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THE PHYSIOLOGY OF MEDIUMSHIP.

In another column will be found an article by Mr. Frank Podmore on the unusually valuable addition to the literature and science of Spiritualism, contributed to these pages by Dr. Purdon a few weeks ago. Mr. Podmore suggests that certain interesting results might be obtained, by determining the quantity of carbonic acid exhaled by a physical medium during a *séance*, because the amount given off of that gaseous product of combustion in the human body, would to some extent furnish a clue to the amount of work done. But the temporarily materialised heads and arms which are so busy at dark *séances*, look and feel like those of flesh and blood, and the heads breathe and speak. This tends to indicate that the temporary organisms give off carbonic acid, consequently that the determination of the amount exhaled by an entranced and quiescent medium, will be but perhaps the smallest of two proportions given off during the production of the manifestations. What may be the nature of the binding link between the temporary organs of the spirit and the corresponding organs of the medium, has yet to be discovered; it is no mere ordinary physical connection, but something deep down below the phenomena of molecular energy. In the case of a genuine materialisation there is no more reason for supposing any chemical difference in the air between the form of the spirit and the form of the medium, than there is in the air between a dying person and the place where his materialised spirit is simultaneously seen by several witnesses hundreds of miles away. There is nevertheless strong evidence of community of sensation between corresponding parts of the two forms, and the same is the case with spontaneous death-bed apparitions. Mrs. Crowe narrates how a young man in Paris was so frightened by the temporarily materialised apparition of his father, that he struck at it with his riding-whip; the dying father, who was conscious of having seen his far-distant son, saw and felt the blow of the whip.

A NAME AND WHAT IT SIGNIFIES.

BY LOUISA ANDREWS.

The question as to the name "Spiritualism," although objections to it be not without foundation on the ground of verbal accuracy, seems to me far less important than the frank and simple acknowledgement and acceptance of its generally received meaning, and the refraining from all attempts to make it mean something not, in fact, essential or peculiar to the thing which by general consent has been so christened. It would, even if clearly desirable, be difficult, if not impossible, to change, now, what has become familiar as a household word to thousands, and is endeared to many by association; and I fail to see that any practical good would result from the proposed substitution.

If names were always, or generally, very exact expressions of the things to which they have been applied, then indeed the word "Spiritualism" might possibly mystify or mislead: but this is so far from being the case that I think we need not be troubled because of the somewhat vague and inaccurate appellation. Those who insist upon regarding Spiritualism as a religion would probably object to rebaptise it by a name which would narrow the limits of its meaning. The more vague, broad and indefinite the signification of the name, the more varieties of opinion and feeling can find room under it; and if ever any "ism" included the most widely divergent and even antagonistic views upon almost all subjects, this that people generally know as Spiritualism does so.

Anything becomes religious to us which tends, directly or indirectly, to lift the mind above the lower and narrower spheres of thought into a contemplation of realities that are eternal, and by this uplifting to inspire in the heart that "worship of something afar from the sphere of our sorrow," which is the soul of all true religion, irrespective of creeds. Spiritualism may do this or it may not. "The fool sees not the same tree that the wise man sees"—nor do all the wise necessarily see the same. "We receive but what we give," and it seems to me we should be content to give according to our capacities and to receive correspondingly, not insisting that others who give and receive something different must necessarily be upon a lower plane and have less right to the name of Spiritualist, which certainly when first given never was meant to be thus restricted and monopolised.

A belief in certain objective phenomena

and their spiritual origin is not a religion, and only in so far as Spiritualism is this belief is it anything distinctive and peculiar. All the rational convictions held by Spiritualists in regard to the human soul, and its relation to the unseen and eternal, have been held by others. Nothing new regarding the duty of man to his Creator, his neighbour, or himself, has been revealed to us, nor is any such direct revelation possible. This knowledge, or insight, is the result of that moral elevation which alone makes clear to the mind the old, old truths, that until they become vitalised through what is supplied by each individual soul as their recipient, remain mere dead statements—"a tale of little meaning, though the words be strong." Morality is a recognition of our true relation to persons, circumstances and conditions, together with the acceptance of this relation as a governing law of life; and in proportion as we become, by using such light as we have, freed from what is low and narrow, shall we take a more comprehensive and therefore less selfish view of these relations, finding in their divine harmony a refuge from all the discords that self-seeking and the effort to put the lower in place of the higher must necessarily produce. No man and no spirit can give us any moral law higher than that in the recognition of which humanity has gradually grown. The Free Thinker, the Christian, and the Buddhist may each and all appreciate and seek to live in unison with this divine harmony, and the exhaustless sources of wisdom and light are as open to the one as to the other. I see no reason whatever for believing that Spiritualists have become possessed of a clearer understanding of, or a stronger desire to attain to, the position which rightly belongs to them, as integral parts of the infinite whole than others.

I see no reason why they should have been led farther or higher than others, nor that they have the monopoly of any truths essential to human progress. And if morality, which may, to a certain extent, be embodied in a code of laws intelligible to the understanding, is not in any degree dependent upon what we have learned as Spiritualists, how can that which belongs more exclusively to the emotional nature, and lives in the innermost depths of the human soul, depend upon convictions which, if worth anything, are rational deductions from observed facts, and not, in any true sense of the word, a "faith"—though faith in things undemonstrable may co-exist with, as it may exist without, these convictions?

In the meeting described by Mr. Massey (in *The Spiritualist* of May 21st) the question was mooted as to the influence of Spiritualism on morality. To expect such a result from such a cause is, I think, to ignore the fact that Spiritualism, as generally understood, means only a belief in the actual occurrence of certain phenomena, and that those phenomena are produced by beings not clothed in physical bodies. [Those who attribute the phenomena to a psychic force emanating from the medium do not usually desire to be ranked among Spiritualists, and it is most unjust and objectionable to force that name upon anyone who refuses to claim it.] To expect from such a belief direct and manifest influence as "a power over evil," is to look for something which it would be very astonishing to find; and as to indirect effects, these must depend, wholly and entirely, upon the individual to be affected. The answer to such questions must, however, be looked for not in what we might imagine to be possible or likely, but rather in the actual living facts as we see them displayed before us. Now, nothing, so far as I can see, distinguishes the Spiritualists of to-day, as a class, except a degree of license, in theory and practice, which is the natural result of a sudden enfranchisement from old restraints, acting upon people who are not educated up, intellectually or morally, to the requirements of a liberty so wide, and which is, we may hope, only a transition state, destined in due time to develop into something wiser and better. Spiritualists differ one from another in their views in regard to all that appertains to rational thinking and right living as widely as it is possible for men to do. Some insist on a moral life according to the old standards of morality accepted by civilised communities generally. Others declare that if a man follow the impulses implanted by nature, it is mere narrow prejudice to object on moral grounds, or to require of him that he should hold himself in subjection to any law of right except what, "fashioned and formed by no will of his own," he feels impelled to make for himself, or rather, as he thinks, finds ready-made to suit his special requirements. All existing ordinances, all recognised boundary lines between right and wrong, would be swept away to make things comfortably "free" for these believers in man's divine right to please himself, if such "advanced Spiritualists" could have their way.

The speeches delivered in New York at that shameful reception meeting tendered to a justly

condemned criminal, welcoming him back from jail into the ranks he had so foully disgraced, prove these statements to be by no means exaggerated. What does morality mean to men and women who worship their own impulses as divine, acknowledging no higher law and reverencing no other God? Sometimes people holding such opinions claim to be Spiritualists—the world recognizes them as such; and who is to say that they have not as much right to that title as we who believe differently and whose views of life and its duties are the reverse of theirs? Where are we to draw the line of exclusion? They believe in those things recognised as appertaining exclusively to the faith called Spiritualism; and *that* is what they get out of it. Because this is so, because men are what they are, and because the same thing influences different people in different, even opposite, ways, (let us name that thing what we may) I hold it to be a mistake to make the claim, which cannot be substantiated, that Spiritualism really means, or ought to mean to everybody who uses the word and claims the appellation, just what it means to us, or that it is, necessarily, in any manner or degree, a religion. The truth is that as soon as we have the phenomena, physical and psychical, behind us, and begin to theorise, ceasing to make what we have learned from indubitable facts the basis of our convictions in regard to spiritual things, we leave the ground that belongs peculiarly and exclusively to us as Spiritualists. The verbal teaching of spirits, direct or through the lips of a medium, is too vague and too contradictory to build upon as the basis of a religious faith; and as to mere noble, inspiring words in relation to things unseen, we shall find these in the utterances of embodied spirits. I, at least, have never heard nor read anything purporting to emanate from the disembodied, so satisfactory at once to the intellect and the heart as I have found in the sermons, for instance, of James Martineau. I have seen it stated by many that the utterances of inspired mediums are occasionally elevated far above their normal capacity. This may be so; but I have not myself witnessed such a case. I have heard and read many pure, true, and altogether unobjectionable things from the lips of a medium, but never anything unquestionably above his or her reach in the normal condition, never anything uncolored by the mental characteristics of the speaker or uninfluenced by his ignorance of the subjects treated. Of course I know that this may be more or less satisfactorily explained,

but the fact remains that we have never yet had any higher teaching in morality or religion than that which others have received through good and wise men in the flesh. Where then is our especial and peculiar Spiritualistic religion to come from? How have we become possessed of a religion in any way different from, or superior to, that of all other men? The high moral and religious views so admirably set forth in the "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism" are, in their essentials, entertained by many who never heard a rap or listened to the words of an entranced medium. I hold that all the influences exerted by Spiritualism are necessarily indirect ones (except in the case of those who are themselves mediums) *having their one and only source in the phenomena*: and this is why I have always insisted upon these as being the nucleus from which all that, as Spiritualists, we hold most precious, has been evolved. To understand these revelations, to appreciate the importance and bearing of these most marvellous evidences of spirit existence and power, humbly to study the meaning of these mysteriously significant facts, and to utilise the results of such study in a way worthy of us as rational and spiritual beings, whose lives are full of problems demanding solution—this is what it seems to me we are called, as Spiritualists, to do: not to fall back upon certain rational views shared by others, or certain exalted states of feeling, claiming *these* to be Spiritualism, while all that really distinguishes us in our opportunities for enlightenment, is looked down upon (though its symbols remain as yet but half deciphered and their meaning most imperfectly comprehended) as something unworthy the patient and continued attention of the truly spiritual minded.

By this course we leave to the ignorant and idly curious, things worthy the most intelligent and reverent study. We turn away from our reliable and heaven sent teachers, viz. facts—and listen enthusiastically to words that may be wise and good, but which we cannot accept as unquestionably true because their origin is doubtful, and because, except in very rare cases, they afford no intrinsic evidence of being the utterances of exalted and wholly reliable guides. Those who are themselves mediums, sometimes forget, I think, how dependent other Spiritualists are, and must be, on their senses for all that they learn on the subjects which especially interest thoughtful and enquiring minds in relation to spirit life and communion. That which we

get otherwise must be accepted on authority, or through a faith that is blind. It is not the phenomena, (not even those that are simplest and least impressive as being familiar) that are unworthy; but men and women, through ignorance, vulgar curiosity and miserable frivolity have been degraded in misusing them.

To rescue these God-sent messengers from such hands, and to strive reverently to interpret teachings, the importance of which we cannot fully estimate, is surely a noble work, one eminently worthy the true Spiritualist, and the wise truth-seeking man, let him call himself what he may. That the influences of a belief in the facts and the truths of Spiritualism may be and often are great and most beneficent, I know well, both from observation and experience; but not in ignoring the phenomena, or in leaving them behind as things outgrown, useful only to neophytes, (exactly those least fitted to deal with them) shall we ever make true progress. These manifestations of spirit existence and energy, with all the mysteries involved in the exercise of unknown forms as they act upon the things we call material, must, rightly used, be of incalculable value; and upon these facts alone must we gradually, stone by stone, upbuild our church, if we desire to have one. On the breadth and strength of these foundations, and upon our rightly interpreting the symbols thereon inscribed, must depend the beauty and the enduring strength of the superstructure. Built upon this rock, and reared by help of knowledge acquired through the comprehension of the unseen, by means of forms that are visible and tangible, we may hope, at length, to lift strong, beautiful, and imperishable towers high above the mists of fancy and the clouds of superstition. Thus, and not otherwise, must our church of the future be built. Of a religion not so founded, and not gratefully acknowledging these facts as its basis, I know nothing, except as all know it who worship God, whose hearts are tender and loving, whose thoughts are lifted by holy aspiration above the pettiness of earthly life, who strive from pure and high motives, to see what is true and to do what is right, or who falling short in attainment, still recognise in these things the highest good; and this, happily, is a religion peculiar to no class, sect, or people.

Bonn, Germany, July 6th.

To-NIGHT (Friday), Mrs. Tappan-Richmond will give a trance address at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, at eight o'clock.

LIFE LESSONS.

A correspondent writes to us from the South of France:—

"I am still only a searcher, and though my searchings seem to bring me but little certitude they give me hope, bringing with it the strength to live. I do not attempt to force the light I would have, having long ago realised, as Mr. Atkinson remarks in last week's *Spiritualist*, 'that in efforts of will we risk wasting the power in a wrong direction.' The deeper lessons of life come to us slowly, and I suppose we only really begin to live when these lessons have taken deep hold of our hearts.

"Since a sad event, I have ceased to live hurriedly or anxiously. I am seeking—waiting—watching the straws, also growing out of life, as it were, and although becoming less dependent on the old needs, I do not forget that life brings us a threefold labour. We must labour in the present, doing that we find to do in our daily lives, yet not calculating even this present as a certainty. We must labour in this same present, calculating the temporal future, that our labour may not be as is the fool's. And in these two labours of present and temporal future, we must labour continually for a probable future, which, if such exists, must be above and beyond our power of comparison with this temporal life, even for death; for death with all its surroundings of uncertainty of time and conditions, is the only one sure event each life can calculate on as a certainty.

"Have the straws brought me any light, when they have only guided me this far on life's pilgrimage?

"There is a question I should much like to see taken up by some of the able correspondents of *The Spiritualist*. It is one no person seems to lose sight of, or put aside, yet none can explain it satisfactorily, and as it bears strongly on our spiritual nature, or soul, touches deeply the fact of this same soul, or spirit, being immortal, or not subject to decay.

"What becomes of the spirit or old self of a person in their second childhood? I know one who is in good health, yet she seems for the past two years to have quite lost sight of her own identity, has to be dressed and fed, plays like a very child with her own grandchildren, while not seeming conscious of any relationship whatever, not even knowing her own children as such."

May it not be that in old age the spirit may sometimes be unable to express itself through the defective physical brain, and perhaps be

passing a portion of its time in scenes far removed from earth? Sometimes the intellectual faculties of such persons become clear and bright shortly before the death of the body.

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.]

ALLAN KARDEC.

Sir,—I am compelled to remove Miss Blackwell's unwillingness, by saying that the printers were perfectly correct in their punctuation; though the severity of her consequent sentence may be modified, when she learns that mine had a double reference—firstly to the many semi-rapist, semi-orthodox persons whom I have met in France—secondly to the account given of the self-styled Allan Kardec in the October number of the *Magnétiseur Universel* for 1876, where the assertion respecting blest medals is to be found. Somewhere among my newspaper cuttings I have this one; if I can find it, I will copy the portion in question and send it to Miss Blackwell, thereby proving to her that "the guilt of preposterous misrepresentation" lies at the door of the fiery little editor in the Rue J. J. Rousseau, not at mine. Meanwhile I venture still to hold other "movements" to be of greater importance than those of tables.

J. A. CAMPBELL.

THE DEATH-WATCH.

Sir,—Allow me to thank you for having inserted in your journal the verses I sent last week, and at the same time to say, that an incident connected with that publication reminds me that I was indebted to you for a similar favour a few months later than this last year, when you printed a letter of mine, relative to a peculiar sound I had heard on two occasions, and about which I was anxious to obtain what information I could through your columns.

I wished to believe that what I had heard was not what some believe it to be, an omen of death, or as it is called, "the death-watch," and your remarks at the end of my letter assisted me to put away the painful thought, especially, as weeks, and even months passed, and no new misfortune appeared.

But in about four months after, when all idea of a "warning," had gone from mind, the cold hand of death was laid on one whose loss to me can never be repaired—laid upon him in much suffering and long continued, both of body and mind, (foreshadowed by the sound I had heard at night, the *end of the day*, so loud, and lasting so long). Two months later, the same decree went out against the only son of my sister, a child of eight years, (answering to the warning heard at midday, faint, and continuing but a short time).

Was it an "omen," or an insect, or is the insect always an omen?

I do not ask you to publish this, but leave it to your own discretion. Any experience calculated to strengthen belief in forewarnings, is a doubtful benefit, for it often makes one wretched without doing good. A warning of coming evil to those whose lives are linked with ours, *might* be a great blessing; would be one if it restrained the hasty word, the ill-judged letter, the thoughtless or heartless act; but we are so prone to believe only what we wish, that we look away when the hand of a hard destiny seems to point to what we

most prize, and persuade ourselves *that* is not the doomed one, and so the warning is lost.

L. F. S.

[After anybody hears the noise made by the death-watch beetle—a common and harmless insect—some relative or friend is sure to die if the hearer only wait long enough, but there seems to be no reason for crediting the beetle with having anything to do with the matter. A little hot water poured into the crack between the boards in which the death-watch usually works, will stop the “omens.”

Ed.]

A TRANCE ADDRESS.

Sir,—Will you kindly inform your readers that on Tuesday, July 20th, a meeting will be held at these rooms, at 8 p.m. precisely, when Mrs. Cora S. V. Richmond will give an inspirational address and also answers to questions. Open free, members and friends.

C. A. BURKE, Sec.

British National Association of Spiritualists,
38, Great Russell St., Bloomsbury, W.C., July 14th, 1880.

DEATH:—To die, therefore, is to come to life amid scenes, strangely like, yet indescribably superior to the things with which we are familiar here. They are a thousand-fold more real, and living, and efficient. They are not near, or far in space; for they are within this world as we are within our bodies. The only condition of our entrance into this world is the opening of our spiritual senses; and this takes place fully and forever at death. Our departed have not gone away from us; they have gone only where our flesh-conditioned eyes do not see them. We are already in their world as to our spirits, although we do not see it. When death uncovers us of this body, which hides our outlook to this world, we shall realise a spiritual body whose senses tell us of a real spiritual world, without any journey or any dark river to cross.—*New Church Independent*.

SPIRITUALISM:—*Notes and Queries* of last Saturday contains the following paragraph:—“To the sources of evidence already adduced allow me to add an article in the April number of the *Quarterly Journal of Science* of 1878, entitled ‘Space of Four Dimensions,’ by Prof. Zöllner, the eminent astronomer, of Leipzig. It is an account of an experiment carried on by the writer, together with two others of the most distinguished men of science in Germany, Profs. W. Weber and Fechner, with the medium Slade, and recorded in the first volume of Zöllner’s scientific treatises. Prof. Zöllner knotted together and sealed the two ends of a new string, purchased by himself, and never allowed out of his own custody. In company with his friends and Slade, he sat in a brightly lighted room in his own house, the string slung round his own neck, the knotted and sealed ends placed on the table under his own hands, the loops hanging down below the edge of the table on his lap, Slade’s hands on the table throughout, and never touching the string. Under these conditions four knots were produced in the string, such that they could not be untied without free ends, a phenomenon which Prof. Zöllner believes to be explained by the hypothesis of a fourth dimension, and the new set of movements it would admit of. Prof. Zöllner had many sittings with Slade, always in full light, at which many phenomena of the most marvellous description occurred, and they are recorded by him in later volumes of his *Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen*. I am now engaged on the translation of these portions for the English public. They are among the most perfect of the evidences of spiritualistic facts, and, indeed, leave no possible loophole to the sceptic who is not sufficiently hardy to impugn the veracity of the eminent witnesses. C. C. M. Temple.”

PRIVATE SEANCES.

On Wednesday, last week, at a private *séance* at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory’s, 21, Green Street, Grosvenor Square, London, Mr. Rita was the medium. Mr. F. W. Percival, M.A., brought with him to the *séance* a rectangular cardboard box, six or eight inches long. Before leaving home he had carefully tied the lid on with string, which was sealed to the cardboard in four different places, and the wax stamped with a signet ring. A piece of paper and a piece of red pencil were placed inside, for the purpose of obtaining spirit writing in a securely enclosed space. Mr. Rita never saw this box until just at the beginning of the dark *séance*. At its close the seals and strings were found to be intact, but instead of any writing in red, a great deal of scribbling in black was found upon the cardboard of the bottom of the inside of the box, showing that, as in some of Professor Zöllner’s experiments, the spirits had been able to introduce and remove lead-pencil from the interior of a securely fastened box. In the course of the same *séance* feebly illuminated spirit forms were several times seen floating in the room by all present, while Mr. Rita was held hand and foot.

At a *séance* at Mrs. Gregory’s, last Saturday, Mr. F. O. Matthews, of Keighley celebrity, was the medium. Among the guests present were Mr. and Mrs. William Crookes.

Last Saturday night also, a *séance* was held at Captain James’s, 129, Gower Street, London, with Mr. Rita as medium. The materialisations were unusually strong, probably in consequence of additional power given by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Fletcher. The forms appeared, well-lighted, behind the sitters, as well as over the table, and in one instance two of them were seen at once. Spirit writing was obtained on both sides of a book slate, which had been carefully tied, gummed up, and sealed by Miss Robinson. Major General Maclean was among the guests present at this *séance*.

Last Wednesday night, at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory’s *séance*, Sir William Dunbar, Bart., was among the guests. A book slate was brought, untied, by Mr. Percival, and held in the hands of a visitor throughout the *séance*, yet the word “Good” with part of the word “Night,” was written on it by the spirits through Mr. Rita’s mediumship.

COPIES of the translation of the experiments in Professor Zöllner’s great work will be out about the end of next week. A prospectus of the contents of this unique book will be found on page 36. The Spiritualist public are indebted for this English translation, to the generosity in time, work and ability of Mr. C. C. Massey.

THE PHYSICAL THEORY OF MEDIUMSHIP.

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

It is not, I trust, too late to refer to Mr. Purdon's article in *The Spiritualist* of May 14th, which I read for the first time last night. I much regret that so able a paper, containing as it does, the only fully developed scientific theory of mediumship which has yet appeared, should not have met with more notice than it has done, and that those who have noticed at it all, should have passed over the main point, to comment on details more or less irrelevant, or, at least, inessential. For myself, I very much doubt whether mediumship be not something more than the outcome of a hystero-gouty diathesis in the medium; and I am not inclined to attribute much weight to the corroborative evidence for his theory, which Mr. Purdon finds in the urine analyses.¹

Mr. Purdon advances the theory, that the phenomena of what is known as mediumship may be accounted for by the abnormal physiological condition of the medium; a condition in which the voluntary muscular system is dissociated from the control of the central ganglia, and "thrown out of gear." The effect of this dissociation, as he points out, may be assumed to be twofold. In the first place, the normal consciousness being composed of two sets of elements, those derived from incoming passive sensation, and those derived from outgoing active motion, the effect of the partial withdrawal of one of these components must be to leave the other unballasted, and, in the event of its total withdrawal, we should be ready to admit almost any abnormal manifestations of consciousness to be within the limits of possibility. We are already familiar with some of these abnormal powers of consciousness in dreams; and we see, it is assumed, its unrestrained sensory activity in the phenomena of clairvoyance and clair-audience, and, as regards what Mr. Purdon happily calls "woven feeling," in the strange exaltation of the imaginative and reasoning faculties that are sometimes exhibited in trance.

But whilst in dreams the power of volition, as well as its external manifestation, is enfeebled or altogether wanting, in the exercise of mediumship volition may be as active as in the normal state, but, being debarred by the theory from externalising itself in the ordinary manner, through the muscles, it has recourse to other, and, except through these phenomena, unknown agencies, which for

convenience sake have been classed together, and are named Psychic force.

So far, Mr. Purdon's hypothesis supplies an adequate explanation of at least the greater part of the known phenomena of mediumship, and is not discordant with orthodox conclusions, founded on the latest researches in physiology. I cannot sufficiently admire the thoroughness and consistency with which he has elaborated his views, nor the ingenuity and conciseness of his statement of them. But it appears to me that in his anxiety to derive some confirmatory evidence for a theory which is sufficiently strong, clear, and consistent, to stand for the present by itself, without any such bolstering, he has made a slight mistake, if he will not think me too presumptuous in saying so. In the first place, when the causes affecting nitrogenous elimination are so obscure, it is not desirable to base any conclusions at all on a single experiment. But were these experiments multiplied indefinitely, and the results found all equally consistent with his theory, it does not appear to me that Mr. Purdon would have made his position appreciably stronger. Granting that this assumed decrease in the elimination of urea during a *séance* is to be attributed to the same cause, to which the similar decrease during sleep is ascribed—the inactivity of the voluntary muscles—it does not require the aid of quantitative analysis to show us that the muscles are inactive. We did not wait for the chemist to tell us that the body is at rest during sleep. Why should we require such aid to tell us that the body is at rest during trance? We can find out much better by other means whether that is the case or not, with regard both to the voluntary and the involuntary muscular systems. The cardioscope and the stethoscope will tell us whether the rhythm of the heart is slower, and the respiration more languid, and our own eyes will afford us surer indications than can be derived from any estimations of urea, of the passivity of the limbs and trunk.

But Mr. Purdon's theory requires that not only the actual motions, but the volitional nerve-currents in the central ganglia, of which these motions are the general, but by no means the invariable, consequents, should also be wanting. To render this clearer. Normally in a state of rest, when external movement is almost absent, the volition of such movement is frequently present, but is suppressed by an after volition before it can be realised. It is

believed, for instance, that the act of thinking is, ultimately, a suppressed articulation, the formation of the words by the lips being willed, but the transmission of the nerve-current being stayed before it leaves the cortical centres. Now these inhibited volitions, probably, have somewhat of the same weight in consciousness as if they had been actually realised. And it is these which are assumed by the theory to be wanting both in sleep and in mediumship. What we really want, then, is not evidence of the diminution of muscular action—that we can supply for ourselves—but of diminished cerebral action in the direction of muscular action. And it is very doubtful, how far the elimination of nitrogen is affected by this. Mons. Byasson, for instance, in an experiment of nine days duration, found that while the effect of cerebral activity on the eliminated nitrogen was obscure, that activity caused a very marked increase in the amount of sulphates, and, to a less degree, of phosphates and water, in the urine; doubtless, all derived from the disintegration of brain tissue. If then it is possible, and I apprehend that it is possible, to obtain any direct evidence for Mr. Purdon's theory from urinary analysis, it is eminently desirable that the latter constituents, also, should be taken into consideration as affording much surer indications of what it is desired to prove, and of what appears to be susceptible of direct proof by no other method.

But whilst it is probable that any indications derived from this source, until our physiological knowledge is much more advanced, must remain of doubtful value, there is an analogous method by which the problem may be attacked on its purely physical side, which seems to hold out some promise of substantial and trustworthy results. Mr. Purdon supposes that the chair, which is moved from its place at a physical *séance*, is moved by the volition of the medium, and by means of force evolved from the body of the medium (possibly, conjointly with those of the sitters). Now all the force in the body is derived from the oxidation of the carbon and hydrogen of the food. And it is found that the evolution of carbonic acid in the breath bears a direct and readily estimated proportion to the nature and amount of the work being done by the body, so that, given the amount of carbonic acid produced by a man of known bulk in a definite period, it would be possible to guess pretty accurately the nature of the work on which he was engaged. Now if we can estimate the amount

of carbonic acid evolved by a medium during the progress of powerful physical manifestations, whilst his body was quiescent, we should be enabled to calculate, in terms of foot-pounds, the amount of energy required to lift a table of known weight, to a certain height, at a given distance from the body of the medium. And we could in this way arrive at some estimate of the comparative economy of the two known modes of externalised volition—the muscular and the psychic—and should have advanced very near towards demonstrating the relations of this mysterious force with the known forces of nature.

Of course there are considerable practical difficulties in the way of such a proposal. It is probable that, at first, much difficulty would be experienced by the medium in passing into the trance state at all, whilst his head and face were encumbered with the apparatus necessary for the purpose of the experiment. And in order to obtain any accurate measure of the force employed, we should have to estimate the carbonic acid evolved not only by the medium but by all the sitters. But these preliminary obstacles once overcome, it is hardly possible to overrate the important nature of the results that might be arrived at by such a method of research. At any rate, the suggestion is here thrown out, in the hope that some may be able to avail themselves of it.

London July 10th, 1880.

SPIRIT PAINTINGS.

In the very interesting details given from Le Mans, in France, and taken from the *Revue Belge*, of April, as translated in your journal of May 28th, there were omissions which I am glad to say were filled up in the *Revue Spirite* of last month, June, 1880, which gives an account of a further *séance* at the same place. For example, we were not told who the medium was, nor where he sat during the time that drawings were being made like those produced by M. Duguid, of Glasgow, but in a manner unlike that accomplished by M. Duguid, inasmuch as in this case, the drawings were ostensibly manipulated by a spirit. By the present account we are told that the medium is M. Lebreton himself, the gentleman who gave the trance to this circle; and the place where he sat was at a table, between two ladies, who did not, however, hold his hands. I here translate the last details from the *Revue Spirite* :—

“THE SPIRIT ARTIST.”

“Spiritual group, Henri Lebreton, at Mans,

séance of March 4th, 1880. Those present who signed their names: MM. Cornilleau, Contreau, Léon Denis, Niepceon, Bouteloup, Lebreton. Mesdames Frager, Malherbe, Niepceon, Goutard, Guyon, Bouteloup, Blavette, Lebreton.

"Our guide, the spirit artist, presented himself and begged us to make haste; he wished, he told us, to attempt a work such as we had not before seen him execute. He asked for a turn-screw, and when we asked him what he wanted it for, he answered by the table, "That is my business and not yours, you make haste." All his usual implements: pencils, crayons, penknife, crumbs of bread, as well as the turn-screw were placed, some on the table which stands in the middle of the room, some on the table used by the secretary. He ordered us to sit at the places pointed out to us, and commanded complete silence and an uninterrupted chain, all which was rendered. The medium, H. Lebreton, places his hands on the table; Mesdames Niepceon and Blavette are at his right, the others at his left, hold in one of their hands those of Madame Lebreton, placed in the middle, whilst their other hand ought to be united (*doit s'unir*) to that of the person who commences a second chain. M. Contreau places himself as intermediary, the spirit joins M. Denis to him, and finding us well placed, ordered the candles to be put out.

"After a prayer, uttered by the medium, the manifestations commenced; flashes of light passed about the room in every direction, the bell was rung, the partition boards were strongly shaken, we heard that noise which imitates the Chinese drum. On our asking for the instrument which caused the noises it was given; it is a little tray of sheet iron, and was brought by the spirit Blanche; where she got it no one knows. During this time the artist was very active, we saw him turn and move, we heard him screwing and unscrewing, and he did it all with great briskness; we could make out perfectly well what he was doing; with his turn-screw he took to pieces a little portable easel which he had never before made use of; this easel can, at the will of the user, be placed, when complete, upon the ground, or can, when dismantled, be placed on the table. It was in this last way that the spirit made use of it, for he took off the screws very handily which fastened the three lower branches, put his easel on the table, and placing on it a great piece of cardboard, took a whole sheet of drawing paper and, as he wished to fix it to the cardboard,

set to work looking for points or nails by which he could carry out his intention. He unhooked a picture that was hanging over the chimney-piece, made us touch it, placed it on the ground and, by the aid of his turn-screw, took out some nails that were at the back, put the nails in my hand, and in high good humour, told us, by raps, that he had got all he wanted. He took his sheet of paper, made it undergo a full fluidic preparation, turning it over and over again in his hands; then, he made it into a roll into which he passed his hands. He lit-up the interior of this roll of paper very powerfully, and he made use of it for throwing a brilliant light on our faces and in every direction. He then fixed his paper on to the cardboard, by means of the nails which he came to take again out of my hand, and began his work, stopping from time to time to shake us by the hand all round and to go to get the things he wanted from the second table. This movement was effected very quietly; we saw a luminous hand go and come, continuing this even when the spirit was at work, leaving us thus to guess that he had one or more friends who aided him in his work. The artist several times turned round his easel, thus showing his drawing to us all. After about twenty-five minutes, a strong rap struck with the pencil case announced to us that the drawing was finished. The spirit wished us good night, rapping always in the same way, a rap for each of us, and ordered a light to be struck. Upon the paper was a head of the natural size, this head, drawn from the top of the shoulders, is surrounded by a line forming an oval medallion; the features are strongly marked and very expressive; the beard, fully drawn is very thick; the hair is turned back; on the left under the line formed by the medallion, are found the initials of the spirit, (A.C.); and below, in the middle, (F.V.R., at thirty years of age.) We were full of wonder and enthusiasm, and heartily did we thank God in that He had permitted us to behold such great things. After this act of grace each of us retired filled with astonishment and admiration.

ERNESTINE, MADAME LEBRETON."

April 2nd, 1880.

We should have been glad if the ladies who sat on either side of the medium had given especial testimony as regards the medium having remained on his chair during the whole *séance*, although, we fully believe that this is implied by their appending their names to the document. And even had he been moved away

in a trance by the spirits to help in the work, there would still have been wonders enough in the *séance*, less principle, to satisfy the cravings of the most greedy for physical phenomena.

The case which, according to my knowledge, comes nearest to that which has been above detailed, is that of the mediumship of Mr. Charles Swan, of Aylesbury, (of whom I have not heard for some years, but who, I sincerely trust is now well and flourishing) who, as a lad, when shut up in a room by himself, admirable paintings were produced through him without copies, while other physical manifestations occurred, which could not have been effected by the lad himself unassisted, such as hanging heavy pictures, &c.; and, indeed, his uncle, Mr. Wilson, also of Aylesbury, expressly asserted in *Human Nature*, for March, 1872, that the framing and the hanging of the pictures were done by the spirit of his deceased brother, John.

SCRUTATOR.

MRS. WELDON'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN NEWGATE.

Last Tuesday night, Mrs. Weldon lectured at the Central Hall, Bishopsgate Street, London, on her Prison Experiences. The hall was filled in every part; in fact, during the first hour of the lecture, the crowd trying to gain admittance blocked the pavement and part of the road outside the building. Captain Morrison presided. Mrs. Weldon gave her statement as to the merits of certain points connected with the late trial, which had resulted in her being convicted of libel, and imprisoned in Newgate (not as a first-class misdemeanant) for a few weeks. She then retired from the platform for several minutes, returned in an imitation of her prison garb, and proceeded to narrate her experiences in prison, amid occasional bursts of applause from the listeners. In the course of her remarks she exhibited a small glass frame, beneath which were various specimens of husks and hairs which she had picked out of her mouth and teeth while imbibing a single basin of the daily gruel of Newgate. Her remarks upon the potatoes and lady prisoners of the establishment were severe. Portions of her address could not be heard, because of the noise made by people entering and leaving the hall, but much of it was contained in a periodical called *The Prisoner's Cross*, on sale in the building, and from which we make the following extracts:—

"I had my dreams in prison. The atmosphere of Newgate seems conducive to dreams.

I had two of them. Of the first I will say nothing. I have often dreamt it; it is a terrible dream, and a sure precursor of disaster. It was so in this case. The second came as the interpreter of the first. The second dream was in fact the little bird of the air that brought me the intelligence of the descent on Tavistock House while I was safely out of the way, and beyond the possibility of defence. Mankind is uncommonly cowardly at times. In my lone cell I saw the rude men ransacking my apartments, and shrieked with terror lest they should get hold of my papers, and construe some of them into evidence of madness . . .

"The imprisonment never broke down my courage or my spirits, but the revelation of that vision did. I knew it was true to the letter, and I literally cried for two or three days afterwards, and could neither eat nor drink. Still, it was a merciful dispensation that the voice whispered the whole sad truth into 'my dreaming ear.' It is, indeed, of no avail to deny information to those whom the gods determine to inform. They will find a method, natural or supernatural to admonish their favourites. For those favourites indeed

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

* * * *

"The chaplain read me awful homilies on the sinfulness of sin, and, notwithstanding my frivolity, laboured to impress on my mind that I had brought a fearful disgrace on myself and on my friends by getting into prison. Dounce man! To be found out seemed to him to be *the* crime, and one of the greatest moral turpitude. Sin is nothing till it is found out. That is sound theology, you may depend upon it, in the region of the Old Bailey. The 'conviction' is the essence of the crime. There is no mistake about it. I told him I could not see the sinfulness on which he dwelt with so much unction. I had had no hand in making the laws, and I was in prison because of bad laws; therefore the disgrace was in the laws and not in me. He never tamed my proud spirit, though we had many a tough controversy, and I really believe I know more about the spirit and essence of religion than he does. Oh, how he turned on the Gospel taps—the 'Will of God' one morning, and the next morning the 'Eternal Life,' and on other mornings all the well-known orthodox taps—good old-fashioned threadbare doctrines—musty theology, but no life and soul in them. But I survived the infliction of all the taps. He did not drown me. I gave him word for word, and

answered his *letter* with the *spirit*. I assure you there is little of the spirit of religion in Newgate. It is a sort of geographical parenthesis where God is not. As for the Chaplain himself—well, he is a polished and a perfect gentleman in his personal character, but in his official character he is the perfection of stereotyped official religion, and official religion is a very milk-and-water affair.

* * * *

"I sang for them in the chapel on Sundays. Wherever I may be I must sing, while Heaven lends me breath. I sang to the poor people in prison. I sang loud, and sang my best. Music is to me a sacred exercise, and least of all can I sing hymns of praise or of devotion with half-heartedness and cold formality. The prisoners heard me and were delighted. My singing touched and softened their hearts, and soothed the rebellious and wayward passions in many a breast.

"I did not like the Chaplain's sermons; they did me no good, and I dare say the experience of everyone else was the same. They struck no chord within my soul; they prompted me to no good thoughts or deeds; they fortified my spirit with no Christian and heroic courage. I took with me into the prison all the vivacity and moral character that sustained me, and I am proud to say that I came out of prison with an unbroken spirit and a character undemoralised. That is a grand distinction for me, for such experience is almost unique. They burnt out of me none of the qualities they found in my soul. They cannot tame or degrade a free and independent spirit.

* * * *

"My punishment did not formally include hard labour, but I think I had it. First they said they would send me to the wash-tub.

"'Oh! very well,' I replied; 'the wash-tub be it.'

"But they relented. Even governors, and inspectors, and warders sometimes relent. So I did not go to the wash-tub. Imagine them finding such an occupation for a lady delicately brought up!

"But I did not rebel. I am proud and outspoken, but I am meek, and even submissive, to an authority I respect. They thought they had got a lawless spirit in me, but they were mistaken. I let them know when I thought they were imposing on me unwarrantable indignities and cruelties, but I was at heart loyal to their discipline. So I never refused to wash.

"But they found an employment more suitable for me—an employment that was more profitable to them. I knit them nine pairs of worsted socks, and, that they might not get intermixed, I marked them in pairs, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, &c. Besides, I did all the fancy needlework they required of me. I was often up at half-past four in the morning at my task. Is not that 'hard labour' in prison parlance? Didn't I take pains with the Chaplain's robes? Poor man, he was wearing a surplice which was so 'tattered and torn' that it might not have been repaired for a hundred years. Indeed, it looked as though it had descended from one Chaplain to another through a long line of reverend officials. I would advise the ladies, wherever there be a prison, to look after the Chaplain's robes. Do as I did; mend them carefully and neatly. For, if Newgate be a fair example, all the Chaplain's surplices, hoods, &c., require the delicate attention of nimble fingers. Such attentions to the staid and worthy gentlemen who minister in holy things to prisoners and captives would be much more pious than the working of curates' slippers, how exquisite soever the workmanship bestowed on those slippers. I also repaired the stole. Oh, that stole! What irreligious neglect had left it in the dilapidated and discreditable condition in which I found it? I made it a labour of love, and left the evidence of my visit, and the traces of my pious diligence in that stole.

"But the trouble to get a needle and a piece of fine thread! I thought we should never be able to begin for lack of those necessary implements of housewifery. I am not sure that the Home Secretary was not consulted in this matter also. There is no precedent for fine needles and fine thread; no precedent for repairing the Chaplain's robes and making them decent.

"At last the needles and thread came, but whether by the solemn intervention of one of her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State I know not. But they came, the work was done, and I will venture to say the Chaplain wears his robes to-day with a proud satisfaction which is shared by no other prison chaplain in the kingdom.

Mr. W. J. COLVILLE, the trance medium, has postponed for a time his return to England.

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

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