

A CASE OF
PARTIAL DEMATERIALIZATION
OF THE
BODY OF A MEDIUM

INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

BY

MONS. A. AKSAKOF

SCIENTIST, PHILOSOPHER, AND LITERATEUR,
EX-PRIME MINISTER OF RUSSIA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

TRACY GOULD, LL.B.

COUNSELLOR AT LAW, MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK BAR

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CHAPTER I.

THEORETICAL SPECULATIONS — MATERIALIZATION AND DEMATERIALIZATION.

An extraordinary manifestation occurred at a seance given by Madam d'Esperance at Helsingfors, Finland, in December, 1893 — a manifestation which casts a bright light upon the mysterious phenomena of materialization, and confirms by the evidence of both sight and touch what had hitherto been but a theoretical postulate, though a logically necessary one.

Before entering on the discussion of the case it is best for me to give briefly an idea of the theory to which I refer, which applies to all cases of materialization and gives shape and finish to those of which I am about to treat.

Spiritualism has always recognized the fact that the phenomena of materialization are produced at the expense of the medium's body, from which the required materials are taken; that is to say, a certain degree of dematerialization of the body of the medium inevitably attends this phenomenon. But this hypothesis had never

been followed to its farthest limit; the final conclusion which would absolutely and logically result from it, if true, had never yet been drawn. On the one hand, the rarity of materializations and the lack of direct observation sufficient to support the conclusion; on the other hand, the extraordinary admission of fact which it compelled (though that fact itself is no more wonderful than materialization, which is now becoming so familiar) explains why it has not yet been generally and expressly admitted. But now we have *one case*¹ which gives us a right to speak out boldly and positively. It is this case of which I am about to treat.

Analysis of mediumistic phenomena enables us to distinguish three stages of materialization:

1. The first stage is *invisible materialization*. We must, *à priori*, admit that there is such a thing, because we know of the movement of substantial articles, which can only be caused by some invisible human agency, as I have shown in a former work, entitled "Animisme et Spiritisme." We must admit it also because we have so often felt, as it were, *touches* in half-light seances, and have felt sure that they were those of hands, although the hands were invisible

¹ Italics are always those of the author unless otherwise noted.

—TRANSLATOR.

first in W.E.B. Dorr, because
photos are positive, doctored, or
because they are not genuine
and are therefore to be discarded.

ones. We are further assured in this belief by the evidence of spirit-photography in general,¹ and especially when the senses themselves lend their aid, and the sight and touch of spirit-forms is confirmed by the camera. Such, for example, are the photographs of Beattie; and also those of Mumler, the latter taken when Mrs. Conant, the famous American medium, saw an apparition touch her hand, and the photograph proved that it was really the hand of a figure invisible to the ordinary human eye; or even that of Mr. Tinkham, on which appeared the hem of a garment, held up by a hand which was invisible to the unaided eye.

Spirit photography furnishes us with abundant evidence of the ephemeral existence of real, objective figures, which we can explain upon no other hypothesis than that of a materialization begun, but not perceptible to our eyes. The necessary material is certainly taken from the medium, but its quantity is so inconsiderable that the partial dematerialization of the medium is not perceptible to our senses.

2. In the second stage, we have the well-known phenomenon of *visible and tangible ma-*

¹ Mons. Aksakof has coined, and uses, the term *transcendental photography*; but I have thought best to restore the familiar expression in the text. — TRANSLATOR.

terialization, though partial and incomplete. Thus, the appearance of hands has been familiar at seances ever since the beginning of the spiritualistic movement. It occurs in full light, when the medium is surrounded by the witnesses. Then, later, came dark seances, at which hands were felt, though the medium's hands were held by the witnesses, at the time. Partial materializations also took place at these seances; heads, busts, and figures, more or less vapory, were seen in semi-obscurity. When, at length, the medium was isolated behind a curtain or in a dark cabinet, apparitions of heads, busts, and hands were obtained that were much more substantial and which shone with a faint light. To conform to the theoretical principle, this phenomenon of partial materialization ought to be accompanied by *partial dematerialization* of the medium. That is to say, that, in order to furnish the material for materializations, there should be *complete local* dematerialization of the medium, or there should be a general dematerialization, more or less inappreciable to our senses.

In those cases, no direct observation of physical changes, accompanying the production of the phenomena, could be made upon the medium, who was always alone inside the cabinet. But in this last instance, in the seance with Madam

d'Esperance which we are now to treat in detail, full confirmation of our logical conclusion was obtained; for while Madam d'Esperance sat in front of the curtain, by dim light, and while partial materializations (as, for instance, apparitions of heads and busts) were taking place behind the curtain, several persons proved, at least by sight and touch, the demi-dematerialization of her body — to wit, of her feet and lower limbs.

3. In the third stage we have *full materialization*; that is, a complete human form, visible and tangible, which to the eye, in no way differs from a living human being. This manifestation is the very highest development, the *non plus ultra*, of materialization, during which the medium is alone, in darkness, and generally entranced. A long study of these phenomena compels the admission that when the complete materialization of a human form is obtained, that form indubitably resembles the medium in feature. This fact has been the cause of much suspicion and of many pretended exposures, etc. All attempts to see the medium and the fully materialized form at the same time (which attempts have unfortunately been made without any examination into the real condition of the two bodies — that of the medium and that of the apparition) have failed, with the rarest excep-

tions. When, by means of exceptional precautions — such as holding the medium's hair outside the cabinet, or passing a galvanic current through the medium's very body — it was finally made sure that the medium could neither consciously nor unconsciously play the part of the spirit and yet the resemblance between form and medium was found to be perfect or almost perfect, (as in the case of John King's resemblance to his medium, Williams, or of Katie King's resemblance to her medium, Miss Cook,) they were forced to recognize the fact that *the double*, or *duplication*, of the medium was the starting-point of all materialization. But this expression might lead to false conclusions, if we did not understand and realize that this double is but a part, or *simulacre*, of the medium's real body, which still remains behind the curtain.

In reality, however, it is neither a moiety nor a phantom of a body, but a veritable and complete body of flesh and bone, like unto that of the medium in every way; in short, it is like enough to the body of the medium to deceive the medium himself. What, then, has become of the real body, for the time? One cannot, in reason, admit that the medium has, at one time, *two complete bodies, absolutely alike*. We have already stated, in substance, that it is perfectly

logical to argue that the degree of materialization of an apparition corresponds to the dematerialization of the medium; consequently, if the materialization of the apparitional human form is complete, the dematerialization of the medium's form should also be complete, or at least would be carried so far that the medium would be invisible to our eyes, if we should look for her during such manifestation.

To sum up, bearing in mind the proposition that every materialization necessitates a corresponding dematerialization, the entire scale of materialization may be formulated as follows:

1. Primitive, invisible materialization corresponds to the least imperceptible dematerialization of the medium, the latter remaining visible during the phenomenon.

2. Visible but partial materialization, incomplete either as to form or necessary matter, corresponds to an equally partial or incomplete dematerialization of the medium, who remains wholly or partly visible.

3. The visible and complete materialization of an entire human form corresponds to maximum or complete dematerialization of the medium, and may be carried to such an extent that the medium, in turn, becomes invisible.

If this be admitted as a general and logical

theory and proposition, it, to a certain extent, explains and accounts for many cases of materialization which have, without it, appeared doubtful, questionable, and even suspicious; but even this admission does not do away with all doubts and difficulties, for these sometimes depend upon the individual capacities of the different mediums; and, moreover, we never know just how far the materialization is limited by existing circumstances. That point will be discussed in another chapter. The important question is this: Have we enough assured facts before us to justify propositions 2 and 3 of the foregoing general statement?

We are now in a position to reply affirmatively.

I shall begin with a case within my own personal experience, which I have long and carefully considered, and which, in my opinion, so strongly confirms the theory as to be almost equivalent to positive proof. It refers to an incident in the classic materialization of Katie King, and I have already related it in "*Animisme et Spiritisme*," but I reproduce it here in an abridged form.

It took place in 1873. Professor Crookes had then published his articles on psychic force, but did not yet believe in materialization and said that he should not believe in it until he

could see the materialized form and the medium, at the same time. As I was then in London, I very naturally desired to witness this phenomenon — always wonderful — with my own eyes.

After I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Cook's family, I was very cordially invited to be present at the seance arranged for October 22d. The circle was to be held in a small room, used as a dining-room. The medium, Miss Florence Cook, sat upon a chair, in a nook formed by the chimney and one side of the room, behind a curtain sliding on rings. Mr. Luxmore, who directed the seance, insisted that I should carefully attest the manner and place in which he bound the medium, as he always considered that precaution necessary. He first attached to each of the medium's hands a strong band, secured by knots; then, joining the hands behind her back, he tied them with the ends of the same band and secured them with fresh knots; then they were still further tied to a long cord, which was passed outside the curtain through a sliding copper ring, carried to a table beside which Mr. Luxmore sat, and finally made fast to the table.

The whole was so arranged that the medium could not rise without pulling the cord. The room was lighted by a small lamp placed behind a book. In less than a quarter of an hour the

curtain was drawn aside far enough to discover a human form standing inside, clothed in white, and bare-faced, but the hair was covered with a white veil. Hands and arms were bare. It was Katie King. All the time that the seance lasted, Katie talked with the members of the circle. Her voice was modulated to a murmur. She several times said, "Ask me questions — sensible questions." Thereupon, I asked, "Can you not show me your medium?" She answered, "Yes, come quick and look." In an instant I had drawn back the curtain, for I had but one pace to step, but the white figure had vanished.

Before me, in the dark corner, was the shadowy form of the medium, seated in her chair. She wore a black dress, and for that reason I could not see her very plainly. As soon as I had reached my place, Katie's white figure reappeared at the curtain and asked, "Did you see her plainly?" I answered, "Not very well, for it is quite dark behind the curtain." "Then bring the light, and look quick," she commanded quite sharply. In a second I was behind the curtain with the lamp in my hand, but all trace of Katie was gone. There was absolutely nothing there but the medium, deeply entranced, seated as before, with her hands tied behind her back. The light, falling upon her face, produced the custom-

ary effect; the medium began to shudder and to awake. An interesting conversation now took place behind the curtain, between the half-awakened medium and Katie, who tried to put her to sleep again. But she was forced to yield, said good-bye, and silence followed. The seance was at an end. Mr. Luxmore requested me to make a careful examination of the cords, knots, and seals. All were intact, and when he asked me to cut the bands I could hardly introduce the scissors beneath them, so tightly were the hands tied.

My confidence in the genuineness of this manifestation is absolute. Moreover, I consider it of the very first importance in confirmation of the principal theory with which we are dealing. How are we to understand the phenomenon, and what conclusions are we to draw from it? Katie bore what is called a perfect resemblance to the medium. The likeness was such that it might have deceived the medium herself; not in illusory form only, but in flesh and bone, with a heart and with lungs, as Professor Crookes has demonstrated. Can it reasonably be admitted that the medium, at a given moment, can have *two complete bodies*,—one in the form of Katie King, outside the cabinet; the other, her own proper form, inside the cabinet? Evidently not.

The cords, remaining intact, prove that Katie King was not the medium in person, unconsciously playing the role of the spirit. The medium could not, in an instant, divest herself of her black dress, escape from her bonds, reclothe herself, re-tie herself, etc., etc., even if it were physically possible for her to untie herself and to re-tie herself and replace the knots and seals, in a longer time. We may, therefore, safely presume that, if I could have passed Katie, or could have seen inside the cabinet while Katie was outside it, *I should not even then have seen the medium*, — but should have seen her garments, at most, and more likely, nothing at all. But how explain that change of form — as quick as lightning — to the medium, clothed and bound? The garments and the cords should have fallen to the ground if the body was withdrawn from inside them. How, then, restore the position of these? The necessary supposition is that the body is *not entirely* dematerialized, that a “substratum” — an astral body — remains to keep the position of the cords and garments, in such a way that the borrowed matter can in an instant be withdrawn from the materialized figure and reunite with that “substratum ;” thus restoring the medium to her former position and condition.

We know that at seances in full light, materialized hands appear with incredible rapidity, and disappear, (that is, are reabsorbed into the medium again,) with like rapidity.

The phenomena are, then, the same. This hypothesis is supported by a fully authenticated fact, in the following incident which happened to Colonel H. S. Olcott in America, in 1874, with Mrs. E. J. Compton as medium. The Colonel thus relates the occurrence in his book "People from the Other World:"¹

"My first sitting with the medium occurred January 20th, 1874. The spectators, numbering twenty-four, were seated in chairs placed around the room at a distance of about eight feet from the cabinet; Mrs. Compton took her place on a chair inside it, the light was turned very low, and for a long time nothing of interest happened. At last the door of the cabinet opened and the figure of an Indian appeared on the threshold and questioned us. He greeted me cordially, but did not come out, stating that the medium was too weak and infirm to furnish the necessary power.

"The next evening little Katie Brink appeared

¹ Being unable to obtain a copy of this book, I have to re-translate the extract from Mons. Aksakof's version in French.—TRANSLATOR.

and went round the circle, touching several persons and patting their hands. Robed in floating drapery of white muslin-crepée, her head covered by a bridal veil which fell to her knees, gliding on white slippers, and but half seen in the dim light, she reminded me of Goethe's Bride of Corinth. . . .

"Passing from the other participants, she came to me where I sat, a little to one side, with one hand resting against the partition of the cabinet, and, passing her hand softly across my forehead, seated herself upon my knee, placed an arm around my neck and kissed my left cheek. Her hands appeared scarcely as large as those of an eight-year-old child; but I felt the firm flesh of her arm upon my shoulder, and the lips that kissed me were as natural as any living human being's. After we had chatted some time, I entered the cabinet, while the little one remained outside. *I found no medium there*, though I closely examined the recess, and, the better to assure myself that I was not mistaken, I felt of the chair, the walls, and all around the enclosure. There was but one possible alternative: either the spirit was no spirit but the medium herself, or the medium had been transfigured after the manner of the Oriental thaumaturgists

(evoquers of the dead). I would solve the doubt before leaving the city.

"On the evening of the next day, having obtained the kind consent of Mrs. Compton to submit to my investigation, I took off her earrings, seated her in a chair in the cabinet, and secured her by passing a No. 50 thread through the holes pierced in her ears and sealing the ends of the thread tightly to the chair, with sealing wax and a private seal. . . .

"When the light had been lowered, as is usual at such sittings, and the door of the cabinet closed, we sang for some minutes. Suddenly a pair of hands swept across the opening from right to left, and disappeared as suddenly. Then came another pair of larger hands, and then a voice spoke to me, (if it was not that of the deceased Daniel Webster, it was at least an exact reproduction in depth, sonority and tone, as nearly as I can remember it,) and dictated complete instructions and measures of caution as to the manner in which I should conduct my investigation. When I entered the cabinet while a spirit was outside, I might tap and feel all around, to convince myself that the medium was not there, but must be careful not actually to touch the chair. I might put my hands as close as I desired, but he begged me to avoid direct

contact with the frame of the chair. Then, I was to put a cover — no matter of what kind — over the plate of the scales, so that the spirit would not come in contact with either wood or metal. I promised to follow these instructions closely, and immediately had the satisfaction of seeing the little girl in white at the open door. She came forward, passed around the circle, touched several persons and went close up to others. I was sitting, ready to act, with one hand upon the weights and the other at the end of the lever, and took her weight without loss of a second, as soon as she mounted the scales. She immediately returned to the cabinet, while I read the figures by the light of a match. She weighed but 77 pounds, though her form did not look childish.

“The spirit then came out again and I instantly entered the cabinet. I examined everything with the greatest care, but, as before, found no trace of the medium. The chair was there, *but no body was now seated in it*. I then asked the child-spirit to make herself lighter, if possible, and to remount the scales. I brought the lever to equilibrium as quickly as before, and when she had again retired, I read her weight at 59 pounds. She appeared once more; this time she went from one to another of the spectators,

touched the forehead of one and the hand of another, seated herself on Mr. Hardy's knee, placed her hand softly on my head, patted my cheek, and mounted the platform of the scales to give me a last test. She now weighed but 52 pounds, although from beginning to end no change, either in her garments or in her bodily appearance, had been observed. . . .

"The weighing ended, Katie appeared no more. After a few moments had elapsed, we were addressed in the deep and guttural base of the Indian chief, who appeared at the door. A conversation then followed between him and Mr. Hardy, who had lived for some years among the native Indians of the West, and who bore witness to the correctness of the language spoken by the spirit-chief.

"I entered the cabinet with a light, and found the medium exactly as I had left her at the beginning of the seance, every thread and every seal intact. She sat with her head resting against the wall, her flesh pale and cold as marble, the pupils rolled up beneath the eyelids, her forehead covered with a kind of death-like moisture, without breath or pulse. When all had examined the threads and seals, I cut the threads with scissors and carried the cataleptic woman into the fresh air of the room, lifting her chair by the

seat and back. She remained thus, lifeless, for eighteen minutes; life then returned to her body little by little, the pulse and the temperature of her flesh became normal once more. I placed her upon the scales and she weighed 121 pounds."

As, according to this, the form of Katie Brink weighed 77 pounds, there remained but 44 pounds of the body of the medium in the cabinet — a little more than one third of her normal weight — and even then the body, clothing and threads were all invisible to the human eye. We must, therefore, assume that there was some sort of body remaining, which served the purpose of the medium's body, and acted as an invisible support for her garments and the thread. But the form of Katie Brink, instead of resembling that of the medium, was more like that of an eight-years-old child. How, then, could anything whatever remain of the body of Miss Cook, when Katie King is reported by Prof. Crookes as being still larger than her medium?

We have all the more right to argue that what remained was invisible, and that the re-absorption of the materialized form into the astral body (which remained seated in the chair) was almost instantaneous. Those who have made any study of materialized hands know how rap-

idly those hands form and return into the body of the medium, and this should enable us to understand the rapid disappearance of an entire figure.

Mr. Crookes has repeatedly remarked that when he entered the cabinet with Katie, *she instantly disappeared*. As he persistently insisted upon seeing the materialized form and the medium together, he finally succeeded, but only once and in the dark; and then Katie could not even speak, as she was but half materialized. It is a pity that Katie King's form was not weighed, for it is probable that she appropriated nine tenths of the matter in the body of her medium.

Here I will relate an experience of my own, which confirms the two preceding cases.

In 1890, I went to Gottenburg expressly to hold a series of materializing seances with Madam d'Esperance. She had offered to submit to all test conditions which I might deem necessary to convince me of the genuineness of the phenomena — a privilege which she had not yet accorded to any one else.

At the seance of June 5th, I was seated, as is my custom, close to the corner of the cabinet, with Madam d'Esperance inside it and beside me. The curtain alone separated us, its lateral opening being close to my right shoulder, and I had

but to draw the curtain a little to see the medium. The materialized form known by the name of Yolande had already shown herself several times, and had made the tour of the circle leaning on my arm. A lamp, suspended from the ceiling and wrapped in several folds of red paper, shed a dim light, but when I was directly beneath the lamp with Yolande, the light was strong enough for me to positively recognize the features of the medium in her face. When we approached the cabinet, I resumed my seat, but Yolande remained standing at a short distance from me, in the opening at the center of the curtain. Then, without taking my eyes from her, I softly passed my right arm through the side opening in the drapery of the cabinet. I had only to reach a little way to make sure if the medium was in her place, and I did so. The medium had been seated on a low, upholstered *fautuil*. I raised my hand to the top of its back, and then let it slide along the back to the seat. The medium was not there.

But at the very instant that my hand touched the seat, Yolande entered the cabinet and a hand fell upon mine and thrust it aside. Immediately afterwards the medium asked me for a drink, and I handed it to her through the same opening in the curtain. The medium was in her place, in

her red dress with tight sleeves. An instant before, Yolande was still there, in a white dress, with arms bare to the shoulders and bare feet, and with a white veil covering her head and bust; now she was nowhere to be seen; exactly as was the case with Katie King.

This experience gave me much food for reflection.

How could Yolande, who was *half without* the cabinet, know of the movement of my hand *within* it? It was absolutely impossible, because of the almost perfect darkness, for her to see me lower my arm along my chair, or insert it behind the curtain. It was still more impossible to see what I there did with it, or even where my hand was; nevertheless, the hand which grasped mine and thrust it away, moved as accurately and precisely as if my hand was seen by the light of day.

If it was really the medium herself who, consciously or unconsciously, personated Yolande, and if the sofa was really empty, the medium could neither have seen nor have felt the groping of my hand, and would have kept on playing the role of spirit; she would have remained at her place, or might have entered the cabinet, or might even have entered and gone out again, as if nothing had occurred.

But there had been a derangement; Yolande appeared no more that night, and we were obliged to close the seance.

As I heard it said the next day that something had frightened the medium, I questioned Madam d'Esperance without saying anything of what I knew. She answered that, towards the end of the seance, she had felt as if something was moving over her from her head to her shoulders, and that this had so alarmed her that she had let fall the hand upon which she was resting her head; that her hand had encountered another hand, which frightened her very much more.

This account of itself was very strange. Madame d'Esperance had felt exactly such impressions as she should have felt if she had retained her place all the time. But my hand had not come in contact with her form. What, then, had received those impressions? Was it not a necessary inference that some simulacre of her body had remained in the seat—a simulacre endowed with sensation and consciousness?

Madame d'Esperance also possessed the gift of mediumistic writing; in this way, outside her seances, she received communications in the name of a certain "Walter," who declared himself the director of the materializing phenomena. I wished to try this resource also, and see what

explanation I could get in that way. The day after the seance, I asked Madam d'Esperance to hold a pencil, and the following conversation resulted between the spirit, Walter, and me:

"Did you see what alarmed the medium?"

"Yes: a hand was placed first upon her face, then upon her knees, then upon her hand; that is all."

"Whose hand?" for I still kept my secret.

"I did not see, for my attention was wholly occupied with the fright of the medium."

"My chief desire is to see Yolande and the medium at the same time. Is that possible?"

"All depends upon how much remains [of the medium]."

"If I suddenly looked into the cabinet, should I find the medium gone from her place?"

"Very likely. It depends upon where the matter is taken from to build up the form of Yolande. If there is a certain amount in the circle, so that we need not depend solely upon the medium, you could see her as well as at this moment."

Some days later, when Yolande had several times been out of the cabinet, (while the medium was secured by a band of cloth, which I had myself adjusted each time so that it encircled her waist and the ends were then passed through a

staple fixed in the floor and were finally fastened to my chair,) I asked Walter:

"How much has remained of the medium recently, when Yolande came out?"

"I don't believe much remains of the medium *except her organs of sense.*"

"If, when the medium's body is almost entirely dematerialized, I put my hand softly on her chair, could it injure the medium?"

"It might, if you pressed heavily. If the materialized form was hurt in any way the medium would feel it instantly."

"And if I passed my hand across the space occupied by what remains of the medium's dematerialized body, when she was herself invisible?"

"That would injure her very seriously if we were not on guard to prevent any such mischance. To attempt it would be a dangerous experiment."

"Then if I should pull the band of cloth which encircles the medium's waist, I might cut her body in two?"

"Yes; but that would not happen unless all the substance of her body had been drawn away, which is very rarely the case, though frequently there is very little left."

"Then the invisibility of the medium's body

to the eye of the spectator, is no proof that no body is there?"

"Certainly not: it only shows that you have not eyes sensitive enough to see it. A clairvoyant could see it, though you could not."

Madam d'Esperance was astonished at these replies, made through her own hand. She repeatedly exclaimed:

"This is all news to me; it is a revelation! I always supposed that no change took place in my body."

"But it is impossible," I objected, "that you should feel no alteration during such an extraordinary manifestation as materialization."

"I felt a change, it is true," was her reply, "but I was profoundly convinced that it was only a deceptive sensation."

"Can you describe the change for me?"

"*I felt as if I was empty inside,*" said she.

This is a very significant response, perfectly consonant with the facts as stated above, and with the theory deduced therefrom. Nor did Madam d'Esperance even yet believe that the feeling of *emptiness* could be more than a simply subjective sensation.

In the sequel, the interesting details of a long examination to which I subjected Madam d'Esperance, the notes of my visit to Gottenburg,

and her impressions during the seances, will be found. These details are unique in kind, for she is a medium unique among mediums; she does not become entranced, and is conscious of all that transpires about her during the materializing seances. The time has come to publish these, now that we have objective proof, visible and tangible, of the accuracy of her assertions. They can no longer be regarded as merely subjective.

CHAPTER II.

ACCOUNT OF A SEANCE GIVEN BY MADAM D'ESPERANCE AT HELSINGFORS, FINLAND, DECEMBER 11TH, 1893, AT WHICH THE PHENOMENON OF PARTIAL DEMATERIALIZATION OF THE BODY OF THE MEDIUM WAS DEMONSTRATED BY SIGHT AND TOUCH.

Madam d'Esperance was kind enough, after her visit to Helsingfors in November, 1893, to pass five days at my residence in St. Petersburg, during which she gave ten seances in my house, which were most satisfactory to all who took part.¹ On her return journey to Sweden, she stopped two days at Helsingfors, whence I received this letter, written the day after her arrival:

HELSINGFORS, December 12th, 1893.

My Dear Friend: We held another seance last evening, although I did not feel very much inclined to do so; but I preferred not to put it off till tomorrow, fearing all sorts of interferences.

The sitting took place at the house of Mr. Seiling, the engineer, and I think there were, in all, fourteen persons. The manifestations were of a very extraordinary character, and, as I thought a description of them would interest you,

¹ See *Psychische Studien*, January and April numbers, 1894.

I asked Mr. Seiling and General Toppelius to write an account and send it to you. The gentlemen readily promised to do this. The notable feature of this seance was that half of my body disappeared, though I only happened to discover it by the merest chance. My head, or rather my neck, gave me much pain and I was supporting it with my hands crossed behind it, as that seemed to diminish the suffering somewhat. My arms became tired in that position and, thinking to rest them on my knees, I discovered that there were no knees where mine should be and that my hands, instead of resting upon them, rested against the chair, itself. This frightened me a little and I wished to find out if it was true, or if I was dreaming. The light was pretty good and I drew my neighbor's attention to the matter; he examined the chair and so did four others, and all attested the fact that only the upper part of my body was tangible.¹

The seat was empty except for my garments, but arms, shoulders and chest were in the ordinary place. I could speak, move my head and arms, drink water, and even feel sensations as if in knees and feet, though the latter were invisible.

During this time, forms came and went, but only showed themselves; hands of various shapes and sizes touched persons nearest the cabinet.

I think fully an hour must have elapsed from the time when I discovered my peculiar condition; plenty of time for proof, and more than enough for me, as I was anxious to know if I should ever recover possession of my limbs and be able to use them. I became very nervous over this uncertainty.

¹ Literally "truly existed." — TRANSLATOR.

This is a brief *résumé* of what occurred but I hope some one will send you a circumstantial account.

Cordially yours, etc.,

E. D'ESPERANCE.

Knowing the writer of this letter to be a person of absolute veracity, I had not the slightest reason to doubt her statements, and readily recognized the great importance of the facts related in confirmation of the theory of all such phenomena. But the first essential was to find out how accurately it had been observed by those present, and how far their testimony would prevail in establishing a truth almost as incredible as fable. It is easy to understand with what impatience I awaited the particulars and with what pleasure I received the three narratives which General Toppelius was so kind as to send me. I give them here in the first place, together with the correspondence to which they led:

I. TESTIMONY OF MISS HJELT. — FULL ACCOUNT OF THE SEANCE.

A. *Letter from Miss Hjelt to Mons. Aksakof.*¹

[Original in Swedish.]

Sir : In compliance with the request of Madam d'Esperance, I send you the particulars of the last seance she held here, December 11th, 1893.

¹ Miss Hjelt, besides being the founder and directress of a large school of sculpture and engraving on wood, at Helsingfors, has

The seance took place at the house of Mr. Seiling, an engineer. The arrangements were almost the same as those at preceding seances, with the sole difference that there was more light on this occasion. My observations were as follows:—

Before the Seance. The medium entered the room in full light and took her seat in a large upholstered chair, with a stuffed back. The medium laid aside the little shawl which she generally wore about her shoulders at the previous sittings because the room that we then occupied was larger and colder. She afterwards offered it for our use in reducing the amount of light, and it was accepted for that purpose. She took off her gloves and put them in her pocket. Before the seance began, she put nothing else in her pocket, not even her handkerchief. I took particular notice of these things because I had heard it suggested, after other seances, that this shawl might be used in the manifestations, just as the gloves might pass for hands, if displayed against a white back-ground, while the medium was walking about the room, in the character of a spirit. When the medium made the slightest motion, in conveying the gloves to her pocket, I heard a sound as of keys or money shaken in that pocket. I resolved to keep my senses on the alert to observe if, during the seance, this noise was repeated, some one in the circle having insinuated that the medium might easily have imposed upon us. It seemed impossible for her to move without making the same noise again; and, for myself, I then and there concluded that nothing could be more rash than for anyone meditating an

written the following brochures:—“*L'autorisation d'apprendre un metier dans les écoles dites professionnelles.*”—“*La femme dans son champ d'activité pratique.*”—“*Methode de sculpture sur bois pour les enfants.*”—A.A.

imposition of the kind to carry such noisy articles in her pocket. In the entire course of the ensuing seance, however, I detected no repetition of the sounds.

Before the seance opened, I noticed that the medium crossed her hands behind her head and, with a movement of extreme weariness, stretched herself and leaned her neck against her hands. This gesture, made when the room was still quite well lighted, was perfectly natural and made me think that she had slept ill in the cars when returning from St. Petersburg.

During the Seance. The sitting commenced. In a circle composed of fifteen persons, I was the third at the right of the medium. This position was very advantageous; I had the medium in front of me, at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the whole upper part of her body was distinctly defined in demi-profile against a white window-shutter, lowered over one of the windows. I was so close to the medium that I could see her form, clothed in a light dress, her hands and her feet—the latter thrust a little to the front and crossed. I could, therefore, by bending slightly forward, both see and hear her slightest movement.

We had not long to wait. A hand and a fore-arm reached out from the cabinet, on the side opposite that on which I was sitting. On the white back-ground of the window-shutter I could distinctly follow its movements and even those of the fingers. The wrist was slender and the hand appeared to be a woman's. From the arm hung a rather wide sleeve of transparent, gauze-like tissue; through which, though imperfectly, I could discern the window-shutter. The material was somewhat darker than the shutter. The hand was repeatedly offered to those who sat nearest, and pressed their hands; then it withdrew. A little later, a luminous form appeared at the same side

of the cabinet and extended its hand to those within reach.¹ One member of the circle, Mr. Seiling, handed a scissors to the spirit and asked it if it would 'kindly cut off a piece of its veil for him. The spirit took them into the cabinet, but a few minutes later it returned and handed the scissors back to Mr. Seiling. He expressed his disappointment at not receiving a portion of the material and asked permission to cut off a small piece, himself. This was granted and I distinctly heard the noise of the scissors as he cut it, and a moment after he remarked, "I have got a piece of the veil."² While these things were happening, I distinctly saw the medium and her hands. Once, she leaned forward and turned her face to the spirit, as if she, too, wished to see it.³

A luminous form now appeared between the folds of the curtain at the center of the cabinet; I might say that an upright figure stood behind the medium's chair. The medium sighed heavily, as she often does at these seances. The sigh seemed to indicate suffering. She then spoke these words:

"Someone in the cabinet touched me from behind; I felt it very plainly."⁴ The figure thereupon disappeared.

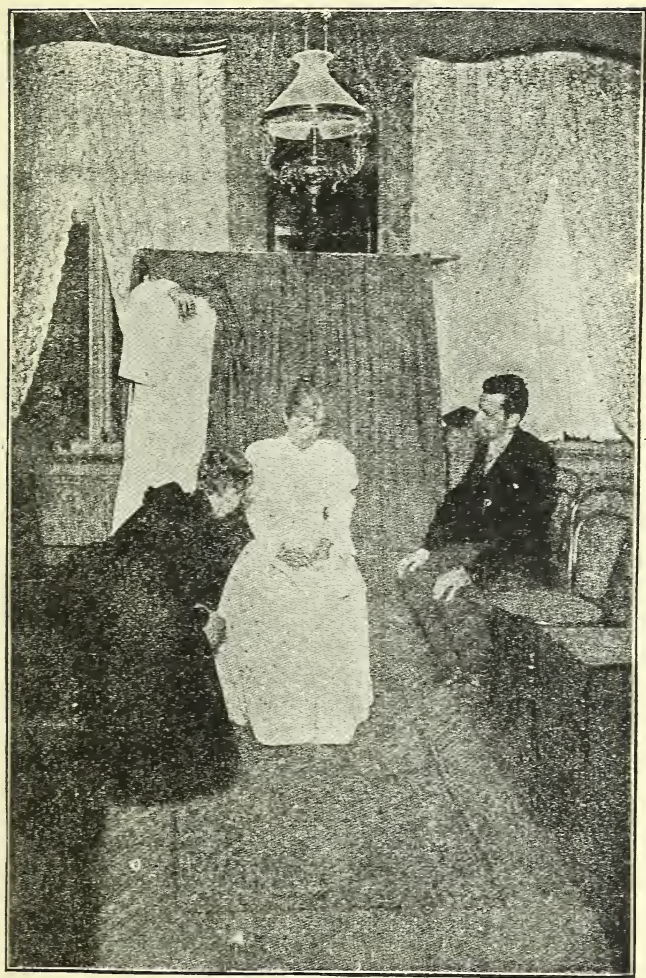
One of the gentlemen suggested that the medium should

¹ See, later, the testimony of Mr. Seiling and of Miss Tavaststjerna. — A.A.

² See the account by Mr. Seiling further on. — A.A.

³ See Plate No. 2. Miss Hjelt sits in the place of the medium, and turns her head towards the apparition of a *right hand*. The profile of the head and bust of the medium is shown against the shutter. On the right sit Mr. Boldt and Madam Seiling. See, further, Chapter III. — A.A.

⁴ Miss Hjelt told me that she saw a bust behind the medium, at the middle opening; a hand was then lowered and touched the medium's shoulder. See Miss H.'s letter, later. — A.A.



Reproduction of the Seance of December 11, 1893.



Reproduction of the Seance of December 11, 1893.

hold a pencil and paper, to see if the spirits would dictate any arrangements, or anything else of the kind. The medium hardly seemed disposed to comply. "Perhaps it is not worth while to trouble them to write," said she; "wait a while." But the request was repeated and someone handed her paper and a pencil. She took them with the remark, "O, well! I will hold them and we will see if it does any good."

At this time I plainly saw the medium holding the paper in one hand, with the other hand crossed over it. By my side, at the lateral opening of the cabinet, a hand, a forearm, and part of an arm, were repeatedly shown, and those who were near by shook the hand. For myself, I only cared to catch a fold of the drapery as it hung down, and to feel of it carefully. It felt somewhat moist and was of very fine texture. The hand seemed much larger than those I had seen before.

Suddenly, there appeared in the same opening, on our side of the cabinet, a tall, luminous figure. It apparently started to leave the cabinet, took a step forward and then drew back.¹ Almost immediately afterwards, we saw an arm thrust out of the cabinet; from very far up in the same lateral opening, it descended softly towards the medium, shining brightly the while.² The instant it reached the medium, it snatched the paper and pencil from her hands, with a movement as quick as lightning, and bore them into the cabinet. We distinctly heard the noise

¹ At this time Miss Hjelt saw both the medium and the figure, whose head was outside the cabinet, very distinctly. It looked at the medium and at the paper she held in her hand. — A.A.

² See Plate No. 1, which is a reproduction of a photograph taken March 3d, 1894, for Mons. Aksakof, under conditions described in Chapter III., hereafter. — A.A.

of rumpling paper and tearing it in two, after which the hand reached forth and gave the two rumpled pieces to Capt. Toppelius, who handed them to the medium. The medium held the paper between her hands — the pencil had not been returned — when the same luminous arm was again lowered, with the same extreme deliberation, and again snatched the paper and bore it into the cabinet. We at once heard the noise of a pencil writing rapidly and in another moment the hand brought back the paper. The nearest person, Mr. Toppelius took it and started again to hand it to the medium, when the hand, (the arm as well and part of a body becoming visible,) forbade him to do so by a gesture of command, seized the paper and returned it to Mr. Toppelius, placing it against his chest. We then comprehended that the words written thereon were addressed to Capt. Toppelius. [After the seance, we were allowed to read them; they were as follows: — “*Jag skal hjälpa dig!*” — “I will aid thee.” They were written in Swedish, in a very clear hand.] There was neither chair nor table in the cabinet, on which to write. All this occurred very quickly, but so openly that every detail could be seen by all. During all the time it was taking place, I saw the medium very plainly. She spoke at times. She told Mr. Toppelius to put the paper in his pocket and read it later, while the spirit was still visible.

From all this, I was forced to draw the conclusion that, in the cabinet, two hands at least were working with psychic force and with definite purpose. These hands could not belong to the medium. They must belong to a figure which *stood* beside and behind the medium, who was *seated*, whose hands and body I saw all the time, and whom I heard utter an exclamation of surprise — an “Oh!” — when the paper was snatched.

I afterwards made sure, by comparing notes with others, that, while waiting for fresh manifestations, which dragged a little, the medium joined both her hands behind her head, as she had done before the seance. While she was in this position, it struck me as unfortunate that she was overtired to such an extent from her journey and I ardently hoped that persons sitting further from her than I was would not misinterpret this putting of her hands behind her neck, and her movement in stretching her limbs.

Looking from a distance, these motions might be misconstrued; but near at hand, they could never be!¹

After a little, she let her hands fall upon her knees. I then saw her pat her skirt, here and there, with her hands and observed that she became more and more agitated as she did so. This struck me as singular. I bent forward and tried my best to see what had happened. The medium again sighed heavily, and this made me think it was something unpleasant. In a few moments she said to her nearest neighbor at the left, Mr. Seiling, "Give me your hand." Mr. Seiling rose and offered his hand to her. She then said "Feel here." Mr. Seiling replied, "This is very strange. I see Mme. d'Esperance and hear her speak; but on touching her chair, I find it empty. She is not there; there is nothing but her dress." The touch seemed to give the medium acute pain, yet she asked several persons to come and feel of the chair. She took Capt. Toppelius' hands in her own and passed them along the upper part of her body until he suddenly touched the seat of the chair; he showed his consternation and astonishment by several expressive exclamations.

¹ *E.g.*, by supposing that the medium had risen from her seat.

The medium permitted five persons to test the verity of the phenomenon, and each time it seemed to cause her great distress. She asked for water twice, at least, and drank with feverish avidity both times; she was visibly alarmed and was nervously impatient while waiting for the water.

Against *the white back-ground of the window-curtain, I clearly and distinctly saw* the upper part of the medium's body, each time that she leaned forward. Several times she had occasion to reach out to take one of the hands, to guide it in feeling of the chair and of her body. At such times, I not only saw the front of her waist, but also her back, which was defined against the white curtain. The outline of her head was thus so clearly shown that I could tell the style in which her hair was dressed. I cannot remember how much of her body remained, below the waist, but of one thing I am certain; namely, that it did extend below the waist; and it impressed me as important that I saw the medium, all the time, *on a level with myself*.

Once she bent forward as one does when suffering sharp pain. Her body was then in the position of one who, while seated, crosses her hands upon her lap and leans far forward. At that time she was *in front* of the back of the chair. She could not have been behind it; the back of the chair would have made it impossible for her to occupy the position I have described. The medium's skirts remained extended, as they had been during the entire seance, and sloped towards her feet. They seemed to lie more flat after they were pressed down by the spectators.

Some one in the circle proposed that we should close the seance the moment that it proved trying to the strength of the medium, but she opposed this proposition and requested that the sitting should be continued until her

limbs were restored. We therefore went on with the seance and I kept my eyes intently fixed upon the lower part of the medium's body, in order to observe the restoration of her members.¹ Without my having seen the least movement of her skirts, I heard the medium say: "I am better, already," and a few moments later, she cried brightly, "Here they are!" As for the folds of her skirt, I saw them, so to speak, fill out; and, without my knowing how, the tips of her feet re-appeared, crossed, as they had been before the manifestation.²

While the manifestation lasted, the attention of all was attracted to the medium. Conversation was interrupted, as well with Madam d'Esperance as between the members of the circle. We moved about, changed places, and even walked around the room, etc.

After the end of the phenomenon, the cabinet was moved from its place. The medium pushed her chair forward, fearing that the cabinet would fall upon her. While the medium was thus seated at a distance from it, and while I distinctly saw both her hands and her feet, the cabinet moved from its place several times.

At one particular time, in order to assure myself that I was in my right senses while making the observations I have just given, I tried to withdraw my thoughts from what was taking place around me, and to fix them upon something indifferent, and disconnected with the seance. I wished to see if my thoughts would obey my will.³ In

¹ During all this time, Miss Hjelt's face was but six fingers' lengths away from the medium's knees. — A.A.

² Miss Hjelt had not remarked the time of their disappearance.

A.A.

³ The writer seems to have been on her guard against any hypnotic influence. — TRANSLATOR.

this I succeeded perfectly. Accordingly, I can confidently affirm that the manifestations—incredible as they appeared to my reason—actually took place, and that the medium did not make one motion to assist in the appearance or disappearance of the same.

After the Seance. I had an opportunity to examine the piece of material which was cut from the veil. It was a texture as fine as gauze and put me in mind of a spider's web, but was more closely woven and stronger. It did not appear luminous in the dark.

I conversed with the medium, who told me that what had occurred was an entirely new experience for her. It appears that, hitherto, she has hardly *herself* been able to observe or measure her dematerializations. She had therefore been very much astonished when, in the attempt to rest her hands upon her lap, she had found the chair empty under her. She told me she had all the time felt as if her limbs were in the proper place, but her hands could not feel them.

I have only to add that it was not the medium who informed the circle of the phenomenon. The announcement was made by Mr. Seiling, when he returned to his seat.

Accept, etc.

Helsingfors, December 15th, 1893. VERA HJELT.

B. Letter from Mons. Aksakof to Miss Hjelt.

[Original in French.]

ST. PETERSBURG, December 3d-11th,¹ 1894.
Perstective Nevsky, 6.

Mademoiselle : It is with sentiments of profound satisfaction that I have read the account of the seance of

¹ Where double dates are thus given, the first is that of the *Julian*

December 11th, 1893, with Madam d'Esperance, which you have been so kind as to send me through the agency of General Toppelius.

You have built a fine monument to the honor of Madam d'Esperance, attacked as it is by General Sederholm. I was struck with the precision and acuteness of your observation. A rare thing, this, in spiritualism, even among men; and when I reflect that you are inexperienced in such matters, I am the more surprised.

Will you, then, accept the assurance of my lasting gratitude, and if I have delayed its expression it is because I did not have your address and have just obtained it.

A single detail is lacking in your account, namely, the amount of light in the room. You state only that it was lighter than at the preceding seances, and that you plainly distinguished the medium and her hands. That is good, and very important; but to what extent could you so distinguish her—in what details? For instance, could you make out the fingers, the face, the *coiffure*, of the medium? And was not the degree of light varied during the seance?

I pass, for the present, to some other particulars.

You say: "Suddenly, there appeared in the opening of the curtain, a tall, luminous figure;" and shortly afterwards, "then we saw an arm come out of the cabinet, from very far up." Am I to understand that the apparition (of the figure) and the arm appeared in the middle opening of the cabinet, *over the medium*? This is a very important point and the information should be exact.

Who were the five persons who examined the chair when the limbs were not there? How many times did calendar or year, still used in Russia and Greece, while the second is that of the *Gregorian* calendar or year, now used in all other Christian countries. — TRANSLATOR.

Madam d'Esperance ask for water while in that condition, and who handed it to her?

There is another essential point: you say, "The medium's skirts remained extended, as they had been during the entire seance, and sloped towards her feet." What do you mean by "sloped"? Further on, you say, "As for the folds of her skirt, I saw them, so to speak, *fill out*." Then the skirts could not have remained extended, as they had been during the entire seance, as you had said just before? This is either a contradiction or a faulty expression.

And later, you say, "And, without my knowing how, the tips of her feet reappeared, crossed as they had been before the commencement of the seance."¹ You must refer to the *shoes* or *slippers*. But might it not be argued that the medium had merely drawn them back under her skirts and thrust them forward a little later? Why did the occurrence seem incomprehensible to you?

This is all that occurs to me at the moment.

May I presume upon your kindness and hope that you will instruct me as to the particulars that I have pointed out?

Accept, once more, the assurance of my deepest gratitude and the expression of my most sincere regard.

A. AKSAKOF.

C. *Miss Hjelt's Reply to Mons. Aksakof.*

[Original in Swedish.]

HELSINGFORS, January 28th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

I beg you to accept my sincere thanks for your letter. I am happy to know that my account of the seance of December 11th pleased you.

¹ There is a slight misquotation of Miss Hjelt's words, but it proves of no consequence. — TRANSLATOR.

I will give you the further information desired, at once.

You ask me to define the amount of light in the room more exactly. To do so, I may state that I could see the entire form of the medium distinctly, as well as the outline of her hands, defined against her light-colored gown. As for the features of her face and her *coiffure*, it was difficult for me to see them constantly, as the medium was seated before the cabinet and the drapery was very dark. But each time that she changed her position, her bust was brought somewhat forward and all the outlines of her figure were clearly shown against the white window-shutter which I have already spoken of. Every time that she extended her arm, I could see not only the motion of her fingers, but the fingers themselves, crushing the paper which she held in her hand.

It gives me great pleasure to hear that you intend to visit Helsingfors. I hope that your coming will be of great benefit, for it will certainly be easy for you to unravel the confusion of ideas which this phenomenon of dematerialization has produced in our minds.

Should you so desire, I shall be very glad to act the part of the medium, temporarily, for you; that is to say, *I will sit in a gown of the same shade and color as that worn by Madam d'Esperance, and reproduce, in the same light, all her acts and gestures*, as I observed them at the seance referred to.

I trust it will then be easy for you to demonstrate the injustice of General Sederholm's suspicions.

The position which I occupied at the seance was such that I think I can reproduce the occurrences in question, in all their details. I can also show you that my eyesight and that of my companion is excessively acute. I can as-

sure you that it would have been impossible for the medium to attempt any imposition without my discovering it.

You asked me for some particulars on the following points :

“ Suddenly, a tall, luminous figure appeared in the opening of the curtain, etc.”

Once, I saw *a bust in the middle opening* of the cabinet. The form appeared to *stand directly* behind the medium’s chair. It brushed the medium’s shoulder with its luminous hand and Madam d’Esperance shuddered at the touch.¹

But the other luminous form, of which you ask a more exact description, appeared in the opening at the right of the drapery. Its motions seemed very strange ; at first, it seemed to push aside the piece of paper which the medium held in her hand, then it retreated to the cabinet and drew the curtain behind it ; at last, and suddenly, it thrust forth its arm and snatched the sheet.

This incident I can reproduce so exactly that it will inevitably refresh the memories of the witnesses. The skeptic must remember that it would have been impossible for the medium to produce these appearances fraudulently, seated as she was and talking with us all the time.

The five persons who felt of the chair while the medium’s limbs were intangible are Mr. Seiling, Capt. Toppelius, Dr. Hertzberg, Engineer Schoultz, and Mr. Boldt.

Madam d’Esperance asked for a drink at least twice during the manifestation. Water was given her by Mr. Seiling and Dr. Hertzberg.

The expression “ Madam d’Esperance’s skirt sloped towards her feet ” struck you as inexact. I mean by it that

¹ Miss Hjelt, afterwards, in reply to a question, told me that she plainly saw *the fingers* of this hand as it came down and touched the medium’s shoulder. — A.A.

the skirt, around the ankles, necessarily appeared more scant, so to speak, than it did higher up.¹

“As for the folds of her skirt, I saw them, so to speak, fill out,” etc.

You will readily see that they could not have remained equally full all through the seance; for, during the examination into the phenomenon, the hands of the witnesses must have flattened them out considerably in feeling of the chair-seat; but thereafter, when the manifestation was over and the limbs restored, the skirts would fill out again.

“Without my knowing how, the feet reappeared.” I should have said, the points of her slippers.

You ask, “Might it not be argued that the medium had simply drawn them back under her skirts?” Perhaps so; but then there must have been some movement of her limbs and I should have seen it, because I fixed my eyes upon the place where the feet should reappear and never took them off it, on purpose to see how it happened and whether it was accompanied by any motion of the body or not.

I can also show you just how this occurred, when you are here, and you can then judge why it seemed incomprehensible to me. A little earlier, (that is, before our attention was called to the “dematerialization,”) the medium stretched herself, thrusting out her feet in so doing. This, naturally, made it impossible for her to draw back her feet without some movement of the limbs. At least, I have been unable to accomplish it, in spite of repeated experiments.

¹ It is difficult to convey the writer's exact meaning by translation, and the verbal equivalents would not do it. The full sense is that the pressure of the gentlemen's hands, while the medium's limbs were dematerialized, flattened the skirt out. It therefore appeared more “scant” at the ankles, than higher up, where the body remained material, and therefore held it “full.”—TRANSLATOR.

I have done my best to answer your questions, but if anything is still obscure, I shall be very happy to inform you further if you have the slightest desire that I should do so.

In the meantime accept my assurances of the greatest respect and distinguished consideration.

VERA HJELT.

D. Supplementary Letter from Miss Hjelt.

HELSINGFORS, March 25th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat:

I have the honor of submitting what follows, relative to the subject of the questions which you have been kind enough to ask me, through Mr. Seiling.

First, as to my previous attitude towards spiritualism — I have known of the movement since 1880, without ever understanding anything about it, (except in the last two years,) but supposing that it dealt solely with the reality of ghosts. But for the past two years I have read, with vivid interest, books both in favor of and against spiritualism, and have taken part in the seances of family circles, here, and in those of the Society for Psychic Research of Stockholm.

I was therefore perfectly familiar with the principles of spiritualism — at least with the most important ones. As for the purely psychic aspect of the question, I believed in the possibility of the phenomena, though I was not convinced of their actual occurrence. But I acquired that certainty in the course of seances given by Madam d'Esperance, having frequently had an opportunity to test the genuineness of the phenomena. The last of these sittings was particularly convincing to me. That which I saw and witnessed from my place is not, for me, a belief: it is a fact. At the same time, I have continued my investigations in

spiritualism with still greater interest, without losing any of the faculty, which is my special characteristic, for taking a calmly critical view of such manifestations.

I may be permitted to pass this judgment upon myself, because the method by which a person is accustomed to weigh evidence exercises a certain influence upon her judgment and her power of observation. And since you have been so kind as to attach some value to my observation during this seance, I wish to convince you that I am not so credulous as to permit myself to be tricked or imposed upon.

Second, I have taken part in six seances held by Madam d'Esperance, at Helsingfors.

Third, At the last seance, the distance between the medium and myself was about three feet; but when I leaned forward, as I constantly did, the better to observe, the distance was hardly more than half a foot.

Fourth, I was fully aware of the importance of exact observation, and of seeing the medium and the figure, both at the same time and apart from each other, because I had discussed that matter beforehand with persons who doubted the honesty of the medium. I particularly remember one conversation, held while the medium was visiting St. Petersburg, when her good faith and the possibility of the phenomena were daily discussed; for this reason, I made a vow that if another seance was held I would secure a good place, close to the medium, and watch the manifestations closely enough to be able to swear to the accuracy of my observation. The two persons with whom I made this compact agreed to be governed by my judgment. We formally decided that the investigation should be left to me. I have not asked those persons for permission to give their names in this letter, but I do not doubt that they would wish

me to do so. They were Dr. Hertzberg and his wife. I promised them not to allow myself to be frightened by the apparitions, lest, if flurried, I should forget to watch the medium. That is why the medium was the principal object of my attention at the last seance, though I could not prevent myself from seeing other things at the same time.

Fifth, At the time of the dematerialization of the medium, I was naturally not in a position to give my attention to the manner in which it happened. But the medium made no sort of movement with her feet, either forward or sideways. I could not have helped noticing it if she had done so, for I was but a few fingers' lengths away, and kept my eyes fixedly upon her feet.

After the gentlemen had examined the chair and vouched for the dematerialization, I resolved to watch carefully how and whence the feet reappeared.

I should state that I also watched for anything that might come from the cabinet, on either side of the chair on which the medium was seated. I do not know why I said that her feet reappeared with a somewhat violent motion,¹ perhaps I referred to some other movement of the medium. I was expecting it, and watched the medium very narrowly and carefully, that I might be able to form an opinion as to how it occurred. But I did not detect any motion of the lower part of her body, and everything happened as I have related it.

Sixth, The medium's garment was tight-fitting; a princess robe, with a large Watteau fold down the back and a smaller one in front, as you have doubtless seen them.

¹ Miss H. *had not so stated* in any of her former letters. Some expression of hers must have been *mis-quoted* to her. I have noted one unimportant instance of this on a previous page.

The folds are fastened to an under-waist or lining of shirting. Dresses of this pattern are often worn by ladies on formal occasions. My dressmaker tells me that the folds of such a dress will not fall gracefully unless it is made in this way — in fact, she knows no other way to make one. A gown of this kind is very difficult to put on. It is not upon my own observation alone that I depend for the correctness of my description of this costume, but also upon several conversations with the ladies Toppelius, at whose house Madam d'Esperance stayed.

In view of the suspicion aroused by General Sederholm, (of which he made mention even before his newspaper article,) we examined the gown and found that it differed in no way from what it should be, from a feminine point of view. In other words, Madam d'Esperance's gown gave no ground whatever for suspicion, and was correctly made.

If I can be of any service in furnishing further explanations, I shall always consider it a favor on your part if you will put your questions, and it will give me great pleasure to answer them as far as I can.

Very truly

VERA HJELT.

II. TESTIMONY OF STAFF-OFFICER CAPTAIN TOPPELIUS.

[Original in Russian.]

. . . After several persons had approached Madam d'Esperance's chair, I myself received permission to do so.

Madam d'Esperance took my hands and passed them along her figure, from the shoulders downwards, on both sides: suddenly, instead of feeling any continuation of her

body, I came to an empty space.¹ Madam d'Esperance passed my hand along the seat to the very back, and I found nothing but her robe.

The space between the medium and the seat of the chair was very small.

I remember that, during all the time, the medium was very much agitated. I had not intended to make a more particular examination and therefore returned to my seat.

GUSTAVE TOPPELIUS,

Capitaine d'Etat-Major.

Helsingfors, 3/15, December, 1893.

III. TESTIMONY OF PROF. SEILING.

A. Letter from Prof. Seiling² to Mons. Aksakof.

[Original in German.]

Sir: Though not personally acquainted with you, I send you the following account, because your friend Madam d'Esperance has expressed a desire that I should do so, as she thought that its contents would prove of great interest to you.

The following manifestation, among others, occurred at a spiritual seance held at my residence on the 11th of the current month, with Madam d'Esperance as medium.

Towards the close of the seance, which had lasted nearly two hours and a half, Madam d'Esperance, at whose left I sat, then close to the cabinet, asked me to touch the seat of

¹ "*Je rencontrai un vide.*"

² Professor of mechanical technology in the *Ecole Polytechnique* at Helsingfors. — A.A.

her chair, but guided my hand herself. To my great astonishment, *she passed my hand all over the seat* without my finding anything of the lower part of her body, while I could see and feel her dress, spread over the chair. Returning to my place, I saw Madam d'Esperance for a full quarter of an hour, apparently sitting in her chair, with the lower part of her body all the time wanting, so that her dress hung down at a right angle from the front edge of the chair.

In order that another participant might better examine the phenomenon, I changed places with a person who was nearer the middle of the circle than I; therefore I could not observe the outline of her body as clearly as those who were seated at one side, among whom was my wife, who informs me that she distinctly saw the lower part of the medium's body return to its normal conformation.

It seems to me worthy of remark that, *while in that condition*, Madam d'Esperance twice drank water. The light was sufficient to enable the medium to be very plainly seen from five seats in the half-circle.

Afterwards, when I asked Madam d'Esperance why she had guided my hand, she answered that the thought alone of the chair being moved, bathed her in a sweat of agony, and that if such a thing had happened she would certainly have suffered intense pain.

My general report of all the seances which have been held at Helsingfors will very probably be published in *Die Übersinnliche Welt*.¹

Accept, etc., . . .

MAX SEILING.

Helsingfors, December 4/16, 1893.

¹ It appeared in the numbers for January and February, 1894.

B. Letter from Mons. Aksakof to Prof. Seiling.

ST. PETERSBURG, December 10/22, 1893.

Dear Sir: I am greatly indebted to you for your letter. The fact is that the subjective impressions of Madam d'Esperance may readily differ from the reality, as it exists for us. This is why I have so impatiently waited for the confirmatory testimony of the other witnesses to the remarkable phenomenon of the disappearance of a part of the medium's body at a seance. For this phenomenon is of the *very first importance* to an understanding of the principles of materialization, and it is therefore incumbent on us to demonstrate the fact with the greatest possible plenitude of detail.

As I am convinced that you share my interest in this aspect of the question, to the fullest extent, I take the liberty of addressing you, with the request that you will kindly reply to the following questions :

1st. In what kind of a chair was Madam d'Esperance seated? Can you not give me a drawing of it?

2nd. Can you not also give me a profile sketch of the medium's figure as it appeared at the time, as well as of the position of her dress on the chair?

3rd. When Madam d'Esperance called you and asked for your hand, had she *before that* spoken of the disappearance of her limbs, or did she put your hand, directly, upon the chair without saying anything? (I ask this in view of a possible claim that it was a case of suggested hallucination.)

4th. When you passed your hands over the chair, did you plainly see the upper part of her body, the hands and the head, and did you talk with her?

5th. You say : " She passed my hand all over the chair."

This is a very important particular, for it might be said that Madam d'Esperance had disposed her limbs so cleverly that her skirt would lie flat on one side of the chair, and hang vertically. Therefore the whole question amounts to this:—Did you feel *the entire seat, even to the back of the chair*, and did your hand *penetrate beneath* the upper part of the medium's body?

6th. Who is the gentleman to whom you gave your seat that he might look in his turn? Will he not be so good as to give me his evidence in regard to the matter?

7th. I beg that Madam Seiling, too, will give me the benefit of her observation, as to the disappearance and re-appearance of the medium's limbs, as critically as possible.

8th. Who are the persons who twice gave the medium water, and can they testify to the absence of her limbs at the time? For you say “*While in that condition she twice drank water.*”

9th. And finally, in view of the possible suggestion that Madam d'Esperance had adroitly slipped *behind a chair*, covering it with the folds of her skirt, I would ask:

(a) Was the light, during all the seance, sufficient to see that the medium kept her seat, or were there moments when it was more dim and when Madam d'Esperance *could have risen from her seat* and entered the cabinet, without being observed?

(b) Was there an open space between her chair and the cabinet?

(c) Did any one touch the upper part of the medium's body and the chair, while her limbs and feet were intangible?

I beg you to excuse me for this importunate inquiry, but I have felt that I must pursue it, both in the interest

of a cause which is dear to me and for the personal reputation of Madam d'Esperance.

Kindly accept, etc., . . .

A. AKSAKOF.

C. *Prof. Seiling's Reply to Mons. Aksakof.*

[Original in German.]

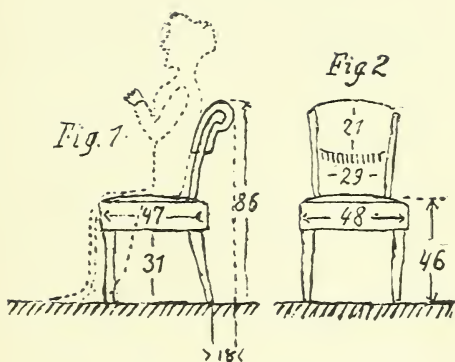
HELSINGFORS, January 7th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

Fully realizing the importance of the reasons which prompted the circumstantial interrogatory to which you have submitted me, I shall, to the best of my ability, answer the questions asked in your letter of December 10th-22nd, 1893.

§ § 1 and 2. I have endeavored to answer these by the enclosed sketches. I attach *the very greatest importance* to questions of measure. As you will observe, the lower part of the back of the chair is open. The upper part of the medium's body was not always upright, as it is drawn, but was bent forward from time to time, especially during the examination of the back of the chair by those present. And just here I wish to note the fact that it would have been *impossible* for the upper part of her body, as it is drawn and as I carefully observed it, (both sideways and, later, from in front,) to have occupied the *natural* position of a seated person, if the lower part of her body had been standing behind, or at the side of, the chair.

§ 3. My expectation was not aroused when Madam d'Esperance called me to her and said, "Mr. Seiling, give me your hand and feel of the chair." It was not till after I had felt of it that I understood what the request referred to.



The seat and back were stuffed.

Distances are in centimetres.

§ 4. I involuntarily exclaimed, "Madam d'Esperance is not seated in the chair, but only her dress is spread upon it," expressly because I could feel nothing of her body at that point. I suppose it can hardly be necessary for me to state that I could distinctly see *all the upper part* of her body *above* the seat, as all could see that as well as I—at least, all those nearest her could. I talked with Madam d'Esperance, also.

§ 5. In *Fig. 3*, the zigzag line shows the part traversed by my hand in feeling of the seat, and shows how truly I can say that I felt *all over it* in the operation, even under the trunk of the medium's body. The hypothesis that she had drawn back her limbs is *absolutely* exploded.

One thing struck me afterwards, when I had time to weigh all the circumstances, and that is that while examining the seat I seemed to feel only the dress, which was of fine woollen cloth, without feeling *any garment beneath it*. In other words, if I am not mistaken, all the undergarments were dematerialized as well as her body.

§ 6. The person was Dr. Hertzberg. I have tried to see him and communicate your request, but have not yet succeeded. He knows all about it.

§ 7. My wife's account is enclosed herewith.

§ 8. Water was given to Madam d'Esperance, once by me and the other time by Dr. Hertzberg. When I approached to give Madam d'Esperance the water, I had again the same view that I had when I examined her chair for the first time.

§ 9. General Sederholm must have imagined the facts of his narrative; I say imagined, because, at that seance, he was seated too far away, and moreover his sight is too poor, for him to be able to make so exact an observation. Miss Hjelt has, in her account, sufficiently explained

how he came to think that Madam d'Esperance partially arose.

(a) The light, once adjusted, remained the same. That, spite of all, Madam d'Esperance might have moved, is possible; for no one anticipated the occurrence of any such phenomenon. But, if she had once attained a standing position behind the chair, it would have been utterly impossible for her to regain her seat without being detected.

(b) The chair was so close to the curtains of the cabinet that there was no *open space* intervening, yet I could see that the chair did not actually touch the cabinet. The principal arguments against the supposition advanced are the natural position of the upper part of the body, as of one seated, and the difficulty of regaining her seat, as pointed out in (a) above.

(c) As nearly as I can learn, Capt. Toppelius touched the upper part of the body. Neither Dr. Hertzberg nor I did so.

With every assurance of my distinguished consideration, etc.,

MAX SEILING.

D. Supplementary Report of Prof. Seiling.

[Original in German.]

HELSINGFORS, January 15th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

I hope I shall, to a degree, fulfil your wishes,¹ by the following complementary report of the seance of the 11th-12th of December, 1893. You will find in it the desired

¹ I had written, asking that he would send me more particulars of the seance, the plan of the room, the light, the position of the participants, etc. — A.A.

plan, a description of the room, the light and the cabinet, as well as the names of and the positions occupied by the participants.

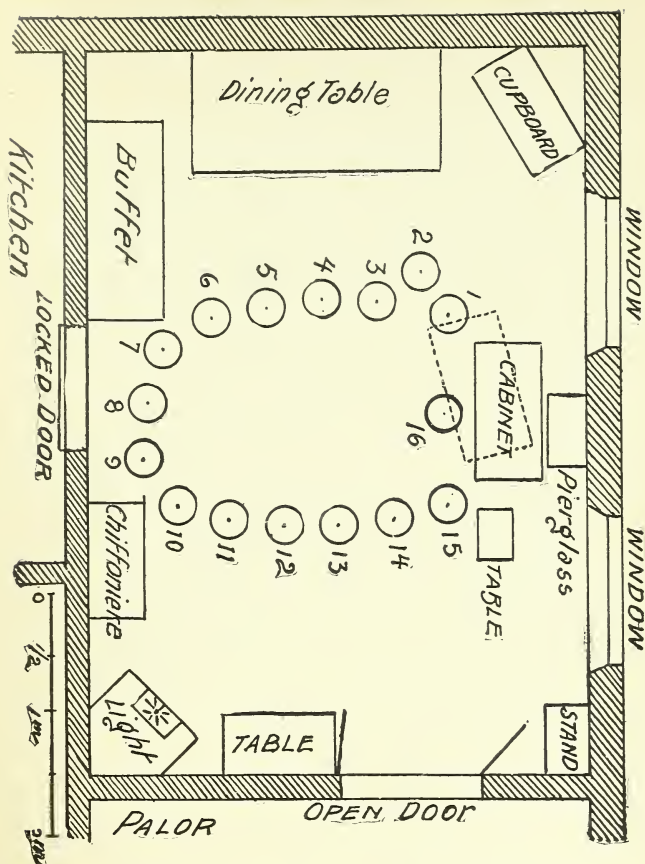
EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM.

The room in which the seance of December 11th took place is in the second storey. The entrance to the dining-room, used as the seance-room, is through the parlor. The two wings of the parlor door were open during the seance, but the kitchen door was closed and locked. Only a feeble light could have entered from the parlor, for it was not illuminated and its two windows were almost covered by heavy curtains. Before the windows of the dining-room were white tulle window-shades and sliding white shutters. The shutter was lowered over the right window, that nearest the parlor, only. The principal light came from the street, by the left window. There was also a small oil lamp, lighted and placed in a niche of the stove; the doors of this niche were placed as shown in the diagram, the front opening was covered with red paper and the top of the niche was covered with the medium's shawl. I could plainly see the form of the medium's head and hands; on the other hand, I could hardly see her *coiffure*, because, *from where I sat*, the background was dark.

There was so much light from the street that when the shutters were raised, *without any* lamp burning in the room, one could easily be recognized at a distance of two metres.¹

The cabinet was not placed directly against the wall, because there was a pier-glass behind it, mounted on a bracket. Nor was it placed in the center of the space between the two windows, but facing the three persons

¹ A little more than two yards. — TRANSLATOR.



- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Capt. Toppelius. | 9. Miss Toppelius. |
| 2. Madam Seiling. | 10. Genl. Sederholm. |
| 3. Mr. Lönnbom. | 11. Miss C. Toppelius. |
| 4. Miss Hjelt. | 12. Dr. Hertzberg. |
| 5. Genl. Galindo. | 13. Mr. Schoultz. |
| 6. Madam Toppelius. | 14. Miss Tavaststjerna. |
| 7. Genl. Toppelius. | 15. Prof. Seiling. |
| 8. Mr. Boldt. | 16. Madam d'Esperance. |

who occupied the middle of the circle, as shown in the diagram. The width, depth and height of the cabinet were, respectively, 120 centimeters, 60 and 180.¹ There was nothing inside it.

Upon a small table beside me, were a carafe of water, a candle, (unlighted,) paper and pencils.

For the first half hour, Capt. Toppelius took his father's place, so that the latter might examine the hands extended from the cabinet.

All the dimensions of the room and furniture are drawn in exact proportion, upon the scale indicated.

REPORT.

The seance commenced at a quarter of eight and ended about a quarter after ten o'clock.

A lighted lamp stood on the table near the stove; it was extinguished after everybody, including the medium, was seated. The medium wore a princess gown of white woollen stuff, trimmed with lace at the top. Within the first quarter of an hour, the light was arranged, the shutter of the right window was drawn down, and the doors of the niche in the stove were adjusted as shown in the diagram. Two thirds of the time which the seance lasted was occupied in singing well-known airs.

About ten minutes after the final adjustment of the light, the first manifestation occurred: A hand was shown in the opening of the curtain, at the right side of the cabinet and at the left of the medium. This hand came and went, disappeared and returned again and again. *I took it, and so did both my nearest neighbors;* it was of medium size, bare and warm, and was *a right hand*. It was *impossible*,

¹ Something more than 47 inches wide, 24 deep, and 69 high.

therefore, that it could be the medium's hand, for we could *see her seated* and motionless in her chair. After a while, I grasped a second hand, which appeared to me larger than the first; at least, it was warmer and pressed mine more cordially.

Later, an entire luminous form appeared in the same opening of the curtain, but was not recognized. I was permitted to cut off a piece of this spirit's veil. This incident has been *exactly described to you by Miss Hjelt*. The material is a white *crêpe*, pure silk and of extreme fineness, as I have proved by microscopic and chemical examination. I send a small scrap of it, herewith.

Hands had already appeared at the other end of the cabinet, but after this episode of the veil they became still more numerous and clasped the hands of those nearest the cabinet. Several times, there were two, and even three, together. — At least, so I have been assured, for I did not see them myself :

1st. Because I was too much occupied with what was happening at my side of the cabinet. I was constantly expecting something.

2nd. Because the background was perfectly dark.

3rd. Perhaps, also, because the body of the medium interposed. For this reason, I saw very little of the incident of the paper and pencil, which Miss Hjelt has described in all its details. I saw only that the paper disappeared suddenly from the medium's lap and how, after a little, it was returned from the top of the cabinet. [It was I who gave the paper and pencil to Madam d'Esperance.] On the other hand, I heard the rustling of the paper, both within and without the cabinet, and the sound of writing that came from the cabinet. This "*direct* spirit writing" very greatly resembles the *indirect* writing obtained

when Madam d'Esperance herself held the pencil, under other circumstances. I attach a specimen of one of these indirect writings, certain letters in which correspond exactly with the medium's hand. The words of this direct writing — "I will help you!" — refer, in my opinion, to the medium; but the paper was not handed to her, in order that we might be the more fully convinced that it was truly *direct* writing.

In the course of the afternoon, General Toppelius told Madam d'Esperance that at the preceding seance two gentlemen, having accidentally touched her chair, had found it empty. I could not credit this, for my part; for, sitting in the second seat, counting from the cabinet, I had Madam d'Esperance constantly in view. This statement seemed perfectly incomprehensible to Madam d'Esperance and she was so much distressed by it, that it argued ill for the success of the last sitting. But it turned out far otherwise; for by the partial dematerialization of the medium, it was shown that the seat of the chair might be empty without the medium's having left it. A dematerialization so complete would not have been necessary for any other purpose than that, for during the dematerialization not a spirit appeared, and there seemed to be very little going on in the cabinet. A considerable time before the phenomenon of dematerialization, I saw *one form come out* of the cabinet, at the other end, but it only advanced one pace.

Finally, it should also be remarked that, at the close of the seance, it was found that the position of the cabinet had been changed and that it had been moved to one side, very much as shown in the diagram. But I had already observed movements of the cabinet, on other occasions.

Accept the expression of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

MAX SEILING.

E. Letter from Mons. Aksakof to Prof. Seiling.

[Original in French.]

ST. PETERSBURG, January 11th-23rd, 1894.

Dear Sir: There is, in your letter of January 15th, a detail of very great importance.

While you sat at the left of the medium, *a right hand* was given you. This is a positive statement, but it is necessary to be more explicit. How did you *know* that it was *a right hand*? By sight, or by feeling, or by both those senses at once? Was it a simple meeting of the hands, (as is ordinarily the case,) or a regular clasp?—Did you “*shake hands*,” as the English say? In other words, did you place your thumb *between the thumb and the back* of that right hand, pressing the palms together with the other fingers, as is customary? Can you speak with absolute certainty as to these particulars? For the evidence will then be *decisive*.

And can your neighbors, Miss Tavaststjerna and Mr. Schoultz, also testify that it was indeed a right hand?

Then, a little further on, you say “I took a second hand” without stating if this was another right hand.

This is the first point: the second and last detail which I need is a *description of the arrangement* of the cabinet. How was it made? In the first number of the “*Ubersinnliche Welt*,” which I have just received, this information is wanting, and it is necessary, in order to understand the appearance of the hands.

I hope that I shall soon have the pleasure of making your personal acquaintance, for I see that it is indispensable for me to visit Helsingfors in order to definitely elucidate the important phenomena of this last seance and the diverse opinions relative to it. I have recently seen General

Galindo ; he says that it was so dark that he could see nothing, although he sat next Miss Hjelt. Then, it seems imperative that all the conditions of illumination should be reproduced, so that I can judge of it with my own eyes. Will you be so kind as to give me an opportunity so to do, if I go to Helsingfors? And besides, is it possible for us to *reproduce* it; for instance, if the light which came from the street, by the window with its shutter up, was caused by the light of the moon and not by unvarying light of the street lamps?

Thanking you again for your courtesy, I have permitted myself to trouble you still further, as you see, and without ceremony, leaving the rest until our interview.

Accept, etc.,

A. AKSAKOF.

F. Reply of Prof. Seiling.

[Original in German.]

HELSINGSFORS, January 26th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

I am happy to be able to send you an early reply, as the opening of parliament has given me a day's liberty.

I still owe you explanations upon two points. The first refers to the manner in which I took the hand. Both times, it was *indubitably a right hand*—I “shook hands,” as you suggest in your letter; and as this can only be done with two right hands, (or two left hands,) there can not be the slightest question upon this point. It is *absolute demonstration*, as strong as you could wish it. Nevertheless, the manner of the two “hand-shakings” was very different. The first time, the grasp was like that of one who is

utterly indifferent; the second time, it was emphatically cordial. The second hand was warmer than the first, too.

Miss Tavaststjerna, on whom I called today, felt *exactly the same thing* and is ready to swear that it was a right hand.

Mr. Schoultz, whom I have also seen, is not so positive about his experience, as only *the tips of his fingers* were pressed by the spirit's hand. For that matter, he did not exchange any real "hand-shake" and touched none but the first hand.

The other point refers to the cabinet. This was improvised with a folding screen of four *plaques*, so disposed that it was twice as wide as it was deep. To give it rigidity, we attached it with cords to a broomstick, in front and at the top. A woollen cover was thrown over the whole, and *two* shawls closed the opening in front. There was, therefore, one entrance in the center and one at each side. It was this side entrance that I called "the opening in the curtain"; it was *there* that the hands appeared and they were quite high, as if those of a standing person. In the center, the two shawls lapped a little over each other—nearly fifteen centimetres.¹

I hope to be able to reproduce the exact amount of light that was in the room when the seance took place. It is true that there is now no snow, whereas there was a great deal at the time, but we trust more will fall before your arrival. There was no moonlight, the moon being new. This must be taken into consideration at the time of your visit, for the room faces towards the south.

You will meet all the persons present at the seance, ex-

¹ About six inches. — TRANSLATOR.

cept, perhaps, General Toppelius; but he was in a very disadvantageous seat.

Accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

MAX SEILING.

IV. TESTIMONY OF MADAM HELENE SEILING.

[Original in German.]

A. Note from Madam Seiling.

At the seance which was held in our house on December 11th, 1893, I could not, for want of space, obtain a seat in the circle, properly so called, and therefore took a seat behind the first and second chairs at the right of the medium. As I was not at all prepared for the partial dematerialization of the medium, I did not observe the disappearance of her limbs. I only saw that she remained seated in her chair, all the time. But my attention being attracted to the matter, by my husband's exclamation when he examined the chair, I watched from that moment with the most rigorous attention and can testify that, for at least a quarter of an hour, nothing was to be seen of her limbs; that her dress looked as if it rested directly against the chair, and that it fell *to the floor* at a right angle.

Confining my attention strictly to the ulterior developments of this remarkable phenomenon, I saw the dress fill out, (so to speak,) little by little, and the outlines became more and more full, until her entire body had returned to its natural state. During all this time I could see the upper part of her form, which appeared as if she was seated, and from time to time she bent forward, away from the back

of the chair. I saw her take the glass and drink, and heard her speak.

HELENE SEILING.

B. Remarks by Mons. Aksakof.

At my request, as there was an apparent contradiction between the narratives of Miss Hjelt and Madam Seiling, Prof. Seiling gave me the following explanation:

In order to explain the apparent contradiction between the accounts of Miss Hjelt and my wife, I called upon the former this morning. By comparing notes, we found that Miss Hjelt's testimony referred to the commencement of the phenomenon, while my wife's, (like my own,) refers to what occurred *after* I had examined the chair, in which process I had flattened out the medium's dress. The contour of the skirt had not been altered in the handling of the seat, at the time mentioned by Miss Hjelt, but hung full until after my first examination.

V. TESTIMONY OF MISS FANNY TAVASTSTJERNA.

[Original in French.]

A. Letter from Miss Tavaststjerna to Mons. Aksakof.

HELSINGFORS, April 14th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

At length I can send you the testimony which you have so much desired. I greatly regret the long delay. I am

sure that you will excuse me when I state that it was due to my repeated illnesses since your departure.

I pass, then, to the seance. For the external arrangements, I beg leave to refer you to the detailed description furnished by Miss Hjelt. Personally, I should state that at the last seance which Madam d'Esperance gave us at Helsingfors I had the good fortune to occupy one of the very best places for *watching the medium*. I had the second seat at her left, and the circle being very narrow, my knees were hardly thirty centimetres¹ from those of the medium. Thanks to this proximity and to the light, which was very good, (my neighbor on the right could read the time from his watch,) I could follow every movement of the medium. Furthermore, I did not lose sight of her for an instant, and I declare that it would have been impossible for her to have risen from her seat without my remarking it. I should state that I am not one of the credulous, but am, on the contrary, very critical.

With these few general observations, I pass to such manifestations as I plainly saw and felt, during the last seance.

We had not been long seated before a hand appeared in the opening of the cabinet, on the side nearest me. My neighbor on the right, (Prof. Seiling, who occupied the first seat to the left of the medium,) shook the hand, which instantly disappeared behind the drapery; he then said, "There is a lady here who greatly desires to shake hands with you," when the hand reappeared. My neighbor quickly caught my hand and placed it in that which came from the cabinet. It was cool and moist, but pressed my hand kindly.

¹ About one foot. — TRANSLATOR.

A little later, the curtains on our side again opened and I saw a tall, luminous figure standing motionless in the aperture. I offered my hand and it was clasped in a hand much larger than the one I had shaken before. The fingers seemed a little attenuated, something like those of a very aged person; but when they grasped mine, their pressure was very firm and as cordial as any that I have ever felt.

During all this time, I saw the medium quietly seated in her chair, within a foot of my own. I should also state that *both the hands that I had clasped*, besides being on the left of the medium and quite high up between the curtains, *were right hands*. This absolutely proves that neither was the medium's hand.

Mr. Seiling, the first person to the left of the cabinet, had a pair of scissors and asked the spirit if it would give him a piece of its veil. The form took the scissors and retired into the cabinet, whence I heard a slight noise, as if a person were cutting something. In a little while, it came back and returned the scissors to Prof. Seiling. The latter was not satisfied, as he had not obtained what he wanted, and said to the spirit, "But you have not given me a piece of your veil." The form then lifted a corner of the veil and held it towards Prof. Seiling, who cut off a piece. After the seance, the material, which was exceedingly fine and beautiful, excited the admiration of all.

There were several materializations at the other side of the cabinet; but not having seen them distinctly, I am not qualified to speak of them. I therefore pass to the dematerialization; and I here repeat that, from where I sat, I could plainly see all that the medium did.

I was intently watching the medium, when I heard her sigh profoundly and repeatedly, as if she was greatly dis-

turbed. Then I saw her raise both her hands, or wave them, several times, and I must confess that this aroused my suspicions. "We shall see," thought I, to myself; "perhaps she intends to out-do herself, or to palm off some deception upon us." In order to see better, I leaned forward and watched her thus, at close quarters. At this instant I heard her say to Prof. Seiling, "Come and feel of my chair." He arose and I saw the medium take both his hands. Immediately afterwards he exclaimed, "This is marvellous! I see Madam d'Esperance; I hear her speak; but there is nothing but her dress upon the chair." After an interval of a few moments, Madam d'Esperance permitted four other gentlemen to feel the chair. During the entire time, she appeared to suffer acutely. She sighed, and twice at least she asked nervously for a drink. I saw her take the glass of water, heard her swallow, and saw her return the glass. I saw that while the upper part of her body retained its ordinary outline, the lower part did not.

The medium being seated, with her limbs extended a little ways in front of her, I could see the contour of her limbs and knees distinctly, during the early part of the seance; but now, the skirt fell straight down in front of the chair, as if there was nothing inside it. This state of affairs lasted about five minutes, after which I suddenly noticed that the skirt was filled out again, though I can not say how the change took place, and I heard the medium exclaim, "Now I feel better;" and, later, I heard her say, "See, my limbs have been restored."

Among the persons present at the seance but who were seated further from the cabinet, some claimed that, to produce this last marvel, the medium slipped behind the chair, or drew her limbs to its sides. But I can attest that

it was impossible for her to have accomplished either one or the other manœuvre ; because, as I have already said, the circle was so narrow that, in examining the chair, the gentlemen would have tripped over the medium's limbs if she had placed them at the sides. On the other hand, as the light was very good and as I was seated close to the medium, who wore a dress that was almost white, I should have seen it if she had risen or had changed her place. If any assert that I was hypnotized, I reply that, if such was the case, not the slightest suspicion of it occurred to my mind during the seance.

Accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

FANNY TAVASTSTJERNA.

B. Supplement to the Foregoing Letter.

In reply to a question of mine as to her previous acquaintance with spiritualism, Miss Tavaststjerna writes me as follows:

HELSINGFORS, April 20th.

Monsieur : I have very little to say in reply to the question you ask me. I knew almost nothing of spiritualism, previous to the seances given by Madam d'Esperance. I had read very little, or almost nothing, of it, for I did not then know that spiritualism had a literature as complete as it is interesting. Such information as I possessed on the subject was given me by my sister, who is a member of the "Society for Psychical Research," of Stockholm, and by Miss Hjelt, who has attended meetings of that society for the past year. The subject interested me deeply and I had

an eager desire to learn more of it, and for this reason I was very glad of the opportunity to be present at the seances given by Madam d'Esperance.

Accept, etc.,

FANNY TAVASTSTJERNA.

VI. TESTIMONY OF GENERAL TOPPELIUS.¹

[Original in Russian.]

When Madam d'Esperance returned from Petersburg, she stopped at my house, as formerly. When the question of another seance was discussed, I told her that it was absolutely necessary to have more light; because after one of the seances that she had held here, before her departure for Petersburg, some persons suspected that she had risen from her seat, leaving only her dress on the chair, etc. I communicated this frankly to Madam d'Esperance; the suspicion wounded her deeply, but she did not object to my proposal.

The seance took place that same evening, December 11th, at the house of Mr. Seiling, by the light of a small lamp, which, though covered, enabled us to distinguish the outlines of the spectators and the medium. As I was seated at the extremity of the circle, I could not see distinctly enough to testify positively as to all the extraordinary manifestations which occurred at that seance.

I have heard the others speak, in proportion to their opportunities for exact observation; and from all the impressions that I have gathered, I consider that the account given by Miss Hjelt is in strict accordance with the truth.

¹ At the date of my visit to Helsingfors, both the wife and daughter of General Toppelius were absent; but the General told me that they could testify to nothing positively, as they were far from the medium: consequently, his testimony must count for theirs. — A.A.

The sole detail lacking, in my opinion, is that, at the close of the seance, Madam d'Esperance was in a state of weakness and nervous depression such as I have never seen equalled. Her face and figure both manifested complete exhaustion, and the suffering visible in her features excited the most profound compassion. She seemed completely prostrated; and I think if she had been placed upon scales, her weight would have shown a loss of ten kilogrammes,¹ at least.

The next morning, my daughter informed me that, on our return from the seance, Madam d'Esperance was so faint that she had gone directly to bed and that, in the morning, she was still too weak to attend to the packing of her baggage. As she had to set out that very day, my daughter collected and packed her dresses and all her other belongings, and profited by the opportunity thus afforded, to examine them very carefully. But she found absolutely nothing suspicious — not a sign of a veil, masks, or gutta-percha hands, as some had been pleased to suspect.

Accept, etc.

G. TOPPELIUS.

Helsingfors, December 5th, 1893.

VII. TESTIMONY OF DR. RAPHAEL HERTZBERG.²

[Original in German.]

HELSINGFORS, April 18th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat:

In reply to your letter, I have the honor of communicating what follows, relative to the "dematerialization"

¹ About twenty-two pounds. — TRANSLATOR.

² Doctor of Philosophy and President of the "Men of Letters" Club, at Helsingfors. — A.A.

which occurred at one of the seances given by Madam d'Esperance. Before Madam d'Esperance called our attention to the "dematerialization," my next neighbor and I saw her skirts swell out considerably, as it seemed to us. Miss Hjelt has told me that what appeared to me to be an enlargement of the medium's dress, was really a slight materialization, independent of the medium and floating, for an instant, in front of her like a cloud; that not only did she touch it and find that her hand seemed to be covered as if with a veil, but that she drew her neighbor towards it and made him feel of the nebulous shape, which thereupon passed away.

The "dematerialization" followed immediately. Madam d'Esperance called me to her, took my hands, and passed them all over the cushion of the chair,¹ which I patted and on which I found nothing but her dress spread out. I distinctly saw the upper part of her body, as well as her hands; but I was not thinking of the apparition and did not compare the proportions of the upper part of her body with her surroundings.² I was cut short by the importunate approach of another impatient spectator, and returned to my place.

A few moments later, at the request of Madam d'Espe-

¹ When I met Dr. Hertzberg at Helsingfors, I expressed the great interest I felt in knowing exactly how he had examined the chair. He went to a chair, passed both his hands all over the seat and as far as the back. "How!" I exclaimed, "even to the back of the chair!" "Yes," he replied, "even to the back, as I have just shown you." — A.A.

² This is somewhat obscure, but seems to mean that he did not look to see if the upper part of her body appeared smaller than usual in any way; as it possibly might in case the *complete local* dematerialization was accompanied by a greater or less degree of general dematerialization. — TRANSLATOR.

rance, I took a seat close beside her. I saw the upper part of her body and her arms very plainly, as she leaned her left hand on the cushion of the chair. She asked for a glass of water and I gave her one. She seemed to lean heavily upon her hand, for the arm trembled as if with the effort. An instant later, she suddenly seized my hand with both hers. I had rested this hand upon the cushion of the chair, and I now felt the cushion moved as when one sits down heavily. Very soon afterwards, she told me to feel of the chair, and I found that her limbs were restored.

Being very ill-informed as to spiritualistic phenomena, I was a mere spectator, and entirely passive. I did not examine closely into the occurrences of this particular seance, and therefore can not speak of them more positively.

The attempted explanations of the manifestations which Mr. Lönnbom has offered, are ridiculously childish. He supposes that Madam d'Esperance employed dolls and gutta-percha hands, yet declares that he saw nothing suspicious and that he could take his oath to that effect.

Begging you to excuse me for this tardy response to your esteemed favor, as well as for my imperfect knowledge of the German language, I am, with highest consideration, etc.,

RAPHAEL HERTZBERG.

P.S. Madam d'Esperance says that she did not so seize any hand, at any time; but she supposes that mine rested on the cushion, close to hers, all the time. After she took my hand, (as it seemed to me,) without lifting it from the cushion, she held it a moment, pressing it nervously, as if she were in pain.¹

¹ Upon this point, see the testimony of Madam d'Esperance.

A.A.

This whole postscript is very obscure and indefinite, and I have

VIII. TESTIMONY OF MR. SCHOULTZ, CIVIL ENGINEER.

A. Letter from Mr. Schoultz to Mons. Aksakof.

[Original in German.]

HELSINGFORS, April 20th, 1894.

In compliance with your request, I send you the following report of observations which I made at a spiritualistic seance, given by Madam d'Esperance, at the house of Mr. Seiling.

After a small lamp, wrapped in red paper, had been placed in the niche of the stove, the room was so dark that I could not distinguish persons sitting opposite me, at a distance of from four to six feet; but I could see the medium, who was dressed in a white muslin gown, very much like a loose lounging wrapper, with a Watteau fold down the back. The light was so dim that, though sitting in the third seat at the left of the medium, I could with the greatest difficulty make out her feet, which were extended in front of her, and her arms, which from time to time she crossed above her head.

After the participants had made a chain and sung for a few moments, I saw something white and faintly luminous, at the left side of the medium. They said that it was a hand, and some persons offered to take it. I extended my right hand, also, behind the curtain, [*No. 1.*]¹ and it was

had to do the best I could with it. It seems to mean that, while Dr. Hertzberg felt all that he describes, the medium was unconscious of playing any part in what he felt. It recalls the experience of the author's with Yolande, related in the first chapter, when his hand was *thrust aside* by another hand, which does not seem to have been either that of Yolande or that of the medium, but of one of those "on guard." — TRANSLATOR.

¹ Figures in brackets refer to explanations in the two letters following. — A.A.

quickly taken and warmly pressed, three times, by a woman's hand which was very soft and warm. After that, large and small shapes in white and luminous matter, were repeatedly shown from the cabinet, both to the right and to the left of the medium; but the matter did not assume human form. Once, it resembled a hand, wrapped in shining gauze, and seemed to wear a bracelet in the form of a narrow band. Signs were made by the hand. It appeared on the medium's right.

During the seance, the medium asked for a drink of water and Prof. Seiling, who had the first seat at her left, immediately handed her some. She took the glass and Mr. Seiling returned to his place; but an instant later, the medium asked, "When can I have the water?" "But I gave it to you a moment ago," replied Mr. Seiling. [*No. 2.*] "I did not receive it." General astonishment. After a little while, the medium said, "Now, someone hands me the glass from the cabinet; see!" I could not see how this occurred, on account of the dimness of the light.

Before speaking of what happened later, I should refer to a matter which attracted my attention and caused me to watch more closely. I observed [*No. 3.*] that the medium often passed her arms inside the curtain, in such a way that the dark drapery showed a pronounced line against her white garments, which was not the case when she held her arms in front of it. Furthermore, I should have stated that at such times her arm and shoulder looked as if an arm was extended out of the cabinet. I saw this at the same time that the shapes of luminous matter appeared at the right and left of the medium.

Dematerialization of the Limbs. At the beginning, the medium sat with her limbs extended; but she drew them back, little by little. [*No. 4.*] I then saw her slowly raise

herself; her skirts filled out, and the medium, letting herself down, appeared again of her usual height. While these movements [*No. 5.*] were taking place, she was not visible to the persons facing me, for I heard them say that they did not see the medium. — The reason probably is that one half of the curtain partially concealed her from those on the side opposite mine. She sighed profoundly several times while this was taking place and Mr. Seiling remarked that she must be suffering. Suddenly, she cried, [*No. 6.*] “Now, my limbs are gone; come and see!” I think I was the second person that approached and examined the medium. She took both my hands in hers, placed them one above the other, and pressed them several times against the cushion of the chair, asking me what I felt. “Only a dress, upon the seat,” I replied. After that, she pushed me aside, without allowing the least investigation, and someone else took my place. A moment later, I saw the medium move softly, although I can not affirm that she arose; but I observed that she did something with her hands around her waist, as though she was arranging some part of her dress. After this, she said, “I have my limbs, again,” and thereupon the seance ended.

During the dematerialization of the medium, there were no materializations or spirit-forms.

Thus ended this seance which, unhappily, proved so unequal to my expectation.

IVAN SCHOULTZ.

After receiving the testimony of Mr. Schoultz, which seemed in conflict with the accounts of the other witnesses, I sent it to Prof. Seiling, Dr. Hertzberg, Miss Hjelt and Tavaststjerna,

with the request that they would send me any remarks which they cared to make. They sent me the following letters:

B. Counter-Testimony of Prof. Seiling.

[Original in German.]

HELSINGFORS, April 22nd, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat:

I do not attach any great weight to a narrative written so long after the event. For instance, that which Mr. Schoultz relates concerning the disappearance of a glass of water, etc., occurred at a preceding seance. Further on, he states that Madam d'Esperance told the audience of the disappearance of her limbs. This is absolutely false. It was I who announced it to the witnesses, after I had examined the chair. Miss Hjelt so stated, in a report written within a few days of the seance.

Mr. Schoultz claims that he recognized a left hand, after he had explained to me that he could not tell whether it was a right hand or a left one, because only the tips of his fingers were taken. If I rightly remember, Mr. Schoultz declared in your presence, the evening that we were together at my house, that he did not observe whether his hand was taken by a right hand or a left hand.¹

Sitting beside Madam d'Esperance, as I did, the movements related, [*Nos. 3 and 4*] could not have escaped me — especially the fact of her rising. [*No. 6.*] I heard Capt. Toppelius alone say that he did not see the medium, and that was during the dematerialization, and not before it.

With my best wishes, etc.,

M. SEILING.

¹ I remember this, also. — A.A.

C. Counter-Testimony of Dr. Hertzberg.

HELSINGFORS, April 28th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

Miss Hjelt has sent me Mr. Schoultz's letter, with a request that I should give my opinion upon certain points; which I willingly do.

[*No. 2.*] The incident of the glass of water took place at a previous seance, and occurred exactly as follows :

Prof. Seiling gave the glass to the medium, who said, almost at the same time, "Why do you not give me some water?"—"But I just handed you some," replied Mr. Seiling. "No, I have not received the glass," said she. "That is very extraordinary, for the glass was certainly taken from my hand," responded Mr. Seiling in surprise, addressing his remark to the members of the circle. "Ah! now I have the glass," cried Madam d'Esperance, who in fact now held the glass of water in her right hand.

Having the first seat at the left of the medium, I had seen Mr. Seiling bring the glass; then I did not see it, either in his hand or the medium's; and afterwards, I saw it in her hand. But I can say neither how it disappeared nor how it reappeared. During the entire incident, Mr. Seiling stood immediately in front of the medium.

Towards the end of the dematerialization, after I had changed places with Mr. Seiling, I heard Capt. Toppelius, who sat first at the medium's right, say that he could not see her, [*No. 5.*] and I told him that we saw her very plainly.

During the whole time that I occupied Prof. Seiling's place, Madam d'Esperance leaned her right hand upon the cushion of the seat. It is therefore most unlikely that she made motions with both her hands around her waist. Mr. Schoultz perhaps misunderstood the movement, (the only

one she made.) to cover my hand, which I had placed against the chair, with both of hers.

Accept, etc.

RAPHAEL HERTZBERG.

P.S. I may further add that, during the dematerialization, Madam d'Esperance did not stand behind her chair, as General Sederholm claims.

D. Counter-Testimony of Miss Hjelt and Miss Tavaststjerna.

[Original in French.]

HELSINGFORS, March 1st, 1894.

Monsieur: In reply to your kind letter of April 23rd, asking for the comments of Miss Hjelt and myself on the testimony borne by Mr. Schoultz, we have the honor of submitting what follows.

As for the *left* hand which Mr. Schoultz claims to have shaken behind the curtain, we both remember that at the seance held March 4th, at Prof. Seiling's house, at which Mr. Schoultz was also present, I told him that I had twice shaken a right hand. I asked him if he had remarked the same thing, and he replied that he had only been permitted to take the tips of the fingers, and that he could not tell whether it was a left hand or a right one. Several persons heard him say so.

The incident of the glass of water did not happen at the last seance. Mr. Schoultz has confused the occurrences, and has related them in a very different manner from that in which they were reported by others and observed by ourselves.

As we have already stated in our respective narratives, (therein contradicting Mr. Schoultz,) we observed that the medium remained quietly seated, during the entire seance. We affirm that she did not put her arms behind the curtain and that she did not rise from her chair. We were both nearer to the medium than Mr. Schoultz.

To explain the inflation of the medium's skirts, (or what Mr. Schoultz supposed such,) Miss Hjelt has asked me to relate the following. The last manifestation which she remembers seeing, before the dematerialization, was a luminous mass, which glided from the medium's lap to the floor at the left side of Madam d'Esperance. Miss Hjelt supposes that Mr. Schoultz mistook this phenomenon for a puffing-out of the medium's dress. She says that it was perhaps her fault that this manifestation disappeared so quickly; for, the better to convince her neighbor, Mr. Lönnbom, she took his hand and moved it towards the luminous ball, from the other side of the medium's lap, intending him to grasp it. At the approach of their hands, it moved off towards the cabinet. The medium then cried, "Do not touch it; let it alone." Mr. Lönnbom thereupon apologized, stating that Miss Hjelt had moved his hand.

Among those seated opposite Mr. Schoultz, Capt. Toppelius is the only one whom we heard say that he could not see the medium. This is easily explained. While the seance was in progress, hands which came from the cabinet had several times touched him; and, in order to give more room for spirits that wished to come out, he had moved his chair a little backwards and to the right. This change of position made it impossible for him to see the medium. Miss Hjelt naturally declared that she could see the medium the whole time.

The medium did not say, "Now my limbs are gone." She did not mention the phenomenon. It was Prof. Seiling who first announced it to the company.

Miss Hjelt declares that she very easily followed all the motions of the medium's hands. She absolutely denies that the medium busied her hands about her waist, as if arranging her toilet. As for myself, I, too, devoted myself exclusively to watching the medium the whole time that the dematerialization lasted, and I saw nothing of what Mr. Schoultz relates. Moreover, it appears that Mr. Schoultz, after declaring at the outset that he had seen nothing, so to speak, ends by seeing everything, down to the most minute details!

Accept, monsieur, the most respectful salutations on behalf of Miss Hjelt and myself.

With the highest consideration,

FANNY TAVASTSTJERNA.

IX. TESTIMONY OF GENERAL SEDERHOLM.¹

On the fourth of December, 1893, Madam d'Esperance set out for St. Petersburg, whence she returned to Helsingfors on the eleventh of the same month. A seance was held the following evening.² There were but sixteen persons present.

Madam d'Esperance wore a light-colored, loose-fitting dress. The seat given me was far from the cabinet. On this occasion, I saw nothing of much moment — only a

¹ Taken from the Helsingfors journal, "Nya Pressen," No. 343, December 17, 1893. — A.A.

² The evening of the *same day*. — TRANSLATOR.

hand was repeatedly extended from the cabinet ; it touched the shoulders and the heads of those nearest.

The total width of the cabinet was not more than a metre and a half.¹ If placed in the center of the cabinet, therefore, Madam d'Esperance could, by extending her arms behind the dark curtain, have touched her nearest neighbor without showing the white of her arm.

Later, Madam d'Esperance requested some of the participants to examine her chair. The chair was now occupied by a being with no lower limbs, which however possessed a head that could talk, and hands.

Those who examined the chair, found that it was empty, and that there was no body beneath the dress. How explain this miracle of a human being, without body or limbs, floating, as it were, in the air ; yet speaking and taking the hands of those who examined the chair ? Very easily. If you, my reader, will put on a blouse and stand behind a chair, as Madam d'Esperance then did, covering its back with your dress and skirts, you will work the same miracle ; for those who examine the chair with their hands — in the dark, of course, — will find only your dress and skirts upon it. But where is your body ? It has disappeared ; it is dematerialized.

None of the believers in Madam d'Esperance would admit that she was standing behind the chair, for that would be to suspect her — to doubt her and her spiritualistic manifestations.

I leave my readers to draw their own conclusions. I simply state the facts as I saw them.²

¹ Not quite two yards. — TRANSLATOR.

² This is all that the old General has seen fit to say on the subject which is of any special interest to us. We need not attach much importance to this, for the General has not cited things which he

X. TESTIMONY OF MR. JEAN BOLDT.¹

[Original in German.]

HELSINGFORS, May 8th-20th, 1894.

Monsieur le Conseiller d'Etat :

I beg you to excuse me for not having replied more promptly, but the principal reason is that I had nothing in particular to communicate in regard to the so-called phenomenon of dematerialization.

As I mentioned to you, *viva voce*, I was not permitted to examine the entire seat of the chair, on that occasion, so that my observations are of no real value. All that I can say is that the upper part of the medium's body was in its natural position.

Most cordially, etc.,

JEAN BOLDT.

Address, Nikolaigatan, No. 23.

XI. TESTIMONY OF GENERAL GALINDO AND MR. LONNBOM.

These two accounts have not reached me, up to the present time. I regret that I did not see Mr. Lönnbom during my stay at Helsingfors. All that I learned was *saw*, but constructs his article solely of things which he *did not see*. Instead of facts, he gives suppositions, and we have taken those into consideration. — A.A.

How much more thoroughly Prof. A. has considered *every possible* hypothesis and objection we leave the thoughtful reader to judge. The method and candor of the author make this book a *model*.

TRANSLATOR.

¹ *Juriste et homme de lettres*. — A.A.

that he knew nothing of spiritualism, and that it was the first time that he had ever been present at a seance. As he sat very close to the medium, he could easily see *everything*, and he was very much astonished; but the next day he tried to explain the whole as done with dolls and gutta-percha hands, adroitly handled by the medium; but at the same time he was unable to see how she did it. [*See the testimony of Dr. Hertzberg, No. VII.*] I addressed Mr. Lönnbom, however, through the intermediation of Dr. Hertzberg and Prof. Seiling, and asked him to give me his impressions of the seance, as well as any explanation of the manifestations he saw fit, not hesitating to express himself freely; but I have heard nothing from him, up to the present time.

As for General Galindo, whom I have known for many years, I saw him at Helsingfors. He is very skeptical, as well as very desirous to see and be convinced. I questioned him about the seance, but, to my great astonishment, he declared that he had seen nothing whatever of all that Miss Hjelt relates, because of the darkness of the room. As it seemed to me, also, that he cherished some doubts and suspicions, I asked him to communicate them to me, in writing, and without reserve, — as I had invited all the others to do; but up to the present time I have received nothing from him, either. — A.A.

XII. PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF THE MEDIUM, MADAM D'ESPERANCE.

A. Account of the Seance held at Helsingfors, December 11th, 1893, at the residence of Prof. Seiling, No. 45 Wladimirsgaten, written by Madam d'Esperance.

[Original in English.]

I arrived from St. Petersburg, very tired after the night-ride, with a severe headache and a sharp pain in the neck, which I was told was the commencement of an attack of influenza.

I had tried to sleep during the day, but without success, and was inclined to postpone the seance; but considering that, if I was to have the influenza, I could not hope to be in any better condition the next day, and that the second day was fixed for my return to my home at Gottenburg, postponement of the seance would make no improvement in the situation.

It was rather late when I reached Prof. Seiling's house and all the members of the circle were already in their places.

The room was lighted by a lamp placed upon a corner of the table, and the door of the seance-room was wide open. The piano in the parlor had been pushed close to the door and a lighted lamp hung from the parlor ceiling.

General Toppelius was seated at the right extremity of the circle,¹ close to the cabinet, with Mr. Lönnbom next him; behind, and about half-way between them, sat Prof. Seiling.

Upon entering, I spoke to very few of those present, and sat down at once in my place before the cabinet, without even looking about me; but in fact I never did that.

¹ See diagram of the room, in Prof. Seiling's report. — A.A.

I was in too much pain and too tired to enter into conversation.

We had considerable difficulty with the light, which was arranged as follows: a lamp was placed, (as I suppose, for I did not see the lamp,) in the niche of the stove, and the opening of the latter was covered with red, or orange-colored, paper. The light fell directly on the cabinet, and was a great inconvenience to those who sat facing it; but after they had tried several ways to soften it, I offered my shawl, which was of pale blue cashmere, which was hung before the opening and answered the purpose very well. When this was settled, Mr. Seiling went to the piano and played one of Wagner's serenades, if I remember rightly.

During his playing, all became quiet and he returned to his seat on my left.

I heard movements in the cabinet and saw hands, which came from behind and above me. I think these hands touched those who sat nearest the cabinet on both sides of me. I saw the hands once or twice, when they came far enough forward, and at other times I knew they were present, by the remarks of the spectators.

I was seated about a foot, or a little more, from the curtains of the cabinet; the light was strong enough to enable me to recognize every person in the circle, and I observed that Capt. Toppelius was placed seventh or eighth on my left. This put me in mind of the fact that he had asked to be seated near me, and because of my promise, I asked General Toppelius if he would object to changing places with the Captain. He immediately consented to do so.

Capt. Toppelius then seated himself close at my right hand — so close that I touched him whenever I moved.

The manifestations were interrupted by these changes and some one suggested that we should try to obtain written instructions as to the best way to proceed. A sheet of letter-paper and a pencil were handed to me, so that I might receive any communication, using my lap for a table.

While I thus waited, a large hand and bare arm reached from the cabinet, over my head, into my lap, snatched the paper and pencil, and disappeared with them in the direction of the cabinet.

I heard the noise of rumpling and tearing paper and then that of a pencil, writing. Then the hand came from the curtains behind me, dropped a part of the paper and the pencil in my lap, handed the rest of the paper to Capt. Toppelius and disappeared again. The Captain afterwards found a communication in the Swedish language written on the paper. The hand and arm appeared far above both our heads, as if those of a very tall person.

The curtains were frequently drawn apart and I saw that there were forms, more or less perfectly materialized, inside the cabinet. I do not think that any of them came further out than my chair, but I cannot be certain; for the greater part of the time, unless I was touched or questioned, I sat with my eyes closed and my hands clasped behind my neck, as this position seemed to ease my headache.

Capt. Toppelius spoke to me once or twice and I remember that he made the remark that there was a strong smell of turpentine, or something like it, in the room. I detected it, also; but, instead of paying any attention to it, I endeavored to see and hear nothing, so as not to interrupt the manifestations, which seemed to be feeble, at best.

I felt miserably weak and frightfully nervous, all through the manifestations, but attributed it to the illness with which

I was threatened; and I heartily wished that the seance could be soon finished, so that I could get some rest.

Shortly after that, I relaxed my muscles and let my hands fall upon my lap, and I then found out that, instead of resting against my knees, they rested against the chair in which I was sitting. This discovery disturbed me greatly, and I wondered if I was dreaming. I patted my skirt carefully, all over, trying to locate my limbs and the lower half of my body, but found that although the upper part of it—arms, shoulders, chest, etc.,—was in its natural state, all the lower part had entirely disappeared. I put my hand where my knees should have been, but nothing whatever was there but my dress and skirts. Nevertheless, I felt just as usual—better than usual, in fact; so that, if my attention had not been attracted by accident, I should probably have known nothing of the occurrence.

Leaning forward to see if my feet were in their proper place, I almost lost my balance. This frightened me very much, and I felt that it was absolutely necessary to assure myself whether I was dreaming, or the victim of an hallucination. To this end, I reached over and took Prof. Seiling's hand, asking him to tell me if I was really seated in the chair. I awaited his answer in a perfect agony of suspense.

I felt his hand, just as if it touched my knees; but he said, "There is nothing there—nothing but your skirts!"

This gave me a still greater fright. I pressed my free hand against my breast and felt my heart beating wildly.

I was almost fainting from terror and asked for a glass of water, which was given me. As soon as I drank the water, I broke into a profuse perspiration. Every moment

added to my fright, and I waited in terror to see what would happen to me next.

I heard the other spectators ask what had happened and knew that Mr. Seiling was telling them of the disappearance of part of my body. Several of them asked permission to come closer, that they might see for themselves. I remembered that Dr. Hertzberg took an active interest in such matters and asked him to come forward. He changed places with Prof. Seiling and I held his hand almost all the rest of the time.

Some one afterwards asked, "Can Mr. Boldt go and see?" — "Can Mr. Schoultz approach?" They came and touched me. They put their hands on the chair and passed them all along my dress. My nervousness and fright augmented every moment, and I suffered extremely. Capt. Toppelius examined me and exclaimed, as if shocked — "Not even half of your body is left!" This information made me ill. I felt shaken, too; and when still others seemed to wish to make a critical examination, I felt that I could stand no more and asked them to leave me alone a moment.

Somebody suggested that we should terminate the seance, but I feared that something would happen to me if we did, and begged them to remain quietly seated. They complied.

I think Mr. Seiling played an air softly on the piano, or some one may have sung; I do not exactly know, for I was scarcely more than half conscious. Calm was restored and after a while I felt my limbs gradually restored and my skirts filled out. The great nervous fright which I had endured subsided little by little, and about half an hour from the time that the last person had touched me, as near as I can judge, I recovered my normal condition. The

reaction, after an experience so trying, will account for my uncertainty.

I drank a cup of tea and I think I ate something, but I am not sure. At the end of half an hour more, I felt able to take leave of Mr. and Mrs. Seiling and to return home with General and Madam Toppelius.

Three months have passed since that incident; but for only five days past have my nerves felt fully restored from the fatigue and the emotions that I then underwent.

It is probable that dematerialization of the medium occurs at every seance, in a greater or less degree; but on the occasion in question, it occurred in an exceptional way; that is to say that one part of my body remained intact, while the other part, as far as I could tell, was completely dematerialized.

I do not know whether this same thing has happened before, in the same manner, or not; and I can truly say that it is to chance rather than intention that I owe the discovery. While it lasted, my most marked sensations were great physical depression and a repugnance to speech or motion; at the same time, I was very sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of those around me, and they affected me powerfully.

The discovery of the partial dematerialization was a great shock to me, for I felt that I was among strangers, unfamiliar with any such phenomena; and when I thought how necessary it is for the participants to remain quiet and calm during the continuance of any such manifestation, I became agitated and nervous—doubtless to an absurd degree—the more so as the manifestation lasted so long. It seemed to me that it lasted fully an hour, although I could form no accurate conception of the actual time.

I knew that the excitement of the spectators interfered with my restoration, or at least made it more difficult.

Although this singular half-dematerialization was an entirely novel experience for me, the question just how far my form was dissolved, or in a fluid or half-fluid state, had often been raised at home, without our ever arriving at any conclusion; for I always suffered mortal agony if any one touched me while materialized spirits were outside of the cabinet. When grasped, or even touched, during the materializations, I felt such a shock that I was always more or less sick for several days after.

When I first commenced to sit outside the cabinet, an event occurred which tended to show the spectators what I had already been able to demonstrate, in a different way. We all saw a cloudy stream, like mist or fog, spring from my chest and pour into my lap, where it assumed the form of a child.¹ When this child's-form was touched, the fingers seemed to sink into it, and at the same time I felt as if fingers were being pressed against my own cheek. The infant was very vivacious, and squirmed in my lap in the most natural manner. This greatly amused Mr. Fidler's son, Hudson, and wishing to play with the baby's little feet, he put his hand on my lap for that purpose, but the hand sank through the baby's limbs and touched my dress. This frightened him and he quickly retired, partly because he was afraid and partly because I could not bear the pressure I felt, and asked him to withdraw his hand. On that occasion, it seemed as if my entire body was in a

¹ A footnote inserted here in the original work, refers to an entirely different incident, which happened more than two years after the text was written by Madam d'Esperance. To avoid confusion, I have inserted it at the end of this paragraph.—TRANSLATOR.

semi-fluid state. I could speak and gesticulate, but could not stand up. My limbs seemed to be too soft to bear me.¹

Perhaps I may try, at some future time, to give you further evidence of these phenomena; but up to the present time, I have not been able to devise any plan which will enable me to produce them and will at the same time insure me against a recurrence of the unpleasant experiences of the last seance.

E. D'ESPERANCE.

Gottenburg, March 14th, 1894.²

¹ About the end of July, 1896, Madam d'Esperance came to Paris for a brief visit. In the presence of five persons [Madam Aksakof, Madam Boutlerof, her friend the Baronne de Zeidlitz, Madam Cauvin and myself], she tried to see how much of her mediumistic power she had regained. She sat upon a sofa, we upon chairs; the lights were extinguished and we waited in silence, without forming a chain. After a few moments we all saw a luminous ball in the direction of the medium, at about the height of her chest, as it seemed to us. The ball looked like mist, or a luminous fog. It spread out towards the floor, then contracted, assumed the most various shapes, and at times displayed very brilliant points, like small stars. Finally, Madam Cauvin, who seemed to be entirely unfamiliar with such manifestations, thought she recognized the form of an infant. She became alarmed, wished to get away, cried out, and made so much trouble as to put an end to the manifestations. The luminous vapor diminished in volume, and finally disappeared.

This vapor doubtless resembled that which came from the medium Eglington, under like circumstances. He compared it to the smoke of a lighted cigarette. The artist, James Tissot, made use of a very original simile, likening it to "grated moon-light." To me, it appeared like the light of the milky way on a clear night, when it is really of a milky whiteness. — A. DE R.

² I was unable to obtain this account any earlier, for to my request Madam d'Esperance replied that she was too weak to write it out, and that even the thought of that seance and of her frightful sensations was still insupportable. — A.A.

B. Questions addressed to Madam d'Esperance by Mons. Aksakof.

Having received this most interesting account, but finding it imperfect in some respects, I begged Madam d'Esperance to inform me upon the following points :

The principal reflection made upon your conduct is that you held and guided the hands of those who examined the chair. For this reason I would ask you to explain :

1. Why you did so and how the chair was examined. Was the seat inspected clear to the back? And what and how did you feel during the process? All this is of the utmost importance.

2. Your condition was so extraordinary that you probably tried to observe every feature of it. Thus, for instance, did you put your own hands in to the space between the trunk of your body and the chair? Was there such a space between your body and the seat, to your knowledge? If this was so, (as several witnesses have assured me,) your bust must have *floatcd in the air*, without any visible support, so to speak; did it not?

3. Will you be so kind as to state exactly how far Prof. Seiling and Dr. Hertzberg carried their examination of the chair; for Mr. Boldt and Mr. Schoultz say that they were only permitted to make a partial examination?

4. I beg that you will also state exactly what Capt. Toppelius did. He writes that you "placed his hands, or rather guided them, down along both sides of your body, as far as the seat of the chair." Consequently, he is the only one who is so fortunate as to be able to verify the actual presence of the upper part of your body, in its natural place. I beg you to give particular attention to this important point. As to this, you say, elsewhere, only that — "Capt. Toppelius also examined me." Did he use

both hands in so doing, or only one? The *slightest particulars* in regard to this matter are of vast importance.

5. The following expression occurs in your narrative : — “As soon as I drank the water, I broke into a profuse perspiration.” I wish that you would clearly explain your sensations while drinking water, under such remarkable conditions.

6. There is one more detail, still to be desired — The state of your health, after what you had endured, should be minutely described; and also, be it understood, your loss of mediumistic power. How did you discover and make sure of the loss? And when did the symptoms of its return occur to your notice?

C. Supplementary Explanations by Madam d'Esperance.

The following are Madam d'Esperance's answers :

1. I guided the hand of the first person who examined the chair because I was averse to mentioning my own impression of what had taken place, not being sure that what I thought was true, and also to see if that person confirmed my discovery. I wished to do this without attracting the attention of the other persons present. We passed our hands quickly all over the seat of the chair, and when they struck the back of the chair, I felt a slight shock. Before the examination, I felt weak and distressed, with a peculiar numbness in my members; but I suffered no actual pain except in the neck, up to the time that the chair and the place where my body should have been, were touched. Then the distress became intolerable, exactly as if my nerves had been touched to the quick. Dr. Hertzberg

came, at my request, I think, and in like manner passed his hands over the seat, the back and where my limbs should have been. I do not think that I guided his hands, but I am not sure. He then took the seat which Mr. Seiling had occupied before.

Messrs. Schoultz and Boldt then came *together* to make their examination, and by so doing, intercepted the light completely. They used their hands awkwardly and frightened me so that I grasped their hands, (or one hand of each,) rather to protect myself than for any other reason. I really do not believe that I thought what I was doing, at the time. Their motions were brusque, nervous and uncertain, and as they had their backs to the light, I was in their shadow. It is therefore very likely that they did not see me as plainly as the others. They were to blame for coming together, for they interfered with each other's movements.

2. I do not know how much space there was between my body and the chair. It seemed to vary. There was no apparent support except the garments which I wore.

3. I felt so sick and faint after being examined by Messrs. Schoultz and Boldt, that I was very much afraid of swooning and falling from the chair.

The agitation of the witnesses had a peculiar effect upon me, and I was terribly afraid that something would happen, without knowing what. I grasped Dr. Hertzberg's right hand with my left and held it against the seat of the chair, and it helped to keep me upright, as I felt myself falling forward. I sat thus some time, still holding Dr. Hertzberg's hand, as it seemed to give me strength.

4. Capt. Toppelius asked permission to draw near, and as soon as I had a little recovered from my fright and faintness, he came to me. I then took my hand from that of

Dr. Hertzberg, and, grasping the Captain's hand in mine, guided it carefully, (because I was in great fear of pain,) from my shoulders, along the back of the chair and down to the place where my knees should have been, and then along to my feet. In so doing, I once more lost my balance.

At the same instant, he seemed to feel a kind of shock and cried — “ Good God ! half your body is gone ; it makes me sick ” — or something like it. His touch and his agitation caused a return of my weakness ; but I had noticed, in lowering my hands along my body, that part of it remained, below the waist. In fact, it did not seem to terminate abruptly, for I felt no sudden break. Since then, I have had an impression that the dematerialization was more general than I had supposed upon my first discovery ; for I remember that when I followed the outline of my body, guiding the Captain's hand, it struck me that I seemed thinner and that the flesh was more soft, than usual. But I made the deduction afterwards. Distress, agitation and fear prevented me from thinking of anything but my condition, at the time.

5. After Capt. Toppelius had returned to his seat, Mr. Seiling insisted on the observance of calm and silence.¹ I asked for water ; and, in the very act of drinking, I wondered how the water could be absorbed. I felt no distress whatever after they ceased to touch me ; but I felt great weakness and bodily disquiet. I asked myself where the dissolved portion of my body could be and wondered if I should ever be whole again. From the moment of the first discovery, the nearest persons, and I myself, had an impression that there were one or more forms in the cabinet, behind me, but in my fright I forgot them.

¹ He started a hymn, the others joined, and this helped to restore quiet. — E. D'ESPERANCE.

I felt that the water which I drank was absorbed in the pores of my skin, and I saw my skirts fill out, little by little. There was no more pain, but I felt a tingling sensation, as if my feet were asleep. I watched the filling-out of my skirts with great pleasure and noticed that everything in the cabinet grew quiet.

6. After the seance, I felt very weak and tired, and could scarcely believe that all this had really happened. All that I had said or done, seemed to have been said or done by another person.

I returned to my home a few days later, but could not get rid of my impressions. I felt no desire for anything — either amusement or occupation — and found it impossible to awaken any interest in anything of either sort. I was dull and lifeless. Any attempt to work or think, or even to write, seemed beyond my strength, and if I forced myself to undertake any of these things, the effort brought on violent pains in the head; my hair grew white, and when I had these headaches, it fell out in large quantities. And whereas I was naturally quiet, I was now always sleepy, and could hardly keep myself awake in the daytime.

This continued for three months, but I grew better at the end of that period. At the request of friends, I held several trial-seances, to see if I could not obtain intelligent communications, in the hope that these might be of service, but all our efforts were unavailing. Later still, in March, I took part in a circle held at the house of Mr. Karl Nordmark, where we got answers by raps and there was an attempt at materialization. A week later, we tried again but had no success. At the seance following, however, we succeeded; one spirit materialized and was recognized by some of the sitters, and a second was so perfectly

materialized that it went around the circle and was recognized by a young man as his mother.

After that, I felt like myself again and although not yet perfectly well, I felt better than I did just before the remarkable seance at Helsingfors.

E. D'ESPERANCE.

Partenkirchen, Haute-Bavarie, April 26th, 1894.

CHAPTER III.

PERSONAL INVESTIGATION OF MONS. AKSAKOF.

I was absolutely compelled to rest content with the foregoing circumstantial accounts, and to undertake a journey to Helsingfors, myself; for the case involved is so extraordinary, so incredible, and at the same time so very important, that I considered it my duty to employ every means in my power to make the investigation as complete as possible. To this end, my journey to Helsingfors appeared to be necessary for the following reasons:—

1. First of all, it was desirable that I should make the personal acquaintance of the witnesses of the phenomenon referred to, as upon their testimony depends the answer to the first great question to be decided; namely, Did this happen, or did it not?

The value of evidence certainly depends in great part upon the moral and intellectual competence of those from whom it is received; it was therefore necessary to be assured of such competence on the part of the witnesses. In spiritualistic matters, it is incumbent upon us to be as careful as we are distrustful in this respect.

Long experience in this domain of inquiry has convinced me that the most cautious men, and even those trained to observation in the exact sciences, may see things awry, when spiritualism is concerned. The compelling desire to obtain certain phenomena, at any price, sometimes deprives men of their critical faculty, and blinds them to everything that impeaches the reality of the expected manifestations. It was therefore incumbent on me to make sure that the witnesses in question were not mere enthusiasts, unworthy of credit. To each one of the witnesses, I accordingly put a certain number of questions, in order to verify and complete that which they had certified in writing.

2. I considered it essential that I should see the very room in which the seance was held, with the same cabinet and with the same arrangement of chairs, etc.; for, frequently, the simplest things, omitted in descriptions, but which instantly strike the eye, are of the greatest weight in establishing a fact.

3. In order to form a perfectly accurate idea of the principal occurrences at that memorable seance, I intended, once on the spot, to bring about a repetition of it, — that is, to reproduce the seance, as well as possible, with the help of the actual witnesses. The reader has already learned,

from the preceding correspondence, that Prof. Seiling, (at whose house the sitting was held,) had promised me his assistance in the undertaking, and that Miss Hjelt had been so kind as to offer to act the part of the medium, in a costume of the same color as that worn by the latter. Taking advantage of this generous proposition, I asked her to order, at my expense, a gown of the very same pattern; for in such a matter the pattern of a dress plays a very important part, as we shall see from the sequel.

4. Finally, I held it of the very first importance for me to get an exact idea of the amount of light in which the seance was held, and of the sources of that light. As for the windows of the room, we are told that the white shutter of the one was lowered, while that of the other was raised. This made it important that the kind and quantity of light which penetrated from without should be taken into consideration. The least moonlight would have greatly modified the brilliancy of the illumination. But according to all the information obtainable, there was no moon at the time the seance took place. I must therefore time my visit by that phase of the moon. I did so, and went to Helsingfors on the 18th of February, (March 2d,) 1894, arriving the next morning, after a journey of fourteen hours. This

would have been nothing to speak of, if I had not, as inseparable travelling companions, a number of bodily infirmities, which make all journeys extremely unpleasant for me. I went directly to Prof. Seiling's house and was immediately presented to his wife. She welcomed me with the utmost cordiality; we had exchanged so many letters that we met as old friends.

Without loss of time, we went to the room in which the seance was held, where everything had already been put in position, as shown in the diagram. There was the same cabinet used before, made from a movable screen, also borrowed, (this time from General Toppelius,) covered with shawls, hung in place of curtains. Before the cabinet was the very same chair on which Madam d'Esperance sat during the seance, the design of which is exactly shown in Prof. Seiling's sketch. The chairs occupied by the witnesses were arranged at the sides.

At the first glance I was struck with a fact which, in spite of the exact scale on which the diagram is drawn, had escaped my observation; and this proves that a diagram can never fully serve the purpose of an examination conducted on the spot. The first thing that struck me, then, was the narrowness of the space for the circle, into which the fifteen chairs of the witnesses

could hardly be crowded, though touching each other;¹ and especially the narrowness of the space between the medium and her nearest neighbors. Their knees and feet must have filled the entire space, as Mr. and Mrs. Seiling assured me in reply to repeated questions, and even demonstrated for me on the spot. This is a fact of the very gravest import, for it instantly does away with the possibility of those manœuvres by which General Sederholm attempts to explain the manifestations under consideration.

Soon afterwards Miss Hjelt and her friend, Miss Tavaststjerna, joined us.

First of all, Miss Hjelt changed her dress and

¹ The sole fault in Prof. Seiling's diagram of the seance-room is that he has used an *arbitrary figure* — namely, a *circle* — for each chair, and *has not drawn these circles to scale*, as he did the rest of his figures. If, for each of these circles, the reader will substitute a *rectangular figure* of the exact size of any ordinary chair *drawn to scale*, he will find that most of these rectangles *touch each other*, and that the witnesses must have been crowded as close to each other and to the medium as they possibly could be.

It will be seen that one *metre* of the scale on the diagram is equal to three times the diameter of the circles: hence, as the *metre* is hardly equal to three feet and three inches, English measure, he allows only 13 inches for the width of each chair; whereas any ordinary chair, even if not cushioned or upholstered, is at least 16 inches wide in the seat, if not more. To properly represent the closeness of the chairs to each other, we should therefore add nearly one quarter to the width of each of the 15 circles representing the seats of the participants, and still more to that which represents the medium's seat, which we know was an upholstered chair.

TRANSLATOR.

put on the white princess gown which she had ordered at my request. When so dressed, she initiated me into the secrets of such a costume, and showed me why the explanation advanced by General Sederholm was out of the question; because no one wearing it and standing behind the chair could have covered the chair with her skirts so as to keep up the impression that the medium was seated in the chair. The fact is that such a dress does not unbutton either in front or behind, but must be put on over the head, the only opening being in front and at the waist. Besides, a dress of this make requires a complete muslin lining or under-waist, to which it is tightly sewn; otherwise the delicate material will not stay in place. For all these reasons it was impossible for the medium to resort to the stratagems suggested, and this shows how apt explanations, invented at the objector's "own sweet will," (and not founded on a careful scrutiny of the facts,) are to assist the conclusive demonstration of a proposition which at first seemed improbable.

After this little *leçon de toilette*, of a kind so new to me, we proceeded to re-enact the seance. Miss Hjelt took the place of the medium, and the other witnesses took their respective chairs. Mr. Seiling sat at Miss Hjelt's left, Madam Seil-

ing on her right, and Miss Tavaststjerna on the left of Mr. Seiling — Captain Toppelius was absent from Helsingfors at the time. I held the detailed account of the seance, written by Miss Hjelt, in my hand, and commenced to read it. As I read, I questioned the witnesses concerning the incidents of the seance, supplementing the account with a figurative representation of the most remarkable and interesting episodes.

Miss Hjelt's responses to my questions, both answers and actions, were given with such precision and promptness that I could see that she had observed most closely. Not once was her memory at fault.

I found that her report of the seance was exact in every particular, and had only occasion to add some minor details which appear in my notes to her narrative. For instance, stepping behind the curtain and putting Madam Seiling in the medium's chair, she faithfully re-enacted the incident of the appearance of the hand and the snatching of the paper and the pencil from the lap of the medium. Several times, I put the question, "Did you plainly see the medium in her chair and holding the paper and pencil, at that time?" To this question, she always replied by the most positive affirmation. This incident is of the first importance; for, if we estab-

lish the marvelous and almost incredible fact of *materialization*, it implies the possibility of the equally marvelous and incredible fact—*dematerialization*. When we came to this last-mentioned manifestation, Miss Hjelt took the place that she actually occupied throughout the seance and showed me how, overcome by intense curiosity, she moved so close to the medium that they were hardly half a foot apart; and how, even then, she bent forward, so as to look more closely, still.

I was careful to ascertain just what difference Miss Hjelt saw in the medium's skirts, after the disappearance of her limbs, as Madam Seiling had testified. Miss Hjelt saw the medium at a different angle from that of Madam Seiling's line of vision, and naturally could not see the outline of the medium's dress, which stood out sharply when viewed from Madam Seiling's seat; then, too, the light helped the latter, as it fell from one side, at a right angle. This was not so, as to Miss Hjelt, who faced the dark back-ground of the cabinet.

Many other questions which I had asked Miss Hjelt were repeated and discussed anew.

I interrogated each of the other three witnesses just as closely, as to the particulars which each could best observe; as, for instance, Prof.

Seiling and Miss Tavaststjerna, as to the apparition of the hand upon their side of the cabinet — a *right* hand, though upon the medium's left, and at such a height that it could only belong to some human form,¹ standing up, behind the curtain. Mr. Seiling was questioned as to the matter of the dematerialization, as he had an exceptional opportunity to observe it closely. I asked him, using the same chair, to show me the exact way in which he had examined it at the request of Madam d'Esperance; and he showed me just as it is represented in his drawing.

"In one particular," I said to Mr. Seiling, "your narrative is incomplete. Why did you not make sure that the medium was not behind the chair, when you even went so far as to place your hand upon the chair-back?"

"Such an idea never occurred to me," replied Mr. Seiling, "and why should I go behind the chair and look for Madam d'Esperance, when I could see her plainly before me, seated in the chair? You must remember that, during that time, I gave Madam d'Esperance a drink, at her request, and that this enabled me to satisfy myself, with still more certainty, that she was really in the chair."

For this argument. I had no reply.

¹ A *human* form. *assumed* by a spirit, in materializing.

Madam Seiling, in turn, was closely questioned as to the details of her valuable account, which she confirmed in all respects, and especially as to the fact "that the medium's dress, (her skirt,) after hanging vertically from the edge of the seat, gradually filled out again to the dimensions and outlines corresponding to her feet and knees."

In short, for four hours, those four persons had to put up with my reading, my questions, my objections; and I acquired a profound conviction that all had really occurred just as declared by the witnesses at the very outset.

That my readers might the more readily picture the seance for themselves, I requested these witnesses to come together once more after my departure, and reproduce and photograph its most prominent incidents, so as to furnish illustrations for my work. Thanks to their kindness, I am able to insert the accompanying plates.

Plate No. 1 gives a general idea of the room in which the seance was held; two windows are shown in the background, one with the shutter raised, the other with the shutter down; between the two windows is the cabinet. [The original cabinet, alone, was not used in the photographs, as the folding screen of which it was constructed was borrowed for the seance, and again for its reproduction when I was present, and had since

been returned to the owner. But this is of no consequence, of course.]

Madam Seiling, dressed in a gown exactly similar to the one worn by Madam d'Esperance, is seated in the same place that the medium occupied. The situation selected for reproduction is when the medium held the paper and pencil, and a hand, thrust from high up behind the curtain of the cabinet, was lowered and seized them. At the right, Mr. Seiling sits in the same place which he had during the dematerialization; on the left is Miss Tavaststjerna, in Miss Hjelt's original place, while the latter stands for the moment behind the curtain, to act the part of the materialized form. She shows how, and at what height, *the hand* appeared, which is another important fact. The defective drapery must be excused, as they had only a white sheet with which to imitate it. The picture shows, at the same time, how close to the medium the witnesses were seated.

The photograph from which Plate No. 2 was made was taken for the express purpose of showing how clearly the head and bust of the medium stood out against the white back-ground of the window-shutter; thus enabling Miss Hjelt constantly to scrutinize the position of the medium and her different motions, especially during the

dematerialization. The time selected for this picture is that at which a hand was shown on the left side of the cabinet, at the height indicated. It will be remembered that it was a *right* hand, as proved by the hand-shaking with Mr. Seiling and Miss Tavaststjerna, to which they have testified in their respective accounts. In this plate, Miss Hjelt takes the medium's place, with her head turned towards the materialized hand and the curtain, as she had seen Madam d'Esperance turn her head, upon the occasion referred to; while Miss Tavaststjerna shows her *right* hand. [The sleeve of the dress is a very natural accessory, as will be readily understood.] At the left of the cabinet, Mr. and Mrs. Seiling are seated.

After the representation of the seance, it remained to reproduce the conditions of light in the room, so as to make sure that the several witnesses could really see all that they claimed to have observed.

For this purpose, we came together at Prof. Seiling's at eight o'clock that evening, and I then had the pleasure of meeting two more of the original witnesses, namely, General Toppelius and Engineer Schoultz.

The task of reproducing the exact amount of light was not as easy as the work of morn-

ing. The same small lamp was placed in the same niche of the stove, just as it had been originally; but, unhappily, Mr. Seiling could not get the same kind of red paper which had been used to soften the light. Consequently, opinions differed, as the paper substituted sometimes gave too much light, and sometimes too little.

At last, however, we succeeded in adjusting the light so that all except Prof. Seiling agreed that it was the same as that in which they held the seance. Mr. Seiling, however, declared that there had been a little more light at the seance, because there was snow upon the roofs at that time, and that some reflection from it entered by the window with the raised shutter; and this in such strength that he could see to tell the time on his watch. This showed that there had been a fair amount of reflected light.

Be that as it may, I made sure that, even with the light that we then had, Mr. Seiling could easily distinguish the medium, sitting in front of him and hardly a foot off, and I verified the fact by trying it, sitting in Mr. Seiling's chair. Then, changing to the opposite side, where Miss Hjelt sat, I found that the outline of the medium would be plainly visible to her, (the medium sitting between her and the white window-shut-

ter,) and that she could follow every one of the medium's movements.

It must be remembered that the faculty of vision in comparative darkness varies greatly, and often acquires remarkable strength. I have even known a person whose sight was so acute that she could see a needle on the floor, in the dark. In the present instance, Miss Hjelt and Miss Tavaststjerna both claimed that they had very sharp sight. At that very moment, I happened to recall what Miss Hjelt had said in her narrative as to seeing the tips of the medium's feet appear from under her skirts, and I asked her, —

"How could you see the tips of the medium's black slippers, in the dark?"

"I can only say," answered Miss Hjelt, "that I *did* see them, quite plainly."

"And can you now see the tips of your own shoes?" (for she was then seated both in the medium's position and in her chair.)

"Certainly," she answered, "I can see them distinctly." As for myself I could not see them at all.

I know from experience that at dark seances, one can only keep watch of all that happens if he is seated close to the medium. It is manifestly owing to a slight difference in distance

alone that General Galindo, (who sat next at the right of Miss Hjelt,) and Mr. Schoultz, (who sat next at the left of Miss Tavaststjerna,) saw very little, and that even what little they saw struck them as suspicious. This is especially apparent in the narrative of the latter, who derived nothing but unfavorable impressions from the entire seance.

As Mr. Schoultz was one of the five persons who had felt of the medium's chair, it was very desirable that I should obtain his *viva voce* testimony. I also asked him to both explain and show me how he had examined the chair. He sat down in the chair, moving a little to one side, and grasped one of his hands with the other, (as the medium had grasped it with hers,) and passed it about the uncovered part of the cushion. Such an examination proved absolutely nothing. So far, he was perfectly right.

He stated that he had noticed several other things that he thought suspicious, and I therefore asked him to submit a statement in writing, without any restriction whatever. The reader has seen this statement, together with the criticisms of those to whom I thought it my duty to submit it. The imputations cast upon both the phenomenon and the medium in this narrative show that the very simplest things may arouse

suspicion, at a seance of this nature, if the light is dim or if one is not very near the cabinet. It is not to be expected that the medium shall sit motionless in an uncomfortable chair, throughout a seance lasting two or three hours; yet, if she changes her position, arranges her dress, or stretches her weary limbs—all these things awaken doubts against which she cannot defend herself.

I have already stated that the *value of evidence* depends greatly upon the *personal character* of those by whom it is given; and, in this connection, I should state the very favorable opinion which I formed of the four witnesses who came forward to attest the truth of the remarkable fact with which we are dealing.

In Mr. Seiling I recognized the man of exact science, ready to study any phenomenon of nature, without prejudice and without partizanship. In a preceding note, it is stated that he is a professor of mechanical technology, etc., at the *Ecole Polytechnique*, in Helsingfors. He is, therefore, a man accustomed by his profession to mathematical precision, to exact measures, and to the observation and study of natural phenomena, in the light of mechanics. But I was surprised to find a portrait of the philosopher Mainländer in his *cabinet de travail*, and told

Mr. Seiling that I shared his admiration for the works of that scholar, of which I have made a special study, published under the title "*Ein neuer Messias*," (Munich, 1888). Even so far as philosophy is concerned, therefore, the trend of Prof. Seiling's ideas can not be regarded as favorable to spiritualism; for Mainländer, a pantheist and disciple of Schopenhauer, is directly opposed to all doctrines involving a belief in the persistence of the individual after death. Mr. Seiling's participation in a course of spiritualistic seances, for the first time in his life, was therefore in no way due to any predisposition in favor of these doctrines or phenomena; his testimony was uninfluenced by any interest for or against their reality.

Madam Seiling and Miss Tavaststjerna would also rank as excellent witnesses. Finely educated, of positive and reflecting minds, quiet and serious in disposition, every one of their words inspires confidence. They calmly related what they had seen and noted; and one felt that there was neither exaggeration, imagination, or preconceived opinion.

As for Miss Hjelt, she merits a more extended introduction to my readers. I have already stated that I was strongly impressed by the precision with which she noted everything that happened

at the seance. Personal acquaintance only raised the high opinion that I had formed of her. In her, I had the pleasure of meeting a living incarnation of the human intelligence — active, practical and wholesome — and this estimate was fully confirmed by all the information I received about her. It was she who introduced the teaching of joiner's-work into Finland, and opened a new field of labor to women; namely, instruction in carving on wood. In 1885, she founded a school for instruction in wood-carving, at Helsingfors, and admitted both children and adults of either sex, thereto, taken from all ranks of society. Last year, she founded a steam factory for cabinet work, at Aggeby, near Helsingfors, where furniture, apparatus for gymnasiums, tool-handles, etc., are made. It is easy to see that Miss Hjelt is not one who would allow herself to be attracted to spiritualism unless upon the most uncontrovertible evidence.

One fact that I consider very important is that these four witnesses had all been present at several of Madam d'Esperance's seances, before the one with which we are now concerned; for a person who is familiar with the kind and manner of manifestations produced, soon learns to study the weak and doubtful points, and to

concentrate all the attention upon them so as to arrive at a definite conclusion.

The following day, I called upon General Toppelius, to thank him for the kind attention shown in sending me the first account of the seance and to ask him some further questions about Madam d'Esperance, who had visited at his house. I greatly regretted that Madam Toppelius, Miss Toppelius and Capt. Toppelius, who had all been present at this particular seance, were absent from Helsingfors at the time of my call; but I most regretted my inability to meet Capt. Toppelius, the General's son and one of the most important witnesses to the dematerialization, as shown by his testimony.

Next, I called upon General Sederholm, with whom I had some previous acquaintance.

Some years before, he had done me the honor to call upon me, on account of his admiration for the works of Andrew Jackson Davis, and to thank me for producing them in German. It is a peculiar coincidence that, in this very instance, Madam d'Esperance came to Helsingfors in compliance with his urgent and repeated requests. Indeed, the General went to Gottenburg in person, to urge her to come. But the prospect of giving seances before strangers, of different nationality and wholly unacquainted with spirit-

ualism, had little attraction for her. Besides, her absence from Gottenburg, which would be at least a month long, (to wit, the whole of October or November,) would be very detrimental to certain business interests which had been confided to her hands. In short, Madam d'Esperance could not be persuaded to accept the invitation, until an event occurred which changed her resolution. She wrote me as follows, on August 26th, 1893: —

“We had the pleasure of receiving a visit from General Sederholm, a short while ago. He proved very congenial and we enjoyed his stay very much, short as it was. He wished us to hold some seances, but they could not be arranged just then; for no one was at home but myself, and I was not very well. He has sent us some articles which he has published on spiritualism, and in the Swedish language. It was a great surprise to us to learn that he had pursued the study so far; and I was as sorry as I was annoyed that I had not accorded him my hearty coöperation in his researches, when he was here. I really regret it very much, and I shall try to make up for it as soon as I can.”

And a little later, on the 27th of September, Madam d'Esperance wrote me:

“The date for my visit to Helsingfors is not

yet set, as it is very difficult for me to get away. However, I feel that I have no right to neglect such an opportunity to work for the cause; for I can not tell how long I shall be here, to labor in this field; and I should be very unhappy if I had occasion to reproach myself that I had not done all that I could."

And again, October 11th:

"I wrote General Sederholm, one or two days ago, and told him that I was very sorry that I had refused him my help, when he was here; but that I am now at his disposition. My conscience is easy, at last."

Thus it happened that Madam d'Esperance came to Helsingfors and was repaid by an insultingly injurious article, contributed by General Sederholm to the most important newspaper of Helsingfors, in which he plainly insinuated that Madam d'Esperance herself played the part of the spirits. Love of truth blinded the General even so far that he forgot the fundamental rules of hospitality; so far that he hurled at this most distinguished lady a foul insult, repeated over his name in all the journals; — without considering that Madam d'Esperance is not a professional medium, and that she came to Helsingfors at his own solicitation, to give a few private sittings to certain persons interested in the subject. When

he made his request, General Sederholm probably expected something very different from seances. Fascinated by the accounts of the marvelous seances which Madam d'Esperance had given at Christiania, he hoped to obtain the same results, without taking into consideration all the careful preparation made by the Christiania Circle, in order to accomplish those results.

No subject is more complex, less understood, or more liable to mistake, than this subject of materialization. Only by long experience, under exceptional conditions, have we been compelled to acknowledge the phenomena as genuine, authentic, real. We may, however, know the fact and yet be far from able to explain it. A much longer study and, (generally speaking,) a much more profound personal knowledge of spiritualism, is necessary, before it can be proved that *fraud* has attended us, step by step, from the first simple rap to the complex phenomena of materialization. If delusion and mistake have been and still are the constant experience of human science in the study of the *physical* phenomena of nature, we should look for still more illusion in the domain of *psychic* research. For thousands of years we believed in the rising and the setting of the sun; but how long have we understood the fact, hidden beneath the appearance? The

same with spiritualism. We have seen its phenomena for half a century, and they will doubtless be studied for future centuries; but when shall they be fully understood?

The more world-wise men are, the more suspicious they become, as to the theory, and especially as to the doctrine, of spiritualism. But the young, the simple-hearted, the disappointed, the afflicted and the suffering, — these welcome it with open arms. In this very way was General Sederholm driven to attend these seances — he was heart-hungry, more than anything else. He longed for consolation, but did not wish to make a personal investigation of the phenomena; therefore, his disappointment was intense. The worthy General expected his recently deceased daughter to appear at once; whereas he only saw the double of the medium, which borrowed the name of his eldest daughter. Written communications — things so common as to be of almost daily occurrence in spiritualism — furnish innumerable instances of just such personifications. The General had probably often received communications of that kind, but he had not thought it necessary to denounce the mediums by whom they were written, as frauds. A deceptive note, or a false appearance, is less upsetting than a fraud in human form!

It seems that the General was utterly unfamiliar with what has been told and published by spirits, touching the philosophy of materializations, which generally are the double of medium. The materialized form may exactly resemble the medium, yet this is not the slightest proof of fraud on the medium's part. The General did not even know this! Actuated by a pardonable motive, but with an acrimony which is inexcusable when we consider that a seance should be a deliberate and dispassionate investigation, he hurriedly published his article, impeaching the honor of Madam d'Esperance. This article drew forth an indignant protest from those who had had an opportunity to observe the facts directly contradictory of the General's accusations; but the protest was localized at Helsingfors, while the calumny spread over the entire world without refutation. My conversation with the General satisfied me that he was utterly incompetent to judge of such matters. When I had, as briefly as possible, explained the theory of materialization, as it is outlined in Chapter First, and had told him of my experience with Katie King, it had the effect of a revelation on him; and yet he said that he possessed my book, *Animisme et Spiritisme!*

I next called upon General Galindo, whom I

had known for many years. He had been my travelling companion when I went to Gottenburg in 1890. He, too, was led to investigate spiritualism by heart-ache, loneliness, need of comfort and help, among the bitter experiences of life. He took part, at that time, in some of my seances with Madam d'Esperance, but did not obtain all that he longed for. As he was still interested in the subject, he naturally attended the seances at Helsingfors. Knowing that he was a skeptical observer, but that his was an honest skepticism, I asked him to keep me informed of all that occurred, and he did so; but he saw nothing decisive, on account of the want of light, and even the absolute darkness which Madam d'Esperance was sometimes so foolishly good-natured as to permit at the request of those present, when they wanted to make the manifestations more intense by contrast — as if they were not sufficiently prejudiced by the inevitable inharmony of a mixed assemblage of beginners! When I asked General Galindo about the seance, he said that it was so dark that he could not see anything. As he, too, expressed some doubt, I asked him to put his version of the affair in writing, without the slightest reserve; but he has not done so, as the reader already knows.

To finish my investigation, nothing remained

but to call on a few witnesses, especially the rest of the five persons who had examined the medium's chair. These were Dr. Hertzberg and Mr. Boldt. Thanks to the kind offices of Prof. Seiling, both these gentlemen called upon me at my hotel the same evening. Mr. and Mrs. Seiling, Miss Hjelt and Miss Tavaststjerna joined us there, and we, all together, discussed the remarkable phenomenon, *pro* and *con*.

In compliance with my request, Dr. Hertzberg showed me exactly how he had felt of the chair in which Madam d'Esperance was seated at the time of the dematerialization. He passed his hands all over the seat, clear to the back; and when, hardly believing my eyes, I repeated the question, "What! are you sure that you felt all over the seat with your hands?" he answered, "Yes, exactly as I have shown you."

"And did you give Madam d'Esperance a drink while she was in that condition?"

"Yes."

"Did her head, arms and bust appear as they would if she were seated in the chair?"

"Certainly; though, to tell the truth, I did not observe the fact with the critical attention that it merited. Remember that I did not, at the time, appreciate that the phenomenon was

serious and veridical. You can easily understand my position."

"Did you not feel sure that, if you put your hand behind the chair, you would find nobody and nothing there?"

"I did, in fact, think that I ought to put my hand behind it; but for the very reason I have given, I did not do so."

In the long conversation which ensued, Dr. Hertzberg gave me many particulars of seances with Madam d'Esperance, at which he had been present. Many of the manifestations were as convincing as they were wonderful, because he had positive proof of the simultaneous presence of the medium and the materialized form. As to some other matters, he appeared still doubtful. For instance, he had discovered that sometimes the medium's body was not in the chair where they thought it was; but he added that reflection had obliged him to confess that this was no evidence of fraud on the medium's part.

Mr. Boldt could give me no definite information, for he had examined the chair very hastily and imperfectly. All that he could say was that there was nothing suspicious in the appearance of the medium, or that indicated that she had risen from her chair.

I did not succeed in meeting Mr. Lönnbom,

but I asked Dr. Hertzberg, who introduced him into the circle, to prevail upon him to give me a written account. As the reader knows, he did not succeed.

The next day I returned to St. Petersburg, more than satisfied with the result of my investigation, and congratulating myself that I had enjoyed a respite from illness, long enough to accomplish it.

To what conclusion does the evidence then point? Before answering that question, let us sum up the arguments both for and against the authenticity of the phenomena:

1. The first objection raised is that Madam d'Esperance *herself* guided the hands of those who examined the chair, and that therefore the investigation was restricted.

No doubt this is a serious objection. But suppose we put ourselves for a moment in the place of Madam d'Esperance, and admit the genuineness of the manifestation. Would one be able to act coolly and judiciously, at such a time? The unexpectedness and strangeness of the experience, with its accompanying fear, would probably give rise to unspeakable fright and mental disturbance. It was a question of life or death. Can we form any idea of the nervous excitement and panic which Madam

d'Esperance endured? It was such that she "did not care very much what she did, at the time." And if, on the one hand, we consider the great distress which she felt at the least pressure on "what might yet be in fact a part of her own body" — (a pain which she herself compares to that of a naked nerve, roughly touched;) — and, on the other hand, the delicate and difficult position of a lady permitting gentlemen to approach and establish the disappearance of her limbs and knees, it will seem only natural that Madam d'Esperance took their hands and guided them while they were examining the chair upon which she was seated. The real wonder is that she retained enough presence of mind to realize all the importance of the phenomenon and to provide us with such proof as was possible, under the circumstances.

Moreover, this objection, such as it is, absolutely disappears before the positive affirmation of Prof. Seiling and Dr. Hertzberg; who, although their hands were guided, felt all over the surface of the seat, even to the back of the chair.

2. The second objection is that none of the witnesses made sure, by sight and feeling, that there was no one behind the medium's chair, during the disappearance of her limbs.

This objection would be serious, if it were

not absolutely refuted by the concordant testimony of *six persons*; two of whom, (Prof. Seiling and Dr. Hertzberg,) declare that they saw Madam d'Esperance in the chair while they made their examination, and one of whom, (Capt. Toppelius,) asserts that not only did he see the entire upper part of the medium's body in the chair but also felt it, with both his hands, from the shoulders to the lowest point remaining, "down both sides."¹ How could anything more plain be asked for? But we have the further evidence of three observers, (Madam Seiling, Miss Hjelt and Miss Tavaststjerna,) that they saw the medium *in the chair* during the entire seance, and especially during the dematerialization; and among other things, they noticed that her dress hung vertically from the edge of the seat, and later, that it again filled out, without the medium's moving. The accounts of those who did not see any of these things could in no event detract from the weight of declarations so positive and explicit, by those who did see the occurrences.

3. The third objection is that such a disappearance of half of a living body, involving the

¹ If the medium were *standing*, (whether behind her chair or anywhere else,) how could any one "come to an empty space," in passing his hands down along the sides of her body?—TRANSLATOR.

disappearance of flesh, bones and blood, for full fifteen minutes, is an impossibility, an anomaly, an absurdity. How could the other half of the body live, speak and drink water, in such a state, etc., etc., etc.?

I fully comprehend the force of this objection, and all that seems physiologically extravagant in the admission of such a possibility. But, in the light of ordinary experience, *all* the phenomena of spiritualism are impossibilities, and — as many are fond of reiterating — in direct opposition to the eternal laws of nature. Spontaneous movements of material objects, the instantaneous apparition of perfectly plastic hands — all these are perfect absurdities, utter impossibilities. To this, spiritualism can answer nothing, unless it be that these facts are established by the testimony of thousands of persons, and that they should be calmly studied.

As for the present case, the only objection of any weight is that this particular manifestation is unique. That is true, but it is to be hoped that we shall have frequent opportunities to study such phenomena, in the future.

After these objections, which I consider sufficiently answered, it is but fair to claim a hearing for the following considerations, in support of the phenomenon.

1. One fact which I deem very important is the concordance of this phenomenon with the general spiritualistic theory of materialization, and with the special facts and theories developed with Chapter First. If Madam d'Esperance had simply perpetrated a joke, we might expect to find it at variance with all previous observations and all spiritualistic doctrines. The miracle would have found no support, either in history or logic, and would have been simply ridiculous. If, on the other hand, the phenomenon is genuine, it should appear to be "in the line of development" of the principle, as Monsieur du Prel has expressed it; and so, in fact, it is.

2. In the case before us, the best evidence of the entire good faith of Madam d'Esperance lies in the fact that, doubting her own senses and suspicious of self-delusion, she made no announcement of her strange discovery. It was not she who cried, "My limbs are gone," as Mr. Schoultz claims, but she immediately called Mr. Seiling, without saying one word as to what had happened, and asked him to examine the chair and say if she was really seated therein. It is another significant fact that, by thus making known to the others what had occurred—real and serious as it was for her, but which those others might think only a trick—and by invit-

ing an examination on the instant, she put herself at the mercy of those others and burned her bridges behind her. For, certainly, if she wished to perpetrate a hoax; if she was expert enough to slip behind the chair without being seen, at a moment when no one's attention was upon her, (as General Sederholm declares,) she would know that after she had drawn the attention of the witnesses, and especially of those nearest her, upon herself, it would be impossible to recover her seat without exposure. If she had thought to excite the wonder of the company by any such trick, she would surely have betrayed herself.

3. My investigation, conducted on the spot, procured me among other things certain evidence which, though silent, is eloquent in denial of any such fraud. These are the purely physical conditions of the situation in which the trick must have been played. In fact, the sitters at her right and left were so very close to the medium that her passing to the rear of the chair without knocking against their feet was a *physical impossibility*. Besides, the medium must have risen, to accomplish the change of position in question; and the witnesses are united upon the point that the medium never quitted the sitting posture, which she had taken at the open-

ing of the seance. Any such motion would have been readily noticed, because of the medium's white dress and the proximity of the sitters.

4. Nor can I suffer one of my personal observations, to which I attach great weight, to pass unnoticed.

Strange as it may seem, it is a fact that Madam d'Esperance never drinks water, either at or between meals. She drinks it only at materializing seances, but at these she drinks a great deal. I know this both from her own statements and from my own observations, when she has stayed at my house. Many know that a *carafe* of water is required at each of her seances. Many also know that just when the seances are at their best and when the materializations are most successful, she drinks most, and that she generally drinks after each appearance of an entire form; but few know that, except at these seances, she never drinks water. To me, the fact that she drank the water during the very quarter of an hour for which part of her body disappeared, is itself proof that a veritable dematerialization occurred simultaneously. For it is manifest that the materializations which occur at her seances are regularly accompanied by dematerialization of her body, but that she is seldom conscious of

it; and that this intense thirst, precisely concurrent with the phenomenon, is caused by the enormous loss of vital fluids, which doubtless takes place in her body, at such times.

5. Finally, we must remember the nervous tension, as well as the fright and distress, which Madam d'Esperance suffered during those manifestations, of which she herself tells us and as to which she is confirmed by those who watched her closely — as well as her extreme nervous depression, after the seance, with which even General Sederholm was struck. Was this, too, but a well-played comedy? And if so, for what purpose?¹ Materializations are not, ordinarily, accompanied by suffering. I do not believe that any one can read the perfectly simple narrative of Madam d'Esperance, without being impressed with her sincerity. And when she says, "My nervousness and fright augmented every minute, to such a degree that I became terribly ill," I believe it.

During my stay in Gottenburg, I came to know Madam d'Esperance for a profoundly sincere

¹ Remember, also, that when, after the seance, she was found in a state of almost nervous prostration, *not a doubt* of the genuineness of the dematerialization had been expressed by *any one*. She, therefore, had no anxiety on *that* score, to account for her nervousness. She did not know that any one was suspicious. — TRANSLATOR.

and truthful woman; nor have I the slightest reason to doubt anything that she says of this extraordinary case.

Writing as I do, a whole year after the event, I cannot ignore the unfortunate results of that seance, upon her health in general and upon her mediumistic powers in particular. So serious were the consequences that she lost every trace of her mediumship, except simple writing. This lasted for three months, and she supposed that it was gone forever. The shock to her nerves was so great, that Madam d'Esperance could not, in all that time, take up the business affairs that she had laid aside to go to Helsingfors; the slightest mental labor exceeded her powers.

Her visit to Bavaria seemed to do her good, but no sooner had she returned than she was prostrated again. This very real illness did not enter into the considerations of Messrs. Sederholm & Company! Madam d'Esperance had come and gone. The dematerialization was nothing but a clever hoax, an amusing recollection. But for Madam d'Esperance, the first-fruits of the so-called hoax were a long and painful reality. As for me, knowing of the tortures which she endured, I did not see how I could suffer them to pass in silence, and I saw in them the most convincing proof that the de-

materialization was something other than a pleasantry.

And now, summing up the data, I am compelled to decide that the evidence in favor of the genuineness of the dematerialization outweighs the evidence against its genuineness, and that a veritable phenomenon was produced.

I perfectly understand that the fact appears fabulous, incredible, *even to us, spiritualists*, without speaking of those outsiders who take me for all manners of a fool; but if we admit the phenomenon of materialization — and, to us it is an indisputable fact — the phenomenon of dematerialization is its undeniable logical consequence.

My deductions in Chapter First, from the materialization of Katie King, seem to me perfectly logical and justifiable, and strike the keynote of the logical possibility of the phenomenon dealt with herein. Why, then, are we so loth to admit it? Simply because any extraordinary phenomenon is always more acceptable if presented as a logical demonstration than when we see it with our own eyes and touch it with our own hands.

CHAPTER IV.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE MEDIUM, CONCERNING HER CONDITION, AFTER THE SEANCE AT HELSINGFORS.

I think it expedient to add to the force of what has gone before, by giving the following extracts from letters written to me by Madam d'Esperance. We here see, as in a mirror, an exact picture of her mental and physical condition, throughout the last year.

GOTTENBURG, January 7th, 1894.

The Christiania seances, of which I have told you, are not yet arranged, for I have not recovered my mediumistic powers since the last seance in Finland. Many people, if in my place, would prefer not to have them return at all, for they certainly cause me much trouble and many indignities.

That makes little difference to me, for no one is dependent upon me; but all this newspaper

¹ A new series was to have commenced January 12th, 1894, in accordance with an invitation which she had previously accepted.

notoriety and the malevolent articles reflect even upon those who espouse my cause. Mr. Fidler and his family are included in the hostility and insults which seem fated to attend me. This not only pains them, but operates to their pecuniary injury as well, because many dislike to continue business relations with people so closely associated with an imposter, such as I.

I have felt very well since my return from Finland; but a singular sense of loss, which I cannot shake off, disturbs and oppresses me. I do not know what I have lost, unless it is my mediumship, but the feeling is depressing and strange. I still think my power will return, but it makes very little difference whether I wish it or not!

GOTTENBURG, January 30th, 1894.

My mediumship is not restored! I have tried several experiments for the purpose of finding out — more from a sense of duty than for any other reason; for the possession brings no benefit to any one, in compensation for the trials which it causes everyone.

Perhaps it is unfortunate that the Christiania

¹ Mr. Fidler is the head of the great mercantile concern at Gottenburg, in which Madam d'Esperance is employed. — A.A.

seances are spoiled. If I am ever in condition to do so, I shall keep the promise I made them; but perhaps they may be better off, as it is.

I hope you will be able to obtain complete and satisfactory confirmation of the manifestations at the last Helsingfors seance; for it will be too bad if I have lost both my mediumship and my health, without any benefit. I believe that allowing so many people to examine me, disarranged my entire nervous system and caused all the damage. . . .

I cannot say that I am exactly sick; but, on the other hand, I am far from well, and I suffer all imaginable pains when I make the slightest attempt at reasoning. I could remain for hours, doing absolutely nothing, if I were permitted to do so; but there is too much to be done to allow such idleness. . . .

GOTTENBURG, February 6th, 1894.

. . . I hope you will be able to clear up the last seance, at least to a degree. I never expected to expend so much energy and labor to obtain satisfactory confirmation of the truth of a phenomenon, as I have expended in this last case. And when I think how difficult it is to obtain positive proof of the most ordinary occur-

rences, even when there is no real or serious doubt, I should be astonished if it was not very hard to prove our case. In any event, I shall always regret that this occurred before mere neophytes, such as those at Helsingfors. I see no signs of returning mediumship, yet. . . .

GOTTENBURG, March 4, 1894.

It will interest you to know that I held a seance, a week ago, at the house of Mr. Nordmark, president of the Psycho-Physical Society. There was ample proof that my mediumistic powers have, to a certain extent, returned. We received a communication by raps, which has since been confirmed; something like the Stromberg case.¹

GOTTENBURG, March 5th, 1894.

. . . With the improvement in my health, my mediumship seems to be restored. A circle had been organized, to sit at Mr. Nordmark's house, at 10 o'clock, A.M. It was perfectly successful.

PARTENKIRCHEN (*Haute-Bavarie*),
April 6th, 1894.

. . . You will be surprised to receive a letter

¹ See *Psychische Studien*, January number, 1894. — A.A.

from this strange corner of the world. One of my dearest friends, the Baronne de Z —, has long wanted me to make her a visit, but I was not well enough to attempt the journey. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, she came for me, and — here we are! . . .

I have not given any one my address, for I wished to avoid applications for seances. For the nonce, I am nothing but a female artist; at least, until my strength is fully regained. And as I am now sure that my mediumship is not lost, I can afford to wait patiently and let it recover from the shock it has sustained. . . .

PARTENKIRCHEN, April 26th, 1894.

. . . I feel quite well and quite strong again. Perhaps it was only the intense heat that made me feel so weak. . . .

GOTTENBURG, January 23rd, 1894.

. . . I returned a month since, to enable the cashier of the house to take her vacation. I am now feeling much more comfortable. My stay in Bavaria has produced the best results, although it seemed enervating, at first. . . .

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GOTTENBURG, October 20th, 1894.

. . . Since I wrote you that I was well again, it has proved that I did so prematurely; for I had scarce returned when I began to be sensible of the mistake I had made, in leaving the neighborhood of the Alps so soon. In fact, the moment that I attempted to take up my accustomed duties, I found that I was utterly unfit for work, and up to the present time, I have not been able to discharge them. I left my bed, today, for the first time since the beginning of September. My physician has told me, only today, that I must not remain in Sweden this winter, but that I must go south as quickly as possible. This is a great disappointment to me. I wanted to resume my work. . . .

VILLA CLARENZIA, .
Montreux, Switzerland,
December 29th, 1894.

. . . As you see, I am in Switzerland, in search of health. Not that I am very ill, but a mere nothing startles and completely unnerves me.

. . . Yes, this is the consequence of that last seance, which has spoiled a whole year of my life. My entire nervous system has suffered. At the slightest chill, or if I do not follow the prescribed

régime, serious illness follows. I felt so much better this summer, after my long absence, that I returned to my work; but after an experiment of a few days, I found myself as ill as before, and discovered that I could do nothing requiring thoughtful calculation. I was forced to lay my painting aside entirely. . . . Except for these things, I am pretty well. I have a fair appetite, and sleep well, and am able to be about. . . .

My hair has not returned to its natural color.¹ In front, and at the top of the head, the hair is almost white, and the rest is black; but I fancy that the new hair, that grows in as the old falls out, is darker. It grows white, however, as soon as I have headaches, and I have these upon the slightest occasion. . . .

¹ It had grown white after the seance at Helsingfors, *Vide Psy. Stud.*, October number, 1894. — A.A.

CHAPTER V.

PERSONAL ACCOUNT, BY THE MEDIUM, OF HER
CONDITION DURING A MATERIALIZATION-SE-
ANCE.

Madam d'Esperance is, so far as I know, the only medium who is not entranced during materialization-seances.

This is in accordance with an agreement made with the invisible powers, when her mediumistic gifts for materialization were first discovered; which discovery happened, according to Madam d'Esperance's own account, entirely by chance, and in the manner following:

One day when she was visiting a friend,¹ Miss Fairlamb, (now Mrs. Mellon,) who was already known as a medium for materializations, she was detained longer than usual, because a cab could not be obtained. Madam d'Esperance did not then believe in materialization, though she had not the slightest doubt of her friend's good faith. To pass the time, and solely for their amusement, Miss Fairlamb proposed that Madam d'Esperance should enter the cabinet which was

¹ At Newcastle, England, about 1878. — A.A.

kept for seances. Scarcely had Madam d'Esperance, laughingly, seated herself, when *a form appeared*. Naturally, they gave her no peace after that. But knowing how frequently mediums are accused of themselves playing the parts of the spirits, and to what disagreeable suspicions they are exposed, she refused to re-enter the cabinet except upon *one condition*; this was, that she should not be entranced, but should be suffered to retain her entire consciousness all the time, if "the spirits" could manifest under such conditions. They replied that it was possible, and promised that she should never be entranced. She thought herself thus assured that she should never, unconsciously, be made to act the part of a spirit. She was, therefore, mortified and alarmed that she had been, so to speak, the victim of an illusion, when she ascertained, later, that even when she knew that she was seated in the cabinet and had her full consciousness, her body could be projected out of the cabinet and made to play any part which the invisibles might impose upon it.¹

This was a revelation to her; and, thereafter, she would hold no seances except upon condition that she was permitted to sit in front of, and outside of, the cabinet.

¹ See the last pages of Chapter First. — A.A.

But all this information was only a chance acquisition during my stay at Helsingfors in 1890. What seemed of chief importance was to take advantage of that most rare opportunity to question a medium as to her physical and mental condition during a materialization. Madam d'Esperance most amiably consented; I put the questions, and Mr. Fidler took down the responses in shorthand. The result was the questions and answers given below.

The difficulty which I then felt in reconciling the exact duplication of the medium's body — this complete externalization, (to use the language of practical hypnotism,) — with the medium's certainty that she had not left her place in the cabinet, made me decide not to publish the interview. But now, since the occurrence of the phenomenon at Helsingfors — which may serve as a "demonstration *ad oculos*" of what is possible in this phase of mediumship if developed to a higher degree — I feel justified in publishing the interview by a firm conviction that a time will come when these things will be estimated at their true value.

I. QUESTIONS BY MONS. AKSAKOF, AND RE- PLIES OF THE MEDIUM.

Question 1. What are your mental and physical sensations, when you are seated in the darkness of the cabinet, when the manifestations commence?

Answer. When I first sit down and the curtains are closed, I feel anxious to be sure that the spectators are seated in their right places. As long as I can see those who are present, I do not feel any attempt on the part of the spirits to manifest through me; when the curtains are drawn, my attention is usually fixed upon the members of the circle, trying to make sure that everything is as it should be. Generally, also, I feel somewhat worried, and feel that every preparation should be made before I enter the cabinet and take my seat, so that I need not be concerned about anything. The slightest confusion always disturbs me; so much so, that, if it is not immediately quieted, I become so agitated that no manifestations whatever can take place

When all is quiet, I feel no sort of care, even for myself; and the longer the sitting lasts, the more tranquil I become. Sometimes, I make the remark, "There is some one in the cabinet." I do so because I think I should inform the circle

of the fact; not that it is of any interest whatever to me.

It seems that, if one of the sitters leaves the circle, the chain is broken and this stops the manifestations. At the last seance, I felt as if someone had done something out of the way; but I did not know what it was, nor by whom it was done.

The first sensation that I am conscious of, when sitting in the cabinet, if everything is as it should be, is this: I feel as if my face and hands were covered with cobwebs, and I hastily rub both face and hands. This sensation passes away and then the air seems to be filled with particles of something, and it is difficult for me to breath. This, also, passes away and then I know that an apparition is taking shape.

The commencement of manifestations is announced by the feeling of cobwebs, but this does not recur unless the seance is interrupted. If a break occurs, it is repeated. When the seances are not successful, I feel the cobwebs, as it were, all the time; but at such times, there are really neither veils, nor forms, nor even webs. When a ray of light penetrates the cabinet, I can see a white and vaporous mass, floating like the smoke of a locomotive. I have often put my hand into

this mist, to feel it and examine it; but I can not say that it ever feels as if I touched anything. I do not see it frequently, and have very rarely felt any curiosity to examine the curling mist; not that it interested me particularly, even then; but because it might be interesting to others. After this mass of vapor has swayed and rolled, in every direction, for some time — sometimes, even as long as half an hour — it suddenly becomes stationary, and then I know that a living being is beside me. Sometimes, the form takes shape almost as soon as the mist appears.

I always have a sensation of emptiness, which begins as soon as I feel the cobwebs. I have the latter feeling only at the commencement, and later am unconscious of anything like it; but the sensation of emptiness seems to persist.

If I try to move, I have no sense of distance; nor can I say how far I move a finger; or, if I shake it, I can not say where it will stop; I can only compare it to our sense of movements under water.

The law of gravity seems to be suspended. I know that, in some way, I always become more inert; and although the distance between me and the side of the cabinet is very short, it seems to have been increased, and now seems to be limitless.

When Yolande appears, she seems to approach from a great distance.¹

Quest. 2. Have you noticed which is materialized first, the form or the veils? Have you ever seen or thought that Yolande dressed herself? Has she, to your knowledge, ever taken any of your garments to clothe herself?

Ans. When the mist is changed to a living body, I can never tell whether the form or the drapery is first shaped. The whole transformation is so rapid, that it is difficult to say which appears first, the body, or its garments. Yolande almost always comes close up to me, as soon as she is materialized. When she appears, I always feel a certain interest in her, although I do not often have an opportunity to see her. It is, in one sense, a surprise when she comes, whether it is because I can discover no limit to the cabinet, or because her form seems to come from so great a distance; and that is why my interest is excited.

I have put my hand upon her and have felt of her hair, but have never had the curiosity to examine her closely. On Monday last, she put her head upon my lap and I felt her hair against my hands; her shoulders and arms were bare.

¹ Yolande is the name given to the materialized form which most frequently appears. — A.A.

So far as I know, she has never taken any of my garments to clothe herself. On one occasion, Madam Fidler made the remark that she wore a skirt trimmed almost exactly like mine; but the trimming was carefully examined and we found that it had been washed, folded and put away for a long time. Since that time, I have always made it a point to wear dark trimmings on my skirts when I hold a seance, because Yolande is always dressed in white.

When Leila¹ was photographed, I saw by the sudden magnesium flash, that she wore a shawl like one of mine, which was presented to my father by Abdul Azziz, in recognition of his services in directing the blockade, in the Crimean War, I believe. Immediately after the seance, I took pains to find out where my shawl was, and I found it folded and stored away in its proper place.

When Yolande is outside of the cabinet, I have forced her to return to me by will-power. This puts her in a very bad temper when she wishes to remain outside.

Quest. 3. Can you see Yolande distinctly when she appears between the curtains? What

¹ The name of a materialized form which appeared at a course of seances held for Mr. Hedlund, by Madam d'Esperance, at Gottenburg, in 1890. — A.A.

do you feel at such times, and why do you not answer questions?

Ans. When Yolande stands in the opening of the curtains and I see her, I feel quite dreamy and indifferent to all that is taking place around me. The reason, doubtless, is that I am too weak and powerless to concern myself about anything. When questioned, I have to collect my thoughts and strength, so to speak, before I can answer. My thoughts and feelings are as vague as if I was in a dream. I can think and feel, but can not move. It is as if I were paralyzed.

Quest. 4. Do Yolande's movements of her body, hands and feet cause any correspondent movement whatever of yours?

Ans. Any rapid movement on Yolande's part makes me perspire freely. I do not know what movements she makes; I only know that she moves; for I now know, from experience, that any effort on her part fatigues me much more than if I made it myself.

It often happens that I have to change all my garments after a seance, because I am in such a perspiration. In my ordinary condition, on the contrary, I may almost say that I never perspire. Even when taking Turkish baths, the most intense heat is necessary to excite perspiration in me.

Quest. 5. When Yolande is entirely outside the cabinet, do you always know the fact? What do you feel, at such times? Is there any *rappport* — any sympathetic connection, between you and her? When she touches a sitter, or is touched by one, are you conscious of it?

Ans. Whenever Yolande is outside the cabinet, I know it; but that may be only because I see her go out. Whenever she is dematerialized outside, I feel myself grow stronger, and I conclude from this that she is gone; but I can scarcely say that I know it, as a fact. When she is dematerialized outside, I do not know whether she has entirely disappeared, or has re-entered the cabinet without my seeing her. All that I feel, when she is outside, is a nervous anxiety as to what she may do; exactly as if she had escaped from my control, and I fear that she may do something she should not do. I never think of myself, but only of her, precisely as if she were a child entrusted to my care. This is never the case with other spirits; I am indifferent as to them, and do not seem to care. I am curious about them, but not concerned.

Perhaps my anxiety as to Yolande is caused by the fact that she has several times gotten into difficulty, already. Thus, for example, when Mr. George Jackson, (of No. 100 High Street,

Birmingham,) was here, at the time of the first seance, he was involved in one of these difficulties. When Yolande threw off the veil which had covered her, he thought she meant to give it to him and attempted to put it in his pocket. In spite of his haste to do so, there seemed to be more and more of it. Yolande was not pleased with his appropriation of it, and began to show signs of anger. The other participants told Mr. Jackson to release the veil, but he did not understand Swedish and continued to thrust it into his pocket. Yolande, apparently, lost her temper completely, at last, and commenced to stamp her foot. Mr. Jackson then understood that he had made a mistake and returned the veil. I saw her distinctly, at the entrance of the cabinet; but could form no conjecture as to what had happened. I could only see her, pulling the veil and stamping.

When Yolande is outside and touches, or is touched by, some one, I always feel it. I do not know when she touches an object, a book, or a table, for instance; yet if she grasps anything tightly, I feel my muscles contract, as if my hand had grasped it. When she dipped her fingers in the melted wax, I felt a burning sensation.¹

¹ This occurred at one of my seances. I had prepared some melted wax and warm water, to try to obtain a cast of Yolande's hand.

At the time of the circles held at Mr. Hedlund's house, I remember that, one evening, he opened the curtains at the center of the cabinet; it seems that, at that moment, Yolande stepped upon a thumb tack, for I instantly felt a sharp pain in my foot, but she felt nothing. The pain constantly came and went, from that time to the close of the seance.

Several years ago, at Newcastle, she had a rose in her hand and one of the thorns pierced her finger. Simultaneously, I felt the prick, in mine. She first went to one of the sitters, to get him to remove the thorn; but as none of them understood her, she came to me and I pulled it out.

Except this sensation of pain, (frequently felt by me when the injury really happens to Yolande,) I do not know that there is *any connection whatever* between us, as far as relates to my own innermost personality. I am perfectly sure that I lose nothing, unless it be some little physical sensitiveness; I am sure that I lose neither power of thought nor of judgment, when Yolande is present; for my reasoning power is then more acute than at other times. Although she may take parts of my body, I know that my intellect is not even temporarily impaired.

Quest. 6. Have you never been in a position

to observe Yolande when she was out in the room, well away from the cabinet?

Ans. I have seen her play an organ, outside the cabinet. She chanced to leave the curtains a little way open. I have seen her outside, on other occasions, also. During seances at Mr. Hedlund's, I often saw her experimenting with the light, to see if she could bear it; she had drawn the curtains together at the top, but in such a way that I could see her. I have also watched her when she was examining the room. But frequently, when I feel curious to observe her, (as I sometimes do,) I have not strength enough to open the curtains.

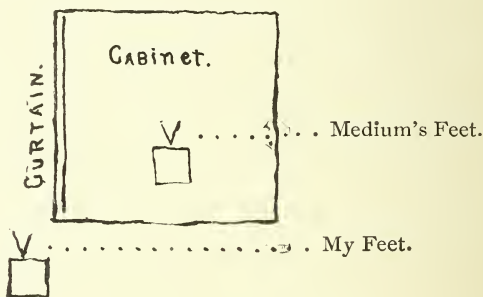
I have seen Yolande outside of the cabinet about six times, in all. One day, at Newcastle, she came to me from the third compartment of the cabinet, across the room. I saw her come out, then I lost sight of her and knew nothing further of her movements until I saw her near me, but a few feet off. *I went with her*, and she put her arm around me and helped me to walk to the organ. At other times, she has materialized at my side, outside the cabinet; then, I could see her as well as I could see the members of the circle.

Quest. 7. Do you notice any changes in your bodily or mental condition during seances, which correspond with the manifestations?

Ans. As the apparitions take shape, dissolve, or move about, I am conscious of physical sensations; as, for example, the feelings of emptiness and paralysis; but these impressions pass away with the forms. But, on the other hand, it is exactly the reverse with my mental condition; for my mental impressions are much more powerful during the manifestations than when I am in my normal state, and neither materializations nor apparitions are present.

I know and feel all that occurs, even outside the circle. I saw that you were absent;¹ I know

¹ This refers to the following incident: At one of the seances, when everything was in readiness, Madam d'Esperance in the cabinet, the curtains drawn, every one in his place, the half-light adjusted, but the door not yet locked, I slipped out of the room without making the slightest noise. As soon as I returned, they told me that Madam d'Esperance had exclaimed, "We cannot begin, for Mons.



Aksakof is not here." I must add that the medium was seated in the cabinet, and her chair was so placed that her back was turned towards my position. Only the curtain separated us, but my seat

when any one is stirring in another part of the house, and I hear them much more plainly than under ordinary circumstances. I heard the clock strike in the church tower; I could hear the whistling of the steamers in the harbor, and the noise of the incoming and outgoing trains, as I could not possibly do in my normal state.

Quest. 8. Do you hear what is said by the members of the circle, among themselves, and especially when they talk with Yolande?

Ans. I hear the spectators, and even seem to know their thoughts. When any one speaks to Yolande, no matter in what language, I seem to know what they mean to say to her. I do not understand this from their speech but from their thoughts.

Quest. 9. If Yolande happens to touch you what kind of sensation do you feel?

Ans. When I touch Yolande it seems as if I were touching myself; but when I feel that there are four hands, I realize that they are not all mine. Saturday, when she took both my hands — one to hold the guitar and the other to strike the chords — it felt as if I were touching my own hands. Her hands were cooler than

was at the left corner of the cabinet, somewhat behind the medium's chair; so that, even if there had chanced to be a hole in the curtain, she could not have seen me. — A.A.

mine, but that was the only noticeable difference.

Quest. 10. Do you touch Yolande when you wish to and as often as you wish to? I suppose you, naturally, wish to assure yourself that hers is a veritable body?

Ans. I never try to touch Yolande unless she is very close to me, and unless she asks me to do something for her.

I felt her Saturday [July 5th, 1890] when she was so frightened that she threw herself into my arms. I felt her whole body, the draught of her breath, and the beating, or I might rather say the throbbing, of her heart. I could not understand the cause of her alarm. Could the sound of the guitar alone have disturbed her to such a degree? Her fingers were moist, and it seemed as if some earth clung to them; I therefore inferred that she had been doing something with a plant¹; I felt the sand.

If I try to touch Yolande, it is always at the commencement of a seance: later I feel neither interest nor curiosity so to do. *When I put out my hand and touch her, I feel nothing at all,* it feels as if there was nothing there. I see plainly that there is something or somebody there

¹ The seance of June 28, 1890, during which Yolande materialized a plant. See *Psych. Stud.*, December, 1890. — A.A.

when the curtains are open, but later, by the time that she is better materialized, I lose all interest. Nevertheless, if she touches me, I can feel it.

I do not remember to have ever taken Yolande upon my knees; the greater part of the time she sits on the floor at my feet and rests her head in my lap; then she comes in front of me and seems to step between me and the curtains, and although the space is but three or four hands wide, she can pass without my feeling anything. She can stand upright, on my feet or on my knees, and yet *I feel no weight whatever*. Yet, on Saturday, July 5th, I felt the full weight of her body, though usually she seems to have no weight at all.

I do not know that Yolande has ever passed behind me, but Mina¹ very often does so. The latter, at such times, seems to bury herself partly in the wall of the cabinet, without the slightest inconvenience to herself. Yolande never does this.

A living human being, of Yolande's figure, could never pass between me and the curtains, as she does, without crowding me.

Quest. 11. Have you ever seen Yolande mate-

¹ A little girl who materializes at Madam d'Esperance's seances.

rialize or dematerialize in the opening of the curtains, (as we once saw her,) and what effect did it have on you?

Ans. I have never seen Yolande dematerialize, but I infer that she has done so from the sense of returning strength. I remember very distinctly that, when at Christiania, I felt a lack of respirable air in the room; and once or twice, *when I breathed deeply*, I heard the participants exclaim, "*Now, she, [the materialized form] is gone!*" Once, I did this on purpose, and heard Madam Fidler say, "*There! she is gone again!*"

Quest. 12. Toward the end of the seance, when Yolande is ready to leave, do you feel any particular bodily sensation? How do you feel before the seance, and how after it?

Ans. At the end of a seance, I always feel that a good bath would be the best thing for me; for I do not feel very comfortable. I suppose the reason is that Yolande borrows a certain amount of matter, for her materializations, from the spectators, and that I absorb some of this and it makes me uncomfortable. Now, I always take a bath before each seance, but then I took it afterwards, and I do not think the absorption did me any harm; still, I am not sure.

I always feel a tingling sensation, all over my body, before a seance — even eight or nine hours

before. When I know that a sitting is to take place, I feel a pricking in my fingers, exactly as if I held the tubes of a galvanic battery; I take no interest in anything, and it even prevents me from thinking. I even prefer not to know, beforehand, when a sitting is arranged.

After a seance, I generally have nausea, followed by vomiting, caused by the absorption of matter drawn from the members of the circle by Yolande, for her materialization.¹ Throughout the day, before a seance, I abstain from nourishment, as far as possible.

Quest. 13. Have you never tried to hold Yolande, or her veil, with your hands? It would seem but natural for you to wish to preserve a piece of the drapery.

Ans. Only the other day, I took the scissors and tried to cut off a lock of her hair, but I did not succeed in doing so; she was too strong for me. Except in that instance, I have never tried to hold her. I was more curious to test her strength than anything else, but she grasped my fingers so tightly that I could not move them.

Quest. 14. Have you ever seen Yolande face to face?

¹ Madam d'Esperance recently told me that she was surprised to feel no distress after the seances at Christiania, but that none of the sitters used either alcohol or tobacco. — A.A.

Ans. When she has been outside the cabinet with me, *her face has always been veiled* in such a way that I could not see it; but at Newcastle, I saw her in the middle of the room, when the curtains were opened and the light fell full upon her. I then saw her arms and shoulders as plainly as I could see those of any other person. It was a seance in full light. *I saw the French woman, and it was like looking at myself in a mirror, so much did she resemble me.*

Quest. 15. Did you recognize this resemblance in face or hands, or only in other bodily and mental characteristics?

Ans. I have never seen any resemblance to me in the features of Yolande's face; or, rather, I have never had an opportunity to compare them.

Quest. 16. Have you never felt as if you were in Yolande; as if your consciousness was transplanted into her? Or do you always have a sense of separateness from her, and of always being yourself, in your place, inside the cabinet? Can you think, and understand all that takes place about you?

Ans. When she touches me, the sensation is exactly the same as if I touched myself. I do not feel as if I were a part of her; but, on the contrary, as if she were a part of me.

Wherever Yolande may be, I always know

that I am truly myself, in my place in the cabinet. That is plain and sure, and nobody in the world could weaken that conviction; for I am sure of it, and it is not a mere belief. I know that I, myself, am here, and that some part of myself, (which is exhaled from, and goes out of, me) has escaped from my control. It seems as if something which appertained to me had come into the temporary control of another. I do not know exactly what I have lost; at all events, I have lost nothing essential to my being; and yet the materialized form has been made out of me.

I consider Yolande a being distinct from me; I am absolutely certain that she has her own, separate individuality, her own sensations, her own consciousness, entirely apart from mine.

Quest. 17. Since you feel that Yolande is, in reality, either another personality, or entirely independent of you, can you not describe her moral and mental characteristics? — When you enter the cabinet, do you think of Yolande, or desire her to come?

Ans. She is as willful and capricious as a child and, to me, seems as undeveloped as a girl of thirteen or fourteen years, without any remarkable intelligence, but simply inquisitive. She appears like a child transplanted to a more civil-

ized sphere of existence; she understands and learns quickly; but curiosity is the most distinctive quality of her character.

When she first came among us, she did not seem to know what a chair was, and attempted to use one in all sorts of ways. She sat upon the back, and fell over. On the other hand, she appeared to be acquainted with the use of paper and pencils.

She showed much curiosity as to everything that was brought to her notice; she understood the use of clothes and jewelry, and knew how to put them on properly.

Yolande never shows affection for me, or for any one else; she plays freely with Mr. Fidler's children, because she is used to them, but not from any fondness for them.

I suppose she finds pleasure in activity. If I happen to ask her for anything—flowers, for instance—she gives them to me, but poutingly, it seems. When any other person asks her to do anything she does it more willingly; but if it is I, not only is she unwilling, but she seems to look upon me with suspicion, as if I exercised a surveillance over her.

Yolande appears to be influenced by a desire for praise and a wish to be thought intelligent. She must have progressed in the six years since

Walter¹ told us she had learned the first letters of the alphabet; but she has still much to learn.

I never try to think of what may happen while I am in the cabinet, and I never desire that Yolande may come. I do not know that *she* will come, but I know that some one will generally come. Of course, if nothing occurs, I am disappointed; and, for that reason alone, I might desire her to come.

Quest. 18. When other spirits materialize, do you feel as if they were a part of yourself, or as if they were strangers and independent of you?

Ans. I do not feel, with other spirits, as I do with Yolande. I can tell, without looking, whether it is Yolande or another form. I do not know why this is; I only feel the difference.

When the spirit called "Charles!" I was curious to see who it was, without taking any further interest. I felt that Yolande was gone and that I was restored to my normal state; then, at that very moment, I felt a change and the spirit called "Charles" appeared.

Quest. 19. Has Yolande never manifested in any *other* way *than during a seance*, with the materializing cabinet?

¹ A spirit-guide who manifests by writing. — A.A.

Ans. Yolande has never, to my knowledge, manifested otherwise than at seances, with the cabinet for materializations. The other spirits which manifest at the seances, have given proof of their existence, at other times.

I remember that one evening, while I was still living in England, I had one of the little boys upon my lap, and as we sang together we heard a voice accompany us. The boys asked, "Is that you, singing, Nina?" and she answered, "Yes." Thereupon, they mounted the stairs at a run and, not finding her there, they called out, "Are you down-stairs?" The voice again answered "Yes." They scampered all over, looking for her, until tired out. They heard the voice in all parts of the house.

Quest. 20. Please tell me how you were impressed by Walter's answer, on June 16th, 1890, which you said was entirely unexpected—"a revelation." I refer to your entire invisibility when I suddenly looked into the cabinet.¹

Ans. Prior to the 16th of June, 1890, I felt absolutely certain that no appreciable change took place in my body. I did, indeed, feel that a change took place at seances, but did not suppose that it was apparent to others. I always, so far as I know, could see, feel and hear; or, I

¹ See *Psych. Stud.* for 1894, pp. 298, 299. — A.A.

might rather say, that when I am in the cabinet my hearing is much more acute than at ordinary times, for I can then hear the ticking of a clock in an adjoining room, or even on a lower storey; I can hear all the sounds of the city, for instance, the striking of town and church clocks, and the ticking of the watches of the spectators. It is certain that my senses are sharper than usual. I can *feel thoughts*, but it seems more as if I heard them.¹ I have lately tried to fix the thoughts thus felt and heard, so as to be able to repeat them; but I have not succeeded.

If I had known that I should sometimes be *transformed*, as Walter seems to believe, I should never have dared to hold seances for persons not perfectly familiar with matters of this kind.

I frequently walk with Yolande, outside the cabinet, so as to enable the sitters to see us both, at the same time.

On many occasions, I have seen Yolande before me, or kneeling beside me, patting my dress, and sometimes she gives me a glass of water. I have talked to her, touched her, and have had opportunities to convince myself, in

¹ These italics are the translator's. The translation is literal.

all sorts of ways, that we are two distinct personalities. The first time that I remarked any very great change in myself, and actually comprehended that it was a real change, was at the time of the Hedlund photographic seances, when a male spirit touched me. I was so frightened at it that I tried to rise and fly from the cabinet, but found *that I had no power to move*. The spectators saw the spirit referred to, and saw it dissolve, little by little. At the same time, I felt my strength and sensibility return.

II. SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS BY MONS. AKSAKOF.

I know no more appropriate way to close these interesting communications, than to refer my readers to the simple and vivid description which Madam d'Esperance has given of what she knows, thinks and feels during a materializing seance, when sitting *outside the cabinet*, in full view of the participants, as published by her in a series of articles in *The Medium* for 1892 and 1893, under the title "How a Medium Feels during Materializations."

I cannot refrain from here reproducing one passage which directly and specially relates to the question treated in this work, and describes

another valuable case of that duplication which the medium experienced, while she remained conscious throughout it. Madam d'Esperance herself speaks, herein; and it must be remembered that the account was written long before the Helsingfors experience.

"And now, another small and delicate form appears, with its little arms stretched out. Some one, at the far end of the circle, rises, approaches it, and they embrace. I hear inarticulate cries; 'Anna! O Anna! My child—my dear child!' Then another person rises and throws her arms around the spirit; whereupon, I hear sobs and exclamations, mingled with benedictions. I feel my body moved from side to side; everything grows dark before my eyes. I feel some one's arms around my shoulders; some one's heart beats against my bosom. I feel that something happens. No one is near me; no one pays the slightest attention to me. Every eye is fixed upon that little figure, white and slender, in the arms of the two women in mourning.

"It must be my heart that I hear beating, so distinctly; yet, surely, some one's arms are around me; never have I felt an embrace more plainly. I begin to wonder. Who am I? Am I the apparition in white, or am I that which remains seated in the chair? Are those my arms,

around the neck of the elder woman? or are those mine which lie before me, in my lap? Am I the phantom; and, if so, what shall I call the being in the chair?

"Surely, my lips are kissed; my cheeks are moist with the tears so plentifully shed by the two women. But how can that be? This feeling of doubt as to one's own identity is fearful. I wish to extend one of the hands lying in my lap. I can not do so. I wish to touch some one so as to make perfectly certain whether I am *I*, or only a dream; whether Anna is I, and if I am, in some sort, lost in her identity.

"I feel the trembling arms of the elder woman, her kisses, her tears, the caresses of the sister, and I suffer mortal agony. How long will it last? How long will both of us remain? What will happen, in the end? Shall I be Anna, or will Anna be me?

"Thereupon, I feel two little hands slipped into my paralyzed palms; this gives me a kind of support and an acute happiness. I know that I am still myself and that little Joute,¹ tired, doubtless, of remaining forgotten behind the three figures, and feeling lonesome, is looking for a playmate.

¹ The name of another child-spirit, who materializes at Madame d'Esperance's seances.—A.A.

“How happy I am to feel the touch, even of a little child! My doubts—as to who and where I am—are gone. And while I am experiencing all this, the white form of Anna disappears in the cabinet and the two women return to their places, tearful, shaken with emotion, but intensely happy.” (*The Medium*, 1893, p. 46.)

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSIONS.

At the commencement of this memorial, I stated that the manifestation, of which, in particular, it treats, is destined to throw a bright light on certain questions, hitherto obscure and confused, relating to the phenomena of materialization. I shall restrict myself to a statement of them, in the briefest manner possible, without entering into details.

1. The frequently noted fact of the resemblance of the materialized form to the medium, here finds its natural explanation. As that form is only a duplication of the medium, it is natural that it should have all her features.

Véry recently indeed, at the time of our Milan seances with Eusapia Paladino, I had an opportunity to show a resemblance of *hands*; and I have mentioned, in my book, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, a case in which the resemblance of *feet* was shown by impressions in paraffine. As for features of the face, we have Prof. Crookes' photographs, in which the resemblance between Katie King and her medium cannot be mistaken. Consequently — and this is a most important point

to remember, when experimenting, investigating or criticising — it is obvious that the most exact likeness is not any evidence of fraud, on the part of the medium. Thus General Sederholm was very easily misled to his conclusion that Madam d'Esperance played the part of the spirits, herself.

2. Furthermore, — One may seize the materialized form, and hold it, and assure himself that he holds nothing except the medium herself, in flesh and bone; and it is not yet a proof of fraud on the medium's part. In fact, according to our hypothesis, what *could* happen if we detain the medium's double by force, when it is materialized to such a degree that nothing but an *invisible simulacre* of the medium remains in the seat, behind the curtain? It is obvious that the simulacre — that small portion, fluid and etherial — will be immediately absorbed into the already compactly materialized form, which lacks nothing [of being the medium] but that invisible remainder.

It is nearly twenty years since Mr. Harrison, the editor of the London *Spiritualist*, wrote as follows concerning this process: "It is clear that the two forms must re-unite, and that the lesser portion should be absorbed into the greater." (*Spiritualist*, 1876, II, 256.) But I do not see

how this could be accomplished, if the medium was well "secured" — if her hands and feet were securely bound. According to the theory, the bonds, with the knots, seals, etc., should remain intact, hanging from the chair of the medium. That would involve a pleasant experience! But I do not know of any such case; for, in experimental spiritualism, it has not been thought necessary to resort to physical restraint, when it is absolutely certain that all fraudulent conduct, on the part of the medium, is out of the question.¹

3. The hypothesis in question illustrates the difficulty, which has always existed, in seeing the perfectly materialized figure and the medium, at the same time; because, as I have already said, a perfect materialization, on the one hand, necessitates an equally complete dematerialization, on the other hand; this means that only an invisible simulacre is left, which, we suppose, remains in the place of the medium's body. The same principle applies to photographing the medium and the materialized form, together; successful attempts are of legendary rarity. It seems that the difficult thing

¹ Nevertheless, for analogous cases, with Jean and Emile Schrap and Madam Demmler, as mediums, see *Psych. Stud.*, June, 1889, p. 258; October, 1892, p. 433; September, 1892, p. 436. — A.A.

to attain is, the knowledge or the ability to preserve the necessary equilibrium, when distributing a given amount of matter into the two forms.

4. Experience proves that the process of dematerialization and rematerialization extends not only to organic bodies, but also to inorganic bodies. For this reason, the cords and seals with which the medium is secured, do not offer the slightest obstacle.¹ Just here, the following hypothesis is presented, as to the operation of these laws: "Either the bonds are dematerialized, or the medium, herself, is dematerialized." We have a striking illustration of this in the case of Mrs. Compton, which I cited in the first chapter. We have another analogous example, in the experience of Prof. Crookes, recounted by Mr. Blackburn. Miss Cook's neck, waist, hands, and arms, were tied with four bands of ribbon, by Prof. Crookes, to four points on a movable ladder, and the knots were sewn and sealed. Within five minutes, the medium stepped out of the cabinet, free from her bonds, which lay on the floor, intact. (*The Spiritualist*, 1874, II, p. 285.) I may also refer the reader to a personal experience of mine, with the medium Leon

¹ Then, why should there be any difficulty in the process of absorption or combination, spoken of in the last paragraph of section 2, above? — TRANSLATOR.

Montet, whom I tied with the greatest care and who was instantly freed from all the cords; yet not the smallest knot was fractured. (*Psychische Studien*, January, 1882, p. 1.)

5. These facts being unquestionable, the same hypothesis also explains the penetration of matter by matter, and the "*apports*" which are so well known in mediumship. They are, evidently, intimately associated with the phenomena hereinbefore dealt with. It is unnecessary to cite examples. I refer the reader to my book *Animisme et Spiritisme* and to my narrative of the iron ring which was put on the arm of the medium, Williams, as related in *Psychische Studien*, (February, 1876). It rests upon the same hypothesis. Mr. Harrison enters into details to explain the cases of *apports* and penetration of matter, in his article entitled "Theory of the Explanation of certain Spiritual Manifestations," (*The Spiritualist*, 1876, I, p. 205,) in which he quotes my experience with Williams.

6. The solidarity of the medium and the materialized form become manifest and perfectly comprehensible.

It has often been noticed that physical impressions, made upon the materialized form, take effect upon the medium. We have the first, as

well as the most common, examples of this, in cases where marks are put upon materialized hands. I have treated this subject in *Animisme et Spiritisme* and have therein given an interesting instance of a knife-wound upon a materialized arm, the pain from which was felt by the medium. In like manner, it has often happened, at Madam d'Esperance's seances, that where a materialized hand was pricked, the puncture was felt by the medium. I was present, myself, at a seance when the materialized spirit dipped her fingers in melted wax, and the medium instantly cried out that it burned her.

In short, we have a case unique in the annals of spiritualism, attested by five witnesses, which explains this solidarity in the most unlooked for manner. At a seance given by Mr. Monck, a masculine form issued from the left side of the medium and took shape, under the very eyes of the witnesses. The medium was in plain sight all the time and the light was good. The form was completely materialized, and its face, hands and feet were examined by the full light of the gas; furthermore, it gave proof of its strength by lifting the members of the circle from their chairs, in rotation.

It should be incidentally noted that this last case shows that the hypothesis of an almost

entire dematerialization of the medium, accompanying the complete materialization of a form as I have explained above, is subject to exception, (as I have stated again and again); for, in this instance, the medium remained visible and tangible.

I quote the following, verbatim:

"They next proposed an unusual proceeding; namely that the form should drink a glass of water. The result was, that, while the materialized spirit *drank the water before our eyes*, and in such a manner that we could see it drink and hear it swallow, *a like quantity of water was instantly ejected from the medium's mouth*. This agrees with the oldest analogous evidence; that is to say, that sometimes, if not always, there is an intimate connection in taste and sensations, between psychic forms and the mediums from whom they spring." (*The Spiritualist*, 1877, II, p. 287.)

There is a tradition that spirits *dread a sword*, and even in the most recent cases, we find facts confirmatory of that belief. Thus, in Glanvil's narrative entitled the "Demon of Tedworth," (XVII Century) we read that a servant of Mons. Mompesson, (whose house the "demon" kept in an uproar,) being beset by the spectre at night, menaced it with his sword and thus put it to

flight. Once, the spectre attempted to get possession of the sword¹ and a struggle ensued; but as soon as the servant became master of the weapon, the spectre vanished. "We noted that it always tried to avoid the sword." (S. Glanvil, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, Ed. of 1688, pp. 325-326.) The Marquis de Mirville, in his work, "Spirits and their Fluid Manifestations," quoting many incidents from the first manifestations at Cideville, which occurred in 1851, states, among other things, that the spectre always sought to avoid the point of a sword, directed toward the spot where it was supposed to be making the sound of blows. The marquis quotes many passages from ancient writers, in confirmation of the tradition referred to.

According to recent investigations in the unfamiliar and mysterious domain of hypnotism, the sensibility of the surface of the skin may even be extended to a certain distance from the hypnotized person, so as to form a kind of sensitive cushion around him or her.² The hypnotized person is then absolutely insensible of a prick applied directly upon her skin; but, if this air-

¹ Like the pencil which was forcibly wrenched from my hand behind Eusapia's back, at one of the Milan seances. — A.A.

² Much like the *electric field*, or the *magnetic field*. — TRANSLATOR.

cushion is pricked, at a given distance from the body, this is felt at once. This phenomenon is now called *exteriorization of sensibility*.¹

What takes place in the phenomena of materialization, as we have seen it, may be considered the highest development of "exteriorization." Thus, tradition and experiment join hands.²

7. Finally, if we have not found a complete solution of the mystery of materialization, we have, at least, a kind of natural explanation of it. It is no longer a miracle — an instantaneous creation of matter for organic human forms, drawn from nothing, so to speak. It is a transformation — the transformation of one existing organic form, into another. It still remains wonderful, but it is no longer miraculous. This is all the better for the spiritualistic doctrine, because it tends to prove that the body is not merely the product of the play of chemical forces; but is the creation of an organizing, persistent force, which can shape matter at its will. The body with which we are familiar is shown to be a material vesture, but a temporary one, only.

¹ See *Les Etats profonds de l'hypnose*, by A. de Rochas d'Aiglun, Paris, 1892; *La Force vital, notre corps vital fluidique*, by Dr. Baraduc, Paris, 1893, and *Exteriorisation animique complete du corps vital psychique*, by the same author. — A.A.

² See *Psych. Stud.*, July, 1893, p. 321. — A.A.

The supremacy of spirit over matter becomes manifest.

In the case of simple duplication, when the medium is entranced, we have a phenomenon of equilibration — that is to say, a re-distribution of the organic matter belonging to *one* body, into *two* bodies, — together with conservation of identity of the form which is generated by the individual organizing principle. When such a manifestation occurs and the medium is not entranced, we have the proof that the possession of the sum-total of our psychic body is not necessary to our auto-consciousness; and also that the organizing self can act, and even build up a body, entirely outside of and apart from the conscious self. When the duplication occurs and the materialized form, while conforming to the general type of the medium, still differs from it in some respects, (as in the case of Katie King, where the shape of the nails and ears, and the color of her hair, were entirely unlike her medium's,) we have a dazzling proof of the organizing power of the supreme self, which is not confined to the model of the familiar earthly body which it inhabits. This is the beginning of transformation.¹

The ancients were familiar with this kind of transformation. Iamblichus says, in his work on the Egyptian Mysteries (Sec. III, Ch. 5) “*Corpus eorum vel concreescere videtur in altum, vel in amplum, vel per aerem fenni videtur.* — A.A.

When the materialized form is entirely different from the medium, (as in the case of Katie Brink and Mrs. Compton, referred to in Chapter First,) we have a complete transformation, or transfiguration.

How, and by whom, is it accomplished? That is the difficult and important question. It is hard to believe that it is the work of the individual and transcendent self. And if, critically speaking, this supposition fulfills all the requisites for establishing an individuality, (see *Animisme et Spiritisme*,) we have the best evidence that a transcendent, individual self, (which is not that of the medium,) simply seizes certain organic matter, to transform it at its pleasure.

But if this is so, would it not be simpler for this supreme self to reproduce the very form and face of the medium, and then transform them at will, without resorting to the marvelous production of a form entirely different from that of the medium? If cases of this kind exist, it would be striking and ocular proof that materialization resolves itself into a phenomenon of transformation. In truth, such cases do exist; but they are rare and infrequent amongst the enormous mass of materials for spiritualistic literature.

I find two cases of this nature given in an article by Miss Kislingbury, in *The Spiritualist*

of December 22nd, 1876, in which she classifies apparitions as duplications, transfigurations and transformations, and gives two examples of transfiguration.

Here is the first, taken from a letter from Mr. Joy, an American, previously published in the same journal, September 17, 1875:

"Mrs. Crocker, a very estimable medium of Chicago, told me the following facts, some time ago. Under the direction of her spirit-guide, she some months since began a series of seances for the development of a new phase of mediumship. The sitters were her own family, only. One night when there was a bright fire in the room, besides some moonlight, she was transfigured. Her face was entirely changed as to size, shape and expression, and a heavy black beard appeared on it. All those who were seated at the table saw it alike. Her son-in-law cried, as she turned her face towards him, 'O, this is my father!' and afterwards declared that it was the exact image of his deceased parent. A moment later, Mrs. Crocker was transformed into an old lady, with white hair. These metamorphoses occurred gradually, while none of the witnesses took their eyes from her face. She retained complete consciousness, but felt a very lively tingling sensation all over her body, ex-

actly as if she held the poles of a strong galvanic battery."

The other example is taken from the "Book of Mediums," by Allan Kardeck. The case occurred near St. Etienne, in 1858.

"A young girl of some fifteen years, possessed the singular faculty of transfiguring herself; that is to say, of assuming the likenesses of certain deceased persons, at given times. The illusion was so complete that many thought the person in question actually present, so exact was the likeness in feature, look, tone of voice, and even in verbal expression. This phenomenon was repeated hundreds of times, without the girl being able to control it in any way. She often took the appearance of a brother who had been dead some years; and not only were his features reproduced, but his height and the proportions of his body. A neighboring doctor, having frequently witnessed these *bizarre* effects, and wishing to make sure that he was not the victim of some trick, tried the following experiment. We obtained the account from him, from the girl's father, and from several other honorable and reputable persons who were eye-witnesses. He adopted the plan of weighing the girl both in her natural state and when she was transfigured and appeared like her brother, who was

something over twenty years of age and who was much larger and stouter than she. He found that in the latter state her weight was almost doubled! The test was conclusive, as it was impossible to attribute such a result to a mere optical delusion."

Though these cases are cited by Miss Kislbury as examples of transfiguration, the production of the beard, the gray hair and the increased weight, are all phenomena which clearly indicate that a process of transformation had already taken place, always admitting the exactness of the facts related. Unfortunately, we have not details of the observation and direct testimony of the eye-witnesses, sufficient to justify full credence of facts so very important, if authentic. One great point in their favor is, that they are not in conflict with the principle upon which all materialization is based; and that they illustrate, in some sort, the transitory and initial stage in the transformation of one organic body into another, under the operation of an unknown organizing force.

This is the proper place to mention another class of phenomena which also weigh in favor of the theory of transformation; but which, unfortunately, are as rare and as insufficiently described as the foregoing.

Thus, we find the following case reported by Mr. Simmons at one of the meetings of the National Association of Spiritualists, held at London, in December, 1876.

"Dr. Newburgh had told him how, for that purpose, he had tied Mrs. Compton with waxed cord and nailed her black alpaca dress to the floor. After thus securing her, he returned to the circle outside and saw a form, smaller than Mrs. Compton and entirely robed in white, issue from the cabinet. He said it would require thirty or forty ells of material to make that robe. The doctor was invited to enter the cabinet, and found there nothing but the medium's empty chair. He came out and talked with the apparition and asked for a piece of its veil. The figure answered, 'If you cut this, it will make a hole in the medium's dress,' and added that, in that event, he would have to present her a new dress. He thereupon cut from the white veil a piece nearly as large as his hand. The form re-entered the cabinet. An instant later, he was invited to enter also, and he found the medium tied with the waxed cord, and her dress nailed to the floor, as at first: and, *in her black dress, he found a large hole, which corresponded exactly to the white piece.* Later, the doctor cut the surrounding piece from the black dress, to

show the others how exactly the white piece fitted into the rent. Afterwards, he examined and analyzed the two materials, and found them exactly alike in all other respects, but of different colors.”¹ (*The Spiritualist*, 1876, II, p. 257.)

The same thing was very frequently observed at Madam d’Esperance’s seances, where, whenever one of the participants succeeded in clandestinely cutting off a piece of the veil which enveloped a materialized form, it was found that a piece of the medium’s dress or underskirt was missing. I can not, at present, refer to any account of such occurrences, for I have long since had to give up keeping my register, because of failing eyesight. I only know that, in the case of Madam d’Esperance, the instances did not occur in the course of experimentation, in the true sense of the word. It was always discovered by chance and always after the seance. At the time of my sittings at Gottenburg, I wished to arrange for an experiment of the kind, and to that end, I ordered a special robe for Madam d’Esperance; but I have had no opportunity to try the experiment, being too eager to accomplish the special object for which

¹ A more extensive account of Mrs. Compton and of analogous manifestations will be found in *Psych. Stud.*, January, 1894, p. 291.

I went to Gottenburg. It should be stated, however, that when a cut is made by permission of a materialized form, as in the case quoted above, (*Psych. Stud.*, 1893, pp. 341-349,) Madam d'Esperance is not surprised, and her dress remains uninjured.

If we could establish one case of this kind, in such a way that it should be absolutely indisputable, we should therein also have a phenomenon which would mark an epoch like that to which this little book is devoted; and moreover, in that case, the evidence would not be ephemeral and transitive, (as the evidence is when organic living bodies are materialized,) but the proof would be as enduring and permanent as are the knots in an endless cord, obtained by Prof. Zöllner.

From the point of view of an impartial critic, I must admit that the phenomenon of the partial dematerialization of the body of the medium, of which I write, is still far from positively established. The principal defect, (which I can not ignore,) is that it is *unique* and was *unexpected*; the witnesses, not having foreseen any such manifestation, could not, while the phenomenon lasted, act with the calmness and prudence necessary to demonstrate a fact so extraordinary. But yet, as it is, I think it supported by evidence

sufficient to justify me in making it the subject of this memoir.

Now that the case is known, there remains but one thing to desire: its *reproduction* in all the thousand conditions possible for perfect, scientific, irreproachable observation; and above all, before a circle of persons perfectly conversant with the present state of the inquiry. To this end, we have an important help in the personality of the medium, who desires nothing so much as serious investigation, and who affords exceptional advantages in some respects, as she is not entranced during the sittings, as she is accessible to observation, and as she is herself an excellent observer. But in order to reproduce the phenomenon with Madam d'Esperance as medium, it is, first of all, necessary that her health be re-established; and that her mediumship, dissipated by the psychic and physical shock suffered as a result of what then occurred, should be restored anew. From last accounts, it appears that an improvement in her health has at length taken place, and her mediumship is returning. Let us hope that she will no longer be a martyr to the cause which has hitherto borne her only mortifications, disappointments and bitter calumnies, in return for all the abnegation, generosity and devotion she has shown.

Repiofka, Penza, July 11/23, 1895.