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A DESIRE for investigation being felt by many on hearing of the phenomena of Spiritualism, several residents in Dalston and its neighbourhood thought that if an Association were formed, and investigation instituted, the alleged facts of Spiritualism, if true, might be demonstrated. Accordingly, a preliminary Meeting was called and this Association formed on the 15th September, 1870.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP.

LIKE travellers exploring a previously unknown country, Spiritualists have to encounter many difficulties, which the experience gradually acquired gives the power of avoiding in the future. Not the least difficulty which has to be surmounted is the discovery of the best method of allowing physical mediumship to develop, so that its dangers may be avoided, and the results be beneficial both to the sensitive and his friends.

Experience seems to show the truth of the oft-repeated statement that "the lower the spirit the greater is its direct power over common matter." Probably because of their nature and affections, the lower spirits are more closely allied than others to the things of earth. Disturbances take place in haunted houses without the presence even of any medium at all, and such manifestations are usually produced by spirits who have committed great crimes in the building about which they hover. The physical manifestations produced through mediums are rarely accompanied by high intelligence, nor are the communications in many cases of the highest veracity, so that, if our only method of communicating with the next world were by means of the physical manifestations, our general ideas of the goodness of the spirits who communicate would be somewhat discouraging. When the affections of the medium are all centred upon physical pleasures, with no liking for upright principles or the progress of truth, the manifestations produced through such a medium may be very wonderful, but come from excessively low spirits. Yet it must be remembered that as upon earth, so in the next world, there are two classes of low spirits—firstly, those whose intentions are bad and mischievous; secondly, those who desire to rise and to do good. If these latter spirits work under the instructions of higher ones in producing the manifestations, it is conceivable that high mental and moral teachings may be combined with very powerful physical mediumship. Are there not such cases on record? Take, for instance, the splendid manifestations witnessed by Mr. Livermore, the New York banker, through the mediumship of Miss Kate Fox, at whose seances Mr. Livermore's departed wife made herself visible, as a form of surpassing beauty, and wrote messages to him in the same handwriting with which she communicated on earth. Moreover, Benjamin Franklin made himself clearly visible at the seances, and gave correct dates and particulars relating to himself.

These manifestations took place in the early days of the mediumship of Miss Fox, and it is worth while to raise the question whether the more reliable and truthful manifestations given through physical mediums, have not as a general rule, taken place in the early days of their mediumship, and among private friends. The general tendency of the experience already acquired by observation, teaches that after good physical mediums are unfortunately thrust out by circumstances into the

world, so that their mediumship is no longer exclusively confined to friendly influences and to social life, the mental and moral character of the manifestations begin to deteriorate. This is probably due to the circumstance that the mediums are dragged down by the low mental and moral condition of the sitters into whose presence they come, who begin to tie the medium with ropes and tapes, or to screw them down with wires, thereby introducing a low moral element into spirit circles, and surrounding the medium with a mental atmosphere which can only be penetrated by the very lowest spirits from the next world. Ropes and chains so applied prove that there is something morally rotten in the circle, for they demonstrate either that the medium is an impostor, consequently that it is necessary to apply the tests, or that the sitters suspect an innocent person of being an impostor; in either case the moral atmosphere of that circle is impure, and if spirits communicate by affinity, the better spirits manifestly cannot gain entrance thereto if they wish. Sometimes, if bad influences get about the medium, they can be cleared away in a week or two by surrounding that medium by good conditions, but if a medium has been exposed for several months to the influences of low class sitters and spirits, it seems doubtful whether the dark influences brought about them can ever be got rid of afterwards.

These are mere speculations upon a very serious subject; but if it be true, as experience seems to prove, that when mediumship first develops in a medium of upright character, surrounded only by personal friends, that the higher and lower manifestations are obtained together, and if it be also true that when physical mediums have to face the impurities of the world, they, as a general rule, lose the higher manifestations, and retain only the lower, Spiritualists ought to ascertain the cause, and having discovered that cause, should be careful to protect all newly-developed mediums from danger.

To reduce these ideas to practice, we think that people who want physical tests should be obliged to go to professional mediums, who are obliged to submit to physical tests, to meet the average wants of the miscellaneous minds which constantly come into their presence. There may be also some few unprofessional mediums who are known to be unreliable and untruthful, who also might be subjected to physical tests at their *seances*. But outside and above all these, we ought to have circles to which none but persons who do not cheat each other, and whose word is their bond, can get access, and the medium should be one of known integrity of character, thoroughly and deservedly trusted by the sitters. To such circles inquirers who in their hearts desire physical tests should never have access. Under these conditions, it would probably be possible to obtain the higher and lower manifestations together, and be possible for the departed friends of the sitters to make themselves visible, to prove their identity, and to converse with their relatives as they did in earth life. If such conditions are absolutely necessary to obtain such perfect results, it is clear that Spiritualism is passing its votaries through a splendid practical religious education, and that the highest manifestations can only be witnessed by those who, by their lives, prove themselves worthy to receive the demonstration.

## SPIRIT TEACHINGS.\*

NO. V.

*After a conversation on the influences direct and indirect which spirits exercise on men; something was said as to the character most amenable to influence, and I asked for information.*

Friend, there are varieties of mediumship as you know, and there are divers modes in which spirit influence is exercised. Some are selected for the mere physical peculiarities which make them the ready vehicles of spirit power. Their bodily organisation is peculiar, and the more undeveloped spirits readily make their presence manifest through them. They have no mental qualifications, and information given by the spirits who use them would be of a trifling or even foolish nature, and untrustworthy. They are used as the means of demonstrating spirit power; the reality of external invisible agency capable of producing objective phenomenal results.

These are known to you as the physical media. Their work is not less significant than that which is wrought through others. They are concerned with the foundation of belief.

And some are chosen because of their loving gentle nature. They are not the channels of physical phenomenal action; in many cases, not even of conscious communication with the spirit world; but they are the recipients of spirit guidance, and their pure and gentle souls are cultivated and improved by angel superintendence. By degrees they are prepared to be the conscious recipients of communications from the spheres; or they are permitted with clairvoyant eye to catch stray glimpses of their future home. A loving spirit friend is attracted to them, and they are impressionally taught and guided day by day. These are the loving souls who are surrounded by an atmosphere of peacefulness and purity of love. They live as bright examples in the world, and pass in ripe maturity to the spheres of rest and peace for which their earth life has fitted them.

Others, again, are intellectually trained and prepared to give to man extended knowledge and wider views of truth. Advanced spirits influence the thoughts, suggest ideas, furnish means of acquiring knowledge, and of communicating it to mankind. The ways by which spirits so influence men are manifold. They have means that ye know not of by which events are so arranged as to work out the end they have in view. The most difficult task we have is to select a medium through whom the messages of the higher and more advanced spirits can be made known. It is necessary that the mind chosen should be of a receptive character, for we

\* In the *Spiritualist* of August 15th, an account was printed of some remarkable *seances* held at the house of Mr. Stanhope T. Speer, M.D., Douglas-house, Alexandra-road, St. John's-wood, through the mediumship of a gentleman in private life who does not wish his name to be published. It will be remembered that most of these spirits gave their names and proved their identity; also that the extracts they gave from their writings were found, after laborious search in the British Museum Library and elsewhere, to be true. Hence there is evidence that spirits can give teachings through this medium, free, to a large extent at all events, from colour from his own thoughts; consequently, the "spirit teachings" printed above, obtained through his mediumship, may be assumed to be to a considerable extent reliable. It is proper to state that these communications are selected in chronological order from a mass which has been given continuously for the past six months. Many of the originals are of such a personal nature that they are necessarily omitted, otherwise no change is made. The communicating spirits are many: each gives his name and details of his earth-life very fully. These facts, in all cases unknown to the medium previously, have been invariably found to be correct in every particular. The handwriting, peculiar to the communicating intelligence, is always preserved and the individuality remains throughout the same.—ED.

cannot put into a spirit more information than it can receive. Moreover, it must be free from foolish worldly prejudices. It must be a mind that has unlearned its youthful errors, and has proved itself receptive of truth, even though that truth be unpopular.

More still. It must be free from dogmatism. It must not be rooted and grounded in earth notions. It must be free from the dogmatism of theologies and sectarianism and rigid creed. It must not be bound down by the fallacies of half-knowledge which is ignorant of its own ignorance. It must be a free and enquiring soul. It must be a soul that loves progressive knowledge, and that has the perception of truth afar off. One that yearns for fuller light, for richer knowledge than it has yet received; one that knows no hope of cessation in drinking in the truth.

Again, our work must not be marred by the self-assertion of a positive antagonistic mind, nor by the proud obtruding of self and selfish ends and aims. With such we can do very little, and that little must all tend to the gradual obliteration of selfishness and dogmatism. We desire a capable, earnest, truth-seeking, unselfish, loving spirit for our work. Said we not well that such was difficult to find among men. Difficult indeed, well-nigh impossible. We select, then, such a soul as we can best find, and prepared by constant training for its appointed work. We inspire into it a spirit of love and tolerance for opinions that do not find favour with its own mental bias. This raises it above dogmatic prejudice, and paves the way for the discovery that truth is manifold, and not the property of any individual. Store of knowledge is given as the soul can receive it; and, the foundation of knowledge once laid, the superstructure may be safely raised. The opinions and tone of thought are moulded by slow degrees, so that they harmonise with the end we have in view.

Many and many fail here, and we abandon our work with them, finding that not in this world of ours can they receive the truth; that old earth-born prejudices are firm, dogmatism ineradicable, and so that they must be left to time, and are to us of no avail.

Moreover, a perfect truthfulness and absence of fearfulness and anxiety are the steady growth of our teaching. We lead the soul to rest in calm trust on God and His spirit teachers. We infuse a spirit of patient waiting for that which we are permitted to do and teach. This spirit is the very reverse of that fretful, restless querulousness which characterises many souls.

Here, too, many fall away. They are fearful and anxious, and beset with doubt. The old theology tells them of a God, who watches for their fall; and of a devil, who lays perpetual traps for them. They wonder at the novelty of our teaching; their friends are ready to point to so-called prophecies which tell of anti-Christ. The old foundations are shaken, and the new are not yet laid; and so the adversaries creep in and tempt the wavering soul, and it fears and falls away, and is useless to us.

Yet more, we must eradicate selfishness in all its many forms. There must be no obtruding of self, or we can do nothing. There is nothing so utterly fatal to spirit influence as self-seeking, self-pleasing, boastfulness, arrogance, or pride. The intelligence must be subordinated, or we cannot work upon it. If it be dogmatic, we cannot use it. If it be arrogant and selfish, we cannot come near it. Self-abnegation has been the virtue which has graced the wise and holy men of all time. The seers who bore of old the flag

on which was inscribed for their generation the message of progressive truth were men who thought little of themselves, and much of their work. They who spoke to the Jews, whose messages you have in your sacred records, were men of self-denying purity and singleness of life. Jesus, when He lived amongst men, was a grand and magnificent instance of the highest self-abnegation and earnestness of purpose. He lived with you a life of pure self-denial and practical earnest work, and He died a death of self-sacrifice for truth. In Him you have the purest picture that history records of man's possible. They who since have purged the world from error, and have shed on it the beams of truth, have been one and all men of self-denial and earnest devotion to a work which they knew to be that for which they were set apart. Socrates and Plato, John and Paul, the pioneers of truth, the heralds of progress, all have been unselfish souls—souls who knew naught of self-seeking, of proud aggrandisements, of boastful arrogance. To them earnestness and singleness of purpose, devotion to their appointed work, forgetfulness of self and its interests were given in a high degree. Without that they could not have effected what they did. Selfishness would have eaten out the heart of their success. Humility, sincerity, and earnestness bore them on.

This is the character we seek. Loving and earnest, self-denying and receptive of truth; with single eye to God's work, and with forgetfulness of earthly aims. Rare it is, rare as it is beautiful. Seek, friend, the mind of the philosopher, calm, reliant, truthful and earnest! Seek the spirit of the philanthropist, loving, tolerant, ready to help, quick to give the needed aid. Add the self-abnegation of the servant of God who does his work and seeks not his reward. For such work, high, holy, noble, is possible. Such we guard and watch with jealous care. All such the angels of the Father smile and tend and protect from injury.

*But you have described a perfect character.*

Ah no! Ye have now no conception of what the perfect spirit is. Ye cannot know; ye cannot even picture it. Nor can ye know how the faithful soul drinks in the spirit-teaching and grows liker and liker to its teacher. Ye see not as we see the gradual growth of the seed which it has cost us so much labour to plant and tend. Ye only know that the soul grows in kindly graces, and becomes more lovely and more loveable. The character we have faintly pictured in such terms as are intelligible to you is not perfect, nor ought but a vague and distant resemblance of that which it shall become. With you is no perfectness. Hereafter is progression and constant development and growth. What ye call perfect, is blotted and blurred with faults to spirit vision.

*Yes, surely. But very few such are to be found.*

Few, few: and none save in the germ. There is the capability on which we work with thankfulness. We seek not for perfection: we do but desire sincerity and earnest desire for improvement: a mind free and receptive; a spirit pure and good. Wait in patience. Impatience is a dire fault. Avoid over carefulness and anxiety as to causes which are beyond your control. Leave that to us. In patience and seclusion ponder what we say.

*I suppose a secluded life is favourable for your influence, rather than the busy whirl of town. [Writing changes.]*

Friend, the busy world is ever averse from the things of spirit life. Men become absorbed in the material, that which they can see, and grasp, and hoard up, and they forget that there is a future and a spirit-life. They become so earthly that they are impervious to our influence; so material that we cannot come near them: so full of earthly interests that there is no room for that which shall endure when they have passed away. More than this, the constant pre-occupation leaves no time for contemplation, and the spirit is wasted for lack of sustenance. The spiritual state is weak: the body is worn and weary with weight of work and anxious care, and the spirit is well-nigh inaccessible. The whole air, moreover, is heavy with conflicting passions, with heart-burnings and jealousies, and contentions and all that is inimical to us. Round the busy city with its myriad haunts of vice, its detestable allurements, its votaries of folly and sin, hover over the legions of the opposing spirits who watch for opportunity to lure the wavering to their ruin. They urge on many to their grief hereafter, and cause us many sorrows and much anxious care.

The life of contemplation is that which most suits communion with us. It is not indeed to supersede the life of action, but may be in some sort combined with it. It is most readily practised where distracting cares come not in, and where excessive toil weakens not the bodily powers. But the desire must be inherent in the soul; and where that is, neither distracting cares nor worldly allurements avail to prevent the recognition of a spirit world, and of communion with it. The heart must be prepared. But it is easier for us to make our presence felt when the surroundings are pure and peaceful.

*I have been asked to put a question on a communication lately printed. Why must the life of action precede the life of contemplation?*

Friend, the life of action is that to which the incarnated spirit is devoted. The soul sustained in a body of flesh is put there for the purpose of energizing, that is, of using and developing in active use faculties which are implanted in it. In discharging its duties it learns by experience the lessons necessary for its progress. It is gifted with certain faculties, charged with certain obligations, provided with means of developing the faculties and discharging the duties. In proportion as this is duly done does the soul progress. This, you will see, necessitates a life of energy and activity. The life of dreamy inaction is fatal to development. It was not intended to preclude altogether contemplation and meditation. Far otherwise, meditation in due measure is the necessary correlative of an active life. I did not mean that it must be as the repose that follows toil, not as the sloth which precludes effort. This sphere of life is man's sphere of active energy. Nay, until the energizing spirit has passed through the seven spheres of action it may not enter on the life of contemplation in the spheres beyond. When it has reached that bound its faculties have reached such measure of development as is possible for them, and the soul passes to the life of contemplative introspection in the spheres where are gathered the free and perfected souls who have reached the state of rest. But here is activity rather than repose.

We have received enough letters respecting Mr. Volckman's conduct towards Miss Cook to fill a number of this journal, but publish only a few, as personal matters are usually of little public interest.

## LAVATER'S LETTERS TO THE EMPRESS MARIE OF RUSSIA.

LETTER IV. CONTINUED—ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

A LETTER from a deceased person to a friend on earth, on the condition of disembodied spirits:—

“At last, my beloved, it is possible for me (although only partially), to satisfy our mutual desire that I should communicate something of my present condition. On this occasion I can give you but few details; all will depend on the use you make of my communications. I know that the desire you feel to acquire information concerning me, and the general state of disembodied spirits is very great, but it cannot surpass my wish to reveal to you all that is possible.

“The power to love of the spirit that is loved in the material world, increases beyond all expression when he becomes a citizen of the immaterial world. With the increase of affection, the desire augments to communicate to those whom he has known, all that he is permitted to relate.

“I ought to begin, my well beloved, for whom my affection daily increases, by explaining to you by what means it is possible for me to write to you, without actually touching the paper or guiding the pen, and how I can converse with you in a terrestrial language that in my normal state I do not comprehend. Imagine to yourself that my actual state differs from my preceding condition, even as that of the butterfly differs from the chrysalis. I represent the transfigured and emancipated chrysalis, having passed through two metamorphoses. Even as the butterfly flutters around and amidst the flowers, we frequently float around the heads of the good, but not always. A light invisible to mortal eyes, save to those that are clairvoyant, shines around the head of all good, loving, and religious men. The idea of the nimbus with which painters surround the heads of saints is essentially true and rational. No being can be happy without this light, which sympathizing with our aura, attracts us towards itself in proportion as its brilliancy assimilates with ours. No impure spirit can approach this holy atmosphere; reposing in this light above the head of the good and pious man, we can read his thoughts and mind.

“We see man as he really is; each ray emanating from his brain is for us a word, often a discourse. We reply to his thoughts, yet he remains ignorant that it is we who answer. We excite in him unconsciously ideas that without our influence he would never conceive, although the disposition and aptitude to receive them are innate in his soul; the man worthy to receive the light, becomes thus a useful and profitable organ for the sympathetic spirit who desires to communicate his knowledge to the world.

“I have found a spirit, or rather a man, accessible to the light, whom I can approach, and it is by his organs I speak to you. Without his mediumship it would have been impossible for me to communicate with you humanly, verbally, palpably—in fact, to write to you. Thus you receive by these means an anonymous letter from a man you are unacquainted with, but who is possessed with a strong love of occult and spiritual subjects. I hover over him, even as the most divine of all spirits reposed on the most divine of all mankind after His baptism; I inspire him with ideas, he transcribes them beneath my influence, under my direction, by the effect of my *radiance*. By a slight touch I cause all the chords of his soul to vibrate conformably to his

individuality and mine. He writes what I desire him to write. I write through his mediumship, and my ideas follow his. He feels happy while writing (his ideas become more elevated, more holy, and more abundant, or he becomes more animated, more liberal, and more rich in his ideas). It appears to him that he breathes and moves in a clearer and more joyous atmosphere; he moves slowly, like a blind man led by a friendly hand; by these means you receive from me a letter. He who writes believes himself free, and he is so actually; he suffers no violence, no constraint; he is free as two friends walking arm in arm guide one another reciprocally. You ought to feel that my spirit is in direct communication with yours; you feel what I say, and you read my most secret thoughts. This is enough for once. To-day is called by you the 15 ix-1798."

JEAN GASPARD LAVATER.

SWEDENBORG ON COMMUNION WITH SPIRITS.

"It is believed by many that man may be taught by the Lord by spirits speaking with him, but those who believe and desire this do not know that this is connected with danger to their souls. As long as man lives in the world, he is in the midst of spirits as to his spirit, and yet spirits do not know that they are with man, nor man that he is with spirits. The reason is because they are conjoined immediately as to the affections of the will, but mediately as to the thoughts of the understanding; for man thinks naturally, but spirits spiritually; and natural and spiritual thought make one only by correspondences, and when two make one by correspondences one does not know anything of the other. But as soon as spirits begin to converse with man they come out of their spiritual state into the natural state of man, and they know then that they are with man, and they conjoin themselves with the thoughts of his affection, and speak with him from them; they cannot enter into anything else, for a like affection and thought flowing thence effects conjunction, and a dissimilar one causes separation. Hence it is that the spirit who speaks with man is in the same principles with man, whether they are true or false; and that he excites them, and by conjoining his own affection to that of man he strengthens it very much. Hence it is that no other spirits speak with man, or operate into him manifestly, except such as are like him; for manifest operation into man and speech are the same thing. Hence also it is that no other than enthusiastic spirits talk with enthusiasts, and that no other than Quaker spirits operate upon Quakers, and Moravian spirits upon Moravians; the same would apply to Arians, Socinians, and other heretics. There are no other spirits who talk with man than such as were once men upon earth; and what is singular, when a man thinks that the Holy Spirit converses with him or operates in him, the spirit also thinks that he is the Holy Spirit. Hence appears the great danger in which man is when he speaks with spirits, or feels their operation manifestly. Man does not know the nature of his affection whether it is good or evil, nor with what other beings or persons it is conjoined; if, therefore, he is in the pride of intellect, the spirit favours all his thought which flows thence; likewise, if any one is full of fire in favour of certain principles, as is the case with those who are in truths not from a genuine affection. When a spirit thus favours the thoughts and principles of man from a similar affection, then one leads the other, as one blind man leads another blind man, when both fall into the ditch. Those who had familiar spirits in olden times were of this kind, and likewise the Magi in Egypt and Babel, who on account of their speech with spirits, and the operation of the spirits themselves, which they felt manifestly, were called wise men. But by these means the worship of God was turned into the worship of demons, and the Church perished." (*Apoc. Expl.* 1182.)

"When spirits begin to talk with men they must not be believed; for almost everything which they say is invented by them, and they lie. If they were allowed to describe the quality of heaven, and how things in heaven are constituted, they would tell so many lies that men would be perfectly amazed; and they would say these things with the greatest assurance, protesting that they were true. Wherefore, when

spirits spoke, I was not allowed to place any faith in anything which they said."

"Spirits are extremely anxious to make up stories, and when anything is made the topic of conversation they imagine that they know all about it, and they all in their turn express a different opinion about it as though they were thoroughly conversant with the subject; and if man listens to them and believes them they deceive and seduce him in many ways. . . . Wherefore let men take care lest they believe them; for this reason, also, it is most dangerous for men in this world to talk with spirits, unless they are in true faith. The spirits induce such a powerful persuasion that it is the Lord Himself who speaks and commands, that man cannot do otherwise than believe and obey." (*Spirit Diary*, 1622.)

"There is nothing more common with spirits, than, when in conversation, to say, that a thing is so or so; for they imagine they know everything perfectly; and they declare a thing to be so, when yet it is not so. . . . As soon as they observe something which they do not know, they say at once that this is so." (1902 *S. D.*)

"Sometimes it was shown to me by experience, that spirits were induced to believe that they were those persons about whose life and manners I was able to have some knowledge, and from this knowledge in my mind they induced other spirits to believe that they were these persons; they spoke in the same manner, had the same disposition, and many other like things. They were endeavouring even to make me believe that they were these persons; but because I had learned that other persons may be personified thus perfectly by spirits, they could not impose upon me."

"Wherefore let those be careful to whom it is granted to speak with spirits lest they believe that the spirits are those whom they pretend to be; for they are able to assume the likeness of any man which they find in the memory of the man with whom they are. That this is so may also appear from this circumstance, because such spirits are associated with men as are like them; and when they are with men they do not know otherwise but that they are they." (*Spirit Diary*, 2686, 2687.)

"These expressions about the nature of spiritism," says Professor Tafel, "and the danger to which those are exposed who talk with spirits, appear very remarkable when we take into consideration that they were written in the middle of the last century, and that then Swedenborg had no idea of the extent to which the custom of talking or communicating with spirits would be carried in this world. The only true way of being instructed in the truth is by means of the written Word of God." Swedenborg says concerning this:—

"It is quite different with those who are led by the Lord, and He leads those who love the truth and desire it from Him. These are illustrated while reading the Word; for the Lord is there, and converses with every one according to his comprehension. If such persons hear the language of spirits, as happens sometimes, they are not taught, but led, and indeed so carefully, that man is still left to himself; for every man is led by the Lord by his affections, and he thinks from these in freedom as of himself, and if this was not so he could neither be reformed nor illustrated. But men are illustrated differently, each one according to his affection and his intelligence thence; those who are in the affection of spiritual truth are raised into the light of heaven, so that that they can even perceive the illustration." (*Apoc. Expl.* 1183.)

MR. JAMES WASON, solicitor, of Liverpool, in a letter to Mr. Charles Blackburn, says:—"I am glad to say that all the Spiritualists here that I have spoken to are satisfied as to the truthfulness of Miss Cook, and condemn the outrageous conduct of Mr. Volckman."

INSPIRATIONAL MUSICAL TALENT.—The youthful solo of Mr. S. T. Speer, M.D., Master Charlton Speer, mentioned in our last issue as being under the direct guidance of musical spirits long since passed away, will be the "solo organist" on the monster organ of the Albert Hall, at the concert of the Albert Hall Amateur Orchestral Society, of which His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh is President, and which will be held at the Hall to-morrow, Saturday, the 31st, at eight o'clock. He will play an "Allegro Pomposo," by Henry Smart, and the great organ Prelude and Fugue in A minor, of Sebastian Bach, a pianoforte arrangement of which, by Listz, was recently played by Dr. Hans von Bulow at the Monday Popular Concerts.

## SEANCES AT MRS. MAKDOUGALL GREGORY'S.

CONSIDERABLE public interest is felt in the mediumship of Miss Showers, in consequence of the interesting particulars respecting it which Mrs. Showers has contributed to these pages.

On Friday last Miss Showers gave a *seance* at the residence of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, 21, Green-street, Grosvenor-square, W. The guests present were Mrs. Showers; Mr. T. Herbert Noyes, jun., M.A.; the author of the "Unorthodox London" letters in the *Daily Telegraph*; the gentleman through whose mediumship the "Spirit Teachings," occasionally published in these pages are given; Dr. Richardson, who is one of the leaders of the Spiritual movement in Australia; and Mr. W. H. Harrison. There was a dark *seance*, at which Miss Showers was made to sing and play in the dark by her spirits. Her voice is a mezzo-soprano, but the spirit calling himself "Peter" controlled her to sing in a clear powerful baritone voice, like a man. The voice of "Florence" was a sweet soprano. Other spirits also controlled her while singing, the general result being a marvellous display of vocal power, which few, if any, professional singers could equal. The singing was more powerful in the dark than in the light, the control being more complete.

Last Tuesday there was a face *seance* in the presence of the same guests. "Peter" said that he wanted his medium to be tied up with tape, and arrangements were made to give the *seance* under strict test conditions. It was then found that there was no tape in the house, so the experiment had to be deferred till another occasion, but as a substitute "Peter" requested Mrs. Gregory to thoroughly search his medium in another room, which was done.

Shortly before the face of "Florence" came to the aperture in the cabinet, the spirits sang the following hymn; the solemn strains resounding through the dimly lighted room, and the circumstances under which they were given, made the general effect very impressive:—

PETR.—Jesus, my God, behold at length the time,  
When I resolve to turn away from crime.  
Oh! pardon me, Jesus! Thy mercy I implore!  
I will never more offend Thee! No, nevermore!

FLOR.—Since my poor soul Thy precious blood has cost,  
Suffer me not for ever to be lost.  
Oh! pardon me, Jesus! Thy mercy I implore!  
I will never more offend Thee! No, nevermore!

PETE.—Kneeling in tears, behold me at Thy feet;  
Like Magdalen, Thy mercy I entreat.  
Oh! pardon me, Jesus! Thy mercy I implore!  
I will never more offend Thee! No, nevermore!

"Florence" then came and talked for some time. The general conclusion was that the face bore no very strong resemblance to that of the medium; the eyes were fixed and somewhat staring, and did not "blink" at all during the whole time that the face was visible; sometimes it came for five or ten minutes at a time. This rigidity of the eyelids was the most abnormal feature noted by the observers.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.—The committee appointed by the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists to draft the prospectus, met on Monday evening last, when the several prospectuses prepared by members of the sub-committee, appointed from the body of the committee, were considered, and, from the valuable matter formulated, the committee will be enabled to submit to the Council, at the next meeting, a most comprehensive prospectus. Letters of encouragement have been received from Judge Edmonds, Mr. Robert Dale Owen, Mr. J. Milne, and others. The preliminary work being near completion, it is anticipated that the Association will soon be ready for public action.

## A TRANCE LECTURE.

LAST Sunday night, Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan delivered a trance sermon at the Cleveland Hall, Cleveland-street, Portland-road, to a large and intelligent body of listeners, among whom were Mrs. Honeywood, Mr. James Wason, Mr. Benjamin Coleman, Dr. Purdon, and a great many of the leading friends of the spiritual movement.

Mrs. Tappan began by offering the following prayer:—  
"Our Father, Thou Infinite Spirit, Thou light, and life, and surpassing glory, Thou strength above all things, and Thou soul of wonderful compassion, we praise Thee. The boundless firmament proclaims Thy power, Thy glory; the everlasting stars revolve in response to Thy law and Thy breath, and the soul of man—more mighty than worlds, more dazzling than stars, endowed with more surpassing glory than the sun—the soul of man worships thee, and aspires to know Thee, because of Thy endless love, strives to know Thee because of Thy wisdom. But Thou, that searchest the human heart, Thou whose presence is here, even as a voice, respond. Even as a penetrating soul, Thou canst judge of the offerings Thy children bring, whether they be of the spirit of purity and light, whether they be of that perfect praise whereby the soul is made fully in accord with Thee. But let us be strong in the strength of meekness, let us be wise in the midst of Thy patience and understanding, let us be filled with the breath of Thy power and inspiration, till all life shall be embodied in loving deeds and words, until mankind shall forget its misery and its strife, and be uplifted to behold those angels who evermore sing praises to Thee in words and deeds of loving kindness. And to Thee, O Father, be praise for evermore."

Mrs. Tappan, in the trance state, said that the subject of the discourse that evening would be the nature and efficacy of prayer. She said that the tendency of modern thought was towards exact science, and that one of England's leading men of science had recently asked that the ward of a hospital should be set aside, and the patients in that particular ward be prayed for, to see whether prayer had any influence over their recovery or not. This shout of derision from the world of science was naturally followed by one of horror from the religious world; but the fact that a man should thus go beyond his sphere, and ask the Deity to gratify one of his petty foibles, shows what is abroad in the nineteenth century. Whilst materialism is thus asserting that there can be no answer to prayer, something should be done to make the real nature of prayer understood. Materialists declare the whole world to be inflexibly governed by law, and that man can receive nothing unless he asks for it in accordance with natural law, consequently that the sentence in the Lord's Prayer, asking for bread, is superfluous, because if a man wishes for bread, he must plough, and sow, and reap, before the bread can be forthcoming. If he wishes for political power or for success in battle, he must work for them, and adopt means to attain the end; and everybody knew that praying was not much in accordance with military ethics, or much relied upon by the leaders of armies. Such extreme ideas on both sides as to the nature of prayer were, probably, mistakes. Material things should be prayed for in material ways. Men had eyes, hands, and feet, and should use them if they wanted material blessings; they should sow the seed in full confidence that time and the laws which God had made, would bring them the harvest. But the materialist applies his methods to spiritual things, in doing which he makes a mistake; he forgets that there may be laws which transcend those of physical nature, but whereby the spiritual nature is sustained and fed. God may have methods that science does not understand. Professor Tyndall, before challenging the Almighty to perform an experiment to please him, ought to place himself in a condition to learn what prayer is. The man of science bends his knee to nature, and searches her realms with reverence, but when he comes to the vestibule of the spirit, without reverence and without awe, he tears down the veil of spirituality, and says there is nothing there, but that reason alone will suffice. Other qualities of the mind have to be developed before man can understand the things of the spirit. The eye of man alone was not sufficient to discover many of the stars, which have been brought to his knowledge only by means of the telescope, and may it not be true that man's spiritual nature may be limited also, and needs a telescope to learn more of the things of the spirit. Religion, with her snowy brow and with her loving voice, has spoken in many tongues, in every age, in every land, and found her responsive echo in the human heart. It is true that although God answers prayer, He must do so in accordance with law, but at that point the man of science

must stop, for the Almighty does not necessarily answer prayer in accordance with material laws, and those who have no souls, or think they have none, cannot be within the range of the comprehension of these things, any more than a blind man can see the sun. There may be thousands of channels of which the materialist knows nothing, whereby the Infinite works out His purposes. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire," says Dr. Watts, but there are desires which are not of the soul, and may not be the legitimate subject of prayer. Prayer should deal only with that which comes within the range of spiritual requirements. Prayer cannot transcend natural laws, says the materialist. But what are natural laws? Who has pointed out the boundaries of infinity? To limit the laws of the Deity is to bind infinity. Mrs. Tappan then went on to say that prayer was efficacious also in proportion to its intensity, just as sound could be heard at a greater distance when it was more intense, and that as the union of two or three voices would intensify sound, so praying in unison would produce more powerful effects. Moreover, if several persons agreed about one request, it was likely to be less selfish, and would more probably come within the true range of spiritual powers to answer. The union of the several minds would form a spiritual atmosphere, and when its waves vibrated they might reach the centre of the soul itself.\* The man intent upon material things passes through the field of nature without seeing any beauty in the flowers, and without recognising the fragrance of the breezes; their glory was lost to him. There was, in truth, a realm of spirit which might be entered by prayer; but the upper chambers of the mind, the spiritual part of the soul's temple, could only be entered by desire. Men could not be forced upwards. No messenger would take them unwillingly into the realms of life and light. She closed by saying that the laws which control spirit were as perfect and inflexible as those which govern matter, and she exhorted her hearers to cultivate their spiritual faculties.

#### SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA,

THE Rev. John Tyerman delivered the third of his course of lectures on the question, "What does Spiritualism teach?" in the Polytechnic Hall, Bourke-street, Melbourne, on Sunday evening. The question often arose, "What is the standard of Spiritualistic teaching—on what authority does it rest?" He replied they had no absolute and final standard on all questions, and could not possibly have in this imperfect and progressive world. Only on questions capable of positive demonstration—and they were comparatively few—could a final standard be erected. Those who dogmatically affirmed that a complete and final revelation of truth and religion was found in any particular book, and entrusted to the custody of any particular church, displayed marvellous presumption, and but little knowledge of the progressive development of truth, which was God's method of revealing His will to mankind. Spiritualistic teachings rested on a fourfold basis. First, on carefully observed and well-attested facts. These proved the doctrine of communion with disembodied spirits. Secondly, on science. Science was the high priest and interpreter of nature. Its discoveries confirmed their position in regard to the uniformity and immutability of nature's operations, and the consequent non-interposition of a special providence. Spiritualism hailed every new scientific revelation with delight, and did not tremble at every fresh announcement as orthodoxy did, lest it should clash with some cherished dogma, or disprove some favourite passage of Scripture, as had already been done in several instances. Thirdly, on reason. Reason was not infallible, but it was the highest authority, the safest guide God had given man. Those who so persistently decried reason as carnal in its nature and unreliable in its deductions, were strangely inconsistent; for it was only by the exercise of the reason they condemned that they arrived at their conclusions; and every attempted explanation of their Bible, and enforcement of their religion, was but an exercise of the same despised reason. Spiritualism tried every dogma at the bar of enlightened reason: if it stood the test it was received as true; if not, it was rejected as false. Fourthly, on the moral sentiments of our nature. Reason was not sufficient of itself. If the premises from which it argued were false, its conclusions might be quite logical and consistent, and yet most false and mischievous. Calvin's views on certain dogmas were instanced as an illustration. Spiritualism tried every alleged truth by man's higher nature. Was a doctrine humane in its spirit? was it

beneficial in its tendency? was it worthy of a God of infinite and unchanging love? If not, no matter what the authority on which it rested might be, whether Church or Bible, it was spurned as a pernicious error. Such doctrines as those of the fall, the atonement by innocent blood, a personal devil, and eternal punishment, would not bear the test of man's lofty moral sentiment, when not warped and beclouded by man-made creeds. Returning to the latter part of the last proposition discussed a week ago, which involved the doctrine of spirit communion, the lecturer contended that it was in the very nature of things in the highest degree probable. Would God prohibit it unless it was likely to injure either the spirits themselves, or mortals on earth? But both could not fail to be greatly benefitted, rather than injured, by it. It then became a question of fact whether the departed did or did not return to earth, and communicate with those still in the body. He maintained that the testimony in favour of the proposition was overwhelming. If spirit intercourse was not proved, nothing could be proved by testimony. Mr. Tyerman then dealt at length with the following propositions:—First, that individual human reason is the final arbiter on all questions of speculative truth, and individual conscience on all matters of religious and moral duty. Catholics put forth their Bible and their Church as the only competent arbiters on these subjects. But so-called infallible Popes had too often proved their fallibility to be trusted by intelligent men. Protestants set up the Bible as the final and only reliable standard of truth and duty; but in point of fact each Protestant sect had its own interpretation of that book, which of course was correct, and all others erroneous. But who should decide, amid this conflict of interpretations, which was right? Let each man judge for himself; for after all, that was what the leaders of the different Protestant sects did. Secondly, that eternal progression, and consequent ever-increasing knowledge and happiness, is the natural and inevitable destiny of every member of the human family. Under that proposition, it was shown that man was capable of never-ending progression, that no other view of his destiny was worthy of his Creator; and that this destiny was an inevitable one, arising out of the natural constitution of things, and, therefore, was not a something lost by the fall of fabled Adam, and purchased for a select few by Jesus Christ. That proposition demolished that most barbarous and blasphemous of doctrines—the doctrine of eternal punishment. An animated discussion followed the lecture, which appeared to be greatly enjoyed by a large and intelligent audience.—*The Progressive Spiritualist, Melbourne, Nov. 8th, 1873.*

#### "FIVE WEEKS IN A TRANCE."

UNDER the above title we recently quoted an interesting article from *The Religio-Philosophical Journal* (Chicago), and now give some further particulars extracted from that journal of January 17th last:—

In No. 16 of the *Journal*, we published an article clipped from the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, giving an account of a wonderful phenomenon, relating to Miss Eleanor Bonney, who had, several months ago, repeatedly announced to her friends, that she was, at some time not far distant, to go into a long and peculiar trance, the result of which would be the revelation of some startling facts—facts that would convince the sceptical world of the truths of Spiritualism. Her predictions were treated with a great deal of levity by many of her friends and relatives, being considered the result of hallucination, but the sequel shows that her prophecies thus far have been literally verified. She seemed to entertain the extraordinary opinion, that it was her peculiar mission, to prove that a person could, to all appearance absolutely die, the soul be completely separated from its earthly tenement, and the first stages of decomposition even set in, and then, through the potent agency of spirits, be restored to life again.

There are a few things exceedingly curious connected with this remarkable case. Many entertain the idea that she had taken poison, from the fact that she predicted the hour at which she was to "go out," as she

\* Mrs. Tappan sometimes tries to explain spiritual things physically. What is the wave-length of the alleged prayer vibrations?—Ed.

termed it, at two o'clock in the morning, and lying down upon the bed finished the directions she wished to give. No one was to be allowed to watch over her but Mr. and Mrs. Preston, Mr. and Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Dutton. The attendants positively assert that many of the predictions she made have been fully realised, and they entertain a firm conviction that resuscitation will eventually follow.

The fact that she was a very large woman, weighing 208 pounds, perfectly healthy and gushing with vitality, may have made her a desirable subject for scientific spirits to experiment upon, and who may, in this instance fail in accomplishing what they desire, the same as the denizens of earth often do in many of their undertakings.

The statement of the *Democrat and Chronicle*, that although five weeks had passed, there was no more unpleasant odour than would naturally proceed from a sick room, certainly is strange, and indicates that something quite unknown to men of science is at work in preventing decomposition. Since then, however, "There has been no sign of resuscitation, but an examination of the coroner shows that the remains are far gone in decomposition." The statement is made that the body remains at the temperature of the surrounding atmosphere, and presents the same appearance that would naturally have been expected by the sceptical. The coroner did not think there was sufficient evidence of an unnatural death to warrant a dissection of the body.

According to the *Albany Evening Journal*, coroner Bissell, of Genesee, accompanied by Dr. Lauderdale and Sheriff Arnold had been to Avon to investigate the case of Miss Bonney. They met with no resistance in gaining an entrance and making a full examination of the "corpse," as they pronounce it to be. They found no appearance of violent death or other circumstances which would warrant them in taking the body in charge, and say that the body is so far decomposed as to render dissection useless in reaching the cause of her death. Externally, it presents a full and plump appearance and dark yellow colour, is of the same temperature as the room, and does not differ from the appearance of any body which had been kept the same length of time. In conclusion, the *Albany Evening Journal* says, "Thus it appears that Miss Bonney actually perpetrated a very severe joke upon herself. A large portion of the community will for ever believe that she took poison. If she did not, she worked her mind into such a condition of excitement that death resulted therefrom. To most people the latter theory will seem highly improbable, if, as has been stated, the deceased was at the time in a state of perfect physical health. It is to be regretted that the coroner did not do his duty promptly, and by a thorough investigation, ascertain whether the girl was poisoned or not."

"The examination of this late day reveals the fact that the remains have been steadily undergoing the process of decay, and are now but a putrid mass, emitting a fearful stench. This should be enough to satisfy the most ardent Spiritualist that the body can never return to life. Still the family refuse to be convinced, and announce their purpose to keep the remains unburied for six months."

That Miss Bonney is absolutely dead, no one who visits her doubts. Yet that, even, was strictly in accordance with her prediction, for she had positively stated, that "when the soul had entirely separated from the body the house would be shaken violently,"

which prediction was fully realised by those in attendance. The *Rochester Union and Advertiser* says, "A physician from this city—not a believer in Spiritualism—visited Avon yesterday, and made an examination of the body, as he had done before. He was not allowed to touch the body, but merely to look at it, as it was one of the conditions of the going out, that no hand should be brought in contact with it. This condition has been conscientiously lived up to by her attendants. The physician states that, in his opinion, the woman is positively dead, and it is an utter impossibility for life to be brought back into the body."

"Since his last examination, about a week ago, no material change seemed to have taken place in the appearance of the corpse. He noticed, however, a slight ring about the eyes, which was a little lighter in colour than the rest of the body. This he accounts for by saying that it is a perfectly natural result of the sinking of the eyes. They at first and for some time protruded slightly from the head, such as it was predicted, would take place, but have now sunk somewhat, which gives that appearance about the eyes so often seen in a corpse."

"As regards the odour in the room, the doctor says he thought he detected, on his visit yesterday, a different scent from that which he found on his first one. This, however, he did not think arose from any decomposition, as in his opinion, that had not yet set in. Many reports have been circulated in regard to the time it was said Miss Bonney predicted she would remain in that state, but her friends state that she did not give the exact time when she expected to come back to life, but said that they should keep her six months, not burying her unless decomposition should set in. When the soul re-entered the body, she said they should hear a sound like the booming of a cannon."

"One thing is stated by the doctor, which, if true, is certainly remarkable. About four weeks ago, when he was about to go up to Avon, he bought a bouquet of very choice, handsome flowers at Vick's store on State-street. That bouquet he took with him to Avon, and it was placed in the room where the body of Miss Bonney was lying. The flowers are to this day as fresh and as fragrant apparently as when they were purchased."

The whole incident is indeed curious, and is exciting great interest. Those flowers that do not seem to perish, the fact that Miss Bonney went into a trance precisely at two o'clock, surrounded by her friends, and that her tongue has protruded from her mouth, and a slight effusion of blood been perceptible on her nostrils, as predicted, must certainly awaken within the minds of her relatives and friends an earnest desire to scrupulously follow her directions, and the circumstance (also foretold), that when her soul had been finally separated from the body, that the house would be shaken violently, must, of course, arouse within each one anticipations of favourable results, however incredulous a person may be, and her brother and others strong in the faith, declare that she will yet come to life again as perfect as before.

We entertain the opinion that "nothing is impossible with God;" that is, that anything not beyond the limitations of reason can be performed or accomplished by the power of mind. We believe that the resuscitation of Miss Bonney is possible but very improbable. A partial decomposition of the body would not seriously interfere therewith, if the nerve centres remained in a perfect state of preservation.

Poetry.

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS.

(From the Churchman's Monthly Penny Magazine.)

'Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'—Heb. i. 14.

CAN it—can it be,  
That the celestial spirits throng this sphere  
And hover o'er and round us, ever near,  
Though we no form may see?  
And am I now surrounded by a band  
Of those who minister at God's right hand?  
And do these sinless hosts  
Encamp about our coasts.\*  
And through our valleys walk, and on our mountains stand?

And can it be, indeed,  
That those pure beings hear each word I say,  
And note my every action, day by day?—  
Perchance my thoughts too read;  
Grieving (if grief can touch angelic breasts)  
Whene'er I disobey my God's behests;  
Rejoicing when my soul  
Pants for the heavenly goal,  
And battling with the foe who oft its course arrests?

Yes! 'tis no idle theme,  
No speculation of a mind diseased,  
No wild conceit by some enthusiast seized,  
No poet's baseless dream;  
Then let not scoffers ridicule nor sneer,  
Nor let philosophers their smile of pity wear,  
Nor Christians deem it vain,  
The thought to entertain,  
That angels lead us on, that spirits guard our rear.

At God's command they fly;  
They leave their diamond thrones, their sapphire bowers,  
Cerulean fields, and never-fading flowers;  
They cleave the azure sky,  
And with the swiftness of the morning ray,  
The first glad messenger of welcome day,  
To this sad sinful world,  
Where Satan hath unfur'd  
His rebel standard black, they wing their aerial way.

And when convulsive throes  
Shake the frail tenement that holds the soul,  
And snap the silver cords, and break the golden bowl,—  
When life draws near its close,  
The eye of faith discerns 'mid gathering shades,  
And more distinct as earth's fond vision fades,  
The white-robed seraphs nigh,  
To bear the soul on high,  
To that celestial home, which death no more invades.

J. F.

Correspondence.

[Great freedom is given to correspondents, who sometimes express opinions diametrically opposed to those of this journal and its readers.]

THE OUTRAGE AT A SPIRIT CIRCLE.

SIR,—I have just read in the *Medium*, Mr. Volckman's first instalment of what he calls "his ghost experiences," and in which he sets forth his version of the scene which took place at Mr. Luxmoore's house last December.

Although I am a Spiritualist, I am bound to confess that my faith in the authenticity of this particular manifestation has been somewhat shaken by the events which then occurred. It is natural that this should be so, but as Spiritualists we have seen enough of wonders to induce us for the present to suspend our judgment.

The phase of mediumship supposed to be possessed by Miss Cook is comparatively new among us, and although the appearance of John King and other spirits are pointing in the same direction, they differ widely, inasmuch as they have as yet no power to materialise their forms to the extent assumed to have been attained by "Katie."

I have not the pleasure of knowing Miss Cook, nor have I been at any of her *seances*—if these lines should meet her eye, I trust she will accept them as the mere expression of a natural doubt, and as not intended in any way to assume the smallest culpability on her part.

Whilst acknowledging that we live in the midst of wonders, which, scouted as incredible at first become at last to be as familiar to us as the sunset, we are none the less bound to use an ever increasing vigilance to see that our appetite for the marvellous does not lead us to swallow all spiritual food that is offered to us without due examination as to whether it is wholesome.

Now, in this case we have certain manifestations occurring which are vouched for as facts by numerous persons of un-

\* Psalm xxxiv. 7.

blemished character and reputation, whose evidence it would seem impossible to gainsay. Circumstances arise, however, which tend to impeach the correctness of these facts—and as it is impossible to doubt the *bona fides* of those who have vouched for them—let us consider whether it is not possible that they may have been deceived.

The whole question in my mind resolves itself into this. Have Miss Cook's friends ascertained by the evidence of their eyesight that she is actually inside the cabinet during the time that Katie is manifesting outside? Nothing short of this should satisfy them, for if this test is unattainable, endless doubt and suspicion must be raised by the marvellous resemblance that is reputed to exist between Katie and the medium.

The answer to this objection will doubtless be that measures are taken which preclude the possibility of Miss Cook so much as rising from her chair, but we must bear in mind that mere fastening with tape, however well it may be done, and however securely the knots may be sealed, is no practical safeguard. We know by experience that a powerful physical medium can well laugh at such clumsy expedients, and could be free by spiritual aid, almost ere the curtain of the cabinet was drawn.

We know also that the clothes of such a medium can be removed in an instant of time, and on this hypothesis, and without imputing the least intentional disloyalty to Miss Cook, she herself thus freed from her bonds and somewhat disguised as regards her clothing by the spirits who control her, may be walking about in trance state among her friends ignorant as an innocent child (as indeed I believe her to be) of the trick which spirits are playing us through her means.

To tell us that the figure is occasionally seen to be taller than the medium, conveys to my mind no conviction—for we all know that the bodies of powerful mediums can be and are frequently elongated.

When a gentleman of such position and character as Mr. Luxmoore tells me that he has with his own eyes seen Miss Cook and Katie bearing separate and distinct individualities, at the same instant of time, then I will accept as fact the truth of this manifestation, but until then I must be pardoned for saying, "It may well be true, but it is not yet proved to be so."

But let not Mr. Volckman think that he has done any service to Spiritualism, or to the cause of truth, by the conduct he has thought fit to pursue. I do not think that had he succeeded in proving Miss Cook to be an impostor (which he has not) he would have received the thanks or commendation of one right thinking man. He was perfectly at liberty to have denounced the manifestation as an imposition, if such had been the result of his observations, but to take the course he did was both ill-bred and ungentlemanlike.

My friend asks me to dinner, and gives me a bad one; I have doubtless a right afterwards to express my opinion on the subject, but to jump up from the table, and by my conduct to create dismay, confusion, and distress among the guests, is a very different matter, and the consequence would very justly be my exclusion from all such social meetings in future.

To attempt to justify my behaviour on the grounds of the insufficiency or bad quality of the food, would be considered an aggravation of the offence.

Mr. Volckman has, however, yet more grievously offended against the unwritten law of the society in which he claims to move. To obtain admission to this *seance*, he deliberately pledged his word to conform to certain arrangements and stipulations. Nothing that then occurred could release him from that pledge, and nothing that he can now say will remove from him the stigma of having violated it. M. R. S.

January 19th, 1874.

SIR,—I enclose a copy of a letter I have sent to the editor of the *Medium*, and request you will kindly also publish it, as I find that Mr. Burns cannot be relied on to print statements or opinions which do not "answer his purpose." IOTA.

Jan. 20th, 1874.

To the Editor of "The Medium."

SIR,—In your remarks on "Grasping a Spirit" last week, you say well, "Allegiance to truth is the first duty of the investigator of Spiritualism" (you might have added, "or of any one else"), and I presume that in saying that "any man has a right to take such steps as he conceives to be necessary to expose what he believes to be\* imposition, you

The italics are mine.—IOTA.

mean this latter sentiment to be taken with the grain of salt contained in the former, viz., subject to the "allegiance to truth." (It is broad enough even then.)

Mr. Volckman, however, in his defence, reverses this wholesome order, and pleads that a man is justified in breaking his voluntarily given word of honour when the object is to expose what *he believes to be* imposition. In other words, that the end justifies the means. In all consistency then, sir, let us at once float all our mediums in deep water, with their thumbs tied together, for there is not one of them whom *some one* does not "believe to be" an impostor.

There are two perfectly distinct questions involved in this matter, each of which should, I submit, be first judged independently, and on its own merits—viz. :—

1. The genuineness or otherwise of the materialised spirit, Katie, as per Miss Cook ; and

2. The morality of Mr. Volckman's proceeding.

As regards the former—whether or no Mr. Volckman has done anything towards establishing his point, is a question which each one who reads his account must decide for himself; but as regards the latter, what of Mr. Volckman and his truth? I have said advisedly that he broke his "voluntarily given word," for if he objected to the conditions (which he knew beforehand, as this was not his first visit to my knowledge), he ought, as a man of "truth," to have said so before the *seance* began. He himself, indeed, distinctly admits that he did "break the conditions," in the only sense in which it is possible to understand that expression. But he justifies it.

To come to the bearing of this second point on the first. How can we accept the testimony of a man who so lightly esteems his own word of honour?

It seems worthy of note that he has not yet denied that he acted at the instigation of others, though he says no one had any knowledge of his invitation to or presence at this particular *seance*.

He sneers at Lord Caithness. His lordship merely did what every gentleman, man or boy, would have done in his place.

25, James-street, Buckingham-gate, S.W.

IOTA.

January 20th, 1874.

To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."

SIR,—As I anticipated, the editor of the *Medium* has suppressed my letter, and, as I also foresaw, he has, nevertheless, as his custom is, used it as an invisible peg whereon to hang some comments of his own. Yet he lauds his own neutrality in "permitting the other side to speak," and indeed, asserts that he has no doubt of the genuineness of Miss Cook's mediumship. It is, in fact, clear enough that *she* is not his quarry. He flies at higher game, and makes his expressions of faith in her serve as a cloak to conceal his real object, which, however, evidently is to throw dirt at the person he designates as the "great unpaid." Mr. Oxley's letter did not interfere with this object,—mine did. The one is therefore inserted, the other suppressed.

The editor hints that he could "suggest a higher code of morals for the spirit circle than" one founded on "honour." He does not state *what* it is, but that is quite plain from the general drift of his observations. He maintains, with Mr. Volckman, that *if* the spirit were no spirit, M. Volckman was justified in breaking his word of honour. In the first place, there is not much virtue in this "if." It is just as possible that Mr. Volckman may be mistaken in his belief, if he holds it, that what he grasped was Miss Cook; and if he be so, what becomes of his justification? He has thrown his honour to the winds for nothing! In the second place, if he had even known that the "figure" was that of the medium, it would not have justified him in breaking his *voluntarily given word*. He and the editor think otherwise. "THE NEW CODE OF MORALS" is that it is lawful to do evil that good may come; that when a man has an object in view which he himself deems righteous, he is bound to use *any* means, moral or immoral, to attain it. It must be confessed that the editor acts nobly up to his creed. He sees a chance of a fling at some one against whom he has a spite (of course he thinks it righteous to take advantage of it), so he adopts Mr. Volckman, whom he professes to think mistaken; suppresses the letters which tell against him; and invents a new code of morals to justify him.

IOTA.

#### MESMERIC EXPERIMENTS.

SIR,—Some years back I went to see some experiments in mesmerism; it was not in England and not in Buddha land, although what occurred may denote in small what is said to occur extensively in Tartary.

There were two subjects in great contrast, one a highly clairvoyant person, the other, when mesmerised, went into a state of rigidity like one dead. While in this state, the experimenter ran a large pin, eight or nine inches long, right through the flesh of the subject's arm; it did not flinch any more than if the body had been dead. This was done several times, and I had the *privilege*, on one occasion, of extricating the pin from the flesh, and I pulled it out with some difficulty, for it was well in, and protruded from the contrary end to that in which it was inserted. No blood flowed, and when the pin was out, there was little or no trace of where the pin had been inserted. Where had the feeling gone? It was evidently, during the time of the body's rigidity, not in the body, but I suppose it was somewhere.

Some of M. Kardec's comments on the conditions of the perisprit may throw light on this and other kindred subjects. He says: "This second envelope of the soul or the perisprit exists then during our corporeal life, it is the intermediary for all the sensations that the spirit experiences, the means by which the spirit transmits its will to the exterior and acts upon the organs. To make use of a comparison of material origin, it is the electric wire conductor which serves for the reception and transmission of the thoughts; it is, in short, that mysterious, inexplicable agent, which we call the nervous fluid, and which plays so important a part in the human economy, but of which we take but too little account in physiological and pathological questions. In medicine, those students who confine themselves to the material, ponderable elements only, are deprived of an incessant source of action which would guide them in the appreciation of facts. A knowledge of the perisprit is the key to a throng of problems until now unexplained."

M. Kardec also says, that although, in its normal state, the perisprit or semi-material envelope of the spirit is in the form of the man, it can nevertheless assume any other form it pleases, and is expansive or compressible to any degree; and, be it again remarked, this perisprit we have with us here, and when we die we carry it away with us, leaving only our gross mind.

W. R. T.

[There are certain parts of the body into which a pin may be driven without causing much pain; to illustrate this, Sir John Lubbock, Bart., M.P., once hammered a pin up to its head into his leg, at a Royal Institution lecture on "Savages" delivered by him.—Ed.]

#### SPIRITUALISM AND SCIENCE.

SIR,—I have lately read with great care and with much delight, the very able article in the current number of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, on "Phenomena called Spiritual," by the editor, Mr. William Crookes. Although not an acknowledged Spiritualist himself, I think that Mr. Crookes has proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, not only phenomena of a very remarkable character occurring at his own house, under the most severe tests *in the light*, but further, that he has also given the best proofs we have yet had from him, that the only theory that will explain all the various phenomena daily taking place in all parts of the habitable world, is the spiritual theory—that they are produced by the agency of "disembodied spirits." I wish to draw special attention to the following passage in Mr. Crookes's article. He says, speaking on the subject of intelligence, *the intelligence is sometimes of such a character as to lead to the belief that it does not emanate from any person present*. Again he says, "Without wishing at present to speak positively on this point, I may say that the will and intelligence of the medium have much to do with the phenomena. I have observed some circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of an outside intelligence, not belonging to any human being in the room." Now I claim that although the investigation of Spiritualism is without doubt a matter for individual proof, yet testimony like the above, coming as it does from such a careful observer as Mr. Crookes, is deserving of our highest respect and attention. For surely such candid admissions come very near to the threshold of Spiritualism. That the mind both of the medium and the sitters do in some way, not yet clearly understood, assist, or retard the phenomena, is a fact, and therefore cannot be denied. As for instance, it is well known that (except in those comparatively rare cases where we have highly developed mediums such as Mr. Home and others present), in an inharmonious circle little or nothing occurs. So far as that is concerned Mr. Serjeant Cox's psychic force theory is not without its value. But admitting all this, I myself have seen, heard, and felt in my ghost experiences that which neither psychic force, muscular cerebration, or any of the pet theories of our opponents can

possibly explain. Indeed, this is almost proved by the words of Mr. Cox as quoted by Mr. Crookes, where he says, "But I and all who adopt this theory of psychic force as being the agent through which the phenomena are produced, do not thereby intend to assert that this psychic force may not be sometimes seized and directed by some other intelligence than that of the psychic."

I see that in the present number of the *Spiritualist* you have reprinted an article on Mr. Crookes' experiment appearing in the *Daily Telegraph*, in which the sapient editor or writer, whoever he may be, professes to have doubts as to whether he (Mr. Crookes) may not be deceiving himself. Mr. Crookes has not given us names and dates, the writer complains. Truly, the conversion of the writer would indeed be valuable!

I have also read the article appearing in that ably conducted magazine, the *Fortnightly Review*, from the pen of Lord Amberley. His lordship sneers at the whole thing. Placed by the side of the patient researches of Mr. Crookes, it sinks into utter insignificance. By his own showing he has proved himself unworthy of respect, for a man who could play such tricks upon his friends, by purposely tilting a table, had better refrain from writing any more so-called criticisms on Spiritualism. They are, as Dr. Sexton says, not worth a snap of the finger.

JOHN WATSON.

3, Windsor-place, St. Vincent-street, Ladywood,  
Birmingham, January 25th, 1874.

#### "A PRIORI" OBJECTIONS TO SPIRITUALISM.

SIR,—A false argument may be more obstructive to the advancement of knowledge than a false fact. Such reasoning, therefore, as the following, ought not to pass unchallenged:—

"There is a line between phenomena contrary to our experience, and phenomena beyond it, though the line may not be always easy to discover."\*

Clearly "a phenomenon contrary to our experience," is a confusion of terms. Experience is the aggregate of observed phenomena, and, as Hume has shown, it can neither prove nor disprove anything beyond the facts it takes cognizance of. An alleged phenomenon may be contrary to a supposed law, but as every supposed law is a generalisation from experience, and not experience itself, this is evidently a distinct proposition from the one quoted. We are constantly adding to our experience facts previously outside and beyond it, and such new facts often contravene or appear to contravene former generalisations (called known laws), but they cannot be contrary to former experience.

These remarks are intended to point out to objectors that all *a priori* reasoning against the "phenomena called spiritual" is unphilosophical, and must be futile. What the opponents of "Spiritualism" have to do is to explain its facts or to deny them. An inductive science is not in the nature of things to be demolished by an *a priori* argument.

G. T. GREEN.

Penalt, near Monmouth.

#### THE OUTRAGE AT A SPIRIT CIRCLE.

MR. VOLCKMAN, who committed the outrage at Mr. Cook's circle at Hackney, has published long letters in the *Medium*, attempting not only to justify his own conduct, but abusing several persons well known and respected by Spiritualists. His utterances answer themselves, and need no reply, for no right-minded person can respect the tone of jocularly he assumed in making serious charges against private individuals.

Miss Cook's mediumship has been well tested for a long time by gentlemen of high intellectual culture, legal acumen, and scientific knowledge. The spirit faces have appeared at the cabinet window when she has been bound and sealed in her chair, with a lock of her hair passed through the door, and fastened so as to be in sight of the observers all through the seances. She has been searched by ladies over and over again, and has given seances in private houses, in cabinets extemporised for the occasion. At Mr. Luxmoore's house, 16, Gloucester-square, Hyde-park, W., the cabinet, which Miss Cook and her friends did not enter before

the seance began, consisted of a private room, to which entrance by the other door or the window was prevented by soldered metallic fastenings and other means. It was searched by Mr. Crookes, Prince Wittgenstein, and others to see that there was no white drapery in it, and Miss Cook was searched by Mrs. Honywood, Mrs. Crookes, Mrs. Tappan, and others, before she entered this cabinet, in which she was bound, and sealed with signet rings. Katie, of course, came out as usual in flowing white robes. In fact, Miss Cook has given more good test face and form manifestations than any other medium in London, all publicly attested by good witnesses.

Moreover, as time goes on, these manifestations will develop in all directions, and will without question cause Mr. Volckman's act to be regarded as it deserves in the light of history. Did we desire to begin a war of words, Mr. Volckman's writings give excellent openings for attack, but it is preferable to leave him to his own conscience, and his own thoughts. He has no power to make reparation for the wrong he has done, even should he desire to do so. His conduct is universally condemned among Spiritualists, and has awakened not a little sympathy for Miss Cook.

As regards Mr. Burns, who justifies Mr. Volckman for breaking his word of honour, and who has made the integrity of a truthful and upright medium a matter of newspaper debate, probably his "new code of morals" on this matter is the same which induced him, after publishing deliberate untruths about the British National Association of Spiritualists, to refuse to correct them when his attention was officially called in writing, by the Council, to their falsehood. The untruths have therefore been wilfully allowed to sink uncontradicted into the minds of his unfortunate readers.

The testimony about Miss Cook's seances, published by most of the leaders of the Spiritual movement in England, has no weight with Mr. Volckman; he came to the conclusion that he knew more about the matter than they, after his forty minutes' experience. But Mr. Volckman's intimate friend, Mr. Guppy, has been present at one only of Miss Cook's seances; he was delighted, and proposed to the company that a written account of it should be drawn up and signed on the spot. Unfortunately Mrs. Guppy has never been at one of Miss Cook's seances, but the following testimony of his own friend will probably interest Mr. Volckman. It is quoted from *The Spiritualist* of Dec. 15th, 1872.

"At the close of the seance the following account of it was drawn up, Mr. Guppy dictating the first two or three sentences, and Mr. Henderson most of the others; but the strict accuracy of every sentence was considered and passed unanimously before it was written, and the measurements given in the document are exact, as they were made on the spot with a measuring tape:—

"We, the undersigned, had the pleasure of being present at a spiritual seance at Mr. Henry Cook's, Hackney, on Wednesday evening, December 4th, 1872. Miss Cook, after entering the cabinet, was tied, by some power, at the wrists, round the neck, and round the waist to the back of her chair, with thread. After the examination and sealing of every perceptible knot, by Mr. Henderson, he, at his own suggestion, and with the assent of the medium, tied a thread round the side cross-bar and round the front left leg of the chair; the thread was then brought under the door to the outside of the cabinet, and fastened to the carpet by a common pin, in a good light. Thus the thread could have no play up and down the leg of the chair, consequently the chair could not be moved more than two inches without breaking away from the pin which held the thread outside. The other thread was knotted close to each of the wrists of the medium, and sealed, so that the hands could not be passed through the loop round each wrist. The doors were shut, and soon afterwards a small hand, followed by a large one, appeared; next came a face calling

\* "Experiences in Spiritualism," in *The Fortnightly Review*, Jan. 4, 1871.

itself 'Katie, the spirit,' in full gaslight; she was clearly seen by all present, she much resembled the medium in appearance, and was surrounded with white drapery. The beautiful white face then went away, and in three or four minutes the same features reappeared, nearly black all over; the "whites" of the eyes were also nearly black, the pupils being blacker still. It was a living face, and talked to us all in full light. This dark face went away, and in less than three minutes, most likely two minutes, the white face, perfect as before, reappeared, and talked to us. She threw out two oranges, one to Mr. Guppy, and the other to Mr. Henderson. Then there was a breakage in the *seance*, and at the second sitting Katie appeared as before. The thread was so close round the wrists of the medium, as to cut into the flesh, so that the knots on each arm could not be sealed without burning her. One of the knots near the waist was tied with thread by Mr. Henderson. A piece of thread was tied by Mr. Henderson to three or four parts of the thread about the medium, and the end of this second thread was passed under the bottom of the door, and held all through the *seance* by Mr. Henderson. He proposed the test, and the medium assented to it at once, the object being to prove that she did not get upon the chair. The distance from the seat of the chair to the top of Miss Cook's head, when seated, is thirty-one inches. The distance from the seat of the chair to the bottom of the opening in the cabinet at which the faces appear is fifty-one inches, so that the distance from the top of her head to the bottom of the opening in the cabinet is twenty inches. During the sitting Mr. Henderson said he felt tugs at the thread he held not exceeding six inches. When Mr. Blackburn clasped it, he says he felt tugs not exceeding two or three inches. Katie said that every time she drew power from the medium, the medium gave a jerk. At the end of each sitting, the seals and knots were found to be perfect, and Mr. Henderson has them now in his possession, and says he will show them to anybody who will call upon him. Before the *seance* Mr. Henderson was in the room by himself examining the cabinet as long as he pleased, and he said that he was perfectly satisfied with its *bona fide* character.

AMELIA CORNER, SAMUEL GUPPY, CHARLES BLACKBURN,  
A. L. HENDERSON, HENRY COOK, EMMA COOK,  
ELIZA TILL, WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

**HERR DOBLER AND SPIRITUALISM.**—We see by the *Bristol Times and Mirror* that Herr Dobler is going about the country tying himself with ropes, then performing certain tricks while a person present holds his knees. Dr. Sexton's assistant, Mr. Ogan, often performs Herr Dobler's tricks publicly, and shows how they are done. The *Darlington and Richmond Herald*, of January 21st, says:—Herr Dobler, at the conclusion of his dark *seance* on Wednesday evening, said that in giving what they had seen that evening, he did not wish in any way to interfere with the science of Spiritualism. He had not had experience in Spiritualism himself, and was not a believer, but he had had a great deal of testimony from gentlemen as to the manifestations—extraordinary manifestations—which had taken place at their own houses—gentlemen whose word he could not doubt. With regard to the Davenport, whose manifestations he produced, he had no doubt it was jugglery, and the proof of that, to his mind, was that he could produce them by that means. It must be understood that he laid down no challenge to produce other manifestations than were produced by the Davenports. As the Spiritualists, he understood, had taken it very much to heart, and thought that he was interfering with their belief, and with the science of Spiritualism, he deemed it right to make this statement. With regard to Spiritualism, he thought there was a good deal of humbug mixed up with it as well as truth. (Hear, hear.) There was a gentleman in that room on Monday evening, the Rev. Dr. Monck, of Bristol, between whom and himself a little cross-firing took place, and, in the heat of the moment, he had made remarks respecting that gentleman which he would not otherwise have done. (Hear, hear.) He had had the pleasure of meeting that gentleman there, and, though both he and Dr. Monck resided in Bristol, they had never met before. He had heard, on the authority of gentlemen residing in Bristol, who knew Dr. Monck, that he was an excellent medium. Some clergymen, whom he had recently met there, stated that what took place at Dr. Monck's *seances* was supernatural; in fact, from what he had heard of it, he had no doubt about it himself. (Applause.)—Dr. Monck spoke of the frank and handsome manner in which Herr Dobler had spoken, and regretted that anything unpleasant

had passed on Monday night. He had no doubt that Herr Dobler was irritated by the striking of matches, which the Spiritualists looked upon as wrong, but for which perhaps some excuse might be found in the way in which Herr Dobler's bill was drawn. He was glad to find, from Herr Dobler's statement, that he had no wish to attempt to expose Spiritualism generally, but only the Davenports, whom he (Dr. Monck) had never seen.

**SPIRITUAL LITERATURE.**—For two or three years most of the Sunday spiritual meetings in London have been worked by Mr. Burns, the publisher, in his private trade interests; during that time they have been used for the sale of his goods at the doors, and for advertising purposes. On the 15th December, 1870, he wrote to Mr. E. W. Allen, another publisher, as follows:—"Mr. Daw informs me that you have applied to sell papers at the Cavendish Rooms on Sunday evenings. I beg to inform you that it is engaged for other purposes, and is not at your disposal.—JAMES BURNS." The present Sunday Lecture Committee is not an anonymous one, and is the first which has been formed in London for a long time, independently of trade interests. By way of contrast, we also quote a letter recently written by its secretary about Mr. Allen's publications:—"4, Gray's-inn-square, W.C. Jan. 26th, 1874. SIR,—I am requested by the members of the Tappan Lecture Committee to inform you that you are quite at liberty to sell the *Spiritualist*, or any other papers, spiritual or religious, at their meetings; but it would be necessary to provide your own means for so doing.—WEBSTER GLYNES, Hon. Sec." It is a question for the committee to decide whether the sale of literature at Sunday meetings is good for the cause or not, but in any case it is satisfactory to know that the meetings are now worked in the public interests, and that all our publishers are placed on an equal footing. Mr. Burns' letter was not published by us at the time he wrote it, because we thought it better for the movement that he should be allowed to unduly push his trade interests, to a certain extent, to the disadvantage of his neighbours, rather than that such sources of dissension should be introduced into our journals.

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THE MANCHESTER ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

A MEETING of the active members and friends of this Association was held on Sunday, the 26th day of October, 1873, to take into consideration the best means to adopt for the consolidation of the society. A provisional committee was appointed, from which a sub-committee was chosen, to draw up a prospectus.

The Objects of this Association are:—

1. Mutual aid on the part of its members in the discovery of all truth relating to man's spiritual nature, capacities, duties, welfare, destiny, its application to a regenerate life, also to assist enquirers in the investigation of the facts of Spiritualism.

2. To spread a knowledge of the truths connected with the facts, chiefly the truth of the reality of a future state of progressive existence for all.

As soon as a sufficient number of members is enrolled, a meeting will be called, at which a permanent committee will be elected for the management of the society.

The provisional committee earnestly solicit the co-operation of all who desire the spread of the true and ennobling principles of Spiritualism.

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The London Dialectical Society, Adam-street, Adelphi, under the presidency of Sir John Lubbock, Bart., M.P., appointed a Committee to investigate spiritual phenomena. The Committee was appointed on the 26th January, 1869, as follows:—

“H. G. Atkinson, Esq., F.G.S.; G. Wheatley Bennett, Esq.; J. S. Berghem, Esq., C.E.; H. R. Fox Bourne, Esq.; Charles Bradlaugh, Esq.; G. Fenton Cameron, Esq., M.D.; John Chapman, Esq., M.D.; Rev. C. Maurice Davies, D.D.; Charles R. Drysdale, Esq., M.D. D. H. Dyte, Esq., M.R.C.S.; Mrs. D. H. Dyte; James Edmunds, Esq., M.D.; Mrs. Edmunds, James Gannon, Esq.; Grattan Geary, Esq.; Robert Hannah, Esq., F.G.S.; Jenner Gale Hillier, Esq.; Mrs. J. G. Hillier; Henry Jeffery, Esq.; Albert Kisch, Esq., M.R.C.S.; Joseph Maurice, Esq.; Isaac L. Meyers, Esq.; B. M. Moss, Esq.; Robert Quelch, Esq., C.E.; Thomas Reed, Esq.; C. Russell Roberts, Esq., Ph.D.; William Volkman, Esq.; Horace S. Yeomans, Esq.

“Professor Huxley and Mr. George Henry Lewes, to be invited to co-operate. Drs. Chapman and Drysdale and Mr. Fox Bourne declined to sit, and the following names were subsequently added to the Committee:—

“George Cary, Esq., B.A.; Edward W. Cox, Esq., Serjeant-at-law; William B. Gower, Esq.; H. D. Jencken, Esq., Barrister-at-law; J. H. Levy, Esq.; W. H. Swepston, Esq., Solicitor; Alfred R. Wallace, Esq., F.R.G.S.; Josiah Webber, Esq.”

After inquiring into the subject for two years, the Committee issued its report, which, with the evidence, forms a bulky volume, published by Messrs. Longmans. Among other things this Committee reported:—

“1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance.

“2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person.

“3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time and in the manner asked for by persons present, and by means of a simple code of signals, answer questions and spell out coherent communications.

One of the sub-committees of the Dialectical Society reported:—

“Your committee studiously avoided the employment of professional or paid mediums. All were members of the committee, persons of social position, of unimpeachable integrity, with no pecuniary object, having nothing to gain by deception, and everything to lose by detection of imposture.”

## HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES.

INQUIRERS into Spiritualism should begin by forming spirit circles in their own homes, with no Spiritualist or professional medium present. Should no results be obtained on the first occasion, try again with other sitters. One or more persons possessing medial powers without knowing it are to be found in nearly every household.

1. Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cool rather than warm—let arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.

2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm, but when one of the sitters breaks the circle by leaving the table it sometimes, but not always, very considerably delays the manifestations.

3. Before the sitting begins, place some pointed lead-pencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table, to write down any communications that may be obtained.

4. People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well-developed physical mediums; it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is a weakening influence.

5. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature. A prayerful, earnest feeling among the members of the circle gives the higher spirits more power to come to the circle, and makes it more difficult for the lower spirits to get near.

6. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.

7. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion, let one person only speak, and talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean “Yes,” one means “No,” and two mean “Doubtful,” and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three signals be given in answer, then say, “If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?” Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

8. Afterwards the question should be put, “Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?” Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will be afterwards strengthened. Next ask, “Who is the medium?” When spirits come asserting themselves to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as spirits out of the body have all the virtues and all the failings of spirits in the body.

9. A powerful physical medium is usually a person of an impulsive, affectionate, and genial nature, and very sensitive to mesmeric influences. The majority of media are ladies.

The best manifestations are obtained when the medium and all the members of the circle are strongly bound together by the affections, and are thoroughly comfortable and happy; the manifestations are born of the spirit, and shrink somewhat from the lower mental influences of earth. Family circles, with no strangers present, are usually the best.

Possibly at the first sitting of a circle symptoms of other forms of mediumship than tilts or raps may make their appearance.

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