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In all probability an organisation of mesmerists will be formed before long, the desirability of such a step being generally felt. The chief difficulty encountered by the former Mesmeric Infirmary was that it either could not obtain or could not pay a cultured and educated class of mesmerists, consequently those patients who could afford to support the hospital, did not do so, because they did not like the operators sent to their homes by the institution. The mesmerists on the premises, had plenty to do however, and effected marvellous cures, but most of those who derived benefit could pay little or nothing to keep up the establishment. Subscriptions came in from the founders of the Infirmary, but these charitable supplies naturally dwindled in amount year by year; furthermore the spirited and constant management of men like Dr. Elliotson being removed from the Infirmary, enthusiasm died out among the workers, so the first Mesmeric Hospital calmly folded its hands and died a peaceful death.

In any new step in the same direction therefore, care should be taken to engage a few superior men as operators, whereby the rock on which the first Mesmeric Infirmary split, will be avoided.

A VOICE FROM LAODICEA. *

BY F. PODMORE, B.A. (OXON.), F.C.S.

THE evidence for the phenomena known as spiritualistic appears to me logically irrefragable. The phenomena are narrated on credible testimony—nay, on the testimony of reluctant or uninterested witnesses—to have occurred in all past time. They are written

* A paper read before the National Association of Spiritualists February 16th, 1880.

in the Bibles, the histories, the folk-lore the minstrelsy of all the world. Poets in all ages have sung them; chroniclers have recorded them; philosophers have explained or have failed to explain them. And in this last generation, whilst they have been witnessed as before, by competent observers in every department of human knowledge, they have even excited the attention of those learned in the laws of the physical universe. These facts which seem to suspend, if not to violate the known laws of nature, have been officially sanctioned by many of those who have helped to enunciate those laws. The phenomena, from being aliens, are becoming naturalised as lawful subjects of the kingdom of Science. They have been accurately classified and recorded; the conditions under which they occur are being investigated, and their causes assigned. They have in many cases been measured by the rule and weighed in the balance; they have been tested by the galvanometer and the magnet; and doubtless the time is near at hand when the chemist shall determine the exact percentage of nitrogen in spirit albumen, and give duodecasyllabic names to their new hydrocarbons. I believe, as I said at the beginning, that the evidence for the facts of what is called Spiritualism is indisputable. It is impossible to doubt either the good faith and accuracy of the witnesses, or the adequacy of the means of investigation which they have employed. Nay more, I have myself seen many of the physical phenomena, such as slate-writing, and the movements of objects without contact, under conditions where trickery or delusion seemed impossible; and I have received communications which I could only satisfactorily explain by referring them to some intelligent incorporeal agent. I believe that the theory which maintains the existence of such agents is the only one that will adequately account for all the occurrences vouched for by competent witnesses. As such, I conceive the spirit hypothesis to stand on at least as firm a basis as the undulatory theory of light. And yet, believing all that I have said above to be within the limits of fair statement, so far am I from believing in the spiritualistic theory, that I cannot even say that I believe the most elementary of the facts which I myself have witnessed, and on which that theory is based.

AN ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

If my case were at all an exceptional one, I should be guilty of the most impertinent egotism in proposing to vivisect my own

morbid psychological anatomy before even a society of professed students of psychology. But within my own circle of intimates are some who hold a position similar to my own. In the larger world I have reason to believe that there are many more. Seeing then, that I am no mere solitary sufferer, but the representative to-night of a large class similarly affected, I would invite your attention to consider our case, that we may, if possible, devise some sure prophylactic, some subtle moral vaccine, which may guard others, if not relieve ourselves from the attacks of this insidious malady.

By a device well known to mathematicians, a single letter may be made to stand for an intricate formula, so saving a constant and wearisome repetition. Thus the Greek letter "*pi*" or P, represents to the learned the proportion between the diameter and the circumference of a circle, and takes the place of a long decimal fraction. After this analogy, I will ask you, whenever the word "I" occurs in the course of this essay, to substitute for it when possible some such phrase as "the class of sceptics already mentioned, of whom the writer himself is one." By this means I trust that I shall not offend by thrusting my own personality too prominently forward, whilst avoiding a tedious and inelegant periphrasis.

SEANCES, AND THEIR INFLUENCE UPON THE MIND.

I remember reading some time ago, I think in *The Spiritualist* newspaper, the account of a *séance* which Sir D. Brewster had held with Mr. D. D. Home. This account was written some months after the *séance*. Side by side with this, was placed another account of the same *séance* written by the same man in his private diary, within a few hours of the occurrences which he narrates. The contrast presented by these two records is startlingly instructive. The one was calmly contemptuous and spoke of the whole matter as merely a clever, but by no means inexplicable conjuring performance. The other was the utterance of a man in doubt; he had seen with his own eyes things which he could not disbelieve, but was quite unable to explain. The temporary effect of the *séance* was far more marked and of a totally different character from the impression left on the mind of the witness a few months afterwards.

Now I have frequently noticed a precisely similar affection with regard to these phenomena both in myself and others. Some six years ago, when I first heard of Spiritualism, I instituted a few experiments in table-turning

with a circle of intimate friends. The results most convincingly proved the possibility, under certain conditions, of mind influencing mind without the ordinary means of communication. The evidence for this particular phenomenon, the spelling out by the table of words which were in the thoughts of one of our members, who would be away, and sometimes even out of the room, was most conclusive. It was all the more so, because in this particular instance the chances against mere coincidence were capable of exact calculation. The probability of our guessing individual letters correctly, I have calculated at about 1 in 15, say 7 per cent. Now in upwards of a hundred trials, the successful guesses were nearly 40 per cent. These results, from my own notes made during the progress of the experiments, seem to have had a profound effect upon us at the time. But in looking over these records a few weeks ago, together with my chief coadjutor—a man whom I can as little accuse of prejudice as of want of intelligence—I was astonished to find that while the impression left on my own mind was a very slight one, my friend appeared to have retained hardly any recollection at all of these experiments.

In the summer of 1876, I went to see Dr. Slade. I had with him a sitting neither more nor less successful than the common. Of this *séance* I remember writing to some friends, on the day following, that it had finally solved my doubts as to the truth of Spiritualism. In an account of the same *séance* written about a fortnight afterwards, and published in the October number of *Human Nature*, my enthusiasm had already begun to abate. Not only are my assertions more cautious, but my belief appears more forced than spontaneous. Still, I find recorded several very anomalous occurrences, such as slate-writing, the movements of a chair at a distance, and the appearance of a hand, not that of the medium. And I have stated my emphatic belief that these phenomena were incapable of explanation by fraud or trickery, and my strong inclination to attribute them to spirit agency. In looking through this article last December, I found that of all the remarkable phenomena which I appear to have witnessed on that occasion, previously to reading the account again, I could only recollect that I had seen some writing on a slate, and that I did not see how it was done.

In 1877, I went with two other persons, to take a child for treatment by Dr. Mack, the

mesmeric healer. The child's knee when he was carried into the room, was swollen to twice its natural size, inflamed, and so tender that he refused to allow Dr. Mack to touch it, or to remove the stocking. In twenty minutes we three spectators saw, under that magical treatment, the inflammation wholly disappear, and the knee restored to its natural size and colour; it could now be freely handled, except in one spot, and the child walked round the room with greater ease than he had done for months. Through no fault of Dr. Mack's—for the case was not a medical, but a surgical one—the knee returned to its former condition in two or three days, but the effect at the time was undoubted. Of this incident I have a very clear recollection, but, in describing the treatment under which the injured limb was eventually healed, I have not heard either of my co-witnesses make the slightest allusion to the half-hour spent at Dr. Mack's, and from occasional conversations I have every reason to believe that the occurrence has almost entirely faded from their memory. I myself, though I can have no doubt of the facts having actually taken place as I have narrated, yet feel very little assurance that my own is not a unique experience in the history of the world. Though I have seen such wonderful results in this particular instance, I find it impossible to believe in any of the cures effected in the same manner, of which I am constantly hearing, and I trust Dr. Mack will forgive me for saying so. It is not that I am unwilling to believe: it is a comforting belief for one who is not over-fond of drugs; I would gladly believe in the healing power of mesmerism if I could—but I can't.

I am continually hearing from intimate friends detailed accounts of abnormal phenomena—mesmeric, clairvoyant, psychic, and the like. I do not doubt the accuracy of the narrator, still less do I suspect him of any intention to deceive me. Often the facts of the case are such as to preclude the possibility of his having been himself deceived. And yet, I do not believe a word of what he tells me. Some four years ago, a lady of good social position and undoubted intelligence, communicated to me the following incidents from her own personal experience. Of the date I am not positive; it was before telegraphic communication existed between Ireland and this country. My informant was then living in a Midland town. A little boy, who was staying in her house, fell ill of scarlet fever one Thursday morning. The child died at day-

break on the following Tuesday. In the interval the parents had been repeatedly written to, but no reply had been received. That night, or rather between 12 and 1 a.m. on the following day, the lady was lying awake in bed, when she heard the sound of rapid wheels on the road leading to the house. She listened and heard the sound stop, as it appeared at the gate of the drive. She then woke her husband, telling him that the long expected parents of the dead boy were come. But on looking out of the window, they saw no carriage then. The lady learnt in the morning, that all the other inmates of the house had heard the noise of the same mysterious arrival, and that one or two had like herself looked out and seen nothing. It appeared afterwards, that at that very day and hour, the father, who had been absent from home in a remote part of Ireland, had received by special messenger the letters which conveyed the tidings of his child's desperate illness. Also that at the hour of his death on the Tuesday morning, the form of the child had been seen by his brother in Ireland, who had told others at the time what he had seen. I will attempt to define accurately my state of mind with regard to this narrative. At the time that I heard it from my informants' lips, I probably believed it. At the time that I am setting down this account of it on paper, I feel a faint revival of that belief. But ordinarily, this, and a hundred incidents like this, do not form part of my mental constitution at all. I build nothing on such records, I draw no conclusions from them. They have ceased to impress me by the pure wonder of them, and they make no other impression in its stead. The mind reflects, but does not photograph them. Like the memory of dead virtues, they are writ in water, not in brass.

Now it seems to me that this utter incapacity for belief, is a phenomenon quite as marvellous as any other of the marvels which cluster round Spiritualism, and will probably at least as fully repay an attentive study of it. Here are men, who have cast aside all prejudices which might stand in the way of their receiving the facts of Spiritualism. They are willing, nay anxious, if not to believe, at least to hear the evidence fully, and decide upon it fairly. And when the evidence which they asked for is supplied to them, overwhelming in quantity, and unimpeachable in quality, they find themselves almost unaffected by it. Inspirational addresses are to them utterances in an unknown tongue, and the thousand

works on Spiritualism affect them as little as treatises on technical chemistry, or on the subdivisions of the micro-lepidoptera.

These are men rejected by the one side, and half welcomed by the other. Sometimes they succeed in almost breaking away from Spiritualism, they mix with the world, imbibe the world's opinions, and become almost of the world, until a chance conversation, a casual memory reduces them again to their unwilling thralldom. At other times, they become almost Spiritualists; they have been reading a good deal perhaps, or been thrown much with those of that way of thinking, and they congratulate themselves that certainty is at last within their reach, and prepare to enter the race for a martyr's crown, by preaching an unpopular and unwelcome truth. And then, after the lapse of a few quiet weeks, comes the next great "exposure," and more deadly still, the comments on that exposure by a certain class of Spiritualists, and the explanations of it. And the fabric which had been so toilsomely reared topples over in a moment. And the whirlwind of doubt not only carries down in ruin the superstructure, but shakes the very foundations. Of course this is illogical, and not as it should be. The diamonds which a jeweller has, and has proved, are not the less diamonds because he is for once taken in, and gives a hundred guineas for a brilliant of paste. Mr. Sludge when left to himself is caught playing the ghost with a sheet, and some phosphorised oil; but the fact that a few days before, when Mr. Sludge's hands were fast held, my arm-chair danced a hornpipe in the corner of the room, is not thereby disproved. If I deemed my tests sufficient at any time to guard against fraud, they are sufficient still. If they were not sufficient, I ought never to have believed at all. To discredit my chair's saltatory performance only now, argues a want of scientific accuracy in the past, or of logical acumen in the present. We come back, then, to the point from which we started. Believing the testimony to many of these phenomena to be logically indisputable, and believing in the evidence of my own senses in their favour, I ought to believe in the actual occurrence of the phenomena called Spiritualistic. Very good, but I don't believe, and if put on my defence I can only cry "Peccavi."

What then is the nature of belief? From what, if not from reason, does it proceed? By what laws, other than those of logic, does it act? The analysis of a few instances, where

all agree in believing, may help us to understand under what circumstances belief is withheld.

In walking westward down Ludgate Hill a few months ago, on the south side of the street, I received a blow across the face, causing me to close my eyelids. I opened them almost immediately, but could see nothing by which the blow could have been given. Certainly there was no hansom cab in sight, within a reasonable distance, yet I believe that the blow came from the projecting lash of the whip of a hansom cab, which had probably just hurried out of sight in the direction of Blackfriars Bridge, when I looked up. Why do I believe that this was so, and yet not believe that the caress which I have often received at a *séance* proceeded from a spirit hand? It would appear that there is stronger evidence for the last than for the first: for the hand is often seen, the whip-lash in this case was not. My belief is given in the one case, and withheld in the other, chiefly, it would seem, for two reasons. I am familiar with the existence of hansom cabs, and with their mode of action. I have driven in them, and occasionally, I have been nearly driven over by them. A hansom cab is unquestionably a *vera causa*. Now spirits are not so. I have no other evidence for the existence of spirits than these phenomena themselves, and any preconceived opinion which I may have had on their mode of action, is entirely opposed to what I here find attributed to them. But this is not enough to justify my unbelief, for the existence of everything must some time or other be proved for the first time. I believe in the existence of what are called atoms, of the luminiferous ether, and of the element fluorine which has never yet been handled or seen, on evidence of apparently the same nature, but far less cogent than that which I here find insufficient to induce belief. I have not the least doubt of the existence of the last discovered metal, or the newest asteroid. I believe in thallium, though I do not remember to have ever seen it, and I do not—without intending the least disrespect to their common discoverer—I do not believe in “Katie King.”

To be Continued.

Mrs. PATON is obtaining strong flower manifestations in Melbourne.

AN organisation under the name of the St. Thomas Association of Spiritualists has been formed in the Island of St. Thomas, West Indies, and it already has one hundred members, including a trance medium, Mr. Charles E. Taylor.

Correspondence.

[Great freedom is given to correspondents who sometimes express opinions diametrically opposed to those of this Journal and its readers. Unsolicited communications cannot be returned; copies should be kept by the writers. Preference is given to letters which are not anonymous.]

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

Sir,—Your remarks open up several points in controversial theology, on none of which shall I attempt to enter.

Firstly, because it does not concern me to defend the dogma of eternal punishment, or any other part of my individual belief.

Secondly, the example of the “more intelligent divines,” who repeat the arguments of Origen (*Periarchon*, cap 6.) warns me against ranking myself under their banner. As one whose intellect is probably only level with that of the “children,” and the “enthusiastic women,” who attend “æsthetic and pleasing” services. I must kneel with tranquillity under your rod. In this position it is consolatory to share a position held by St. Ignatius, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Gregory, St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. John Chrysostom, and a few others, some of whom are thought “intelligent,” all of whom were not “children” or “women,” and can scarcely be said to have been “enthusiastic” in the sense of being imaginative or credulous.

Not knowing the united decree by which Spiritualists have agreed to denounce the dogma of eternal punishment, it is more comforting to know something of the points in which the Catholic Church, who defines her creed, is in accordance with the various spiritual doctrines, and to find out the points on which we agree.

That 1. There is a Divine Providence; 2. A future life after death; 3. That sins committed in this world are punished in the next; 4. That certain souls are in a condition where they may be helped by the suffrages of the faithful—are points which Catholics abide on, and which I think that all Spiritualists do not contradict. Such doctrines have been, as you well say, like “a lump of honest quartz in front of the steam roller of modern progress.” Sometimes the roller does not succeed in crushing it, the machinery is thrown out of gear, and the riders or the roller are spilt in the mud. But, however the piece of quartz may be shattered, it always remains silex, as hard as the larger piece from whence it was broken. That an institution which is directly opposed to the materialist and agnostic philosophies of the day, and which its syllabus has declared to be irreconcilable with modern science, should be in the way of some, I can well imagine. But it is not the Spiritualist, in the enlarged sense in which I have always used the word, as opposed to the Animist, in whose path the power which sways so many minds, has placed itself.

Permit me also just to say that the excellent man Turricremata was not named Torquemada by his family, and that the punning word by which his adversaries have called him on the theory that his patronymic was a Spanish one, is so obviously a feeble and depreciatory joke, that historians have long since restored him to the title of a family, whose coat of arms exactly indicates his real name. The whole history of the Inquisition in Spain is a subject well worthy the attention of historians, and the life of B. Peter Arbués is suitable for the perusal of all Spiritualists.

I may, in conclusion, ask those Spiritualists who care to know what the Catholic Church has said respecting the dogma of eternal punishment, to read a little book, published last year by my venerable friend,

the very Revd. Pius Melia, D.D. entitled "Words of a believer on the ways of Providence towards man here and hereafter," (8vo. Dolmans, 1879) and they will enjoy the advantage of perusing the original passages at the foot of all the quotations given.

C. CARTER BLAKE.

79, Chancery Lane, W.C., March 20th, 1880.

THREE QUESTIONS.

Sir,—Three subjects are prominently before us now upon which it would be well to have a general expression of opinion from your readers; they are Mysticism, Will-Power, and Sexualism.

Mysticism seems to have been the great weakness of mankind from the earliest times, and even to-day how prone we all are to have a secret. What an important part the "Mystery man" plays amongst aboriginal races, and with what bated breath the mystery writers tell us of the mysteries of the Egyptians. The secret of the Rosicrucians, and of the wonderful meanings underlying the signs of the Zodiac. When we come however to examine them in the daylight of reason and science we find, as Thackeray found on taking off King George's last waistcoat, "nothing."

The Spiritualist has always set its face against this mystery-mongering and endeavoured to set what facts it had, before us in a scientific and intelligible manner; it is time therefore that this bugbear of humanity, this Mumbo Jumbo business were relegated to the limbo of "old Bogey" for ever. I do not mean any alliteration when I say that this mystery is a *mist* which must be dispelled. What we want is not so much "more light" but "less mist," and I would ask any man who has dabbled in this mystery business, either as an Astrologer, Freemason, Theosophist, or any other form of it, to say candidly is it worth one pinch of snuff as a matter of useful knowledge?

Will-Power: This is comparatively a more modern invention, and taken in a qualifying sense such as determination, persistence, never-say-die meaning is right enough; but when we are told of the things done by Yogees and Fakirs the question naturally arises, supposing it to be so, of what practical use is the power to cut oneself to pieces and put oneself together again? To do this requires according to their own showing, a long course of training, takes the individual from the field of earthly labour, for which it incapacitates him, and absorbs his faculties from his earth-life duties.

Sexualism: A tirade against the so-called "animal" man is fashionable just now. We are told to crucify the sexual instinct, that spirituality can only be attained thereby, and that the virgin and celibate only can attain to the higher beatitudes. According to this doctrine the present creation is a mistake. It is reported of Philip of Spain that upon one occasion he remarked that "if the world were to be created again he could suggest some very valuable improvements." Had he been a Theosophist he would probably have made us hermaphrodites, or bi-sexed like the snails, and thus have saved a double creation, as well in the interest of the economies of nature as of the welfare of our souls.

S.
London, March 19th, 1880.

A NEW TRANCE MEDIUM.

Sir,—Probably not many of your readers are aware even of the existence of the newly sprung up town of Millom, on the West Cumberland coast, and joining the northern end of Lancashire, much less of the existence of Mr. H. Taylor, a most excellent trance medium, who lives there, in a modest, unostentatious sort of way. I had the pleasure of visiting him on

Sunday last, and could hardly help calling to mind the oft-quoted lines:—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Mr. Taylor is really a gem, and although not literally "wasting his sweetness on the desert air," it was impossible not to be struck with the apparent fact that were he more widely known, and his services utilised, the cause of Spiritualism would be far more widely benefitted than if his gifts were confined to the rather circumscribed circle to which he now almost solely devotes his services. At the afternoon service there were perhaps some twenty persons present; all, I believe, earnest Spiritualists, and there seemed to exist that kindly and harmonious feeling which should be the first out-come of all spiritual teachings. Mr. Taylor's guide chose a subject of discourse suggested by the day (Palm Sunday), and treated it in a most admirable manner. I don't suppose you could spare space for even an outline of the discourse, but I trust the exigencies of your valuable paper are not such as will preclude the insertion of this notice of a medium whose capacities for extended usefulness seem to me to be next to lost, in consequence of his being so comparatively unknown.

W. ATKINSON.

Ulverston.

GOSWELL HALL SUNDAY MEETINGS.

Sir,—Would you be so kind as to announce in this week's issue, that a trance address will be delivered through Mr. J. J. Morse at the above Hall on Sunday next (28th March). Subject: "The Prophecy of Spiritualism," an anniversary address.

H. J. STEVENS, *Hon. Sec.*

OUR NATIONAL VICE.

Sir,—I am very anxious to distribute gratuitously a little work called "Salvation for the Drunkard," recently published by Mr. Ernest Gough.

I will gladly send a copy to anyone writing for it, in the hope that it may prove of moral and material benefit to those who unhappily need its advice.

If you will allow these few words to appear in your influential paper, I shall be sincerely obliged, and remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

BESSIE CHAMBERS.

64, Chester Square, London, S.W. March 19th, 1880.

COMMUNITY OF SENSATION AT A SEANCE.

BY L. F. CLAVAIROZ (LEON FAYRE), CONSUL-GENERAL OF FRANCE AT TRIESTE.

EVERY Friday several friends meet at my house, and await communications from such spirits as may be kind enough to attend. One of the most earnest of those spirits is an Italian officer, Alfonso Brunetti, who is well known to the readers of the various Spiritualistic journals; he is good and playful, always ready to render a service, but apt to play jokes upon those he visits.

One of my friends left for Lisbon, and was at sea on the following Friday. "Ask Alfonso," said he to me, "to accompany me on my departure. On Friday night he will be able to tell you how I am progressing on my journey,

and I will write to you myself from Lisbon to check the statements of the controlling spirit."

This was done. On the following Friday all our friends assembled; Alfonso also kept the appointment. "Your friend," said he, "has not been altogether ill, but his system is disturbed. The weather was worse this morning than this evening, but there is another squall. Quick! Quick! A basin!"

Scarcely had our writing medium, Caterina, read the words which she had written, than she became violently sea-sick. Her mother and another lady at the *séance* were attacked in the same way, and I myself felt veritable internal disturbance. I administered a cordial to the other lady, which calmed her a little, but after the sickness had a little passed off another attack began, and she had to submit to all the consequences of a great storm at sea.

Our astonishment, although great, increased on seeing our little dog, Lavanais, swaying right and left, as if carried by the waves, and groaning as if she were sea-sick.

We returned to the table, and Alfonso, laughing mischievously with pleasure at the trick he had played, said although he never thought that Caterina would have absorbed all the influence he had intended to bring to bear only on our lady-friend, still, he loved a joke.

All that night and all the next day the three ladies were suffering from the effects of the *séance*, and from want of sleep. Caterina was unable to think of the absent voyager without feeling ill again.

In this case spirits had the power to act upon the human organism and to destroy its harmony at their will. If then, they possess this power, there is all the more reason why the well-intentioned among them should be induced to use it in the opposite direction, and we should encourage this kind of developement among our mediums,

Paris, March 22nd, 1880.

A HAUNTED MAN.—On the 26th of January, at Yass, in New South Wales, a man who gave the name of Thomas Coulthard, gave himself into the custody of Sub-inspector Brennan, and confessed to having, in January, 1878, at Everton, near Liverpool, England, poisoned his wife with prussic acid. He describes himself as a chemist and druggist, and states that he was madly jealous of his wife, who was also his cousin. After his wife's death he fastened lead to the head and feet, placed the body in a sack, and threw it into the river Mersey. Shortly after, he sailed for Melbourne, whence he came to this colony about eight months ago. He has lately been working on Greenfield Farm, near Yass. He asserts that he has been utterly wretched ever since committing the murder, and that his wife's vision appears to him almost nightly. He appears to be in his right senses, and repeats his story coherently. He is 28 years of age.—*Sydney Morning Herald*.

A SPIRITUALISTIC SOIREE.

LAST Wednesday a Spiritualistic *soirée* was held at 38, Great Russell Street, London. During the evening the Misses Withall entertained the company with a duet upon the piano, after which the Misses Beaumont and Mr. Thomason joined in a trio, whilst Mr. Mason played the accompaniment; the piece was excellently rendered, and the harmony perfect. Mr. T. L. Nichols, M.D., then gave a description of a birthday *séance* at Malvern, through the mediumship of Mr. Eglinton; he said that some of these who were present at it desired that it should not be published, as some of the facts were likely to invite the ridicule of persons ignorant of the nature of spiritual phenomena. Miss Evelyn Beaumont then sang Charles Swain's prettily worded song, beginning—

Oh! merry goes the time when the heart is young,
There's nought too high to climb when the heart is young;
A spirit of delight
Scatters roses in her flight
And there's magic in the night, when the heart is young.

The song closed with the following verse:—

Yet an angel from its sphere, though the heart be old,
Whispers comfort in our ear, though the heart be old,
Saying,
Saying:
"Age from out the tomb,
"Shall immortal youth assume,
"And spring eternal bloom, where no heart is old."

Miss Lilian Beaumont gave the accompaniment, and altogether it was one of the best pieces of the evening. Mr. Thomason afterwards sang "The Diver," and Miss Lilian Beaumont "Sleep." Two good recitations by Mr. Dietz followed; a quartette was sung by the Misses Beaumont, Mr. Thomason, and Mr. J. C. Ward. Miss Beaumont sang a solo, and the entertainment concluded with the singing of "The Message" by Mr. Ward.

CURIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES.

THREE mysterious occurrences, difficult to explain, have come within my personal experience, or more truly speaking, knowledge.

A DEATH WARNING.

I happened to be calling on a poor woman, who is ill, and whose wants I take care are attended to, when, hearing a sudden noise and commotion outside her door, I opened it and found a young man of twenty in a dying state, he having just ruptured a blood-vessel. In ten minutes he was dead. The poor mother's distress was terrible, this being her fourth and last child. The day after the funeral, I tried hard to give her some courage and hope, her son having died under peculiar circumstances, he being as she expressed it—"A son and youth without reproach in his life and ways, with the one exception that he had left the church (Catholic), and had more than a year ago, left with her a written paper, insisting that in the event of his death he should be buried without a priest." This to her was a

fearful dread, especially as the Church party and priests also, made it the occasion to intimidate others by working on this poor ignorant bereaved woman's fears, by telling her that as he had died outside the Church and without the sacrament, his soul would be damned.

I am thankful to say, I brought her some little hope that God's judgment was not man's. Then she opened her heart to me, and among other things told me that on the Monday night preceding his death (he died on Wednesday at 3 p.m.) he called her out of her sleep, telling her he would die. She went to him in fear, but he would tell her nothing more than that he would die. He had been ill some time, though not confined to bed, she tried to reason with him by reminding him how much better he was than he had been since his illness. Nothing more was said, but the next day he seemed quite cheerful; he told his mother to have a nice dinner and to have it early as he wished her to go to hear the band play in the afternoon. While she was attending to the dinner a young friend called; during the conversation the young man asked his friend what day of the month it was, and was told "the fourth." "Ah well," he said, "I shall go to the music all the same, but I shall not see the fifth; my time will be up." The son's friend told this conversation to the mother the evening of the day her son died. His words of the Monday night coupled with this remark to his friend, convinced her that he knew he was to die that day. To know he was so soon to leave her, and to eat his dinner so calmly, and then go to the band, all the while so gentle and attentive to her, and yet not to tell her his thoughts and knowledge, but to leave her without a parting word, was so cruel, she said.

From what I have since learned, I feel that if in some way the son had been told of his death as to happen on the 5th, his silence towards his mother was to save her as long as possible, or perhaps to have his last hours with her free from anxiety or religious importunities. He died on Wednesday, 4th of February.

A VENOMOUS SPIDER.

Incident number two occurred to a young lady of my acquaintance, a winter visitor at Cannes, who told me of a strange thing that happened to her. She says that at one of the hotels she put up at to break the journey, and about half an hour after she had fallen asleep, she dreamt that she saw a large horrible spider on the wall by her bedside. It was of a size

and kind she had never seen before, and so great was her fear of it, she awoke. Thinking it only a dream, she fell asleep again, being very tired. Once more she saw it in her sleep, and again her fear caused her to awake. Fatigue and sleep again overcame her, but only to once more dream of the spider, always in the same place, always filling her with the same fear. This time, however, she was so impressed with her dream that she could not rest, and called to her friend sleeping in the adjoining room to come to her, and to bring a light. Immediately on her friend's entrance, she looked at the wall, and to her horror the spider was there, just as she had seen it three times in her sleep. In an instant she was out of bed, and never having seen a spider so large and strange, she rang the bell to ask about it and have it destroyed. The servant said that it was well she had seen it, as it was a most venomous one.

As I am known to make a study of this sort of thing, my friends are always asking me to explain some mystery or other.

A DEATH-BED APPARITION.

My third incident is of greater interest, being truly strange. My most intimate friend here is a young girl of Swiss and Russian parentage, who promises to become a painter of some fame in the future. During the daughter's visit to London last summer, the mother fell ill, an illness that ended in death last January. The mother was a woman of high family, and herself of high intellectual attainments. The father, a physician, who happened to go to Paris, also fell ill, so that husband and wife were both ill, one here, the other at Paris. Fearing to do harm, neither was told of the other's *extreme* illness, yet both knew of the illness of each being sufficient to prevent the long voyage being undertaken. The mother, also my friend, was a firm believer in immortality, and in the power of the spirit to return to the earth and visit as well as make its presence known to the living, a subject we frequently conversed about, Madame — telling me of having herself seen apparitions. Yet she was much opposed to evoking them, and to what is called modern Spiritualism. Her daughter, the young girl I speak of, was a believer in nothing, and almost a sceptic in its hardest sense; she loved her mother, and this was a great jar between them, for her mother was a Christian, deep and real, but with no narrow views. She was prepared to die, and had no shrinking from it. She truly believed that to die was gain. Her constant prayer was

that her daughter might also receive the same belief of the future life. It was a trying experience for so young a girl to see her mother dying, and to feel this great division in their two souls.

It was a painful illness; inch by inch only was she relieved by death. The morning of her death she lay as it were in a deep sleep. A friend was with the daughter; they both stood by the bedside, not knowing if it were really sleep or death. Suddenly Madame — came to, and exclaimed "Oh, who were those two beautiful angels who carried me in their arms?" then she became convulsed; great drops of cold damp collected on her face. Then she spoke and said "How delicious!" then the limbs seemed suddenly to stiffen and all was over. This was on a Monday morning, about eleven o'clock. On the Monday night the two friends were standing by the bed looking at the lifeless body, and conversing of the mother they both mourned, one as a daughter, the other as a friend, and also of this strange thing Death, and of the wonderful faith that could make her exclaim "How delicious," even in the seeming agony of departure, neither of them being able to understand it, being both non-believers. Suddenly Miss — began staring intensely at the foot of her mother's bed, as if she saw some strange light; she motioned for her friend to look, but *she* saw nothing. Miss — then said "But I see my father. How strange! He looks as one dead; he is so changed, his beard is so long, he is so thin and he is *dressed* and *not* lying *on a bed*; it cannot be my father, what can it be?" Some voice seemed to say to her "Yes, it is your father and he *is* dead." Then she saw and heard no more.

This was a wonderful thing for those two girls, for neither doubted but that it was a vision. The daughter seemed all at once to have become convinced of the reality of immortality, and when I went in the morning to them she told me of her vision and of her conviction that her father must have died also. Late that afternoon an old friend of her mother's called to tell her of a telegram he had just received, stating the sudden death of her father, only a few hours before that of her mother, and not at Paris, but on his way to his son's, who had gone to the city (from Switzerland) to bring his father to his comfortable home, the doctors having said that they thought he was equal to the journey and they hoped that at his son's house, his needs would be much better cared for than in Paris.

About the fourth station from the city he was found to be dying and was immediately removed into the station, where he soon expired and "*not on a bed.*" When Monsieur —, who is a clergyman, said to Miss —, "I am come to tell you of a double bereavement," she responded "Yes, I *know* my father is dead. I saw him last night." He thought she was wandering from fatigue and grief, but she told him her vision, as she calls it.

Last summer when conversing with the mother on the subject of spirit life, she told me that when this same daughter was about two years old, a little brother, aged six, of whom she was very fond, died. The evening of, or after, (I forget which) his death, when the family was in an adjoining room, this little sister came to them from another room, saying — and calling her little dead brother by name — that he was not in bed but was playing with her in the other room. They followed the child, but saw nothing, nor did she, though seeming not to understand what had become of him. Madame — told me that for *two* weeks, this baby-child seemed to be conscious of the presence of her little brother, and always about the same time — even to seeming to hear him speak.

I send you these items of strange things, as facts I have from the individuals themselves. The two friends have also since seemed to have received news or tidings from "the other side." So convinced are they of this power that they have had me to pass two or three nights with them, hoping that we three might be visited either by the mother's, or by my own dear child's spirit, whose loss has made death — even though immortality may not follow — a thing to be desired, "a gain." But nothing came to us, even while my soul longed for some token to build a hope upon, longed as only a hungry soul can long, as only a human being whose last tie is severed, can hope a forlorn hope. I thought you might be interested in these real facts, and should you think them of value you are at liberty to use them, only I must ask you not to mention any names in connection with the incidents. I have not asked if I may send them, but as they have been freely spoken of and are known to many persons here, I feel at liberty to speak of them.

Cannes, France, March 16th, 1880.

X

MR. WALKER, the Australian trance medium, is about to give public lectures in South Africa, in consequence of that indefatigable Spiritualist, Mr. Berks Hutchinson, of Cape Town, having engaged him for that purpose.

A YORKSHIRE GHOST STORY.

"WHAT I am going to relate happened to myself while staying with some North-country cousins, last July, at their house in Yorkshire. I had spent a few days there in the summer of the previous year, but without then hearing or seeing anything out of the common. On my second visit, arriving early in the afternoon, I went out boating with some of the family, spent a very jolly evening, and finally went to bed—a little tired, perhaps, with the day's work, but not the least nervous. I slept soundly until between three and four, just when the day was beginning to break. I had been awake for a short time when suddenly the door of my bedroom opened and shut again rather quickly. I fancied it might have been one of the servants, and called out, 'Come in!' After a short time the door opened again, but no one came in—at least, no one that I could see. Almost at the same time that the door opened for the second time, I was a little startled by the rustling of some curtains belonging to a hanging wardrobe, which stood by the side of the bed; the rustling continued, and I was seized with a most uncomfortable feeling, not exactly of fright, but a strange, unearthly sensation that I was not alone. I had had that feeling for some minutes, when I saw at the foot of the bed a child, about seven or nine years old. The child seemed as if it were on the bed, and came gliding towards me as I lay. It was the figure of a little girl in her night-dress—a little girl with dark hair and a very white face. I tried to speak to her, but could not. She came slowly on up to the top of the bed, and I then saw her face clearly. She seemed in great trouble; her hands were clasped and her eyes were turned up with a look of entreaty, an almost agonised look. Then, slowly unclasping her hands, she touched me on the shoulder. The hand felt icy cold, and while I strove to speak she was gone. I felt more frightened after the child was gone than before, and began to be very anxious for the time when the servant would make her appearance. Whether I slept again or not I hardly know. But by the time the servant did come, I had almost persuaded myself that the whole affair was nothing but a very vivid nightmare. However, when I came down to breakfast, there were many remarks made about my not looking well—it was observed that I was pale. In answer I told my cousins that I had had a most vivid nightmare, and I remarked if I was a believer in ghosts I should imagine I had seen one. Nothing more was said at the time upon this subject, except that my host, who was a doctor, observed that I had better not sleep in the room again, at any rate not alone.

"So the following night one of my cousins slept in the same room with me. Neither of us saw or heard anything out of the way during the night or the early morning. That being the case, I persuaded myself that what I had seen had been only imagination, and, much against everybody's expressed wish, I insisted

* This narrative is extracted from last week's *Notes and Queries*, the editor of which journal says:—"The following interesting communication (title included) has been handed to me by a young lady, who is as intelligent as she is charming. Her hereditary acumen precludes altogether the possibility of any self-deceit in regard to her own personal experiences, as narrated by herself. Nor is this the whole of the evidence on the subject, as the reader will see. There are other witnesses to be called. In the conviction, therefore, that this statement (sharply distinguishable as it is from all previous ones of a kindred nature known to me) contains matter of unquestionable interest to every sort of thinker, I submit it to the consideration of the readers of 'N. & Q.'" The scene of the occurrences is an old mansion in the north of Yorkshire; cosy and cheerful though large and lonely in point of site."

the next night on sleeping in the room again, and alone. Accordingly, having retired again to the same room, I was kneeling down at the bedside to say my prayers, when exactly the same dread as before came over me. The curtains of the wardrobe swayed about, and I had the same sensation as previously, that I was not alone. I felt too frightened to stir, when luckily for me, one of my cousins came in for something which she had left. On looking at me she exclaimed, 'Have you seen anything?' I said 'No,' but told her how I felt, and, without much persuasion being necessary, I left the room with her, and never returned to it. When my hostess learnt what had happened (as she did immediately) she told me I must not sleep in that room again, as the nightmare had made such an impression on me; I should imagine (she said) all sorts of things and make myself quite ill. I went to another room, and during the rest of my visit (a week), I was not troubled by any reappearance of the little girl.

"On leaving, my cousin, the eldest daughter of the doctor, went on a visit with me to the house of an uncle of mine in the same county. We stayed there for about a fortnight, and during that time the 'little girl' was alluded to only as my 'nightmare.'

"In this I afterwards found there was a little reticence, for, just before leaving my uncle's, my cousin said to me, 'I must tell you something I have been longing to tell you ever since I left home. but my father desired me not to tell you, as, not being very strong, you might be too frightened. Your nightmare was not a nightmare at all, but the apparition of a little girl.' She then went on to tell me that this 'little girl' had been seen three times before, by three different members of the family, but as this was nine or ten years since, they had almost ceased to think anything about it until I related my experiences on the morning after the first night of my second visit.

"My cousin further went on to tell me that her younger sister whilst in bed had one morning, about daybreak, to her great surprise, seen a little girl with dark hair, standing with her back to her, looking out of the window. She took this figure for her little sister, and spoke to it. The child not replying or moving from her position, she called out to it, 'It's no use standing like that; I know you. You can't play tricks with me.' On looking round, however, she saw that her little sister, the one she thought she was addressing and who was sleeping with her, had not moved from the bed. Almost at the same time the child passed from the window into the room of her (my cousin's) sister A., and the latter, as she afterwards declared, distinctly saw the figure of a child with dark hair standing by the side of a table in her room. She spoke to it, and it instantly disappeared. The 'little girl' was subsequently again seen, for the last time before I saw it, by my cousin's father, Dr. H. It was in the early daylight of a summer's morning, and he was going upstairs to his room, having just returned from a professional visit. On this occasion he saw the same child (he noticed its dark hair) running up the stairs immediately before him, until it reached his room and entered it. When he got into the room it was gone.

"Thus the apparition has been seen three times by the family, and once by me. I am the only one, however, that has seen its face. It has also never been seen twice in the same room by any one else."

H. C. C.*

* The spirit was evidently in trouble and wanted help of some kind. A Spiritualist would have adopted means to get a message from her, and to give her the desired aid.—*Editor of Spiritualist.*

DR. SLADE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

A COMMUNICATION received by the last mail from Mr. J. Simmons, who has at last rejoined Dr. Slade, informs us that that celebrated medium is now giving *séances* in the Colorado district, and a copy of the *Rocky Mountain News*, of March 4th, published at Denver, gives an interesting account of a *séance* with Dr. Slade, at which one of the representatives of that journal was present. Among other things the reporter says:—

Two slates—ordinary school slates to all intents and purposes—were taken from the table and given the reporter for examination. They were as clean on both sides as sponge and water could make them. The medium, then taking up from the table some small bits of slate pencil, no larger than rice grains and probably twice as long, laid them upon one of the slates and turned the other over it. He then placed the two slates upon the reporter's shoulder, merely keeping a grasp upon them between his thumb and forefinger. This was no sooner done than the bits of pencil began to scratch, making the sounds of writing as clearly as any body would wish for. The sounds of dotting the *i*'s and crossing the *t*'s could be heard distinctly. In eight or ten minutes a pencil, which now seemed to be alone in its movements, gave two "ticks" upon the slate and all was silent. The slates were taken down and apart. The reporter was astounded. The bottom slate of the two was found filled with writing—clear, legible writing—but evidently by different bauds. The slate was covered from top to bottom, and the last word was observed to be in the very corner of the bottom. The bits of pencil were also examined. At the end of each of the paragraphs was found the remainder of the bit of slate pencil dropped just where the word was ended. An examination of this writing showed it to contain six different paragraphs, and five of these in different languages, and in different styles of hand-writing.

1. Meine Liebe sei mit euch Allen in Christo Jesu.
2. Quis ego sum, Domine Deus quia adduxisti me.
3. E men gar Eklesia, kai per kath' oles tes oikoumenos cos peraton tes tes diespasmene.
4. Regula est autem fidei, ut jam hinc quid audamus profitiamur illa scilicet qua auditur.
5. Le bonheur s'achète par le sacrifice—Dieu ne donne rien pour rien.
6. Perils and misfortune, and want and pain and injury, are more or less the lot of all men that come into the world.

As soon as the reporter could collect his scattered senses consequent upon this amazing revelation, he sought an explanation for it, but

all in vain. The medium called it Spiritualism and confessed that he knew nothing of the causes leading to the phenomena.

The reporter does not pretend to know what caused these singular demonstrations. The transcription given above is nearly correct, though in one or two instances the words could not be made out with absolute accuracy.

LOVE'S FOUR SEASONS.

Spring; ah! yes, sweet gentle season,
Fresh with greenness, like the heart,
Filled with love's first silent throbbings
For a voice which makes thee start.
Trembling without rhyme or reason,
When those eyes upon you dart
Lightning glances—whose fond meanings
Something more than words impart.

Summer next, with radiant glory,
Reigns; sweet flowers scent the air,
Roses, red and white, fair lilies,
Bloom in beauty everywhere.
Ah! who then would not be happy?
Heart at rest, blue sky above,
Told again the old, old story
Of an everlasting love.

Autumn, rich in golden splendour,
Then at e'en 'tis sweet to roam
'Mid the brightly tinted cornfields
Gathering poppies to take home.
Later still brown leaves are falling,
Flowers fade, birds disappear;
So my love has changed towards me,
Filled my heart with deep despair.

Winter! cold, bleak, dreary winter,
Can it be that once so bright
All the earth has seemed around me,
Now as desolate as night?
Like the Soul, with silent sorrow,
Frozen, empty, filled with care,
That never more will know the summer
Be it e'er so bright or fair.

LEO

To Correspondent.

G. A. F., Colombo: Posted to you last week.

SUNDAY SERVICES.—Last Sunday evening at a Spiritualistic meeting at the Goswell Hall, Mr. Duguid addressed the meeting. Among the speakers who followed him were Mr. Enmore Jones, Mr. Towns, and Mr. A. T. T. Peterson, who occupied the chair. Mr. Enmore Jones expressed the opinion that Spiritualists should agree to keep the one fact before the public that proof abounds in our midst of the reality of a spirit world, and that means exist for establishing communication with that world. On minor points they might, in a friendly way, differ in opinion in private; for instance, he (Mr. Jones) might work in his little Church of England corner, another Spiritualist might work in a Roman Catholic groove, whilst a third might perhaps advance the tenets of Buddhism, but let none introduce irrelevant disputes aside from the main issue, to the public. Mr. Peterson said that on some points he and Mr. Enmore Jones were as opposite to each other as the poles, in opinion, but he agreed in the remarks which had just been made; Spiritualists should not fritter away their strength in small divisions. Mr. Towns recommended the listeners to attend the Sunday conference meetings at Goswell Hall in the morning, at eleven o'clock, as well as the meetings in the evening.

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INFORMATION FOR NON-SPIRITUALISTS.

In thirty years Spiritualism has spread through all the most civilised countries on the globe, until it now has tens of thousands of adherents, and about thirty periodicals. It has also outlived the same popular abuse which at the outset opposed railways, gas, and Galileo's discovery of the rotation of the earth.

The Dialectical Society, under the presidency of Sir John Lubbock, appointed a large committee, which for two years investigated the phenomena occurring in the presence of non-professional mediums, and finally reported that the facts were true, that the raps and other noises governed by intelligence were real, and that solid objects sometimes moved in the presence of mediums without being touched.

Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, deviser of the radiometer, and discoverer of the new metal thallium, investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism in his own house, and reported them to be true. Mr. A. R. Wallace, Mr. Cromwell Varley, Prof. Zollner, and a great number of intelligent professional men have done the same.

HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES AT HOME.

Inquirers into the phenomena of Spiritualism should begin by forming circles in their own homes, with no Spiritualist or stranger to the family present.

The assertions of a few newspapers, conjurers, and men of science that the alleged phenomena are jugglery are proved to be untrue by the fact that manifestations are readily obtained by private families, with no stranger present, and without deception by any member of the family. At the present time there are only about half a dozen professional mediums for the physical phenomena in all Great Britain, consequently, if these were all tricksters (which they are not), they are so few in number as to be unable to bear out the imposture theory as the foundation of the great movement of modern Spiritualism. Readers should protect themselves against any impostors who may tell them that the phenomena are not real, by trying simple home experiments which cost nothing, thus showing how egregiously these are duped who trust in worthless authorities.

One or more persons possessing medial powers without knowing it are to be found in nearly every household, and about one new circle in three, formed according to the following instructions, obtains the phenomena:—

1. Let arrangements be made that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.

2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit in subdued light, but sufficient to allow everything to be seen clearly, round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is of little importance. Any table will do.

3. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is weakening.

4. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature.

5. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first indications will probably be table-tilting or raps.

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

7. Possibly symptoms of other forms of mediumship, such as trance or clairvoyance, may develop; the better class of messages, as judged by their religious and philosophical merits usually accompany such manifestations rather than the more objective phenomena. After the manifestations are obtained, the observers should not go to the other extreme and give way to an excess of credulity, but should believe no more about them or the contents of the messages than they are forced to do by undeniable proof.

8. Should no results be obtained at the first two sittings because no medium chances to be present, try again with other sitters. A medium is usually an impulsive individual, very sensitive to mesmeric influences.

Mediumship may either be used or abused. Mediums should not lower their strength by sitting more than about twice a week; angular, excitable people, had better avoid the nervous stimulus of mediumship altogether.

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