accredited High Priest and High Priestess of a religious organisation. It is said that this man's speech was of such spiritual unction, that he discoursed on high matters with such



depth of religious fervour, that many came to hear him and were spell-bound by his eloquence. It is certain that he numbered amongst his audience, not only the commoner sort of mankind, but men of science and letters, men of wealth and men of good social position. He received eulogistic notice from literati, and in the Public Press. Many houses were thrown open to him, and men from almost all ranks gave him welcome. Presents and testimonials were given from his admirers. He sat at good men's feasts, and was greeted as an equal by men whose shoe latches he was not worthy to unloose. And whilst none doubted his singular abilities, there were found but few to question his sincerity. For he well knew, for a time, how to acquit himself worthily of such society. He gave generously to the poor and needy; his life was pure and blameless, and all his sentiments were flavoured with the most exalted spirituality. Nay, his upturned glance sufficed to show his constant communion with Heaven.

Yet in all this man's nature there was no atom of truth, or honour, or generosity, or any good and noble quality whatsoever; but, from ignoble birth to death, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his caitiff head, he was one consummate Lie. So transcendent was this man's hypocrisy, that he deceived not only himself—for that is shewn by all the annals of scoundrelism to be your scoundrel's first task—but even some good men who honoured him for his spurious sanctity. The marvel is to us, who were not dazzled by the glamour which he cast over his dupes, that any honest man, looking on the false face of him, and seeing the utter meanness and the cowardice of it, could ever clasp his hand, or accord to him the rights of fellowship again. Doubtless there was in the man some remnant, if not of religion, then of superstition; for else the hold which he gained on other men's beliefs were incredible. But shall we say that he was the less, or the greater scoundrel for that? Others trade only on the self-interest, this man on the unselfish affections of his fellows. Other liars make their gain from the weakness and the foibles of men,—this Prince of Lies, in virtue of the half-belief which he had, ensnared his dupes by all that is holiest and best in our common nature. And in view of the issue, it matters little whether the doctrine which he taught was true or false, for Truth is tenfold dishonoured in the dishonour of her teacher.

Still this man had his enemies, even in the zenith of his power. He was possessed by an

insane jealousy of all rivals to his pretensions, and did his best, it is said, to ruin one such. And he was detected, once or twice, in gross and impudent falsehood, and was publicly exposed. It was easy for his disciples, at first, to ascribe all such scandals to the malice and shortsightedness of his enemies. But at length his vanity and avarice overleaped their mark. The end was in this wise. This man and his wife had made the acquaintance of a certain person of wealth and good social position, with whom they lived for a year or two in one of the first European capitals. They had obtained, by means of what devilish falsehoods is not clearly apparent, large sums of money from their willing victim, with which they lived in state; dressing themselves sumptuously; entertaining and being entertained; giving alms to the poor, and practising the art of mesmeric healing. They were ultimately thrown into prison on the charge of making away with some jewellery—valued, it is said, at many thousands of pounds—which they were accused of having obtained by means of representations so monstrously and cruelly false, that I hardly know whether to wonder most at the iniquity of the lie, or the credulity of its dupe.

Surely we have great cause to be thankful that we were never thrown in contact with this arch-deceiver. For all this took place a hundred years ago. The name of this man was Guiseppe Balsamo, better known, in connection with a certain diamond necklace, as the Count Alessandro di Cagliostro. The date \* of his first public exposure was 1780.

London, October 3rd, 1880.

A TRANCE address will be delivered every Sunday evening this month, by Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond, at the Neumeyer Hall, Hart Street, Bloomsbury, London, commencing at seven o'clock.

MR. C. E. WILLIAMS has returned to London after prolonged absence on the Continent, and will give his Thursday and Saturday *séances* as usual, but will admit no strangers.

OUR esteemed contributor, Mr. J. T. Markley, has received a warm compliment from the Lisbon Press Association on the Tercentenary Sonnet to Camoens, which appeared in our last issue, together with a proof copy of the poems of the great Portuguese poet.—*Press Gazette*.

### Answers to Correspondents.

W.—The matter appeared in *Hull's Crucible* some time ago; for purposes of investigation you had better send for a stock of copies. It ought to be publicly ventilated.

\* *Cagliostro démasqué à Varsovie en 1780*, mentioned in T. Carlyle's *Essay* on him.



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PLATE I:—Experiments with an Endless String.

PLATE II:—Leather Bands Interlinked and Knotted under Professor Zöllner's Hands.

PLATE III:—Experiments with an Endless Bladder-band and Wooden Rings.

PLATE IV:—Result of the Experiment.

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PLATE IX:—Slate-writing in Five Different Languages.

PLATE X:—Details of the Experiment with an Endless band and Wooden Rings.

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