





# The Spiritualist Newspaper,

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## THE INVESTIGATION OF SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA BY NOVICES.

IN the report of the meeting of the Psychological Society, printed in these pages last week, will be found the speeches of several members, who stated that it was desirable to ascertain why manifestations are obtained at some *séances*, and none at others, in order that preventible failures may be avoided in the future. Nothing can be more desirable than a full knowledge of the conditions under which the best manifestations occur, because compliance with the said conditions will tend to save time, and secure precision. But some of the speakers at the meeting talked as though none of the conditions had ever been ascertained, although they have been unravelled to such an extent, that experienced Spiritualists can usually tell beforehand whether a *séance* will be a good one or the reverse. In the first place the medium must not be tired, but full of vital energy; he should also be in good health and spirits. Nothing kills manifestations so surely as uncongenial persons in the circle. Mrs. Jencken (Kate Fox), who has had more experience in the influences affecting spiritual phenomena than anybody else in the world, once told us that nothing checked the manifestations so much as her taking dislike, with or without cause, to some one of the sitters. The medium, then, in the first place, should be in good condition; the other primary element of success is that he shall have full confidence in every member of the circle, and feel happy in their society; in short, the more strongly he is bound to them by ties of affection, the more powerful will be the manifestations. Well-meaning investigators, versed perhaps in physics, and understanding little about spirituality, sometimes form circles, and without the least knowledge of the subject, begin by insulting the power which produces the manifestations by denying on the spot that spirits have anything to do with the matter at all; their *à priori* conclusion in this matter is the outcome of utter ignorance. After insulting the beings at the root of the matter, they commonly break through all the conditions under which the manifestations have been discovered by experience to be obtained. One glance at their faces is quite enough for the unfortunate medium, and chills out of him any sensation of happiness he might have felt before entering the *séance* room. They next instruct him where he is to sit, and what persons are to sit on either side of him, instead of asking the spirits who are to take those positions. When the latter are consulted, it will usually be found that they select the most affectionate persons in the room to sit near him, placing the more self-sufficient and unpleasant at a distance. The result of all this is that no manifestations are obtained, or that into such a villainous spiritual atmosphere only the lowest intelligences from the next world can gain entrance; if these gain power they play some reprehensible pranks, painful to the medium or to the sitters. Experienced Spiritualists are now well versed in these conditions, consequently do not take the trouble to invite to *séances* people who think they know all about the subject beforehand, and are perfectly ready to sit in judgment as authorities. Locking out these people protects the members of the circle and the medium from much annoyance. There are some investigators who begin their inquiry into the subject with good intentions, but who kill incipient manifestations through non-compliance with these conditions, so that the sooner they begin to understand that one of the primary elements of success in the spirit circle is that most, if not all the members shall be more or less strongly bound to the medium by ties of affection, the sooner will they cease to leave on record a series of dismal failures. Very powerful mediums obtain manifestations in the face of the most adverse conditions, but such mediums are rare, and access to their *séances* is one of the greatest of privileges.

## SPIRITUALISM IN NEW ZEALAND.

THE following particulars relating to some of the earlier *séances* in New Zealand, held soon after Spiritualism was first introduced in that country, are extracted from a private letter to a lady residing in Bath:—

Now for the table-turning, in which you express so confident a belief. You are quite right, the table *does* rise—through what agency remains to be discovered. How great is its jump! Long since I made the same reply to objections that you do,—“*Eppur si muove.*” I know all about Faraday’s test; but, when the table rises to me, by my simply placing my fingers, without force, on the *middle* of it, there can be no mistake, and of course no collusion. I ought rather to say that the table has so risen; for it rises no longer to me alone.

The experiment was first introduced into Auckland from America. Though much disposed to laugh at it, I did not, but bided my time. A question had been asked of the table,—“How many days will the *Spencer* (which had just sailed from Auckland) take to reach Melbourne?” “Thirty days” (an unusually long passage) was the reply. I said, “I will wait for news; if thirty days be the time, I will experiment myself.” *On the thirtieth day she did arrive.* Accordingly, I enquired who were the most successful practitioners, and selected from among them two men upon whom I could depend. Their names were Vaile and Jarvis. It would be endless work to tell you of the result; I was never so bewildered in my life. The end of all was that after about three months, I had to leave off, for it affects the nerves most strongly. One adventure, however, I must mention, because of its absurdity, though none the less true on that account. The table became suddenly very ill-behaved, kicking about in the most obstreperous manner. We told the spirit (mind, I do not believe in spiritual agency the least in the world) to letter his name. Of course you know how that is done. N—I—C. I had myself not the least thought of what was coming. “If the next letter be *k*,” said Vaile, “I shall bolt!” And, sure enough, letter *k* it was. At that time I had not yet satisfied myself that there was no devilry at the bottom of the matter. We looked at each other in mute astonishment: at last I said, “Blow out the lights, and give him a chance.” Neither of my mates seemed inclined to do so, and I blew them out myself. Let me confess that I half expected to see his sable majesty cross the room on a flash of blue lightning, and was really disappointed when he made no sign. We relit the lights, and Vaile proposed putting a Bible on the table. We then challenged Nick to lift again, and beat him. He could not lift an ounce. We took the Bible off, and I muttered a Latin prayer out of the breviary, over the table, and bid him try again. Up and down went the table, worse than ever. I have no doubt that if the priest had been there, or we had been holy Roman Catholics, the reverse would have taken place. On my way home, I called in on my friends, William Brown and his wife, to tell them. I was so excited, that, as Mrs. Brown afterwards confessed to me, they thought that I had taken too much whiskey; whereas, in truth, to borrow a Catholic phrase, I was “fasting from all but sin.”

One other curious thing I must tell you. A vessel was signalled, but was blown out to sea again before her number could be made out. The spirit was asked, “What vessel is that?” “*Do not know.*” “Can you go and see?” “*I can.*” Returned and said, “*The ‘Deborah’ Brig.*” “You are wrong for once,” said the inquirer; “the *Deborah* is a brigantine” (a well-known trader, Captain Bliss, between Auckland and Sydney). But the spirit stuck to his text, and a bet was actually made by one who was plucky enough to back the devil against what was supposed to be a

certainty. He won his money, and was paid. For, two days after, in came the *Deborah* brig, from London, a vessel that had never entered the harbour before.

I sent an account of the experiments to Wellington, where they were tried on a large table at Mr. Dillon Bell's. All the veneering flew off. A cracking noise in the table I have often heard; never what is commonly called "rapping." Once we were trying a large heavy table during session time. It was obstinate, and would not move. By a sort of instinct I conceived the idea that Fitzgerald, of Canterbury, exercised an adverse influence. He is a large, powerful man, of the high, sanguine temperament; the very man, one would suppose, to help in the accumulation of force. As soon as he left the table, it spun round the room so fast that we had a race to keep up with it. You may say that he exerted force to hinder it; not so; he was as much surprised as any of us.

I investigated the question most carefully with my friends Mr. and Mrs. Brown (I wish you would find them out in London. Morrison, the New Zealand agent, No. 3, Adelaide-place, London-bridge, will always give you their address), but we gave it up in despair at last. Moreover, we got out of conceit with the spirits, who lie sometimes like tinkers, and with the most mischievous ingenuity.

More about the spirits presently; but an improvement was effected upon even them, for some wiseacres discovered that we had each of us a guardian angel in attendance. Curiously enough, this absurdity supplied me with a hint towards solution of the mystery. We were trying the table in William Brown's house. Some one asked, "Who is Mr. C——'s guardian angel?" "How many letters in the name?" "Four—D R——." Mrs. Brown suddenly stopped the proceedings, and broke up the *séance*. I asked her what was the matter. She made no answer, but brought out of the study a book which I had lent her, and pointed to a name in the title page. This book was an Italian Bible, which had been given to me by Lady Virginia Murray, and the name was Lucy Drew. I saw in a moment what was passing in her mind; she had compounded a little romance in her own mind, and had broken up the *séance* out of regard to my feelings, which were likely to be wounded by indiscreet revival of the past. I assured her that she need have been under no anxiety about that; although I knew the lady very well, she was some twenty years older than myself. But it struck me that the table might obey the thoughts of the persons present, and that the persons might be in a state of partial or complete clairvoyance, clearly not necessarily so, as in the present instance. I subsequently succeeded in commanding the table myself, by means of intense will, standing at the other end of the room, away from the operators, who brought out the result which I required in silence, with *one additional*.

Now it is of no use laughing at all this as being contrary to common sense, and to the doctrine of attraction of gravitation. Do we yet know all about the attraction of gravitation? There are phenomena yet to be accounted for. Every one knows the difference in weight (to lift) between a dead man and a live one. But there is a case in which the living man is without weight. You will doubtless have heard a well known experiment. A man is laid on a table; four others put a finger each under him; all five draw breath and hold it at the same time; and up rises the middle man, borne on four fingers. Now it struck me that there *might* be conditions under which the attraction of the earth should exercise a repulsive force, as well as that of the magnet; and that a development of the odyllic force, the main agent in mesmerism, might be one of those conditions. It is a curious fact that, from the time that I endeavoured to account for the rising, *i.e.* repulsion of the table on physical grounds, losing the excitement of wonder, I lost half my power of influencing the table.

Bishop Selwyn preached a sermon at St. Paul's (our St. Paul's) against it. The text which he *intended* to take, had not his courage failed him, was admirable. It was from Acts, relative to the appointment of deacons. "It is not meet that we should leave the word of God to serve tables." My own opinion is that all these new things are old ones connected with the ancient and venerable practice of witch-

craft, which was not merely imposture. Depend upon it that whatever obtains general credence, and takes a firm hold on the popular mind, has at least a grain of truth at the bottom of it. In every superstition that endures there must be a living coal to keep it alight.

Enough of this, though there be plenty more to say.

#### DR. DODDRIDGE'S DREAM.

THE difficulties in the way of ascertaining the exact nature of life in the world of spirits are great, because spirits appear to possess powers and senses which we have not, and to be surrounded by conditions of which we can have no perception. Hence, the higher spirits in their attempted revelations speak chiefly by signs and symbols, which, if taken too literally, lead the inquirer into error. Nevertheless, there is a sameness of a striking nature in the symbolism revealed through seers and trance mediums. The late Judge Edmonds, of New York, in a vision of his spirit home, saw all the leading incidents of his past life depicted in pictures on the wall. Spirits who communicated through Mr. Morse in the early days of his mediumship, spoke sometimes of seeing the deeds of their past life pictured upon the walls of a room; the figures in these life-pictures were usually described as moving and changing. To show how these revelations, from widely different sources, agree, we here quote the contents of a *Stirling Tract* (No. 244) which has been sent us, containing an account of "Dr. Doddridge's Dream:"—

"Dr. Doddridge was on terms of intimate friendship with Dr. Samuel Clarke, and in religious conversation they spent many happy hours together. Among other matters, a favourite topic was the intermediate state of the soul, and the probability that at the instant of dissolution it was not introduced into the presence of all the heavenly hosts, and the splendours around the throne of God. One evening, after a conversation of this nature, Dr. Doddridge retired to rest with his mind full of the subject discussed, and in the 'visions of the night' his ideas were shaped into the following beautiful form:—He dreamed that he was at the house of a friend, when he was suddenly taken dangerously ill. By degrees he seemed to grow worse, and at last expired. In an instant he was sensible that he exchanged the prison-house and sufferings of mortality for a state of liberty and happiness. Embodied in a splendid aerial form, he seemed to float in a region of pure light. Beneath him lay the earth, but not a glittering city or village, the forest or the sea, was visible. There was nought to be seen below save the melancholy group of friends, weeping around his lifeless remains.

"Himself thrilled with delight, he was surprised at their tears, and attempted to inform them of his change, but, by some mysterious power, utterance was denied; and, as he anxiously leaned over the mourning circle, gazing fondly upon them, and struggling to speak, he rose silently upon the air; their forms became more and more distant, and gradually melted away from his sight. Reposing upon golden clouds, he found himself swiftly mounting the skies, with a venerable figure at his side, guiding his mysterious movement, and in whose countenance he remarked the lineaments of youth and age were blended together with an intimate harmony and majestic sweetness. They travelled through a vast region of empty space, until at length the battlements of a glorious edifice shone in the distance, and as its form rose brilliant and distinct among the far-off shadows that flitted across their path, the guide informed him that the palace he beheld was for the present to be his mansion of rest. Gazing upon its splendour, he replied, that while on earth he had heard that eye had not seen, nor had the ear heard, nor could it enter into the heart of man to conceive the things which God had prepared for those who love Him; but, notwithstanding the building to which they were then rapidly approaching was superior to anything he had ever before seen, yet its grandeur had not exceeded the conceptions he had formed. The guide made no reply—they were already at the door, and entered.

The guide introduced him into a spacious apartment, at the extremity of which stood a table covered with a snow-white cloth, a golden cup, and a cluster of grapes, and there

he said he must remain, for he would receive in a short time a visit from the Lord of the mansion, and that, during the interval before his arrival, the apartment would furnish him with sufficient entertainment and instruction. The guide vanished, and he was left alone. He began to examine the decorations of the room, and observed that the walls were adorned with a number of pictures. Upon nearer inspection he found, to his astonishment, that they formed a complete biography of his own life. Here he saw upon the canvas that unseen angels had ever been his familiar attendants, and, sent by God, they had sometimes preserved him from immediate peril. He beheld himself first as an infant just expiring, when his life was prolonged by an angel gently breathing into his nostrils. Most of the occurrences here delineated were perfectly familiar to his recollection, and unfolded many things which he had never before understood, and which had perplexed him with many doubts and much uneasiness. Among others he was particularly struck with a picture in which he was represented as falling from his horse, when death would have been inevitable had not an angel received him in his arms, and broken the force of his descent. These merciful interpositions of God filled him with joy and gratitude, and his heart overflowed with love as he surveyed in them all an exhibition of goodness and mercy far beyond all that he had imagined. Suddenly his attention was arrested by a rap at the door. The Lord of the mansion had arrived—the door opened and he entered. So powerful and so overwhelming, and withal of such singular beauty was his appearance, that he sank down at his feet, completely overcome by his majestic presence. His Lord gently raised him from the ground, and, taking his hand, led him forward to the table. He pressed with his fingers the juice of the grapes into the cup, and after having drank himself, presented it to him, saying, 'This is the new wine in my Father's kingdom.' No sooner had he partaken than all uneasy sensations vanished. Perfect love had cast out fear, and he conversed with his Saviour as an intimate friend. Like the silver rippling of the summer sea, he heard fall from his lips the grateful approbation: 'Thy labours are over, thy work is approved, rich and glorious is thy reward.' Thrilled with an unspeakable bliss that glided into the very depth of his soul, he suddenly saw glories upon glories bursting upon his view. The doctor awoke. Tears of rapture from his joyful interview were rolling down his cheeks. Long did the lively impressions of this charming dream remain upon his mind, and never could he speak of it without emotions of joy and tenderness."

#### AN INSPIRATIONAL ADDRESS ON SPIRITUALISM AS A SCIENCE.

This address was delivered one Sunday evening in the trance state by Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, before the Boston Spiritualists' Union, during his recent visit to the United States. We extract the trance address from *The Spiritual Scientist* of Boston. Mr. Morse, upon rising, uttered the following prayer:—

Through that Divine Providence whose care hath ever guided humanity, whose Divine love and wisdom doth ever abide with His children, let us stand, our thoughts and aspirations welling upwards after that which is beautiful and pure in being; and as our souls flow out, and as our minds endeavour to draw near to the grand truths of life, our natures will be inspired, and somewhat of the glory will enter into our nature; we shall feel the soul of the Divine life that pulsates through us, and draw nearer our God to Thee. To praise Thee by set words, or adore Thee by any formal mode, is not the worship that Thou dost require; but it is the waiting spirit, springing in its purity, springing in its integrity, ever pushing forward in the pure purposes of life, and in deeds of kindness, making efforts to lift mankind upward and onward. This is the prayer, and this the only ritual, and this the only method whereby Thy children can worship Thee. Grant, oh, we pray Thee, that this worship of good deeds and noble works, this living faith of divine works, shall glow in the pathway of humanity and cast a radiance over its suffering, filling all lands with hope and joy; and grant, too, that it may yet bind humanity in the bond of one common love, and one united interest, which shall make it as one with itself and with Thee, its Father and its God. Amen.

In speaking to you this evening, friends, we intend to traverse some ground that may be familiar to some of you, but yet, perhaps, may be new unto others. We intend, also, to embody, so far as we are able, such general information, bearing upon the points that we shall touch upon, as will prove of interest to all our hearers, and for the special object engaging your attention for the time before us we have selected this theme; not by any means a new one, perhaps, nor do we claim that

we shall be able to throw any new light upon it, but then discussion thereof may prove mutually advantageous. The theme that we would speak to you upon is "The Science of Spiritualism."

And we think that our friends will agree with us that in the understanding of the merely mechanical portions of this philosophy of Spiritualism, by which we mean the means whereby the inhabitants of the next world are enabled to hold communion with the inhabitants of this, the consideration of these matters cannot but prove of advantage to all concerned. For it is not that we should know too much of these things, but rather is it that we should know a little, and know that little well and thoroughly.

Now, our conception of Spiritualism, be it here stated, really amounts to this, that it is first based upon its phenomenal evidence, which phenomenal evidence really rests upon certain inevitable laws and principles inherent to the condition of this universe; and it is just as the spirits themselves are enabled by their knowledge of these facts to point them, by their own will or purpose, in any particular direction—just in proportion as they are able to do this does success attend their efforts, and no more.

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We must assume, at the outset, that there are such persons as disembodied spirits. At present you will please to consider that there is not a particle of evidence to support this idea, but it is necessary to be admitted on the theory we are now considering.

Well, here is your disembodied spirit. You cannot see it, but then there are many other things in nature that you cannot see, and why not this disembodied spirit? The object is that this table shall be moved, but the table is in one condition of existence, and the spirit is in another. Manifestly a fusion of forces, so to speak, is the only means we have by which it would appear possible for the two conditions to come together.

Now, can this living material being,—excuse us for the word, for we know no better one,—can this living entity on this side fuse itself to the dead, or material, conditions on your side?

By the way, science perplexes us very much sometimes; she uses such a strange nomenclature for things which wear such different aspects to the Spiritualist, that we are at a loss to find a fitting word; therefore we blame science for the little confusion that now arises.

What is there that shall relate this table to that spirit? Apparently nothing, and if there were no other conditions than those which pertain to the table and those which pertain to the spirit, that spirit might stand there from now to the crack of doom, and the Rochester knockings would never have transpired. But, observe! We find that when manifestations are produced, the presence of a medium is necessary.

"Well, what is a medium?" says the investigator. "Why cannot spirits come without a medium?"

Well, we do not know why spirits cannot do without mediums,—we do not know why light should not reflect itself without being reflected from some surface capable of bringing about that result.

"But what is a medium? What is she? What does she have to do? They are usually women, and women are so sentimental and soft-brained and crazy! What do these mediums do? How do they call up the spirits?"

Well, they neither call them up nor down, but they just sit perfectly still.

"Well, what do they want there at all if they do nothing but sit still?"

Well, my friend, there is something flowing from their organisations which the spirits use, and upon which they are dependent, and the absence of which makes the manifestations impossible.

"Well, where does it come from, this something which the spirits want to use,—from her head, her eyes, or her mouth?"

How very material these people are, to be sure! They would wish to hear the voice of Deity through a tin trumpet before they believed it, and probably when they heard it sounding through that instrument, they would say that it was a piece of clever imposture on the part of some human being.

But what is the philosophy of mediumship? There has been a doctrine prevailing among the sages, of all ages of the world, that every condition of existence, that is, every order, or form of order of life, evolved from itself a peculiar sphere or effluvia—that is the word usually used—as in the case of the rose or the onion, for instance, to the odours of which you are sensitive, and which you can easily recognise. These exhalations are such that you cannot lay hold of them, but they are, nevertheless, real and substantial; as real and as substantial as are the objects from which they are exhaled. Now, all things in nature emit their own peculiar atmosphere, and atoms of matter are also surrounded by their peculiar atmospheres. Every human being in this room is also surrounded by his peculiar atmosphere. Every world floating in space is surrounded by its own peculiar atmosphere; in short, every condition of existence evolves its own especial atmosphere. Now, the union of two atoms means, not the union of the atoms as such, but the interfusion of their atomic sphere, or surroundings, and, therefore, all forms of life, animate and inanimate, represent molecular structures, depending on the unity entering into their construction for the time being.

Consequently, this table before us, which is simply so-called wood and marble, is in reality a compound of certain atoms in chemical relationship, which give you the constituents which you know either as wood or marble, whichever portion of the table you take. These atoms are held together by purely chemical relations. They were originally brought together by affinities toward each other, and are maintained in their present relations because the vibration of the individual atoms happens to be harmonious, that is, they are all beating, so to speak, in the same rhythm. By striking it with a hammer, thus destroying the harmonious vibration, you would shatter this marble to pieces. So, if you placed the wood in the fire, you would bring about also a repulsion

of the harmony in the atoms. But in neither case would the elements of the articles be lost; they would return back to their elementary conditions. We find, then, this table composed of atoms; each atom has its own peculiar sphere, and each sphere impinges upon the other; and the vibration obtaining through these constituents constitutes and maintains the continuity of the substance.

Now, here is your medium, surrounded by his or her own peculiar atmosphere. What are the elements of the human body? Science has hardly made up its mind what they are. But the atmosphere which surrounds the medium will partake of all the physical conditions peculiar to the body itself. On the other side is the spirit, also surrounded by its peculiar sphere, which will be representative of its organic conditions as a spirit.

The problem is: given the spirit, the medium, and the table; required, to unite their several relationships in one continuous chain; result, a perfect union between the two worlds. How is it to be obtained?

The sphere surrounding the medium is usually termed the *aura*, or atmosphere, or, as it has been very learnedly called, the sphere of psychic force. And, by the way, this psychic force has been credited with all the various manifestations of Spiritualism, and psychic force should be a very great individual indeed. But, unfortunately, we shall find that this mode of reasoning is simply an attempt to put the wagon before the horse! The spirit surrounded by its external condition, has to ask itself the question, How is the union which is required to be effected?

You have heard of mesmeric operations, and, doubtless, many of you have seen them; and you know that when the mesmerist establishes sympathy between himself and his subject he does so as the result of a mental act, having previously established a mental harmony, or equilibrium, in the mind of his subject. Thus the spirit finds, then, that if it can draw near to the mind of the medium, not necessarily to psychologise that mind, but only to come into sympathy with it, that then one important object has been gained. Granted that that sympathy has been attained, its next direction is to operate on the sphere of psychic force surrounding the medium, and, by the aid of his will-power, to coalesce the sphere belonging to himself and that of the medium into one perfect whole. After what has been done, a sympathetic connection is established between, not only the medium and the spirit, but between the spirit and this other world. Now, the medium places his or her hands on the table.

"What is that for?" says the investigator. "Is she going to move it? Why can't she take her hands off?"

She does take her hands off, and, much to the disgust of the very clever investigator, the table moves just as well without the laying on of the hands as when they were laid on.

Evidently, the conditions surrounding the medium must be considerably more gross than the conditions surrounding the spirit, and, consequently, we are coming downwards in this matter, from the spirit-world to the material conditions. What is next required? Why, that the spirit shall relate itself to the material condition to be operated upon—the table, for instance. How can it do that? Not directly, that is impossible; but by infusing, so to speak, the psychical sphere of the medium, and projecting that sphere on the atmosphere surrounding the table, and bringing the two atmospheres into harmony with one another, and finally making the vibrations through the entire series harmonious.

By this method a perfectly continuous link is established between the mind of the spirit, down through the sphere of the medium on to the sphere surrounding the table, and thus to the very table itself, which, by the operation of the will power, on the part of the spirit, is moved in any especial manner, just as the spirit desires, and its ability enables it to accomplish.

You may think this to be a very intricate method of procedure. You may think that there is no wonder that spirits make so many blunders in their communications, when the mode of making them is so indirect. And yet, you may say to yourselves, there are some cases where phenomena seem to occur so readily, and spontaneously, that it would scarcely appear necessary that all these conditions should be obtained. Yet, whether the phenomena appear spontaneously or not, in either case these conditions have to be applied, and where the phenomena readily occur, there is proof positive that the conditions are more harmonious than when the phenomena come less readily.

We come, then, to the conclusion that, by a series of links, the operating spirit relates itself to the material to be used; and in getting to this conclusion we are not, perhaps, running directly against scientific experience, but only bringing it to bear on these facts of Spiritualism, and endeavouring to show that after all, communication between the two worlds is natural, and is governed by laws as natural and exact in their requirements as are the common events which may transpire in this world in which you now live.

And here do we not find a reason—shall we not say a substantial reason?—which gives us a solid foundation whereon we can stand in contemplating this question? For, if some spirits could come just when and how and where they might please; if they could transcend law and order, and ride rough-shod over all the principles of being, what a condition this world would soon be in! We tell you, friends, honestly, that as you do not send too great a number of saints into the next world, you must expect a considerable percentage of sinners to come back (applause), and it might be that these latter gentlemen, not feeling over amiable themselves for the world's past kindnesses, when they lived in body, might play such a part in this world, that the world itself would rise up in its agony, and cry to God to blot out its existence.

Here we stand on scientific facts and conclusions, by virtue of which the ordinary physical phenomena are believed to be produced.

We enter now on the consideration of the second division of this science of Spiritualism. This first division, you will perceive, embraces the outer or physical phenomena. Now, by following the conditions of

the mind interiorly, instead of looking at the work exteriorly, we shall bring you to the psychical condition of this matter. In the first condition, where the phenomena worked outwardly to the medium, we found the spirits relating themselves to the organic conditions of the medium, and thus, for the time being, temporarily re-establishing their former relationship with the world which they once inhabited, and enabling them to come in contact again with the external world. There is a point here to which we shall have to direct your attention presently. To come more intimately to the psychological department of our subject now, we find that when the spirits operate upon the sensitive form of the human organisation, they not only come in contact with the external world, but for the time they temporarily re-assume the control of another organisation; in other words, that they re-associate themselves with earthly organic conditions. But, as you will readily admit, it is a very difficult and delicate thing to make a proper and satisfactory appearance in another man's clothing; so it is a very difficult and delicate thing indeed to make yourself thoroughly plain to the understanding of your friends through somebody else's brain; and it is not that spirits fail in communicating to you that you have to consider, and it is not on the failures and the blunders and errors that creep into their communications that you have to comment—and the world at large is quite ready enough to comment on these—but rather should you comment on the fact that so many succeed, instead of the fact that so many fail. You should rather rejoice that there are those with intellects clear enough, with hearts pure enough, and with purposes high enough, to devote themselves to the mastery of these psychological problems of being, and thus enable them to manifest themselves to your understanding.

But what are the means whereby psychological control is effected? Here let us sum up that department. If psychological phenomena are produced by a certain kind of fluid or emanation evolved from the structure of the medium, how do we produce all the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, such as spirit photography, transportation of ponderable bodies, the levitation of individuals, the penetrability of matter, solid bodies passing through solid bodies? They cannot all be done in the same manner, but they are all dependent on the same agency, the absence of which would render them impossible in any one department; for it is by the aid of this psychic force, as it is called, that we, while performing physical manifestations, are able to adjust the scales in any given direction, for that psychic force is to me, for the time being, serving the same purposes that your physical bodies do to you. The psychic force, however, being a higher force, enables us to produce a higher order of phenomena; the physical body being of a lower grade, does not enable you to produce anything but a lower order of phenomena. There is the difference and the distinction, that is all. The application of these general principles would extend over far more time than we can devote to their consideration now.

To return from this digression, and to attract your attention more closely to the psychological point of the matter, which is the second division of our subject, let us ask how mental phenomena are produced, since they are inward and not exterior? Now, the spirit acts in sympathy with the exterior psychic sphere of the medium, in the same manner as mentioned before, and, while operating on that sphere, instead of allowing that mind to work inside of it, it strikes the mind, which acts on the sphere of nervous force belonging to the individual, which nervous force it operates upon; and, in proportion to its ability to control, or subject, this nervous force, just in proportion are psychological phenomena produced.

Of course the organic condition, the temperament, the intellect, and the health of the person affect and govern to a certain extent, the nature and character of the individual mediumship.

If this control of the nervous forces is complete, the brain is finally subject, and the entire body passes under the control of the external intelligence, being dispossessed, as it were for the time being, of its own intelligence, and becoming, for the time, a machine or instrument under the control of an outer intelligence. You may have a piano free from all imperfections, and you may have some knowledge of music, but you cannot play one of Beethoven's sonatas; and so a spirit may have a perfect piano, but unless it has superior knowledge, it cannot play one of the sonatas of immortal life, that might be accomplished by another intelligence which has learned more, and knows more, of the subject under consideration, and knows how to touch the various keys of the instrument by turns.

Assuming that the operating spirit has, comparatively speaking, a perfect control, and that it is enabled to use the bodily instrument even as it feels inclined, after this there is another important fact to be taken into consideration. Would a person whose organic peculiarities might be classified as weak,—would such a person be able to give out the vigour and power of a Demosthenes? Would such a person revel in the imagery of a Milton or a Homer? Would he be able to use the eloquence of a Shakespeare, or enunciate the mathematical problems of a Newton? It would be impossible to suppose such a thing. But the operating power, let it be as great or grand as you choose to think of, you must always bear in mind it is not expressing itself, of itself, but expressing itself through another organisation that was never made to fit its mind, that was never made to be the servant of its intelligence, and was never constructed to be the vehicle of its thought; it may be relatively adapted to its organisation, but not absolutely. Therefore, the expression of any medium will always be below the capacity of the operating agent, but just in proportion as the organic conditions improve, and as they approximate to higher and more perfect states, so will that expression improve, so will the conditions be enlarged, and the results increased both in beauty and power; and if that *medium is only true to his mediumship*, and only strives to improve his own mental and physical conditions, and to lift himself higher, such results will flow from his mediumship, that *he knows not where he will stand ultimately*. We throw out this suggestion that we are dependent on the

organic conditions of the medium. We can never transcend the possibilities of these conditions, but we can exalt and improve their normal operations.

If there be any truth in the persistency of law, if principles abide, and the conditions of things move in established and fixed directions, these things will be true in connection with human nature. We never can run counter to law, nor overthrow a principle, and we can never get more out of an instrument than it is capable of expressing, though what we may get out of the instrument may transcend what the instrument would give out under the control of a poor operating intelligence.

We carry this matter to another stage. Spiritualism, as a science, has revealed, as it is seen, a new possibility within human nature and material life. It reveals also, as we have seen, other possibilities in a metaphysical direction; it reveals certain subtle conditions of organisation, and certain subtle and superior conditions of mind, and shows you how minds may be operated upon by other intelligences, and made to express greater and grander truths as the result of such operation, than they would left to their own unaided genius. But it reveals to you also these two farther facts, equally important and grand. The first is that it is possible for man, the spirit, to associate himself while in the spiritual world with the inhabitants of this material world, and this involves the proposition, either that the spiritual world is very closely united to this, or, shall we say it, that it is the other side of this world.

"Why," says the materialist, "What do you mean? The spirit world on the other side of this world! This world is round, and if we go to the other side we shall find sky, and if we go to this side again we shall find sky, and whichever side we go to we shall find sky; we shall find no spirit world on either side of it." These friends are so very literal. They do call a spade a spade in such a very spade-like manner that they never can believe in anything else but a spade. When you say the other side of it, you sometimes mean the inside of it; the brains are on the other side of their foreheads, being the inside of their heads, and it may be that the spirit world, being inside, is the other side in this sense, that it is the interior condition of this world, and such, in truth, is the first condition of spirit life. How do you prove it? Why, the Spiritualist knows man is a spiritual being; the religionist professes to know it, and we hope he does, but he is a little hard in accepting it when he is told that one of these spirits has come back in this way. Perhaps it is not comfortable for him to know that good spirits are looking on while he is doing the meanest things possible, and soiling his humanity at every turn.

These spirit people tell you, then, that the spirit world is on the other side of life, and the truth brought forward to support the assertion is that you are spiritual beings now, and that, being spiritual, you must be sustained, spiritually, by spiritual conditions: that as you are sustained exteriorly by the natural conditions, so you must be sustained interiorly by the spiritual conditions; and thus you are partly, while in these bodies of yours, living in the spiritual world; that you are living on the one hand in the spiritual world, just as on the other you are living in the natural world, and death is not a departure to a far-off land—is not a sailing off like a rocket into the blue sky, but is simply a throwing aside of the natural body and entering into the full and complete possession and use of the spiritual one. Therefore spirits, when they return, do not come from a far-off world. They associate themselves with the psychical conditions associated with the medium, and thus for the time being, re-establish their former relations with the material universe in which they once moved, and in sympathy with material conditions, gain objective force, or materialise themselves, to come forth and stand before you even as they lived in times gone by.

This is one of the grand facts revealed by Spiritualism as a science.

The other fact is this, that the science of Spiritualism gives you another conception of the future life: that is, the home that man is to live in hereafter. It claims—and we think justly—that if there is a home for man in the after life, that that world can only be built up in accordance with fixed principles, that it can only be placed in being in obedience to the laws governing the existence of other facts of spirit nature. If this is not the case, and the next life is totally different from this, you could not exist within it unless you underwent a miraculous transformation at the point of death; and if you underwent that transformation there would be an end of your identity; if you were transformed into something else you would not be immortal. There would be no continuity of existence; you would be destroyed so far as your nature and state to-day are concerned, and humanity would never be able to understand the future life, because it would be totally and radically distinct from the world wherein you now live. No inhabitant could ever return, because the conditions would be distinct and different; no message could ever be signalled into this world, because it would be in a language that none would understand. Under conditions so distinct and different it would be utterly impossible for any communion to take place, because there would be no point of contact between the two worlds.

The science of Spiritualism shows that there is not only a point of contact and sympathy, but that, under proper conditions, both worlds are in perfect sympathy and reciprocity one with the other, and that the coming back of the angels from the after-life is simply their objectifying themselves from their hitherto subjective conditions, by the aid and agency of the medium.

As this science of Spiritualism becomes more understood, and as the laws and principles governing its operation become more plainly known, it will be seen how useful and valuable have been the phenomenal evidences of the last quarter of a century. Then it will be seen that they have been the starry index pointing to greater and grander truths yet to be revealed—that heaven is no far off country, but an ever present reality, lying all around you; that the dead are not removed to some distant land, but are here in your midst, labouring with you, suffering

with you, sorrowing for you, stooping with you and lifting you up, and ever earnest in their desires to inspire your hearts with thoughts of goodness and peace, leading you upwards and onwards, ever nearer to God our Eternal Father.

To carry on this science of Spiritualism beyond the point we have now attained is scarcely within the province of our present limits; still there are some other matters which we will now present by way of conclusion.

Mediumship is a grand and glorious function, specially active and apparent in certain persons, and it is of this matter of mediumship that we would now offer a few closing sentences. As we have told you, spirits are dependent on certain elements evolved from the structure of the medium, that by these elements they are enabled to produce the manifestations; so you will find that one of the first necessities of mediumship is the nearest possible approximation to full bodily, vital, health; for then all the exhalations will flow harmoniously. Thus you will present conditions to the spirits that will supply them with the greatest amount of power, and enable them to produce the grandest results. Thus we would say that whilst to-day mediumship appears to flourish amongst those whose organisations are lowest in vitality, in time to come it will be a sure characteristic of perfect health; in other words, the exercise of mediumship, and its functions, instead of drawing the vital power will assist in its development and unfolding, and necessitate a greater amount of natural harmony than they have to-day. Our Father never intended that a single function of the human nature should be inimical to those who possessed it. How then can we suppose that mediumship, being a function of human nature, was intended to be inimical to those who exercise it? In the present condition of things the solemn conclusion is that mediumship kills more than it cures. Mediums are the Saviours to-day, and their sufferings the cross whereon they are crucified for the benefit of the race.

And now, as we part from our subject, let us tell you that the science of Spiritualism is also something else, that not only does it minister to the intellectual necessities and the practical demands of investigating minds, but it ministers to those who have accepted its truths, and to those who know what a blessed privilege this angel-communion is. It ministers to their higher natures; it speaks to the very spirit that pulses within them; it urges them forward, lifts them up, clears away the fogs and clouds that have hung around the mental horizon, disclosing to them the glory and grandeur of the sun of truth rising into the mid-heaven of their intellects, flooding them with light and power. It urges you to float away into that blue distance where the radiance of God shines with glory inconceivable; it bids you come up and join the glorious company; it bids you to live here in this clear atmosphere of purity; it tells you that those who are departed are not dead, but only gone before; that there is a genuine feeling between you and them; that their angel faces cheer you in your sorrow, and that their smiling radiant presences are with you as lights of glory and lamps of grandeur to illumine the paths to immortal light, and to inspire the principles of the true religion in the breast of every living soul.

The science of Spiritualism reveals as its crowning glory its manifestation of the aspirational sentiment in human nature. As a science, it demonstrates all its positions, and points you to that far-off future where grandeur and beauty shall dawn daily upon you, and where to live is to drink in the love of God, to grow in spirit, and unfold in wisdom, until you shall yourselves become as gods, governed by a greater God who designed you for a path of happiness and progress in a bright and happy future which shall be the possession of humanity.

A JAPANESE NOTION.—A correspondent says:—"I have accidentally come across such curious information concerning a form of Spiritualism in Japan that I mention it to you, in case you may not have chanced to have heard of it. It is that spirits of a low class in that country enter animals, and such creatures as are thus possessed are called 'Fox spirits.' My informant learnt this orally from several Japanese with whom he has had the opportunity of conversing, and has not seen the fact in any book, or heard of it from any other source."

ANTI-SPIRITUALISM IN LEIGH.—On Sunday, May 7th, six or seven puritanical looking individuals from Wigan paraded the streets of Leigh singing hymns, and announcing that they had come to lecture against Spiritualism, which they were prepared to prove originated with the devil. A few listeners followed them to the Market Place, where they "held forth" till their lungs failed them, after which both speakers and listeners went on their way rejoicing. A Spiritualist writes to the *Leigh Chronicle*:—"My object in writing is not to stay the lecturing of these Wigan folk; far from that, I only wish they may come again and again, not only to this town, but to every town in England, if they can afford it; it will be a blessing to us Spiritualists, and open up the way in many parts of the country for the knowledge of the gifts of which the Apostle Paul said he would not have us ignorant. I trust ere long we shall plant Spiritualism firmly in Wigan, nay, more, I am confident of success, and defy all the lecturers in Wigan, or any other town, to stay the tide of this glorious spiritual movement amongst God's children. We Spiritualists are happy in our belief, we are happy in our knowledge, we know that 'whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap'; and we do but expect to be treated as Christ was. But I would warn those who do oppose this belief to take heed lest they be found fighting against God. Anything new, anything contrary to orthodox religion, is, and always has been, received with discredit and mistrust; scarcely a sect but it has had its trouble. Do people think that every fresh doctrine that opposes the old musty beliefs must of necessity be of the devil? We look on our Father as a God of love and mercy, but many of our opponents make it appear by their teachings as if He did not love His people."

## MR. BLACKBURN'S SEANCES.

SPIRIT HANDS UNDER TEST CONDITIONS.

A MOST satisfactory *test séance*, with Mr. Eglinton as medium, was held at 38, Great Russell-street, on the 12th inst. It was attended by Mr. Alexander Tod, of Peebles; Mr. Robert S. Wyld, LL.D., Edin. (a gentleman just commencing an investigation into Spiritualism, and who was introduced by Mr. Tod); M. Gustave de Veh, of Paris; Mr. Collingwood; Mrs. Fitz-Gerald and Mrs. D. G. Fitz-Gerald; Mrs. Potts and Mrs. Michell; Miss Kislingbury; and myself, on behalf of the *Séance Committee* of the British National Association of Spiritualists.

As preliminaries, the cabinet was duly scrutinised, the medium enclosed therein, and instructions in the direct voice were obtained from Joey—the intelligent and practical spirit “control,” who usually presides at Mr. Eglinton’s *séances*—to the effect that he (the medium) should be secured and seated as on the last occasion when he gave a *séance* at these rooms. Accordingly, Dr. Wyld and Mr. Collingwood, being investigators, were requested to constitute a “tying committee.” These gentlemen performed their duty in a very thorough manner; first tying the medium’s wrists together behind him with tape; then seeing that his coat sleeves were securely *sewn* together with white cotton; then tying his wrists to the back of the chair within the cabinet; then tying his neck to the chair; and, lastly, passing the free end of the tape used for the last-mentioned purpose through an aperture in the cabinet, so that Dr. Wyld might hold it in his hand whilst he was seated in the “circle.” When the tying was completed the medium was requested to place his feet upon a hassock; the curtains of the cabinet were drawn so as to leave his feet and knees in view, and a stringed musical instrument was placed in his lap, constituting a kind of table on which were placed a book and a hand bell. The gas was then lowered, and we took our seats.

In about half an hour the book was distinctly and repeatedly seen to open and close up again. Then a *finger* was seen in proximity to the book; and, in a short time afterwards, a *hand* was several times protruded between the curtains. Joey now requested that someone should come forward and ascertain, *immediately after a hand had been shown*, whether the medium was still secured as at first. This challenge was taken up by Dr. Wyld and Mr. Collingwood. As the test is an important one for investigators, I requested these gentlemen, at the conclusion of the *séance*, to give their individual testimony as to the result. This they freely did by signing the following short statements:—

On two occasions, *immediately* after seeing the ‘spirit’ hand protruded from the cabinet, I examined Mr. Eglinton’s bonds, and found them perfectly secure. (Signed) R. S. WYLD.

I also, on one occasion, did the same. J. FRED. COLLINGWOOD.

Miss Kislingbury then asked Joey whether Dr. Wyld could be allowed to *stand behind* the medium, *inside the cabinet*, whilst the materialised hand was shown to the sitters outside. This inquiry was answered in the affirmative; and, accordingly, Dr. Wyld entered the cabinet, and took up a position behind the medium, who moaned and shivered as though “power” were being drawn from him to an unusual extent. In relation to this test, I obtained the following very brief but sufficient testimony, bearing in mind the value of evidence obtained on the spot and at the time:—

We saw the hand whilst Dr. Wyld was in the cabinet.

G. DE VEH.	E. KISLINGBURY.
ELLEN POTTS.	E. FITZ-GERALD.

Dr. Wyld, also, expressed himself as being perfectly satisfied with the test. Some of the sitters did not very distinctly see the hand on this occasion, by reason of others pressing forward towards the cabinet.

After a break, a second *séance* was held, at which the medium sat unbound, with his feet and legs in view. Under these conditions a *foot* was protruded between the curtains of the cabinet, being distinctly seen by M. de Veh, Mr. Tod, and Mrs. Fitz-Gerald, and less distinctly by the other sitters, including myself.

DESMOND G. FITZ-GERALD, *M. S. Tel. E.*

MR. J. L. O’SULLIVAN and M. Gustave de Veh, of Paris, have been in London during the past week.

## FRESH SEAWEED AND A PIECE OF ROCK BROUGHT TO A CIRCLE BY SPIRITS.

THE *Harbinger of Light* (Australia) of March 1st, which arrived by the last mail, contains the following account of remarkable physical manifestations in Melbourne:—

We have from time to time given reports and published letters concerning the remarkable manifestations occurring at the *séances* of Mrs. Paton, of Castlemaine, through whose mediumship solid substances are brought by spirit aid into a closed room. Nearly two years since, a party of gentlemen, by Mr. Paton’s permission, paid a special visit to Castlemaine, to hold a test sitting, on which occasion some striking phenomena occurred. The press, as usual, was not satisfied with the precautions taken, so Mr. Paton was induced to allow another party to visit, accompanied by a detective and two or three determined sceptics, who attended with the foregone conclusion that the manifestations were imposture, and that it was their mission to expose it. A circle with such ingredients was hardly likely to supply the conditions necessary to induce good manifestations, and the result was that the only object brought in was not of sufficiently large size and weight to satisfy the committee, and the press reports were unfavourable, although not the slightest evidence of trickery was adduced. Having witnessed the phenomena ourselves under strict test conditions, and being convinced of their genuineness, we, a short time since, suggested to Mr. Paton (hearing that he and Mrs. Paton would be spending a few weeks in Melbourne) the advisability of having a series of test sittings, with the view of demonstrating as far as practicable, the reality of the manifestations. Mr. Paton expressed his willingness. Mrs. Paton kindly consenting, a committee was formed, and the first two sittings have already been held. We append the secretary’s report of a meeting held at Mr. Terry’s, 84, Russell-street, Melbourne, February 22nd, 1876. Present: Mesdames Paton, Mather, Fielding, and Messrs. Stanford, Terry, Paton, and Deakin:—

The room is on the first floor, connected with the remainder of the house by a passage, in which the gas remained lighted during the *séance*. Its walls are of brick and plaster; it has two windows opening upon Russell-street, some three feet above the verandah, which is detached, and its roof plainly visible to the continuous passers on the other side of the street. The lamps outside shone through the Venetians, and an occasional vehicle partially lit up the room. The darkness at its deepest permitted the sitters to dimly discern the forms of those nearest to them; the table, a small one, compelled them to touch each other. There was no possibility of a sitter moving, even slightly, without its being instantly recognised by those next to him. The chimney orifice is filled by a grate; the only furniture in the room besides the chairs was two small globes and a harmonium. Upon one of the tables were a few books and papers. The medium was an entire stranger to the house. A chairman and secretary having been appointed, the room was thoroughly searched and sounded, and the members mutually examined, Mrs. Paton being carefully tested by the other ladies. The chairman locked the door and retained the key. The grate was fastened with string twine; the door was sealed with a slip of gummed paper, marked by the secretary; the windows were closed at the bottom, a few inches being left open at the top for ventilation, and the members were then satisfied that all possible communication with the outside was cut off.

They then formed a circle about the small table, and sat for some ten minutes, singing part of the time, the medium being powerfully convulsed during the whole period. With a sudden thump exactly on the centre of the table, a heavy substance was deposited, which, on the gas being lit, was discovered to be a large piece of rock, measuring 12 by 6 by 4 in., and weighing 14 lbs., smelling strongly of the sea. It was a piece of rock, of the kind common between St. Kilda and Brighton. The sitters were much pleased at so convincing a manifestation, and the light was again put out, when the medium instantly said that something cold and clammy was near her face. This was for some seven minutes disregarded, till a member remarked a peculiar scent; a damp mass was felt on the table, which the gas revealed to be a large piece



of coarse seaweed; on touching it, a large number of sea insectivora spread themselves over the table, and were with some difficulty removed to a more fitting position on a newspaper. For some ten minutes the circle rested in the light, to restore the medium, and then, during a third sitting, all holding hands, the medium's ear-ring was taken from her ear, and placed upon the table. This concluded a highly satisfactory evening to all concerned; the whole time occupied was one hour and twenty minutes.

At the second sitting, February 25th, the conditions were the same as on the previous occasion. The committee was augmented by the presence of Messrs. Sanders, Dempster, Ross, and Dr. Richardson. The medium was on this occasion thoroughly searched. The power did not appear so strong as at the first sitting, but after a lapse of about twenty minutes a heavy substance fell on the table, and rolled on to the floor; on lighting the gas, it proved to be an iron dumb-bell of six pounds' weight. No one present recognised it, but it was subsequently found to have been brought from the house where Mr. and Mrs. Paton were lodging in Collins-street. After sitting some time, without further manifestations, the committee adjourned till the 29th inst.

DR. SEXTON will deliver a discourse at the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer-street, Regent-street, on Sunday next, in reply to the question, "What is the Use of Praying?" Service at seven.

At a recent dark *séance* of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, at which Mrs. Bassett was the medium, spirit lights were seen flitting about, while both her hands were held.

DR. GEORGE SEXTON delivered a lecture on Wednesday evening, May 10th, at Heckmondwike, under the auspices of the British National Association of Spiritualists. The subject of the lecture was, "Is Spiritualism beneficial to Mankind?"

A SECOND series of Free *Séances* is being arranged, with the liberal aid of Mr. Charles Blackburn, to be held with various mediums, at 38, Great Russell-street, during the months of June and July. Further particulars will be advertised in the monthly agenda of the Association.

MR. JENCKEN informs us that recently at a *séance* at the house of Mr. S. C. Hall, through the mediumship of Mrs. Jencken (Kate Fox), the name "Matilda Yockney" was spelt out by raps, and was unknown to the medium, and everybody in the room, except an inquirer present, who did not believe in Spiritualism.

THE PERSECUTION OF SPIRITUALISTS IN PARIS.—When the medium, Mr. Firman, was recently imprisoned during the persecution of Spiritualists in Paris, Mr. O'Sullivan visited him, and in a private letter said:—"I went to see Firman yesterday. The life is pretty hard. Has to weave some chair-bottoms, and to wear prison garb; sleeps in a place with three others, with only rough, worn blankets. All sorts of riff-raff in the prison, about 800 in number. When not in the work-rooms they are crowded in a narrow open court, rain or shine. The food impossible, but he can buy his own, eating in public, surrounded by envious eyes. This will be a horrid place for Leymarie. No special indulgences now allowed for gentlemen prisoners. Firman can make two chairs a day, and gets *one centime* (1-10th of a penny) for each, and half of that is retained, for some reason or other. The superior accommodation for gentlemen (called the *pistole*) was suppressed, through operation of a new law, only two or three days before Firman went in. Titled men there have to share the common lot. Not even allowed to wear their own linen. Firman bears up bravely enough, but could not help at first turning his back to Bullet and me, trying to hide his tears of mortification and feeling. But we cheered him up. We have a permit to go four times in all; his wife a permanent permit for twice a week, Sunday and Thursday."

APPARITIONS DUE TO PHYSIOLOGICAL CAUSES.—A clergyman now deceased, and whose name it is not necessary to mention, but who will be identified by a large number of people when it is said that he had been an officer in the army prior to his ordination, and that he held in succession incumbencies in Bath and in Coventry, was accustomed to relate a curious experience of his own. He was walking in an unfrequented road near Bath, when he saw in front of him a party of big boys, who were ill-treating a little boy; and, although of portly figure and past middle age, he hurried forward to the rescue. Between him and the boys a narrow lane entered the road on his right hand, and just before he reached this lane a little old woman, in a black bonnet and red cloak, and carrying a crutch-handled stick, seemed to emerge from it, with her back towards him, and to hasten on in front of him, as if bent upon the same errand with himself. He overtook her, and when close to her he fancied that she was unreal, or shadowy, and he walked through her, so to speak, without experiencing any contact or resistance. He turned round, saw her stand facing him, and walked through her again, on which she vanished. Being a sensible man, he left the boys to their own devices, strolled slowly home, and sent for the doctor. A very eminent hospital surgeon in London was occasionally haunted by an apparition for nearly fifteen years; and in his case the connection between the spectre and the state of the circulation of the brain was proved by the circumstance that the figure always became visible when a position was assumed which interfered with the free flow of blood through the great vessels of the neck.—*The Times*, April 19th.

## NICOLAS TRÜBNER.

Of all the great London publishers, perhaps none have done more than Mr. Trübner to circulate in Great Britain unbiassed information, adapted to the wants of cultivated readers, about the chief religions of the world. He has issued many works containing information—more especially about Eastern religions—free from abuse of the theological systems themselves, and of those who hold them, thus he has been a great power in the promotion of knowledge of religious subjects in this country. Although he is unacquainted with Spiritualism, having as yet given no time to the personal investigation of that subject, he has published some of its best works, notably Mr. Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, and *The Debatable Land*; also Allan Kardec's *Spirits' Book* and *Book of Mediums*. The following is a brief outline of his career:—

Among publishers who, by their activity, have exerted a civilising and enduring influence in the domain of general knowledge, and established new lines of commercial intercourse with distant countries and peoples, Nicolas Trübner occupies a very prominent place. He was born in 1817, at Heidelberg, where his father carried on the business of a goldsmith. As a boy he manifested great vivacity of temperament and manners, and in play and studies he was always the leader of his comrades. The circulating library of a family related to his own absorbed half of his leisure time, literature and travels engaging his special interest. His father wished him to become a goldsmith, but mechanical work was not to the boy's taste; to send him to college would involve too much expense, and so it was decided to have him enter a bookseller's shop. He served his first apprenticeship with a bookseller named Mohr. This gentleman, who conducted his business in a very honourable way, was peculiarly fitted by his firm and considerate bearing to inspire the assiduous stripling with both respect and love for the calling he had been induced to choose. Some thirty years ago the university of Heidelberg enjoyed the highest consideration. All branches of science were represented by teachers of distinction—such as Thibaut, Fachoriá, Mittermayer, Paulus, Schlosser, Tiedemann, Chelius, and others who were famous beyond the narrow limits of the university. Most of these men were on a friendly and social footing with the house of Mohr, and the intercourse with them had an energising and informing effect on Trübner's mind.

His apprenticeship being completed, he entered, in 1839, the old and well-known establishment of Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, in Göttingen, as an assistant. Subsequently he entered the service of Hoffmann and Campe, in Hamburg. Here, instead of the grave and solemn-looking professors of the Heidelberg university, with whom he had hitherto been in contact, he became acquainted with the keen and fervent leaders of *Young Germany*, and the interminable libel suits and press chicaneries which they and their publishers at that time had to endure. In 1842 he accepted a situation at Willman's, in Frankfurt, whose business then included a line of foreign publications, principally English. There he made the acquaintance of Mr. Longman, of London, who secured Trübner for his own establishment. Working zealously and unremittingly in the extensive business of this house, he acquired a thorough insight into all the details and peculiarities of the English book trade. Having reached middle age, Mr. Trübner conceived the idea of forming an establishment of his own. During his service as an assistant he had busied himself largely with various private studies, especially philological, and had gathered a large and varied mass of materials.

With funds furnished him by some friends, he engaged in the business of introducing and circulating American literature in England. A journey through the principal cities of the United States procured him many valuable business connections. A catalogue published under the title of *Trübner's Bibliographical Guide to American Literature* was received with just appreciation, not only in the United States, but even in France and Germany. It was the first work which gave a systematic and comprehensive synopsis of American literature, and had, therefore, great value for the American as well as the general scholar. In recognition of the value of this work several learned societies of the United States elected Mr. Trübner an honorary member. A well-merited tribute was rendered him in *Allibone's Dictionary of English and American Authors*, Philadelphia, 1871. Desirous of extending his business, Mr. Trübner directed his attention to the literature of Asia, and established lines of communication with its principal cities for the export and import of literary works. As a repository for the scientific results of this colossal intercourse, Mr. Trübner founded a special literary periodical, entitled *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record*, the object of which is to give a monthly synopsis of all important works issued in North and South America, India, China, Australia, and the English colonies, including also the most notable literary productions of Europe. This monthly periodical has been published for a number of years, and is transmitted to all parts of the civilised world.

This extensive activity has been crowned with remarkable success. The publishing establishment of Mr. Trübner is in its line one of the foremost in London; its relations with foreign countries are so comprehensive that thirty-three assistants hardly suffice for the work. The management and classification of the works in Sanscrit and Arabic are intrusted to competent persons specially versed in Oriental languages.

Mr. Trübner's list of publications forms an elegant volume of 156 pages, and is particularly rich in Oriental literature, archæology, and philosophy. It records nearly 1,400 of his own publications, among which are many comprising numerous volumes and annual sets. The appendix is made up of a number of valuable works published for the English government under the title, *Calendars of State Papers and Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the*

*Middle Ages*," the sale and distribution of which are committed to Mr. Trübner's care. It is an undertaking resembling the publications issued in Germany entitled *Monumenta Germanica*.

Mr. Trübner is the agent for forty-seven offices and learned societies in England, America, Denmark, and Sweden. At the coronation of Oscar II. of Sweden, Mr. Trübner published a memorial pamphlet which gives an historical synopsis of Sweden, with a collection of poems by the present king in an English translation. The publishing establishment of Mr. Trübner is situated in Ludgate-hill in a five-storey building of Gothic style with a dash of Oriental architecture. The relations of the house with the East are aptly suggested by sculptured figures of elephants supporting the roof. The store is on the ground-floor, and has room for 80,000 volumes, which are placed in galleries, and can all be reached without ladders. Adjoining are offices for business relating to the United States and the English government. The cost of this building, all parts of which were specially adapted and arranged for facilitating the business of the house, amounted to 250,000 gulden.

Mr. Trübner's enterprise and energy have met with notable success. He is married to a lady of great intelligence and amiability, the daughter of the Belgian Consul Delepierre in London.

The foundation of the university library of Strasburg was encouraged and materially promoted by Mr. Trübner's numerous and valuable gifts.

His agents in Pekin, Calcutta, Teheran, Constantinople, Bulang, Cape Town, and Melbourne take notice of all important works as they appear, and send them to London, whence they are distributed to the leading libraries on the Continent.—*Every Saturday* (Cambridge, Mass.).

#### THE BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."

SIR,—The Council held its usual monthly session on Tuesday, 9th inst., at 6.30 p.m. The following members were present:—Mr. A. Calder, in the chair; Mr. Morell Theobald, Mr. T. Everitt, Mr. R. Pearce, Mrs. Fitz-Gerald, Mr. and Mrs. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, Mr. G. R. Tapp, Mr. E. T. Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. E. Dawson Rogers, Mrs. M. Theresa Wood, Miss H. Withall, Miss G. Houghton, Mr. Martin R. Smith, Mr. J. M. Gully, M.D., Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mr. J. Ivimey, and Mr. Algernon Joy.

Three new members were elected, including Dr. C. Carter Blake, Lecturer on Comparative Anatomy at Westminster Hospital, and Mr. J. McGlassford, F.C.S. Dr. Puel, of Paris, Editor of the *Revue Psychologique*, and Herr Stratil, of Vienna, a member of the Buda-Pesth Society of Spiritualists, were elected honorary members. The resignations of Mr. J. Freeman, Mr. H. Everitt, Mr. and Mrs. Markham, and Mr. and Mrs. Deacon were accepted.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee reported a balance of £75 4s. 9d.; accounts were presented for payment amounting to £37 14s. 6d. The committee also presented a letter from Mr. W. H. Harrison, containing the terms on which he agreed to place the services of his clerk at the disposal of the Association. The report was adopted by the Council.

The Secretary reported letters from Editors of *The Spiritualist* and of the *Spiritual Magazine*, agreeing to the terms for advertisements recommended by the Council for the current year; also a letter from the Editor of the *Medium*, on the subject of advertisements, declining all communication with the Association. A present of photographs, said to be of lights from a magnet, was reported from Mr. Collen, of Brighton; of a magnetoscope, from Dr. J. Dixon; and of various works presented to the library of the Association from Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mr. W. Whitear, Miss Anna Blackwell, the Countess of Caithness, Mr. B. Coleman, Mr. S. C. Hall, Mr. A. Vacher, and Mr. J. N. T. Martheze. A unanimous vote of thanks was passed to all the above. Letters were also read from Mr. F. A. Binney and Mr. J. T. Rhodes.

The arrangements for the approaching annual meeting of members on the 23rd inst. were announced by Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, and it was resolved that a copy of the proxy and voting papers, as per draft presented, should be sent to every member of the Association. A draft report of the Council for the year, to be read at the annual meeting, was submitted by the secretary, which, after a few amendments, was approved and adopted.

The *Séance* Committee reported a communication from Mr. Charles Blackburn, offering to continue the weekly *séances* under his former liberal arrangement. A unanimous vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Blackburn.

The *Soirée* Committee recommended that after the usual monthly *soirée* on the 7th of June next, these meetings be suspended during the next three months. The recommendation was adopted.

Mr. Fitz-Gerald moved, in the absence of Mr. George King: "That an Experimental Research Committee be appointed, with permission to make use of the *Séance*-room of the Association, with such apparatus as should be placed at the disposal of the committee." This was agreed to, and the committee appointed, as follows:—Mr. C. F. Varley, Mr. W. H. Harrison, Mr. George King, Mr. D. Fitz-Gerald, Dr. J. M. Gully, Mr. C. C. Massey, Mr. W. H. Coffin, Dr. Carter Blake, Rev. W. Newbould, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, Mr. Edmands, and Mr. H. Withall, with power to add to their number.

It was resolved, on the motion of Mr. D. Fitz-Gerald:—"That on the demand of any member of Council, the individual votes of members of Council on any resolution be recorded in the minute-book of the Council."

The following notices of motion were handed in. By Mr. A. Joy:—"That it is not competent for an ordinary Council meeting to reverse

the decision of a special Council meeting, or to pass a resolution which shall conflict with any resolution passed by a special Council meeting." By Mr. T. Everitt:—"That, in order to obtain an independent and impartial account of the proceedings of Council, the services of a reporter be secured, who is not a member either of the Council or of the Association." By Dr. Gully:—"That letters from members resigning be only reported by the secretary, and not their reasons for so doing."

E. KISLINGBURY, Secretary, B.N.A.S.

#### Poetry.

##### EXTRACTS FROM THE MASQUE OF PANDORA.

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

I.

DEATH takes us by surprise,  
And stays our hurrying feet;  
The great design unfinished lies,  
Our lives are incomplete.

But in the dark unknown  
Perfect their circles seem,  
Even as a bridge's arch of stone  
Is rounded in the stream.

Alike are life and death,  
When life in death survives,  
And the uninterrupted breath  
Inspires a thousand lives.

Were a star quenched on high,  
For ages would its light,  
Still travelling downward from the sky,  
Shine on our mortal sight.

So when a great man dies,  
For years beyond our ken,  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men.

II.

River, that stealest with such silent pace  
Around the City of the Dead, where lios  
A friend who bore thy name, and whom these eyes  
Shall see no more in his accustomed place,

Linger and fold him in thy soft embrace,  
And say good night, for now the western skies  
Are red with sunset, and grey mists arise  
Like damps that gather on a dead man's face.

Good night! good night! as we so oft have said  
Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days  
That are no more, and shall no more return.  
Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to bed;

I stay a little longer, as one stays  
To cover up the embers that still burn.

#### Correspondence.

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

##### A SIXTH LATIN COMMUNICATION FROM PUBLIUS SYRUS.

SIR,—Your general readers may by this time be tired of Publius Syrus, and of the humble chronicler of his communications. But not so, as I have some reason to know, as to some of your readers, who, being Latinists, appreciate the great interest of this novel phenomenon of an ancient Roman writer, of nineteen centuries ago, giving, and continuing to give—through a lady medium, absolutely ignorant of any other language than her own French—moral sentences or apophthegms in his own Latin, at once pure and intensely condensed. These maxims are sometimes given in French, and then translated by the spirit into Latin forms which I should never have imagined, if I had set myself to the task of translation; sometimes in Latin directly followed by the conversion of them into French by the spirit himself. And there is this curious feature about these translations into French, that they are generally rather developments of the ideas compressed into the condensed Latin, than such versions as any scholar of our own day would naturally give. Another curious thing is, that these Latin maxims have all the intrinsic evidence of style to characterise them as the productions of the same mind from which proceeded those (some twelve or fifteen hundred in number) which constitute the collection of fragments of Publius Syrus which have come down to us. And still, another is the fact, that before this appearance of Publius Syrus *redivivus*, a different spirit, calling himself my "guardian angel," had announced that he was about to send me a "spirit of ancient times," a "great philosopher," who would give me from time to time some of his maxims for my meditation and instruction. Such was the commencement of my communications with or from Publius Syrus.

I have already given you five of these communications. I have recently received a sixth, in regard to which I must set forth some remarkable circumstances, to explain the wide divergence of the Latin (*i.e.* of its latter part) from the French form.

Being at Mme. R——'s for a different object, I had asked him for another. He at once gave (in French, not in Latin) the following: "For nations to become great they must have great-minded rulers, to whom they should yield a passive obedience." The first half of this was very well, but my Americanism revolted against this apparent inculcation of the doctrine of "passive obedience," so dear to despotism. I fancied that it expressed a thought more natural to the devoted friend and partisan of Julius Caesar—which Publius Syrus was—than acceptable to

a nineteenth-century republican. But I asked him for the Latin version of it. He gave, "*Oportet quod omni magne nationi prepositus sit magnanimus.*" There was then a pause. I supposed that to be all he meant to give; and that the conclusion, as it had been given in French, was rather a comment or deduction than intended as an integral part of the maxim. As a friend was waiting to succeed me (the Hungarian Count B. L.—) I yielded the place to him, very ill pleased with the "passive obedience" doctrine of the Publius Syrus whom I had always before found so wise and philosophical.

But a few days afterwards I returned, and asked if the "*Oportet, etc.*" was the whole of the Latin version. "No." "Well, please complete it, but allow me to say that I don't see how I can ever assent to the 'passive obedience' doctrine it seemed to express." I then went on to tell him (the whole passing in English) that if he was a Roman friend of Cæsar, I was a citizen of a new world not dreamed of in his day, and I was proceeding to state my mind on the subject, when the table moved impatiently, and Mme. R.— said, "He says you don't understand him, or you don't understand each other." "Well, permit me, dear Publius, to say this. I fully accept the wisdom of the first part, respecting the necessity of great men in combination with the millions of the masses to make nations truly great. The great-minded man, the *magnanimus*, infuses his spirit sympathetically into the million, whom he leads forward with high guidance to high aims; who look up to him with a willing homage of admiration, trust, and love, which is a true and just natural loyalty; to whom, and especially to whose growing youth, he stands conspicuous in his great personality, as a type, exemplar, and model, causing him to be accepted as their recognised head and chief, *prepositus*, leading them along the path of greatness, not merely by wise government, but still more by this profound and pervading moral influence of his spirit upon theirs. This is about your meaning, is it not?" "Yes." "But to make a great nation the million are as necessary to the man as the man to the million. The million are the nation, and remain the nation after the death of the man. Freedom for them is essential to that free natural loyalty of love and sympathy. Their obedience must be willing and intelligent, and even critical, not merely blindly submissive. This rightful loyalty of theirs is to the man, and cannot pass by succession to a dynasty, nor can it co-exist with mere passivity constrained by power. Democracies have always their natural chiefs, who are their representative men, and whom they elect to their presidencies, as in the case of a Washington and a Jefferson. I cannot think that I differ much from the real meaning which underlies your words, do I?" "No." "Then you probably mean only to criticise what is called the ingratitude and fickleness of democracies, which so often after a time withdraw their sympathy and support from their great natural chiefs, and which banish their Phocians and Themistocles, and ostracise their Aristides, whom they ought rather to cherish and cling to." "Yes." "Well, I beg pardon for having spoken so frankly to you, instead of waiting to hear your own words in your own tongue. Pray now finish the translation." And he did so at once, in the following words: "*Turba quæ rupem, petere debet, rupem diripit.*" ("The crowd which ought to seek—i.e., to rest upon or gather round—the rock, breaks to pieces the rock.")

I have here given, of course, the substance of this colloquy, not my exact words. I then said: "I now understand what you really meant, and beg pardon for having at first misconceived you; but the expression 'passive obedience' has acquired in our modern political vocabulary a very obnoxious sense, from the manner in which it has been so much abused by despotic power. But, tell me, was not this maxim a thought and composition of the period of your earth-life, when you mourned over the fall of your friend and protector Cæsar, so that it is a citation from some of your perished writings?" "Yes." "Tell me, too, about the three preceding ones, which all turn on the topic of *Truth*; are they also quotations from of old?" "No." "Do you mean that they are thoughts and compositions of yours of the present time?" "Yes."—"And am I wrong in fancying that you have been prompted to give them in reference to the difficulty which the great and divine truth of Spiritualism finds in making its way against the resistance of the scientific world, and as an exhortation to us to persevere in carrying it courageously and dutifully forward?" "Yes."—"You once before told me, when I made rather a bold request, that hereafter, if I continued to please you, you would do a great deal for me. Do you find me so far receptive and appreciative of what you have deigned to give, as to fulfil in any degree that condition?" "Yes."—"Thank you, indeed; and be sure that I shall continue, at least, to publish whatever you may employ me to give to the world."

Well, after the above, what becomes of the theory which one critic has propounded, that these maxims of Publius Syrus may have been recollections, compositions, or translations, emanating from my own brain, by "unconscious cerebration," reflected or transmitted to some invisible "intelligence," and thence back in communication to me?

In reference to the second of these communications, in which he gave me, as having been *his*, and as having come down from him, through the centuries, by oral tradition, that familiar *dictum*, the authorship of which has been hitherto unknown, namely "*Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat*" (see note), allow me to add, as a confirmation of his claim, that in glancing over the pages of the iambs of Publius Syrus, I find the line: "*Stultum facit fortuna quem vult perdere*," which is, evidently, a mere variation from a former prose form, for the purpose of converting it into an iambic line.

J. L. O'SULLIVAN.

Paris, May 6th.

Note.—It will be remembered, by those readers who have followed the series of those letters, that an etymological controversy arose between another of your correspondents and myself upon the word *dementat*; my critic arguing that there was no authority for the word *dementare* as an active verb in the classical period, and thence implying a question whether it could really have proceeded from Publius Syrus. With all his cleverness and caudour, my critic wrote hastily. Six weeks ago I sent you a full reply, which accident prevented

from appearing. You now kindly offer to me to insert it. I no longer think it worth while to occupy your space, nor trouble your wearied readers with more than the following. In this beautifully plastic and symmetric language, the Latin, verbs are formed from adjectives (disregarding a few exceptions, to which all general rules are subject), with the four following main branches of terminations, viz., *-o-are*; *-eo-ere*; *-sco-scere*; *-io-ire*. The first are, with very few exceptions, active-transitive, meaning to make so and so, or to put into such and such a condition, e.g. from the adjective *durus*, *duro-are*, to harden or make hard. The other three are intransitive, as *dureo-ere*, to be hard; *duresco-ere*, to grow hard. The fourth class are also, with a very few exceptions, intransitive, and when the adjective expresses a condition, moral or mental, applicable only to a person, I do not remember any exception to the usage of the verb in *-io-ire* signifying to act so and so, as from *insanus*, *insanire*, to act insanely, *superbire*, *blandire*, *liguire*, *dulcire*, *dementire*, *sagire*—(analogous to the Greek *θεω*). Even from a noun substantive there is *servire*, and from a participle, *esuire*. This class of verbs always imply, not the material condition of a thing, but the living or action of a person. It is true that there is a large class of intransitives in *-eo-ere*, from adjectives, but they imply rather the *being materially* in the condition denoted by the adjective, than the *acting so* by a person. This is a refinement which my learned critic overlooked in that same haste which caused him to derive *insanire* from an *insanis* which does not exist. The usage which forms the active-transitives in *-o-are*, though not absolutely without exceptions, is so general and pervading that most of the pages of a dictionary will be found to furnish examples of it; and for the most part when such verbs are intransitive it is because the meaning of the adjective is such (as in *agrotare*, *hibernare*, *estivare*, &c.), as not to admit of the verb being transitive. I do not speak of the intransitives in *-are*, derived from nouns substantive, as *exulare*, &c. These transitive verbs in *-are*, are even formed frequently from adjectives in *-is* where the *i* predominates, or in other terminations than the common *-us*, such as *levare*, *gravare*, *exanimare*, *illustrare*, *dulcare*, *celebrare*, *mitigare*, *nobilitare*, *temerare*, *frequentare*, &c. And even though there may be an exceptional *nigrare*, intransitive, there is also *denigrare*, transitive. Verbs primarily and regularly transitive are also occasionally used in a neuter sense (a usage common in English, as to *harden*, to *warm*, &c.). That there are not a few transitive verbs in *-io-ire*, I never questioned, but they are in general not from adjectives. My critic cites indeed two (*mollire*, *lenire*), but they are rare exceptions; I am sure he could not cite half-a-dozen. But enough of this, nor shall I trouble you further on this subject. I find myself required to justify what I had stated as being in accordance with the general rule and usage of the language (and this is all I had stated), namely, that *dementare* is the natural and regular form of the verb from *demens* to express the idea of *make mad*, and *dementire*, that to express the idea of *to act as a madman*; and I leave it to the decision of Latinists whether I have not done so. As for the non-classical Lactantius, in the fourth century, having used *dementabat* as intransitive, that this is a mere copyist's error is shown by the same Lactantius having elsewhere given the intransitive form correctly, in "*Instinctu demonis percitus, dementit, effertur, insanit.*" And as for *dementare* not actually appearing in the fragments we possess of Roman literature, hundreds of similar verbs do not appear, though their having existed is shown not only by analogy but by derivative words from them. No *frondare*, for instance, appears, but *frondator* and *frondatio* prove it to have existed as good Latin, in the same way as "clipper" and "clipping" would suffice to prove the good English of "to clip."

I regret to have been compelled to occupy so much of your valuable space in so dry a Latin etymological discussion. But a hasty negative criticism may sometimes impose a good deal of trouble to refute it, and to prove an affirmative, when the point at issue is one of serious importance. It sometimes takes long to reply to a short question, to clear away a plausibly unsound objection. And besides the interest of the special point as to the authentic genuineness of Publius Syrus, as a novel phenomenal proof of Spiritualism, it is also a matter of no small mere literary interest to determine whether or not we have at last ascertained the original author, hitherto unknown, of this time-worn saying, now claimed by Publius Syrus as *his*; connected, too, as it is, with the curious historical circumstances declared by him, that he gave it to his friend the great Cæsar, and that Cæsar paid no heed to it; no more heed, he added, than would now be paid by other men of our own day, great or minor, who lose their heads (I mean their common sense) by the intoxication of power or success.

J. L. O'S.

May 14.

#### FIRST STEPS TO A KNOWLEDGE OF SPIRITUALISM.

SIR,—In my letter on the above subject, published in your issue of April 17th, I attempted to review some of the difficulties experienced in the early stages of investigation, from the evidences of fraud and simulation so invariably met with to a greater or less extent, where anything like a general or promiscuous range of investigation is attempted; and I alluded to the unavoidable alternative of having either to convict the medium, or the spiritual influences acting through and by the medium's organism, of direct fraud and trickery. This seems at first glance to place the investigator on the horns of a dilemma, either of which must be tolerably fatal to progress in faith or belief. Further inquiry and consideration, however, smooth the way for the inquirer, and shew that, notwithstanding the ugly preliminary appearances, light may still shine through the darkness, and truth possibly exist but slightly below these unpromising surface obstructions; and it is to suggest this reassuring consideration that I venture to trouble you with these further remarks on the subject of my "first steps in Spiritualism."

The most important point to be insisted on, as a preparation for the inquiry, is to give up all conventional, educational, and preconceived ideas and thoughts about "Spiritualism," and to commence the observation of its phenomena with an entirely open and unbiassed mind, ready to accept any discovery that may be made (after proper safeguards and precautions against fraud or error), whether such discovery is in accordance with known laws or not, and to leave the discovery of the explanatory causes to later developments. In other words, to accept *facts* whenever found, and to wait for further light upon the principles that may explain them. This, I am convinced, is the only true path to traverse, and though the way may seem narrow and crooked at first, a little reflection ought to convince every one that truth and knowledge of all kinds can only be attained by a mind that is non-obstructive and open to the reception of truth, or, at all events, to facts that must in the first

place be held to represent truth. We must start, then, with the position that there are phenomena to be discovered, and must not be in too great haste to explain them, until satisfied that we have a fair stock of indisputable facts or phenomena requiring explanation.

Taking my own case (which for a representative illustration is as good as any other), I have satisfied myself by repeated and critical observation:—

(1.)—That raps, hand touches, movements of furniture and other objects, production of flowers, scents, and other materials, with the various physical manifestations, so often described and experienced by all investigators, do really take place without any assistance, human or mechanical, that can be explained by any known laws of science or physiology.

(2.)—That voices are heard holding intelligent converse with human persons present, and forms of persons, or parts of persons, are seen, and can be occasionally identified, under conditions rendering trickery or collusion on the part of those present impossible.

(3.)—That communications are received, both through writing and clairvoyant mediums, shewing an intimate knowledge of one's secret affairs and experiences, occasionally blended with matters not known to the inquirers at the time, but afterwards verified, and, as regards writing, often exhibiting a *fac-simile* of the deceased persons' caligraphy.

These are sufficiently startling phenomenal facts to satisfy any beginner, that something has been got hold of worthy more than a passing attention, and requiring both a new kind of knowledge to explain, and a considerable disruption of the preconceived ideas and opinions represented by our old knowledge.

Such facts as I have enumerated can only be explained by the self-evident deduction that there must be a super-human—for convenience we will call it "occult"—force and intelligence existing, and at work under certain conditions, entirely distinct from any force previously described by scientific men, as part of their known laws regulating force or matter; and there is this difficulty in ascribing the discovery to any mere physical section of science, that it is accompanied by and under the control of "intelligence," and can apparently exercise the attributes of "mind" as independently as any ordinary human person; there is no alternative thus left but to consider this discovery as representing an occult intelligence, conveniently described for common reference as "Spiritualism."

I do not accept this term as exactly satisfying the requirements of the definition needed, or as necessarily implying a belief in all that is claimed for Spiritualism by its most enthusiastic votaries; but under this name I propose in my next to reconcile some of the difficulties besetting inquirers like myself into what is as yet but a slightly explored path of knowledge, leading, I believe, to a rich mine of hidden wealth, but requiring something more than surface explorations to possess it.

W. H.

#### LIFE AND DEATH.

SIR.—The following is from Fichte (Dr. Smith's translation):—

"All death in nature is birth, and in death itself appears visibly the exaltation of life. There is no destructive principle in nature; for nature throughout is clear, unclouded life: it is not death which kills, but the more living life which, concealed behind the former, bursts forth into new development. Death and birth are but the struggle of life with itself to assume a more glorious and congenial form. And my death,—how can it be aught else, since I am not a mere semblance and show of life, but bear within me the one original, true, essential life? It is impossible to conceive that nature should annihilate a life which does not proceed from her; the nature which exists for me, and not I for her.

"Yet even my natural life, even this mere outward manifestation to mortal sight of the inward invisible life, she cannot destroy without destroying herself; she who only exists for me, and on account of me, and exists not if I am not. Even because she destroys me must she animate me anew; it is only my higher life, unfolding itself in her, before which my present life can disappear; and what mortals call death is the visible appearance of this second life. Did no reasonable being who had once beheld 'the light of this world' die, there would be no ground to look with faith for a new heaven and a new earth; the only possible purpose of nature, to manifest and maintain reason, would be fulfilled here below, and her circle would be completed. But the very act by which she consigns a free and independent being to death is her own solemn entrance, intelligible to all reason, into a region beyond this act itself, and beyond the whole sphere of existence which is thereby closed. Death is the ladder by which my spiritual vision rises to a new life and a new nature.

"Every one of my fellow-creatures who leaves this earthly brotherhood, and whom my spirit cannot regard as annihilated because he is my brother, draws my thoughts after him beyond the grave,—he is still, and to him belongs a place. While we mourn for him here below, as in the dim realms of unconsciousness there might be mourning when a man bursts from them into the light of this world's sun, above there is rejoicing that a man is born into that world, as we citizens of the earth receive with joy those who are born unto us. When I shall one day follow, it will be but joy for me; sorrow shall remain behind in the sphere I shall have left.

"The world on which but now I gazed with wonder passes away from before me, and sinks from my sight. With all the fulness of life, order, and increase which I beheld in it, it is yet but the curtain by which a world infinitely more perfect is concealed from me, and the germ from which that other shall develop itself. My faith looks behind this veil, and cherishes and animates this germ. It sees nothing definite, but it expects more than it can conceive here below—more than it will ever be able to conceive in all time.

"Thus do I live, thus am I, and thus am I unchangeable, firm, and completed for all eternity, for this is no existence assumed from without, it is my own true, essential life and being."

Such are the concluding passages of Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Vocation of Man*. They are not the words of a religious enthusiast, giving passionate expression to hopes unjustified by science; but they embody results arrived at by profound philosophical thought. This is transcendental idealism—a system which in the hands of Fichte far excelled in metaphysical completeness and coherence the speculations of Berkeley, which are so well and accurately sketched by Mr. St. George Stock in the last number of *The Spiritualist*. The identity of subject and object, the necessary evolution of the latter—the world, from the former—the mind of man, and the latter as the existential manifestation of the one life—God; the meaning of freedom, the fact of *individual* immortality, the essential nothingness of matter and the sensuous life—all these are propositions connected together by a chain of necessary thought, requiring indeed the deepest and most sustained attention from the student, but which once clearly and thoroughly apprehended are seen to possess a demonstrative force. We see in *spirit* "the promise and potency of every form of terrestrial life," and of all other life.

C. C. M.

#### IDEALISM AND SPIRITUALISM.

SIR.—Mr. St. George Stock has very clearly explained the difference between the philosophical systems of Locke and Berkeley, but I should like to know whether he agrees with me in the fundamental objection to Berkeley's position as stated in the letter on which he comments to the effect that if the things perceived are external to the percipient they cannot be also perceptions. Again, the statement of Berkeley is untrue in saying that he differs with the philosophers and agrees with the vulgar. No doubt the vulgar believe that they see the things themselves, or at least that what they perceive resembles them; they do not confound the perception or perceiving with the object, but feel quite sure that St. Paul's will remain as they see it, and where they see it, when they are away, whereas Berkeley states the very contrary; for he says in his *Principles of Human Knowledge* that "It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men that houses, mountains, rivers, and, in a word, all sensible objects, have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding." Then comes the question of the nature of the percipient, whether to be considered as a pure spiritual being or fact, unorganised and occupying no space or otherwise. Descartes placed it in a very small space in lodging it in the penial gland. Hegel denied the percipient, and reduced everything to thought, and even the links in the chain of thought he conceived as mere relations with nothing to be related. Such is the extravagance to which idealism logically leads.

Apart from such metaphysical wanderings, I think that modern Spiritualists are but putting up at the half-way house in supposing spirits to be organised bodies in a kind of shadowy way, from their experience of the physical world, thus by a faint analogy making things intelligible; but facts are facts, and conceivability is not the criterion of truth in such matters, or our knowledge of nature would go a very little way indeed, and causation would be a mere fiction. Certainly all the Theistic interpretations of causation have been fictitious, Berkeley's with the rest, but Hegel never refers to a God, and seems, like Comte, to ignore causation altogether. In this we see how curiously extremes meet, that is, in positivism and absolute idealism—for both systems seem to hang things together as by a rope of sand.

In concluding permit me to quote the clear statement of Dr. Collings Simon in regard to Berkeley's view of perception, as given in a letter which I enclose. He says—"What I hold is this. That the Ego perceives each hard and heavy group of qualities presented to it, and perceives each such group to be at the distance from other groups at which it is perceived to be, and also at the perceived distance from the group over which the Ego has a special control. Each group is external to the other, and all are external to the Ego as far as this word 'external' can apply to a nature which is unextended, and which has therefore neither an inside nor an outside. It is more correct to say 'independent' of than external to, in this place and sense." All this he supposes to be produced by the same unknown cause that produces the Ego.

And here we may note Mr. Stock's illustration of the mesmerised person impressed by the will of his mesmeriser, but which impression would only be as in a dream, and the perception would not be of any outside and real things, much less be things themselves. Brain sympathy is a better expression than thought-reading, as having a more general significance. But if it is stated that life is of such stuff as dreams are made of, and that all our impressions are illusory too, that then would be no answer; but we see that Berkeley's theory is not that. That is not purely ideal and subjective, but a fanciful speculation a long way beyond the ideas of the vulgar, with realism, idealism, and Theism all confounded together.

Then we see that Berkeley's idea of a spirit was of an unextended nature, therefore occupying no space, and of a homogeneous character; yet something unextended would seem to be nothing at all, though no doubt a thought fills no space and yet has a location, and is a something in one sense but nothing in another, either as an entity or a force. The great difficulty is that the idealist, as we see, is forced to use language framed on a very different conception of nature, and Spiritualists, too, will have to meet that difficulty as they may, or the differences will be more about words than things. Dr. Johnson's common sense reply to Berkeley when the latter declared there was no such thing as matter in the ordinary sense, was by kicking a stone, for really argument seems to be useless; hence Byron's witticism that "when Berkeley said there was no matter, and proved it, then it was no matter what Berkeley said." But to God all things may be possible, even what is inconceivable.

able and seemingly contradictory; so that Hume perhaps was right in saying that idealism admitted of no reply, but produced no conviction.

HENRY G. ATKINSON, F.G.S.

Boulogne-sur-Mer.

MR. EGLINTON IN MANCHESTER.

SIR,—Mr. Eglinton called on me last Monday, and there were at once some nice raps. I liked him and thought—A good medium! fairly established, orders promptly executed. Moulds in request. We visited my medium at noon. Jolly raps all over the room like a carpenter's shop. I took my hat to leave, and found inside it a card photograph I had left in my bedroom which the medium had never entered. Raps said "Bertie did it in fun." She puts new thoughts into people's heads, so why not a card in a chimney-pot hat?

In the evening, late, Mr. Eglinton said, "We had a good *séance*; got a mould of a small hand, while my hands were outside." That will do. I tell a sharp scientific man of it; we go to mould proprietor, who is surprised at my glee, for he had coloured the paraffin and mould was white. Looks queer, I guess, to scientific man. "May be badly mixed, colour not got everywhere." Answer: "H'm." In the evening grand *séance* with some elements of fresh and inherited scepticism. Mr. Eglinton well sewn up, sleeves together behind. With these marks of flattering suspicion placed on his seat in cabinet. Music-box too. Both wound up. Box going and stopping at command. Silly but splendid manifestations. Legs of medium brought into view, a book placed on the lap, but wouldn't open as expected. Tambourine vexed, moved violently about—not on terms with book. Sundry other unmistakable tests of a power, not baptized as yet by science. That ceremony will come off later. Medium takes (in trance) mouthful of water. Spirit speaks nevertheless. Medium spits out the water after. Great astonishment. Medium's coat torn.

Second part. Material manifestations. Splendid supper. Liked the sitting very much. Lively movement of knives and forks (by wilful muscular action). Agreeable reflections on the inner man. Heavy monster dining-table trembling. Chief sceptic arrives. After supper mould-paraffin-foot-bath business commences. Pail with the hot stuff placed inside. Gentleman of the white mould sits next to cabinet. Medium let in with no test whatever. Spiritualists elevated with these signs of confidence. Great encouragement to set power in full swing! Spirit says to doubtful mould-asker—"I say, Mr. — you made a mess yesterday with the colour; it formed a sediment; to-night you have again secretly weighed and coloured!" Gentleman surprised. "Why not?" 'Twas so, although nobody knew. After a while, splashing of the water heard. Hopeful sensations! Medium out of trance, cabinet lit up. Two ugly green paraffin-slippers on the floor, half broken, as if spirit had made haste to get out of the mess. Measurement of slippers and foot of medium. Apparent difference. Great relief to medium. More accurate measurement—the "doubles" of medium's foot after all, the bend of big toe (feeling uncomfortable in the hot stuff) having been overlooked. *Finale*: all under a cloud.

Next evening grand *séance* with only sceptics, but *outside* conditions very fair. Total failure, as medium told me afterwards. He stated there were twenty-five present, but the number was fifteen. This *incorrect* statement turned against his honesty. Perhaps he saw the doubles of ten of them. Result: Total defeat. Sceptics triumphing in the camp.

Summing up.

*First visit. Raps and card in hat.*

Believers.—"Beautiful manifestations." Sceptics.—"Clever."

*Stopping and going of box.*

B. "Splendid test." S. "Rather odd."

*Tambourine shaken.*

B. "Medium couldn't do it." S. "Has been done before (Döbler)."

*Speaking with water in mouth.*

B. "Unmistakable power." S. "Ventriloquism."

*Supper.*

General admiration; no difference of opinion.

*Trembling of big table.*

B. "Remarkable power." S. "Nervousness."

*Torn coat (quite new).*

B. "Spasms." S. "Attempt to get out."

*Moulds of medium's foot.*

B. "Pity, 'twas only his double." S. "Barefaced (or footed imposture), followed by liberal display of titles, as humbug, scamp, cheat, etc."

*Result total:*

A muddle (until Mr. E. comes again).

CHRISTIAN REIMERS.

THE FLOATING OF SOLID OBJECTS IN THE LIGHT.

SIR,—Various causes have prevented my sending a few particulars of a *séance* held at my house nearly a fortnight since; yet, feeling the importance of facts being made known (as the phenomena occurred in the light), I will, with your kind permission, briefly describe them.

Mr. Arthur Cöلمان very kindly favoured us with a visit, and we were told to sit for a light *séance*. This request was quickly complied with: Mr. Willie Eglinton was present, also my husband and myself. During breakfast, loud knocks sounded on the table, and chairs fairly danced. Soon after the *séance* commenced, a chair appeared to "walk" towards the large table at which we sat, a distance of several yards. Articles of two kinds were taken from the sideboard, and placed in my husband's hand, seven or eight yards distant. A flower from the garden was laid on the table before us; it had been mentally asked for by my

husband. Rings were taken from my finger, and instantly placed on that of Mr. A. Cöلمان, and again transferred from Mr. Cöلمان to Mr. Eglinton. My husband (who was in a sceptical mood) was told to place a ring inside the huge musical box, which was under the large dining-table, draped for the purpose. Mr. Eglinton suggested the lid should be closed. This was done, and the box drawn far beyond reach of the media; in a very short time the ring was laid at my husband's feet. The lid of the box had not been opened. The usual winding up, setting on, and stopping of the musical box, ringing of bells, and several other phenomena took place; but I must not longer trespass upon your valuable space.

S. VERNON.

Bognor, May 8th.

MISS LOTTIE FOWLER gave a private *séance* last Tuesday to Mr. Alexander Tod and friends at 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

MR. W. EGLINTON has been giving *séances* at Portsmouth during the early part of the present week.

THE new lending library of the National Association has been commenced, and members who subscribe not less than 10s. 6d. a year, can obtain the loan of books on application.

THE *séance* room of the National Association of Spiritualists is now frequently engaged for private *séances* by ladies and gentlemen who do not wish to hold circles in their own homes, or on the premises of the mediums.

SPIRITUALISM IN LANCASHIRE.—Mr. John Hartley, of Mottram-road, Hyde, Manchester, assistant-secretary to "The Lancashire District Spiritualist Committee," writes that the committee desires to raise £500 in voluntary subscriptions, to be expended at the rate of £100 a-year for five years, in the promotion of lectures on Spiritualism in the locality, and the sale of Spiritual literature. The committee should apply to the National Association of Spiritualists, which we believe has made arrangements to remunerate Dr. Sexton for the delivery of a course of lectures at various towns in the Lancashire district.

MR. J. J. MORSE IN THE PROVINCES.—On Sunday last Mr. Morse delivered two trance addresses in the Temperance Hall, Manchester,—that in the afternoon upon "Mental Dynamics," and in the evening upon "God's People, Who are they?" Both meetings were well attended, and the lectures were well received. On Sunday next Mr. Morse speaks in the Islington Assembly Rooms, Liverpool,—afternoon at three, evening at seven; on Monday at the Temperance Hall, Sheffield; and on Thursday he will deliver a trance address before the members and friends of the Dalston Association, 74, Navarino-road, Dalston, E., at eight p.m. Mr. Morse will then proceed to fulfil his engagement at Jersey, Channel Islands. All letters to be directed to Mr. Morse, at Warwick Cottage, Old Ford-road, Bow, London, E.

WAX MOULDS FROM SPIRIT HANDS.—In last week's *Spiritualist* was an article pointing out precautions which should be taken to ascertain that tricky spirits do not carry moulds of spirit hands into the cabinet, and carry away an equal weight of paraffin, to make it appear as if the hand-moulds had been manufactured on the spot. Messrs. Oxley and Reimers have written from Manchester to complain about this, as if it were a specially adverse criticism upon their operations, whereas it referred to all the *séances* of this kind which have yet been held, and more especially to those of Mrs. Hardy in America, it having been asserted that, at one of her test *séances*, the hand-mould produced had pieces of cotton wool adhering to it, as if it had been previously packed away in that substance. Moreover, there is the undoubted fact that spirits carry substances, including drapery, to and from circles with great facility. The mediums may be searched before and after a *séance* and no drapery be found about them, yet the spirits will bring it in in the middle.

SPIRITUALIST SERVICES IN CHURCHYARDS.—Mr. A. Klamborowski, of Tincton, Dorchester, writes, in a recent number of *The National Church*, against the delivery in churchyards of funeral services by those who are not Episcopalians, and quotes in support of his view parts of a speech by Dr. Hitchman, of Liverpool, made soon after the death of a brother Spiritualist. Mr. Klamborowski says:—"Standing by the resting-place of the dead, this gentleman purposed to say, 'Mr. Welch, the 'ordained' chaplain of Anfield Cemetery, now reading stereotyped prayers at the adjacent receptacle for dust and ashes, may reiterate his theological parables to the end of time. Spiritualists, and Spiritualists alone, possess the key of their mysteries, or the ethereal instrument that unlocks the door of the 'Spiritual Temple.' Speaking in consecrated ground, Mr. Hitchman intended to pour out the vials of his bitter scorn upon the very notion of consecration. He would, had he had the opportunity, have cried, 'Consecrated ground! Why not ask benediction of atmospheric elements? Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Are Spiritualists henceforth to believe that the Lord created the earth and then left man to consecrate it? I trow not.' But the 'Doctor' can bless as well as denounce. The Spiritualist, like the materialist, seems to have his wiser and better moments, and this is one of the new and revised gospels for prohibiting the preaching of which in God's acre churchmen are at once lovingly warned and fiercely threatened by Non-conformists, who are so much more pure and liberal than themselves, 'I would rather say,' shouts the 'Doctor' in the *Medium*, 'instead of "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," blessed are the living, either in the body of matter or that of spirit—who live in the truth of God, morally and scientifically, by acting in obedience to those laws of nature which are the Scriptures of Divine Philosophy, whether found in the works of Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, the Vedas revealed directly to Brahma, the Zendavesta of the Persians, the Koran of Mohammed, the Pentateuch of the Hebrews, or the sayings and doings of Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, and Confucius—nay, the alleged "miracles" of Christ Himself.' Which, Sir, of the numerous sects into which Nonconformity is split would tolerate such blasphemous balderdash within their own unconsecrated chapel-yards?"

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

The annual meeting of the members of the British National Association of Spiritualists will be held on Tuesday next, 23rd inst., at 6.30 p.m., at the offices of the Association, 38, Great Russell-street, when the new members of the Council for the coming year will be elected, and the annual report read.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

In society there are two extreme orders of mind, the lesser and the more powerful having the tendency to build up; the larger—and the less powerful, in consequence of the lack of the faculty of orderly union—having the tendency to pull down. Never was a house built yet but it had some fault which the constructor himself would not repeat, a fault open to the just animadversion of both friends and foes; but it is better and nobler to erect a house with several imperfections than to build none at all. For these reasons the pulling down force in society will generally, but with occasional outbursts of transient supremacy, be subservient to that which builds up. Between these two orders of mind oscillate those who desire not to conserve abuses, yet who would rather by hard work build something useful, with its unavoidable faults, than idly pull down everything.

Out of the chaos which existed in Spiritualism three years ago, with no union or concerted action—every man going his own way without consulting his neighbour—an attempt was made to establish order. This of necessity, by inexorable and universal law, led to a divergence between the pulling down and the building up forces in Spiritualistic society, with the result that the latter has made the headway it deserved to do—a headway all the more secure because every step has been won in the face of every kind of opposition.

These remarks of course refer to the steps which have been taken to establish national union among Spiritualists in this country; an attempt which has been so successful that it seems desirable to criticise the position attained, as freely as if there existed no enemies to orderly action ready to magnify every shadow of a defect. It is all the more necessary to do so just now, because growing organisations soon gain great power, and while they are in their infantile stages they are more supple, more attentive to the influence of public opinion, more anxious to remove defects which at later stages of growth cannot be eradicated. The bones of a child are somewhat gelatinous, so that if they get bent they can by judicious treatment be restored to their normal shape; but once let them harden, a deformity is established for life.

The controlling power of the National Association of Spiritualists appears to be just getting strong enough to call for and to be able to bear criticism from the whole body of its members, which criticism will possess all the more weight when advanced just before a general meeting and an annual election. Recently attention was called in these pages to the accidental circumstance that during the coming year the Council, under present conditions, possesses much more power of electing new members of the governing body, than do the great majority of the members; these conditions may perhaps be altered at the general meeting in such a way as to reverse the present position, not that it matters at all in a practical sense, nobody having any desire but to do the best for the Association, but because the establishment of a precedent may be bad for the future, and it is easier to enforce action upon a true theory in times of indifference, than when vested interests may have sprung up.

The question to which it is now especially desired to draw attention, is the desirability of forming an executive committee of the National Association. Some of the workers say that a council of seventy is too unwieldy, and that it should appoint an executive committee from among its members to do the actual work. If seventy members attended, there might be some force in this remark, but as more than twenty-five members have, we think, never attended at once, and as we roughly guess the average attendance to have been under fifteen, this shows that there is already considerable concentration of power in the hands of very few persons, some of them old-established workers and towers of strength in connection with the spiritual movement, others comparatively unknown before they began to do their present useful work. Our points are that if there were an average attendance of twenty-five instead of less than fifteen, the former number would be none too large in comparison with the influence of the work to be done, and to give security against the formation of cliques. The workers may respond, "Yes, but when we have done the work month after month, those who have done nothing may step in and outvote us." That is just what is wanted. Something of unusual public interest must have cropped up to suddenly bring in the non-workers, who, as disinterested observers, not mixed up with any previous contention, are just the right persons to come to a just decision, and one which will satisfy the public. If an executive committee existed, and the non-workers took steps to reverse one of its decisions, at once there would be a great rupture, and the hardest workers might all leave in the excitement of the moment; but if the hard and fast boundary line of an executive committee had never been drawn, the decision of an outside majority, instead of offending a considerable number of people, would only be adverse to the few who had displayed error in judgment. Lastly, although the private members see that the business of the Association is done by but few, the knowledge that there are plenty more councillors ready to step in and to rectify anything going wrong, gives a sense of security which would not be felt were there an executive committee.

The foreign relations of the National Association are, as pointed out recently, in an undeveloped state. Special reference was then made

to no communication having been entered into with the thousands of Spiritualists in Spain and Mexico, and that their journals have not been obtained and filed. Mexico is always in a state of chronic revolution, and if its Spiritualistic records were to be regularly preserved by the British National Association, they might prove to be more permanent than the other copies possessed by the editors themselves. At all events this country has the advantage of continuous peace, and those who filed Mexican or Spanish journals at 38, Great Russell-street, would not have bomb-shells whizzing about their ears, which might not be the case in the countries where they were produced. In Australia a weekly paper was started about a year ago; a very few scattered copies of it reached England; whether it is still in existence, or whether back numbers of it can be had, we do not know, but the items of national Spiritualistic history therein recorded are not preserved or known by the British National Association of Spiritualists. Moreover, as the Association knows little of what is taking place in Spiritualism in foreign nations, those nations know as little about the Association, consequently care nothing whether it sinks or swims; had friendly relations been entered into the case would have been different. It would be a good thing if every annual report of the National Association of Spiritualists had to give as far as practicable (1) A list of all the spiritual societies in the world, with the number of their members, the date of their establishment, the extent of their libraries, and other particulars. (2) A list of all the Spiritual periodicals in the world, and a statement of the extent to which they are preserved at the central establishment in this country. (3) A statement of the steps which have been taken to establish friendly relations with the said societies, and to make known in the several countries the objects and work of the British National Association. Suppose this to be done what would be the results? In the first place all the annual reports would be of great historical value, and of so much present value that Spiritualists all over the world would want to read them and to see them in their journals, which is not the case at present. Secondly, such steps would establish a widespread friendly feeling, so that any attempt to persecute or overthrow the present Association would excite a large amount of public sympathy resulting in concerted action. Thirdly, such reports would tend to secure the more speedy incorporation of the Association under the auspices of the Board of Trade, for that government establishment would have to deal more carefully with an organisation having widespread international interests, than one which dealt only with little things, involving perhaps more work and expense. If a foreign department of the National Association were established, consisting of some of the members of the Council who are in the habit of travelling in foreign countries, and of others who are good linguists, it would be a wise step.

AN OLD ENGLISH SUPERSTITION.

IN THE FERNS.

Wild blossoms of the moorland, ye are very dear to me;  
Ye lure my dreamy memory as clover does the bee.  
Ye bring back all my childhood lov'd, when Freedom, Joy, and Health  
Had never thought of wearing chains to fetter Fame and Wealth.  
Wild blossoms of the common land, brave tenants of the earth!  
Your breathings were among the first that gave my spirit birth;  
For how my busy brain would dream, and how my heart would burn,  
When gorse and heather flung their arms above the forest fern.

It was the belief of our credulous ancestors that the fern seed became visible only on St. John's Eve, and at the precise moment of the birth of the saint; that it was under the peculiar protection of the queen of the fairies; and that, in this eventful night, the most tremendous conflicts took place for its possession, between sorcerers and spirits, because it was conceived not only as capable of conferring invisibility at pleasure on those who succeeded in procuring it, but it was also esteemed of sovereign potency in the fabrication of charms and incantations. Those, therefore, who were addicted to the arts of magic, and possessed of sufficient courage for the enterprise, were presumed to watch in solitude during this solemn period, in order that they might seize the seed on the instant of its appearance, and so secure to themselves the much-coveted power of hearing and seeing others without being subject in their own persons to the scrutiny of the observed.—*Bow Bells.*

MR. BLYTON informs us that at a private family *séance*, held at the residence of a member of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism one evening last week, opportunities were afforded to the several members of the circle for observing in a good light some powerful spirit materialisations.

MODERN THEISM.—On Sunday afternoon, before a crowded congregation, the Archbishop of York, in St. James's Church, Piccadilly, preached a sermon on "God, a Personal Being, not an Impersonal Force." The sermon was the fourth of a series to be preached at the church by eminent clergymen, at the request of the Christian Evidence Society. His Grace selected for his text Heb. iii. 4. The one question, he said, to which he invited attention was this: Ought we to allow our minds to connect with the beauty of nature, the symmetry of nature's laws, and with the dictates of our own consciences, the thought of a Being who had caused all those things, or ought we to see nothing beyond the facts themselves, and to dismiss all thoughts of a wise and loving Being, whom we have not seen as unscientific, and as belonging to the vague region of metaphysics? The world was full of facts, which in the case of any human works would be conclusive evidence of an intelligent maker, and the mind hastened to the conclusion that Intelligence was at work here. As nobody doubted the possibility that God might exist, the generality of mankind would never hesitate to attribute the work of creation to God.—*Daily Telegraph.*



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