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the Mysteries
of

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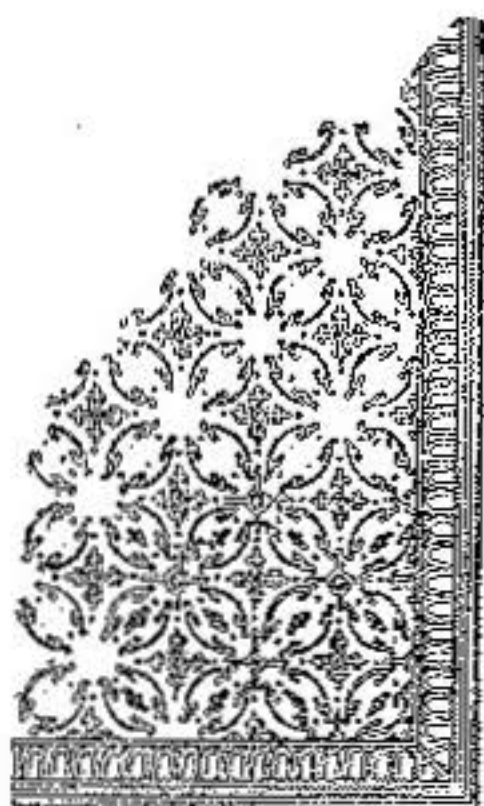
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"SPOOKLAND!"

*A Record of Research and Experiment in a much-talked-of realm of mystery,
with a Review and Criticism of the so-called spiritualistic phenomena of*

Spirit Materialisation,

And Hints and Illustrations as to the possibility of artificially

Producing the Same.

By

T. SHEKLETON HENRY, A.R.I.B.A.

ILLUSTRATED FROM
ORIGINAL "SPIRIT" PHOTOGRAPHS.

SYDNEY:

W. M. MACLARDY AND CO., PRINTERS, 52 PITT STREET.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN placing the following pages before the public, the author is actuated by two motives:—Firstly, that recent occurrences in our midst, relating to some of the so-called phenomena of Spiritualism, and questioning the evidence on which these phenomena profess to stand, and notably the occurrence of Friday, October 12th, have created a widespread, sensational, and general interest throughout Australasia.

The newspapers have been full of controversial matter on the subject, opinions have been expressed most freely; and without confining themselves to the alleged exposure of the 12th October, and the immediate and irrefutable evidence on which that one fact can alone be judged, many correspondents have wandered off into side issues, and brought forward statements and counter-statements not material to the case in point, but involving the greater and wider issue of the probability or even possibility of the occurrence of such phenomena at all.

Certain so-called Tests are stated to have been applied by individuals in Sydney, who put forward the evidence of these so-called Tests, in support of the genuineness of the phenomena which they uphold.

On the other hand, are the statements of other individuals, who took part in the said so-called Tests, but who cannot accept them as such, and can not consider the evidence adduced as sufficient ground on which to base so bold a faith.

Therefore, the author, firstly, in the capacity of an impartial recorder and witness, gives to the public an exact, truthful, and impartial record of these so-called Tests carried out in Sydney, that the thinking public may sift and judge the evidence for itself.

If such occurrences as these are to be held up as evidence now or at any future time, it is well that some truthful, and undistorted record should be available. The author has been present at, and assisted in, all these much-talked-of experiments, and has kept complete written notes and records, with the view to ultimate publication. This duty, therefore, naturally and necessarily devolves upon him, and no time could be more fitting than the present.

As an unbiassed critic, viewing the broad question of Spirit Materialisation as a whole, the author endeavours to avoid all narrow and personal issues and to consider everything material to the question purely in the aspect of evidence.

On such a vexed question as this, it is impossible to avoid the mention of certain names and occurrences, and the candid criticisms of the evidence of individuals.

The author, while regretting the necessity, wishes to assure those persons that his action arises from no personal feeling in the matter, and that no offence is intended.

No counsel, when criticising the evidence of witnesses and presenting his view of a case to a jury, would be accused of personal feeling in dealing with those witnesses; and the author asks the same consideration in presenting this case to the public.

All the authentic testimony, documentary or otherwise, at the author's disposal and relating to the incipency and growth of the alleged phenomena of Materialisation, are reviewed by him.

The second reason for this publication is somewhat different.

In dealing with a field of research which necessitates the employment of a class of individuals at all times more or less associated with trickery or imposture, it behoves the investigator to be upon his guard, and while retaining an impartial judgment, to be fully alive to every possibility of fraud and trickery. The man of business, in the course of daily commercial transactions, works upon this principal; and while casting no personal reflection upon his fellow-citizen does not leave it in the power of that other to dupe him.

How much more necessary is it, therefore, in dealing with a realm of so much mystery to take even stricter precautions?

To the true scientific investigator, this warning is unnecessary; but humanity embraces a large class of people predisposed to dabble in occult mysteries, and with a tendency to still believe in supernatural interference with their personal welfare.

These can not be considered investigators in any sense of the word, but emotional, credulous, and ready-made dupes.

A timely warning may save such as these from the toils of unscrupulous imposters who abound; and enable them to ascribe to their true source, the various tricks, by which, in many cases, the impostor plays upon the most sacred feelings of the credulous, while he relieves them of their cash.

Numbers of persons will witness an exhibition of this sort, and because they cannot themselves detect how it is done, ascribe the performance at once to supernatural or abnormal agency.

Their emotions are played upon, their religious sentiments abused, and the resultant all-believing state, leaves no room for the reasoning faculties.

In this condition they are ready to swallow everything and ask for more.

And yet the same persons after witnessing a clever conjuring entertainment, however far beyond their powers of explanation, would never think of ascribing such to other than the true cause.

But the bona-fide conjurer does not appeal to the emotions, neither does he play upon the religious sentiments of his audience. Given certain conditions, with surroundings of semi-darkness and music, it is possible to produce this unreasoning, emotional state in the majority of persons; and it grows with practise.

It is merely a confidence trick.

The author illustrates how, from personal experiment, he is able to produce the exact semblance of Materialised Spirit forms, under Spiritualistic conditions, and explains how any individual may do the same.

A number of bona-fide tricks are thus disclosed.

It is not with any wish to cast reflection upon Spiritualism or its followers that this is done, but from a desire to open the eyes of the unwary to all the possibilities of an artificial source for much that passes as supernatural. Although the Phenomena of Spirit Materialisation may not stand upon sufficient evidence, yet the author believes that, below all the fraud and imposture there exists, without doubt, a substratum of little known and abnormal, though natural, phenomena, which are worthy of scientific investigation.

He therefore claims the sympathy and co-operation of every right-thinking person, whether spiritualist or otherwise, in his endeavour to separate falsity from truth and to remove a fruitful source of imposture and evil.

For the etymology of the title "Spookland," as expressing the haunt or plane of the "Spook," readers are referred to current Theosophical Treatises.

Lincoln's Inn Chambers,

Elizabeth Street,

October, 1894.

Sydney.

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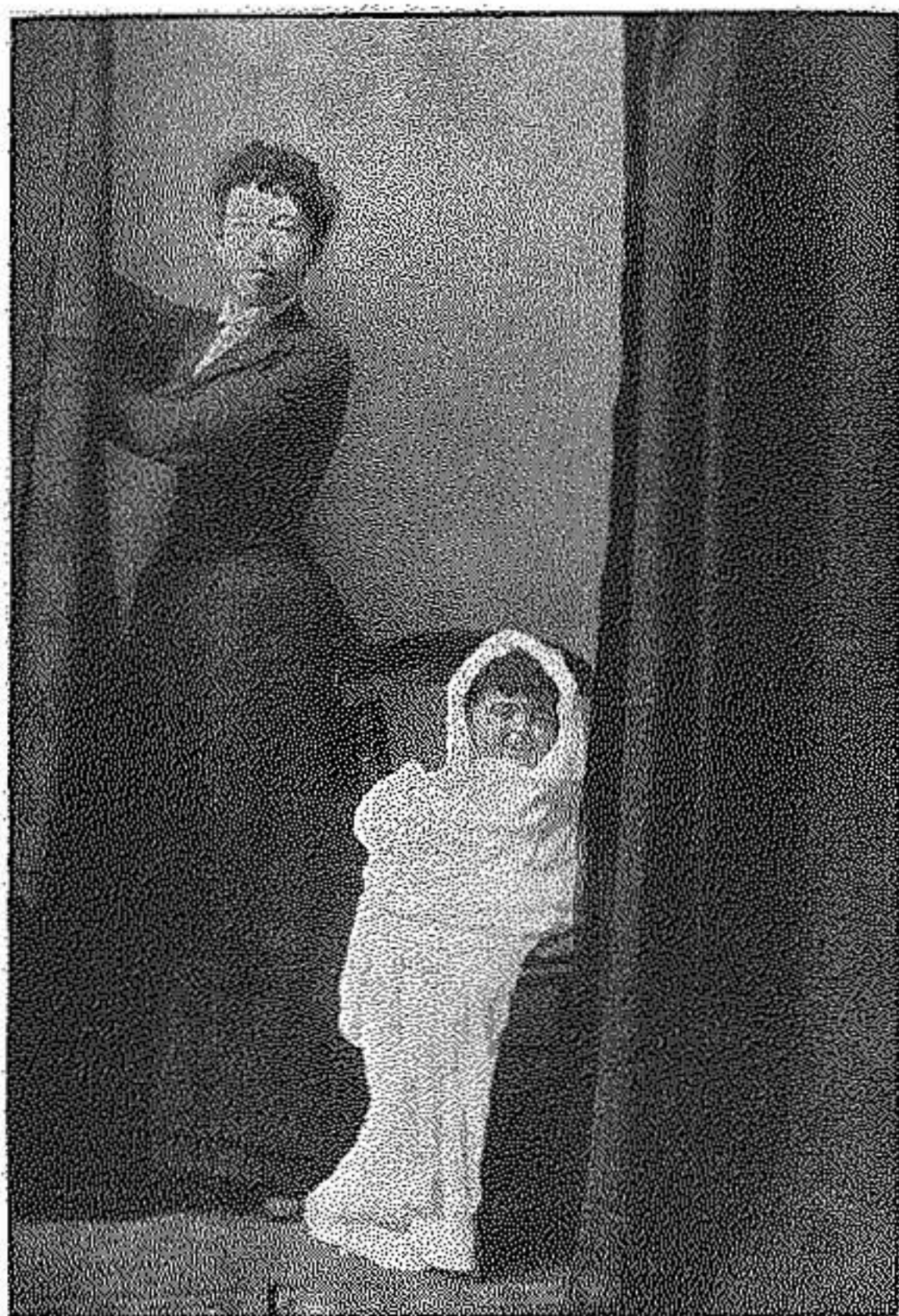
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MRS. MELLON AND "CISSIE."

From a photograph taken at Edinburgh by Mr. Stewart Smith on September 5, 1890.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction : SOME TYPICAL AND HISTORIC MATERIALIZATION SEANCES.

MR. HACKETT, MRS. MELLON, MRS. BESANT.

BEFORE theorising upon the origin of any particular phase of "earthly matter," or discussing the characteristics of any one form of organised material, whether it be "Spook," "Spirit" or one of the every-day forms of life, it is necessary, firstly, for the propounder or author to be personally well acquainted with the habits, manners, customs and characteristics of that phase of material upon which he writes; and secondly, to convey to his readers some exact knowledge also of the habits and characteristics of the race of beings about to be discussed. My acquaintance with that realm of mystery and occultism, which I have termed "Spookland," and more particularly with that greatest of all the so-called Spiritualistic Phenomena, and most astounding of all the professed mysteries—"Spirit-Materialisation"—is based principally upon my own careful research and personal observation, extending over a considerable period, and also upon documentary evidence at my disposal.

The exponents of this arch-mystery profess to bring back, to earthly life, the denizens of the land of death; to raise up to our mortal gaze, in all the semblance of the bodies which they left behind, those friends and relations long since dead; to clothe the Spook again with a warm material covering of flesh, and from the Ghost create for the time being, a living, moving, speaking human entity.

Before discussing the truth or error of these professions, I will introduce my readers to the habits of these ghostly beings, and for the benefit of such as have not had a personal acquaintance with the Spook, or themselves investigated this land of mystery, will proceed to recount my observations of their habits. I will, therefore, take my reader to some typical "Spirit-Materialisation" Seances, and for the sake of authenticity they shall be recent, and some of them historic, occurrences. That I may not be accused of adding or subtracting anything, I will give the accounts written by others, where possible, in preference to my

own, and where my own account appears it shall be corroborated by the testimony of others present.

In my early investigations of this subject I was introduced to a medium named Hackett, and witnessed a remarkable exhibition of his powers given at the Psychical Society's Rooms in Pitt-street, Sydney. As his particular phase of Materialisation is considered by Spiritualists to be an elementary stage of the Phenomena, I can not do better than introduce them to Mr. Hackett's powers first.

The séance took place in a large upstairs room about 60ft. by 20ft., and when in company with three or four friends I entered this room, there were about seventy or eighty persons assembled. The door was at one end, and the three windows at the opposite end were blocked by dark blinds. In one corner at the end next the window was erected a small platform or stage about three feet high and six feet square, the construction of this and the floor beneath being visible and unenclosed.

Upon this stage and in the angle of the room a curtained recess was arranged by hanging on an iron rod two curtains of black material, about seven feet high, fitting closely side by side and reaching to the stage.

I was allowed to examine the curtained recess or "cabinet," and in fact examined the stage, floor, and adjacent window thoroughly without finding anything concealed; the only peculiarity that attracted my attention being the fact that the curtains had three or four long slits extending from the bottom up to four or five feet of their height. On the corner of the stage, and about two feet in front of the cabinet, was placed a large basin containing cut flowers. I and my friends were allotted front seats, my position being within four feet of this basin of flowers.

Mr. Hackett, the medium, a powerfully-built man, aged about thirty-eight, of dark complexion, clear cut features, and by trade a blacksmith, after being introduced to the visitors, ascended the stage and took his seat on a chair behind the curtains. The lights at our end of the room were turned out, and only a dim light at the far end near the door left burning. The President of the Spiritualistic Society requested that no person should leave a seat without permission, and then took the lead in singing several hymns. After some minutes of this sort of thing, peculiar mutterings and jabberings issued from behind the curtains, and I was informed that the medium was in a trance and under "control" of one of his "spirit" guides named "Parehaka," a supposed Maori.

Not having a knowledge of the Maori language, however, this did not impress me much; but when the supposed "Parehaka" broke off into pigeon English and addressed several of his old acquaintances present, informing them that certain spirit friends were there and were going to show themselves, I became more interested. Suddenly in the midst of renewed jabberings a long streak of what seemed luminous drapery appeared between the curtains, and as the jabbering increased the drapery seemed to rise and distend until it assumed the rough

outline of a female form. This figure moved out across the stage and bowed to the spectators, and being asked by a gentleman present if it were his deceased wife, nodded in the affirmative. Thereupon the gentleman rose and reverently touched the hem of that drapery, and the figure vanished in the way that it had come.

Many other forms came and went—some tall, some short—but each one draped and all possessing the graceful gliding motion of the orthodox Ghost. Most of them were recognised by persons present and many of them reverently touched, though how they were recognised I do not know, seeing that all were equally without features, and limbless.

Many of the persons at the back professed to see the features distinctly—these persons were “clairvoyante”—though I, sitting in the very front only a few feet from the apparitions and with remarkably good eye sight, could distinguish none. This is evidently a faculty acquired after practice.

Some of the Ghosts approached the basin of flowers and appeared to stoop towards it, and then flowers were thrown to the spectators. I mildly asked if I might be allowed to touch the Spirit drapery, and after promising that my touch should be very gentle I was allowed to do so.

In a coquettish manner the ghost dodged close to the curtain and in a half-distrustful sort of way submitted to my irreverent touch.

To my sceptic hand the drapery felt remarkably like the ordinary coarse muslin of commerce, and I felt strongly tempted to hold on and pull; but, remembering my promise, and that the friends with whom I had come were responsible for my good behaviour, I said nothing and meekly took my seat.

Another interval of jabbering by some more “Spirit” guides, and then we were informed that the spirits would give us a dark seance.

The light at the back was then turned completely out, and forth from the “cabinet” into the black darkness of the room issued small, glowing stars and specks of incandescent light. Words cannot describe the way these lights glowed and flitted till they lost themselves in the darkness among the spectators. A faint imagining of phosphorous and match heads crossed the workings of my brain, but was scouted, without finding expression in words, as an insult to the implicit trust placed by those present in the bona-fides of the medium.

A little more singing brought this remarkable seance to a close, and the lights were turned up; and after expressing my thanks to Mr. Hackett for his exhibition, I departed with my friends.

I never met Mr. Hackett again, but the history of his later achievements will be related in a later chapter. The above account is corroborated by Mr. Wallis, who was also present. It must not be presumed from this that I was ever a bigoted sceptic on these matters. On the contrary my attitude was always that of an earnest impartial investigator, anxious to prove or disprove to my own satisfaction the genuineness of many alleged remarkable phenomena. While never

personally approving of the teachings or objects of Spiritualism, I was investigating from a scientific standpoint much of its phenomena, and while keeping my mind unbiassed by the credulous faith of the Spiritualist on the one side, or the dogmatic teachings of Modern Science on the other, was prepared to accept nothing that was not proved to my own satisfaction. Ever sceptical and on the outlook for fraud and imposture, until a fact was irrefutably proved, I have always been ready to uphold publicly and in the face of popular prejudice any phenomena, however abnormal and startling, that should rest on proper evidence.

I will now describe a typical Materialisation Séance with Mrs. Annie Mellon, a medium who has obtained world-wide celebrity among spiritualists and others, and whose powers illustrate the highest stage in the development and exposition of the alleged phenomena of Spirit-Materialisation. The following account of a séance held on Monday, Sept. 10th, 1894, is taken, by kind permission of the Editor, from the *Sydney Sunday Times* of Sept. 16th, and I give the report as written by its representative in preference to my own for reasons before mentioned:—"It was on Monday evening last that I attended at the residence of Dr. MacCarthy in Elizabeth Street, Hyde Park, to witness by invitation a Materialisation Séance conducted by a lady who attained celebrity in England some years since, and was referred to by Mr. Stead in his new year's number of *Review of Reviews* for 1892, entitled 'More Ghost Stories,' as the one person in the United Kingdom of undoubted materialising faculty, and undoubted character, who could almost always secure the presence of phenomena, and who had never been detected in a trick of any kind."

In addition to the medium there were present:—

Mrs. EVES

Miss B——

Dr. MACCARTHY

Mr. P. J. MACCARTHY, dental surgeon

Mr. T. S. HENRY, architect

Mr. N. JOUBERT, of Hunter's Hill

Mr. RUMBLE, of North Sydney

Mr. WALLIS (of Winchcombe, Carson and Co.)

Dr. PICKBURN

Messrs. STEWART and MORGAN, from Melbourne, members
of the Victorian Psychical Research Society

And the representative of the *Sunday Times*.

Before proceeding to witness the Materialisation, it was decided to hold a short dark séance, as it was explained, to get the power up. This took place, as usual, in the kitchen, and we were no sooner seated and had commenced to sing than a hand-bell was lifted off the table, rung melodiously in the air over our heads, carried backwards and finally deposited on the floor behind us.

A tambourine was then wafted about the room, striking me several smart raps on the head, jambed down on the head of another sitter, and finally encircled round the medium's left arm whilst Mr Stewart had hold (as he assured us) of her left hand. A light was struck and the tambourine was found in the position described, in the same manner as occurred at a previous seance, and attested by statutory declarations in our last issue.

After this the company proceeded to the room where the materialisation took place.

The apartment is a bedroom about 16 feet by 11 feet, situated on the second floor, facing the street. The bed had been pushed back to the front wall, leaving about twelve feet between it and the opposite wall. Across the south-west angle of the room, at a height of about seven feet, was placed a curtain-rod about four feet long, from which hung a pair of dark-colored curtains, screening a space just large enough to conceal a low chair for the use of the medium. Nothing else whatever was in the screened corner.

The only furniture in the room beside the bed consisted of a wardrobe, a small round table, on which Dr. MacCarthy rested his auto-harp, and the chairs for the sitters.

I examined the interior of the wardrobe, to make sure that no person or apparatus was concealed there, and even looked under the bed. The door of the room was locked, and the key given into my charge, and the sitters placed themselves in a semi-circle facing the screened corner, my own seat being in the centre. The gas was turned out, but a lamp was left burning low, and partially shaded in the recess at the side of the fireplace, giving sufficient light to distinguish the sitters and the various objects in the room.

The proceedings were opened by singing Mrs. Beecher Stowe's beautiful poem, commencing, "It lies around us like a cloud," the touching air being accompanied by Dr. MacCarthy on his instrument. When this was finished another tune was started, and soon I saw an irregular luminous appearance on the right side of the curtain. It gradually increased in length, and then shifted its position to the centre, and shortly assumed the form of a man about six feet high, enveloped in white drapery. The lower part of the features were partially swathed in the folds of the wrappings. The arms seemed only partially developed, no hands being visible, and, strange to say, the lower part of the figure appeared to taper off, leaving no defined limbs visible, and only very slight drapery where the form came in contact with the floor.

The effect of this apparition was indescribably weird, and, whatever the impression may have been upon those to whom it was not a novelty, it certainly seemed to me a most awesome thing.

Here before me was a form resembling, and yet not resembling a human being, and said to be a denizen of another world—a shadowy substance which seemed to gaze upon the company with passive dignity, and whose movements were the embodiment of silence.

The singing ceased, and the question was put, Whom had the Spirit come to see? The names of various sitters were mentioned, and at that of one of the Melbourne visitors it slightly bowed its head.

The gentleman indicated went forward right up to the form, mentioned the names of several deceased relatives, at one of which the figure bowed again. The gentleman, however, failed to recognise any resemblance to his relative, and after a vain endeavour to take the spirit-hand, which, as before described, did not appear to be materialised, he retired, the form immediately afterwards vanishing behind the screen.

The vocal exercises were then resumed, and before many minutes had elapsed another white patch appeared, emerging from between the curtains, and grew gradually till it assumed the form of a child about three feet six inches in height. This was generally recognised as "Cissie," to whom the tambourine and bell performances of the dark séance had been attributed. She came forward, took a box of chocolate creams off the table, rattled the box, took two out, and placed them between Dr. MacCarthy's lips, then helped herself to some, and began audibly sucking them.

The question was asked whether I might go and touch her, to which she appeared to bow assent; but on my going forward she glided within the screen. She soon emerged again, however, and I ventured a second time, with the same result, and a third attempt met with no better success, the little figure each time coquettishly evading me, and ultimately disappearing altogether.

The next figure to appear was identified as "Geordie," to whom reference has previously been made in these articles. The form was that of a man somewhat over the middle height, with a bearded face, and, like the previous visitants, enfolded in snow-white wrappings. He seemed to evolve from the luminous stage more rapidly than his predecessors, as his full stature was almost immediately revealed.

He came and stood out in front of the screen, and, after a few seconds, said, in a hoarse whisper, "Don't ask me to do anything, as the medium is not very well." Then, asking if we would like to see the medium, he retired behind the curtain. We heard the hoarse voice saying, "Get up, stand up," and then both came out together, the medium, who was in a dark dress, waving her hand and heaving a deep-drawn sigh, as though from exhaustion, went back into the curtained recess. "Geordie" then, turning full towards me, so that the unearthly figure and pallid features were distinctly visible, said, "Mr. Times, what do you think of this, Mr. Times?"

Somewhat taken aback, I ventured to reply that it was indeed more wonderful than I had expected, and soon afterwards he began to dematerialise. He did not go back behind the curtain, as the others had done, but the head gradually sank, and the form to lose both length and breadth, until nothing was visible but an up turned face in the centre of a small nebulous patch in the middle of the

floor, when from the strange uncanny lips came distinctly the words, "Good night, God bless you," and all that was left of "Geordie" vanished from our gaze.

A somewhat longer interval occurred before any further appearance, but all at once, during the singing, we saw once more the white nucleus in front of the screen slowly rising, and also extending forwards until it gradually assumed the appearance of flowing drapery, revealing before us the figure of a beautiful woman, with pale but sweetly expressive features, and long dark hair hanging down over her shoulders.

She was hailed as "Josephine," another alleged frequent visitor to the circle, and with perfectly silent movement she moved towards the table in front of Dr. MacCarthy, who lifted a wreath of flowers which lay upon the table and placed it round the figure's neck. The form bowed its head to receive them, and then silently glided behind the screen, where the wreath was afterwards found. The next form to appear was also that of a female, but the features were somewhat indistinct, and she was stated to be a stranger. After a few seconds this form disappeared, and then "Cissie" made a second appearance. This time she did not emerge from the curtain, but materialised in the room.

The little white nebulosity first appeared growing slowly upwards till the childish form, with black, chubby features, became perfectly developed. Then, retiring for an instant within the screen, she re-appeared, and danced upon the floor, producing a sound such as would be made by nimble, tiny bare feet. She moved backwards and forwards, played upon the auto-harp, but did not speak, and then dematerialised before us, reversing the process by which she had made her appearance, the form and substance gradually sinking and fading away to the vanishing point.

After this another youthful, but somewhat indistinctly revealed, form, slighter but rather taller than "Cissie," appeared in the centre of the screen, but disappeared after a few seconds; and as the power appeared to be waning, the light was restored, and the séance terminated.

The medium was found sitting behind the screen in a somewhat exhausted condition, but in a short time revived.

It was stated to me that the forms were unusually weak to what they sometimes are, a fact accounted for by the ill-health of the medium. This may or may not be so, but although no special tests were used on the occasion, the various appearances, as may be judged by the above plain, unvarnished narrative, were sufficiently remarkable to excite the greatest wonder and surprise."

I now give a record of a quite historic séance, which took place on Saturday, September 30th, 1894, for the enlightenment of Mrs. Annie Besant, then in Sydney.

The following is an accurate report by the *Sunday Times*' repre-

sentative, who was present, and appeared in that paper on October 7th, 1894 :—

"SUNDAY TIMES," OCTOBER 7TH, 1894.

A séance for spirit materialisation possessing more than ordinary interest, not only on account of the nature of the manifestations, but because of the presence of a visitor of world-wide fame, took place in Sydney on Saturday, 30th ultimo.

It appears that Mrs. Annie Besant, though herself an earnest investigator of occult phenomena, and claiming to have had a wonderful personal experience in connection with her researches into the esoteric mysteries of Theosophy, had never witnessed the actual materialisation of fully-developed spirit forms; but having heard of the remarkable manifestations occurring through the mediumship of Mrs. Mellon, on arriving in Sydney communicated with that lady, asking to be given the opportunity of being present at a séance.

Just at the time of Mrs. Besant's arrival Mrs. Mellon was seized with a severe attack of illness, and it was at first feared would be unable to comply with the request; but fortunately, both for herself and the distinguished visitor, she recovered more rapidly than was at first anticipated, and the séance was accordingly arranged to take place just prior to Mrs. Besant's last lecture, on the date mentioned, at the residence of Dr. MacCarthy, Elizabeth-street, Hyde Park.

So soon as the affair got wind, both Mrs. Mellon and Dr. MacCarthy were fairly besieged with applications from persons desirous of being present, both within and without spiritualistic circles, the applicants including leading men in political, social and journalistic society. Both the exigencies of space and a consideration of the unfairness of introducing a number of new and possibly inharmonious influences, however, necessitated the invitations being strictly limited, and the circle was consequently restricted to eighteen persons, including the representative of the *Sunday Times*. Amongst others present were a member of the Upper House, a doctor of philosophy, the Rev. G. Walters, Dr. Pickburn, Mr. T. S. Henry (architect), Mr. C. L. Wallis, and Mr. N. Joubert. Mrs. Besant was accompanied by her daughter, Mrs. Besant Scott, and there were also present four other ladies.

As Mrs. Besant was to lecture in the Opera House in the evening, the séance was held in the daytime, and the subdued light which constitutes one of the favorable conditions for materialisation was obtained by an arrangement of curtains and venetian blinds by which the degree of light could be regulated as required, although it may be mentioned that at no time during the séance was the semi-darkness too great to prevent reading the time by the dial of an ordinary watch.

The arrangement of the room was much the same as on the occasion of the séance previously described in the *Sunday Times*, except that all superfluous furniture was cleared out to make room for the larger number of sitters, who were seated on three rows of

chairs, occupying fully two-thirds of the floor space. The cabinet, as it is technically called, consisted simply of a brass curtain rod and pair of curtains fixed across one corner of the room, behind which was placed a low chair for the medium.

At about 3 o'clock the proceedings commenced by most of the sitters joining in singing, and after two or three airs had been got through, whilst in the midst of "Ye banks and braces," a tall form enveloped in white drapery appeared in front of the cabinet.

At first the outline was indistinct, but gradually it took on that of a man, and was recognised by previous sitters as that of "Geordie."

Soon the singers ceased, and the ghostly visitant, instead of remarking "Thank you!" after the usual polite manner of earthly auditors, observed in somewhat guttural tones: "I say, that's not very good singing." Those not too much awe-struck by the apparition laughed, but Geordie chipped in again, "I say, there's a lady here," and just then a female form appeared to the left of Geordie, who evidently prided himself on the manner in which he was doing the honors as M.C., and added, "She comes for Dr. S." The gentleman indicated rose, and asked, somewhat nervously, "What is the lady's name?" "How should I know; she is a foreigner!" was Geordie's prompt reply.

He then remarked: "There are three of us here," and had scarcely spoken when the little spirit known as "Cissie" was seen standing on Geordie's right, all three forms being distinctly visible together.

The gentleman for whom the stranger spirit had come here made some advances forward, and asked if he might shake hands with her, but was informed by Geordie that she had no hands. She appeared to be not very strongly materialised, and soon afterwards disappeared within the cabinet after bowing several times.

Cissie now came out of the cabinet, took up a hand-bell which stood on a small table near, and rang it vigorously. Some of the company asked her to go over to Mrs. Besant, but she appeared either somewhat shy or not sufficiently strong to do so at first, although Geordie encouraged her by saying, "Go out, little one."

She was then asked to place her foot upon a slate which had been previously dusted with soot in order to obtain, if possible, a foot-print. She appeared to do so several times, but the impressions as afterwards seen were very indistinct, as though it had been brushed by drapery.

Cissie executed a sort of baby hornpipe, then apparently commenced searching for something. She crumpled and tore up several papers lying on the table, and, after retiring into the cabinet, re-appeared.

"Come along, dear," said Mrs. Besant, encouragingly, and the little figure toddled across and handed her a flower, received one from her in return, played a few chords on an auto-harp, and then retired, kissing her hands as she disappeared.

Dr. MacCarthy next formally introduced Geordie to Mrs. Besant, saying: "This is George Thompson, Mrs. Besant; he is commonly known as Geordie. Allow me to introduce Mrs. Besant, Geordie; one of the most remarkable women of the age, or of any age."

Geordie replied, "I know it," bowing gracefully; and added, "most delighted to meet you, Mrs. Besant."



"JOSEPHINE."

From a photograph taken March 16, 1896.

The following conversation then took place between Dr. MacCarthy and Geordie:—

Doctor: "Geordie, will you answer me one or two questions? Tell me; are you George Thompson?"

Geordie: "I am, and no other."

Doctor: "Do you carry with you your own distinct and complete intelligence, or are you the desire body or Kama-rupa or "spook" of the Theosophists?"

Geordie: "I have my own complete intelligence. Do you take me for a lunatic? I am not a desire body nor a spook—neither am I the sub-conscious intelligence of anyone present, doctor."

The latter part of the reply being a palpable hit at the Doctor's favourite theory, provoked some laughter amongst the circle.

Doctor: "One more question, Geordie. Have you been retarded in your development since you first materialised?"

Geordie: "No; on the contrary, I have progressed."

Mrs. Besant here asked if she could see the medium, and Geordie having answered yes, he brought Mrs. Mellon outside the cabinet, when Mrs. Besant was led forward by the doctor and took the medium's hand, Geordie still standing alongside in view of the whole circle.

Geordie then retired, and after a brief interval another female form appeared, which, by its graceful proportions and long flowing hair, was easily recognised as "Josephine," another frequent visitor to the circle. She bowed to the company, advanced with an almost imperceptible motion towards Mrs. Besant, who handed her some flowers, bowed her acknowledgement, and then, by request of some of the sitters, dematerialised outside the cabinet, the form gradually diminishing until only a small luminous cloud with a trace of the dark hair was visible on the floor, and then vanished altogether.

Geordie then re-appeared, and remarked, "I don't think I can do much more. I'm afraid I'm overdoing it." He then asked that someone should go to the medium, and thereupon instantaneously vanished as the doctor entered the cabinet.

He found Mrs. Mellon in a very exhausted condition, and states that her pulse was very rapid and feeble, scarcely perceptible. Mrs. Besant also went forward and took her hand, and, as showing the power of contact, the doctor states that after a few moments the pulse resumed its force and volume, and its rate lowered almost to normal.

Subsequently the medium, whilst apparently in a trance, was said to be under "control" by Cissie, who informed the sitters, in childish accents, that when she was crumpling up the papers she was looking for chocolate creams, and was much disappointed that none had been provided, as when materialised she was very fond of those sweetmeats.

She also informed the *Sunday Times* representative that some day she would perform the feat known as the ring test, or passing matter through matter, by placing a ring upon his arm whilst he had hold of the hand of another person.

The sitting lasted altogether about one hour and three-quarters, and was undoubtedly of a most astonishing as well as interesting character.

Extract from letter of Rev. George Walters.

(To THE EDITOR "SUNDAY TIMES.")

Sir,—Having, at your request, perused the proof of an article describing a séance held at Dr. MacCarthy's house, at which Mrs. Besant and others, including myself, were present, I can say unhesitatingly that the article gives a simple, straightforward, unvarnished account of what did occur.—I am, etc.,

GEORGE WALTERS.

The following opinions, expressed by Mrs. Besant-Scott to a Melbourne *Herald* reporter after the above séance, are interesting:—

"Geordie's" 'turn' having ended, Josephine came on. She asked the company after their health, &c., and accepted some flowers which Mrs. Besant offered her.

"Cissy," a little African, next appeared, and expressed her disappointment that she could not have some chocolates. She spoke in very badly broken English, and babbled the words "molecular inter-spaces" with inartistic inability. They seemed to catch in her throat, and she had great difficulty in getting through with them.

"Cissy" having retired, another spirit was called. It seemed somewhat ill at ease. A Frenchman was present, and on being told that the newcomer was a friend of his, exhibited the greatest excitement, grasping a chair by both hands in his fright. The spirit fled in good time, and then Geordie, Josephine and Cissy came out together. Josephine subsequently threw a carnation at Mrs. Besant, into whose lap it fell.

Mrs. Mellon appeared with Geordie afterwards, and about this there was an element of suspicion. It is quite possible, I think, for her to be supporting a lay figure by her left hand, as she and Geordie declined to shake hands.

When asked as to the dematerialisation, she said: "The forms gradually faded away towards the floor, until they became small specks, which eventually disappeared."

When asked if she thought deception was practised at this séance, Mrs. Scott said, "Well, I was dubious when I saw the curtains go out in the direction of the wardrobe; but as to the dematerialisation, there is something about it which I cannot explain."

Now, with all due deference to Mrs. Besant-Scott, she has unwittingly incorrectly described two important points—firstly, that Josephine spoke; and, secondly, that Cissie herself spoke. Josephine never spoke, either directly or through the entranced medium, and Cissie spoke only through Mrs. Mellon's voice, or, as it is termed, through the entranced medium under control of Cissie.

The most devout and regular attendants at Mrs. Mellon's séances never profess to have heard either "Josephine" or "Cissie" speak, and the *only* materialised form that I have ever heard speak is "Geordie." I will ask my readers to bear this in mind, as it is an important point

in the chain of evidence which I will discuss further on. The "unexplainable dematerialisation" I will also discuss.

The reporter also describes the little figure of "Cissie" as toddling across and handing Mrs. Besant a flower. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Besant went over to receive the flower, and the figure of "Cissie" was never at any time more than twelve inches in front of the curtains, though the hands, of course, reached further.

The experiment with the sooted slate was tried by myself as a test, and proved a very good one. Mrs. Besant and myself examined the slate in full light afterwards, and found only the marks caused by the drapery.

With the exception of this discrepancy, these are correct reports of authentic séances from the point of view of an ordinary spectator. Anybody who gained admission to the inner circle of a famous materialising medium would see a very similar exhibition.

In the course of my research on the subject, I had witnessed a great many such séances. I had come in contact with Mrs. Mellon in her capacity as a professional medium, and it was in the aspect of an investigator only that I had dealings with her.

With a view to recording and publishing my observations, I kept a complete record of each séance as it took place, with my criticisms upon the same. Those readers who wish for an account of Mrs. Mellon's other séances will find very full details in Part III. of this book.

The literature of Spiritualism teems with such accounts of Spirit-Materialisations, and such exhibitions seem to satisfy the longings and cravings of the majority of Spiritualists. But they do not satisfy the investigator; and though he may not detect any absolute proof of fraud, neither has he, in all this, any positive proof of genuineness.

The difference between the Spiritualist and the sceptical investigator is this: that the sceptic doubts everything until evidence is brought forward which precludes the possibility of fraud, while the Spiritualist goes there prepared to believe everything he sees and hears, and shuts his eyes to any possibility of fraud.

Thus we find thousands of witnesses ready to uphold the genuineness of phenomena which they have seen, for the reason that the great majority of the witnesses of such phenomena are, for very good reasons, Spiritualists, and leave their reasoning powers behind when they attend these exhibitions.

Faith as blind and credulous as any other, holds sway here, and such people, without taking further trouble to think, accept, as completely convincing evidence of such astounding phenomena, exhibitions such as I have described.

There is no searching of the medium beforehand—nothing to show that the medium is not masquerading as a "spirit" outside the cabinet, or manipulating lay figures and muslin drapery. The whole proceedings are so hedged round with such suitable, and in fact such

absolutely necessary conditions, that trickery is made easy, and great indeed must be the faith that can accept such evidence as establishing so grave a question.

I do not for a moment wish to infer that Spiritualism rests solely upon evidence such as this. Although materialisation holds with them an important place, many Spiritualists profess to find greater and more inspiring evidence in other and lesser phenomena—such as alleged trance and direct spirit communication—on which to build their faith. With these other phenomena the present treatise does not deal; they may or may not be worthy of investigation, but they are beyond the limits of the question under consideration.

With regard to the reliability of the evidence of witnesses, it is remarkable how few persons have the faculty of exact observation at all developed. This is largely a matter of training, and it often happens that most important circumstances, and perhaps some crucial point, are entirely overlooked through the lax observations of witnesses.

Ask two people to describe from memory any common object of every-day life, and one will note every detail with exactness, while the other will have but a hazy idea. It therefore follows, that in a field of such research as that in question, the value of the testimony of witnesses is far from equal, and that scientific or expert evidence can alone be counted worthy of consideration.

I have frequently, after certain séances, heard witnesses state that a certain form had walked out into the middle of the room, or had "dematerialised" or vanished in the middle of the floor, while I myself and others from more careful observation could state positively that such was not the case, and that such a statement was an exaggeration, to say the least of it. There is a vast difference between a form vanishing in the middle of the floor and "dematerialising" six inches in front of the curtains of the cabinet. Such discrepancy of evidence is easily understood when we bear in mind the laxity of observation and of speech with which so many people are blessed. If there is any possibility of the existence of a loophole for trickery or deception, then such evidence is not worth adducing at all.

All the negative evidence which the thousands of spiritualistic witnesses bring forward is only negative evidence after all, and therefore worthless as evidence. It only goes to prove that these thousands of possible dupes did not detect the trickery if any existed, while no amount of such evidence can prove that trickery did not take place. Where there is a possibility of fraud—and even a very great probability judging by the history of the subject—the careful investigator will begin by presuming these alleged phenomena due to trickery, and hold that opinion until he finds direct and irrefutable evidence to the contrary. And how is he to obtain this evidence, which must be scientific or expert? Such evidence must be based on carefully-considered experiment, practically and carefully carried out, taking absolutely nothing for granted, allowing no sentiment to interfere, and precluding every possibility of fraud. Experiments such as this were carried out

some years ago by William Crookes, F.R.S., in England, and Professor Johann Zöllner in Germany, and tended to establish the probability of hitherto unrecognised natural laws and abnormal forces, which were grouped by them under the name of "Psychic Force." No spiritualism entered into the calculations of these scientists; they professed to deal with natural—though little understood—phenomena, and treated their experiments from the purely material standpoint. Following on the experiments of these men, Psychical Research Societies have been formed in most of the large cities of the world, and the Psychical Research Society of London numbers among its members some of the leading men of the present day.

This was my standpoint when I took up the subject, and from this material aspect I have always viewed psychical investigation. In the lesser so-called spiritualistic phenomena I have found, from a material point of view, much that is worthy of study and research; and while I see absolutely no evidence on which to base the hypothesis of a spiritual origin for any of these, I believe that a greater knowledge of the natural laws, which undoubtedly govern these phenomena, may be turned to practical and material advantage.

That a telegraphic message may be sent from point to point without a connecting wire is already an established fact. Why not eventually dispense with the electric battery also? Every year gives some new fact to science, and shows but more plainly the limited view of Nature which our present knowledge allows us. But this does not prove spirit materialisation any more than the existence of the force we call electricity or steam power does. Having, however, taken up the study of these lesser so-called phenomena of spiritualism with this object, I was also anxious to experiment with, and test for myself, its so-called greater phenomena of materialisation. With this in view, I attended a great number of these orthodox séances with the medium, Mrs. Mellon, and my own observations carefully noted, so far from being in support of the genuineness of the phenomena, tended to make me even more sceptical.

Exhibitions such as these might be reverently regarded by "faithful believers" but to the practical investigator they were most unsatisfactory. When, therefore, some intimate friends and fellow-investigators proposed to form a committee and to carry out some interesting experiments and "tests," with a view to clearly establishing the genuineness or otherwise of the phenomena occurring through Mrs. Mellon, I readily consented to join with and assist them.

CHAPTER II.

The "Test" Seances and Criticisms.

TEST NO. I.—THE MATERIALISATION OF SPIRITS WHILE THE MEDIUM IS SITTING OUTSIDE CABINET.

With the object of carrying out these experiments with the medium, Mrs. Mellon, a committee consisting of the following persons was formed in the month of June, 1894:—Mrs. E—, Mr. J. F—, Mr. N. Joubert, Dr. M—, Mr. P. J. M—, Dr. Pickburn, Mr. Rumble, Mr. T. Shekleton Henry, Mr. Chas. L. Wallis.

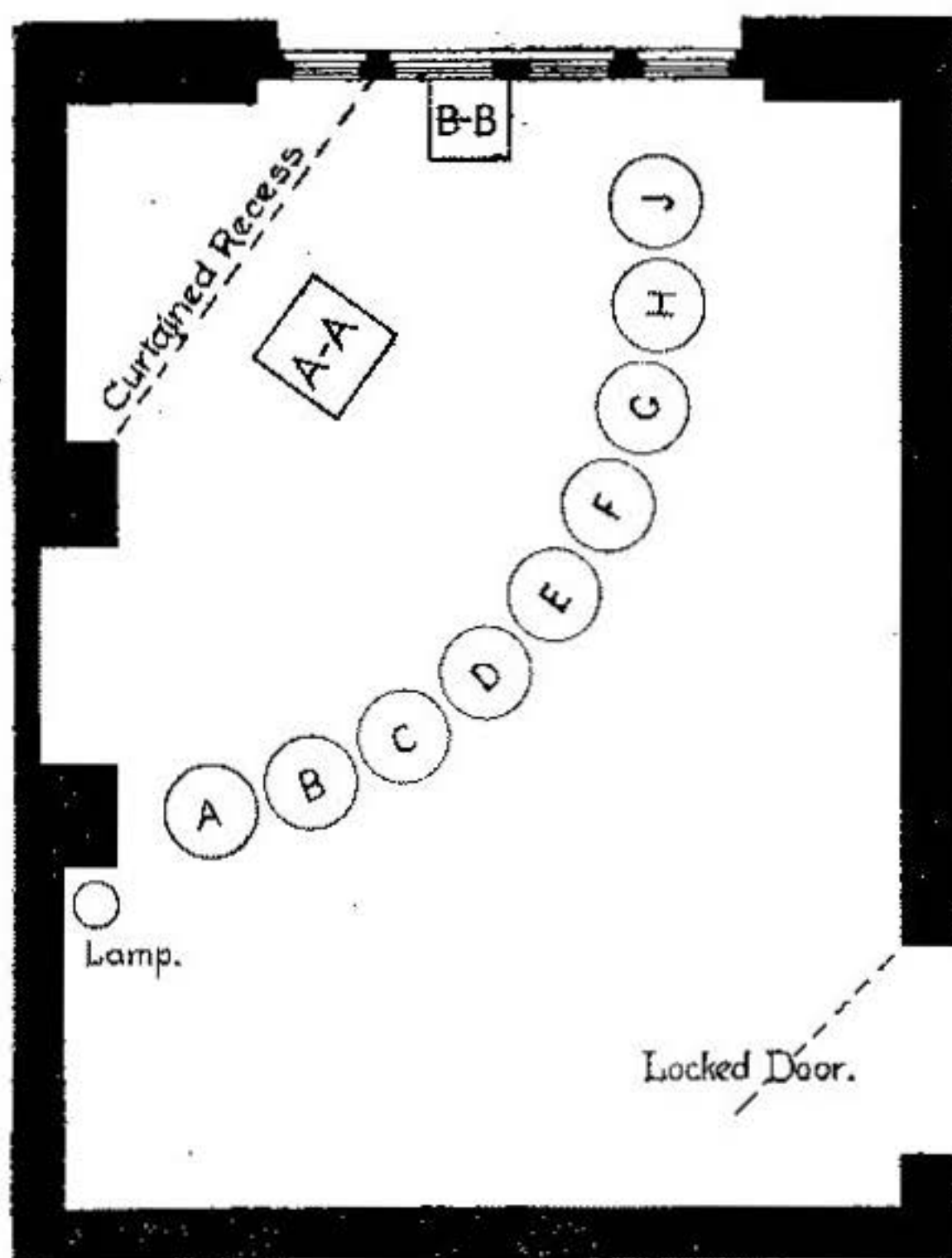
The "tests" were formulated and proposed by Dr. M—, after consultation with the medium, and it was arranged that they should take place at 223 Elizabeth-street, Sydney. It was agreed to publish the results, and I undertook the writing of the record of each as it occurred. As these experiments were to take place in Dr. M—'s house, he naturally took the direction and arrangement of details, and settled what "tests" were to be applied, in fact it was through the personal influence of Dr. M— that the medium consented to undergo any tests at all.

This lady talked so much of the cruelty of tests which she professed to have undergone in England, of "straight jackets, wire cages, bags, wires, seals, and cords," that Dr. M— agreed that she should not be subjected to any such "cruelties" at his hands, and experiments were therefore arranged with the idea of suiting all parties.

The requisite "sympathetic element" was supplied by the presence of three spiritualists on the committee; in fact that would seem to be their chief qualification for being there. The object of the first "test" was to demonstrate the genuineness of the phenomena of materialisation, by the medium sitting outside the cabinet in view of the spectators, and then producing "spirit" forms.

This first "test" séance took place on Tuesday, 26th June, 1894, and we assembled as above, with the addition of Mrs. R—, at 8.33 p.m. The accompanying plan, drawn to scale, shows the arrangement of the room, sitters, and curtained recess or "cabinet."

Mrs. Mellon and her husband arrived shortly before 9 p.m., and then the door and windows of the room were locked and sealed. Mrs. Mellon consented at my suggestion to take her hair down, and permitted me to measure it, and then tie it up in a peculiar knot at the back, in such a manner that it could not be untied without notice. I also proposed to place a tape round her neck or body and seal the same to the back of the chair, but to this she would not



Scale $\frac{1}{2}$ 5 10 Feet.

Plan of Room in which first "Test" Seance took place, at 223 Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

A-A—Medium (Mrs. Mellon) on chair.

B-B—Small table on which were pencils and paper.

A—Mr. N. Joubert.
B—Mr. T. S. Henry.
C—Mr. E. Ramble.
D—Dr. Pickburn.
E—Mrs. E——.

F—Mr. F——.
G—Mrs. R——.
H—Mr. C. L. Wallis.
J—Dr. M——.
Mr. Mellon attending to lamp.

consent, excusing herself on the plea that the smell of sealing-wax made her ill.

A small bamboo table (B-B), on which were two or three sheets of foolscap paper (previously examined and initialled) and a pencil, was placed against the window and about a foot from the curtain of "cabinet." The lamp, shaded with a pink globe, was placed at the back of the sitters, as shown on plan, and to this Mr. Mellon attended throughout the evening, and regulated the light to suit the "spirits." No offer was made by the medium to allow herself to be searched, and Dr. M—— appeared to rely upon her bona-fides. We relied upon him in that matter.

At 9 p.m. she took her chair (at A.A. on plan) outside the cabinet, and the gas was turned completely out. The light from the shaded lamp was very dim, and I could only see the piece of white tape on the medium's hair showing against the dark back ground of the curtains, and barely distinguish the dim outline of the back of her chair and elbows. She sat with her back to the sitters and facing the curtains, saying that the light on her face from the lamp would be disturbing.

A few chords on Dr. M——'s auto-harp and a little singing from the company, and after about eight or ten minutes a white hazy form seemed to grow gradually up from Mrs. Mellon's lap and at the same time extended downwards to the floor beside her knee. This at first appeared like a long strip of white drapery, and then fluctuated and distended until part of the drapery covered the medium's shoulder, though I could not detect any movement of her back or elbows while this was going on.

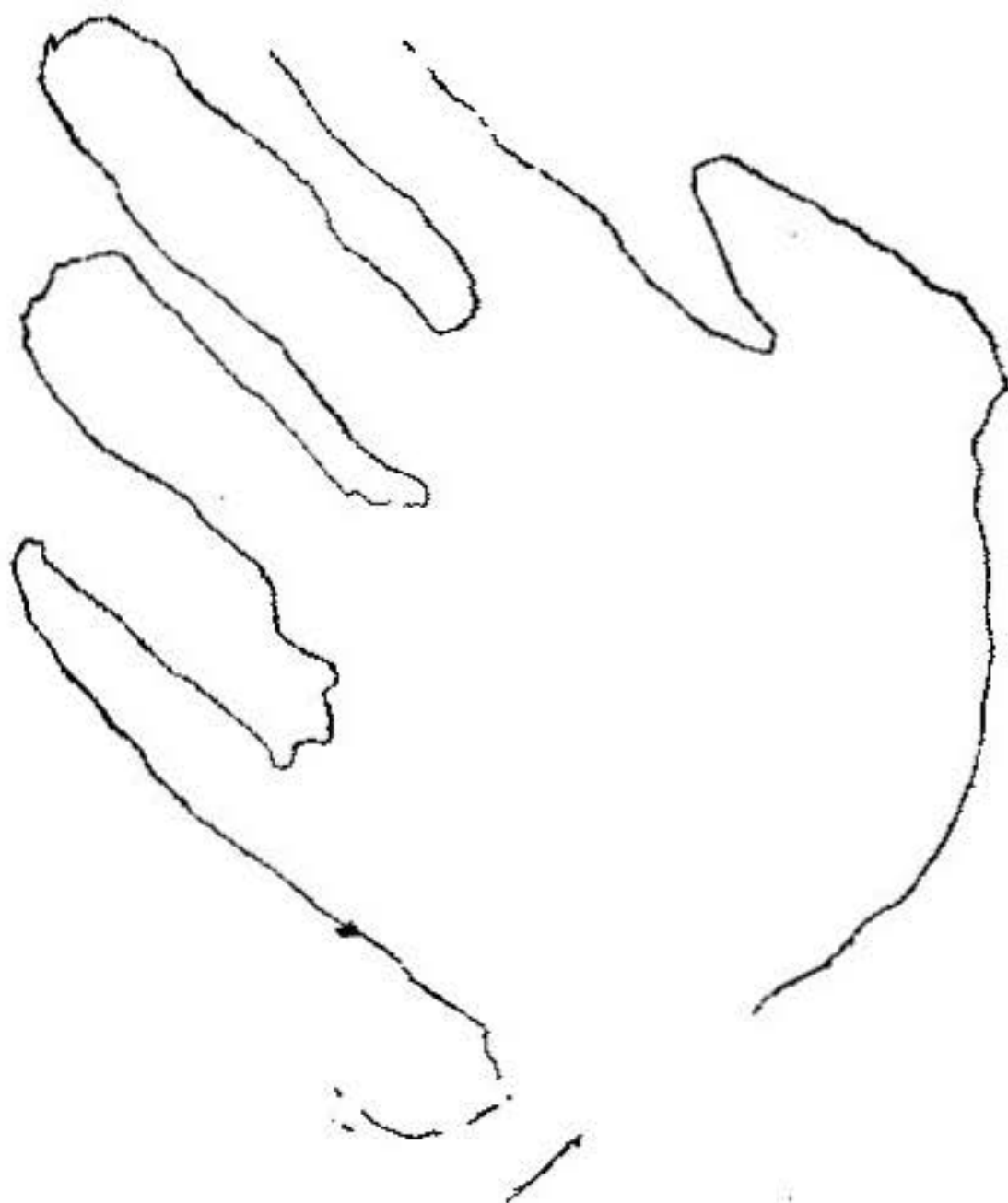
The drapery had now assumed the rough shape of a draped female form with head covered, and then slowly what appeared to be an arm went out, like the arm of a semaphore, and pointed towards the fireplace. The process was then exactly reversed and the form was lost to sight, apparently somewhere down near Mrs. Mellon's lap.

Next a short form of the same draped character appeared about twelve inches from the medium on the side nearest the window. It was about the height of a child of 4 or 5 years, and after a few minutes appeared to be reabsorbed into the medium.

Mrs. Mellon then informed us that these were "Josephine" and "Cissy" "trying to materialise," but that they were unable to do so properly outside "cabinet," as it required so much extra power. The effect was certainly very wonderful, but the light was so dim that one could not see what was going on in front of the medium. We expressed ourselves so far satisfied—we could not do otherwise; we were under promise not to leave our seats (to personally investigate); and though the darkness and absence of searching provided ample opportunity for trickery, it clearly would never do to make such an accusation without proof. This form of exhibition was new to me and to most of the others present, and one cannot be expected to have an explanation ready on the spur of the moment for all the

"phenomena" at the command of a medium of twenty-five years standing.

Mrs. Mellon then retired into the "cabinet," and was said to be entranced or "controlled" by "Cissie," who talked through her in the usual childish manner for some time, while (as she informed us) "Josephine" was materialising inside. "Josephine" shortly after appeared clothed in white, with bare arms and neck, and long dark hair hanging down over her shoulders. She walked out into the



CISSIE'S HAND.

Photographed (full size) from original pencil drawing by herself.

middle of the room, took some flowers which were handed her by Dr. M.—, separated them, and then came over and handed me one at arm's length. At request she then allowed Dr. M.— to measure her hair with tape for comparison with the previous measurement of the medium's. This he did in the most reverent manner possible, and did not take the opportunity, which he might, of ascertaining that it

was not a wig that he was measuring. "Josephine" then retired to cabinet, and after a short interval "Cissie" appeared between the opening of the curtains and took a box of chocolates, which were handed to her by Dr M.——. She then romped about with the sound of bare feet upon the floor, and dodged round the back of the curtains and out of the side next the window. She was requested then to place her hand upon the sheet of foolscap on the little table, and without coming away from the curtains she placed her hand apparently on the paper and traced round its outline with the pencil. After the séance the paper was examined, and the drawing reproduced was found upon it. "Cissie" returned to "cabinet," and then a tall attenuated form which bowed to the name of "Wahrungha" appeared between the curtains and shook hands with Dr. M.——, who advanced for the purpose—(Dr. M.—— afterwards described the hand as not fully formed)—and then appeared to bring the medium out and showed her to the sitters. Dr M—— again advanced and shook hands with the medium. Only one of her hands was visible.

Both the form and the medium then vanished behind the curtains, and, after a short interval of singing, we were informed that the power was exhausted, and that nothing more would occur that night. The gas was accordingly lit, and the medium emerged from the cabinet apparently rather tired. Her hair was found to be in the same condition as when tied up by me, and on comparison of the measurements of the hair, "Josephine's" was found to be about three inches longer than Mrs. Mellon's. This, together with the knot constructed by me, proved at any rate that whether "Josephine" be Mrs. Mellon herself or not, Mrs. Mellon's own hair does not do duty on these occasions. This brought the first "test" to a close, and we departed with plenty of food for reflection.

CHAPTER III.

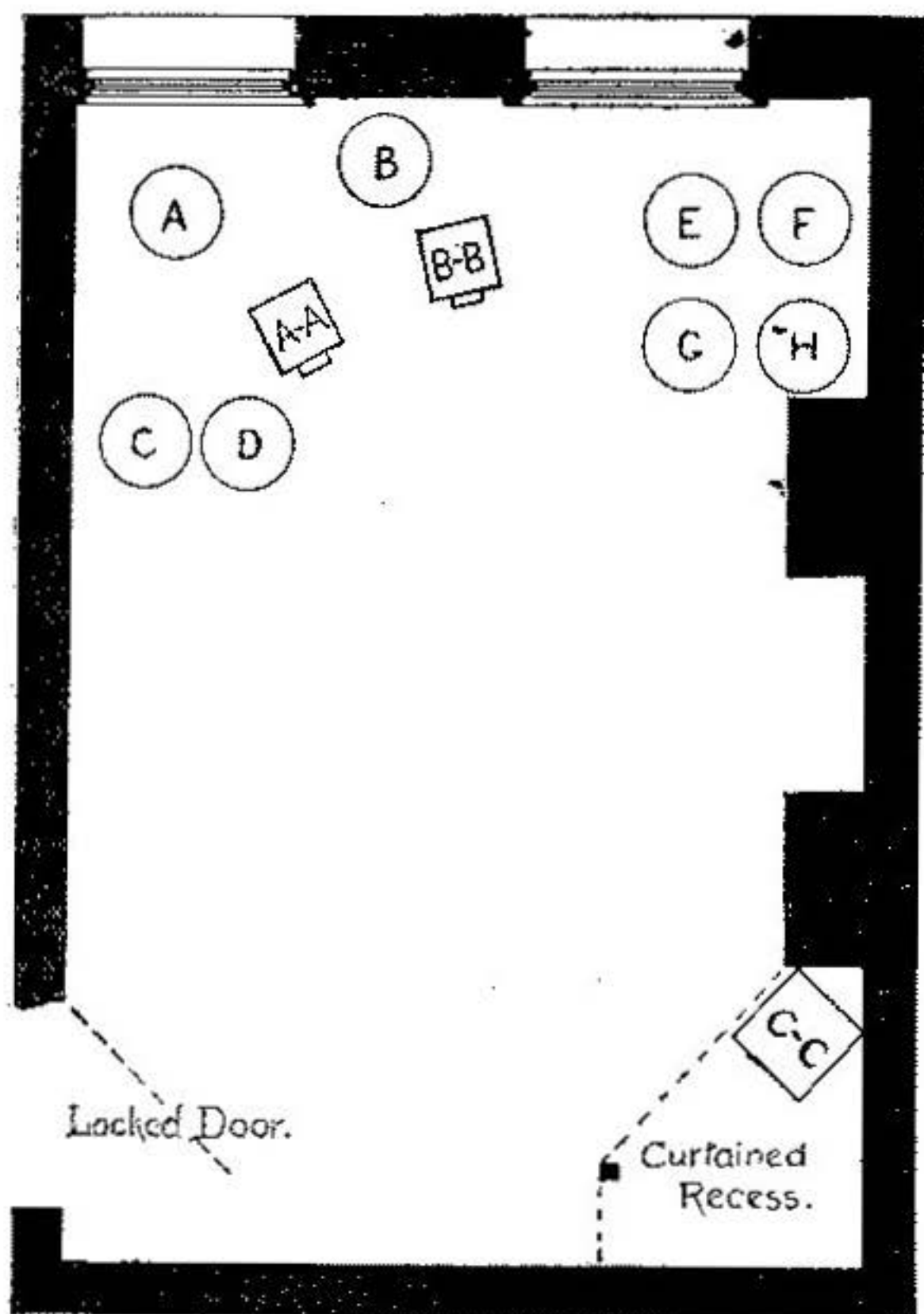
TEST NO. 2: THE FIRST PHOTOGRAPHIC SEANCE "GEORDIE"
PHOTOGRAPHED.

The second of the series of "test" séances with Mrs. Mellon was held this afternoon (Sunday, July 15th, 1894), in a room on the second floor at 223 Elizabeth Street, Sydney. The accompanying plan shows the exact arrangement of the room, cameras, sitters, medium and "cabinet."

The object of this "test" was to obtain photographs of the "materialised" forms, if possible in daylight, for the principal reason of proving their reality, and objectivity, and that they were neither due to hallucination nor hypnotism. Photographs of "materialised spirit" forms had been taken by Dr. M—— in daylight on previous occasions, notably that of "Josephine," reproduced in this book; but as they were not taken under "test" conditions, they were not considered satisfactory as evidence.

Now, the ordinary "spirit photograph," as understood by spiritualists, means the image left on the sensitised plate of a shadowy, unsubstantial, or vapourous form or forms, which forms, they assert, are always hovering round about us, although generally invisible to the human eye. These shadowy beings are said by spiritualists to be the spirits of departed friends, etc.; and they claim that, although invisible to the human eye in its normal state, under certain conditions these spirits affect the sensitised plate of the camera, and thus leave their image. This is the "spirit" photograph in the true sense of the word, and these airy, unsubstantial beings, are not "materialised" to undergo the process of photography, but are in their supposed usual, and humanly speaking, invisible state. Such photographs have frequently been exhibited, and have been reproduced in Mr. Stead's journal from time to time; but the testimony as to their genuineness is, like the photographs themselves, too shadowy to allow of their being considered evidence at all. It is well known that such photographs may easily be produced by a little trickery and manipulation of the plates or back-ground; though, in spite of the conviction of several persons for this offence, there are not wanting plenty of dupes who spend their money in obtaining these dubious portraits of their deceased friends and relatives.

There are several methods by which spurious spirit-photographs are produced, for instance by manipulation of the plates either before or after they are placed in the camera, or the higher department of fluorescence may be employed and any object rendered capable of being photographed which, to the normal human eye, is utterly invisible. If the object be so prepared in a dark room as to reflect only the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum, it will be easily photographed, although invisible to the sharpest eye.



Scale: 10 Feet.

Plan of Room at 223 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, in which the
Photographic "Test" took place.

A-A—Dr. M——'s Camera.

B-B—Mr. P. J. M——'s Camera.

C-C—Medium (Mrs. Mellon) seated.

A—Dr. M——,
B—Mr. P. J. M——,
C—Mr. T. S. Henry,
D—Dr. Pickburn.

E—Mr. F——,
F—Mr. Rumble,
G—Mr. C. L. Wallis,
H—Mrs. E——.

By the agency of fluorescence, figures depicted upon a background by such a substance as disulphate of quinine may become visible to the camera. Such a solution, although to the eye it is colourless like water, is to the camera as black as ink, and in this manner a back-ground screen might be prepared.

But through the mediumship of Mrs. Mellon, the forms to be photographed were "materialised," that is to say substantial and visible to any eye, and with the ordinary human attributes, as witnessed at the usual séances, which have already been described in Chapter I.

The photographing was to take place in daylight, a thing hitherto unknown with any other medium; and results in the way of "spirit" photographs were expected which would surpass what had gone before. Due care had been taken in the purchase and sealing up of the plates in the presence of witnesses, to prevent any tampering in that direction; and the "cabinet" having been constructed under my own supervision and examined by everybody previously to taking their seats, there was clearly no chance of manipulating a background, were it otherwise possible in daylight.

The plates used were Ilford's rapid dry plates, and were purchased by Mr. Rumble and Dr. M—— at Frost and Shipman's, George-street, Sydney, on July 13th, 1894, and sealed by Mr. Rumble in the presence of Dr. M—— and the assistant, with Mr. Rumble's own seal, and were then taken to 223 Elizabeth-street, and locked and sealed up in a cupboard there in the presence of two witnesses.

The committee assembled at 2.30 on the afternoon of July 15th, and the cupboard was unlocked and the sealed packet inspected by all. Then the sealed packet was carefully guarded down to the dark room by Dr. Pickburn, Mr. Rumble and Dr. M——, and the seals broken and all the plates transferred to slides in the presence of these witnesses, never leaving their sight until placed in the two cameras upstairs in the séance room. We had all now assembled in this room, and the two cameras, which had been previously focussed, were placed in position, as shown at A-A and B-B on plan.

The medium had arrived, and was removing her hat and cloak. I had expected that Dr. M—— would say something about searching beforehand to make the "test" complete. He had not said anything however, so I stated to him that he ought to insist on this point, as it was the crucial one of the whole proceedings. With considerable deference he suggested it to Mrs. Mellon, and she rather hesitatingly consented to be searched by Mrs. E—— in an adjoining room. Mrs. E—— reported that this had been done, and brought the medium into the séance room, and the door was then locked and sealed at 3 o'clock, and the key retained by Mr. Wallis. After Mrs. Mellon had arranged the sitters as shown on plan, and with their backs to the "cabinet," and the blinds had been adjusted so as to regulate the bright sunlight from the windows, she took her place inside the cabinet at 3.5 p.m., and drew the curtains. These curtains had been so arranged with pulleys

that they worked easily and rapidly, and the cords brought down behind in such a way that one pull opened and another pull closed them. It had also been stipulated and agreed to that no person should look round when the curtains were opened and the signal given to expose the cameras, and even Dr. M—— and his brother, who attended to the cameras, were under promise to uncover the lenses without looking round. This was explained by the medium as a necessary condition, for the reason that the direct gaze of the human eye would disintegrate the "materialised forms." After a considerable interval of singing to the accompaniment of the auto-harp, the signal to expose the cameras was given at 3.32 p.m. by the curtains being drawn apart. An exposure of two seconds was given, and the curtains then closed. Mr. P. J. M——'s camera missed fire, or rather he was late in exposing.

I sat with my watch and note-book on my knee, and noted the time and particulars of each event.

Mrs. Mellon, who was apparently not entranced, then remarked from within the "cabinet" that she thought she was out of focus and behind "Geordie," but that they would try again.

We sang again at request, and Mrs. Mellon made a few more remarks from behind the curtains, and said that "Geordie" informed her that he would show himself to us afterwards, but that we were not to look now.

At 3.45 p.m. Mrs. Mellon was "controlled" by "Cissie," and speaking from within the "cabinet," in "Cissie's" childlike voice, said that she came to give us instructions about taking the next photo., and further remarked that Dr. Pickburn was looking round from the corner of his eyes, and that "that made 'Geordie' shrink and bored holes in him," and again requested that we should not look round.

Under the circumstances this was a very pardonable curiosity on Dr. Pickburn's part, and I myself, and others must, plead guilty to the same offence; but it furnished valuable evidence further on.

I noticed also that Mrs. E—— and Mr. Wallis had provided themselves with a hand mirror, though undetected from the "cabinet," and stated afterwards that they obtained an excellent view of "Geordie" while the curtains were parted for the photographing.

At 3.49 p.m. the signal was given and both cameras exposed again for two seconds.

The blinds were then drawn down and the room slightly darkened, and we turned round in expectancy of "Geordie's" promised show, the cameras being kept ready.

After five minutes' waiting, "Geordie" suddenly peeped out of the "cabinet," and quickly drew in again. I got an excellent view of his face, and can describe it as very shining, and not at all lifelike. The cheeks were very highly coloured, and the whole expression was lifeless, unreal, and fixed. This was the same impression the other spectators received, and was explained afterwards by the spiritualists as being due to "Geordie's" intense desire to remain absolutely still for the photograph.

I may here remark that the readiness with which Spiritualism finds an explanation or excuse for any possible point of objection that may be raised is really wonderful. Immediately "Geordie" drew back into the "cabinet" Mrs Mellon called out to Dr. M—— to go over. He went and examined her pulse, and stated to us that "Geordie" had disappeared, and that the medium was alone in the "cabinet," although we had all seen Mr. "Geordie" just two seconds previously. This was quick work, and beat his usual dematerialising record.

At 4 p.m. Mrs. Mellon said that there was a lady "materialising" in the cabinet, whom she did not know. All this time we were facing the cabinet, and when the form appeared and stood for about 3 seconds between the curtains, we all had a good view of it. The light, it will be remembered, had been previously subdued to allow "Geordie" to meet our gaze, added to which the daylight was now failing. This may account for the fact that both Mrs. E—— and Dr. M—— thought they recognised a deceased relative in this strange lady. Dr. M——, although saying that he thought the light insufficient, was anxious to photograph this lady, and exposed the cameras for another 4 seconds while we turned our backs. Then the plates were changed, and the same form opened the curtains again and stood for 10 seconds for a second exposure. All these plates turned out afterwards to have been wasted over this lady, as they were failures from insufficiency of light.

I was very well satisfied with the good look I had at her, however, and noticed that the face was fair and animated, and the eyes blue.

In fact the face bore a striking resemblance to the medium, and the contrast between the pallor and animation of this face and the high colour, shiny gloss, and rigidity of "Geordie's," was very marked. Here I may say that there were more spiritualistic explanations given to account for this resemblance to the medium.

"Cissie" took "control" again at 4.15 p.m. Mrs. Mellon in the usual childish accents of this influence, said that the last form was a lady apparently between thirty and forty years of age, unknown to her, and appeared to have died of a wasting disease; and also said that there was a child inside the "cabinet" "materialising." However, this form did not appear, and Mrs. Mellon then said that she thought the power was exhausted, and terminated the séance at 4.20 p.m.

Dr. Pickburn, Mr. Rumble, Dr. M—— and Mr. P. J. M—— then took the slides down stairs to the dark room and witnessed the removal and development of the plates.

The medium, apparently exhausted, remained seated inside the cabinet until the rest of us went down stairs to get tea; some refreshment being sent up to her in the "cabinet."

The negatives, when developed, were handed round for the inspection of all, and, with the exception of the failures already enumerated, were very clear and well-defined portraits of "Geordie." The photographs from these negatives are already well known to the Sydney public, and some of the best have been reproduced for

publication. After the negatives had been shown to the medium, she left the house to return home.

The result of this séance was very gratifying, and the great advance which these negatives showed upon all previous "Spirit-photographs" was considered to redound greatly to the medium and the photographers. Theoretically they were complete "tests," as to the reality of Spirit materialisation. The chain of carefully considered evidence, duly witnessed step by step by several reliable persons, from the purchase and sealing up of the plates in the shop down to their development afterwards in the dark room, was unbroken and theoretically complete, and apparently left no loophole for any possibility of trickery. From a practical view, however, the weakest point in this whole chain of evidence was the fact that while there were several witnesses to attest every other point, there was only one witness to the searching. To the majority of those present this appeared but a trifling matter; in fact, so trifling that it was almost overlooked. Dr. M—— and others considered the *bonafides* of the medium to have been sufficiently tested in England to accept her *ipse dixit* without more enquiry. He promised, however, to strengthen this point of evidence at the next "test," on my suggestion that other witnesses to the searching would strengthen what appeared to my mind to be the most crucial point of the whole "test."

CHAPTER IV.

TEST No. 3: THE SECOND PHOTOGRAPHIC SEANCE, AND THE RESULT.
 TEST No. 4: THE THIRD PHOTOGRAPHIC SEANCE, AND REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENTS.

The Second Photographic Séance of this series of experiments took place on the afternoon of Sunday, August 5th, 1894, at 223, Elizabeth-street, Sydney. Mr. R. C. T. Morgan, of Melbourne, Secretary to the Psychical Research Society of that city, then on visit to Sydney, was invited to be present, and, with that exception, the circle comprised the same persons as enumerated in the account of the first photographic test.

The object of this second attempt at photographing the "materialised spirit" forms was to obtain photographs showing the medium more distinctly beside "Geordie," and sufficiently clear to place her identity beyond dispute. In the series of photographs obtained at the last sitting, "Geordie" himself appeared well developed and clearly defined, while the medium unfortunately was unrecognisable, the blurred image of her face being just apparent over "Geordie's" right shoulder. The parcel containing the dry plates had been purchased, locked up, sealed, and the whole transaction duly witnessed, as on the previous occasion.

We assembled in the same room as for the last séance, the arrangement of the room, sitters, cameras, and "cabinet" being almost exactly the same as that shown on the plan in Chapter III, except that Dr. Pickburn and myself were placed at first behind the other sitters on this occasion, but subsequently moved.

The cameras were focussed on the "cabinet" as before, and all was ready when the medium arrived just before 3 o'clock.

Following out my suggestion, Dr. M—— had decided to ask the medium to allow two persons to witness the searching, and Mrs. Mellon, on arrival, consented to permit Mrs. E—— and a domestic to carry this out in an adjoining room. This they professed to have done thoroughly, and brought Mrs. Mellon into the séance room at 3.10 p.m., the door being then locked and sealed. Mrs. Mellon then re-arranged the sitters somewhat, making me change places with Mr. Morgan, thus placing Mr. Morgan at my back and between me and the "cabinet." She then took her seat inside the cabinet at 3.20 p.m.

Here let me say that, after the satisfactory view of "Geordie" obtained through the mirror on the previous occasion by Mrs. E—— and Mr. Wallis, everyone of us had come provided with a mirror on this day, and, as far as I can ascertain, the medium was unaware beforehand of our clandestine intentions.

After singing for forty minutes without any remark from the 'cabinet' and no result except a movement of the curtains as if someone were peeping out at us, one of the sitters next me remarked that he thought that "Geordie" must have detected the mirrors. If he ("Geordie") was sharp enough to catch Dr. Pickburn looking round on the previous occasion, he or anybody else peeping out from the curtains, could not fail to see nine mirrors held up in a very expectant attitude. Anyhow at eight minutes past 4 p.m. Mrs. Mellon said, "Are you ready, doctor?" And then further said that "Geordie" was in the "cabinet" materialised, but seemed to be melting away again as something was wrong. At this remark Mr. Wallis looked at me significantly.

Another tedious half-hour of singing without result, and without any remarks from the cabinet, proved a trifle wearisome. Mrs. Mellon did not speak all this time and was thought to be entranced. At 4.30 p.m. the sound of rapping was heard to proceed from the cabinet, and on enquiry if the "spirits" had a message to communicate, the following was rapped out:—

"Geordie is disgusted with you for having mirrors."

Mrs. Mellon then, in a tone of apparent great annoyance, asked "What does this mean?" "Who had mirrors?" and was informed that all present had them. She then said that it was a mean advantage to take, as we had been told previously that to look at the "spirit forms" in daylight, caused them to melt and bored holes in them.

We all apologised, and replied that we were unaware that looking at the reflected image in a mirror would have the same disintegrating effect as that supposed to be produced by the direct gaze from the human eye.

We then promised to put the mirrors away if Mrs. Mellon would try for a little longer. We sat till 5.10 p.m., but without result, and then broke up the sitting, after having experienced one of the most tedious afternoons that I remember.

The medium appeared very much annoyed, and inclined to severely blame Mr. Wallis as the originator of the "mirror test" (as I may call it), although we all pleaded guilty on this occasion.

After she had departed, a council of war was held, and it was decided that the committee should subscribe towards a present of jewellery to be given to the medium as a solatium to her injured feelings, and in the hope that we might be forgiven, and the opportunity of another photographic séance allowed us.

An evening or two after that, a small gathering was held at the Hotel Métropole, and on behalf of the committee an apologetic and glowing speech was made, and Mrs. Mellon was formally presented with some valuable jewellery.

Mrs. Mellon passed over our offence; we were forgiven, and promised another sitting from her, which would take place on the following Thursday afternoon.

We accordingly assembled on the following Thursday, August 9th, 1894, for the third photographic séance. Besides the medium, there were present Dr. M——, Mrs. E——, Mr. N. Joubert, Mr. C. L. Wallis, Mr. Rumble, Mr. F——, Mr. R. C. T. Morgan, Mr. P. J. M——, and myself. The photographic plates had been purchased on the previous day, and the same precautions of sealing up the packet, locking and sealing the cupboard, etc., carried out as before in the presence of witnesses, so that there was no possible loophole for these plates to be tampered with beforehand.

At 2 p.m. the cupboard was unlocked, the packet taken down stairs to the dark room, and the plates transferred to the slides in the presence of several witnesses and then escorted up to the séance room. This was the same room as that used for the photographing before, and the arrangement was similar to that on other occasions described, and shown on the last plan.

After focussing the cameras, Mrs. Mellon was searched by Mrs. E—— and the domestic in an adjoining room, and then brought into the séance room, and the door locked and sealed at 2.38 p.m. Mrs. Mellon then took her seat in the "cabinet," and the venetian blinds were regulated to admit the proper light. We sat with our backs to the "cabinet" as before, and sang to the accompaniment of the auto-harp.

At 3.20 p.m. Mrs. Mellon was "controlled" by "Cissie," and, with her usual childish manner of speech, requested Mr. Joubert to sit at the back between the rest of us and the cabinet, while I had to change places with him and move further away.

She then informed us that we were to close our eyes directly we heard the curtains move, and to keep them closed while the curtains were open. This was evidently done to guard against a repetition of the "mirror test."

At 3.25 p.m. Mrs. Mellon, in her normal voice, said: "Are you ready, Doctor?" We then closed our eyes as promised, while the curtains were drawn aside for about 5 seconds, and an exposure of 3 seconds taken with both cameras.

Mrs. Mellon then said from within the "cabinet," "I am afraid I moved."

The curtains rattled again, the same performance of closing our eyes was repeated, and the cameras again exposed for 3 seconds. The plates were then changed at 3.30, and we indulged in another interval of singing. At 3.45 p.m. Dr. M—— was again asked if he were ready, and all the eyes again closed, while the curtains were once more drawn aside and another exposure of 3 seconds taken. Mrs. Mellon then said, "That last 'materialised spirit' was the form of a lady, but I don't know who she is." The two previous shots had been taken at "Geordie," the wish having been expressed beforehand that he should be again photographed together with the medium.

At 3.55 p.m. Mrs. Mellon said, "I'm afraid that they'll not be able to do any more," so at 4 o'clock we broke up the sitting and

unlocked the door. The medium remained inside the cabinet to rest, while the plates were taken downstairs to the dark room and developed in the presence of Mr. Joubert, Mr. Morgan, Mr. P. J. M—— and Dr. M——.

The rest of us adjourned downstairs for tea, and refreshments were sent up to the medium in the cabinet.

The portraits of "Geordie" were found on development to be remarkably good negatives, showing "Geordie" and the medium standing beside him, clearly defined and easily recognisable. One of these portraits has been reproduced for publication, and with the exception of a slight change in position the others are similar to this. With regard to the last exposure of the cameras at the supposed "form of a lady," the plates on development showed what appeared like the draped form of an old woman. The head was draped round with white, so as to conceal the eyes and chin, and the only features visible from this shroud-like covering were the mouth and nose. There was some dispute afterwards as to the sex of this individual, some of those who saw the portrait claiming it to be a man.

I will refer to all these photographs again in a later chapter. There were no failures this time; all the negatives were good, and the result of this highly-successful photographic séance was considered to be a "triumph." Nothing like this had ever been achieved before in the way of "spirit photography;" and we congratulated both ourselves and the medium upon the successful issue to what we were bound to consider (theoretically speaking) a most complete and thoroughly perfect "test." In theory, this chain of evidence was complete and unbroken; we had taken every precaution against the fraudulent manipulation of the plates, etc.; the medium had been searched by two witnesses; and yet the "spirit forms" appeared and were photographed on the sensitised plates. Was not this complete evidence of the genuineness of the "phenomena?"

The foregoing accounts are the records which I intended to publish, and comprised my contemplated book. Those who will take the trouble to refer to the first number of the *Cosmos Magazine* will see the contemplated work advertised there to that effect. Now, although I felt inclined at this point to accept the genuineness of these phenomena, on the strength of the apparently irrefutable evidence of the last photographic test, I had no intention of ascribing these or any other phenomena to a spiritual origin. I am, and always have been, strongly averse to Spiritualism; and it was only from the material and physical standpoint that I was investigating its so-called phenomena. Even if these phenomena were proved genuine (and our last test appeared at the time to support this), I preferred to consider them due to some little-known natural laws, some abnormal concentration of force, which was able to objectivate and materialise the *thought forms* evolved from our own conscious or sub-conscious intellects. This certainly appears rather an abstruse



"GEORDIE" AND MRS. MELLON.

Photographed by daylight, August 9, 1901.

theory, but supported, as it seemed to be, by other transcendental *physical* phenomena, it is more reasonable and logical than the spiritualistic hypothesis to account for the so-called phenomena of materialisation. Those who will refer to the above-mentioned advertisement will find there absolutely no mention of either spirits or Spiritualism, and such has always been my attitude in the matter.

To accuse me, therefore, of inconsistency in my present attitude is as wrong and as unjust as to call me a spiritualist. My only object has been to probe the truth, or otherwise, of certain *alleged* phenomena.

Before proceeding to describe other events, and my further train of reasoning which led up to them, I will here give Mrs. Mellon's own account of her sensations whilst undergoing these photographic tests. This account, written by herself after due thought and deliberation was supplied to me some time after the last-mentioned "test" took place, to be published with my records of these "tests." I give it here for what it may be worth, and without further comment. Mrs. Mellon says:—

"Concerning the photographing of the materialised spirit forms my sensations, etc.

"Commencing with 'Josephine,' a photograph of whom was taken by Dr. M——— on the afternoon of March 16th, 1894. I felt, during the early part of the process, a chilling and benumbing sensation steal all over my body, while the psychoplasm was being taken from me, and which came principally from my left side and from the tips of my fingers.

"This psychoplasm, or vapoury mass, fell at my feet in waves and clouds, very beautiful to look at; then, as it arose and fell, I could see flashes of glorious light here and there, like rays of bright sunlight on a rippling brook.

"I felt that the veil between us was partially lifted. I felt that certain laws in operation would quicken the forces that would eventually cause a temporary materialised form to present itself. (That temporary forms can and do build up from elements, gases, and particles of matter in the atmosphere, combined with the magnetic nerve, aura, etc., taken from the medium and sitters, is an absolute fact, of which we have abundant proof.) And as I gazed, with half-closed eyes, I saw this moving, living mass gradually, but surely, assume a distinct human shape. The face, head and hair were the last to make their appearance.

"I felt impressed from the first it was my dear guide 'Josephine' who was materialising; and, as she grew stronger, I became convinced that my impression was correct.

"During this interesting process I could see other beings, very shadowy, certainly, but perfectly distinct, making passes with their hands from right to left, and *vice versa*, over the form of 'Josephine.' I saw her stagger several times as though she would fall, but as the

psychoplasm continued to flow from my side the form became stronger and clearer, whilst I, up to this stage, had been gradually getting weaker. My hands then commenced to tingle and burn, while my face became rigid. I could not move a muscle, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, I could not have uttered a word to save my life. I felt, as it were, under a spell, although my brain was clear. I was perfectly conscious the whole time, from beginning to end. However, this rather unpleasant sensation lasted only when Josephine's head and face were being materialised; and as I got the signal (three tiny taps of my chair) to open the curtains, I felt a sudden rush of power flow up my arms; but the rigidity of my face did not relax in the slightest degree until after 'Josephine' was photographed, when she suddenly collapsed, causing me to shake violently. I felt that I must call someone to me to hold my hands for a few moments, in order to resuscitate me a little. This I immediately did, asking one of the sitters, Mr. R——, to please come to me at once. After holding my hands some few minutes, I felt greatly restored.

"Such a manifestation as the materialised form cannot possibly be put down to any hypothesis but the true one—viz., the Spiritual.

"Have we not been walking amid the shadows already too long and at last have come into the light and glory which we must recognise and take into our hearts.

"With regard to my sensations during the photographing of the spirit known as 'Geordie':

"First: My face did not become rigid as in the case when 'Josephine' was materialised, but I felt much more reduced in size. My arms were attenuated, my face felt drawn and pinched, and I felt frightfully hungry. I was perfectly conscious the whole time. I could talk as well as 'Geordie,' who spoke just before he was photographed.

"After the photographing took place, the form immediately collapsed, throwing me into a violent tremor. I called to Dr. M—— to catch hold of my hands, which he did, at the same time feeling my pulse which was found to be abnormally high and irregular.

"I was so exhausted after this sitting that I almost fainted away, since which time I have suffered from general weakness.

"I may state that both before and after the sitting I consented to be taken into a bedroom by a lady and her maid, and underwent the painful ordeal of having my clothing examined. I always make it a point of wearing only coloured clothing when I am to hold a séance, and, at the lady's suggestion, I discarded the ordinary white underwear for coloured flannels.

"I thought this suggestion ridiculously absurd at the time, but I do not regret having complied with the lady's wish, if by doing so I have strengthened the evidence of the manifestations, the only white article about me being a silk handkerchief. The little child known as 'Cissie' was photographed by J. Stewart Smith, Esq., at his own residence in Edinburgh on September 3rd, 1890, and in daylight, between the hours of 2.30 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon; the sitting

was, as you see from the time stated, a short one, published in the *Medium and Daybreak* on October 3rd, 1890. 'Cissie' has attended me almost ever since the beginning of my development as a medium some twenty-four years, and her first effort at materialising must date back twenty-two years. She was a mere child, then about six years of age; however, there is some doubt as to her correct age. I only judge it to be, as I have stated, from her appearance. I used to see her clairvoyantly, long before she learned the Science of Materialisation. 'Cissie' could not at first speak a word of English, but can now speak fairly good English, and tells us that in spirit-life she is now grown up; but that when she comes into my aura and takes on the earth's conditions, she feels as she did when in earth life, and therefore always manifests as a child.

"'Cisserina' is her spirit name but for convenience sake we call her 'Cissie'; she is a dear little thing, and is quite worthy of all the love and affection in which she is held by our many English friends at home, and has always been to me as a dear friend and comforter."

CHAPTER V.

TEST No. 5: THE SEANCE FOR WEIGHING THE "SPIRITS," AND THE RESULT.

Although I here speak of this Weighing Séance as test No. 5, I do so for the reason that Mr. R. C. T. Morgan, of Melbourne, under whose direction it was arranged and carried out, has talked of it in Melbourne as a "test," and not because either Dr. M——, myself, or others present considered it as such. It was altogether an informal affair, arranged on the spur of the moment for the personal enlightenment of Mr. Morgan; was not held under any pretence at "test" conditions, and included no searching of the medium, neither was she secured in any way to the scale on which she was supposed to sit. Mr. Morgan has, however, brought it forward as evidence in support of his views, both in the Melbourne newspapers and before the Psychical Research Society of that city; and so I will here criticise the occurrence as it stands, and consider what value can be given to this evidence and why it cannot be put forward as a "test."

We assembled at Mrs. Mellon's house, 5 Waverley Road, Woolahra, Sydney, at 8 p.m. on Monday, July 30th, 1894, and among others present were Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Wallis, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Joubert, Dr. M—— and myself.

Two of Fairbank's weighing machines had been hired by Mr. Morgan, from Lassetter and Co. during the day, and had been conveyed to Mrs. Mellon's house during the afternoon. The weights and particulars were noted by myself as they occurred, which records I afterwards supplied to Mr. Morgan. I will now quote his own words in describing the proceedings:—

"I assisted to hang the curtains of dark material across the corner of the room, and all the preparations, it will be observed, were made in the presence of all the sitters.

"One of the two weighing machines was of a type usually found upon a railway station for weighing goods, having a back and projecting arm with index inscribed.

"This machine was then wheeled behind the curtain, the index arm or beam projecting from behind the curtain into the room, and in front of this arm and within two feet of the curtain I placed my chair, being, perhaps, four feet in front of the first row of sitters. The second or smaller machine, standing only some twenty inches high, was placed in front of the curtain in full view of the sitters, and 14½ inches from the curtain.

"Dr. M—— undertook to attend to this machine and to the weighing of the forms, while I noted the register of the machine upon which Mrs. Mellon sat.

"A small bull's-eye lantern, with a crimson glass, was provided to read the index. Mr. Henry, in the circle, was deputed to note the weights when called by Dr. M—— and myself. Mrs. Mellon was first weighed and her weight ascertained to be 7 stone 12 lbs., and the box upon which she sat weighed 8 lbs., making a total weight upon her scales of 8 stone 6 lbs. She took her seat behind the curtain at 8.35 p.m., and her weight was again taken and found to be the same as before—viz., with the box 8 stone 6 lbs. Needless to say no person could enter the room without unlocking the doors and being observed by every one present, and such person would have to pass through three rows of sitters and even after that be exposed to the scrutiny of Dr. M—— and myself, who were posted in front of the circle and close to the curtain. At 8.50—the intervening 15 minutes being filled up with singing to the accompaniment of Dr. M——'s auto-harp—'Cissie,' the little mulatto girl who manifests through Mrs. Mellon, came out into the room through the centre of the curtain and where it divides, and behind which curtain, as previously stated, Mrs. Mellon, sat upon the scales; and that she did actually occupy that position during the whole of the sitting I can without hesitation affirm, as although I did not keep the lantern on the scales the whole time, I did so every few minutes, never allowing a minute to elapse without feeling and testing the beam of Mrs. Mellon's scales to ascertain that her weight still rested upon the platform. This important fact should be borne in mind in reference to all the manifestations of which I shall speak. 'Cissie,' whose dark features and hair were distinctly visible to me as I sat within two feet of her as she emerged from the centre of the curtain, stepped out apparently cautiously to the smaller scales outside the curtain, and was asked by Dr. M—— to step on to the platform of the scales. She first put one foot upon the platform and shook it, causing it to oscillate, and the vibration was distinctly audible not only to those near but to all those in the room.

"After trying it for a few moments, she stepped boldly on to the platform, and I heard her little bare feet dance upon the iron stand, producing a sound readily recognised but difficult to describe.

"After the vibration had ceased, Dr. M—— held a small lantern in position so as to read the index on the scales 'Cissie' stood upon, and after repeatedly satisfying himself that it was correct, announced that the weight registered was 1 stone 2 lbs. I took Mrs. Mellon's weight at the same time and found it to be 6 stone 6 lbs., showing a loss, or reduction of two stone, but as 'Cissie' only absorbed 1 stone 2 lbs. the other 12 lbs. remains to be accounted for; but I believe from what followed that 'Geordie' was at the same time materializing or preparing to do so whilst 'Cissie' was outside the curtain.

"There was a space of $14\frac{3}{4}$ inches between the curtain and the outside scales, and when 'Cissie' was outside I was careful to ascertain that nothing connected the form of 'Cissie' with anything behind the curtain, and that nothing but vacancy (if the use of such a term involving a paradox is admissible) intervened or occupied this space of

14½ inches, and I think I should add that no article whatever, no piece of furniture was left behind the curtain. All that was there was the medium, the scales, and the box used as a seat.

"After the weight had been called by the Doctor and verified by myself and noted by Mr. Henry, 'Cissie' stepped off the platform and bowed repeatedly, kissing her hands to the sitters, the sound produced by the lips being distinctly audible and as natural as though produced by any mortal. In fact it was difficult to realise that she differed in any respect from an ordinary child, with this exception, that whilst taking on temporarily the garment of the material body in order to render herself visible to our material senses, she had not acquired the faculty of speech.

"After retiring behind the curtain, 'Cissie' dematerialised and controlled Mrs. Mellon, speaking for about four or five minutes, enquiring after and sending messages to several who are not in this audience. She also said that she had not done all she had wished to do as 'Geordie,' who was present, was reserving most of the power for himself, as he intended to do something important.

"It was now six minutes past 9 o'clock, and whilst 'Cissie' was controlling the medium I took the weight of the latter, and found it 6 stone 11 lbs. In a few minutes a tall female form appeared, but beyond the fact that it was a female it was impossible to recognise the features, but it was taller than Mrs. Mellon, and stood for two or three minutes in front of the curtain pointing to one of the sitters, but from the fact that there were then three rows of sitters some difficulty was experienced in determining for whom she came, every question as to whom she pointed, being followed by the shake of the head, denoting negation, although the hand continued to point through the misty half-transparent drapery. This form then retired, and at 9.25 'Geordie' stepped outside the curtain, coming from the centre where it divided. He did not speak, but obviously knowing the object of the sitting, he straightway struck with his bare feet, *first right and then left*, the platform of the scales, causing a vibration audible all over the room.

"He did this several times, and then without invitation stepped up and stood upon the platform, upon which he stamped several times, the thud of his bare feet being distinctly heard and also the vibration of the platform.

"Dr. M—— then took his weight, being very careful about it, and reassuring himself of its correctness, occupying about two minutes in the process, and reported that it was 7st. 2lb. I then took Mrs. Mellon's weight, and found it was 5st. 3lb., and I am assured that it was practically this weight whilst 'Geordie' was being weighed, as I kept my finger on the balance of the medium's scales whilst 'Geordie' was being weighed and there was no difference from that time until a few seconds after I read the index on the medium's scales. After 'Geordie' had retired some two minutes, I again took Mrs. Mellon's weight, and found it had fallen to 4st. 13lb., the explanation being that 'Geordie' was developing for the direct voice.

" At 9.35, or ten minutes after he had first appeared, 'Geordie' came out again, but this time at the further end of the curtain near the wall, and not from the centre as before; and in the direct voice said quite distinctly, although in somewhat hoarse tones, 'More light.'

" Mr. Mellon, who was sitting in the third row and furthest away from the curtained recess, turned the gas jet up higher, although not full up, but 'Geordie' was dissatisfied, and said in a distinctly confident tone, 'Turn it full up.'

" Mr. Mellon complied, and 'Geordie' immediately said, 'That's grand,' and stood in the light that gave the most vivid view of the materialized form it has been my privilege to witness. His features were distinctly visible, and any person who has seen his photograph would have recognised him at once. He remained in full view of all the sitters for about 30 seconds, and so bright was the light that one gentleman who was present, as a practical illustration of the brightness of the light, took out his watch, which has the dial engraved upon the outside, and holding it at arms length from him easily ascertained the time.

" Now at this time I was careful to ascertain that Mrs. Mellon's seat was still occupied, and for that purpose kept constantly feeling the beams of her scales and ascertained that they still stood at 4st. 13lb. 'Geordie' was at too great a distance from the scales for the explanation or suggestion that it was the medium representing him, for if that were the case the only weight left upon the scales would have been the box, which weighed only 8lb.; and it must also be remembered that 'Geordie' stood clear of the curtain and furthest from the place where the medium sat. 'Geordie' then retired, and at 9.58 'Cissie' came out again from the centre of the curtain, and danced upon the floor and kissed her hand, when Dr. M—— asked her to play upon his auto-harp. At first she appeared timid, and retreated backwards, when he knelt down and held the harp towards her she advanced a step, and gaining courage touched the strings with her fingers several times, producing sounds audible to all the sitters, and I distinctly saw her fingers, though covered with the misty drapery, touching the chords.

" I again took the medium's weight and found it 6st. 2lb., and again before 'Cissie' retired it fell to 5st. 12lb.

" After 'Cissie' left, Mrs. Mellon asked for Dr. M——, stating she felt much exhausted, and the doctor put his hand through the curtain and took her pulse, reporting that he found it 130, very irregular and much reduced in volume and force. Of course, excitement will quicken the pulse, and did it present no other feature, it would bear little significance, but its irregularity and reduction in volume and force are very important when considering this question of materialisation.

" At 10.15 was rapped out, 'Cannot possibly do any more; light up.' On lighting up, Mrs. Mellon's pulse was taken by the Doctor

and found to be 88, and she was also immediately weighed and found, with box, to be 8st. 6lbs., and I carefully inspected the recess to note whether anything appeared to be changed and to ascertain whether the medium's dress or hair showed any signs of disarrangement."

Before criticising the above account, let me again state that I did not at the time consider these informal experiments in any way worthy to be called a "test." So strongly did I hold this opinion, and so much was I impressed with the possibility of trickery, and the comparative ease with which such scales, placed in such a position, and under the lax conditions of the present instance, could be easily and imperceptibly manipulated by the medium, that I stated to Dr. M—— and Mr. Morgan, immediately after this séance, that I could not consider these experiments at all in the light of evidence, and that they established no proof whatever. When the other persons had gone, I further demonstrated to these two gentlemen, in the presence of Mrs. Mellon, that I could, by standing with one foot on each scale, so regulate the balance of my body as to throw what weight I liked upon either scale. I stood upon the scales myself and showed them this, and that it was quite possible for the medium, with shoes and stockings removed, to have stood up and with one arm held the figure of "Geordie" outside the curtains, while she placed one bare foot upon the smaller scale and stamped with it. She could thus, with one foot on each scale, throw the bulk of her weight on to whichever foot she pleased, while Mr. Morgan, with his finger on the balance beam of the larger scale, would be unaware that she was not seated and would feel only the expected fluctuation of the balance of this larger scale, supposed to be due to the loss of weight by the medium.

Let it be clearly borne in mind that the platforms of these two scales were only $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart, and that the platform of the larger measured $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and that of the smaller only 4 inches in height from the floor. As a further experiment to demonstrate this, I requested Mrs. Mellon to stand upon the scales herself, and the following entry in my pocket-book, recorded at the time, shows plainly the result, although we had the full light to read the scales by:—

"Mrs. Mellon standing with one foot on each scale, and without the box used as seat.

"Weight registered on smaller scale—6st. $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

"Weight registered on larger scale—1st. $8\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

"Giving a total weight of 8st. 1lb.

"Mrs. Mellon's weight, taken both before and after séance upon one scale, was carefully ascertained to be 7st. 12lbs.

"This, when compared with the above weight of 8st. 1lb., shows a difference of 3lbs.

"The increase of 3lbs. in the total weight above is due to the impossibility of reading both scales simultaneously during the above experiment."

Here, then, is the explanation to the supposed combined weight of "Geordie" and the medium which Mr. Morgan talks of, as showing the grand total of 12st. 5lbs. The weights taken on this occasion were certainly not taken simultaneously. They were taken in the dark, and after a good deal of fumbling on the part of both Dr. M—— and Mr. Morgan, due, doubtlessly, to their unacquaintance with weights and scales. It took the two of them to find the weights for "Geordie," and, after this had been ascertained and noted by myself, Mr. Morgan turned his attention to Mrs. Mellon's scale.

The whole process took two or three minutes, so that there was ample time for the medium to throw whatever weight she pleased upon either scale.

Let it be also borne in mind that the medium was neither searched nor secured to her seat or to the scale in any manner, so that it was quite possible for her to move about inside the cabinet on the larger scale just as she pleased, or even to put one foot on the floor without detection, the singing covering any rustling or possible sound of movement. From the sound made by "Geordie," I was certainly under the impression that there was only one foot on his scale. If people expect to hear two feet, no doubt imagination will help them. With regard to the combined weights of "Cissie" and the medium, given as 7st. 8lbs., here again there is a considerable discrepancy between that and the medium's normal weight, with box, of 8st. 6lbs. This difference is due without doubt to the same cause; the impossibility of registering two weights simultaneously on such machines. Let anybody experiment in this way for himself and he will find that unless the weights are recorded exactly simultaneously (an utter impossibility without a scientific apparatus) the result may be anything he pleases. In this instance there was nothing to prevent Mrs. Mellon kneeling on the larger scale inside the curtains and placing both hands outside on the smaller scale; her head and shoulders, also outside the curtains, draped to represent the small figure of "Cissie." Her hands could thus patter on the platform of the smaller scale; and I defy Mr. Morgan or any one else to distinguish in the dark between the sound of hands or feet. And then, again, Mr. Morgan states that he was careful to ascertain that nothing but "vacancy" existed between "Cissie" and the curtains. Now, for this piece of evidence he is relying solely upon his eyesight—the easiest deceived of all the senses. He was not even allowed to turn the small lantern on to the form (being told that to do so would bore holes through it), and the light was so dim that it was utterly impossible to have detected a dark dress against the dark curtains. At the distance of a few inches away from "Cissie's" face it is impossible to distinguish any features. This has been stated to me by Dr. Pickburn, Rev. G. Walters, and others who have been privileged to approach this form, and the light is always so dim that nothing but the contrast of the black face against the white hood-like drapery and of the white drapery against the dark background of curtains is discernible. The evidence of Mr.

Morgan's eyesight cannot, therefore, carry much weight on this point. Afterwards, when "Geordie" requested more light to show himself by, the gas jet in the front room was turned well up, and he merely thrust his head out of the curtains. Even then, were a mask or false beard used, the light was not sufficient at that distance to detect it. For further evidence on these points I will refer my readers to a letter in a following chapter from Mr. Wallis to the Psychological Research Society of Melbourne, and with these remarks will dismiss the so-called weighing test as unworthy to be considered a test at all.

CHAPTER VI.

TEST NO. 6: THE ALLEGED EXPOSURE OF FRIDAY, 12TH OCTOBER 1894, AND WHAT LED UP TO IT. THE EVIDENCE OF THE VARIOUS WITNESSES; FURTHER REVELATIONS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' ASSOCIATION; PUBLIC COMMENT AND INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE.

Before describing the occurrence of Friday, 12th October, 1894, which I here classify as "Test No. 6," I will first relate the train of events and process of reasoning which led up to my decisive action on that occasion. On the strength of the last photographic "Test," I was inclined to believe that there was something genuine about these phenomena. My sceptical observations and opinions up to that date, had to give way in the face of the apparently reliable evidence of this "Test." As an impartial investigator, I honestly acknowledged at the time that the result of this apparently complete chain of evidence (as established by this last photographic "Test") was certainly in favour of the genuineness of these manifestations. Theoretically, this chain of evidence was perfect and unbroken; each successive step had been carefully witnessed and guarded. Certainly, if I had myself had the direction of these "Tests," I would have imposed much more stringent conditions, and not felt the same compunction as Dr. M.— in imposing restrictions upon the movements of the medium whilst in the cabinet. There was no necessity for this far-fetched delicacy in treating of the matter; we were dealing with a professional medium, who, although not directly paid a certain sum for undergoing these "Tests," yet indirectly was most substantially repaid by valuable presents of jewellery, &c., besides receiving such an invaluable advertisement (in support of her professed abnormal powers) from the presence at these "Test" sances of several well-known and respected citizens. It was proposed to jointly attest the records of these "Tests," and the publication of these records by myself, would not have been the least important advertisement she was about to receive. Such a document could have been flourished in the face of the public for all time; and not only would tend to firmly establish the reputation of this medium, but would be held up in the future by spiritualists, as strong supporting evidence to the whole of the alleged phenomena of "materialisation."

These thoughts passed through my mind when I began to write up these records for publication; and the seriousness of the step I was taking, and its possible future bearing upon the broad question of spiritualistic phenomena, made me pause and consider whether I was justified in doing so; and whether, after all, the evidence of this one "Test" was sufficiently strong to bear down all my previous sceptical

observations, and to answer all objections to the alleged genuineness of these occurrences. I instituted careful enquiries to ascertain whether there was any other testimony forthcoming; whether there was the evidence of any previous Tests elsewhere to support the genuineness of Mrs. Mellon's professed powers. Mrs. Mellon had over and over again referred to "cruel and barbarous" Tests which she had undergone in England; had talked of Tests she had given before scientific men and learned societies throughout Great Britain; had referred myself and all enquirers here, to Tests given before Professor Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, Mr. Balfour, Professor Stewart and many other well-known men in London and Oxford; and particularly before the Psychical Research Society of London some years ago.

She made these much-talked-of Tests the excuse for refusing to undergo any further strict "Tests" in this part of the world, and in fact refused to undergo any at all, until she came in contact with Dr. M——. So plausibly, and with such an appearance of truth, did she talk of these previous "Tests," and describe them, that I and many others were led into attaching some weight to these assertions. Dr. M——, notably, without taking the precaution of further inquiry (on the strength of her *ipse dixit*), made some very incautious statements in an article written by him at this time. I, however, was not so impressed with the honesty of mediums in general that I could afford to commit myself to print upon the *ipse dixit* of any one; besides which I had more at stake than the other members of our investigation committee, inasmuch as I was attaching my name to the proposed publication. On making enquiries, therefore, it came to my knowledge that neither Mr. Myers nor Professor Sidgwick, of London (two gentlemen whose names had been much quoted), had received any satisfactory tests from Mrs. Mellon at all. I shall refer more particularly to letters on this matter further on. This left all her statements open to very grave suspicion, and I therefore called on Mrs. Mellon to request to be allowed to see any documentary evidence she might have in support of her statements.

Naturally, one would suppose that some such documents would be treasured up by her: letters, newspaper cuttings, or the published proceedings of the Psychical Research Society of London, referring to the matter.

Nothing of the kind was forthcoming, however; and only a pile of old numbers of the *Medium and Daybreak*, and other Spiritualistic periodicals, were placed in my hands. I took these away and waded through them diligently, but without finding one single record of a Test. They contained nothing but accounts of regular orthodox seances written by credulous Spiritualists. Naturally I became more sceptical than ever. I knew positively that numerous requests for tests had been refused by Mrs. Mellon, both in Sydney and in Melbourne. Two friends of mine in Sydney (whose names I can give, if required,) had guaranteed her the sum of one hundred pounds for a short series of tests. This had been declined on the plea of ill-health, although at the time, she was holding seances regularly. Another handsome offer

from the Melbourne Psychical Research Society, was also declined this year on a similar plea. I had also seen some correspondence from the honorary secretary of the same society, requesting to be allowed to try a simple test with a wire cage (similar to the Test at *Sunday Times* Office, described later on) when on a visit to Sydney; and this had been declined. I had myself proposed several simple methods of testing the "phenomena," such as the tape and sealing-wax, previously described; modified handcuffs; or even to be allowed to gently embrace "Cissie." All these had been evaded by excuses.

Things certainly looked very queer. What could possibly be the object of all these excuses and all these evasions, if her powers were genuine?

Again, I carefully went through all my own notes and records of the séances I had attended: the photographing was the only event worthy of consideration as real evidence in support of genuineness. Then I went through this chain of photographic evidence link by link, weighing it thoroughly. I found that, as I said before, the most crucial point—the evidence as to searching of the medium—was the weakest; and had the least supporting testimony. The evidence of these two persons, who had been deputed to carry out the searching, was therefore the *crux* of the matter; and on the reliability of these two witnesses, *alone rested* the whole question.

As far as my personal experiment and research extended, the whole question of "Materialisation" itself, hinged upon the evidence of these two witnesses.

Now, what were their duties; and what were their opportunities for carrying out those duties?

They were required to search thoroughly a professional medium, who, after twenty-five years' acquaintance with her profession, may fairly be assumed to possess more than the average feminine sharpness of wit and adaptability to immediate circumstances, and to be more than a match for such searchers as these two witnesses; even supposing that they carried out their instructions to the letter. Without intending any disrespect to the lady who supervised this searching, I had to acknowledge to myself that she was not a sufficiently strong-minded or determined woman to carry out such an important office. Of a naturally refined and timid disposition, it would be an easy matter for a woman such as the medium, to outwit and deceive her, under these circumstances. The domestic being also a firm believer in the medium's powers, and not being exactly a free agent, would naturally follow the lead of her mistress.

Were the opportunities of these two witnesses such that their evidence on this point, could be considered sufficiently reliable? Could such an important matter be accepted on such evidence?

I decided in the negative. After consulting several mutual friends of Dr. M——'s and mine, I found they agreed with me that such evidence was too doubtful to rely upon. I was then in a most unpleasant predicament. There was absolutely no evidence before me supporting the genuineness of these so-called phenomena. I could not

go to Dr. M—— and express my opinions, as both he, and his lady relative who had conducted the searching, would have taken immediate offence. Previous expostulations had met with no success. My first impulse was to go to Mrs. Mellon and demand a proper and conclusive test; but, on consideration, I felt that such a course would be both impolitic and useless. I knew that from her previous attitude and steadfast refusal of all tests (except Dr. M——'s mild ones), that I would have met with a direct refusal, and probably been excluded from further sésances, as being an evil, sceptical, and *inharmonious influence*; thus altogether losing any possible chance of settling the question. I therefore determined to wait and attend two more sésances with the object of observing more keenly the *modus operandi*, if possible. The suspicious circumstances which I had noted from time to time throughout my previous sittings, I then formulated and classified as follows:—

1. Mrs. Mellon's persistent refusal to undergo tests.
2. Her objection to being searched.
3. No sceptics ever allowed to approach the "forms," and particularly not allowed to approach "Cissie" on any occasion. One would think that an effort would have been made to convince reasonable sceptics like myself, by allowing us sufficiently close to afford us proof of genuineness. Undoubting *believers* like Dr. M—— were allowed to thus reverently approach "Cissie," and to have their hair pulled and even their hands touched by her "spirit-hand." But they did not require convincing; they were already *firm believers* or *considered safe*.
4. I noticed that "Cissie," upon every occasion, made her appearance either at the centre opening between the curtains or at the side openings, and that she never on any occasion crossed the *front* of the curtains, but always retired again through one opening, dodged round at the back of the curtains, and came out again at either of the other openings. If she were an independent "form," as she professed to be, and not connected with the "cabinet" or the medium, what was to prevent her occasionally crossing the *face* of the curtains? The adult forms, when as "strong" as "Cissie," were able to come out into the room, and walk about in the semi-darkness without dodging about behind curtains. This was a point that I always considered most suspicious.
5. I also noticed that "Cissie" varied considerably in height, and that whenever she made her first appearance (to receive chocolates touch the auto-harp, etc.), she was about four feet high, and had *hands*, but *no feet*. She would then retire again behind the curtains (ostensibly to gain strength), and next appear with her pattering sound of *feet*, but *without hands*, and measuring less than three feet high. Her movements were wonderfully quick and childlike, and at first rather non-plussed me; but I found, by experimenting in such a position myself, that it would be quite possible for the medium to move about quickly and noiselessly behind the curtains with her hands upon the floor, the weight of her body resting upon her knees, her hands an head only, projecting in front of the curtains.

6. Another important point was the fact that "Cissie" has never upon any occasion come out into the room away from the curtains, which was compatible with my opinion that the connection between "Cissie" and the medium was too solid to permit her crossing the front of the curtains. Whenever she has shown herself she has never advanced more than about 12 inches in front of the curtains at most, and even in the so-called weighing test the smaller scale was placed so close to the curtain as to permit this.

7. The so-called dematerialisations always took place close against the curtains. Now, I have seen a clever conjuror beat this, and "materialise" and "de-materialise" a form under the same conditions, and *six feet* away from the curtains.

8. "Cissie's" hands were always under the drapery, and whenever she touched the auto-harp or took the chocolates the hands were always covered and hidden by the drapery.

9. Although requested to do so by me, "Cissie" would not make her appearance to be photographed by us in daylight on the occasion of "Geordie's" last photographing. (I had given no previous notice of my request.)

10. And then with regard to "Cissie's" photograph, taken in Edinburgh in 1890 (and a copy of which is in my hand), the doll-like appearance is even more marked than in the case of the photograph of "Geordie" taken by ourselves, while the Edinburgh occasion was not even a pretence at a "Test," and the conditions were much more lax than our own. (For a full account of this, see a later chapter.)

11. "Geordie's" doll-like appearance, both in his photographs and when seen through the mirrors with his mask-like face. Only one of the medium's hands is visible in these pictures, and "Geordie" certainly looks like a lay-figure.

12. I submitted all these photographs, including the Edinburgh one of "Cissie," to examination under a powerful microscope, and the result was certainly startling. None of these faces will stand expert examination. It is remarkable also that a *hem* or *selvage* is distinctly visible across "Geordie's" drapery, a very questionable adjunct to "Spirit" clothing.

13. The medium has never been *touched* in the "cabinet" or *spoken*, while any of the forms have been walking about the room. In fact there was never any proof that the medium was in the cabinet at all on these occasions.

14. The medium and "Geordie" have never spoken simultaneously, although rapidly in succession. He is the only "Spirit" form who ever speaks. His quality of voice is the easiest to imitate. The other forms never speak, although they appear to be often stronger and better materialised; as for instance "Josephine," "Mrs. MacTaggart," etc.

15. The strong resemblance to the medium in figure and movements of the adult forms who come into the room. This is most noticeable in the case of "Josephine." (For corroboration of this opinion, refer to Mrs. C. A. Edwards' statement further on.) On the

occasions when I was privileged to touch "Josephine's" finger tips, I noticed that her arms and hands exactly resembled Mrs. Mellon's; and again in the photograph taken of "Josephine" by Dr. M——, the resemblance of the original picture (taken from the first negative) to the medium was so noticeable, that Mrs. Mellon exacted a promise from Dr. M—— that he would not print from it. This photograph I have before me as I write, but I gave a promise that I would not publish it with the others.

16. I am aware that no ladies have ever been allowed to be with Mrs. Mellon, when dressing, preparatory to holding a séance. Several ladies, intimate friends of hers, have told me that they have frequently endeavored to be present in this way, and have offered to help her dress, etc., but have been refused admission on various pretexts.

17. Mr. Mellon always remains at the back of the circle, and attends to the light himself when any important manifestations take place, such as "Josephine" or "Geordie" perambulating the room. If Mr. Mellon is not there, nothing very important takes place outside the cabinet, although even then a person to be depended on (to promptly turn the light out, if necessary), such as Mr. R——, attends the gas or lamp at the back.

This list of evidence *against* the genuineness of her professed abnormal powers I then submitted to Mr. Wallis and Dr. Pickburn, both members of the Test Committee. I found them also very sceptical, and both agreed with me as to these observations, and also agreed that further action was necessary to clear up this mystery. Not wishing to act decisively without due caution and further deliberation, I attended another séance. My previous observations were fully borne out and strengthened, and I felt fully convinced that we were being fooled by a systematic course of trickery and imposture. At this séance I attempted, as already described, to institute a little quiet test (without any previous notice to the medium) by endeavoring to obtain a print of "Cissie's" foot upon a sooted slate. The result as regards the print was a failure, but as a test it succeeded just as I expected, and proved to me conclusively that "Cissie" had no feet (unless, possibly, by receiving notice beforehand). I therefore determined to take action at once. My first impulse was to broach the matter to Dr. M——, but on reflection I felt that to do so would be useless. I knew that he was so much influenced by the medium, and had such an unreasoning faith in her powers, that he would absolutely refuse to listen to any suspicions, however well founded. This opinion has been since borne out by his unreasonable line of action in the face of the most conclusive evidence. I felt more strongly on his account than on my own, that any action which would rescue him from the toils of those whom I believed to be cruelly duping him, would be doing him the greatest service that one friend could render to another. While appreciating and respecting his brilliant intellectual attainments, I was yet aware that his peculiarities of temperament, his wilfulness, combined with indecision of character, made it impossible to reason with him as one could with most men.

He would have unconsciously let the matter leak out, and the medium would have been warned and on her guard. I consulted with four friends of his upon this point, and they, knowing his temperament intimately, agreed that it would be unwise to apprise him at all. To have denounced the whole thing as a fraud, without conclusive proof, would have been both unjust, and useless in its result. The only course open to me, therefore, was to act decisively upon my own responsibility, and in such a manner that there could be no loophole for escape or excuse if my suspicions proved correct. On the other hand, had I found that I was wrong in my opinions, and on applying my own "test," had discovered anything abnormal about the alleged "phenomena," I would have been the first to apologise and make reparation. No personal feelings entered into the question, and I had absolutely no animus against the medium; I considered her simply in the aspect of a *medium* or *unit* in a broad question of deep importance. By her own conduct in repeatedly refusing "tests," she had forced me into this action; and however unpleasant the duty might be, I nevertheless felt it to be a *duty*, both to my immediate friends and to the public, which I could not shirk. My friend and fellow-investigator, Mr. Wallis, expressed himself ready to support me in the matter, and relied upon my judgment to act on the first favorable opportunity. Knowing Dr. M——'s excitable temperament, and wishing, on the grounds of long friendship, to avoid any personal conflict of opinion with him on such an occasion, we resolved to take the opportunity while he was absent in the country. This presented itself on the evening of Friday, 12th October, and the occurrence is best told in my own statutory declaration of what took place, and in the statements of the various witnesses which are appended. My friendship for Dr. M—— precluded my taking action on any occasion in his house; the tactics of the medium did not give an opportunity elsewhere but in her own house. For reasons best known to herself, she has refused recently to give exhibitions in a public room, and has also declined to do so in other private houses. I was forced, therefore, to take this action in her own house, and although payment was not actually charged on this occasion, I consider that ample payment in kind was received. The medium has talked about the obligations of hospitality, etc. Now, what can be thought of any person who will ask a number of others to a house to systematically trick and befool them, and trifle cruelly with the emotions of many? Where does any obligation enter into such an occasion? Was I to sit quietly and see this going on before my eyes; to see an old lady duped into tears, and do nothing? To have done so would have made me a party to these proceedings, and is against every instinct of honor and morality.

The following are the statements of what took place:—

I, Thomas Shekleton Henry, of Lincoln's Inn Chambers, Elizabeth-street, Sydney, in the colony of New South Wales, architect, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows: That on the evening of Friday, the 12th day of October, 1894, I went to Mrs. Mellon's house in the Waverley-road, near Queen-street, Woollahra, Sydney, for the

purpose of attending a séance at which so-called materialised spirit forms were professed to appear. That the following persons were present besides myself: Mr. Mellon, Mrs. Mellon, Miss Mellon; Miss Elverstone, Miss St. Hill; Mrs. Gale, of Paddington; Mr. Wilton and Mrs. Wilton, of Melbourne; Mrs. Smith, of New Zealand; Mr. Edwards and Mrs. Edwards, of Darling Point, Sydney; Mr. Chas. L. Wallis, of Messrs. Winchcombe, Carson, and Company, woolbrokers, Sydney; Mr. N. Joubert, of Hunter's Hill, Sydney; Messrs. Roydhouse and Kidgell, of the *Sydney Sunday Times*; Dr. Storder, and Mr. Ramble.

We assembled in a double room on the ground floor, divided by folding doors, which were opened and thrown back, and the curtained recess or "cabinet" was arranged in one corner of the back room, and composed of heavy dark curtains about seven feet long, reaching to the floor, and hung upon a rod or string.

The sitters were placed in two semi-circular rows in front of this recess, and also in the back room. A small bamboo table was placed against the wall about three feet from the "cabinet," and between the last person in the row to my left and the "cabinet." On this table I placed three clean sheets of foolscap paper and two pencils, the paper having been passed round, examined, and then initialled by me.

Mrs. Mellon, after arranging all the sitters in such places and at such distance from the "cabinet" or curtained recess as she pleased, seated herself on a chair inside this curtained recess, about 25 minutes past 8 o'clock. I was placed about the middle of the front row of sitters, and about 10 feet from the "cabinet." The gas was then turned out in the back room, and Mr. Mellon, who remained in the front room, turned the gas in the front room down very low, and then wound up and started going a musical box. The sound of rapping was heard to proceed from the "cabinet," and understood to mean "turn the light still lower," which was accordingly done by Mr. Mellon, and we were requested to join hands and sing when the musical box ceased.

After singing for about eight or ten minutes, a very tall form appeared between the curtains, draped in loose white material, with what appeared to be a black face, although no features could be seen. It came just outside the "cabinet," and, being requested to indicate for whom it had come, bowed itself at the mention of Mr. Wilton's name, indicating that it was the spirit of a friend of his, and then retired into the "cabinet," after extending one arm in the direction of the window.

I felt certain, from the shape and movements of this figure, that it was an imposture and a trick. After another short interval of singing, a form, draped completely in white, with a small black shawl round the middle, came from the "cabinet," and approached Mrs. Gale, who sat at the right extremity of the front row of chairs.

This form bowed when addressed by the name of Mrs. Gale's deceased niece, and Mrs. Gale, sobbing, and in great emotion, rose and kissed the head of this form, which then retired to the "cabinet."

This form was barefooted, and had every appearance of Mrs. Mellon's figure, the face being hidden by white drapery.

Next the form known as "Josephine" appeared, dressed in light garments, with bare feet and arms, and head draped in white, the face being visible but unrecognisable in the dim light.

This so-called "Josephine" walked out into the room and took a bouquet of flowers and a pair of scissors from Mr. Rumble, and was requested to distribute the flowers. Finding them wired (I had provided the bouquet myself) and difficult to separate, she left them and retired to the "cabinet," where she appeared to gradually sink down towards the floor between the curtains, a process which I have frequently seen before, and can as easily explain. I recognised "Josephine" as being the same form that I have frequently seen before on such occasions, and known by that name, and always bearing a strong resemblance to the figure and movements of Mrs. Mellon.

After another interval of singing, the small form known as "Cissie" appeared at the curtains, and was recognised by myself and the other persons present who had seen previous séances as the form known by that name, and purporting to be the spirit of a small black child who had died some years ago. The face, which appeared black, was draped round with white material, which hung down to the floor, and the hands moved about under the drapery. This form bobbed about and nodded its head in the usual child-like manner, never coming away from the curtains.

Someone on my left (I believe it was Mrs. Gale) went over and handed the so-called "Cissie" the usual box of chocolates, which "Cissie" rattled and proceeded to eat, and a gentleman on my right (I believe it was Dr. Storder) asked to be given a chocolate, and reached forward to receive it. I asked for a chocolate, but did not get one.

I have repeatedly asked but have never on any previous occasion been allowed to approach the so-called "Cissie." The chocolate box was then deposited inside the curtains and "Cissie" reached to the little bamboo table on which were placed the three sheets of initialled paper and the two pencils. The table appeared to be too far away from the "cabinet," and her arm, in reaching over for it, had to be extended, and I noticed that it was much longer than any arm a child of that height would naturally have.

When the so-called "Cissie" tried to draw the table closer, the two pencils rolled off on to the floor. I went over on the pretext of picking up the pencils, seized the form of the so-called "Cissie," and found that I had hold of Mrs. Mellon, and that she was on her knees, and had a white material like muslin round her head and shoulders.

I can swear positively that when I seized the form Mrs. Mellon was on her knees. She struggled, but I held her firmly and called for the light to be turned up.

Someone struck matches, and then I saw that Mrs. Mellon had a mask of black material over her face, the aforesaid white drapery round her shoulders, her sleeves drawn up above the elbows, the skirt of her

dress turned up, and her feet bare. She was on her knees, and I held her in the position in which I had caught her.

The matches were blown out, and I was assaulted by two or three men present, Mr. Mellon catching me by the throat and tearing off my necktie.

I never let go my hold of Mrs. Mellon, however, until the gas in the back room was lit and turned full on, and everyone present had an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Mellon in the position and in the condition in which I had caught her. I looked inside the "cabinet" and saw lying upon the floor inside the "cabinet" a false beard. I called Mr. Roydhouse over, and he picked up the beard, but it was snatched from his hand. As soon as I relaxed my hold Mrs. Mellon tore the black mask from her face, and the drapery from her shoulders, and hid them under her petticoat. I then entered the "cabinet" and found on the floor a small black shawl, some old muslin, Mrs. Mellon's shoes and stockings, and a small black cotton bag about nine inches square, with black tapes attached to it.

I did not think it necessary to retain any of these articles as so many witnesses saw both them and the whole proceedings.

I was perfectly cool and calm throughout and made no error in my observations or judgment. Mr. Chas. L. Wallis was the only person present to whom I communicated beforehand my intention of taking action to expose what I suspected to be a fraud and common trickery.

I have witnessed a great many previous séances by Mrs. Mellon, and on every such occasion the so-called phenomena produced have been of a similar character.

I have seen nothing that could not be done by common trickery

(Signed) T. SHEKLETON HENRY.

Declared before me this 17th day October, 1894, ALEX. DEAN, J.P

I attended a materialising séance at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Mellon, Waverley-road, on Friday evening, October 12, 1894.

The following persons were present besides myself:—Mrs. Smith (N.Z.), Mrs. Wilton (Melbourne), Mrs. Gale, Mrs. Edwards, Miss St. Hill, Miss Elviston, Miss Mellon, Messrs. Roydhouse, Henry, Joubert, Rumble, Etherington, Wilton (Melbourne), Kidgell, Edwards, Mellon, Dr. Storder. A "cabinet," composed of two curtains hanging closely side by side from a rod was fixed in one corner of the room. Into the recess thus formed, the medium, Mrs. Annie Mellon, retired at about 8.30 p.m., and the sitters, arranged in the usual semi-circle before the curtains, sang several airs, preluded by selections from Mr. Mellon's musical box.

After an interval of a few minutes, what appeared to be a very tall form showed between the curtains in the centre. The light was very dim, and features quite indistinguishable, though the face looked black. This form did not free itself from the curtains. Next appeared a female form draped in white, but wearing also a black

shawl. She was supposed to be the materialised spirit of a niece of Mrs. Gale, to whom she walked out from the cabinet, and returned.

Again an interval of a few minutes, and then the form known to regular sitters at these séances as "Josephine" came out from the curtains and took a large bouquet of flowers. She appeared to try to cut the string which bound the flowers with a scissors handed her by Mr. Rumble, but failed, and retired to the centre of the curtains, and appeared to dematerialise by gradually sinking down to the ground, and then disappearing altogether.

A few minutes passed in singing as before, and then the little black form, purporting to be "Cissie," showed at the centre of the curtains, kissed her hands, and took a box of chocolates handed her by Mrs. Gale. She then reached out from the curtains and took a small stool standing close by with sheets of paper and a pencil on it (left so in case the alleged "spirits" should wish to write messages). As she placed the stool before her the pencil fell off, and Mr. Henry immediately asked, "May I get the pencil for you, Cissie?" and, leaving his seat, stooping low down, went over to the form, and, grasping its arm, called out, "Light up!" This was a pre-arranged signal to me, and I immediately struck three matches and held them together above my head.

By the light thus afforded—fully sufficient for the purpose—I saw Mrs. Mellon kneeling on the floor in front of the curtains, and Mr. Henry standing over her holding her arm. I could not see Mrs. Mellon's face, because she was hiding it by holding it towards the curtains and very close to the ground; but I saw distinctly her light-blue dress, and that she was enveloped around the upper part of her body in white muslin or some such material.

My matches were then blown out by one of those present, and I struck another, which was also blown out. I then endeavored to light a gas jet directly over Mr. Henry's head, but could not turn the tap, and so went back into the further section of the room and lit two jets there. All this occurred in a very few seconds. I returned to the scene of action, and saw that Mrs. Mellon was not then covered by the white drapery; that the white drapery had disappeared; that Mr. Henry was still holding Mrs. Mellon in much the same position, and that Mrs. Mellon's shoes and stockings were lying on the floor, also a dark shawl and a small black-stuff bag. These are the only articles that came directly under my observation, but I was not nearly so well situated as others for seeing details, as I was engaged, against obstruction from one or two of the sitters, in attempting to establish a light.

Directly Mr. Henry made his seizure, Mr. Mellon turned out the low light at the back of the circle, and rushed forward at Mr. Henry in an attempt to free Mrs. Mellon from his grasp.

(Here follows the usual form of statutory declaration, signed in the presence of Mr. A. Sinclair, J.P., October 23.)

(Signed) C. L. WALLIS.

Bridge-street, Sydney, N.S.W.

Mr. T. S. Henry.

Dear Sir,—At your request I now forward you a brief record of my recollection of certain occurrences at the "materialisation" séance held last evening (Friday), at the residence of Mrs. Mellon, Waverley-road, Sydney. By way of preface let me say that being on a short visit to this city, I lately wrote to Mrs. Mellon, enclosing a card of introduction to her from a mutual friend—a prominent and widely-respected Melbourne spiritualist—and soliciting the favour of a "sitting" for myself and my wife. After some correspondence, Mrs. Mellon replied on the 10th instant, acquiescing, and appointing Friday evening at 8 o'clock. Shortly after the hour named Mrs. Wilton and I arrived at the medium's house in Waverley-road. There were several ladies and gentlemen present, all strangers to us, and we were placed by Mrs. Mellon in the front row of the circle. After a few preliminaries, Mrs. Mellon having entered the cabinet, and the gas-light having been turned very low, the séance commenced. I need not now dwell upon the familiar early features of the meeting—the appearance at different times (not simultaneously), and whilst the medium was supposed to be within the cabinet, of sundry figures draped in white, alleged by some of the sitters to be "Elsie," "Josephine," &c., but will pass on to what was the event of the evening.

A small form, childlike in stature, and dressed in white garments, emerged from the cabinet. It made a noise such as that produced by smacking the lips together, and was greeted as "Cissie" by several persons present.

A lady present spoke to it, and said she had some chocolates for "Cissie," who then appeared to walk in the direction of the lady and received a box of sweets. This she shook vigorously, as if pleased, and continued the smacking noise. One sitter asked "Cissie" to give the medium a chocolate; another (I think yourself) said, "Won't you give me a chocolate, 'Cissie?' Come and give me one." Just about this time there was a sound near the "form" as of several lollies being let fall on the floor, and then came other noises like that of someone stumbling or striking against the leg of a table or chair in the vicinity of the "cabinet." I heard a sitter near me say, "There's something wrong!" Then a man's voice (your own) called out, "Turn up the light." Several matches were at once ignited, but it seemed some seconds before anything like a good light was obtained. By this time the commotion had increased; men and women were standing up, and a struggle was going on near the "cabinet." As soon as I could catch a glimpse of the centre of commotion, I observed a form almost kneeling upon the floor a few feet from the "cabinet," and grasped by you. Over the face of that form was a black object like a mask—perhaps a piece of black cloth bound closely round the face. I caught sight also of some flowing white drapery, like muslin, about the body, and I noticed that the figure was not that of a child.

The gas now was burning brightly, and I saw on the floor of the room a pair of black stockings, a pair of lady's shoes, a small black bag, and some flowers, apparently artificial. These articles were

shown by one of the company, who said they had just been found inside the "cabinet."

Of the remainder of the proceedings in this sorry affair I need say nothing. That you had any intention of seizing the medium, or the "materialised forms," I had not the slightest suspicion, and great was my surprise at the sudden disturbance.

I am, dear sir, faithfully yours,

(Signed) WRS. J. E. WILTON.

Petty's Hotel, Sydney, October 13, 1894.

Mr. T. S. Henry.

Dear Sir,—I can corroborate the principal statements in Mr. Wilton's letter referring to Mrs. Mellon's séance last night, merely adding that although I did not notice the face of the "form" that was struggling on the floor in your grasp, still I distinctly saw that the figure was that of a woman, and was elaborately draped in white muslin.—Yours sincerely,

(Signed) L. WILTON.

STATEMENT BY MISS ST. HILL.

After a little while the little black girl, known as "Cissie," appeared at the curtain. She did not come out into the room, but some of the sitters went to her with chocolates, which she ate. She gave some to Mr. Rumble. She then went to a stool where some paper and a pencil were. On dropping the pencil Mr. Henry went forward to pick it up.

The next thing I heard was "Light up!" Someone struck matches, and I distinctly saw Mr. Henry holding Mrs. Mellon on her knees, still wrapped in the white drapery, which was supposed to be "Cissie's." She had a black mask on her face, and was struggling, drawing the white drapery off, which showed her blue gown beneath. She seemed to be crying.

Mr. Mellon, who was seated behind, put out the gas and rushed forward. Mr. Wallis came out and lit the gas, and when I turned again Mr. Henry was still holding Mrs. Mellon, while several were trying to draw him away. She drew her dress over her head and got back behind the cabinet.

I passed up and saw Mr. Roydhouse with what seemed to me to be a beard. He had picked it up off the floor in the cabinet, and while looking at it it was dragged quickly out of his hand by someone.

I then took Mrs. Gale upstairs, and when I returned saw Mrs. Mellon's shoes and stockings, which were afterwards put on her. Her sleeves were drawn up above the elbows, and she seemed much distressed. In the cabinet some black drapery was lying, what seemed artificial flowers (though they may have been real), a woollen cap, and outside was lying a black bag.

I should have said that, as in the case of all the other séances, the light was very dim, and the faces of what are called the spirit forms could not possibly be distinguished.

This is an accurate and truthful account of what I saw.

(Signed) MARY ALEXIA ST. HILL.

330 Victoria-street, Darlinghurst, Sydney. Sunday, October 14, 1894.

Mr. N. Joubert states that when the light was struck he saw the medium in a half-kneeling position on the floor in the grasp of Mr. Henry, and went over to her assistance. He saw some drapery around Mrs. Mellon, but did not see the articles described in the previous statements.

Mr. Roydhouse, Editor of the *Sunday Times*, says :—"It was my first materialisation séance. The forms spoken of as "the black man," "Josephine," and "Mrs. Mac Taggart," had appeared as described in the account of the *Sunday Times*' special, given above, when the event occurred which broke up the séance. When the form spoken of as "Cissie" appeared, it advanced to the circle upon being spoken to by a lady, who said she had some chocolates for it. "Cissie," who seemed to be between three and four feet high, with, what appeared in the dim light, a black patch for a face, was making a noise (even before she obtained a chocolate) like smacking her lips. A gentleman in the circle (front row) asked for a chocolate, and leant forward to get it. The chocolate was seemingly tendered, and was heard to drop on the floor.

"Then Mr. Henry, who was sitting in front of me, left his chair and went towards "Cissie," asking, as I understood, for a chocolate. "Cissie" was in the meantime scribbling with a pencil on some paper left for the purpose. The next moment a cry was heard, a scuffling noise, and Mr. Henry's voice requesting a light. The gas, which had been turned low, was now turned right out apparently, for complete darkness reigned. Mr. Henry continued to ask for a light, and Mr. Rumble and Mr. Mellon to say "No." I had no idea that a seizure had been made. The impression on my mind was that the medium had been taken ill, and Mr. Henry, as a particular friend, had gone to her assistance. Matches were struck, but went out again almost immediately, and the confusion became greater. Eventually the light was turned on, and Mr. Henry was seen to be holding the medium almost in the centre of the vacant space between the first row of sitters and the "cabinet."

"Mr. Henry, upon noticing me, requested that I should "see for myself," and then, of course, I divined what was happening. I noticed that the medium had some white drapery about the lower part of her figure, and one leg was bare—shoe and stocking absent. Both legs might have been bare, but I can only be positive in my statement as to one. While Mr. Henry was still holding her I was looking behind the curtain of the cabinet—the curtain having been partly drawn—and saw some articles lying on the floor. There were, among other things, a slipper, some small articles of black or dark material, a black mask, and a pair of false whiskers. After looking at these, I went behind the curtains and picked up the false whiskers. I was holding

them by one prong when the medium came in and seized them by the other half, and pulled. I sought to retain them, and then allowed them to go. One cannot wrestle with a woman. The medium then gathered up some of the articles behind the curtains and sat on them, remaining in the "cabinet." A lady drew the curtains to screen the medium, and it was not unnaturally suggested that the very exciting and sensational scene should be brought to a close by the retirement of the visitors.

"Before going, however, the medium's husband volunteered to give a test séance under any conditions I would name, when he would undertake to prove beyond question that the medium would do all that was claimed. This was agreed to. It may be mentioned that, in reply to a question, I stated before the whole company what I had personally seen behind the curtain. Someone asked, "Where are the mask and whiskers now?" I answered them that I could not search the medium. I inquired, however, if the medium would furnish any explanation of the strange proceedings, but was told that she was suffering from shock, and could not do so that evening.

"I have merely stated the plain facts in the foregoing, without comment or deduction."

Mr. Kidgill states :—

"Mr. Henry then again called out "Strike a light," upon which several matches were struck, and the medium was seen upon her knees almost in the middle of the space between the "cabinet" and the sitters, in Mr. Henry's grasp, and with some white drapery partially around her. The light then went out, but more matches were struck, and the gas eventually lighted, when I noticed Mrs. Mellon, still held by Mr. Henry, and near her on the floor was a fancy slipper and some other small articles, including something like a piece of black silk, but they were removed by someone too quickly for me to see what they were.

"In the meantime, Mr. Roydhouse had gone to the "cabinet," and, in reply to a question by Mr. Henry, stated that he had seen a black mask and false whiskers, and had hold of the latter. A pair of lady's stockings were also pointed out on a side table."

The exposure was complete and irrefutable, and my unexpected *coup* had taken everybody, except Mr. Wallis, by surprise. Mr. Mellon's action in so promptly turning out the gas, and rushing at me, showed clearly that he knew more than he professed. When we retired to the front room the medium was surrounded in the "cabinet" by two or three lady spiritualists present, who drew the curtains and assisted her to dress. Meanwhile a discussion took place in the front room, and some of the spiritualistic gentlemen said that it was a pity this had taken place, but that they had seen genuine phenomena on other occasions.

Compare this with their subsequent attitude. Mr. Mellon declared over and over again that nobody was more surprised than he

and that he had known her for twenty-five years; implying a complete admission of the fraud on this occasion. He asked what we intended to do, and begged that nothing would be said, and that his wife would promise to give us satisfactory proof of her materialising power in a week's time. We consented to say nothing of the matter until the following Wednesday, on which date he promised, at her suggestion, that a satisfactory test should be given at the offices of the *Sunday Times* newspaper, the arrangement of details being left to Mr. Roydhouse and myself.

Mrs. Mellon also stated emphatically, in answer to a request for some explanation of her conduct, that she was entranced the whole time, and remembered nothing of what occurred.

Compare this statement (which was noted by a number of witnesses present) with her excuses and explanations further on.

It may and has been asked, why none of the properties, such as the mask, false beard, or drapery, were retained by myself and others. Now, in the first place, my hands were not at liberty to enable me to catch any of these articles. I was engaged in holding the medium with one hand, while with the other I had to protect myself from her husband and three or four spiritualists who assaulted me. The medium had one hand free, with which she quickly tore off the mask and drapery, and secreted them under her petticoats. Certainly, some of the other witnesses might have secured some of these articles, but they were all so taken by surprise that they did not render me the assistance which I expected. Mr. Wallis was fully engaged in trying to light the gas, in the face of persistent opposition. The whole affair was witnessed by so many persons, however, that further proof was not necessary; and even had these articles been retained and produced before the public, I have no doubt that I and others would have been accused of bringing them there ourselves. This very accusation was made in the case of the alleged exposure of Hackett, which I shall refer to later on.

On the following Monday, Messrs. Wallis, Joubert, Roydhouse, and myself met in consultation at the office of Mr. Roydhouse, and the following conditions for the proposed test were formulated and agreed to, and afterwards submitted and agreed to by Mr. Mellon, acting on behalf of Mrs. Mellon:—

CONDITIONS:—

"1. That the medium should permit herself to be searched immediately prior to the séance by two lady searchers, one of whom to be nominated by Mrs. Mellon, and the other by the Editor of the *Sunday Times*.

"2. That the medium should be placed in a wire-netting cage, the door of which was to be locked and sealed.

"3. That should a materialised form appear two persons to be named at the séance should encircle it by joining hands whilst it dematerialised.

"4. That a spirit form should be requested to draw the curtain in front of the cage showing the medium, or in the event of the form

being unable to do so, that the curtain should be drawn by means of cords retained in the hands of two of the sitters.

"5. That no light should be displayed except by the person in charge of the gas during the appearance of any form; but that there should be sufficient light when the curtains were withdrawn to plainly see the medium in the cage."

On Wednesday October 17th, we met as arranged at the "*Sunday Times*" offices, and the following extract from the issue of that paper for October 21st, 1894, fully describes the proceedings:—

"In accordance with the above, the proprietors of the *Sunday Times* had a cage specially constructed, about three feet square and six feet in height, and made of timber and wire-netting, fitted with a door, a patent padlock, and two wooden buttons. This cage was placed in a corner of the room chosen for the séance, and in front of it hung a pair of heavy curtains, to be manipulated by cords. A professional searcher was also engaged to act in conjunction with the searcher nominated by Mr. Mellon.

"A gas jet on the opposite side of the room was fitted with an orange-tinted shade, that being the colour of the light said to be most favourable to the development of the phenomena.

"At eight o'clock the following persons were present:—Messrs. J. B. Mellon, E. Rumble, N. Joubert, A. G. Edwards, Etherington, T. S. Henry, C. L. Wallis, H. M. Evans, H. Paterson, Zöllner, Roydhouse, and Kidgell, Drs. MacCarthy and Pickburn, Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. Gale, Mrs. Amelia Smith (N.Z.), Mrs. Eves, Miss Elverstone, and Miss St Hill.

"The medium having submitted herself to a thorough search, and the ladies appointed to that duty having reported that she had no "properties" of any description upon her person, the lady nominated by Mr. Mellon at the same time protesting against the thoroughness of the operation, which she considered an unnecessary indignity. Mrs. Mellon then entered the cage and seated herself in a chair placed therein.

"The position of the sitters was settled by mutual arrangement. Dr. MacCarthy and Mr. Paterson, were appointed to encircle the figure (should one appear), and Mr. Mellon was given control of the light.

"The door of the cage was locked and sealed, the key given into the possession of Mr. H. M. Evans, and the curtains drawn in front of the cage. The gas was turned down, and the company commenced to sing (Dr. MacCarthy accompanying on his auto-harp) the beautiful poem by Mrs. Beecher Stowe.

"After several other airs had been sung, Mrs. Mellon called from the cage that the light was too strong, and it was therefore turned very low. Singing was then resumed, and soon after, or about half-an-hour from the time the medium had entered the cage, three smart raps were heard. Questions were asked whether the light was too high or too low, both of which were answered in the negative. A resort was then had to the alphabet, and the letters 'q' and 'u'

were spelled out. In reply to an enquiry if the word was 'quick,' affirmative raps were given, and at first it was thought it referred to the music, but someone asked if it meant to go to the medium, when the rapping again indicated an affirmative. Dr. MacCarthy at once drew aside the curtains and had the light turned up, when the medium was seen in an apparently prostrate condition. The door was at once opened, and Drs. MacCarthy and Pickburn went in and reported that Mrs. Mellon had fainted.

"She was taken out and restoratives supplied, but it was very evident that her condition precluded the possibility of the continuance of the séance that evening, and the room was speedily vacated by all but the invalid and those in attendance upon her."

The whole thing was a miserable *fiasco*, a piece of audacious "bluff" to gain time, and resulted just as I and others expected. Before we dispersed an attempt was made by Mr. Mellon, and others on his behalf, to induce the editor of the *Sunday Times* and other witnesses to say nothing, and personal insults and accusations were addressed to myself. These I passed over with complete indifference. My friends felt that it was not a personal matter, and that in the public interest the fullest publicity should be given to the whole proceedings. The *Sunday Times* reported the affair in full. Newspaper interviews, letters, and statements on both sides filled the newspapers of Sydney and Melbourne for the succeeding week, and in the more distant colonies and cities of Australia the public journals also took the matter up, showing the widespread public interest evoked.

The newspapers and public opinion unanimously supported my action, and I received numerous private letters and expressions of approval and sympathy. The Melbourne Psychical Research Society at once took the matter in hand, and a request was made to show cause why Mrs. Mellon should not be removed from membership of this society. Great surprise and disgust were caused to me at this time by the unlooked-for and unjust attitude of one for whom I had had a long personal friendship, and for whose sake, as much as from my own endeavor to reach the truth, I had undertaken this most unpleasant *duty*. Under the influence of ill-advisers, he made this the ground for a bitter personal feeling against myself, and allowed me to be unjustly attacked through the columns of the *Daily Telegraph* by certain sycophantic followers. I forgive all this, and will not make it more difficult for him to make the *amende honorable*, which I feel sure will come in time.

Mrs. Mellon also published a statement in explanation of her case, which statement caused a good deal of mirthful comment from the comic journals. No doubt it was accepted as a thoroughly satisfactory explanation by a great many credulous Spiritualists; but even the more intelligent Spiritualists must consider it an insult to their intelligence. The fact that no money was paid on this particular occasion has alone saved her from legal proceedings. These are her explanations:—

"I was in my normal state during the whole of the séance on the 12th instant; that is, I was *not* in a state of trance, as I sometimes am, during the materialisation of spirit forms, and *was quite aware* of what was going on.

"The next thing I was aware of was Mr. Henry holding my left wrist, and I saw I was completely enveloped in drapery. The drapery soon dematerialised, and was *seen to dissolve in a kind of steam* by Mrs. Gale and one of the gentlemen present.

"At a subsequent private séance, I enquired of 'Cissie' how it all came about, and she tells me that there was a very inharmonious feeling at the meeting, and she and her friends felt that something was going to happen. They therefore thought it better not to entrance me that evening, because it would have been much more dangerous to me had I been in an abnormal condition. So, whilst in my normal state, they drew only from the lower part of my body, principally from my legs—in fact, at one time I felt as though I had no legs at all; they were rendered very small and shrunken, and *that is how I explain my shoes and stockings coming off.*"

Now, one would naturally ask why, if she "was quite aware of what was going on," it should be necessary to enquire of "Cissie" at a subsequent private séance? A little more dust cast in the eyes of her still faithful followers! The explanation of the shoes and stockings falling off is really too laughable. Can it be possible that any Spiritualist even can "swallow" that?

The charge of fraud upon this occasion did not rest upon my testimony alone. Miss St. Hill, Mr. Roydhouse and myself saw the false beard, and saw Mr. Roydhouse pick it up and handle it; while they, and four more witnesses, saw the drapery and other articles, and have thus stated.

Here, then, are seven witnesses of undisputed integrity and intelligence. The impartiality of these witnesses is beyond dispute. They had all been invited by Mrs. Mellon herself, and considered respectable and credible persons by herself, and had no exposure taken place would probably have been asked, as on other occasions, to allow their names to appear in support of the genuineness of these "materialisations."

Although none of them are Spiritualists, they are earnest and thoroughly impartial investigators, and have been and are willing to testify to anything that is proved to their satisfaction. Therefore, the assumption of bias cannot be brought against these witnesses.

Again, the assumption of collusion will not hold. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton I had never seen before in my life, and had no conversation with them until after the occurrence. Mr. Roydhouse and Miss St. Hill were also ignorant of my intentions and had no previous conversation with me. Mr. Wallis was the only person present aware of my intended action. On the other side, there is the statement of five witnesses, Mrs. Gale, Mr. Joubert, Mr. Rumble, Mr. Etherington, and a doctor of philosophy (who has not thought fit to publish his name), who contradict the other witnesses as to the articles above mentioned,

although some of them—Mr. Joubert, notably—admit seeing the white drapery round Mrs. Mellon, getting over that by the excuse that it was whisked off supernaturally, and melted.

Whether that excuse is within reason, must be left to the public to judge.

All these, with the exception of the doctor of philosophy, are professed and ardent spiritualists, and without inferring anything against spiritualism or its followers, these five persons cannot be said to be unbiassed witnesses.

Now the evidence of these five persons is only negative evidence after all, and, as negative evidence, is worthless as against the positive evidence of other witnesses. The negative evidence of any number of persons can not carry the same weight as the positive evidence of seven other persons. "There are none so blind as those who will not see," and "for the sake of their cause," these spiritualists no doubt preferred to shut their eyes to what was plain to everybody who cared to look.

Anonymous statements by a doctor of philosophy, however high his position in the educational world, can not weigh much against the evidence of witnesses who have the courage to append their names. The value of this gentleman's testimony and his capabilities for clear judgement, may be gauged by the fact that up to that time he had only witnessed two materialisation séances; the first being the historic occasion on which Mrs. Besant attended, and the second the notable night of the exposure. His behaviour on the first occasion was so remarkably emotional that both Mrs. Besant and Dr. M—— found it necessary to reassure him. (See Chapter I.)

This was hardly the attitude one would expect from a doctor of philosophy commencing investigations, and savoured more of an emotional temperament predisposed to belief in the supernatural.

For any man to be convinced by any one séance such as that, of the spiritual origin of the "phenomena," shows clearly an emotional and biased mind.

An analysis of the case, therefore, amounted to this: That out of the eighteen persons present besides the medium, seven persons, all credible and unbiassed witnesses, testified to the facts, as stated above. Five persons strongly biased denied it! Mr. Mellon and his daughter, from natural bias, if nothing else, cannot be accepted as witnesses. The remaining four persons, all spiritualists, preferred to remain neutral. The attitude of these four persons was significant. The public verdict was plain, and this evidence quite sufficient to prove the charge, but it remained for spiritualists themselves to supply still more crowning testimony to these facts.

A good deal of comment was caused by the attitude of those four persons who maintained silence. Of these four, Mrs. Smith, of New Zealand, prior to her return to that colony, informed the editor of the *Sunday Times* that she was *not satisfied*. Miss Elverstone, it is believed, was not in a position to see what occurred. Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Edwards, of Darling Point, were the remaining two.

The last-named lady is President of the Sydney Association of Spiritualists, which official position renders her testimony of great importance; and her husband also is a prominent Spiritualist. In the *Sunday Times* of Nov. 4, 1894, the following statements of her's appeared.

Statement of Mrs. Caroline Amelia Edwards, of Gladys House, Yarnabbie-road, Sydney:—

"Having preserved silence thus far upon the late exposé at Mrs. Mellon's house, chiefly from motives of sincerest sympathy with that lady in the humiliating and degrading position, as a woman, into which she was thrown. . . . Pitying her as I still do, and did, determined me to take the neutral part I have hitherto maintained, and leave her to rise or fall on the success or otherwise of her test séances. But circumstances have arisen which compel me, for justice sake, to make my statement of facts to you and the public. . . . Common justice and truth demand that I now make a statement of facts that I have hitherto held back. . . . I further desire to point out that the explanation of such facts as I adduce is not to be explained away by the usual feeble hypnotic suggestions. . . .

"At the séance at Mrs. Mellon's residence on October 12th, I was seated in the front row, between Mr. Henry and the foreign gentleman, who wishes his name withheld. When the supposed spirit form of Mrs. McTaggart appeared, I (having been a dear friend of that lady in her lifetime) asked if I could speak to the form, when it immediately and rapidly went back behind the curtains.

"When 'Josephine' appeared, whom I had always suspected to be Mrs. Mellon herself, the form stooped to take the flowers, with a motion which I recognised as distinctly characteristic of Mrs. Mellon.

"When the form of 'Cissie' was seized by Mr. Henry, I heard the exclamation made, and saw him seize the figure. I was by his side in an instant, and on the first match being lighted I distinctly saw a mask, or what looked like one—at any rate, some black covering—on the lower part of Mrs. Mellon's face. I saw her forehead and part of the fringe of her hair above it; I also saw white drapery over her head and right shoulder, but the arm and shoulder which was held by Mr. Henry were covered by the blue dress, which I saw at the same moment.

"The scuffle which ensued has been accurately described in the *Sunday Times*, whose report of the whole affair was true and accurate in every particular. Immediately on Mrs. Mellon retiring to the cabinet I followed, but did not go with her. I found her in a squatting position, not lying on the floor. I knelt down by the side of her, and took her hands in mine.

"Sticking up from the bosom of her dress, which was of V shape, I saw a lump of coarse, dark hair, the portion visible being fully $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch one way and nearly an inch longer the other. I pushed it down her bosom, distinctly feeling it to be hair. I was so horrified at the time at the prospect of exposure, and the fear that she might be searched, that on the spur of the moment I said, "Give me any

thing you have to hide," in reply to which she said, "No, no, I have nothing;" but at my suggestion she pinned the front of her dress higher. Mrs. Mellon at that time seemed perfectly cool and collected.

"Mrs. Smith, of New Zealand, then came into the cabinet, and assisted me in putting on Mrs. Mellon's upper petticoat and skirt, which were off, but put on the dress skirt wrong side out, and so had to reverse it, which, of course, took more time, Mrs. Mellon remaining squatting in a painful position all the time this was being done.

"Mrs. Gale subsequently came in and knelt on the other side of Mrs. Mellon, who was still in the same painful position, which she continued in despite of Mrs. Gale and I beseeching her to change it, until eventually, at Mrs. Mellon's request, Mrs. Gale left her and me alone after all the visitors had left.

"When alone, Mrs. Mellon allowed me to assist her to rise. She then stooped, and, raising her petticoats slightly in front, she drew something from the back, and fastened whatever it was under the skirt with two or three pins. She then put her shoes and stockings on, and left the cabinet. I wished her 'Good night,' and came away.

"On the afternoon of the day when the test séance was to be held at the *Sunday Times* office, I called on Mrs. Mellon. She asked me to help her. I asked her in what way, and she said, 'Oh, you know; one medium can always help another.' I said I could not help her, and she then said, 'Then I am lost! I shall fail to-night!'

She did fail, as we have seen, and after ample time and opportunity for the production of phenomena had been allowed her.

One cannot help sympathising with Mrs. Edwards, seeing the painful position in which she was placed; and she must be congratulated in having come forward fearlessly at the call of honor and of common justice.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SO-CALLED "TESTS" CRITICISED. LOCAL OPINIONS DISCUSSED.

A prominent member of the Melbourne Psychical Research Society, in summing up the case, expressed himself as follows:—"That Mrs. Mellon was guilty of fraud on that occasion I have now no doubt, and the only question that crops up is, has she been defrauding and fooling the public all these years?" That is exactly the question the public is asking, and the one that I am now about to discuss.

I have fully and faithfully described the so-called "tests" which took place early in the present year, and have also described two typical orthodox séances with Mrs. Mellon, which were not "tests." I was present at all these occurrences and on numerous other occasions, of which I have kept records, which want of space prevents my publishing here; and I say, without hesitation, that I have seen absolutely nothing produced by this medium which differed in any material respect from the so-called phenomena to which we were treated on the night of the exposure. I have also had numerous private sittings with this medium and Dr. M—— only, and without a cabinet. Although there has been every requisite condition and every opportunity for the production of materialisation or other phenomena on these occasions, nothing whatever has occurred, after sitting for many hours. The so-called "tests" were unworthy of the name. My own course of observation resulted in a long list of evidence showing grave suspicion, borne out by the observations of others. I am, therefore, forced to the conclusion that on every occasion on which I have been present, all that I have seen has been the result of common trickery. I have seen absolutely nothing occur at any time through this medium that I could not do myself under the same conditions and with a little practice.

With the exception of numerous Spiritualists (whose judgment on the matter may be questioned), the only individual who comes forward to uphold the abnormal character of any of the occurrences which I have witnessed is a certain medical gentleman in Sydney. One point that he lays great stress upon is, the assertion that he sounded "Geordie's" heart-beats upon one occasion, and is positive that "Geordie's" chest was not that of a woman, and that the female mammae were absent. Now, with all due deference to his professional status, his unsuspecting character renders him easily duped, and I may be pardoned if I refuse to accept his unsupported evidence, knowing that he has been equally positive over a former matter in which he was proved to have been wrong. I observed the whole proceedings carefully, and believe that his opportunities for examining the chest (through the clothing) were not such as to warrant so decided an opinion, and his attitude on this as on other occasions was that of a

"reverent believer," rather than of a sceptical expert. And so, when he says that he has "witnessed the entranced sensitive, Mrs. Mellon, of Sydney, considerably reduced in size from the material evolved in the materialising process," and on other occasions "seen, touched, and spoken to the medium and form together," I must regretfully admit that I believe that he has been easily duped, and has allowed his sentiments to obscure his judgment. When he says that the "form" was outside the curtains, and showed him the entranced sensitive reduced in size, as above, he was trusting to his eyesight only, and that in almost darkness. He did not touch the sensitive on this occasion, nor otherwise assure himself that he was really looking at her, and not merely at her outer clothing propped up upon the chair to represent herself. And so also with regard to touching the medium and form upon another occasion. He had nothing to prove that the medium's right hand did not represent herself, while her left hand represented "Geordie's" hand. This I suspect to have been the case on the occasion of Mrs. Besant attempting to shake hands with both Mrs. Mellon and "Geordie" at that memorable séance, already described, when "Geordie" and the medium were on view outside the curtains together, with only one hand each, and even then these two hands not seen simultaneously. I have seen this particular performance frequently. These points may therefore be dismissed as unworthy to be considered evidence. So much for all the séances with this medium that I have seen myself, and upon which I give my opinion without hesitation.

Now, of the earlier séances in Australia which I did not attend, I have before me complete and authentic records, with the exception of perhaps two or three; and I have also interrogated several reliable witnesses to these occurrences. All this evidence, both documentary and from these witnesses, clearly proves that none of these earlier séances differed in any respect from those that I have witnessed myself, and on this evidence I believe the phenomena then observed, to have been produced in the same manner.

Now, one or two of these séances have been quoted in the newspapers by *Spiritualists* as showing strong evidence in favour of their assumption, of genuineness—the moonlight séance at Hunter's Hill notably. Several witnesses have stated to me positively that this performance differed in no way from the others, and was open to the same grave suspicions. Again, there is a letter from another Spiritualist—Mr. A. R. Rose-Soley—published in the *Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 22nd, 1894. In defence of Mrs. Mellon he describes a séance which took place at his cottage, Balmain, Sydney, about the end of the year 1892. Without going into the evidence of other witnesses to the occasion, his own letter, published as above, is quite sufficient evidence for my purpose. There was no searching, tying, or sealing of any sort; and yet he talks of this being "under test conditions" and "imposture being impossible," and in the same breath goes on to describe how the medium was confined behind copper wires stretched across from wall to wall behind the curtains, "the space between the wire lines being only large enough to admit the passage of an arm." That is quite sufficient; and out of his own words he stands convicted of blind, unreasoning credulity. It was just that "passage of the arm"—holding

and dangling the mask and drapery to represent "Cissie"—which we may reasonably assume produced this, the only one, "manifestation" obtained outside those wires, throughout that and several other sittings.

Many unsuspecting people lay much stress on the "de-materialising" or apparent melting away of the "forms" down to a little spot upon the floor. Mrs. Besant herself seems to think that this one point proved the genuineness of the only one such séance which she has seen. This is a simple artifice, when understood, which I shall explain further on, and here recommend to the perusal of Mrs. Besant and others, the proceedings of the London Society for Psychical Research, 1886-87, vol. iv., page 61. I myself and others (before I had gone so deeply into the evidence) felt rather impressed by this point, and I must give Mrs. Mellon the credit for having worked it very cleverly.

The following words of Mr. Percy Wakefield, of Bondi, Sydney, a reliable witness, are strong additional testimony. Speaking of Mrs. Mellon's arrival in Australia, he says:—"A week or two elapsed, and I was informed that Mrs. Mellon was about to hold a series of séances at the rooms of the Psychological Research Society in Pitt Street. The series was to consist of four séances, and a charge of £2 was made for admission to the series. I attended the first series, and not being satisfied with the result, paid another £2 in the hope of witnessing something more convincing during the next series. I had seen nothing but what could have been done with the aid of a few masks and a little drapery, and inasmuch as the room was much darkened on all occasions, and we were expected to watch the phenomena with clasped hands—being warned on no account to break the circle—I was by no means sure that masks and drapery were not employed. During the second series—in one sense—I was much better satisfied—that is to say, I was satisfied that the phenomena were the result of no abnormal power.

I should probably have carried my investigations further, however, had not a "scene" occurred at the concluding séance, when Mr. W. J. Allen, who had been present at them all, openly expressed the opinion that he had seen nothing but what he could do himself with the assistance of a few stage properties. Upon hearing this, Mrs. Mellon, who usually remained behind the curtains in an apparent state of trance for some time after the séance was over, stepped out into the room in a perfectly normal condition, observing that if Mr. Allen was going into the cabinet—which he certainly showed no inclination to do—she thought that she had better come out. So poor an excuse for a sudden recovery from a state of trance, which usually lasted a considerable time, weighed with me a good deal; and, altogether with the fact that from first to last nothing had transpired but what was capable of a very simple and commonplace explanation, led me to make up my mind that the thing was not worth while troubling any more about."

Mr. O. L. Wallis, who has attended nearly every one of Mrs. Mellon's séances since her arrival in Australia, and kept fully-written records of each, also gives valuable evidence. These are some extracts from letters written by him to the Melbourne Psychical Research Society:—"Nothing whatever in the shape of an abnormal or occult appearance

was to be seen when I struck the light, and the 'properties' found are a full and perfect explanation of the way in which the manifestations were produced. So far as I could discern, this séance was not different in any fundamental respect from many others that I have witnessed with Mrs. Mellon as medium." And, referring to the so-called "tests," already described in full, he says:—"I was present at all these séances, and say most decidedly that no 'tests' worthy of the name were applied, and that there were loopholes for fraud in all directions. . . . The form caught by Mr. Henry was *Mrs. Mellon*. She did not fall off her chair, but was on her knees when he caught her. The white covering of her shoulders was commonplace earthly muslin, and I stand aghast before the one hysterical gentleman who saw it 'disappear like steam,' and before Mrs. Mellon's statement that it 'faded and dissolved.' Regarding the attenuated legs, I merely remark that at least two gentlemen in the room had ocular demonstration to the contrary." Writing of his view of "Geordie" through the mirror, he says:—"I would not have missed such an opportunity for £100; it was the most satisfactory test I ever had—a test, not, however of the genuineness of the medium, but of her fraudulent practices. Had I not seen 'Geordie' walk out into the room at other séances, I should have denounced the thing then and there. I know now that 'Geordie' has a dual personality, and when he stands for his photo. is a 'dummy;' when he walks and talks, his existence and Mrs. Mellon's are convertible terms. Mrs. Mellon's statement that she has not taken money is *directly* untrue. When she held her first public séance here she charged 10s. per sitting, and I paid £4 for eight séances. My partners, Messrs. Winchcombe and Carson, paid £2 each for four séances; and I could readily mention ten or twelve people who paid the same fee. She has received numerous and valuable presents, and altogether the business has paid very well."

This is very clear evidence as to the origin of all the so-called phenomena produced by this medium since her arrival in Australia, nearly three years ago.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. MELLON, THE FOREMOST AND MOST REMARKABLE MATERIALISING MEDIUM OF THE WORLD. HER LIFE REVIEWED. HER OWN STATEMENTS AS TO EARLY HISTORY OF HER MATERIALISING SPIRITS "GEORDIE," "CISSIE," ETC., WITH EXTRACTS FROM ACCOUNTS OF SEANCES HELD BY HER IN ENGLAND.

At the outset of this chapter, let me again repeat what I have already said in my preface to this book, that it is only in the aspect of evidence on a broad question of widespread interest, that I herein review the life or doings of any individual, and I again assure such persons that I have absolutely no personal feeling on the matter, beyond a natural repugnance to imposture of any kind.

In an article devoted to "Spiritualism and Spiritualists," in Mr. Stead's publication, entitled "More Ghost Stories," 1892, the following passages occur, describing Mr. Stead's personal research and relating to Mrs. Mellon:—"During these investigations, I have made great efforts to obtain the services of a trustworthy materialising medium who has not at any time been detected in fraud. There are three or four materialising mediums who give sances in London; but, whether from misfortune or their own fault, their names have all been associated at one time or another with the production of fraudulent phenomena. I am speaking of what has been communicated to me by fervent spiritualists, whom I have consulted in the hope that they might be able to furnish me with the address of a trustworthy materialising medium. The net result of my inquiries came to this—that in the whole of the United Kingdom, so far as was known to the Spiritualist community, there was only one person of undoubted materialising faculty and undoubted character, who could always secure the presence of phenomena, and who had never been detected in a trick of any kind. . . . I refer to Mrs. Mellon, late of Newcastle-on-Tyne."

This is very negative praise, indeed, and we have already seen the sequel to it in Australia; but the fact that *spiritualists themselves* have for some time past regarded Mrs. Mellon as *the only trustworthy* medium is, in itself, significant and valuable testimony. It is in this light that I give Mrs. Mellon her duly accredited place, as "the foremost and most remarkable medium of the world," and proceed to review the history of her early powers, with the object of eliciting the evidence such history may throw upon the whole question of "Materialisation."

I have by me notes and records of about one hundred of Mrs. Mellon's sances, collected by me from various authentic sources and spread over the last twenty years—a fair average, I consider, on which to base an opinion as to their general character. These include full records of the most important occurrences held during that period, and reliable evidence as to the "Tests" undergone before her appearance in Australia.

The following particulars as to her earliest developements as a medium I quote from an autograph letter in my possession:—

“My first materialisations took place in the city of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, in the year 1872, and at first got only hands and faces, and my Newcastle friends with me gave me much time and patience to the development of this phase of mediumship, hoping that in time we would ultimately succeed in getting the fully materialised form. We were not discouraged by repeated failures, but persistently persevered in our attempts, until success came in the form of a lady, who was recognised as the sister of a gentleman present, and whose brother, Mr. H. A. Kersey, is the much esteemed president of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society and beloved conductor of the Children's Progressive Lyceum—a gentleman whose earthly life was saved by spirit friends after being given up by the doctors. So miraculous was the cure, that he vowed from henceforth he would devote the remaining years of his earth life to promulgating the glorious truth of spirit return. Needless to say he has kept his word, for a more indefatigable worker in the cause could not possibly be found. Josephine, at this time, commenced to materialise, and was very successful, full accounts of which were published by the late Alderman T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., etc., in the Newcastle-on-Tyne *Daily Chronicle* and in other prominent papers, and later were re-published in the *Northern Daily Leader*, and which accounts caused widespread interest, not only in England and Scotland but also in other parts of the world, bringing scientific men from far and near to witness and test the genuineness of this remarkable phenomena. I may mention the names of two well-known gentlemen, M. Axakoff and Professor Butteroff, who came from St. Petersburg, Russia, to attend séances. After this I was visited by other well-known scientific gentlemen, among whom I may mention F. W. H. Myers, Esq., and Professor Sidgwick, of London and Cambridge, for whom I held séances, some of which were held under strict test conditions. This visit resulted in my signing an agreement for twelve months to visit London and Cambridge four times during the year, for the purpose of giving test séances.

“Regarding test séances held in Liverpool and other cities in England, and in Glasgow and Edinburgh, that were so very successful, although at the time of which I write I was not a fully-developed medium—far from it, nevertheless, the manifestations were of such a startlingly wonderful nature as to puzzle the minds of scientific investigators. Many, some would say, tempting offers of engagements were proposed for me to visit America, Paris, The Hague, and other parts of the globe, but my people objected to my leaving England.

“I think it was in 1873 that the spirit known as ‘Geordie’ came to me. He was very powerful, and soon learned how best to utilise the psychic power or force, but was a long time in acquiring the use of his vocal organs, and, after many attempts to speak, could for some time only articulate the words ‘Yes’ and ‘No.’ But now he can talk quite fluently. His talking entirely depends on the strength of power at his disposal. Sometimes he will put most of the power into his voice, when we can only see his head and bust; whereas, at another time, he will use the power for

materialising his body, and walk about the room, and, should the power be very strong he will take a chair, sit down beside us and join in our conversation.

"I have the undoubted testimony of hundreds of people who have seen, recognised, and conversed with their spirit friends in my presence.

"With the exception of periodical visits to Scotland (where I have many friends), I was never out of England until I came to sunny Australia, nearly three years ago, where I have held some remarkably successful sances, both in Sydney and in Melbourne."

Naturally—and for very good reasons—the great majority of persons who witnessed Mrs. Mellon's exhibitions in Great Britain were spiritualists—faithful, all-believing followers—who required no tests, accepting all they saw and heard, and asking for more. A great number of the records before me of these early sances are written by such witnesses, and have delighted the readers of spiritualistic journals from time to time.

Now, even presuming these numerous spiritualistic witnesses to be reliable (a question that I do not here raise), their evidence is merely negative evidence, as I pointed out before, and goes to prove nothing either one way or the other. This evidence may be therefore dismissed as worthless. Such sances may be classed as spiritualistic worship in distinction to research. The learned Russian professors and others mentioned in Mrs. Mellon's foregoing account, were no doubt introduced to the marvels at these orthodox sances; there is no record of their having been allowed to introduce any tests, and no doubt they were placed under an agreement not to leave their seats to personally investigate. When these gentlemen wished to institute experiments with this medium, their tempting offers were declined on plausible excuses. Again, I have also the records of a number of pseudo-tests, or what profess to have been "completely convincing tests" carried out by a few spiritualists and others from time to time. On critical examination of this evidence, these "tests" turn out to be no tests at all, the conditions being so lax that fraud was not only possible, but probable throughout.

In this category appear accounts of such sances as those held at Weir's Court in 1877, at which the wax moulds of "spirit" hands and feet are reported to have been obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Mellon (then Miss Fairlamb); also the photographing of "Geordie's" head at Edinburgh, the resultant portrait of which I have seen, and give my firm opinion, after long and careful examination of the same, that "Geordie's" head is none other than Mrs. Mellon's, with a false beard on and draped; and the photographing of "Cissie" in 1890, already referred to and explained. All this is worth no more than the first category of negative evidence, except, perhaps, as giving greater proof of the cleverness and capability of the medium. But, on the other hand, all these spiritualistic records have a distinct and decisive value as evidence in another way. They show clearly and without doubt, that all these early sances of Mrs. Mellon's, right up to the time that she left England, were of exactly the same character as those we have been treated to in Australia; and that the "phenomena" produced then (throughout those many years), may be justly ascribed to the same origin as what we have most

recently seen. As evidence in this respect, these documents are most valuable, and no one can read of the doings of "Geordie," "Cissie," "Josephine" or "Minnie" for the last twenty years without being struck by the overlasting repetitions—the same remarks uttered then as now; the same little tactics to amuse and entertain the sitters while the medium is dressing and preparing in the cabinet; the same want of originality or change about the "spirits." "Josephine" seems to have taken the place of "Minnie"—a "spirit" who used to perform in exactly the same manner but under a different name. And then we see accounts of the "spirits" of departed friends appearing very frequently at these séances, as a particular honor to some one present who was more credulous than the rest. These are the thousands who can testify to having seen their departed friends through Mrs. Mellon's powers. Many of us have seen exactly the same thing here in Sydney, and these thousands of poor deluded fools are ready (on the strength of a completely disguised form seen in semi-darkness) to publicly testify to their own folly. It is quite sufficient to read these records published from time to time in the *Medium and Daybreak*—out of their own mouths they have convicted themselves. Here are a few extracts:—*Medium and Daybreak*, May 27, 1892 (speaking of "Geordie").—"A pair of scissors were handed to him by a gentleman, with a request that he would cut off a small portion of his beard and allow him to keep it as a memento of this, to him, most marvellous event. He brandished the scissors several times over his head, . . . entered the cabinet for a moment, then returned with the scissors and the coveted portion of his beard." I have italicised the important point in this, which requires no further explanation. *Medium and Daybreak*, Oct. 28, 1891.—"The dematerialising of "Cissie" outside the cabinet carried the greatest conviction to the company present. . . . which brought the sitting practically to a close, to the satisfaction of all but one (a spiritualist), who did not take the slightest action to prove his allegations." I can quite understand this gentleman's hesitation before attempting to prove his allegations single-handed, having recently received some rough treatment myself at the hands of spiritualists, as already recounted. *Medium and Daybreak*, Oct. 3, 1890—(speaking of the photographing of "Cissie").—"But the important point is that no one looked at the process, for to do so in such a strong light interferes with it. . . . The whole party exercised the greatest self-denial in not looking; their one and only thought was to enable the spirit and medium to be photographed." Exactly so, we have seen the same tactics over "Geordie," only in that case we were not quite so self-denying, but did look surreptitiously. The same writer continues:—"Many years ago we were present at one of Mrs. Mellon's séances at Weir's Court, Newcastle. 'Cissie' was walking in front of the cabinet, sucking sweets which some sitter had given her. The writer was called up to her, and was offered a kiss. As she was only of the stature of a little child, he had to stoop down on one knee to do so, and naturally put out his hand to place it against the child's back. This she at once observed, and by a quick motion of her hand prevented it. The mouth was quite normal, as the kiss proved; the lips were moist and sticky from the sweets she was sucking." Mrs. Mellon had a narrow

escape from being caught that time. It was the perusal of this passage a few months ago, that helped to confirm me in my own opinions as to "Cissie's" origin and construction. I could quote many such extracts had I the space at my disposal, but these are quite sufficient evidence.

I come now to, by far, the most interesting part of the evidence, and, with the exception of the last two months, perhaps the most important period in this medium's whole professional career. Mrs. Mellon has continually referred all inquirers here to tests which she professes to have *successfully* undergone in England, and notably before the Society for Psychical Research of London, and has made these the excuse, in many cases, for declining to undergo further tests in Australia. She has made much capital out of the names of Mr. Myers, Professor Sidgwick, of London and Cambridge, and other members of the above society, whom she professes to have satisfied as to her alleged mediumship. A friend of mine was most incautiously led into furthering this belief, by his statements in an article in the first number of the *Cosmos* magazine. Mr. Myers has been communicated with in reference to these much-talked-of tests, and a reply received to the effect that the London Society was not satisfied. I have also before me the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, London, vol. 4, 1886-87, and I find there a record of these tests written by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, which clearly expresses the opinions of the society and of these members named above. Unfortunately, this volume only reached my hands since the exposure, and Mrs. Mellon, in answer to repeated enquiries of mine, professed herself ignorant of its publication, and, unlike other less important events, professed to have kept no records of these tests—perhaps, for very good reasons, as we shall see.

Here are some extracts from this volume referring to a long series of tests with Mrs. Mellon (then Miss Fairlamb), and also to Miss Kate Wood, who developed with her. Page 49 to 54, vol. IV., says:—
 "Mr. Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, and Mr. Gurney had a series of sésances for materialisation with Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb in January, February, and March, 1875, at Newcastle. . . . We did not consider that decisive evidence had yet been obtained. The sésances were now adjourned to the house where I lived. . . . Having arranged our tests as described, we began a series of four sésances. At the first a vague white figure, which might have been a doll, or perhaps mere drapery, appeared at the doorway, but did not come out. The second was a complete failure. At the third a small vague figure again appeared, and raps were made in places beyond the reach, we thought, of the hands or feet of the medium; but, of course, she might have brought something with her to make these with. We were getting depressed, especially, as on this last occasion, the disentrancement took a very long time. . . . So ended this series; and at the next, which was held at the same place in the following July, and lasted three weeks, a different test was used. . . . The sésances were nearly unsuccessful until the last. On the Friday and Saturday preceding, the sitters had been brought up one by one to what pur-

ported to be materialised forms, but the face was not in a place in which it would have been impossible for the medium's face to be, and on the Friday it appeared to some members of the circle that the face was not satisfactorily connected with the drapery that purported to conceal the body. On Saturday, the 24th, at the last of the series of twelve sances, Miss Fairlamb was placed in the hammock, and Mr. Sidgwick observed the indicator of the balance. . . . Then a form came out and kissed me through the white veil in which it was wrapped. . . . Afterwards Miss Wood was called up to the form, which looked small, and did not move very easily; it might have been a woman on her knees. . . . After the sance I asked leave to search Miss Fairlamb. This she sharply and decidedly declined. She was reminded that she had agreed to be searched, but she said that was before, not after, the sances. This refusal produced an unfavorable impression on us, and left the evidence at best inconclusive. . . . Another series of sances was held with them through a period of three weeks, in August and September, 1875, at Cambridge. The results were again inconclusive, and in some respects suspicious; for the form came out of the cabinet three times, and it was found by trial afterwards that the medium could each time have come just so far without breaking loose from the fastenings. This coincidence was suggestive.

"January, 1877, we tried a final series of sances for materialisation at Newcastle. Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb had by this time quarrelled, and used to sit separately. We first used, as a means of securing Miss Wood, a long bag of machine-made white net, which she got into, head and all. The bag was so long that the end could be brought *outside* the cabinet, where it was drawn together with tape, and the ends of the tape nailed and sealed to the wall close to the mouth of the bag. We held four sances in this way with no result, and then the "spirits," through Miss Wood, told us to give up that test. Then we substituted a graduated tape, tied round the neck, and another round the ankle. The tape was sealed below the knot on to a piece of paper, and the seals traced round with pencil, and later with sympathetic ink, which we thought would betray the fact if heat were applied to the seals. The ends of the tapes were brought out of the cabinet, nailed through large sheets of white paper to the floor, and sealed over the nails. The light allowed at these sances was exceedingly poor. A small white figure came to the entrance of the cabinet—a British but irregularly-shaped object, which on one occasion danced up and down, and which I remember thinking at the time might be the pillow provided for Miss Wood's head. This occurred at three successive sances. At the fourth we were told by raps that the medium was choking. I went to examine, and found that the knot had been moved an inch or more away from the seal, and close up to the neck, so that the tape appeared too tight. The "spirit," speaking through Miss Wood, claimed to have done this in playing with it. After vainly attempting to loosen the knot, which I could not do in the bad light, I cut the tape and removed it, leaving the ankle tape as the only security. We heard a good deal of rustling of the paper to which this was sealed, more than at any previous sance.

After a considerable time, and much singing and talking, a figure—apparently that of a full-grown woman—draped in white, came out. The light was too low to distinguish anything but the general outline of the figure. I think the face was veiled, and when she touched my hand I could feel something like soft muslin between her hand and mine. The figure (twice at least) came out too far from the point where the tape was attached to the floor for it to be possible that it could be Miss Wood, with her ankle still bound. When the figure had finally retreated, we were kept a long time waiting and singing before the séance was declared at an end. We then examined the fastening, and found the attachment to the floor intact, but the seal near the knot torn from the paper and split, one half remaining attached to each tape. A slight strain required to bring the two halves of the seal together showed that the knot was not exactly as it had been, and judging by knots made on other nights, which I had kept, it was much tighter than I had made it. Also the part of the tape round the ankle was creased, strained, and dirty all over, as if it had been much handled and pulled. We felt sure that either it had been forced over the heel, or that a loop large enough to pass over the foot had been obtained by moving the knot to a place below the seal, an operation which the splitting of the seal rendered just possible. At any rate, the indications of deception were palpable and sufficient, and we were not surprised to hear a few months later that a more aggressive investigator had violated the rules of the séance, and captured Miss Wood personating the "spirit." Some persons may, perhaps, wonder why we had not adopted such summary methods of investigation ourselves, but there was an implied understanding with the medium that we should not do so, which we should not have felt justified in breaking. For my own part, though I have no wish myself to adopt such methods of investigation, I think that both Spiritualists and non-Spiritualists ought to recognise that "exposers" have thrown valuable light on the subject.

"While these final séances were going on with Miss Wood, we were also holding séances with Miss Fairlamb under different conditions, but with the same general result, namely, that all that occurred was within the power of the medium. We were also then concluding a series of collateral investigations with some other Newcastle mediums—the Petty family, who exhibited somewhat similar manifestations. This investigation had been carried on as long as those with Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb, and with equally unsatisfactory results. I have now to observe that several other unsuccessful and unsatisfactory series of séances contributed to the *thoroughly unfavorable* impression left by that last set at Newcastle."

This evidence is clear and emphatic, and leaves no doubt as to the *thoroughly unfavorable* impression produced. Far from being evidence in favor of the alleged phenomena produced by Mrs. Mellon, it is evidence in support of very grave suspicions; and, after reviewing all this, and also the spiritualistic evidence which has gone before, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe the so-called phenomena produced by this medium throughout her professional career, to have been all due to the same origin as what we have seen in Sydney.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BROAD QUESTION OF THE SO-CALLED SPIRITUALISTIC PHENOMENA OF SPIRIT MATERIALISATION CONSIDERED. THE EVIDENCE ON WHICH IT STANDS.

In considering the broad question of the alleged phenomena of materialisation, I have first reviewed the evidence of my own personal research. This evidence is all the more valuable in its relation to the whole question, from the fact that I have had the good fortune to have been able to experiment with the "foremost and most remarkable" medium of the present day—the "only one person who could almost always secure the presence of phenomena, and who had never been detected in a trick of any kind," up to within a few months ago. A review of this medium's career has left us with a lot of worthless negative evidence from professed Spiritualists, which is no evidence at all; besides which it has furnished us with a large amount of the most valuable positive evidence against the probability, not to say possibility, of the existence of any such phenomena. Let us now see what evidence the lives of other "materialising" mediums adduce.

Of the only other materialising medium with whose exhibitions I am personally acquainted, some interesting evidence is also to hand. I refer to Hackett, a séance with whom I described in my first chapter. News of his alleged complete exposure in New Zealand arrived a few months ago, and has since been confirmed by the confession of one who was his unwilling accomplice.

We have also seen a record of the doings of Miss Wood, the companion of Mrs. Mellon, and of her final exposure, as recorded and published by the Society for Psychical Research, of London, which I have already quoted. Every other materialising medium has likewise been detected in trickery at one time or another, as we have seen recorded and acknowledged by Spiritualists themselves, in Mr. Stead's journal. I could go on and give particular cases without number, but, in the face of the above evidence, it is unnecessary, and the confessions of the Fox sisters, of Eva Fay, Bullock, and others, are well-known and notorious facts.

On the other hand, let us now consider whether there is any existing reliable evidence in favor of the phenomena of materialisation at all. The statements of some thousands of credulous Spiritualists may be at once dismissed as worthless, and the only evidence admissible is that of scientists or experts who have practically experimented on the matter. To what, then, is this *alleged* mass of evidence in support of the phenomena reduced? To the statements of two or three men such as Mr. Barkas, of Newcastle, Mr. Epes Sargent, of Boston, U.S.A., and Professor William Crookes, of London, men of otherwise high scientific repute, who profess to have so experimented, and whose brilliant attainments in other directions have received due recognition. Whether their scientific attainments have been of any service to themselves in this field of research, and whether their experiments with these alleged phenomena have been as careful and practical as the case required, is a matter open to very grave question. I am not alone in the opinion that the brilliant scientist makes the worst investigator, and for many reasons is often more easily hoodwinked than men of lesser genius. His methods are stereotyped; he

works, as a rule, secluded in a laboratory, or abstracted in a world of his own, his duties necessarily removing him from the every-day world of human nature, which is in itself the best school of wisdom. And it is this particular knowledge of human nature which best fits an individual for research into this realm of mystery, and without a large amount of which the scientist, with all his apparatus, self-registering indices, scales, and measurements, will fail more completely than others. In experimenting on this subject with such persons as are termed mediums, forces (by this I mean the human forces of cunning and trickery) come into play, with which the scientific genius is least of all acquainted.

This calculation does not enter into his abstruse problems; he soars above such trivialities. And yet it is just this calculation, in dealing especially with alleged materialisations, which is all important; and it is for this very reason that I cannot accept the evidence of these three individuals upon this particular matter, when I would not hesitate to accept it upon ordinary scientific matters. Such has been the attitude of the scientific world and of public opinion with regard to these individuals; although Spiritualism holds up the opinions of these men in the face of modern science, and feels quite satisfied. I am not, however, dealing with public opinion, but sifting impartially all the evidence before me; and I find absolutely no single case of reliable evidence in favor of the alleged phenomena. With regard to the two first-named investigators, although their testimony is much quoted by Spiritualists, I do not know of any scientific publication of their experiments. Mr. Crookes has, however, published a scientific treatise upon his experiments with many of the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism; and it is most noticeable that, although he devotes much space to claiming the attention of the scientific world to the lesser alleged phenomena occurring through Home, he says but little of his experiments with "materialisation." In his writings he by no means claims the attention for this that he does for the physical phenomena, which he groups under the heading of Psychic Force; neither does he advance his opinions on "materialisation" as either conclusive to himself or to the world. This reticence is most marked, and it is a pity that Spiritualism is not equally modest in making use of the little that he does say. Apart from all that, these experiments which he quotes were nearly all carried out by himself alone with the medium, and therefore lack the weight of corroborated testimony. Not that I hesitate to accept the truth of Mr. Crookes' statements, but it is easier for one witness to be duped than for several. The question of the lesser physical phenomena is outside the scope of these pages. Now, in all this mass of so-called evidence in favor of "materialisation," there is not a particle of reliable evidence in its support. It is only logical, on the other hand, to conclude, therefore, that the positive evidence of innumerable exposures is a full and complete explanation of all the alleged "phenomena" of "spirit materialisation."

Until some better evidence is forthcoming, we must be excused for refusing to believe in what, to say the least of it, is most highly improbable.

PART II.

CHAPTER X.

SOME POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SO-CALLED PHENOMENA OF
SPIRIT MATERIALISATION ILLUSTRATED, ART AND SCIENCE
COMBINED. A WARNING TO THE CREDULOUS.

INASMUCH as the preceding chapters are an exact and truthful record of occurrences, let me state at the outset, that this chapter is equally based upon actual observation. Nothing that I am about to say is intended as a burlesque upon what has gone before, but is written as a serious and timely warning to many credulous persons who may be on the verge of this slough of deception and falsehood—trembling in the balance between reason and the blindest of faith, and may help such as these to see more clearly the dangers before them. That there are not wanting thousands of fools, who, in spite of repeated exposure and of warning, continue to bow before the wiles of cunning imposters, to worship and reverence the very rogues who trick and befool them, is a disgrace to the boasted intelligence of this nineteenth century. For such as these there is but little hope; the “contagious mental disease” has reached its incurable stage. And there is yet another large class of persons who, from sheer self-conceit and a belief in the infallibility of their own judgment, can not bring themselves to acknowledge a mistake. Such persons lack the honesty and courage to acknowledge that they could possibly have been duped, and, though knowing it in their own hearts, prefer to plunge still further into this slough of deception, hoping vainly to shelter themselves. For such characters as these one can only feel the supreme contempt. But to those persons, predisposed to dabble in occult mysteries, of emotional and credulous temperament, who hanker after supernaturalism with all its forbodings, with unwholesome longings to penetrate the veil that hides the future, but who are yet upon the brink, to those I say pause while you have time, and learn something of the wiles of the wizards whom you would consult. Bear in mind that the history of modern Spiritualism, so far from showing the class of persons who call themselves mediums to be the pure-minded apostles of a cause, the honest interpreters of the faith which they profess, has proved them, without exception, to be unscrupulous persons, many of them expert conjurors, well versed in every trick and wile by which they can entrap the unwary. They deal in surprises, and abstract the attention of their audience to minor points, while the most important though apparently most trivial point in the performance is entirely unnoticed. I do not wish to infer from this that “Materialisation” requires any particular cleverness or knowledge of conjuring; it is more or less a confidence trick, and depends principally upon the audacity of the medium in the use of a few necessary properties.

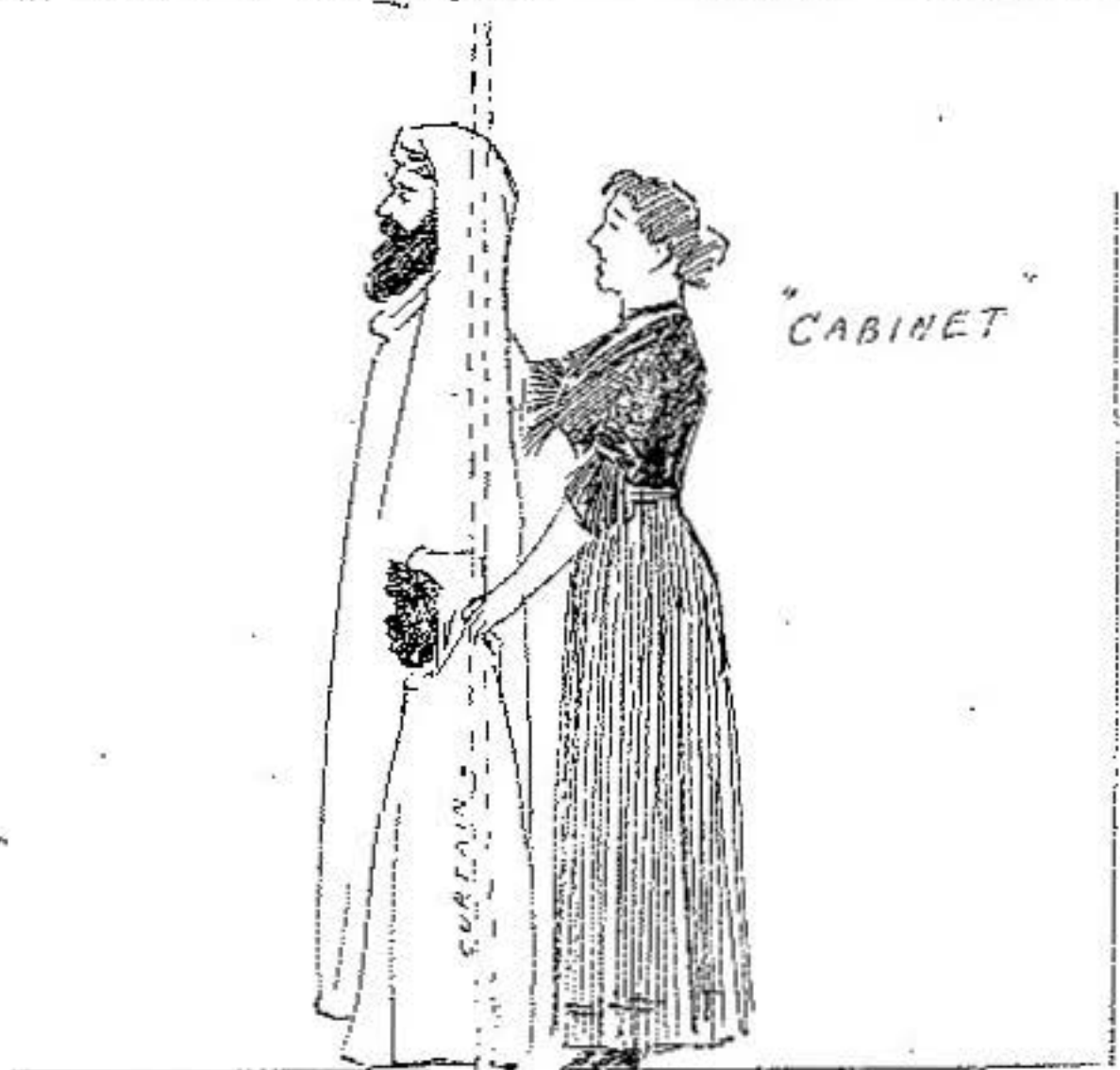
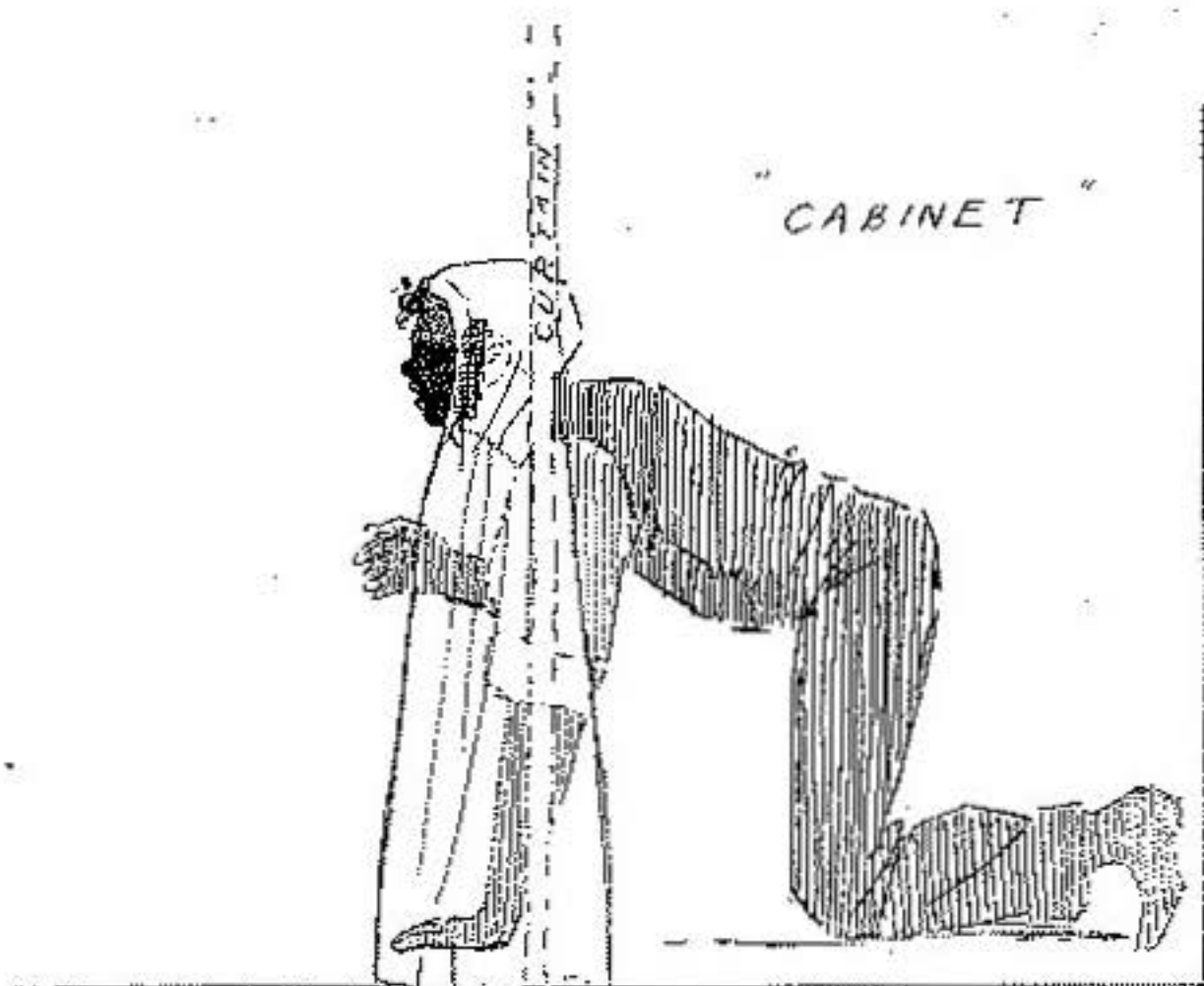
I have seen three "spirit" forms appear at the curtain together. This impresses one at first as very wonderful; for in the darkness and glamour of the surrounding conditions, one is apt to forget that the medium has two hands, which each support a lay figure or strips of drapery, while the medium's own draped personality does duty for the third.

Any one reading the foregoing accounts of séances, will observe that the greatest interval of waiting and singing is always before the most elaborate form appears, and that many ruses to gain opportunity for carefully packing up the properties after a séance, are also resorted to, the medium often declaring that a form is in the cabinet materialising, but has not the power to come out. With regard to producing a spirit form over six feet high, nothing is easier. The medium holds a mask on the end of a telescopic rod, or even with one hand above her head, while flowing drapery conceals the medium's own head and body. I have invariably noticed that these tall forms are not materialised according to natural proportions, and dislike the light. It is also most remarkable that when any of the "spirits" come out from the "cabinet" and write on paper provided for that purpose, that the handwriting is unmistakably that of the medium. I will here refer my readers to the facsimile drawing of "Cissie's" hand on page 19. Let any woman place her hand upon a sheet of paper, keeping the fingers slightly bent, and trace round the fingers roughly with a long pencil, finishing at the top of the thumb and base of the little finger.

With reference to the materialisation outside the cabinet, described on page 18; this could easily be accomplished by a telescopic rod or cross-jointed XXXXX collapsable implement of light dull japanned steel, such as is used in drapers' shops for reaching articles in the windows. An implement of this description, which can be made to extend for five or six feet, when closed, fits into a very small space and could be easily secreted about a woman's clothing. It would also be invisible in the semi-darkness.

For a complete explanation of the "materialising and dematerialising" in view of the spectators, on which so much stress has been laid by Mrs. Besant and others, I can not do better than refer again to the following words of Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, taken from the volume which I have already quoted. Describing a series of séances with a medium named Haxby, one of whose materialising "spirits" was named "Abdullah," she writes as follows:—

"Abdullah dematerialised and materialised in the circle, that is, he appeared to most of the circle to diminish in size, and finally vanish in front of the opening of the curtains of the cabinet, and also to appear in the same place and gradually grow up to his full size. This happened more than once. From my position being nearer than anyone else's, and from my seeing Abdullah more in profile while growing and diminishing, I was able to see the whole process distinctly. He went down on his knees—rather hastily (others observing this, too)—and then gradually bent down and forward, moving his body back into the cabinet as he did so, and keeping the curtains closed above him. Finally he went flat down on the ground, leaving only



his head exposed, and then drew it in. I was able to see that he was lying down inside the cabinet, as the curtains do not quite reach the floor, and I saw the long line of white drapery all the way from the opening of the curtains towards the wall. The growing was done in exactly the same manner, a small bit of white being shoved out first, and then the head, &c. . . . Before this séance all the members of the circle, including an enthusiastic Spiritualist, whom I will call Mr. X., had been told what to expect. Mr. Sidgwick was present, and he appends this note to my sister's account :

"I was seated at the furthest point in the circle; at the same time in witnessing Abdullah's disappearance I was unable even to imagine it anything else than the medium withdrawing gradually into the cabinet, having first fallen on his knees, and then gradually lowered his head. But Mr. X., who sat nearly as far off as, but certainly not farther than, I did, remarked, when the performance was over, that 'all our doubts must now be removed,' and afterwards to Mr. H., on going away, that our materialisations were better than theirs in Paris."

Experiences like this make one feel how misleading the accounts of some completely honest witnesses may be. For the materialisations in Paris were those which the Comte de Bullet had with Firman, where near relatives of the count were believed constantly to appear, and which are among the most wonderful recorded in Spiritualistic literature. And after all it appears that these marvellous séances were no better than this miserable personation by Haxby.

Wax moulds of "spirit" feet and hands have been referred to. I have no doubt that these, when produced unbroken, had been previously manufactured and "planted" in the "cabinet." The occasion when "Geordie" handed round the fragments of a broken mould which had been obtained in view of the spectators, does not sound at all wonderful when we realise that the mould of her own foot was probably made by the medium.

The accompanying illustration, showing how both adult and child forms may be manufactured by anybody, explains itself. When the "spirit" perambulates the room, the mask, beard, drapery, or other distinctive disguise by which the particular "spirit" is to be recognised by its friends, are worn by the medium.

In concluding these pages, let me state that, although I believe that there may be little-known natural phenomena worthy of scientific investigation, it is not through the channel of the professional medium that they will be found, if found at all. Table séances among private persons, while apparently an innocent amusement, invariably lead to pernicious consequences. The whole matter is too fraught with mental danger to the unwary, to be touched upon by any but the most sceptical and hard-headed investigators. For this and other reasons I think that every investigation committee should include one or more professional conjurors, and without doubt a key would then be obtained to much that passes for abnormal phenomena.

The unrestricted dabbling of credulous and emotional people in such matters is both utterly demoralising to themselves and hurtful to humanity at large.

[THE END.]

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