

The Spiritualist

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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.

Its purposes are the collection of facts, through its own circle, or circles, so as to form a perfect basis for honest opinion, and by various means to induce others to give the matter careful enquiry, before judging of the manifestations of modern Spiritualism.

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VERY soon after the introduction of Modern Spiritualism into England the subject attracted attention in Clerkenwell and neighbourhood, where several circles were formed, some of which were continued for a long number of years, and the great and increasing pressure from strangers for admission thereto led, in May, 1869, to the formation of this Association.

It seeks as its main object to assist, by various means, any person desirous to obtain information respecting Spiritualism, or to commence the investigation of its facts; but, whilst Members unite for this purpose, they have opportunities of improving their own knowledge of its teachings and varied phenomena, of becoming acquainted with the experience and opinions of others, and with the general literature of the movement.

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LONDON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 16th, 1874.

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SPIRIT TEACHINGS.*

NO. V.

A communication having been given from a spirit who had previously professed to be Plotinus, it was asked as to his life on earth and his philosophy.

I was never a foe to matter and to the body. I never could tolerate the corporeal and the material. So great was my dislike that I reduced feeding within the barest limits. I ever bent my earnest gaze on the spiritual and eternal. I lived in regular intercourse with the world of spirits. My *δαίμων* (Daimon) was my constant guide and friend. I saw much of what ye call spirit intercourse, in Egypt, Persia, India, and Arabia. The Egyptian priests knew much of the question, but I had more powerful guides than any. My controlling spirit was even then able to present himself to the eye of sense visibly. When my spirit passed from the body my friend Porphyry saw a form glide from under the bed. He described it as a dragon, not knowing. It was in fact an attendant spirit that stood near.

I knew well the reality of spirit converse, and had friends many, who knew it too. Persian, Egyptian, Indian, Arabian, who were well versed in astrology, magic, and the occult arts; a few too who knew personally of spirit intercourse.

Was magic a real art assisted by spirits?

Yes; sometimes. Magic was an art which depended greatly on the exercise of the will, and on sleight of hand. Magicians at times were aided by spirits, and were sometimes astrologers, but not always. I myself was, as I say, wholly given to contemplation, and therein I erred, not knowing that the life of action must precede the life of contemplation. I speculated much on the nature of the soul. I fancied that what ye call soul was but an idea of spirit evolved from that which is the basis both of being and thinking, *i.e.*, spirit; for every act of thought produces an idea which I held to be an actual existence. Matter I believed to be the boundary of being, the lowest principle of all. The body I esteemed a drag and clog. I ate little, and slept less, and mortified the body, not knowing that so I impaired mental and intellectual power.

* 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 the spirits gave their names and proved their identity; also 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.

Nevertheless by constant fasting and by frequent meditation I did so place myself in communion with the spirit world, and with my guardian, that I realised far more than my contemporaries the reality of spirit guidance. Powerful spirits surrounded me. More than once I was blessed with a sight of very high and exalted intelligences who came to me. I was once enabled to summon my Daimon (δαίμων) in the temple of Isis, in presence of an Egyptian priest, who was well versed in the mysteries of spirit communion. He would fain have terrified me by his occult arts, but my guides were more powerful than his, and appeared and claimed his reverence.

I knew even then the reality of a future existence, and of a spirit-world. After my release from the body, which had ever been to me a clog, I presented myself at times at the Delphic Oracle, and described my abode in a sphere where friendship and love to the Supreme were my perpetual joy.

My contempt for the body in one way enabled me to rise, because I had no bodily longings to get rid of, no bodily sins to purge away, and my habit of perpetual meditation on the spirit and the hereafter, and the instruction of my guides, enabled me to realise much that I afterwards saw and knew. Persian, Indian philosophies helped me; and I have since helped many who love philosophy and seek for progress.

Did you soon find out your mistakes when you passed from this sphere?

No. There was no sudden change; the growth of knowledge, like the springing of the seed, is gradual. I found out my errors by degrees, and drank in fresh store of knowledge. I learned by slow degrees to substitute true views for my ignorant and blind groping after the unknown. I learned to know the Deity whom I had dimly pictured. But the knowledge came slowly, and is growing yet, and will grow endlessly. No rapid change, but steady growth and development.

Was there any absolute cessation of consciousness at death?

None: only a short sleep. I was conscious of no cessation of existence. When I awoke in spirit life I was the same individuality that I was in earth life. But I had nearly got rid of the body long ago. With some it is far otherwise.

I should like to hear about the spirit body.

[Writing changes from Plotinus, to that of the spirit who gave the other teachings.]

The spirit body is the real individual; and though for a time it is clothed with fluctuating atoms, its identity is absolutely the same when those atoms are dispensed with. It is preserved after the death of the earth body in precisely similar sort as it exists now, veiled in grosser matter. To us the spirit body is clear and plain. Our view is not hindered, nor our movements impeded by matter as it exists on your plane. What seems to you solid is to us pervious. The atoms which the spirit-body attracts to itself, and which it keeps in a state of perpetual change around it, by the attractive power which is inherent in it, are no real part of the personality. They are not even permanent for the time of existence in this sphere; and when they are replaced by others, no change is perceptible to you. We see otherwise. To our eyes those atoms, accidents of earth-existence, are no bar. We see the spirit-body; and when the earth atoms are laid aside it is but the throwing off a veil which has shrouded, but has not concealed, the real individuality. The magnetic

rapport which unites the spirit body with the earth body is not severed until death. Then the cord which unites them is broken, and the spirit body is no longer able to resume its temporary covering.

Does the spirit body lead a separate existence, e.g., during the sleep of the body?

Yes, at times, it may do so. Its existence is independent; but without the earth body it would live under different conditions. Generally during the sleep of the body the spirit body rests, but it does not sleep. This is usually so. But there are seasons when the balance which exists in a perfectly healthy state is upset, and interfered with by some cause—by disease, by anxiety, by overtaxing the intellect or the bodily powers. In such cases the spirit is disturbed, and those conditions of restlessness which accompany unrefreshing sleep are presented. Where perfect repose of spirit and body are obtained, then refreshment in sleep is found.

The confused remembrances of incidents which the spirit does not fully recollect go to form what ye call dreams. The spirit cannot recall all that it sees, and the impressions left on the mind are mixed with the impressions derived through the bodily senses, and so make the incoherent dream.

Dreams are sometimes accurate reminiscences of what has really occurred, and may be prophetic or warning. Such are sometimes the suggested voice of the guardian who cannot approach the soul when in the body through lack of power. It talks with the spirit during the sleep of the body, and, by protecting from intermixture with surrounding bodily impressions, leaves the remembrance clear upon the mind. In such cases the spirit can and does faithfully remember; but usually the recollection is cloudy.

In rare cases the spirit body is endued with separate vitality for a time. These are cases where the bodily organisation is peculiarly amenable to spirit control; when it has been much used by spirits for purposes of communication, and when the spirit has by long practice become passive under guidance. In such cases the spirit body may be conducted to the spheres, may be permitted to see somewhat of its future home, and learn its duties. It may even drink in draughts of the higher wisdom, and bring them down to earth.

In the unconscious trance the spirit is free, but it is necessary that it be kept in a perfectly passive state whilst manifestations are going on.

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD.

WE here give another extract from the remarkable narrative published by Mr. J. P. James, of Brattleboro, Vt., United States, and stated to have been given through his mediumship by the spirit of Charles Dickens, in completion of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. It is difficult to suppose that the genius and ability displayed in these writings, which bear such a strong resemblance to those of Charles Dickens, should have induced the author, whoever he may be, to come before the world as a clever forger. The extract gives further information about the great egotist, Mr. Sapsea, auctioneer and valuer:—

Like all other nights, whether pleasant or stormy, this particular one has given place to its sister day; and, the storm having subsided, the sun is struggling to

show its face through drifting masses of cloud, which represent the rear-guard of the tempest of the preceding night.

The very Honourable Thomas Sapsea's Mind being of that stupendous nature which required a vast amount of rest, when it had any, it naturally followed that Mr. Sapsea was a very sound sleeper. Such things as winds, violent storms, or even hurricanes, which ordinary mortals regard with some apprehension of personal danger, did not disturb him in the least, for the simple reason that, in his opinion, even the Elements would hardly dare to take liberties with mortals possessing the intellect with which he had been gifted.

Hence the great man had slept during this fearful night, just past, totally unconscious of the warring elements, and slept as peacefully as if a breath of air had not disturbed the leaves upon the trees which shaded the windows of his sleeping apartment.

His toilet being perfected, he raises a window and looks out upon the precincts to get a breath of pure air, and at the same time to discover if there are any evidences to be seen of the violence of the storm in the way of demolished chimneys or fences. Thoroughly convinced of the inability of any storm to do him an injury, he does not think of such a thing as looking about his own premises for damage done, but contents himself by examining those of his neighbours, and then closes the window to prepare for breakfast. He has hardly done so, when he hears a knock at his door, and upon opening it he finds a servant-maid standing before him, with an air of great concern upon her face, who tells him he had better come down as soon as ever he can, for the horrible storm has made dreadful work with old Mr. Sapsea.

On hearing these words, which were delivered in a frightened tone and with great rapidity, Mr. Sapsea's first thought was that the violence of the wind must have torn the tenants of the churchyard from their receptacles, and that they were lying around in various parts of the precincts, waiting patiently for their friends to come and put them back into their former resting-places. But how could it be possible that the elements would dare to take liberties with a Sapsea? He was positive that a live Sapsea was secure from such liberties, and he had always believed that a dead Sapsea would be just as sacred and secure. He could not believe it; there must be some mistake! He did not doubt that other departed ones had been thus dealt with, but a Sapsea—never!

"How do you know, girl, that my father is in the condition you speak of?" he inquires of the servant, who is still standing on the threshold.

"Because, sir," is the earnest reply, "I have *see'd* him, sir! His head is clean gone; likewise one arm, sir."

"Great God!" exclaims Sapsea, "you don't mean to tell me his head is not with the rest of his body?" and the great man lifts his hands in very horror.

"But I just do, sir," replies the servant; "leastwise it's not gone, for some one has picked it up, and put that and the arm on the top step for safety; but you'd best come and see for yourself, sir."

Ordinary minds would never have possessed a doubt that the news he had heard bore reference to the remains of that elder Sapsea, who had lain peacefully in the churchyard so many years; but the great mind, after the first shock was over, happened to think it barely possible that the damage in question might have

occurred to the effigy of the old gentleman at the street door, and Mr. Sapsea asks for information on that point.

"Bless you, sir! you didn't never think I meant the *real* old Mr. Sapsea, did you?" asked the girl, laughing at the absurdity of his mistake.

"No levity, miss!" ejaculates Sapsea in a stern manner, "you should have been more explicit in your statement. I understand now that you have reference to the *statue* of my father, and not to his flesh and bones. It seems hardly probable that even such a thing as this could have occurred, when I have always said that nothing could ever possibly happen to it. This is a grave matter. I will be down in a few moments, and learn from observation the extent of this calamity."

It struck the maid that Mr. Sapsea's misunderstanding in the first instance was truly a grave matter, but she did not dare to tell him so, and hastened below, leaving him to follow as soon as he pleased.

The great man had said "calamity" very much the same as he would have said "insult," and regarded it as an insult on the part of the elements thus to take liberty with anything bearing the semblance of a Sapsea.

He descends to his street door with slow and measured steps, and his face wears such an air of stern pomposity that one would be disposed to think the identical gust of wind that had done the mischief was still remaining at the door in a defiant attitude, and that Mr. Sapsea was going down to order it from the premises; or, failing that, to annihilate it on the spot. He opens the door, and there, sure enough, he sees the body and legs of the dead and gone auctioneer's counterpart, the toga well preserved; but the head, on which rested the curly wig, lies at the feet of his son, face down, as though ashamed to be caught in such a predicament.

Mr. Thomas Sapsea is not prepared, even now, to believe such a thing possible. He re-enters the house, closes the door so as to shut the scene from his sight, and proceeds to pinch his arms and slap his hands together, to be sure that he is not the victim of some hallucination; then opens the door, and finds himself again contemplating the humiliating scene.

Mr. Sapsea has become so engrossed with the havoc made with his street-door ornament, that he does not observe a second person who comes upon him at this juncture, and who cries in a loud tone:—

"What's becu a goin' on here?"

On hearing the voice, Sapsea turns and beholds Durdles looking very much astonished, and waiting for an answer. The stone-mason, never proverbial for cleanliness, is uncommonly dirty this morning, and with his hammer in his hand, looks as if he had recently been engaged with some labour pertaining to his profession.

The great man folds his arms across his stomach, as though to prevent himself from bursting, and in a dignified manner asks the stone-mason what *he* thinks of that, pointing to the dismembered effigy.

"Think?" is Durdles' answer, "that it's d—d lucky for the old man as this ere thing ain't really him."

"It's something I can hardly realise," continues Sapsea, in a mournful tone. "I do not remember anything like it before."

"Thank your old shoes it ain't you!" is the consoling rejoinder of Durdles. "That 'ere 'ead *can* be put on again with a little trouble, and it's all right."

Yourn *couldn't* be put on so easy; or if it was, it wouldn't do you no good. Durdles has come to tell you as the storm did more damage nor that last night. Perhaps you've heerd all about it, though?"

"I don't think I have," says Sapsea; "what is it, man? Speak out."

"That there moniment o' yourn had a smash-up or a smash-down last night, and lays on the sod, there in the churchyard, with two or three more, lookin' like so many stiff 'uns as has taken a houtside passage." He tosses his hammer into the air and catches it so neatly as it descends, and tells what he has just said so very coolly, and with so little concern, that Sapsea believes the man must be joking him. He stares at Durdles for several moments, and, finding him to be apparently in earnest, inquires if this is a fact, or intended as a joke.

"Did you ever catch Durdles a-jokin'?" returns the stonemason, indignantly. "No, sir! his bus'nness hain't one as admits of jokes. When Durdles tells you a thing is so, it's *so!* Come and satisfy yourself, if you can't believe me"—and they proceed to the churchyard, Durdles taking the lead and Sapsea following after.

A CLAIRVOYANT PHYSICALLY BLIND.

A LETTER by Mr. Henry T. Child, M.D., of Philadelphia, printed a few weeks ago in *The Banner of Light*, says of Samuel H. Paist, the blind medium of Philadelphia:—"Our young friend passed on to the higher life from Vineland, N. J., on the 1st day of December, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. His life has been a very peculiar one. When about two weeks old, he lost the sight of both of his eyes. He received an education in "The Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind." When about eighteen years of age, the subject of Spiritualism claimed the attention of some of his friends, and he became interested in it, and soon discovered that he had medial powers; and the spirits promised him, through his own organisation, that in a short time they would open his vision so that he should become clairvoyant, and this was realised in a most wonderful manner. Few, if any, have exceeded him in this beautiful faculty of soul-vision, so far as external things were concerned. He walked our thronged streets, drove horses, and travelled extensively over the country. Such were the promptness and certainty of his movements, that many persons would not believe he was blind until they examined his eyes, which were covered with a thick, white film. His medial powers were excellent, and he has given thousands of tests of spirit presence and identity. It was through him that the writer received the first narrative of Dr. Abraham Ackley, of Cleveland, Ohio, two thousand copies of which have been circulated over the country. The end of his chequered life came upon us unexpectedly. He has been a great sufferer; but now all his infirmities of body, hereditary or acquired, are past, and we believe he has found kind and congenial companions who will lead him onward and upward; and while we drop a tear to his memory, we bid him God speed in his new home."

The importance of the above statement is very great, since it opens the question of the desirability of mesmerising persons who are permanently blind, for the purpose of developing clairvoyance in those who possess the undeveloped gift. Books on mesmerism state that blind persons are more or less susceptible to mesmerism, just the same as other people. Our readers should

draw the attention of those who have blind persons under their care, to the desirability of giving mesmerism an extended experimental trial.

LAVATER'S LETTERS TO THE EMPRESS MARIE OF RUSSIA.

LETTER IV.—ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

IN my previous letter, much venerated Empress, I promised to send you a communication from one who had passed away, to his friend on earth; it will enable you more thoroughly to comprehend my ideas on the state of a Christian after the death of the body. I take the liberty, therefore, to enclose it. Examine it in the light that I have indicated, and give your attention rather to the principle than to the surrounding details, although I have reason to suppose that the latter also contain a germ of truth. In order that you may clearly understand that which I am going to lay before you, I think it is necessary to remark that I feel almost certain that, in spite of the existence of a general and immutable law of punishment or superno happiness, every spirit according to *his* individual character, not only moral and religious, but even personal and official, will have certain sufferings to endure after his earthly demise, and will enjoy certain bliss suited to himself alone. The general law will be individualised for each particular person—that is to say, it will produce in each a different personal effect just as the same ray of light passing through a coloured convex or concave glass derives a different effect and colour. I wish, then, that it could be positively believed that, although all spirits, either happy, less happy, or suffering, are subject to the same simple law of union or disunion with perfect love, it must be presumed that the individual character of every spirit will constitute for it a state of suffering or of happiness essentially different from that of any other spirit. Each one suffers in a different manner from another, and feels happiness that another would be incapable of feeling. To both the material and the immaterial world, God and Christ are presented under a different form, which exists for each alone. In the eyes of each he belongs to Him alone. To each spirit God speaks in a language comprehensible to Him only. He communicates with each individually, and grants him *joys* which he alone is *in a state to enjoy*, capable of feeling. This idea, which I consider a truth, will serve as a basis for all the following communications given by disembodied spirits to their friends on earth. I should be happy to feel that you had understood how every one, by forming his individual character, and seeking after perfection, may prepare for himself infinite happiness, and a felicity appropriate to himself alone. Nothing is so easily forgotten, or so little sought after by men as this individual happiness, although every one possesses the capability of procuring and enjoying it. I therefore take the liberty, wise and respected Empress, of entreating you to analyse, with all attention, this idea, which you cannot look upon as useless, for your own edification and elevation to God: "God has placed Himself and the universe in the hearts of all men." Every man may be looked upon as a mirror reflecting the universe and His Creator. Let us, then, make every effort to keep this mirror as bright as possible, in order that God may see Himself and all His wondrously beautiful creation reflected in it even as he would wish.

SWEDENBORGIAN VIEWS OF THE DOCTRINE OF
ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

THERE is a schism among American Swedenborgians on the subject of eternal punishment, and the Rev. W. M. Fearnald has published the following views, as reported in the *New Church Independent*:—

“And now in reference to this idea of eternal selfishness, and disobedience from such a motive, let us ask again: What is the highest ideal of God, and how is God situated and conditioned in this matter? God is all in all—is in the inmost of every human soul in his *purity and sweetness*; and *that* is the nature which must be ultimated. Otherwise, the Divinity is closed up in hell to eternity. The idea is repulsive and horrible. According to Swedenborg, and according to all true theology, the inmost of every human being, and the inmost of every devil in hell, is nothing less than the divine nature. ‘The internal man is of the Lord and is the Lord.’ (A.C. 1594.) It is this which enables any of us to live. This inmost divine is never conscious in man; his consciousness is confined to the human degrees; but it is the divinity within which gives life and quality to all the human, and without which man is not man. The animals have not this inmost degree.

“Now consider, if this is not ultimated in anything but filth and corruption, which is no ultimatum at all, or if it only comes finally to a *good* devil—to a respectable gentleman—to states of polished and refined selfishness, what an absurdity are we here presented with! God is closed up in hell to all eternity, desiring and willing, but never being able to effect, the deliverance and salvation of the creature! No, this is not the highest ideal of God. This last idea is only the resort of some Swedenborgians, who must have an eternal hell of some kind, to save, as they think, Swedenborg’s consistency, and so they have resorted to this most lame and impotent conclusion. Think of it! An eternal world of polished and refined selfishness; eternal societies of gentlemanly, accomplished, and obedient devils, as a *finality* in the divine government! The best result of the creative power! The last triumph of the Divine Providence, running co-eternal with the existence of God! It is monstrous. It is sheer folly. It is shocking to all reverence and all faith. There is nothing in the Deity that sustains it for a moment. And we take the position boldly and decidedly, that whatever there is in God must eventually be ultimated in all men in its finite degree. Now, is there anything in God that corresponds to this eternal selfishness? There *is* that, be it observed, which corresponds to different degrees of *genuine goodness*, making different grades of *angels* necessary; but what is there that corresponds to this eternal selfishness? Make it ever so good, ever so harmless, is it Godlike?—is it the highest divine will?—is it the heaven to which He wills all His human creatures, and, according to Swedenborg, to which He predestinates all? No, no! only angelhood can answer to that; and as sure as God exists, all souls shall become angels at last, for Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

“We would remark here also, that those who take this view of the eternal improvement and exaltation of the hells, still preserving their distinct existence as hells in opposition to the heavens, find no evidence of it in the writings of Swedenborg. It is not *progression* which he speaks of for the confirmed wicked. They go downward instead of upward, although there is a general

law recognised of non-increase in wickedness, and every evil is said to have its limits. Wickedness, it would seem, cannot increase in the spiritual world beyond a limit, but it may, after that, tend to less and less. Accordingly he saw multitudes of spirits, he says, of various characters, reduced almost to the state of death, sitting like dead stocks, with scarcely any life left, having been in that way for two thousand years. Surely this does not look much like progression; and so there have been those in the ‘New Church,’ who from these representations have proclaimed openly that the wicked would run lower and lower, and increase in wickedness to all eternity. But that cannot be; rather when the end of this inverse movement is attained then there is progression; then the remains of goodness and truth begin to operate, and operate successfully. Any other theory surely does not comport with the highest reason.”

LIVERPOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE third annual report of the Psychological Society of Liverpool, was issued last Friday. It begins by congratulating the members on the bright prospects of the society, and the rapid progress of Spiritualism in Liverpool. It states that the services, especially those held on Sunday, have been the means, more than anything else, of enlightening the public mind upon the teachings and philosophy of Spiritualism. The Sunday meetings, it says, have been addressed by normal and abnormal speakers; but the great majority have been trance speakers, Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, having during the past year given fifty-four lectures in the trance state, and held sixteen *seances* under the auspices of the Society. Since his first visit to Liverpool he has given 105 addresses in that town.

The report further says of the National Conference held in Liverpool on the 5th, 6th, and 7th of August, 1873, that the Council of the Society looks forward to the time when the measures which were then so well and carefully considered and unanimously approved and adopted, will be put in force, to introduce order into Spiritualism, and it adds: “We are gratified to know that Mr. Everitt, the President of the Conference, and the then appointed Council, have inaugurated a central committee in London to carry out what your Conference decided upon, and that committee is, we learn, in a fair way of bringing about a successful issue. . . . The Society cannot say much of the progress of the physical or phenomenal part of Spiritualism during the past year; still, a few circles have been formed to develop the useful phase of physical mediumship, and some of the circles have been so far successful as to have obtained spirit lights, the direct voice, and the carrying of articles through the air. There are under our notice twelve circles, more or less of this class, in the town, and the records of their sittings have been often read at our meetings. These circles have been mainly established by our members.”

The report, which would have been of more historical value had it been a little more statistical, is signed on behalf of the managers by Mr. John Chapman, the honorary secretary.

A GENTLEMAN has written to us, volunteering to form one of a committee for the detection of the persons who stood as sham ghosts in the early Holloway photographs. Three or four others, spiritualist photographers, should join him. There will be no difficulty in exposing several of the persons.

HOME EXPERIENCES IN SPIRITUALISM.

No. II.

BY FREDERIKA SHOWERS.

SOON after Peter had announced himself, the rapping sounds increased in violence, being no longer confined to our evening *seances* in the drawing-room, but diffused all over the house. Polkas, waltzes, sometimes whole pieces of music—such as the overture to *Zampa*—were, at short intervals, drummed out almost throughout the day, on the stairs, panels of doors, and occasionally overhead, in such excellent time, that the airs were perfectly distinguishable. From the first there was evinced a marked and unmistakeable predilection for music. Once or twice, when we were sitting together, I was startled by a sort of gurgling sound proceeding from my daughter's throat, and occasionally a few bars were sung in what struck me as being a powerful masculine voice. The effect was most unpleasant, and used to fill me with fear, particularly as Miss Showers was not conscious of it, and declared she could not hear the voice. Frequently both mediums alleged that they saw large evil-looking eyes approaching and then receding from them, as well as a luminous hand on the table engaged in writing out the messages that were being delivered all day.

DIRECT SPIRIT WRITING.

When letter-paper was no longer procurable, these messages were scribbled on tables, book-cases, and on the sideboard, with lead-pencils, and we have not yet been able thoroughly to eradicate the marks from the furniture. We were desirous on one occasion to remove the piano and look under it, and on doing so found two long letters addressed, one to Miss Showers, and the other to Ellen, purporting to be written by John King and Peter. It was intimated that my daughter's wishes were not to be thwarted in any way, as she was a most powerful medium, and the spirits would be revenged on any person who annoyed her. She was also to be called "Rosy," that being a more favourite name with her. Altogether, the letter struck me as being an absurd piece of bombastic nonsense. The concluding words were, "I have written this through dear Rosy," which mode of ending these communications became habitual, and was never deviated from subsequently. The rapping and writing grew gradually so intolerable, that almost all the domestic work of the house was suspended for three weeks. We took our meals when and how we could, everything like domestic comfort seemed at an end. Letters addressed to me were found in the most extraordinary places, and daily pinned to my daughter's hair, and sleeves, and dress. She was never aware of having written one, and used to walk in the garden quite unconscious of the decorations borne about by her, till the fluttering of the paper in the wind, and the sheets were often two feet long—packing-paper being used when no other could be found,—or some other circumstance brought them to our notice.

SPIRITUAL VISION.

I must not omit to mention the apparition of Peter about four weeks after that of John King. He was seen near the same sofa, and described as a young and goodlooking man, of dark complexion, with an expression so comic, that Mary became almost hysterical with laughter, and Ellen had to run out of the room to indulge the merriment she could not suppress.

A few evenings later, the veiled form of a woman was seen to glide several times towards, and then recede from the table where we were sitting. Every movement was described simultaneously, and watched with breathless interest by both girls. The effect on my daughter was very unpleasant. "I don't mind John King and Peter," she remarked, "but this woman is so ghostly and unearthly, that she frightens me." A sort of shudder passed through her, and she complained of a heavy weight on the brain, and an inability to put her feet to the floor. We both led her from the room, and her eyes retained a strange and stony look, till she fell asleep. The form seemed ultimately to sink through the ground. We knew nothing of the trance at the time, and were at a loss to account for the indisposition of Miss Showers, but Peter has since told us that it was occasioned by the attempt of a spirit to entrance her prematurely.

EXTRAORDINARY MANIFESTATIONS.

My own experience has taught me that a good medium goes through successive and progressive stages of development, none of which can be anticipated without very injurious consequences. In one case Peter took the guardianship of the

mediums entirely, and I can give no adequate idea of the care and solicitude that were evinced all through. The most tender parent could not have been more watchful over a child; of course I am alluding only to affairs connected with Spiritualism, a matter through which we had literally to grope our way, under his guidance. Most unfortunately at the time we had not the most distant acquaintance with any person possessing the slightest knowledge of the subject. By alternate threats and entreaties, expressed at first in writing, and later in speech, he got me to yield to his wishes in every respect. The mediums were to bathe daily in the sea, take exercise in the open air for several hours, and eat only a very limited quantity of food, with an entire abstinence from pastry and sweets of every description. The most absurdly direful consequences were threatened if these injunctions were disregarded.* We were told that for a week their food would not exceed two ounces daily. No notice was taken at the time, but the next day, and for six days subsequently, I doubt whether they were able even to swallow as much. It began to strike me now that some sort of mesmeric influence was exercised, but who was the mesmeriser?

The young gentleman, whose name I am not at liberty to mention, but whom I have designated as Mr. H—, called one evening to bid us farewell, preparatory to sailing for Australia. It had been intimated to us by Peter that he was strongly mediumistic (a term which I by no means clearly comprehended then), and that if we wished to see some "stunning manifestations," we were to invite him. Owing to his being almost an entire stranger, no attention was paid to Peter's suggestion, and we were somewhat surprised, therefore, to hear him announced. It was a delightfully warm evening, late in the spring, and a light gentle rain fell at intervals, alternating with bright flashes of sunshine, which brought out a charming intermixture of colours and shadows, and gave the trees and neighbouring fields the appearance of being illuminated. It was one of the most memorable days of my life, and no circumstance connected with it, however trivial, can ever be effaced from my mind.

After the first few words had been exchanged, my visitor suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! just look at this table." It was a large, heavy, mahogany dining-table, and was gliding over to the opposite end of the room. I had been too long accustomed now to startling manifestations of this nature to pay much attention to his remark, and merely made some casual observation, implying a hope that he had not got wet coming up that long and tedious hill. "My feet are very wet," he replied, "might I dry them at the kitchen fire?" He walked towards the kitchen, which was some distance off, on the same floor, and had hardly been absent two minutes when I heard a loud crash. Thinking some accident had occurred, for he was a mere boy, and seemed rather giddy, I went in hurriedly to enquire what had happened, and found him standing near the fire-place, looking with astonishment at a very large saucepan which was lying on the floor, with all its contents scattered about. "I fear you will hardly believe it," he said, "but I assure you that saucepan jumped off the oven the moment I put my foot up near the grate." While we were laughing at the picture he presented, standing in almost a pool of soup, which, luckily, was not boiling at the time, the bells on the wall behind me rung a joyous peal; and, turning round, I saw two large dish-covers suspended several feet above our heads, on the bell wire. This was not a very unusual sight, for something of a similar nature had been happening every day during the previous fortnight. But I thought we had better leave the kitchen, and was telling Mr. H. so, when the dish covers fell, breaking nearly all the glass and china which stood on a table below. On re-entering the dining-room, I sat down, and Mr. H. tried to do the same, but three times the

* I went into Miss Shower's room one morning early, while she was yet in bed, and told her that she could not bathe that day, as the tide would not serve in the morning, and that I objected to her remaining away constantly from school in compliance with the absurd injunctions of Peter. I spoke irritably, for Spiritualism was not turning out the thing that I expected; and sometimes, when dissatisfied and puzzled, I used to speak hastily to the mediums. On turning to leave the room, there were several tremendous raps on the wall, but I would hear nothing, and walked resolutely down stairs. My daughter, however, began to call out the alphabet, and intimated to me that I was to look under the drawing-room fender, where I should find a communication from Peter. I did so, and found a pamphlet of Mr. William Howitt's, on the first page of which was the following, written in a bold, masculine hand:—

"How dare you prevent either of my mediums from bathing? I will take the whole of Lovey's (Ellen's) power away, and she is not over strong as it is, being consumptive, if you do not allow her to bathe this very morning. Will you dare to oppose me about Exeter? Well, you shall see the result. Never fear—if I can be kind, I can be harsh also, and that you will soon see, if you do not obey my instructions. Now, repent while there is time, for soon it will be too late.—PETER.—I have written this through dear Rosina—poor child!"

chair glided away as he attempted to draw near it, throwing him heavily on the floor. It was yet far from the hour of sunset, and at times there was too much light in the rooms to be quite agreeable; so that, whatever be the objections urged against the value of my testimony, it cannot be asserted that my sense of vision was in any way disqualified for judging correctly. As soon as Mr. H— had succeeded in securing a seat, an embroidered cushion seemed to fly from a sofa several feet off, and fall on the table, after first striking against his head. The chairs and tables commenced gliding about in such an extraordinary way that, apprehensive of injury to the furniture, I proposed our standing in the passage, which was rather a wide one. There was an incessant rapping in all directions, and polkas and snatches of overtures were (apparently) drummed over head. The only people on the premises were Miss Showers, Ellen, Mr. H—, and myself. Ellen was called and sat on one of the stairs, my daughter sitting and occasionally standing on a step a little above. I was at the drawing-room door, and Mr. — leant against the wall with a stick in his hand. We were all in full view of each other. Dishcovers, pots of jam, a roll of lard, egg cups, wine glasses, and other articles too numerous to mention, were now flung out of the kitchen and larder (the door of the latter having been left closed, but not locked), and came round a wall, across the passage, rolling and sometimes flying past me to the opposite end of the drawing-room. Though the glasses and china were necessarily fragile, nothing was either broken or injured. Umbrellas from the outer hall, at the opposite end, were thrown overhead, falling on the upper landing, and a large flower-pot was brought in from the glass-house. Suddenly a startling sound, like a prolonged howl, rose over our heads, and echoed through the house. I was in a very nervous state in those days, occasioned both by the nerve exciting demonstrations of Spiritualism, and by a trembling hope that I would sooner or later receive a communication from the dear son who was ever in my thoughts. It seemed to me now that the grave was indeed giving up its dead; and rushing forward to Mr. H—, I caught his arm and tried to lead him out of the house. "Oh, pray let me remain!" he urged. "It is my last evening, and I shall never see or hear anything like this again." "What do you think of Spiritualism now?" I asked. There was no time for a reply. High up near the ceiling fluttered a paper. It seemed glued to the wall. Mr. H— tore it down with his stick, and read, "Go on or incur my displeasure. Death, death, death, to the unbelievers." Underneath there was the outline of a skeleton head. "We will not go on unless they are less violent," was my remark; "I am getting ill through these rough manifestations on the part of Peter." We were re-entering the drawing-room as I uttered these words. There was a quick postman's knock. I saw a pencil fall, and under it lay a small piece of paper, on which was inscribed the following verse:—

"Gentle spring and fragrant flowers
While away the balmy hours,
Thus will I like zephyr be,
Over land and over sea."

"Is that Peter now?" I asked. A similar knock on the bookcase, and on a mere scrap torn from some letter we read—

"Not like Peter is this child,
Not so wicked, not so wild.
I live in heaven, not in hell,
There shall I for ever dwell."

"Oh, we are getting poetry now; there is a decided improvement," remarked Mr. H. "Shall we call out the alphabet, and ask what had better be done?" We agreed, and it was intimated, by raps, that I should ask questions from the adjoining room, the door of which was to be left partially open, and that a candle should be placed on the table, round which the three others were to sit, and engage in conversation.

"Have you ever been a mortal being like ourselves?" was the question put.

"I have passed to Jordan's tide;
I have lived, and I have died."

"Are we doing wrong in seeking for manifestations of this nature?"

"Don't continue over long,
Else you'll do a mighty wrong.
Stop, and seek not to disclose
The secrets of the grave's repose."

"To whom shall I do a wrong? Can it affect the peace of the dead, or injure the health of my daughter?"

"Not to the living, not the dead,
But to the mighty Triune head,
To God as One as well as Three.
No mortal can it harm. The sea
Laps not more gently s'ony rocks,
Than your loved daughter feels these shocks."

"To try for these manifestations must be sinful then?"

"Grand manifestations are quite right
And lawful in God's holy sight,
But go no further, else you'll rue—
These things are not disclosed to you."

"But some assert that they have come into communication with their dead?"

"Those who profess to see beyond,
Through death's dark, gloomy, awful bond,
Are false."

"Which religion is the true one?"

"True believers in any faith
Are saved.
Thus the great God saith."

"Is it true that there are both good and evil spirits?"

"Spirits there are of different grades,
In heaven and hell's mysterious shades;
Some are false and some are true,
Seek not again to gain a view.
Some have power, though small, 'tis true,
I have none.
There, that's all I'll write to-night.

JOHN KING."

"Oh, pray write something more. Are you a friendly spirit?"

"We are kind and will not harm,
So feel secure from all alarm.
Ada Evangeline.

JOHN KING."

"I'm a scaramouch, and no friend.
I'll do you harm until the end.

PETER."

"We'll protect you,
NEVER FEAR.

Ada.

JOHN."

"Here Mr. H— asked permission to put a question mentally."

"Go on, go on, while there is time,
Seek not to loiter, rise and climb,
Of tinkling bells, beware the air,
My force is here and everywhere."

"True hearts are linked in iron chains,
They know no sorrow, know no pains;
Then seek not to distract their course,
For else than this there's nothing worse."

"Why am I not a medium?" I asked.

"Some are mediums, some of course
Disturb, and some obstruct the force."

Here I very foolishly observed, "Oh, pray say that in prose, the poetry is not good." The remark was caused solely by eagerness and anxiety for information, not with any view to give offence, but was, unfortunately, otherwise interpreted. The next writing we got, was the following message to me— "How dare you judge our poetry? No more pearls shall you have—no more poetry. *Never more.* Farewell. Ada Evangeline. John King.—We will vouchsafe you protection and manifestations, but no more poetry. Never again. Ada. John."

They have kept their word. Never since that evening has John King given any manifestation at our *seances*. I hardly realised the extent of the threatened deprivation at the time, but have thought of it regretfully since, when I have had to content myself in all moods with the witty repartee and lively manifestations of Peter. After I had thus unfortunately disturbed the harmony of the evening, Mr. H— said he would blow out the candle, and try to get some more of the physical manifestations, if nothing else were to be obtained, and he had hardly done so, when the most astounding noises ensued. Chairs, ottomans, cushions, and books were flung about the room, and occasionally thrown on the table; several notes of the piano were struck; and again there arose the same incoherent sound of voices in the air. I was endeavouring to make my escape from the room as usual, when an exclamation from Mr. H— arrested me. "Oh, look, Mrs. Showers," he cried, "there is a man on the sofa; see, he is rising, he is becoming luminous—he wears a white head-dress. Pray don't go away—it is such a beautiful benignant countenance. I am sure he would not hurt you. Don't you see him, Miss Showers?" "Oh, yes," was my daughter's rejoinder, "we have seen him before. It is John King." "Ah! now, there is another man," continued Mr. H—, starting up excitedly. "He wears a peculiar hat, turned up at the sides, and a short shooting coat—he has a long silky moustache—but I don't like the expression of his eyes—he is leering." "It is Peter, it is Peter," cried Miss

Showers. "How handsome he is! I like him far the better of the two. Never mind John King's taking offence—we would much rather have you, Peter." This was, at the time, nothing more than a young girl's thoughtless remark, but I have often imagined since that the choice between the two was really at that moment designedly offered to her. Whether her selection had anything to do with the matter or not, it is an undoubted fact, that Peter has seldom left us since. He has become actually a dearly valued member of our small domestic circle. By some of my own relatives, he is looked on as a familiar friend, and though they hardly believe in his distinct individuality, they cannot help admitting that the witty and amusing observations attributed to him, and the unvarying cheerfulness manifested by the medium act, in moments of gloom and despondency, quite like a cordial. For my own part, I frankly admit, at the risk of being thought a fool, that existence would hardly be endurable now without Peter. His presence is as real as that of any other person about me.

As Mr. H. was bidding us farewell, we rose, also, with the intention of accompanying him to the door, and our chairs, with several other articles in the room, were immediately overturned. We went towards the hall-door, and on the ceiling and surrounding walls a loud, incessant, joyous rapping was kept up, till our visitor walked across the path to the wicket; there the same sounds occurred. He disappeared finally from view, and we took up our candles to go to bed; but my daughter and Ellen had to return more than half-a-dozen times to relight theirs, which were blown out invariably on the same spot on the upper floor.

Ten days, I think, had elapsed since the remarkable *seance* just recorded, when, on leaving the dining-room, after luncheon, my attention was arrested by hearing what appeared to me a man's voice, singing in accompaniment to my daughter, who had just sat down to the piano. After a few bars had been sung, a delicate, female voice took up the melody. "Oh, mama, come and listen to this," cried Mary; and I had just taken two or three steps towards the drawing-room, when—"Keep off, or you will injure the medium," was shouted out in tones that literally seemed to arrest the beating of my heart. "Stand in the hall," continued the voice, "and we will sing to you; but do not come here, or even attempt to look, or it may cost your child her life." "What is this? who are you?" I asked, in utter amazement. "Peter and Florence," was the rejoinder. "There is something about you, Mrs. Showers, that is opposed to these manifestations, and you must not come into the room; not at least, while it is light." Ellen had overheard this conversation, and came running in to inquire what was the matter. Before I had time to tell her, the singing recommenced, and to my inexpressible astonishment, a man's voice chimed in behind me, from the spot where Ellen was standing. Impelled, apparently, by some irresistible attraction, this girl walked slowly forwards towards the spot where Miss Showers was sitting, a male and female voice singing alternately in harmony with the voices of Peter and Florence, as she went. For many months now Ellen had been in my service. In a lonely, isolated house like ours, there was every opportunity for observing her, but never had she evinced in any way a partiality for music; and yet, for more than an hour on this afternoon, several melodies were charmingly sung, each part being admirably modulated and in exquisite tone.

It would have been utterly impossible, without long and careful study, to have taken up the respective parts in such perfect time and harmony. A very eminent professor of music (who has instructed a member of the royal family), remarked, when listening to the singing some weeks subsequently, "Ah, they must have practised well before they were able to sing in unison in that manner." He was, of course, utterly sceptical on the points connected with Spiritualism, and has remained so to this day; but I am the best judge of what happened in my own house, and I know that not only was there no practising, but that each of these "quartettes," as I may call them, was always sung with more spirit and expression the first time of trying it, than on repetition, Peter invariably leading off the air, and taking the entire management of his invisible choir.

MRS. TAPPAN is about to begin a new series of Sunday meetings, as stated in our advertising columns. The place of meeting next Sunday will be announced in to-morrow's daily papers, and in the *Observer* of Sunday.

THE DALSTON SOCIETY.

THE seventh half-yearly general meeting of the members of the Dalston Association of Enquirers into Spiritualism was held on Monday evening last, the 12th inst., at their rooms, 74, Navarino-road, Dalston, London. In the absence of the president elect, Mr. Alfred E. Lovell, the chair was taken by Mr. Thos. Wilks.

The minutes of the last half-yearly general meeting were read and confirmed, and the notice convening the meeting was read. The report of the council, and balance sheet for the half-year ending the 31st December, 1873, were brought up and read by Mr. R. Pomeroy Tredwen, and unanimously adopted. The accounts, audited by Messrs. A. M. Greene and G. R. Tapp, showed favourably as compared with the previous half-year, the nett receipts being £13 4s. 5d., and the expenditure £15 3s. 4d. A small cash balance is carried forward to the current half-year, as well as a stock balance of £14 2s. 1d. to the credit of the Association. Nineteen new members have been elected since the 30th June last, while nine resignations have been accepted. The number of members on the books on the 31st December last was fifty, which is evidence of the Association maintaining the steady increase of past half-years.

The report reviewed the proceedings in the usual manner, and narrated that valuable aid had been rendered by Mr. A. Fegan Egerton, D. Hugh McLeod, M.D., Mr. Hy. W. Howell, Mr. Jas. J. Morse, Mr. Wm. Hy. Harrison, and others.

The report stated that the ordinary *seances* of the Association have elicited the following phases of the spirit manifestations, viz.:—Ordinary and eccentric table movements, with intelligent responses; percussive sounds, commonly called "rappings;" lights; involuntary writings; the entrancement of members, with discourses; the speaking and singing in a variety of tones of voice, by a lady member; and other minor phenomena.

The following officers were then elected for the current half-year:—Mr. Alfred E. Lovell, president; Mrs. Geo. Blyton, Mrs. Amelia Corner, Mrs. M. Theresia Wood, Messrs. G. Blyton, A. M. Greene, Jos. Stephens, R. Pomeroy Tredwen, and Thos. Wilks, as members of the council.

Mr. Thomas Blyton having resigned office as secretary and treasurer, Mr. Tapp moved, and Mr. Tredwen seconded, "That the secretary *pro tem* (Mr. Thos. Blyton) be empowered on behalf of the Association to canvas for a successor, that, failing the acceptance of the post by the members invited, Mr. A. M. Greene's offer to act as secretary *pro tem* be thankfully accepted until further arrangements can be made;" the motion was carried.

It was moved by Mr. Tredwen, and seconded by Mr. Stephens, "That a committee on mesmerism be appointed, to consist of Messrs. Cresswell, Wood, G. Blyton, Mrs. F. and Miss M. R. Showers, and Mr. Cattley, with power to add to their number from the members of the Association, and also power to invite the co-operation of experienced mesmerists, and to report to the council from time to time."

A few alterations to the rules were approved of, and, after the usual votes of thanks to the chairman and officers for their past services, the meeting broke up.

In the course of last year the Dalston Association of Enquirers into Spiritualism, most injudiciously, as we think, reduced its terms for life membership to £2 2s., a sum which enables economical persons living in the locality to gain all the advantages of permanent membership, without paying fair value for the same. Friends at a distance wishing to aid the society would just as soon pay three guineas as two. At the meeting last Monday, it was agreed that a "minimum" donation of £2 2s. should be required of life members, which was but a slight improvement in the rule.

ECCLESIASTICISM AND SPIRITUALISM.—The *Record* says:—Spiritualism is evidently meant to work upon the weakest and the lowest. No one possessing the least idea of what is meant by "reason" and "logic" could tolerate the trash presented by Spiritualism for a single moment. It is sad, indeed, to see that Sunday by Sunday, and even throughout the week, lectures in explanation and enforcement of Spiritualism are given, and are attended, both in divers places in London and in all the chief towns. But the people thus employed are utterly unknown, and many of the places where they lecture are obscure and hardly discernible. We lament that such mischievous falsehoods should be disseminated at all; but we do not feel much alarm at the growth of so very transparent an imposture.

Correspondence.

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

SPIRIT LIGHTS.

SIR,—Mr. Wm. Crookes, in his most valuable testimony to the reality of spiritualistic phenomena, has spoken of his experience respecting spirit lights; and you yourself have witnessed them in my own house. I wish now to say, that on the 3rd of this month, at a *seance* held here, under very favourable atmospheric conditions; a bright light, resembling a cylindrical luminous cake, about three-and-a-half by two inches in size, and surrounded by an oval-shaped luminous envelope, made its appearance, and remained visible, without fading, for upwards of forty minutes. It moved freely about the room in various directions, returning invariably and remaining upon the edge of the table, without (as in former instances) disappearing under the table, for the purpose of acquiring fresh brilliancy. It sometimes advanced, as though walking, to the centre of the table; rose in the air, placed itself, drapery and all, in the palm of my hand, held up to receive it. It then, at my request, soared upwards and struck the ceiling three times, at the same time striking the chandelier in its passage. It then darted away from the circle, and again struck the ceiling at a distance of ten feet from the medium, returning to its original resting place upon the edge of the table, and remaining there, with unabated brilliancy, until the close of the *seance*.

STANHOPE T. SPEER, M.D., Edin.

Dudley Villa, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, Jan. 8.

SIR,—I have read that the spirit of a living person having been invoked when asleep—by the bye, a very dangerous practice—was asked, whether any trouble to it as a spirit, would affect the sleeping body? The answer was, "Yes, I am like a balloon tied to a post—my body is the post, the balloon dashed about by the wind would, of course, shake the post." That which is applicable in the above case, would probably be more so in the case of a double, and if you can feel a double the double can probably feel you, and any hurt to the double would probably react on the post, *i.e.*, the sleeping body. This again would probably be equally applicable, if all, or almost all, the nerve aura of a sleeping medium were borrowed for the physical manifestation of a spirit, united as it must be to the medium by "the silver cord" invisible to our gross perception. Supposing that spirit—invested for a time with a physical body composed of its own fluid amalgamated with that of the medium—were hurt, it appears inevitable that the medium would be the sufferer.

The Church of Rome testifies to doubles. St. Alphonzo, of Liguori, was canonised before the due time after his death, because he was seen simultaneously in two different places.

The records of the Church tell that St. Anthony, of Padua, was in Spain, and when his father was being led to death at Padua, as he was accused of a murder, St. Anthony suddenly appeared, showed his father to be innocent, and disclosed the truth as to who was the real criminal. It is said to be proved that at this time St. Anthony had not quitted Spain.

Tacitus reports an analogous case. He tells us that Vespasian, being in the temple at Alexandria; "being entirely absorbed in what the oracle was about to pronounce, he perceived behind him one of the chiefs of the Egyptians named Basilides, whom he knew was detained by illness some days distance from Alexandria. He questioned the priests as to whether Basilides had been that day in the temple; he enquired of the passers by whether they had seen him in the town; at last he sent horsemen, and became assured through them that at that very time he was eighty miles away. Then he no longer doubted that the vision was supernatural, and the name of Basilides took the place of the oracle for him." (*Tacitus Histori.* Book IV., chap. 81 and 82.)

W. R. T.

MRS. WOODFORDE'S MEDIUMSHIP.

SIR,—I would fain call attention, for the benefit of your readers, to a medium who, since I have become acquainted with her, I have observed, is little known, and who is so sensitive and retiring that, unfortunately, she might remain so, were her gifts not revealed, through the efforts of one like myself, who has been benefitted by them. Gratitude for the blessings of spirit communion with beloved relations opened to me through her impels me to this, besides the desire that

others, thirsting for the same refreshing stream, may be directed to a pure fountain. I would speak also of Mrs. Woodforde's powers of development, which are great. I am an instance of rapid advancement, having, during the course of a fortnight, obtained writing, and trance speaking, besides advancing in clairaudience. It is true that I have had the advantage of almost daily sittings, but I know of many other instances of quick development, some who have at first shown no mediumistic power, having been enabled, after a few sittings, to write, and from this, progressing to the exhibition of other gifts.

Given, the possibility of communion with the spirit world, your more thoughtful readers will admit that to have this power opened is an inestimable blessing.

Many sit alone for months to obtain only the slightest evidences of spirit presence. With a medium, gifted as is our friend, it becomes a speedy and delightful process, for the work is aided by spirits of a high class, with whom it is a privilege to come in contact.

I would also bring before your notice, as an interesting fact, an article entitled "Spiritualism medically considered," which appeared in the *Medical Review* for December. The writer, a young author, was developed for spirit writing by Mrs. Woodforde, and the article having been ordered by the editor of the *Review*, was written under spirit control in his presence, the name of the controlling spirit—an eminent person on earth—being known. I have written this for your columns, hoping thus to reach a wider circle than is open to me in private, and to whom I would extend somewhat of the happiness I have myself obtained by sittings with this medium. I feel sure that with your usual praiseworthy spirit of usefulness and kindly helpfulness to media, you will be pleased to insert it.

M.

MATTER AND SPIRIT.

SIR,—The letters from various correspondents on the relations of spirit and matter, in late numbers of the *Spiritualist*, recall some lines which were once given to me while under an "influence" of some indescribable kind. They struck me as curious, and I preserved them, but I do not hold myself responsible for whatever philosophy they may seem to express.

If you think them of interest, you are at liberty to publish them:—

As the axis to the sphere,
God in matter doth inhere;
Flesh of man the garment is
Which enfolds thy soul and His.
Dwells thy soul from flesh apart,
As He is, thou also art.
Gravity, cohesion's law,
Rules life as matter (is) love's own power.
Nothing can be, nor have a name,
Which owns not God and life the same.

EMILY KISLINGBURY.

93, Clarendon-road, Notting-hill, W.

A DIPLOMATIC DISCLOSURE.

To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."

SIR,—There appeared in the *Medium* of 26th December, a letter headed as above, and signed "P," containing a series of misstatements regarding the British National Association of Spiritualists. Presuming that as the editor of the *Medium* felt bound by his duty as an editor to give publicity to the letter (although we have good reason to believe he knew some of the statements contained therein to be false), he would welcome and instantly insert a reply to the misrepresentations, we sent him in our official capacity a reply thereto. Two weeks have now elapsed without any notice of the same appearing in the *Medium*; we fear the editor intends to suppress it. We are therefore compelled to ask you to be kind enough to put on record in your paper not only our reply to the letter of "P" above referred to, but also his letter, side by side with our reply, in order that your readers may see that we have not misquoted "P" in replying to his calumnies.

Yours truly,

THE HON. SECS.

To the Editor of the "Medium."

"DEAR SIR,—It amuses me to observe that Mr. Burns disclaims any knowledge of what Mr. F. Everitt, Bishop Auckland, meant when he stated, as reported in the *Medium*, No. 193, that Mr. Burns had been unmanageable, and refused the proffered help of gentlemen who would have made matters all right in respect to the support of the Spiritual Institution. Perhaps I may be permitted to enlighten Mr. Burns and readers of the *Medium*, who may have been, like him, unable

to interpret Mr. Everitt's words. Well, the facts are these. An obscure clique, dating from the Liverpool Conference, have arrogated to themselves the title of a "National Association," and being, no doubt, conscious of the baselessness of their pretensions, they secretly entertain the project of ultimately annexing or absorbing the Spiritual Institution, that its merits as a national movement may confer nationality on their bantling. Though Mr. Everitt, of Bishop Auckland, is the brother of the president of this would-be national concern, yet his statement is rather premature, when he avers that overtures have been already made to Mr. Burns. At present the tactics of the aggressive party are not of the nature of business propositions. Hitherto, the work has been prosecuted by the publication of unscrupulous and misrepresenting statements, and the circulation, in private, of influences tending to depreciate the Spiritual Institution, destroy confidence in its management, and thus impair its usefulness; and these men who call themselves "National Spiritualists," are the determined opponents of that which has done anything for national Spiritualism. This reminds me of the Christian Church which, in nearly all its practices and opinions, is directly opposed to the spiritual teachings of the Gospels. The shameful way in which Mr. Burns has been personally treated by the promoters of this so-called "national" society, and the heartless style in which his labours and the claims of the Spiritual Institution have been ignored, show that they are not the men to whom the stupendous issues of Spiritualism can be safely entrusted. Mr. Burns has gone on hitherto with increasing success in a work which, it would seem, no other man, or number of men, but himself is fitted to accomplish, without the help of these "gentlemen,"—nay, in the very face of their libellous opposition, and he may reply to them as Diogenes did to Alexander, "Stand out of my light." With best wishes for the continued spread of Spiritualism, and the ever-increasing success of its true machinery, the Spiritual Institution, I enclose my card, and am ever your sincere friend and helper,

To the Editor of "The Medium."

SIR,—Under the above heading your correspondent "P.," of last week, makes certain erroneous statements with reference to this association, which call for some reply, lest they should mislead your readers. We are therefore instructed by the council to correct them. This association has never entertained the idea of "annexing or absorbing the Spiritual Institution." The council is credibly informed that Mr. Everitt, of Bishop Auckland, did not aver "that overtures have been already made to Mr. Burns" by the association, or on their behalf. The association has not published any "statements" whatever, "unscrupulous and misrepresenting," or the reverse; nor has it "circulated in private or otherwise, any influences tending to depreciate the Spiritual Institution" (so far as the Council can understand the latter statement). Nor is the association the determined opponent of that which has been done for national Spiritualism, whatever that may be. On the contrary, it recognises all workers in the cause, claims their assistance, and hopes, *when duly organised*, to assist them in return. The Council are utterly at a loss as to what "P." refers to when he says, "The shameful way in which Mr. Burns has been personally treated by the promoters of this society, and the heartless style in which his labours and the claims of the Spiritual Institution have been ignored." The Association is not yet fully constituted. It has taken no sort of action, direct or indirect, against Mr. Burns, or any one else. As regards him personally, the only step that has been taken has been unanimously to approve a proposition that he be invited to become a member. The Council do not think it necessary to do more than refer to the terms used by "P." in speaking of this association—"obscure clique," "aggressive party," "libellous opposition," &c. I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

THE HONORARY SECRETARIES.

British National Association of Spiritualists.
Council Chamber, Dec. 30th, 1873.

A SPIRITUAL IMPRESSION.

SIR,—I am not a medium in the ordinary sense of the term, that is to say, cannot get manifestations of any kind, either in a spirit circle or out of one. However, last Saturday evening, whilst walking along Southampton-row, towards Holborn, I glanced across the road, and saw a green covered book, with gilt letters, in the midst of a mass of works in the shop of a vendor of second-hand books. Instantly a vivid impression flashed upon me that it was a work on supernatural

subjects, and so strong was the impression that I walked across the road to see if the idea had any foundation. The book was Walter Thornbury's *Haunted London*, and the only book in any way relating to supernatural matters that I could see among the scores of others around. The whole incident did not occupy more than half a minute; I was walking hastily, and my thoughts bore upon subjects in no way relating to the incident, so I was suddenly and inexplicably turned out of my course to go across the road. Is this coincidence, or unconscious cerebration, or unconscious mediumship, or what? Perhaps Dr. Carpenter—whose understanding is so superior to that of anybody else—will explain.

H.
Jan. 13th, 1874.

A SEANCE AT HACKNEY.

SIR,—Will you allow an outsider, but still an honest inquirer, and a subscriber to your periodical, to draw your attention to an article in the *Lancet*, in which it is asserted that Mr. Wm. Hipp, a correspondent of the *Echo*, at one of Miss Cook's seances grasped the hand of the so-called spirit, held it, and on a light being procured, found it to be the hand of Miss Cook herself.

What is the answer to this? I am inclined to believe that one can be given, but against such a positive assertion there cannot be given an answer too soon, or too explicitly.

Cheltenham, January 12th, 1874.

M. D.

P.S.—I enclose my card, not for publication, but as a guarantee of my good faith.

SIR,—In a recent number of the *Echo* I observe a letter, signed by William Hipp, which is evidently intended as an effort, on the part of that person, to throw discredit upon Miss F. E. Cook, one of the truest and best of media; and as I was one of those present at the seance referred to, which took place about two years ago, and remember the incidents of the same, must, in justice to Miss Cook, ask you to insert my protest against the accuracy of the statements made by Mr. Hipp. That Mr. Hipp did grasp Miss Cook's hand is undoubtedly correct, but the inference of Mr. Hipp that it was in the act of sprinkling him, as undoubtedly false. After the water had been placed upon the table, and the light excluded, the message "*leave it alone*" was spelt out; and each member of the circle, excepting Mr. Hipp, denied having moved their hands. Mr. Hipp, on being pressed, continued to evade the question. Shortly after, Florrie demanded a light to be struck, and Mr. Hipp was discovered standing up and reaching across the table, grasping the hand of the medium. Mr. Hipp, *without any explanation*, thrust Miss Cook's hand back, and hastily withdrew from the house in the most rude manner. The seance was continued, and it appeared that the medium had instinctively made an effort to recover a flower which she stated was suddenly removed from her dress, when her hand was grasped by Mr. Hipp. Statements afterwards made in writing by Mr. Hipp, in connection with his conduct, most certainly justify no very high opinion of his accuracy; and that he should thus attempt to revive what must be a very disagreeable epoch in his life, as well as repeat his previous ungenerous conduct, is much to be deprecated by all lovers of truth. That Miss Cook's mediumship has been sufficiently tested, is patent to all, so more remarks are not necessary from me, who am proud to know her not only as one of our truest and honourable of media, but also as a warm-hearted friend.—Yours faithfully,

THOMAS BLYTON.

12, High-street, Bow, London, E.

12th January, 1874.

FIVE WEEKS IN A TRANCE.

From the "*Religio-Philosophical Journal*" (Chicago),
January 3, 1874.

THE village of Avon is at present enjoying a genuine sensation on account of a circumstance which has recently been brought to light in that place.

A reporter of the *Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, U.S.), visited the locality yesterday and obtained all the particulars in regard to the mysterious affair that have as yet been known. Our reporter learned his facts principally from the lips of John Ryan, a brother-in-law of the woman, and other gentlemen whose honesty

and veracity have been unimpeachable through many years of active business life, and would, therefore, hardly be supposed capable of misrepresenting the facts in regard to so serious a matter. The circumstances of the case are as follows:—

Several months ago an unmarried woman by the name of Eleanor Bonney, announced to her friends with whom she was living, 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 which would convince the sceptical world of the truth of Spiritualism. Miss Bonney had been an inmate of the house of L. O. Preston, a farmer residing about a mile and a half west of the village, for more than eight years. She was the daughter of poor parents who lived in the neighbourhood, and was adopted into the family of Mr. Preston when about seventeen years of age. She had been for some time past an acknowledged medium and clairvoyant, and had, as her friends allege, through the instrumentality of the spirits, been enabled to perform many wonderful things. She was an intimate friend of a lady clairvoyant physician of this city, Mrs. Jennie C. Dutton (of the firm of Sprague and Dutton, 185, Power's Block), who by the way has been rather peculiarly connected with the trance in which Miss Bonney is now lying. As stated above, she—Miss Bonney—frequently gave notice to those intimately associated with her that she was to pass into this mysterious state, and done this so frequently that they began to weary of it, doubting the idea that the event would ever come to pass.

She insisted, however, on the 10th day of November that her time had come, and at once set about making the necessary preparations. Sending for her brother-in-law, John Ryan (a Deputy Sheriff of the village), she informed him of what was coming, and to him and Preston announced the course of conduct to be pursued by them, and certain conditions necessary to be carried out in order to make the experiment a success. She stated that she was to prove that a person could die, the soul being completely separated from the body, the first stages of decomposition even set in, and then, by miraculous power, be restored to life again in all respects as she was before. To accomplish this, certain rules must strictly be observed, and she left the matter entirely to her friends, believing they would see that her wishes were conscientiously carried out. She named the hour at which she was to "go out," as she termed it, at two o'clock in the morning, and lying down upon the bed finishing 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. Dr. Dutton.

The room where she slept was to have no stove, but by means of one situated in an adjoining room was to be kept at a temperature of seventy degrees. Next followed particulars regarding certain events which would occur, the manner in which the body would change, mysterious sounds and phenomena, &c. Of these predictions, many, according to the statements of her attendants, have really come to pass, and the majority of her fellow believers seem to be confident that the remaining ones, even to the seeming impossibility of returning to life, will surely occur. After she had finished what she wished to say, she lay upon the bed for some time without speaking a word, but breathing very hard. This grew weaker until at precisely two o'clock, without a single contortion of the body, or the movement of a single muscle, she passed into what is called a trance,

to all appearances dead. In that state it is affirmed she has remained ever since that time, lying upon her back, slightly inclined to the right side. Her attendants solemnly aver that in that time (five weeks next Monday), she has not partaken of a particle of food, had a drop of anything to drink, nor stirred a muscle. A mirror on several occasions has been held before her nostrils for an hour at a time, without collecting the slightest moisture. Among the changes which she predicted would take place was that her tongue would protrude from her mouth, and a slight effusion of blood take place from her nostrils. This, we are informed, took place some three weeks ago. She also stated that her body would lose fifty pounds in weight, and when that was done it would be manifested by the ringing of bells; that when the soul had entirely separated from the body the house would be violently shaken. Both of these predictions, it is claimed, have come to pass. Miss Bonney was quite a large woman—weighing 208 lbs. the day she passed into the trance, and a medical gentleman of experience states that the body has evidently shrunk enough to warrant the difference in weight which was predicted. The same gentleman avers that he was in the house at the time the bells were rung and distinctly heard them: also that he was present on one occasion when the house shook as if an earthquake were prevailing. Another prophecy was that the body of the woman would turn black, and that the eyes, instead of sinking, would protrude, and that this has taken place is solemnly declared by both her brother-in-law, Mr. Preston, H. B. Simmons, one of the proprietors of the United States Hotel, and the physician above referred to. Although this has taken place, yet we are assured that decomposition has not commenced, and that there is no more unpleasant odour than would naturally proceed from a sick room. This will seem especially strange, when it is understood that a physician of many years of experience has announced that to the best of his knowledge and belief the woman is undoubtedly dead, and has been for some time. Her brother and others stronger in the faith, declare that she will yet come to life again as perfect as before. No one has been allowed to see her corpse, if corpse indeed it is, save those already mentioned. There was at one time considerable feeling existing in Avon in relation to the matter, and the coroner was importuned to look into the case. Those who have charge of the body declare that no person shall enter that room, and they evidently mean to stand firmly to what they have said. The premises have been given into the hands of the deputy sheriff before mentioned, and thus it would seem the parties have the advantage.

Several strange events have occurred. Mr. Ryan told our reporter that on one occasion while in the room were the body lay, his breast suddenly swelled out to such an extent as to burst all the buttons from his vest. His right arm swelled to a large size, and his feet were also enlarged that he was unable to draw on his boots for several days.

One peculiar feature of the case is the condition of the clairvoyant physician, Mrs. Dutton, who according to her promise went to Avon and took her place beside her friend on the next day after the trance began. Two days after that she was taken sick, and for seventeen days existed without food, drink or sleep. She was perfectly conscious, and would answer when spoken to. A few days ago she ate four bunches of grapes which constituted all the food taken into her stomach in

twenty days. This would certainly seem most extraordinary.

Miss Eleanor Bonney, the person whose case we have described above, was a fine looking woman about twenty-five years of age, with dark hair and eyes, weighing, as we have stated, at the time of her "going out," 208 pounds. The singular fact that she predicted months previous the trance into which she was to enter and the events which were to follow it, if it is true, casts an air of awful mystery over the matter which no one is able to dissipate. Although every effort was made to keep the affair from becoming known, and indeed was kept silent for a long time, yet it leaked out little by little, and her friends were obliged to make some disclosures to satisfy the demands of the public. There have been many wild, foolish and wholly unfounded stories started in the vicinity of Avon, but our reporter, wisely discarding them, has taken the facts from the lips of men of wealth and responsibility.

SPIRIT FORMS.

MR. BURNS has printed the following heading, in large type, to a paragraph in last week's *Medium*—"Mr. Volckman's Struggle with the Florence Cook Ghost," which is a remark calculated to do harm to one of our best mediums. He further, in a short ungrammatical article, says:—

"Mr. Volckman's process of investigation may be objected to on the ground of danger to the medium, but the conduct of the friends of the medium was such as to increase that danger a hundredfold. Indeed, we regard the conduct of the circle as reprehensible in every sense. If the form quietly clasped by Mr. Volckman were a spirit, it had a grand opportunity of evincing its peculiar nature under the somewhat novel circumstances. If, on the other hand, the figure were Miss Cook, why should her friends endeavour to hide the fact by attacking Mr. Volckman and turning out the gas? Such circumstances are not incompatible with her honesty, or the genuineness of her mediumship? The narratives of numerous investigators have reached us, showing that mediums are often influenced to act by spirits unbeknown to themselves. . . . The absurd limitations imposed at the circle in question reduced the *seance* to the level of an exhibition, with a desire to force matters to a foregone conclusion. So little is known of the nature of spirit-life, and the control of mediums, that the utmost licence should be given to experiments, and the honest avowal of its results."

The limitations which were agreed to at the circle were that nobody should grasp the forms, and that the sitters should all hold hands when requested. These same conditions, we believe, have been imposed on the sitters at all the face *seances* held in the rooms over Mr. Burns's bookshop. Therefore, the public now know what Mr. Burns thinks of the conditions usually imposed in his place of business, and always at Mr. Williams's *seances*.

The Medium, a few weeks previously, printed a letter which raked up from widely diffused sources, the worst features of two or three faulty *seances* which have taken place at Miss Cook's, and were published with the good ones with her consent and approbation. If anybody took the trouble to bring together and print all that has been published in newspapers against the much-abused Mr. Home, how derogatory to him it would appear to non-Spiritualists to be, but fortunately nobody is likely to be actuated by the painstaking malice, which would seem to be the only inducement to undertake so much work, or to carefully preserve such records. *The Medium* says that Mr. Volckman is about to issue a pamphlet about Miss Cook; he can do her no more harm than he has done already. These face and form manifestations are deeply rooted facts of nature, which are multiplying in all directions. In one case—that of Miss Showers—they have begun exactly the same as at Miss Cook's. There is the duplicate face, the white drapery, the fine veil, and the good light. Would Mr. Burns, Mr. Volckman, or James Clark, like to try what Mr. Burns calls "experiments" at Miss Showers's *seances*? We trust none of them will ever be admitted by Mrs. Showers, who is a lady who is now on a visit to London for the special purpose of learning more about modern Spiritualism, her interest having

been so much excited by what she has witnessed in her own house at Teignmouth.

Mr. Volckman, personally, is well aware of the materiality of the forms and hands built up by spirits; he has shaken the powerful muscular hand of "John King" at Mr Williams's *seances*, just as was done by about a dozen leaders of the spiritual movement last Saturday night.

As regards the attacks upon Miss Cook, a young medium of seventeen, of upright character and blameless life, retribution will fall where it is due; but on the present occasion these remarks are purposely confined strictly to comments upon the statements in last week's *Medium*.

FAINT iridescent pictures have appeared on the window-panes at Mrs. Andrews' house, Moravia, U.S., and have been examined by Mr. Dale Owen.

MR. WILLIAMS'S SEANCES.—Last Saturday about fifty ladies and gentlemen attended Mr. Williams's "*seance* for Spiritualists only." Among those present were Mrs. Honeywood, Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mrs. and Miss Showers, Dr. Baylis, Mr. Henry Morris (of Manchester), Mr. Purdon, Mr. Hannah, and a great many other leading friends of the movement, including some inquirers from Havcrfordwest. The manifestations went on with much power, although, of course, from the numbers present, they were weaker than usual.

EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN IN AMERICA.—In several large districts in the United States, according to the census returns, the men outnumbered the women, so that in certain States in the Union single blessedness is rare, so far as the women are concerned. *The Banner of Light* says:—Over one hundred ladies are said to be studying law in the United States, and in less than three months more than thirty women have been appointed post-mistresses. Dr. Chaplin, in a recent lecture entitled "Woman and her Works," said: "In woman's relation to man, she should be equal in society and equal before the law, as she is equal before God. If this or that branch of learning will develop the intelligence of the boy, why will it not the girl? The question of woman's right to the ballot has passed far beyond the reach of ridicule." Iowa is woman's paradise; a majority of the State officers, and also a majority of the State Judges of the highest State Court, favour woman suffrage. The State Librarian is a woman, and the enrolling and engrossing clerks in the House are women. Women are reporters, copyists and paper-folders in the State Capitol, and six women are serving as County Superintendents of schools. Bishop Simpson says—"I want the day to come when women will vote. Without their vote, I fear we will never be able to put down the houses of infamy and liquor saloons of our country. Nothing is so ruinous to the country, it is true; and it is my opinion that we can't get along without the women voting. It is not good for man to be alone." *The Banner of Light* further states that an intelligent voter of Burlington, Iowa, in scratching out the name of Mrs. Haga, a candidate for school superintendent, wrote upon his ballot paper: "Doant want kno wummun in Mine."

MISS LOTTIE FOWLER, the GREAT AMERICAN SOMNAMBULIST AND CLAIRVOYANTE, whose reputation is well known throughout Europe and America for Revealing Startling Facts to the public, can be consulted on either Medical or Business Affairs connected with the Living and Dead. Hours 12 to 5. Terms, One Guinea. Address, care of Mr. Frederick Everitt, Newgate-street, Bishop Auckland.

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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.

The public meetings of this association are held, *pro tem.*, at the Temperance Hall, Grosvenor-street, every Sunday afternoon, at 2.30, except when other arrangements are made, of which due notice will be given.

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MR. J. J. MORSE, Trance Medium, is open to receive engagements in London or the provinces, to attend seances, or address public meetings. Mr. Morse holds a seance every Friday evening, at 6 o'clock, at 15, Southampton-row, W.C., when he is in London, where letters, &c., may be addressed, or to his private residence, Warwick Cottage, Old Ford, Bow, E.

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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. Bergheim, 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 Volckman, 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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The following Extract from the “ACT TO AMEND the Law relating to LUNATICS” is a fair specimen of Lunacy Legislation:—

“It shall be lawful for the Proprietor or Superintendent of any licensed house with the previous assent in writing of two or more of the Commissioners, or in the Case of a House licensed by Justices, of two or more of the Visitors to entertain and keep in such house as a Boarder for such time as may be specified in the assent, any person who may have been WITHIN FIVE YEARS immediately preceding the giving of such assent, a Patient in any asylum, hospital, or licensed house, or under care as a Single Patient.”—25 & 26 Vict., ch. iii., sec. 13.

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