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LANCHETTE'S



DIARY

EDITED BY KATE FIELD.

NEW YORK:

J. S. REDFIELD, PUBLISHER.

140 FULTON STREET.

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16.  
PLANCHETTE'S DIARY

EDITED BY

K A T E F I E L D

"He who outside of pure mathematics pronounces the word impossible, wants prudence."—ARAGO

NEW YORK

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1868

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## P R E F A C E .

THERE be literature and there be writing. This little book comes under the latter category. It is a simple relation of curious phenomena in which I have been an unconscious actor. Having no leisure to devote to earnest experiments with Planchette, I have rarely laid my hand upon her, saving at the request, and for the entertainment of friends. For this reason, and perhaps for others of which I am ignorant, my acquaintance with Planchette has not led to such remarkable results as I have heard described by grave and reverend signors of unimpeachable veracity. But that which I relate, I have seen in the presence of intelligent men and women of acknowledged standing in society ; and to be an eye-witness to what is curious, is more satisfactory than to hear of what is astounding. The human mind is prone to doubt, and it is wise to treat even one's own senses with incredulity.

Were I one of a very few persons to whom Planchette had manifested herself, I should refrain from giving my experience to the public ; knowing full well that "it is better to tell a probable lie than an

improbable truth ;” but as Planchette keeps the very best company, and as her operators may be reckoned by hundreds and by thousands, I have little fear of being considered the victim of delusion.

Apologizing for the unavoidable prominence of the personal pronoun *I*, and earnestly hoping that the publication of this Diary may lead to the appearance of others which will throw additional light upon a mystery, and thereby furnish science with the tools necessary for investigation, I leave Planchette to tell her own unvarnished tale.

THE EDITOR.

## PLANCHETTE'S DIARY.

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SAUNTERING into a friend's house one day in the early part of last May, I asked the ordinary question, "What is the news?" with the ordinary indifference, expecting to receive the ordinary answer—"Nothing." It is a *façon de parler* with which the loftiest intellect seems to be satisfied, a conversational etiquette that is gone through with punctilio, although results are known before a word is spoken.

Fancy, then, the shock to my nervous system when, on this occasion, my friend became animated, and replied—

"News? There is a deal of news. Have you heard about Planchette?"

"Planchette," I responded; "in the name of mystery what is Planchette?"

"Then you are a greater wonder than Planchette herself, for everybody is going crazy over her."

"Is she a woman?" I imagined her to be a danseuse recently imported to redeem the waning fortunes of *The White Fawn*.

"Woman? No indeed; she's a board; a board

that runs about on wheels, and thinks, writes, and swears like a trooper."

I looked at my friend with amazement, wondering whether she were clothed in her right mind. She was an intelligent woman—one in whose common sense I believed, and yet she spoke of a thinking and writing board, as if we were in the habit of obtaining intelligence from inanimate matter.

"What *do* you mean?" I finally asked.

"Mean? I mean precisely what I say; that a friend of mine has a board mounted on wheels, that writes, answers *mental* questions, and swears prodigiously whenever she places her hand upon it."

"Oh, of course, now I understand. The intelligence comes from the individual who places his hand upon the instrument."

"No, the action is entirely involuntary. Planchette writes about matters of which the persons present are not thinking, and of which they frequently know nothing."

The nineteenth century has acquainted man with so many marvellous discoveries, that it requires no little conceit to deny the truth of the most extraordinary *munchausenism* that was ever conceived. If, in the dark days of Hamlet, there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in student's philosophy, to-day it will not answer to repudiate the existence of stranger things than even Hamlet beheld. My common sense denied the possibility of any intelligence whatever in a piece of wood, but it did not

deny the possibility of phenomena connected with a board on movable legs.

As conversation drifted into other channels, I forgot Planchette, nor did I recall the subject until a week later, when I read the advertisements in the New York papers.

In want of something to do one rainy afternoon, I bethought me of Planchette, and walked down Broadway to Kirby's book store to purchase one. I saw the manufacturer, who assured me that "Planchette wrote for five people out of eight," and was a veritable mystery. Finally I was introduced to the lady herself.

There was nothing very imposing in the creature's appearance. I saw as the name denotes, a little board of varnished wood, fashioned in the shape of a heart, seven inches long and five inches wide, that formed a sort of table by means of two pentagraph wheels at the broad end of the heart, and a lead-pencil inserted in a socket, one inch and a-quarter from the point of the heart. Taking possession of my new acquaintance, I wended my way home in the rain.

I have seen enough of what is called Spiritualism, to be convinced of the honesty of many of its "mediums." It is too late in the day to brand as humbug all the phenomena which have been witnessed by some of the best and clearest intellects of the world. "A rose by any other name will smell as sweet," and perhaps Spiritualism, by any other name, will be more grateful to the sense, but that there is something in it unaccountable to science, is a conviction

entertained by too many sane minds for disbelievers to consign them to a lunatic asylum. Having remarked that the majority of "mediums" possess passive dispositions, and no education whatever; that they are, in fact, little more than magnets or batteries, I felt confident that Planchette would do nothing for me; not because I lay claim to any particular culture or intellect, but because my character is positive. I am not susceptible to magnetism, and am not easily swayed by surrounding influences. Therefore, when I held my first *séance* with Planchette, and obtained no results, I was confirmed in my belief.

I followed the written directions implicitly. I sat down with a dark-eyed lady. Opposite coloring is said to produce the most favorable results, but neither her hand nor mine seemed to possess any magnetic properties. After half an hour's trial, we desisted, and I put Planchette to bed.

The next morning, a gentleman who possesses extraordinary magnetic power, chanced to call. Introducing Planchette, I asked him if he had seen it.

"No, I have heard of it."

"Do you object to place your hand upon it?"

"Certainly not."

No sooner did Mr. L. sit down than Planchette tore up and down the paper like mad, much to the astonishment of the gentleman who became excited. During this performance, I mentally observed that I *never* should succeed in making the

creature budge. This thought had no sooner passed through my mind than Planchette wrote in a large but rather indistinct hand,

“Why don't you let aids alone? J. F.”

Mr. L. could hardly read his own writing, and seemed to be perfectly ignorant of the initials appended to the communication. He assures me that he did not know my father's name, and I believe him.

J. F. was my father's signature. I was not thinking of him at the time, and no sooner saw these initials than I remarked, “there is one letter missing.”

“No,” answered my mother, looking over Mr. L.'s shoulder for the first time, “your father had no right to his middle initial; he was baptized Joseph Field.”

“But what does Planchette mean by telling me to let aids alone?” I had no sooner asked the question than the reply came,

“Ruins confidence in yourself.”

Mr. L. had become so exceedingly nervous that I did not deem it civil to prolong the conversation with my new acquaintance, and here the first interview ended.

On the evening of the same day, a young gentleman of great scientific attainments called, and Planchette emerged from her box. Mr. N. was no less curious than myself, and very soon we sat like two idiots, gazing intently upon the absurd creature, each with a hand upon her back.

After the lapse of one half-hour, human patience came to an end, and we left Planchette in disgust. The board had moved a third of an inch, but it was sensible to attribute this short scratch to nervous pulsation.

I paid no further attention to Planchette for several days, and was at last only drawn to her by a conjunction of rainy weather with the arrival of a lady friend from Boston, whom I was desirous of entertaining. Out-door life was disagreeable, and as a *pis aller*, I once more turned to Planchette. Mrs. T. eagerly seized the proposition, and down we sat, each with a hand upon the board. Very soon, and greatly to my surprise, Planchette began to give signs of animation. She must have taken at least ten minutes to make two sides of a triangle an inch long; but having accomplished this feat, she became more energetic, and trotted up and down a large sheet of cartridge-paper, leaving perpendicular marks in her wake. Having covered half of the sheet with these hieroglyphics, a change came o'er the spirit of Planchette's dream, and she began to "shade."

At this point my mother expressed the opinion that Mrs. T. was the motive power. In order to decide the matter, Mrs. T. removed her hand. Planchette still pursued the uneven tenor of her way, but stood perfectly still the moment I withdrew my hand, and Mrs. T. replaced hers.

After this experiment, it was thought best for me to take entire possession of the board. I laid my right

hand lightly upon Planchette, and after swinging round two circles for five or ten minutes, two pages of "sawing" were the consequence. It seemed as if Planchette were going through her paces prior to writing. This proved to be the case, for the "sawing" was succeeded by a frantic attempt at embroidery, followed by a chain of *ms* that terminated in my name, "Mary Kate Field," the three words being perfectly distinct, but peculiar in that they were written as one word. I am not in the habit of writing the name "Mary," having long since dropped it, and it was not in my mind at the time; in fact, it rarely or never is.

Had I voluntarily traced my name, I should have begun with Kate. This name was repeated six times, and then I was not a little amazed to see Planchette write "Your Father" three times. My father almost always addressed me as "Mary Kate." The coincidence is worth noting.

After this effort, Planchette again betook herself to her favorite occupation of "sawing," then wrote several incoherent lines, and at last "began to talk to me like a father," calling me "dear child," giving me a very sensible lecture, dwelling upon my faults, and telling me how to correct them. Planchette wrote words of wisdom, but I had no such train of thought in my mind at the time; and if I had, I should have been the last person in the world to give it publicity.

Upon the conclusion of the lecture, which covered three pages—the writing being a facsimile of my own,

saving that it was very much larger—Planchette signed herself “J. Field.”

Assuming, for the sake of experiment, that our communications through Planchette were spiritual, Mrs. T. asked if any of her friends were present.

“Yes,” answered Planchette, “your cousin, ——.”

Mrs. T. assured me she had had a cousin bearing the name indicated, who died several years ago.

“Are there any other friends present?” inquired Mrs. T.

Planchette wrote two names, of which Mrs. T. had no knowledge whatever. A request to have the name of her mother given, met with no better result.

*Q.* “Do you know it, Planchette?”

*Plan.* “Yes.”

*Q.* “Then why can't you write it down?”

*Plan.* “Because you do not know it, and consequently it is difficult for me to impress you. If you were to ask me any other question, I could answer it more readily, because you are *en rapport* with Planchette, don't you see?”

I confess that I did *not* see. If I were *en rapport* with Planchette, there was no more reason to stumble at the name of Mrs. T.'s mother than to stumble at anything else. I failed to appreciate Planchette's logic, and here the *séance* ended. We came to the conclusion that Planchette was very “queer,” but very unsatisfactory.

The question, “What is it?” was deferred *sine die*.

NEW YORK, May 26, 1868.

To-day the same trio sat down before Planchette. As she "sawed" over half a page, I asked her the reason of such a waste of paper, to which she replied :

"Because I don't know how to manage your hand as well as I shall hereafter. J. Field."

Q. "If this is really my father, why have you never before manifested yourself?"

*Planchette.* "Because *you* have never made the attempt. I have been ready time and time again to manifest myself, but you have never shown any disposition to bring yourself *en rapport* with me. I am not prone to interfere where the spiritual influence is not fully established. If you care to investigate this matter, you can have such proof as will satisfy you of the truth of much-abused Spiritualism."

Q. "If it is not I writing, how is it that I know what word will be written just before it is traced on the paper?" (I have no idea of the sentence in its entirety, but each word enters my mind before it is written.)

*Plan.* "My dear child, do you suppose that I can influence your hand to write without previously influencing your brain? Do n't be alarmed. I assure you that you are thoroughly innocent of abetting me in so stupendous a manifestation of power hitherto either ignored or scoffed at. Be firm and resolute. Do n't let the derision of Mrs. Grundy deter you from following the bent of your inclination, no matter what that inclination may be, provided you feel

morally certain that you are serving yourself and your Creator. No one, man or woman, is given aspirations to be stifled. Nothing but untold misery can come from ——”

Planchette stood motionless, and I asked if the sentence were finished.

“No,” she replied.

*Q.* “Then why do n’t you go on?”

*Plan.* “Because it is difficult to impress you with ideas that are but half-formed in my own mind.”

The sentence remained unfinished.

Having intended to return home to-day, Mrs. T. was in doubt whether to do so, on account of the non-arrival of a letter which ought to have been received early in the morning. This was a question for Planchette; so we put it to her.

*Q.* “When will Mrs. T. go home?”

*Plan.* “To-morrow.”

*Q.* “Why not to-day?”

*Plan.* “Because the letter she is expecting will not arrive before three o’clock—too late for the 12.15 train—has not been able to obtain the necessary information, and therefore did not write as soon as anticipated.”

The letter arrived at two o’clock, and Mrs. T. decided to remain another day in New York.

The question having been raised, whether the use of Planchette for any prolonged period might not be injurious to the medium, I asked Planchette how long she ought to be exercised.

*Plan.* “Three hours; say in the evening after din-

ner, when your mind is free, and you have visitors with whom you can much better pass the time thus, than in desultory conversation that leads to no good whatever."

My mother remarked that three hours were too long a time. At this Planchette waxed rampant, and retorted:

"Do you imagine that I would advise anything that I *knew* to be injurious to health, and do you suppose that I am ignorant of the laws whereby man is brought into relation with what are called 'spirits,' but which are no more spirits than they were in the flesh, saving that departure from the business of earth necessitates a change of body as well as of base, for what is good for the planet called 'Earth' is not good for the sphere called 'Heaven?' Heaven is nothing but a name, believe me, which is employed by the clergy to signify that retreat where the good, pious souls of their particular ——"

At this point my mother looked over my shoulder to inspect Planchette's writing; whereupon Planchette expressed much uneasiness, broke away from the clergy, and wrote:

"Sit down, away from the table; don't be angry, but I cannot control the medium as well when others are about."

We were left completely in the dark as to the nature of the ecclesiastical heaven, for Planchette would not resume the thread of her discourse.

Once more we endeavored to obtain the name of Mrs. T.'s mother. The christian name was given

correctly, but the remainder was a complete failure. When interrogated, Planchette informed us that she frequently failed in this respect, "because names are the most difficult things in the world to get. The mind never dwells upon names in spiritual life; hence you perceive the strain upon the memory in recalling what never was clearly fixed in it. You shall have the name, and quickly too."

Planchette is a creature of magnificent promises, but alas! she breaks at least one-half of them. Let this be remembered by those who see in her nothing but a disciple of the law of chances. The required name was not forthcoming.

MAY 26TH, *Evening.*

Our trio was reinforced by Mr. B., a clever young lawyer, who regarded Planchette with no favorable eye—had no faith whatever in "Spiritualism," and maintained that for his part he thought it quite as sensible, if not more so, to attribute unknown phenomena to white rabbits as to spirits.

Planchette was quite ready to write, and I found that I could write as easily with my eyes shut as with them open, saving that the words were likely to run into each other, and produce confusion. Otherwise the letters were perfectly well formed. It thus became apparent that I steadied Planchette's movements.

Planchette addressed herself to Mr. B. thus :

"You do not think that I am a spirit. I tell you that I am. If I am not an intelligence, in the name

of common sense what am I? If you fancy I am white rabbits, then all I have to say is, that white rabbits are a deal cleverer than they have the credit of being among natural historians."

Later, doubt was thrown upon the possibility of getting mental questions answered, and Planchette retorted:

"Do you fancy for one moment that I don't know the workings of your brain? That is not the difficulty. It is the impossibility—almost—of making two diametrically opposed magnetisms unite."

After this rebuke, Mr. B. asked a mental question, and received the following answer:

"I am impelled to say that if you will persevere in these investigations you may be placed *en rapport* with your wife, who would undoubtedly communicate with you. If you have any faith in the immortality of the soul, you can have no doubt of the possibility of spiritual influences being brought to bear upon mortals. It is no new thing. Ever since the world began this power has been exerted in one way or another; and if you pretend to put any faith in the Bible, you surely must credit the possibility of establishing this subtle connection between man and so-called angels."

This communication was glibly written until within eleven words of the conclusion, when Planchette stopped, and I asked if she had finished.

"No," she replied.

"Then why don't you go on?" I continued. "I can write faster than this."

Planchette grew exceeding wroth at this and dashed off as an answer :

“ Because, my good gracious ! you are not obliged to express yourself through another’s brain.”

I took it for granted that Planchette had shot very wide of the mark in the supposed response to Mr. B.’s mental query, and hence was not prepared to be told that it was satisfactory, in proof of which Mr. B. wrote beneath it :

“ Appropriate answer to my mental question ; will my deceased wife communicate with me ? J. A. B.”

The remaining communications of the evening were of too personal a character for public reading. Some were germane to the matter,—the questions being mental,—others were not at all correct. Planchette again repudiated the inference that any injurious effects could result from her influence.

“ You do not get rid of your own magnetism. The power given is superhuman ; consequently it imparts strength. You will sleep well, and thus prove to your mother that Planchette produces no unpleasant effect upon your nerves.”

I did sleep soundly, and I may here add, that the use of Planchette is soothing to me rather than exciting. Several weeks before the discovery of Planchette, I found great difficulty in getting to sleep. This difficulty ceased after I had amused myself of an evening with the new wonder.

MAY 27.

In the evening Planchette gave me some very sen-

sible advice, of no interest, however, to any one but myself. I was very anxious to get into the country, and hoped to leave New York early in June. Putting the question: "When shall I leave town?" Planchette answered:

"Not before the last of June. You will lose nothing, as the weather will not be settled before then."

I left the first of July, and the weather did not deport itself in a summer-like manner until the last of June.

MAY 28.

Mrs. S. called and told me that she had bought a Planchette but could not make her talk. She received several communications through me, and at last Planchette condescended to "shake" for her. She was told to go home and try by herself.

At the breakfast-table Mr. G. expressed a great desire to see Planchette perform and she was brought from her box. Miss W. was also present. After several communications, Miss W. asked a mental question and Planchette immediately wrote:

"Miss W., that is hardly possible in the present condition of the money market, but later, I dare say you will accomplish what you desire to undertake."

*Miss W.* "Planchette is entirely off the track. My question was, 'Can you tell me anything about my nephew?'"

*Mr. G.* "Well it is certainly very queer. I asked a mental question to which this is to a certain extent, an answer."

Mr. G. was seated beside me thoroughly intent

upon Planchette. Miss W. was at a distance and not in any way *en rapport* with me. If this phenomenon of answering mental questions be clairvoyance, the situation of these two persons may account for the mixed nature of the answer, beginning with Miss W. and finishing with Mr. G.

As I was not acquainted with Mr. G.'s christian names—of which there were two—Planchette was desired to write them out. After two attempts which were failures, she gave the first but failed entirely on the second, which I learned afterwards was an exceedingly odd one.

After desultory questioning and desultory answers, Mr. G. asked a mental question, to which Planchette replied :

“Don't do it, for if you do you will have cause to regret the step.”

Being told that this was satisfactory, I asked Mr. G. to state as much underneath Planchette's writing and sign his name to it. Expressing his willingness, Mr. G. took the pencil but had only written a few words before a change came over his manner and the expression of his face. He wrote like one possessed, with great rapidity and much indistinctness, nor did he stop until he arrived at the bottom of the page. He confessed that he had written in spite of himself, but that he was not so astonished as he would have been had he not moved chairs and tables about the room several years ago. Never before, however, had he been so fully controlled.

Upon examining the writing we found it to be a

continuation of the answer given through me. Several words were unintelligible to both of us, and Planchette very politely rewrote them so that we were able to decipher the entire communication. I did not understand its tenor, but Mr. G. testified his satisfaction; this was sufficient.

MAY 29.

Mrs. S. called in the evening with Planchette, and accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. R. Mrs. S. said that she had sat with great patience over Planchette, but had obtained nothing except scratches, therefore she had brought the unruly creature to see whether she would behave better in my presence. Thereupon she sat down and placed her hand upon Planchette.

During Mrs. S.'s apprenticeship, Mrs. R. received long and pertinent communications, not in the least extraordinary, however, because the questions were oral, and the responses such as any person of sense would have been likely to make.

In about half an hour, Mrs. S.'s Planchette began to exhibit signs of life; and after doing her usual amount of embroidery, she proceeded to scrawl what looked like "Matt." Consulting my Planchette as to the nature of the text, she wrote "Matt Field; he was always fond of her, and wants to communicate with her."

Matt Field was a brother of my father, who died twenty years ago. It is true that he entertained a friendly feeling for Mrs. S., but she assured me that she had not thought of him at all in connexion with

Planchette. I certainly had not, and the other three persons present—none were Spiritualists—gave me their words of honor that they had not dreamed of him.

While Mrs. S.'s Planchette declared that she was influenced by my uncle, mine assumed to be controlled by my father, and very soon the two boards became disputatious, apropos of a living relative. Mrs. S.'s Planchette startled us by saying that this relative was dangerously ill, and would not recover. My Planchette admitted that she was ill, "but I don't despair as Matt does. She has great recuperative powers. Matt always was despondent, and sees black where I see only light gray. Very naturally, I think I am correct. Matt and I generally disagree."

At this criticism, Mrs. S.'s Planchette became rampant and retorted, "Joe always was overbearing, and has not changed in the spirit world."

"Oh, Planchette!" we all exclaimed, "what is the matter with you?"

*Mrs. S.'s Plan.* "Rather angry."

*Q.* "Why?"

*Plan.* "Because he contradicts me; I can't bear discussion, it flies to my head!"

The extreme ludicrousness of seeing these two boards quarrelling made us laugh heartily. The quotation, "I can't bear discussion," etc., was no less singular than apt, once having been frequently used in the family.

*Mrs. S.* "Why, Matt, are not you brothers friends?"

*Plan.* "Yes, indeed, but we must have our little jokes."

Whereupon my Planchette wrote, "Ha! ha!" and Mrs. S.'s board danced about so absurdly as to excite no end of merriment, and finally scrawled out, "I am tipsy ——"

"I should think you were," I said, supposing the sentence to be finished—"in fact drunk with delight," continued Planchette, "at the idea of communicating with you."

Here the dialogue ceased.

Mrs. R. then asked a mental question, which was answered incorrectly, and Mr. R. inquired the hour.

"Ten minutes of ten," responded Planchette.

Mr. R. looked at his watch, and found the statement to be exact to a second.

The next day we learned that the relative whose health had been the cause of so warm a discussion, had been very dangerously ill, but was better. She ultimately recovered.

#### MAY 30.

I attended what was called a "Planchette party," at which Mrs. C., Mrs. B., Mrs. F., Miss G., and Mr. B. were present. With the exception of myself, no one appeared to have any power over the board; probably because no one else had experimented. Mrs. F. asked what sort of a meeting a certain society in a neighboring city had had that day.

*Plan.* "They have had a very amicable meeting, and Mr. F. made an address in favor of the move-

ment. The idea is an excellent one, and will be carried out," etc., etc.

Mrs. F. knew that her husband had intended to be present, but her information went no further. Several days after, we learned that the meeting had been amicable, and that Mr. F. had addressed it.

Some one asked for news from home, whereupon Planchette uncivilly replied, "Your people are not my people. We are attracted by sympathy in this world of spirits, and do not come together, saving where it can be for the advantage of humanity."

Many communications of a private nature were received. Later, Mrs. F. inquired where B. and H. had gone.

*Plan.* "To the theatre."

*Mrs. F.* "Which theatre?"

*Plan.* "Wallack's."

*Mrs. F.* "What is the play?"

*Plan.* "White Cockade, a very puerile piece."

I had heard that B. and H. intended to go to the theatre; but where, or to see what, I knew not.

Mrs. B. asked where her husband had gone, and Planchette gave the wrong address.

I was asked to take a cup of tea, and declined. Being urged very strongly, Planchette came to my rescue, and said,

"It makes her nervous, and she will be wise never to touch it, or in fact any other beverage saving water."

*Mrs. F.* "Will this advice hold good for me, Planchette?"

*Plan.* "No; wine will benefit you if taken pure, and in moderation."

Mrs. F. said this was precisely what she had been told by her physician. I mentally inquired what time it was. "Five minutes of ten," scribbled Planchette.

This was correct.

"Who invented Planchette?" somebody inquired.

*Plan.* "It is French in its origin, as its name denotes. A French Spiritualist was instructed by the spirits to manufacture this little plaything in order to cheat people into Spiritualism under pretence of a joke."

*I.* "Why, Planchette, what a Jesuit you are!"

*Plan.* "Slightly jesuitical, but all is fair in war, you know; and the terrible war that is waged by conservatives against the new religion is sufficient justification of harmless means to a good end."

Soon after, in my own mind, I asked what time it was. Planchette replied "ten-fifteen." Upon looking at my watch I found this to be correct.

Mrs. F. then asked a mental question without a satisfactory result. Putting another mental question, she received the following answer: "The weather will be very disagreeable for a month."

*Mrs. F.* "Planchette, you are wandering. My question was, 'Why is Mr. C. always talking about the weather?' I'll try again."

"Now, Planchette," I said, "I want you to tell me what Mrs. F.'s question is."

*Plan.* "Is Mr. C., the gentleman who is to preach for Mr. T. to-morrow, a good preacher?"

*Mrs. F.* "Worse and worse. I asked, 'Why is Mr. C. so conceited about his own country?' Your answer refers to the person I had in my mind, but does not otherwise reply."

Here, then, is a curious phase of the phenomenon, that the person thought of should be divined, but not the idea with which he is associated.

Some one present asked for advice upon some highly important private matter. Planchette informed the querist that she was not a "special Providence."

Upon being asked what she meant by that, Planchette replied—

"You know that is a favorite cant expression. All I mean to say is that I have not brains enough to think for everybody. My love devotes me to my family."

As usual, Planchette assured us that she was controlled by my father.

"What is your opinion of ——?" inquired a lady, naming a professional "medium" of considerable notoriety.

*Plan.* "He is a powerful test medium who is not over-scrupulous in using his own wits when those of the spirits fail."

Signifying a desire to ask another mental question, Mrs. F. wrote it down, and folded the paper so that I could not see the writing. As responding to mental questions is often a very long and tedious process, Mrs. F. wrote a series of names, including that of the person referred to in the paper, in order to test Plan-

chette in a new way that might facilitate matters. I had seen this done by professional "mediums," and it occurred to me to give it a trial.

I did not see Mrs. F. write the list. Planchette erased every name, with the exception of L. W.'s. This was correct.

"Now then," I said, "tell us the question."

*Plan.* "Is L. W. contented in Europe?"

I opened the paper which I had held in my left hand, according to Planchette's instructions, and read, "Is L. W. happy and well in Wiesbaden?"

Mrs. B. asked a mental question, but Planchette wrote "No," when she should have written "Yes."

*Mrs. B.* "That is a failure."

*Plan.* "No, it is not a failure so far as I am concerned. Remember that I am acting through another's mind, and am obliged to act against her preconceived ideas. Her very anxiety to obtain correct answers militates against my power. Is not this reasonable?"

Here our sitting came to an end.

MAY 31.

A foreign gentleman called in the afternoon and was very anxious to see Planchette write. I had never before remarked any difference of sensation when sitting at the table with others for the purpose of obtaining communications, but on this occasion, although I sat down with the utmost willingness, Planchette acted like a cross, sleepy child and very

frequently verged upon ill-humor. She wrote a little in the language of my visitor, but as I am conversant with it, this was nothing. Mr. B. wanted to obtain some test and asked for certain friends that Planchette said were present, but to no avail.

"If they are present," I said, "why can't they communicate?"

*Plan.* "Because they can't get possession of you. You are entirely controlled by me and will be until you are a fully developed medium."

*Mr. B.* "Is she not sufficiently developed?"

*Plan.* "Not by any means."

*Mr. B.* "I see no reason in this."

*Plan.* "Did you not take a long time to learn your letters?"

Mr. B. made some remark about the absurdity of Planchette, at which the irate lady informed him that he did n't know what he was talking about. He then asked something about a future state, but Planchette was riding a high horse and seemed to be bent upon administering snubs which made me feel excessively uncomfortable.

*Plan.* "I am not in the mood to discuss so vast a subject as spiritual existence. Ask shorter questions."

Mr. B. wrote down a question, folded the paper and handed it to me. I asked what Mr. B. had written.

*Plan.* "He wants to know where Miss H. is."

This was correct, but two other answers to mental questions were entirely wrong. The remainder of the sitting was made up of airy nothings. Finally, Mr.

B. expressed great concern lest I should be exhausting my vitality by the use of Planchette.

*Plan.* "She is not using *her* magnetism but *mine*."

*Mr. B.* "I take a different view of the matter."

*Plan.* "Your view is an ignorant one."

After this impertinent demonstration, nothing further could be obtained.

*Evening.*

Passing the evening with Miss C., the subject of Planchette soon came to the surface of thought, and the lady was introduced to the company, which was about equally divided between Spiritualists and sceptics. As Planchette manifested a lively friendship for Mr. H. G.—quite tiring my arm by rushing towards the side of the table at which he sat—Mr. G. expressed a desire to know what friend of his wished to talk to him.

*Plan.* "No friend of yours, good honest H., for you *are* honest in spite of what the Copperheads say—that is, you do not know me for a friend, having had no earthly acquaintance with me. My name is Joseph Field!"

*Mr. G.* "Are the planets inhabited?"

*Plan.* "Yes."

*Mr. G.* "Where does the life of man begin?"

*Plan.* "On this planet. Then we are gradually removed to others as our ties become more of spirit than of matter. We make the cycle of all the plan-

etary systems and wind up with the sun. We all go to a hotter place than the old-fashioned hell."

*Mr. G.* "Has climate any effect upon spiritual bodies?"

*Plan.* "Only as it affects our magnetisms when brought into relation with yours."

*Mr. G.* "Who are with you?"

*Plan.* "George Washington sends greeting."

*Mr. G.* "What is Washington's opinion of Grant?"

*Plan.* "Well, I'm not much better at a speech than General Grant, but I think tolerably well of him, on the whole. He is not by any means a great man, but I believe him to be well-meaning. He is not a statesman, but he has enough common sense to put clever men into the cabinet. He will not betray the Republican Party, and, therefore, will be an agreeable change. He will not please the Radicals particularly, for the reason that he has no moral convictions of his own."

*Mr. G.* "Of whom am I thinking?"

*Plan.* "Abraham Lincoln."

*Mr. G.* "Wrong."

*Plan.* "W. H. Fry."

This was again wrong. Mr. G. had thought of a lady.

*Mr. G.* "Well, Fry, how do you like your present condition?"

*Plan.* "It is a deuced sight pleasanter than earth, I can tell you."

*Mr. J.* "That sounds like him. Do you think of your old friends?"

*Plan.* "I love them as well as ever; some of them better, for the reason that I can read character better. The scales have dropped from my eyes."

A third person interposed and asked if he had not had enough of this world.

*Plan.* "Not at all. The spirit is born here. The Earth is our mother and we love her."

*Mr. J.* "That sounds just like Fry."

I never knew Mr. Fry, and was not aware that he had been the intimate friend of several persons present.

Different individuals now wrote lists of names and submitted them to the oracular instrument. In two cases, Planchette erased all names but the correct ones; in two others she failed. After the last failure, a young man present pronounced Planchette a humbug. To this came the reply:

"In a certain sense Planchette *is* a humbug. Planchette *is* a humbug in being called a game. It is the game of life, if you please, but my dear young man, the day is not far distant when you will be ranked among the faithful."

Nothing further of interest occurred.

JUNE 2.

Immediately after dinner, Mr. B. brought Mr. M. to be introduced to Planchette. Mr. M. inquired after his baby. Planchette did not seem to be in a very amiable mood, and replied:

"I do n't know anything about your baby."

Mr. M. handed me a list of names, all being equal-

ly peculiar, and Planchette pointed out the one which Mr. M. had in his mind. He then gave me a slip of paper, on which a question had been written. Having asked Planchette to read it for me, she straightway answered:

“Where does C. C. P. live?”

Opening the paper, I read, “Will C. C. P. arrive to-morrow?”

The dissimilarity of the two questions is as strange as the similarity. Mr. M. was a stranger to me, and never in my life had I heard of such a person as C. C. P.

Mr. B. opened a book at random, and asked the number of the page, neither he nor I knowing. Planchette wrote “246.” This was wrong. Hereupon Mr. B. expressed his disgust, to which Planchette made answer:

“You expect miracles. I am only a beginner, beginning with a beginner.”

*Q.* “Do you mean to say, that you have never communicated with any one but me?”

*Plan.* “I have had little or nothing to do with paid mediums, because I am not in harmony with their illiterate minds. I can't explain the laws of magnetic susceptibility to you at present, but one of these days you will understand the cause of failures.”

Evincing no disposition to converse with either gentleman, both retired as Mr. R. entered the room. He, too, was all agog for Planchette, and immediately wrote a question and a list of names. Planchette selected the proper name, and then wrote,

"How is E. D.?"

*Mr. R.* "No; I asked 'What is E. D. doing?' but I confess I was thinking of another question at the same time."

*Mr. R.* once more presented a list and a written question. Out of four names, Planchette chose the wrong one, and upon being derided, wrote out the correct one.

"Now for the question," I said.

*Plan.* "How old is I. D.?"

*Mr. R.* "Wrong."

*Plan.* "Does I. D. think of me?"

*Mr. R.* "Wrong again."

Planchette began to whirl round and round in a most unusual manner. The whirling was inexplicable to me, but *Mr. R.* nodded his head as if it had some meaning to him. Presently Planchette informed me that I. D. had been bitten by a snake.

*Mr. R.* "Right; she has been bitten by a ground rattlesnake, and Planchette's motion reminded me very forcibly of the manner in which this snake coils. My question was, 'Has I. D. been badly bitten?'"

*Plan.* "No."

*Mr. R.* "I fancy this is so, as her father stated the fact without comment in a letter to me. Had she been seriously bitten he would have said more. What do you think of Swedenborg?"

*Plan.* "My opinion of Swedenborg is very much altered from what it was on earth. He was only partially illuminated, and therefore little faith is to be placed in his writings."

*Mr. R.* "Is not half a truth better than none?"

*Plan.* "A partial truth leads to much error. You will find that the majority of Swedenborgians are not Spiritualists. Swedenborg puts limitations to their faith, and they will not go one step beyond what they find laid down in his books."

*Mrs. F.* "Is Heaven divided into spheres as Swedenborg describes?"

*Plan.* "He saw through a glass darkly. I have no patience with this talk about spheres. The circles of spirits are not numbered. They are brought together by harmony of thought."

*Mr. R.* "Are there any marriages in heaven?"

*Plan.* "No; once is enough."

*Mrs. F.* "Are you happy?"

*Plan.* "I'm in a sympathetic atmosphere for the first time in my life. Shakspeare and I are great cronies. I find traces of old Nathaniel Field's (an ancestor) physiognomy not only in myself, but in our daughter."

*Mr. R.* "What sort of a man was Shakspeare?"

*Plan.* "Shakspeare was not a saint in life, according to orthodox notions, but he was a generous-hearted, noble fellow, and a tremendous worker. Charles Dickens is about as hard a worker as Shakspeare was."

*Mr. R.* "Would you compare the two?"

*Plan.* "Of course not, and yet there is a similarity in the order of mind."

*Mrs. F.* "Surely you have not attained Shakspeare's level. How then can you associate with him?"

*Plan.* "But I tell you that spirits are linked toge-

ther by harmony, and if I am not in sympathy with Shakspeare, with whom *am* I in sympathy? Don't you suppose that Shakspeare is a teacher? Of what benefit are his heart and intellect, if he does not keep school?"

*Mrs. F.* "Then he is your teacher?"

*Plan.* "Yes—guide, philosopher and friend."

Laughing and talking independently of Planchette, my hand resting upon her, however, we were highly amused to see Planchette join in the merriment by exclaiming, "bully!"

*Mrs. F.* "Why, Planchette, I am shocked! How could you make use of such a vulgar expression?"

*Plan.* "That's Shakspearean." Thus reminded, we remembered that "bully" is found in *The Tempest*, "bully monster,"—in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, "Bully Bottom,"—and if I am not mistaken, it also figures in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

*Mr. R.* "What do you think of Benjamin Franklin?"

*Plan.* "Franklin's mind was very good as far as it went, but it did not go very far. He is of hard fibre, and spiritual life has not made as much impression upon him as upon many others of inferior reputations."

*Mrs. F.* "How do spirits look?"

*Plan.* "We show our souls. Whatever our nature, that is seen in our figure and face."

*Mrs. F.* "How are spirits occupied?"

*Plan.* "They do about everything here, even to getting drunk."

*Mr. R.* "Pray how can spirits get drunk?"

*Plan.* "Through mortals. They inspire human beings with their own cravings, and thus indulge in their vices."

*Mrs. F.* "Then it is quite possible for mortals to be controlled by wicked spirits?"

*Plan.* "Certainly."

Mr. R. asked a mental question, which was not answered very satisfactorily. Afterwards he gave me a written question.

"Planchette," I said, "tell me the contents of this paper."

*Plan.* "Shall I return to my old business in New York?"

*Mr. R.* "Not quite right, and yet it is almost an equivalent. I wrote, 'Ought I to remain in New York?'"

Planchette proceeded to answer this question, and entered into a very clear analysis of Mr. R.'s character.

Putting Planchette aside, and placing the pencil in my left hand, I found I could write quite as readily without the board as with it, and that although the writing of my left hand was constrained and peculiar, it was perfectly legible. I had never before written with my left hand.

JUNE 5.

As Planchette purports to write under my father's influence, my mother questioned her concerning

certain incidents in my father's life, of which I was ignorant. She obtained satisfactory results. Planchette then wrote three or four pages of advice regarding my mother's health and line of conduct. It was very sensible. Afterwards I received a small lecture as to what I ought to do.

Having on several occasions assured me that I should be able to produce "raps," I asked Planchette when they would be forth-coming.

"You can have raps to-night," was the response. After waiting for some time, and, just as I expected, hearing nothing whatever, I was first told that I was impatient. Later came this communication :

"There is no electricity in the air to-night, and it is more difficult to produce sound. Perhaps you had better go to bed and not wait for this manifestation."

This is only one of Planchette's many vagaries. Had I sat up all night—and Planchette vowed that it would not require more than an hour longer to produce raps—I should have had nothing but death-like stillness for my foolish pains.

JUNE 6.

Professor and Mrs. B. called in the evening and desired to see Planchette. The Professor asked several mental and one written question. The answers were total failures. Mrs. B. asked how old her father was when he died.

*Planchette.* "He died a comparatively young man."

This Mrs. B. said was correct enough, thirty-six being his age at the time.

*Mrs. B.* "Where did he die?"

Supposing *Mrs. B.*'s father to have been a New Englander, knowing that she was a native of that portion of America, I concluded that he must have died there. Planchette entertained a different opinion and wrote, "In the South."

*Mrs. B.* "Yes, my father died in the Gulf of Mexico."

Professor B. asked at what age *his* father died. Planchette replied :

"About forty."

I have forgotten whether this was three or four years too old or too young, but it was one or the other.

The sitting was stupid, and Planchette retired after advising every one who wished to receive communications to try for himself; stating furthermore that I was not a medium for any one but myself.

"It is no use," wrote Planchette, "to expect people to have faith unless they experience the phenomena themselves. I cannot see into everybody's life. It is impossible."

JUNE 7.

My mother opened a book, and, without looking at it, asked the number of the page touched. Planchette answered, "186." The correct number was "286!"

"What do you mean by being so untruthful?" I asked.

*Plan.* "I have no reason to give. You get a number into your head and of course it must come out before another can get in. This is why children make such good mediums. They do not think for themselves."

Planchette says she has no reason to give, and then gives one. Whether children really make better mediums than adults I do not know.

JUNE 8.

Having sent some theatre-tickets to a gentleman who expected to be in New York on the nights for which they were intended, and learning that they had not been used, I inquired the cause of Planchette.

*Plan.* "He has been quite ill; threatened with fever, but I think it is nothing serious. Will probably be able to come on in a few days."

I disbelieved every word of this report. Three days later, however, I received a note from this gentleman, saying, that he had just arrived in New York, having been laid up for some days with rheumatism.

JUNE 10.

We dined with Mr. and Mrs. F., and in the evening had a very long and interesting séance with Planchette in the presence of half a dozen persons. Planchette made a correct report of the physical condition of Mr. F.'s nearest relative,—of whom I knew nothing; gave an admirable analysis of Mr. F.'s character;

referred to the nature of his ancestry of which I was ignorant; when questioned about Shakspeare, Fanny Kemble and Edwin Booth, gave clever criticisms thereon, and was witty as well as wise. This was the verdict of those assembled who pronounced Planchette to be "very singular indeed."

The séance was too personal for the public eye. Planchette would communicate with no one but Mr. F., and expressed the greatest desire that he should himself experiment with the board for the purpose of investigation, "because," argued Planchette, "he has a clear head, and if he once believes, he will not hesitate to promulgate the truth of a phenomenon that in one form or another, is as old as the hills."

Mr. F. manifested a great deal of interest. Planchette wrote twenty-six long pages.

JUNE 11.

About nine o'clock P. M., we were surprised by the appearance of Mrs. L. Mrs. S. and Mrs. B. in a high state of glee; the last two armed with Planchettes.

Mrs. S. who had worked the board so successfully when last in my room declared that she had little or no power at home; that Planchette had scarcely moved for her, and she wanted to know the cause.

My Planchette replied, "Because you have not been in a receptive mood. The atmosphere of your house is not conducive to spiritual communion and you do not exert yourself sufficiently to overcome depressing influences."

Mrs. B. is very susceptible to magnetism, and in a

short time her Planchette performed extraordinary antics. At first she seemed to have no control over the board, but in the course of half an hour she wrote with great facility. Name after name of persons, whom none of us were thinking of—some of whom were unknown even to Mrs. B.—were written out, with characteristic remarks appended.

Mrs. S. also began to write, but with less success. As tests, the manifestations of Mrs. B.'s Planchette were much stronger than anything proceeding from mine; but as her papers were not preserved, I am unable to recall them with sufficient accuracy to warrant detail.

None of us were Spiritualists, and we naturally speculated upon the phenomena; whereupon my Planchette wrote: "Do K. F. believe in the reality of Spiritualism? How can you doubt the truth of these phenomena? How can your mind control when so much is written that you dream not of? Soon you will discriminate, and the influences around you are so fine that you will obtain exceeding comfort from so-called 'Planchette.'"

We discussed the feasibility of my undertaking a peculiar work, and Planchette advocated it very strongly. I said that I should make a lamentable failure. My hand came down with two heavy raps, which, according to the interpretation of "mediums," signify a negation.

*Mrs. L.* "Who among my friends agrees with K. F.?"

*Plan.* "W. H."

Mrs. L. said this was true.

*Mrs. L.* "Can you tell me whom I am thinking about?"

*Plan.* "F. A." (Correct.)

This experiment was repeated several times, and with success. Twice a list of names was written, and once Planchette selected the wrong name, but upon a second attempt fixed upon the right one.

Mrs. S.'s Planchette became profane—a common practice, I am told, with Planchettes generally; and as the language was foreign to the lady's nature, and moreover not at all germane to the matter, I asked what it meant.

*Plan.* "Her apathy leads her to be influenced by the malice and profanity of neighboring spirits."

*Mrs. L.* "What used Mr. D. G. to call me?"

This was a difficult question for Planchette; but as Mrs. L. is sympathetic to me, I thought it might be answered. After quite a pause, Planchette wrote, "Rose Marie." This was wrong, and had no sooner been erased than "Marie Elise" took its place.

*Mrs. L.* "Right."

The health of an absent acquaintance was discussed. Both Mrs. B.'s Planchette and mine wrote on the same subject at the same time, and expressed the same opinion, which was diametrically opposed to that of the physician.

Then there followed a communication from two friends who had died of the same disease, giving advice as to treatment. This came through Mrs. B., who could not decipher one of the names. I took

the paper from her in the hope of succeeding better, but failed. My Planchette came to the rescue, and wrote the name again. Examining the first by the light of the second, we saw that it could be nothing else.

At the close of the sitting, Mrs. B. wrote as readily as I did, but Mrs. S. had scribbled a few sentences only. She might have got on better had she been less interested in Mrs. B.'s communications. Mrs. B.'s Planchette claimed to be controlled by at least a dozen different spirits in succession. Mine was "faithful for ever" to one.

JUNE 13.

I met Professor H. at Professor D.'s last night, and had quite a long talk with him about Planchette. He did not attempt to deny the phenomenon, but could give no explanation of it. Of course, he totally denied the possibility of spiritual agency. He told me to watch the manifestations closely, for the purpose of getting at the truth.

To-day Planchette informs me that "science can't do anything with Planchette. Mark my words. They (the scientific men) will acknowledge it, and declare it to be an undeveloped law of mind. There they will take their stand, and you won't be able to make them leave it until the whole world cries aloud at their obstinacy. Christ went through the same ordeal. The scientific were not his followers."

JUNE 16.

I passed the evening with Mrs. H., Miss S. and Mr. S. Planchette was put upon the table, and requested to perform. She did not scruple to tell several untruths, and I became exceedingly wroth. Planchette retorted :

"I do tell the truth when I get a chance; but, my dear child, remember that I am conveying my ideas through your mind, and the consequence is that the combination thus formed cannot always be correct."

*Mrs. H.* "If spirits can communicate with us, why have they not done so before?"

*Plan.* "The time was not ripe. Why was not the Atlantic cable laid years ago?"

*Miss S.* "Are we to be swayed by what Planchette says?"

*Plan.* "Not by any means. God forbid."

*Miss S.* "Are we to heed it?"

*Plan.* "In a measure; but for heaven's sake, do not relinquish your own judgment. If advice be good according to your conscience and conviction, take it; if not, put it aside."

*Mrs. H.* "I see no good to arise from what is called Spiritualism."

*Plan.* "It will bring heaven and earth nearer together; it will revive the old belief in spiritual communication, and will force the sceptical to believe in a future existence, besides bringing immense comfort to those who lose their friends."

Out of six written questions four were answered

correctly, and two out of three lists of names were satisfactorily disposed of. The sitting was very uninteresting.

JUNE 18.

Misses P., W. and Professor S. passed the evening with us. None had any sympathy with Planchette, and yet all desired to put her to the test. Professor S. began by asking whether there would be a European war. Planchette indulged in the following glittering generalities:

“A war is really imminent. France is ready for hostilities—far readier than she was a year ago. Napoleon is afraid of Germany, and the longer Germany is left in peace, the stronger and more concentrated she will become.

“Napoleon is a wise man for France, and wants to extend French boundaries. Now or never is the time, and I think that in a few months war will be declared, if some very unexpected *coup* does not take place.”

*Prof. S.* “Shall I go to Paris?”

*Plan.* “That depends—As a student of history, you should desire to go; but if you go to establish yourself in business, there are grave doubts. If you can leave at any moment when you see the clouds gathering, then I see no reason why you should not go.”

Here some discussion took place as to the greatness of different nations. Professor S., who is a German, predicted the future power of Germany. I naturally maintained that America would rule Europe in the course of years.

*Prof. S.* "Will this ever come to pass?"

*Plan.* "Yes."

*Prof. S.* "Why?"

*Plan.* "Because America is a combination of all the world's forces, allied to the greatest freedom of thought."

Miss P. handed me a written question, which was submitted to Planchette.

*Q.* "Does it refer to a man or a woman?"

*Plan.* "To a man."

*Q.* "What is the name?"

*Plan.* "N. B. You'd like to know what N. B. is doing now, and where he is."

The written question ran thus: "What is N. B. doing and thinking?"

Miss P. asked a mental question, to which she received an incorrect reply.

About this time Mr. O. entered the room, and being a stranger, the necessary introduction ensued. Miss P. and himself recognized each other as having met before. Miss P. remembered, but Mr. O. had no recollection of the place.

*Q.* "Where did Miss P. and Mr. O. meet?"

*Plan.* "In Mrs. D.'s studio."

This was correct.

*Mr. O.* "My brother is about to do a rash thing; what is it?"

*Plan.* "He is going into business for himself."

*Mr. O.* "Right. What sort of business?"

*Plan.* "Commission."

*Mr. O.* "Wrong."

I asked Mr. O. to write down the occupation, seal it, and leave it with me, and I would experiment with it. He did so, but before I had leisure to throw away, I accidentally heard what the business was.

After giving Mr. O. some sensible advice, Planchette withdrew.

JUNE 21.

Planchette told a gentleman that he was very much interested in a young lady, and to my surprise he did not "deny the soft impeachment."

*Later.*

Major W. came in. He has a great deal of magnetic power, being able to cure headaches by manipulation. He asked Planchette a question.

*Plan.* "You must do your own questioning on your own board. I'm not a test for strangers. You can have a board as well as any one else; and if you, with your magnetic power, are not willing to take some little trouble, you do not deserve to have any communications."

Such is the inconsistency of the Planchettian nature, that after administering a snub of this description, she will go to work and answer questions quite as readily as at any other time.

I did not know Major W.'s Christian name. I wrote a list of ordinary names, and asked him

whether his name was among them. Assuring me that it was, Planchette pointed to it.

As Planchette persisted in saying that Major W. only needed practice to make the board move, he made the trial, and in the course of half an hour had scrawled over a quarter of a page.

A young lady in the house who never saw a Planchette until a few days ago, and who has no faith in Spiritualism, succeeds in obtaining short sentences.

Mrs. T., the lady who was with me when I first began to write, sends me word that her Planchette is beginning to show signs of activity; that the writing is a facsimile of her deceased husband's, and that his name is the perpetual refrain.

Major W. wished to be told his wife's name, and presented me with a list of thirteen names. After three attempts, Planchette pointed out the correct one.

Mr. B. joined our circle, and said he would give a great deal to have Planchette tell him about a book in his trunk.

*Plan.* "There are several books in your trunk."

*Mr. B.* "I believe there are, but I am thinking of one in particular."

*Q.* "Is it printed, or in manuscript?"

*Plan.* "Manuscript; journal written by his wife."

*Q.* "Was it written soon after marriage or later?"

*Plan.* "Early."

*Mr. B.* "What is the nature of the contents?"

*Plan.* "Expresses much affection for her husband."

*Q.* "How long a period does it cover?"

*Plan.* "Several months."

*Q.* "Is the book large or small?"

*Plan.* "Small."

*Q.* "Leather or paper cover?"

*Plan.* "Leather."

*Major W.* "What kind of leather?"

Planchette hesitated for a moment, and I asked whether the leather resembled my account-book.

*Plan.* "Yes."

Upon showing my book, Mr. B. said that the material was different. I asked to be permitted to compare the two; and when Mr. B. returned with the journal, I found that both had morocco covers, but that the quality was different.

All of Planchette's answers were declared by Mr. B. to be entirely correct.

JUNE 27.

Mr. O. called upon Planchette.

*Mr. O.* "I should like Planchette to give me her opinion of prophecy."

*Plan.* "It is or was nothing more than clairvoyance; such as is developed constantly in the 19th century. But—and this makes a great difference—great minds were endowed with the gift in by-gone days, and *very little* ones are so endowed to-day. However, it is not always so. If you recall William Blake, you will see a fine instance of this gift, and there will be many such before the close of this century.

“There was much of the clairvoyant or prophesying power in the Sibyls and ancient oracles. To-day the ancients are called fools because they gave heed to their priests; but there was much truth mixed up with some falsehood, and in my opinion the fools are as abundant to-day as they were then.”

*Mr. O.* “What do you think about consulting Planchette in business matters?”

*Plan.* “I see no harm in it. As experimental, it is a good test. My only objection is, that people are, in spite of themselves, too much inclined to pin their faith on *what may not be trustworthy.*”

*Mr. O.* “Well, then, let me hear what you have to say about my business.”

*Plan.* “There is this to be said: you are giving, I think, too much time and attention to it, *for you.* By *you,* I mean that a man of your calibre is intended for other work. You are doing what an intellect of purely business capacity might do equally well and better.”

Having no acquaintance with Mr. O.'s private affairs, I asked if this communication were intelligible. Mr. O. signified that it was.

*Mr. O.* “But if by giving my mind to business I succeed in realizing sufficient money to enjoy future leisure, what then?”

*Plan.* “*If,* yes. But there is that dreadful *if.*”

Here Mr. O. asked a mental question.

*Plan.* “Your mines, etc., may come out all right but however *rich* they may be, I fear their riches will remain in the bowels of the earth for some years

longer. Immediate results you can not have; and meanwhile your best years are waning and your special work is unfinished." (Satisfactory.)

*Mr. O.* "But suppose my business be not permanent?"

*Plan.* "Stop at this, then. Do n't go on to other and still other temporary affairs. You can't afford to do it. You are valuable to us. You know it. You have something to say and we want you to say it. Your pecuniary condition is in no great danger of collapse, and whatever you may strive for in the way of wealth, my good friend, be assured that although you will always have enough, you will never be an Astor nor even a less important monetary potentate than he."

*Mr. O.* "Well, it is pleasant to know that I shall always have enough."

*Plan.* "Enough is as good as a feast,  
For man, and for woman, and beast."

Planchette's lecture was comprehensible to Mr. O. who expressed his obligations and retired.

JUNE 28.

C. R. passed the afternoon with me and as she had been absent from the city for several weeks, I expected to surprise her with Planchettian evolutions. The flattering unction was not long laid to my soul. The town of S. was quite as familiar with the mystery as New York. She herself in connection with a friend had been able to move Planchette, and more than that, she

had been able to put this friend into a mesmeric sleep in which she had apparently gone into a trance and had answered questions most accurately. She had even described certain places and rooms in Europe without ever having seen them. This experiment had been tried several times until C. R. found that she could put her friend to sleep by merely looking at her.

C. R. asked my Planchette, whether any unfortunate results would follow, if she exerted this power over her friend, and whether she should endeavor to control her.

*Plan.* "If she can be easily persuaded, no harm can be done, but do not act contrary to her will. Never under any circumstances give her liquor or any stimulant whatever while in a mesmeric condition."

Planchette then proceeded to describe this friend, and with the exception of the hair, drew a correct likeness.

Being anxious to move Planchette, C. R. made the attempt, and in the course of twenty minutes she began to scrawl. This scrawling kept up as long as C. R.'s hand remained on Planchette, and toward the end a violent effort to write was made, but we could distinguish little or nothing. We asked Planchette whether any poetry was written in the other world. This question was put after we had been told that Poe was present.

*Plan.* "We *think* in this existence. No writing. Poetry is thought, conceived, communicated, but not written."

Perhaps this may account for the terrible work Byron and others make of verse when they revisit the scenes of former conquests, and attempt to lisp in numbers. They are out of practice.

We asked what sort of people had the most magnetism.

*Plan.* "Intellectual people usually have less of it than others, because of the drain upon their vitality. Where physique and brain are thoroughly equiposed, you will find the magnetic supply to be complete. Animals have a deal more magnetism (see the horse) than men, for the reason that they are not exhausted by thought."

If this be so, why may not Planchette be moved by *horse-power*?

*Evening.*

Major W. consulted Planchette on some business matters, merely as tests, and Madame was not caught tripping. He asked a mental question, and this was the response.

*Plan.* "You've a pretty strong will of your own; but you've a deal of magnetism, and your perceptions are acute. In a measure you are *clear-seeing*, and might, under favorable circumstances, be even a *vision-ary*."

This weak pun seemed to me entirely *apropos des bottes*, and I expected Major W. to smile sarcastically; but, on the contrary, he told me that recently he had had what appeared to him to be a vision. It apper-

tained to certain business, and had been brought before him so vividly while he was sound asleep, as to make an impression upon him unlike any dream that he had ever had before. He had overheard a conversation between certain parties who were endeavoring to play him false.

Planchette declared this vision to be a warning merely; that the evil might be avoided if taken in time.

Mr. W. is a clear-headed man, of no spiritualistic tendencies.

JULY 6.

During the past week, four or five persons have had interviews with Planchette, in which she has given such excellent analyses of their characters, and administered such good advice, that each person has carried off his character and medicine, and I have nothing left to show for the time thus spent.

BOSTON, MASS., July 12.

Passing last evening with Mr. and Mrs. L., at Roxbury, the children gathered around me, and clamored for Planchette.

"We want to see it go," they all cried; and so, to amuse the little people, I sat down before a table, and they brought me the creature, for of course there was one in the house.

Planchettes pervade the atmosphere, and even Wall street brokers keep them upon their desks. Heaven

help the brokers if they speculate *with*, as well as *upon* them!

The little monster trotted up and down with her usual energy, and also wrote; but nothing of interest was elicited. While we were thus engaged, two ladies called, one of them being a bright, intelligent young lady, who no sooner caught sight of Planchette, than her face became unusually animated, and forthwith she told the following story, which, if not repeated in the same language in which it was told to me, is exact as to facts. Miss D.'s veracity is undoubted; she is not a Spiritualist, and Planchette is a new acquaintance to her.

"Sitting in the parlor recently, with a West Indian lady who was visiting me, I saw her eyes wander about the room, and finally fix themselves upon Planchette.

"'What is that?' she exclaimed.

"I told her, and asked her to place her hands upon the board.

"'But it won't move for me,' she said, placing her hands as requested.

"Planchette *did* move, however, and with the greatest ease, first writing the names of several of her school friends in Germany, and concluding with that of E. D.

"'This must be for you,' Mrs. H. said. 'I am not an American, and am acquainted with no one in this country.'

"E. D. was written several times, but I solemnly averred that I knew no such person.

“Assuming to be E. D., Planchette stated that she died on the thirtieth of last May, of a disease which ‘propriety forbade her to mention.’ Upon further questioning, she gave —— square, Boston, as the place of her residence. Then I remembered that in my daily walks to school, over the Neck, I often encountered a young lady who had been pointed out to me as a Miss D., of —— square. The name of her school was written, and coincided with what I had been told.

“‘If you wish to have my death proved,’ continued Planchette, ‘go to the City Hall, and consult the register; or, if you prefer it, go to *Geranium Path, Forest Hills Cemetery, and you will see my tomb.*’

“The next day I had the necessary inquiries made at the City Hall, but no such name could be found upon the books; so on the afternoon of the same day I went to Forest Hills and, after some difficulty, found a ‘Geranium Path,’ and a lot containing a tomb and several graves bearing the name of ‘D.’ The christian name of ‘E.,’ however, was nowhere to be seen. It was late on a Saturday evening, so I could not gratify my curiosity, and settle the matter by consulting the register of the cemetery.

“Applying to Planchette the next morning, Mrs. H. still being the medium, she persisted in her previous statement, gave the number of the tomb, and enumerated some of the names in the lot. Both number and names I found to be correct. In addition, E. D. wrote out her father’s name and place of business, desiring me to go to her father, and inquire

about her death. Looking in the Directory on Monday, I discovered that E. D. had really given me the right address, but had failed on the christian name. I did *not* consult Mr. D., but I did go again to Forest Hills, saw the books and the superintendent, the latter assuring me that no one bearing the name of D. had been buried there for twelve years. Meeting one of E. D.'s friends soon after, she corroborated the statement.

“Furthermore, I was told by E. D. that the last time she had seen me was on a certain date, with a certain gentleman, in Washington street, Boston. Upon turning to my diary, I found that I had been in town on the date indicated, and with the aforesaid gentleman. Thinking over the matter, I remembered having seen Miss D., of —— square, on that occasion, and of remarking upon her dress!

“Here is mystery for you! Every statement made by Planchette was correct, saving the very important one of E. D.'s death, and the minor one of her father's christian name. I knew none of the facts, saving that of the young lady's existence, which came to my recollection after much thinking.

“Mrs. H., who controlled Planchette, knew nothing of them whatever. She was a foreigner and, as she herself said, unacquainted with any one in America. What is also singular, the language employed by Planchette, was perfectly correct English, while under ordinary circumstances Mrs. H. writes English with a foreign idiom.”

Such is Miss D.'s story, and it is certainly incom-

prehensible. Those who maintain that Planchette never divulges anything that is not known to some one of the persons assembled, will here find much food for reflection.

ISLES OF SHOALS, N. H., August 8, 1868.

Yesterday being rainy, Planchette was put into requisition, and in one case promised to be particularly interesting, had the experimenting been continued. A boy of sixteen, who had previously laughed at Planchette, suddenly found that Madame wrote for him with facility. She purported to write under the influence of the lad's maternal grandfather, who signed his name, and sent one or two messages to his children, that, when repeated to his daughter, were declared to be very characteristic.

The initials on a gentleman's seal ring were given correctly, saving that the situation of two letters was transposed.

Just as the sitting began to be earnest, the lad was called away by his mother, who, fearing the effect upon his nervous system, prohibited any further use of the board on his part. In the evening quite a number of ladies assembled in a private room for the purpose of cultivating Planchette's acquaintance. Having heard that a pretty, fair-haired child, eight years old, was a "medium," she was invited to join us.

Seating her at the table, with two other little girls who were very anxious to "make the thing go," and

whose eyes grew to be as big as saucers when they saw my Planchette dash wildly about, I put Planchette under her hand, and that of a second child, who had never had any such experience.

In a short time Planchette became active, and scratched up a large sheet of paper, but did nothing further, as the little "medium" grew tired and went off to bed. She told me that she and her brother, who is eleven years of age, had frequently obtained very good communications; that she had never tried to write alone; that, unaided, her brother could not move Planchette; that she could write after a fashion, but had never been taught.

After she left, the second child held a pencil in her hand, and succeeded in making a few lines. A young lady, of peculiarly delicate organization, then placed a hand upon Planchette, and before long the board moved about with great deliberation. At the end of half an hour the young lady became fatigued, and retired. My performances with the board were as rapid as ever, but the results were nothing but what might have been the involuntary action of my mind.

AUGUST 9.

This morning I waylaid little Maggie, the fair-haired child, and we retired with Planchette, accompanied by child No. 2, and the susceptible young lady of last night. As Maggie had never written alone, I thought it would be well to try her by herself, and she put both hands on Madame.

Very soon Planchette began to whirl, whereupon I said, "Who are you?"

"Nobody," was the response. A succession of *e's* and *m's* followed this laconicism. Then I said—

"Be good enough to tell me who Nobody is."

*Plan.* "Aneething."

This was a peculiar way of spelling *anything*, so I asked Maggie if she knew how to spell the word. She replied that she had forgotten, but she thought that it ought to be spelled *a-n-a-t-h-i-n-g*.

Removing Planchette, I put a pencil into Maggie's hands, and found that she could use it without Madame's aid. First she wrote the alphabet as far as *g*; then she made a chain of *e's*, and afterwards went off in a tangent, and made circles. I expostulated with Planchette, and asked whether she could not write.

*Plan.* "i can."

*Q.* "What are you?"

*Plan.* "A girl." (Repeated twice.)

*Q.* "Who is a girl?"

*Plan.* "Maggie."

*Q.* "What is Planchette?"

*Plan.* "A *bo*"—(We all supposed that *boy* was intended, but beginning anew, Planchette wrote "*a bord.*")

*Q.* "Maggie, can you spell board?"

*Maggie.* "Oh, yes."

*Q.* "Let me hear you."

*Maggie.* "*B-o-r-d!*"

A series of *s's* and scollops followed, after which I inquired whether Planchette had anything to say.

*Plan.* "it wants to *right*." (This was written twice, as it was impossible to read it the first time, owing to the general debility of all the letters, and the four words being run into one.)

*Q.* "Can you tell me the initials on my seal ring?"

*Plan.* "No."

*Q.* "Why not?"

*Plan.* "*i* do n't *no* them."

Here Maggie stopped writing on account of a toothache, and I could see nothing in this hour's work, but the unaccountable action of Maggie's mind and fingers that could neither spell nor write correctly.

Yet I am told by trustworthy men and women, of children who write and draw with Planchette, when, without the board, it is impossible for them to do either. I could repeat very remarkable stories that have been related to me; but not being able to substantiate them, I refrain.

A lady at The Shoals informed me that at one time in her life she seemed to be "possessed." Losing all control over her arms, they were sometimes beaten upon the table so severely as to become black and blue. She was able to move heavy tables and pianos, could give satisfactory answers to sealed letters, and was a powerful "writing medium." Fearful, however, of the consequences, not being able to master this mysterious influence, she at last refrained from all experimenting. The husband of this lady—both are well known in Boston's literary circles—corroborated these statements.

NEWPORT, R. I., August 24.

Last night Planchette was brought into requisition in the presence of a literary coterie, Mrs. C., Mr. R., Prof. R., and Mr. G., sitting around the table with me, while several other ladies and gentlemen carried on a conversation in another part of the room. Not knowing Mr. G.'s christian name, having met him for the first time the day before, I asked Planchette to write it for me; and as the shortest way to accomplish this was by making a list, Mr. G. handed me a series of names.

Planchette failed. The list was removed, and I put Planchette on a piece of paper with the command to write out Mr. G.'s entire signature. To the extreme right of the paper Planchette wrote the surname in full, and then stood still for a much longer time than suited our patience. Finally, as if she had just been charged with an idea, she danced about, and stopping suddenly, wrote "Watson" before the surname, still leaving quite a space to the left unfilled.

"Watson must be your middle name," I said to Mr. G., who looked on very much surprised.

*Mr. G.* "Yes it is; but I don't believe you can tell me what my first name is, for I never write it out in full, and very few people know what it is."

At all events, it was worth trying for, so Planchette was told to do her best. After another "wait," "John" was written high up on the right hand corner of the paper, remote from Mr. G.'s name.

"This can not be intended for Mr. G.," I said, "or it would have been written in the space before Watson."

*Mr. G.* "No, it is not my name."

Still another "wait," and Planchette filled up the void with "Samuel."

*Mr. G.* "Wrong again."

Hereupon Professor R., who sat at my left, began to smile knowingly and said—

"I have been experimenting. I have been *willing* you *not* to write Mr. G.'s name. 'John,' which Planchette wrote in the corner, is *my* name. Now, I'll not exert my will in opposition to yours, and we'll see if it makes any difference."

Professor R. had no sooner ceased speaking than Planchette became highly agitated, and wrote "Richard" with great rapidity and decision. Mr. G. jumped up and left the room without vouchsafing a remark. It really was his name, and although an editor, he was astonished.

Later, Mr. R. handed me a list of names, and wished to have his own pointed out. I did not know it. All were crased with the exception of the correct name.

*Prof. R.* "Planchette, where am I thinking of going?"

*Plan.* "You are thinking of going West."

*Prof. R.* "Yes, that's in a few days; but where am I thinking of going later?"

*Plan.* "England." Then, (after a pause,) "You are going, or at least hope to go, to Europe."

*Prof. R.* "Right."

Professor R. was a stranger to me, as all present can testify.

Knowing that Mrs. C. had on several occasions moved Planchette with the assistance of another lady, when communications had been received in a language which neither understood, I placed a pencil in her hand, and asked her to try to write.

She said she had never made the attempt alone, nor without a board; but as I urged her, she complied. For quite a while the pencil would not move, and impatient for results, I placed my left hand upon her right hand. Mrs. C. said that the tips of my fingers seemed to be on fire. Upon removing my hand, Mrs. C.'s pencil indulged in a series of scratches, and wrote "Mary" several times.

"Mary what?" we asked.

"Mary Stuart," responded Planchette, repeating the name as if enamored of it. No one present knew of any Mary Stuart saving the lovely Queen of Scots, yet Planchette would write nothing else; and as Mrs. C. began to twitch with nervousness, the séance came to an end.

SEPTEMBER 12.

Taking tea with several friends at Miss C.'s, Planchette constituted the evening's entertainment, the principal feature of which was a series of heads sketched by Miss G., who has no knowledge of drawing. By herself, Miss G. could not make her

pencil move; but after I had magnetized her hand for a few minutes—I call it magnetism, not knowing what the power really is—the pencil started off, and made the most extraordinary looking heads I ever saw, and executed in the most peculiar manner. To call them drawings would be absurd. They were like nothing in heaven or on earth, yet were grotesque enough to laugh at. Not one head or face resembled another. Every one had a character of its own, and was constructed on a different plan. All had names appended, some being of persons present who failed to recognize their own features, and others bearing names unknown.

Matters having come sufficiently *to a head*, five of us sat around a table, took hold of hands, and did our best to invoke “rappings.” Not a rap could be heard, but unconsciously I succeeded in putting Miss C. under mesmeric influence by simply holding one of her hands.

“I can hardly keep my eyes open,” she murmured, and closing them, went into a semi-unconscious state, muttering, “It is delicious! perfectly delightful! Don’t wake me, I beg of you!” and then laughed, as we laughed to see a person of so much reserve lose all control over herself.

The effect produced was such as is often entailed by taking more wine than is good for one’s reason. This sleep continued for several minutes, and might have lasted longer had our merriment been less explosive. When Miss C. awoke, it was with regret on her part, as she said she had been greatly re-

freshed, and had experienced the most delightful sensations.

After further unsuccessful attempts at tipping and rapping, we returned to worldly matters.

SEPTEMBER 18.

Misses C. and G. passed the evening in my room, and although I coaxed Miss G.'s Planchette to write, she would persist in drawing outlandish heads, and baptizing them as likenesses of friends.

"Who is this that draws?" I asked Planchette.

Not one word could Miss G. write. Following the suggestion of Miss C., I put the same question to my own Planchette, and received the reply, "Mrs. M."

We were surprised at this, for although all three of us had been acquainted with a Mrs. M. who had lived in our part of Newport, and had died a year previous, not one of us had given her a thought.

"Mrs. M.!" I exclaimed, "*why* Mrs. M.? Was she in the habit of drawing?"

*Miss C.* "Why, yes indeed. She had a great fancy for sketching, and I remember that she was very fond of making queer heads out of pressed seaweed."

The real Mrs. M. had been a firm believer in a ghost, about which she was wont to tell a remarkable story both in prose and verse.

SEPTEMBER 25.

Yesterday and last night I passed under the roof

with Mr. and Mrs. A. of New York, who relate strange stories of the house they are temporarily occupying.

*Mrs. A.* "The house is haunted I do believe. Night after night we have heard the most extraordinary noises, sometimes pounding, sometimes slamming violent enough to shake the house. When it first began, no one heard the noise but myself and a lady who was visiting us, and of course my husband laughed at me, saying that it was half rats and half fancy.

"A few days later one of the servant girls rushed in to me, almost frightened out of her wits, declaring that a man in a quaker hat had brushed past her on the cellar stairs, and had vanished into space! This, of course, we did not believe, nor did we pay any attention to a later story of hers, wherein she declared, that in the middle of the night this same man had attempted to pull her out of bed, and in the struggle, had hurt her arm very much. Her arm was scratched; but that she undoubtedly did herself while asleep.

"The noises at night continued; the servants vowed they would not stay in the house. Being in New York, Mr. A. did not hear the unearthly sounds; but when he *did* come home he ceased laughing at me, for he, too, heard them. He goes over the house the last thing at night, shuts all the doors, sees that all the shutters are fastened; and yet, when we are quietly in bed, the pounding and slamming begin. Mr. A. gets up, goes over the house again, pokes

into all the dark places, and still the sounds continue.

“At times, they can be heard from kitchen to garret. They have been repeated twelve or fourteen nights, but rarely successively.”

Mr. A., who is a lawyer, and given in no way to fancies, tells the same tale, as does a young man living in the family. During the day I indulged in the hope of “assisting” at this midnight music; and as the conversation naturally took its coloring from recent experiences, I was asked to read aloud a remarkably clever story in the October number of Harper’s Magazine, entitled, “The Day of my Death,” the subject of which is that of “spiritual” phenomena, beginning with an account of noises similar to those described by Mr. and Mrs. A., and ending with the most violent commotions among knives, forks, and china, apparitions, communications, and the prophesying by seven different “mediums” in seven different places, that at a certain hour, on a certain date, the narrator would die, which prophesy was *not* fulfilled.\* The reading of this story, and the discussion as to its probability, absorbed the afternoon, and after tea we sat down to Planchette.

\* Desirous of knowing how much fact and how much fiction went to the making up of this story, I wrote to the author, who is one of the cleverest story-writers in America, and received the following answer:

“The story is ‘thru intirely;’ my note gives the substance of the case. To particularize: The phenomena occurred about fifteen years ago in the house of a near friend of mine, an honorable Christian gentleman and *clergyman*, a man without a nerve

Her boardship did not show her ordinary acumen ; whether this was owing to the presence of two gentlemen who treated Planchette with contempt, thus producing an inharmonious element—sympathies have much to do with this matter—or whether it was owing to the total depravity of inanimate things, I can not say. Apart from pointing out the names of two gentlemen present, Planchette divined nothing. She failed on three or four questions.

Mr. A., however, who had never before moved Planchette, succeeded in getting her to perform a series of gymnastics on the cartridge-paper ; and she made several scrawls that might have passed for writing had they been inspired by Horace Greeley or Rufus Choate. Mr. M., another New York lawyer, also made his “mark,” but it was only a mark.

Disappointed in Planchette, we retired at midnight, and notwithstanding my ears were on the *qui vive*, no sound was heard that I could not account for without going to rats or spirits for a solution. This was a great disappointment to me. To sleep the sleep of the just in a haunted house is contrary

or a fancy ; a man as incredulous on the whole subject of Spiritualism as could possibly be found.

“The facts given in my story I have heard repeatedly from his lips. The phenomena were witnessed by hundreds of people, and made much noise in print at the time. I could not give, in one story, the *half* of them. I *believe* the statements, although I did not witness the occurrences.”

If the reader of this note is not familiar with “The Day of my Death,” he will be fully repaid by investing in the Oct. “Harper.”

to every known tradition, and an offence to the imagination.

OCTOBER 2.

To-day I made a farewell visit to Mrs. A., who was more than ever excited on the subject of the noises. Both she and her cousin, a young man of twenty-five or thirty, said that two nights after my visit, the pounding about the house was so loud and frequent as to prevent every one from sleeping. The coachman was so disturbed by oft-repeated banging on the stable door that he would not sleep there, and sought refuge in the garret.

The following night Mr. A. and his cousin heard a loud ticking on one side of the entry wall. This ticking was easily distinguished on the landing of the second story, but could not be heard on the other side of the wall, not more than half a foot from whence the ticking seemed to proceed.

Twenty-four hours later, Mr. and Mrs. A. heard a similar ticking on the under side of their bedroom mantel-piece. It was impossible to sleep.

The night after, Mr. A. was called to Boston, and without saying anything about these peculiar tickings, Mrs. A., who was afraid to remain in her room alone, requested a favorite waiting-woman, who was not then attached to the family, to pass the night on her couch.

During the night, Mrs. A. remarked E.'s restlessness, which was very unusual. At last, Mrs. A. inquired whether she could not sleep.

"I go to sleep fast enough, Mrs. A.," replied the woman; "but I no sooner lose myself than I am waked up by a strange ticking at the head of my bed. It comes from the wall."

For two nights the house has been quiet and as the A.'s return to New York immediately, they are not likely to have any further experience of this nature. They have been told recently by the neighbors, that the last people who rented the house vacated it very suddenly, because of unaccountable disturbances, and that their coachman refused to occupy the stable.

The story goes, that a former owner of the house committed suicide in an adjoining barn, and that still another man connected in some way with the house also hung himself in a barn. The connection between these suicides and the noises pervading their former home, may be readily established by a good story writer.

BOSTON, October 14.

Surely we know not what a day may bring forth, for if any one yesterday morning had hinted at the possibility of my moving tables, after the manner of "mediums," I should have shaken a most incredulous head. But to begin at the beginning.

Passing the evening at the house of Mr. and Mrs. L. in Roxbury, Mrs. S., who was a guest, proposed that we should amuse ourselves with Planchette. Having no boards, we placed pencils in our hands and laid them upon paper, when Mrs. S. lost control of

her left hand which moved to and fro with great violence and even "struck out from the shoulder" as if engaged in the manly art of self-defence.

A few minutes before sitting down to the table, she complained of numbness in this hand and expressed a fear of paralysis. The vigor with which she subsequently sawed the air, did away with this impression and led to the supposition that the peculiar sensation might have been caused by the incomprehensible fluid which seems to furnish the motive-power in involuntary writing.

Mrs. S. gave herself up to the influence with reluctance, saying she never could write, saving in my presence, and then very unsatisfactorily. Being finally persuaded, she placed the pencil in her right hand, and in a moment came the name of "Father Tailor," written so indistinctly as to be a matter of discussion until Planchette repeated the name in a better chirography. No one present had any knowledge of such a person.

Interrogating the "Father," he maintained that he was in another world where he had been many months and that Mrs. S. knew him in her youth.

*Q.* "Where?"

*Plan.* "In Mobile."

*Q.* "What brings you here?"

*Plan.* "Interest in the writer's mother."

Mrs. S. had been in Mobile when a baby, and naturally had no recollection of "Father Tailor" whose reality is, to say the least, hypothetical. The "Father" wanted to know why Mrs. S. did not try Planchette

more frequently, for owing to want of practice, he could obtain no control over her hand.

Q. "Would Mrs. S. make a good medium?"

Plan. "Yes; healing medium."

Q. "What was the cause of the numbness in her hand?"

Plan. "Humbug! Excitement!"

After this polite verdict, Mrs. S. began to make passes with her right hand, as if in the act of magnetizing some one. Inquiring what this meant, Planchette replied:

"It is a quieting influence which you so much need. It is good for your nerves."

I then asked if I were, as Mrs. S. maintained, instrumental in causing her to write.

Plan. "Your presence, much."

I ventured to remark that I did not see what I had to do with it, whereupon Planchette administered a snub, by saying:

"You do n't believe in magnetism, then: time you did."

Tired of writing herself, Mrs. S. asked me to try my power. First came my father's name, then followed a series of opinions upon various subjects that had engrossed my attention for some days past but were not in my mind at this particular time. I had asked mentally if Planchette had anything to say, and three pages of advice were the consequence. The advice was very good, and in one case such as I should not have thought of giving to myself.

"When will Mr. S. arrive in Boston?" asked Mrs.

S., putting a stop to Planchette's confidential communications.

"He will not be here until the last of the week," answered my Planchette, while hers insisted that he would leave in last night's train and reach the city this morning. (A letter received from Mr. S. the next day announced his intention to be here "the last of the week.")

"Whom am I thinking of?" asked Mrs. S.

Planchette answered incorrectly, but immediately pointed to the correct name, when Mrs. S. handed me a list of names that had not been seen by me.

*Mrs. S.* "Where did I promise to meet this lady?"

*Plan.* "In the country." (*Correct.*)

*Mrs. S.* "Where in the country?"

Again Planchette stumbled, but again out of a list of six summer resorts, selected the right one.

*Mrs. S.* "Have I written to her?"

*Plan.* "No." (*Correct.*) From the expression of Mrs. S.'s face I thought that she had written.

"Whom am I thinking of?" asked Miss D., handing me a list of five names, all of which were entirely unknown to me.

Twice Planchette pointed to the wrong names, and as any further attempt would have been equivalent to guessing, I shut my eyes and held my pencil away from the list. With eyes thus shut, the pencil pointed to the correct name.

*Miss D.* "Which of the five is dead?"

Repeating the experiment of closed eyes, I was

surprised to find it succeed. The pencil made dots over the proper name.

“Now let us see if we can tip tables,” I said, having had quite enough of Planchette. This was agreed to, and selecting a light *papier-maché* table, Mrs. S., Miss D. and myself placed the tips of our fingers upon it. Mrs. L. looked on amused, Mr. L. regarded us as somewhat demented. No one present was a Spiritualist.

Having tried to tip tables on several occasions, without causing the slightest inclination from the perpendicular, I expected no better success in this instance, but as Miss. D. assured me that a young gentleman friend of hers could make tables follow him about the room and even rise from the floor—*not a leg touching the floor for twenty-six minutes!*—I determined to make another effort. In a few minutes the little table began to move, and before long, it tilted backward and forward, now almost to the ground and then assuming an upright position.

It was difficult for us to keep our hands upon the table and although we bore no weight upon it, if I removed my hands while the table was inclined, it would fall to the ground. Music was proposed, and Mrs. S. went to the piano in the next room, while Miss D., thinking that I possessed all the power, resigned her position.

Mrs. S. had no sooner begun to play a waltz than the table manifested renewed activity, and swinging first on one leg and then on the other, walked into the parlor and approached the piano, when, having got

as near the music as possible, it whirled round and round on one leg. I became dizzy by being obliged to follow the table, having all the time only a little finger placed on the centre of it.

This motion was reversed, and when Miss D. came to my aid, the table kept time to the music by swaying to and fro. After this exhibition the table walked back to the other room, and there I abandoned it for a much heavier one that could not be so easily moved.

This last had one drawback, however; it was mounted on castors and could readily be pushed. Still it was difficult to force it off its legs. Placing a finger upon table No. 2, it slowly wheeled around and by describing circles, passed from one room to the other. Raising two of its legs off the ground it pounded upon the floor while Mrs. S. sang.

Here the table-tipping ceased. The phenomena were interesting; one table was very light, and the other was not too heavy for me to carry, and although the principle is of course the same, I should nevertheless prefer to see a grand piano dance on one leg. Surprise increases in the ratio of ponderosity.

OCTOBER 18.

In a letter just received from Miss G. of Newport, whose Planchette indulges in the peculiar drawings of which previous mention has been made, the writer says:

“Planchette, under Miss C.’s hands, was quite

startling the other evening while a niece of Bishop —— was present. It said that she was engaged to a gentleman and gave the initials. Miss C. had never before seen the young lady and knew nothing whatever about her. The young lady looked unutterable things and did not deny the charge. Planchette told the truth.”

With these evidences of Planchette's acumen, I close her Diary, though, I confess, reluctantly, feeling that the preceding pages contain little more than what is rudimentary and that the more intimate I become with my mysterious acquaintance the more secrets she will divulge and the better I shall understand her language. But the edict of a publisher has gone forth and further delay is impossible.



THEORIES  
UPON THE  
NATURAL HISTORY  
OF  
PLANCHETTE.



## THEORIES UPON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PLANCHETTE.

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WHEN was Planchette born? No one in this country seems to know. Some say that the idea was suggested by the old German custom, practised by beldames, of placing a pencil between the blades of scissors, holding the scissors tightly, watching what chances to be traced upon paper placed under the pencil, and accepting its dictums as oracular.

What Planchette says of herself is recorded in her Diary. She seems to be akin to the "Coskio" known to the ancients in the time of Theocritus, and which Butler mentions in his *Hudibras* as

"The oracle of sieve and shears  
That turns as certain as the spheres."

Mr. Robert Dale Owen, the distinguished Spiritualist, who was the first to bring Planchette to America, having had one made for him in France a dozen years ago, states that his attention was drawn to the subject by Bartolozzi, formerly Master of the Horse under Louis Philippe.

He in his turn heard of Planchette—if I remember rightly—through an Italian. Both the daughters of Bartolozzi were operators, and through them Mr. Owen says he has carried on very abstruse conversations upon matters of which they were ignorant. Judging from the name, it is at least plausible to suppose the "little board" to be of French origin.

The earliest mention made of Planchette—so far as I am aware—is in Mrs. C. Jenkins's admirable novel of

"Who Breaks, Pays," republished by Tauchnitz in 1861 as a standard book. In Chapter XXVII, entitled, "Seeing is Believing," occurs the following conversation :

. . . Lill found Mrs. Townsend in her own room, lying on a sofa in a *peignoir*, her long, fair hair escaping from the comb with which it had been hastily caught up. On a table before her was something like a toy—a piece of wood in the shape of a heart, mounted on three tiny wheels; in her hands a book with a yellow paper cover. As Lill entered, she pushed the book under the sofa pillow, and said, "Sit down by me, Lill; I have something serious to say to you. . . . I have been consulting Planchette about you."

"Who is Planchette?" asked Lill, doing all she could to seem at her ease under the scrutiny of the little lady.

"There she is," said Mrs. Townsend, pointing to the apparent toy. "Seeing is believing."

So saying, she drew towards her a blank sheet of folio paper, and upon it placed what she called Planchette: in the broadest end of the heart was a hole in which was already fixed a black-lead pencil, with the point downwards. Mrs. Townsend put her hand on the wood exactly as she would have done on the keys of a piano-forte.

"Now, Planchette," she exclaimed, "let us see what you can do."

In a second or two Planchette wildly scoured across the paper, first one way, then another, Mrs. Townsend's hands obeying every capricious turn of its wheels. At last they came to a stand-still.

"Now then, Lill, see what she has written; there's no trick in it, I assure you."

"I can see nothing but a set of unmeaning strokes."

"Give it to me, child."

Lill handed the paper to her friend.

"What is the meaning of this, Planchette?" cried Mrs. Townsend. "Why do you persist in writing 'river?' Every time I have tried her this morning," continued she, quite gravely, "she has written the same word river. Don't smile; it means a warning to you, for I told

Planchette that it was for you I consulted her. Come, Planchette, dear Planchette, do be a little more clear ;” and Mrs. Townsend, with great seriousness, put another sheet of paper beneath the wood.

“You do n’t mean to say you are in earnest,” said Lill.

“Of course you won’t believe me,” answered Mrs. Townsend. “A truth is always condemned at first : Galileo said the world moved, and it was called a heresy. Well, you may believe I move Planchette ; I can only reply ‘e pure si muove?’”

A bright-red spot of excitement was on each of the speaker’s cheeks.

“It was one of your favorite Italians who gave me Planchette, and if I had always attended to Planchette’s counsel, I should be wiser and better than I am. Many a beautiful letter of advice she has written me, alluding to events no one knew but myself ; and prayers, ah ! Lill ! I could show you such sublime prayers she has written.”

“My dear Mrs. Townsend ! dear Honora !” exclaimed Lill, quite shocked.

“I believed as little as you do, once ; but as I said before, seeing is believing ; and one day I was dining out, and people were talking of spirit-rapping and table-turning ; I laughed, and said I would believe if the dinner-table rose up and slapped my hand. I held my hand high above the table ; you do not think I would tell you a fib, Lill. I give you my word of honor, suddenly everything in the room seemed to wave before my eyes, and the table—a great, heavy dining-table—jumped up and slapped my hand.

“It was the same evening I first saw Planchette and found out I was a medium. Oh ! the comfort I have had in Planchette ; she has been a friend to me in my loneliness.”

Lill began now seriously to fear that Mrs. Townsend was mad.

“No, my dear girl,” said she ; “I am as sane as you. Poor Lill ! I can read your face easier than this warning of Planchette’s river ! river !” she repeated. “Come, put your hands on it with mine.”

It was quite droll to see the two ladies sitting silent and expectant with their hands on the wooden heart, which, however coaxed by her devotee, remained stubbornly immovable.

"Take your hands off ; she knows you are an unbeliever." Away ran Planchette, freed from Lill's pressure.

"Ah ! she has written Lilian, and put a great cross after it !"

"Lilian is my christian name," said Lill.

"There, now, do you believe ? I swear to you I did not know you were called Lilian, though I must say I have often wondered what your real name was."

Lill did not choose to contradict her friend, or even to say that the word she declared was Lilian, might have served as well as any other in the dictionary.

"Lilian, and a cross, and river ; I can't make it out ;" and Mrs. Townsend pushed away Planchette, "except that she means you are likely to be crossed in love."

"She ought then to have written willow, instead of river," said Lill, with a faint attempt at a laugh ; "or perhaps I am to drown myself as poor Ophelia did."

Having thus introduced Planchette, Mrs. Jenkins makes no farther use of her until toward the climax, when Lilian exclaims—

"At present I feel as if I bore a charmed life ; I have something to do. I can't die yet ; besides, you know, Honora, Planchette bid me beware of water, not bullets."

Soon after, Lilian is killed by a bullet while standing at the water's edge watching the coming of the ship in which her husband is expected. She is at Genoa during the revolution of '48.

Nothing more was heard of Planchette until a year ago, when two English articles, one entitled "Planchette," and the other "A Three-legged Imposter," were republished in *Every Saturday*.

The first writer wrote very entertainingly of his singular experience in a country-house ; the second expressed his entire disbelief in the creature for the reason that she would not write for him.

Since then, various articles have appeared in American

journals, the majority of which have done little more than call attention to the subject. In June, the *Scientific American* noticed Planchette with gravity, pronouncing her to be a phenomenon worthy of a scientific investigation, and deprecating the manner in which Professors Faraday and Tyndall had treated Home when a séance had been proposed at which they were to "assist." As a condition precedent to Faraday's entering on the investigation, Mr. Home was invited to acknowledge that the phenomena, however produced, were ridiculous and contemptible.

Not long since, Professor Tyndall offered to pursue an investigation "in the spirit of Mr. Faraday's letter," and of course Mr. Home refused to accept the offer. Mr. Home may be a charlatan, but it does not necessarily follow because he cannot obtain certain effects in broad day light, that he *is* a charlatan. Many chemical and electrical experiments are only visible in the dark, and it may be that other electrical laws, unknown at present, may demand the same conditions.

Four months ago a writer on "Planchetteomancy," in *The Providence Gazette*, dwelt at length upon the subject of animal magnetism, and saw in Planchette "a great remedial agent." Why?

"Because," argued the writer, "in Planchette this wonderful property (magnetism) is developed to such a degree that it *seems* to establish, as fact, the supposition that *man himself is a magnet, his legs forming the positive and negative poles, while his body and head constitute a powerful galvanic battery, through which electricity is constantly passing.* But be that as it may, it is possible that the occult agency is developed in the minds and bodies of persons when they place their fingers upon the magic Planchette which forms a connection between the two persons, and thus produces a *double human magnet.*"

Having advanced this hypothesis, he proceeds to "solve the mystery."

"In the first place, we observe, that as all animal, and to some extent vegetable life, is acted upon, if not evolved from electricity, so whatever interferes with the current of this subtle and

yet powerful principle, disturbs thereby the human organization in the same ratio as when the circuit of a galvanic battery is obstructed by the rupture or depression of its connecting wires, and so deranging the continuous operation of the electric fluid.

"So in the human battery or machine, the disturbance of the electricity of the system results in disorder not only to the nervous organization, but also of the vital functions and viscera. Now in the use of Planchette an effect is produced quite the reverse of this; in place of discordant influences there is harmony; the circulation of the blood is quickened, and the general system is alive with expectancy and astonishment.

"The reason of all this is simply that when two persons are opposite each other with their fingers resting on the little magic Planchette, the electric current flows freely from one to the other, the little instrument being the connecting link or galvanometer, and the circuit being completed by the fluid passing from the body of the stronger person, and being conveyed by the Planchette into the weaker or disorganized organization of the other, thus charging it with an excess of vitalizing electricity, and so supplying one of the most mysterious and powerful agencies ever yet discovered by man.

"Evolved in its most mighty form in the storm-cloud, from whence Franklin drew it—and since made subservient to man in superseding steam by propelling even the Iron Horse upon the iron track, between Birmingham and Manchester in England; and now it comes to us in the fairy form of "Little Planchette," to amuse, astonish, and cure every condition of mind prejudicial to health and happiness."

It may be that this solution explains Planchette, but I confess that I am still in the dark; and if two people are required to produce this electrical current, how is it when only *one* moves the board? Whence comes the remedial agency, then? Shall a man lay hands upon himself?

Still another writer in the August number of "Lippincott's Magazine," avers that "Planchette *cannot take up its pencil-point*, and must always write a running hand." To this statement I can only reply, that in my experience, Planchette *does* take up its pencil-point, writing every word with perfect distinctness, dotting every *i*, and crossing every *t*, and punctuating with precision.

"Planchette can not make a cross," he says. I have seen Planchette make crosses as well as make drawings.

"Planchette answers nothing which the 'mediums' do not know or *guess*," continues this writer.

In the preceding Diary, various instances are given, in which the contrary of this assertion is proved.

The Boston *Journal of Chemistry* for September, devoted five columns to a serious consideration of Planchette, and in concluding, "ventures the opinion, that if the phenomena are ever explained, they will be found to be due to a blending of the psychological and physical endowments of the human organization, acting under certain laws *entirely dissimilar to any now known or understood*." This is a probability, a glittering generality, but not a key to the mystery.

What is Planchette? "It is a spiritual phenomenon," reply William and Mary Howitt, Robert Dale Owen, and hundreds of intelligent men and women.

"Spirits communicate with the earth," in proof of which Professor Hare relates the following incident:

"My spirit sister undertook at one o'clock, on the 3d of July, 1855, to convey from the Atlantic Hotel, Cape May Island, a message to Mrs. Gourlay, No. 178 North Tenth street, Philadelphia, requesting that she would induce Dr. Gourlay to go to the Philadelphia Bank to ascertain the time when a note would be due, and report to me at half-past three o'clock. She did report at the appointed time; and on my return to Philadelphia, Mrs. Gourlay alleged herself to have received the message, and that her husband and brother went to the bank in consequence. With the idea received by the latter, my sister's report coincided agreeably to his statement to me.

"All this proves," concludes Dr. Hare, "that a spirit must have officiated, as nothing else can explain the transaction."

Dr. Hare adds that the note-clerk of the bank recollected the application. In support of this theory, Dr. Hare reasons thus:

"As there is an ethereal medium, by means of which light moves through space from the remotest visible

fixed star, to the eye, at the rate of two hundred thousand miles per second ; as through an affection of the same ether frictional electricity moves, according to Wheatstone's estimate, with a velocity exceeding that of light—so, may we not infer, that the instrument of Divine will acts with still greater velocity ; and that in making man in this respect, after His own image, so far as necessary to an available existence, gives him one degree of power over the same element while in a mortal state ; and another higher degree of power in the spiritual state.

“ But if there be an element through which a spirit within his *mortal* frame is capable of actuating that frame, may not this element of actuation be susceptible of becoming an instrument to the will of another spirit in the *immortal state* ?

“ The aura of a medium which thus enables an immortal spirit to do within its scope things which it can not do otherwise, appears to vary with the human being resorted to ; so that only a few are so endowed with this aura as to be competent as media. Moreover, in those who are so constituted as to be competent instruments of spiritual actuation, this competency is various. There is a gradation of competency, by which the nature of the instrumentality varies from that which empowers violent loud knocking and the moving of ponderable bodies without actual contact, to the grade which confers power to make intellectual communications of the higher order, without that of audible knocking. Further, the power to employ these grades of mediumships, varies as the sphere of the spirit varies.

“ It has been stated that mortals have each a halo, perceptible to spirits, by which they are enabled to determine the sphere to which any individual will go on passing death's portal. Spirits cannot approach effectively a medium of a sphere much above or below that to which they belong.”

“ As media, in proportion as they are more capable of serving for the higher intellectual communication, are less capable of serving for mechanical demonstration, and as they are more capable of the latter are less competent for the former, spirits likewise have a higher or lower capacity to employ media.”

Thus saith Dr. Hare ; and in a communication purporting to come from his deceased father, he is told how these "media" are influenced. "To influence, mechanically, the hand of a medium to write, we direct currents of vitalized spiritual electricity on the particular muscles which we desire to control. In order to produce the physical manifestations, it is not by any means requisite that the medium should be possessed of a good moral character or well-balanced mind, as an individual of small mental calibre would answer our purpose equally well ; but an advanced spirit could not directly impress or control the organs of a mind with which he is not in affinity, and *vice versa*.

"The raps are produced by *voluntary* discharges of the vitalized spiritual electricity abovementioned, from the spirit coming in contact with the animal electricity emanating from the medium. These discharges we can direct at will to any particular locality, thereby producing sounds or concussions.

"The question being often asked, 'How do you move solid substances?' I would partly answer it by asking, How does a magnet attract and raise from their resting-places certain bodies within whose sphere it is brought? How does a man move his body and direct it whithersoever it goeth? How does God, the Almighty, Cause of all causes, move and keep in perpetual motion, the immense systems which revolve in space, and maintain each in its due relative position? I answer, by the magnetism of a *positive* will.

"We, in common with you and all animals, possess an infinitesimal portion of this power, varying in degree in classes and in different individuals. When you raise your arm, as in the act of lifting or moving a body, you direct, by the force of your will-power, galvanic currents on the muscles required to perform the function. The muscles acting as levers, through the stimulus of the subtle element, act and react on the more solid parts, the bones, and thus is the object laid hold of and moved, and still you do not come into direct contact with the object. Now this is called a *very simple* operation, and so it would appear, but who understands it? Although ad-

vanced spirits are much more conversant with the forces operating in nature than the most intellectually developed man in the form, still they do not, nor can they ever, as long as eternity rolls on, understand the hidden sphere of cause. The operation of the will it is impossible to understand.

"Now, as I have said, we are not possessed of physical bodies: still we can make the imponderable elements subserve our purposes by acting as bones, nerves, and muscles."

"But if it be spirits," I argued recently with a very clever man and Spiritualist, "what necessity is there for the interposition of a board? Why cannot people write without Planchette?"

"So they can," he answered, "when the spirits have complete control, but not before. That is easily explained. Place a pencil in your hand and place your hand firmly upon a table, and you will find that it requires considerable power to move your hand independently of your will. But put your hand lightly on Planchette, and the conditions change. The minimum of power will set Planchette in motion. Hence it is that undeveloped mediums write *with* but are powerless *without* Planchette. Here comes in the utility of this little instrument."

"Planchette!" cry several of the churches; "away with it! It is an emissary of the devil." "Some call Planchetta a toy," says the *Philadelphia Universe*, a Catholic organ.

"If it were a toy its motive power could be detected by the eye, and taken to pieces by the hand. But neither the sight of the eye nor the touch of the hand can discover the spring by which Planchette moves. Therefore, it is not in its movements a toy. It moves—undoubtedly it moves. And how? Intelligently! It answers questions of any kind put to it in any language required. It does this. This cannot be done but by intelligence. Well, by what description of intelligence? It cannot be supposed that the Divine intelligence is the motive; for how can God be conceived to make such a manifestation of Himself as Planchette exhibits?"

"A corresponding reason cuts off the idea that it is presided

over by an angelic intelligence; and it is evident to all, that a human mind does not control it. There is but one more character of intelligence—that of the evil spirits. Therefore Planchette is moved by the agents of hell. . . . But why should the devil connect himself with a Planchette—with a little triangular board set on small wheels, furnished with writing facilities, and having hands lightly placed on it? Does not such a thing appear very ridiculous? That is true. No one can give the devil's reasons for the act. He can operate in countless ways. He is not restricted to this or to that or the other reasons. Anything that may assist him in endangering the salvation of men is welcome to his judgment. He has found his way into persons; why not into Planchette? The success of the thing proves the depth of his malignant understanding.

"We suppose that the experienced scoundrel is ready to do anything human wickedness may ask of him when souls are the price of the condescension. But his reasons for particular manifestations are of small importance here. Facts are facts; and the point is that Planchette is not a toy, that it is moved by an intelligence, and that the intelligence which moves it is necessarily evil. We would, therefore, advise all who have a Planchette to build for it a special fire of pitch and brimstone. It is a bad ornament on the sideboard, and a bad amusement in the drawing-room. No one has a right to consult the enemy of God. They who do so are in danger of becoming worshippers of the devil and of dwelling with him forever."

What answer will science make to the Church? Can the devil be demonstrated on scientific principles?

"Planchette is electricity," declares Society, and then Society sits down, feeling persuaded that the matter has been disposed of in a highly satisfactory manner. Electricity—such electricity as is understood by man—is incapable of producing like results.

"Neither according to the Franklin hypothesis of one fluid, nor that of two fluids, according to Dufay, is electricity assumed to be a moving power." Moreover, "electrical sparks produce snapping sounds in the air, not knockings or rappings upon sonorous solids."

Neither should it be forgotten that Planchettes made of non-conducting materials, dance as readily as those made with a view to attract the electric fluid. The "waggish electricity" of Planchette needs a more definite exposition than Society has yet given it.

"Planchette is a result of odic force," says the di-

lettante philosopher. And pray what is the odic force? Does any one know? To account for one mystery by another is not a particularly clear elucidation.

"Odic force? Nonsense!" retorts General Average, "it is the unconscious action of the mind." Does even this solution settle the question?

"It is humbug!" exclaims a defiant majority.

Planchette may be "spirits;" she may be "the devil;" she may be the result of electricity, of odic force, or of unconscious mental action, but she is *not* a humbug in the sense of her being no mystery.

For myself, I have no theories to advance. The more I attempt to explain Planchette to my own reason, the deeper I flounder in the mire of uncertainty. As, however, it is the belief of the majority that the operator's mind is the unconscious instrument of Planchette's revelations, and as my Planchette persists in calling herself "spirits," I shall undoubtedly be considered a Spiritualist in disguise unless I enter into a personal explanation.

Therefore it behooves me to say that I am *not* a Spiritualist; nevertheless, I have no prejudice whatever against a belief in spiritual communion. If we are endowed with immortal souls and preserve our individuality in another existence, it seems to me natural, judging by my own feeling of what I should be impelled to do, that spirits should desire to communicate with their friends on earth. There is no known law against such a proceeding, and there *may* be a law in support of it.

The Bible teems with supernatural visitations, and if they are possible at one time, who shall say that they are impossible at another? From our cradles we are taught to believe in the ministering of angels, and literature abounds in allusions to this belief.

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

says Milton, and Sir Thomas Browne is not a whit less confident of the fact. "I do think," reasons the author

of Religio Medici, "that many mysteries ascribed to our own inventions, have been the courteous revelations of spirits. If they have that infinite knowledge whereby, as in reflection, they behold the thoughts of one another, I cannot peremptorily deny that they have a great part of ours. That they have knowledge not only of the specific but numerical forms of individuals, and understand by what reserved difference each single hypostasis, besides the relation of its species, becomes its numerical self. That as the soul hath the power to move the body it informs, so there is a faculty to move anything, though in form none, and upon restraint of time, place and distance."

But because there is no law against spiritual communion, it does not follow that spirits *do* communicate. I demand as sound proof of the fact of Spiritualism as of any other *ism*; indeed far more, as it is of tremendous moral import. So far as my experience with Planchette is concerned, I see no necessity to attribute her phenomena to the work of spirits. Feeling thus, I should be the last person to voluntarily connect the honored and honorable name of my father with these singular writings, and yet in spite of my willingness to the contrary, his name is appended to every communication. It is the strangeness of this circumstance that has led me to make public mention of a revered memory.

From the sensations undergone while using Planchette, I am inclined to believe myself to be under the influence of a wonderfully subtle magnetic fluid. Whence it comes is the important question. It is true, that different operators are affected differently, apparently according to individual physique. Some, when first experimenting, feel as if bands of iron were bound around their heads. Others endure pain in the backs of their heads, while there are persons who cannot remain in the room with an operator without experiencing headache.

Hysteria and nervous twitching of the whole body are occasional consequences, and I have been told of several cases where the use of Planchette was succeeded by nausea. All of these disagreeable effects are temporary,

however, and so far as I have learned, produce no unfavorable results.

All operators experience one sensation in common ; *i. e.*, the passage of a seeming magnetic current through the arm and hand that are engaged in writing. This is the only sensation I have ever felt, and even this I rarely realize ; although upon placing the tips of my fingers upon the hand of another person with the design of assisting Planchette to move, I am told that my fingers burn and create a prickling in the hand beneath them.

When writing with but one hand, the pulse of that hand is so faint as to be almost imperceptible, while the pulse of the other hand beats as naturally as at any other time. When both hands are active, there seems to be no pulse whatever.

While endeavoring to move a grand piano since this paper was begun, waves of a magnetic fluid seemed to flow through both of my arms, causing them to quiver as the body quivers with ague. The moment I removed my hands from the piano this sensation ceased.

Far from being excited, I am soothed by Planchette. Her influence is so quieting as to produce sleepiness, and when she displays more than ordinary power, I yawn persistently, as many people yawn when under the effects of animal magnetism. But my experience in this respect is not that of every operator. Were it otherwise I should cut Planchette's acquaintance.

Ordinarily, it is impossible for me to write late in the evening and then have a comfortable night's rest. With Planchette it is different.

Willing myself not to think, producing as great a mental void as I am capable of, I let Planchette have full swing, and after twenty, thirty, and forty pages of writing that has occupied two or three hours, I feel no physical or mental fatigue, and fall asleep as soon as I retire. I mention these circumstances because no one, to my knowledge, has taken the trouble to observe what effect Planchette really does produce upon her friends.

"But, after all, what good is derived from Planchette?" ask many. At present this is not the question. So long as facts are inexplicable, the human mind will in-

investigate, for it is the seeker that finds. Planchette is a benefit to the community in that she has taken certain phenomena out of the hands of professional "mediums," and brought them home to numberless households, where imposture is as unnecessary as it is impossible, and where candid scrutiny may be leisurely pursued.

Planchette may hold in her heart the key to a law of mentality, long latent and now about to be discovered. Whether she holds that key or not, it is perfectly evident that she is own sister to "table-tipping" and "rapping."

The pertinent question is, What is her pedigree? Who are her father and mother? or has she "grewed" like *Topsy*? Until this question is answered, Planchette will remain a contradictory inconceivable.

THE END.