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# The Spiritualist Newspaper

A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism.

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## THE PASSAGE OF MATTER THROUGH MATTER.

FOR some years past evidence has been obtained by observers at spirit circles, that solid matter sometimes passes through solid matter under the influence of spirit power; and permanent proof appears to have been obtained by this fact at a *séance* in London last Saturday, as recorded on another page. At that *séance* a ring of solid ivory was linked into a ring of solid wood, without disruption of either so far as close examination in daylight has revealed, and the rings will doubtless be submitted in Leipzig to observation under the microscope during the present week. Meanwhile, we take a common-sense view of what is but a variation of a manifestation long common, and provisionally accept the reality of the fact.

Then arises the question—What is the philosophy of the manifestation? How is it to be explained? One step on the road to a solution may perhaps be found in the evidence given for many years past at spirit circles, of the occasional duplication of material forms. One wine glass was once put beneath a table at a *séance* recorded by Mr. A. R. Wallace, who immediately heard the rattling and clinking together in every way of *two*. Mr. Crookes once held Miss Cook, and saw standing near her the *double* of herself as a spirit form. We once held Mr. Williams at a *séance*, and saw floating high above him a living *double in appearance* of himself, robed in white drapery. A light was once struck at a Davenport *séance*, and the medium was seen duplicated, clothes and all. During the recent experiments made by the Research Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists, while Mr. Williams was on a weighing machine with self-recording apparatus attached, the double in appearance of himself, clothes and all, was busy about the room, and the weight of Mr. Williams varied in an extraordinary way, accompanied probably by complementary changes in the spectral form. Our idea is that there was no "miracle" in a physical sense, that the laws of the conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter were not broken, but that there was a kind of see-saw action between the two forms, the one increasing in weight as the other diminished; and this theory furnishes the key to some facts which are now perplexing American Spiritualists, as set forth more particularly in articles on Mrs. Pickering and Mr. Harry Bastian, in *The Religio-Philosophical Journal* of Chicago.

To return to the ring test. We think it probable that a "ghost ring" abstracted from one solid ring, began to form inside the other; that as that ring increased in materiality and weight, the other correspondingly diminished, till there was an impalpable imperceptible "ghost-ring" outside, which finally was absorbed in the duplicate, after which the interlinking was complete. As a practical matter of fact, there is strong evidence that such actions in connection with solid substances go on commonly at spirit circles; but if anybody asks how such duplications and recombinations are effected, a problem is presented which at present we will not attempt to solve.

In admitting the fact of the occasional duplication of solid objects, with complementary changes in weight between the two forms, it is plain that some of the almost recognised assumptions at the root of elementary physics and chemistry must be thrown aside. These new facts do not harmonise with the fundamental theory of the infinitely rigid and solid atoms of Dalton, nor with the vortex atoms or *wirbelbewegung* theory of Helmholtz; they point rather to the conclusion either that the conventional atom is formed by an underlying infinity of unknown phenomena, or that in some such theory as that of Bishop Berkeley the solution of some of the problems connected with the physical universe will

be found, to the complete overthrow of the scientific Materialist.

Whatever the explanation may be, the fact of the occasional duplication of form, not only of particular human beings, but of solid objects near them, is gradually making itself clear to many observers. This fact is altogether opposed to the experience of those who are experimentally acquainted with molecular physics, and with the nature of chemical reactions, which physical phenomena would consequently seem to be but of a surface nature, governed by underlying psychic laws, of which at present we are almost entirely ignorant, although they are unexpectedly potent in their observed effects.

## THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MR. THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.\*

BY S. B. BRITTAN.

THE wonderful gift of improvisation in which Mr. Harris so far excels the unaided powers and normal operations of the human mind, that he may, perhaps, be destined to stand alone in the literary annals of our time, is by no means the only evidence that may be adduced to prove that he is a medium of communication between the spiritual and natural spheres. It may not be uninteresting, or out of place in this connection, briefly to enumerate some of the phases of his mediumship, and, as a further illustration of his powers, to refer to several well authenticated examples. The remarkable spiritual clairvoyance which Mr. Harris often exhibits does not depend on the influence of mundane conditions or agents; it is induced by invisible beings, who lift the veil from the inner sense, and thus reveal scenes of the immortal life. In like manner, if we are not mistaken, the power of thought-reading is developed, or the faculty of perceiving ideas existing in the internals of the human mind. Occasionally Mr. Harris has been employed by spirits in the transmission of a healing power; but the illustrations of this phase of his mediumship are not numerous. At times he appears to be so far disconnected from the body that he can travel in spirit with great rapidity, visit distant places, and have an accurate perception of remote objects and events. It is also alleged that when spirits enter his sphere they become visible to others; that persons of refined habits and acute sensation both see and hear them; that the spirits are able to cause atmospheric undulations, and to produce the most delicate chemical combinations and sensational impressions. These operations of the spirits are made manifest to the outer senses of men by distinct vibrations, concussions, vocal and instrumental music, and also by the diffusion of aromas through the natural atmosphere. The phenomenon last mentioned occurs less frequently than many others, but intrinsically it is no more improbable, since all the simple elements of which the aromas consist are everywhere diffused in the earth and atmosphere, and it needs but the subtle chemistry of the spirits to so combine them as to render their presence manifest to the senses. Such are some of the more important phases of mediumship, as developed in the experience of Mr. Harris, which I propose to further illustrate by particular examples.

In December, 1852, Mrs. C. called upon Mr. Harris, in the hope of obtaining some evidence of immortality which might afford her the consolation she needed in a season of deep affliction. Her husband had departed this life, and her spirit yearned for the assurance that life was renewed and love immortal beyond the grave. Mr. Harris knew nothing of her history, and had no external perception of the object of her visit; but, becoming entranced in her presence, all was revealed to him. He informed the lady that her husband was an officer in the United States Army,

\* From the preface to Mr. Thomas Lake Harris' "Lyric of the Golden Age."

described his mental and physical peculiarities, his dress, a scar on his face, and said that he carried a repeater watch, and was in the frequent habit of applying it to his ear and striking the hour. The father of Mrs. C., an eminent divine, was also described on the same occasion, and the lady declared that the delineations were in every essential particular true to nature and the facts.

During the same month another interesting illustration of the author's mediumship occurred. The name of the individual and his place of residence are suppressed for reasons which will be obvious to the reader. A professional gentleman at the South was invited to hear Mr. Harris lecture on Spiritualism, but declined, having no faith in the alleged manifestations from spirits. On being requested to make a personal visit to Mr. Harris he consented, at the same time affirming that no spirit could reveal the facts in the life of the person that purported to communicate, in such a manner as to insure identification, as all the phenomena were mere psychological hallucinations, which he himself could produce at pleasure. This gentleman was accordingly introduced to Mr. Harris, and after a brief interview, the latter—being under the mesmeric influence of some spirit—retired to his interior plane of observation. The visitor was informed that the spirit of a young female attended him as a guardian. Her personal appearance, costume, and other things connected with the life on earth, were described; the relation which had previously existed between the gentleman and his spirit-guardian was intimated; the nature of her life and the circumstances of her death were referred to; the spirit also gave him an impressive communication, indicating her condition in the spirit-world, the habits of her earthly friend, and concluded by admonishing him to reform. At the close of this interview the gentleman went away, but not long after called on Mr. Harris again, and related the story of the life and death of the young girl whose spirit had so unexpectedly addressed him, affirming, at the same time, that he was fully satisfied of the truth of Spiritualism from the astonishing accuracy of the disclosures through Mr. Harris. The gentleman also expressed his conviction that the medium could not have derived his impressions by a psychological process from his own mind, and that this was rendered evident to him from the statement of *an important fact* respecting the spirit which, until that hour, was neither known nor conceived of by himself. Since the first interview, a personal investigation had fully established in his mind the truth of the statement.

While in New Orleans, in February, 1852, our friend the author was requested to officiate in his ministerial capacity at the funeral of Augustus Wang. After promising to comply with the request, he was subjected to a powerful spiritual influence, and impressed to say that the spirit still preserved its connection with the body; that Mr. Wang had a partial consciousness of what was going on, but that he would be released from his mortal restraints in about thirty-six hours. These statements were communicated to the family, and the body was thereupon taken from the coffin and placed in bed, after which faint but distinct signs of life were perceptible. Mr. Harris directed a lady to take Mr. Wang by the hand, and tell him that T. L. Harris was conscious of his situation, and would see that he was not buried alive. The lady did so, whereupon Mr. Wang *distinctly pressed her hand*. He remained in that state, without undergoing any apparent change, from that morning until the afternoon of the next day, when spirits announced that he had left the body, and marks of decomposition ensued.

Several facts in our author's experience seem to warrant the inference that the spirit occasionally retires from the sphere of its outward relations, and is so far separated from the body that the animal functions are temporarily suspended, while the immortal entity is free to roam abroad through space. An experience of this kind occurred during the winter of 1852. Mr. Harris was one day conversing with an eminent lawyer in New Orleans when he suddenly fell into a lethargy so profound that he was motionless, insensible, and apparently lifeless. He remained in this condition about twenty minutes. On returning, he stated that he appeared to himself—as a spirit—to have gone in person to a place at the North, where he had previously resided, and

to have ascertained the contents of a letter which had reached the Post-office in that place by the mail of that day. Mr. Harris mentioned the date of the letter, stated that it had been written by a gentleman in Griffin, Ga., under the erroneous impression that he was still at the North, and that it contained a request to take Griffin in his way, and to deliver a course of lectures in that place, should he visit the South during the winter. Mr. Harris was so well satisfied that the invitation thus spiritually received had really emanated from citizens of Griffin, that without hesitation he resolved to comply with the request, and accordingly went to that place. The Rev. A. Buckner testifies that Mr. Harris, on his arrival at Griffin, stated that he had received their invitation, also the singular manner in which their wishes were made known to him. His impressions were found to agree with the facts, precisely such a letter having been written and sent in the wrong direction.

The friends of Mr. Harris relate a still more striking fact of a similar kind. Early in the month of June, 1853, while the medium was in Western Virginia, he passed into the same condition, and remained for several hours. When his external consciousness was restored, he said that he had visited New Orleans, accompanied by a spirit-guide. After seeing his friends in that city, he was requested by the spirit to go with him to a strange place. He complied, and after travelling a short distance found himself on a level road, bordered on either side by swampy ground covered with shrubbery. At the right there was a small canal, and a building with a tall chimney. The guide called his attention to these objects, and bade him recollect what he had seen, saying, emphatically, "*Remember there are the water-works.*" He travelled on about three miles when he approached the entrance to an extensive cemetery. The massive gateway was in the Egyptian style of architecture, and apparently constructed of granite blocks. He was requested to pause, and stand upon one of the piers; he did so, and the guide then made the following communication:—

"The yellow fever is about to prevail in this city, and from ten to fifteen thousand persons will be deposited, during the summer and autumn, in these grounds. The bodies will be buried so carelessly, and the coffins will be covered so sparsely with earth, that the ground will crack open by the heat of the summer sun, and make visible that which is below."

In the spring of 1854 Mr. Harris visited New Orleans in person. While in that city, he on one occasion mentioned to a circle of friends the occurrence just related, and observed that he would have supposed that his former visit was not imaginary but *real*, had he not known that they had no waterworks, and been informed that the entrance to the cemetery was made of wood instead of granite. On the afternoon of the same day, Mr. Harris was invited to visit the cemetery in company with a friend. He soon found himself on the identical avenue he had formerly traversed in spirit with his angelic guide. He saw the same building he had been told to remember as the waterworks, and his friend informed him that it was used *in draining the city*. Pursuing the same road three miles further, he arrived at the cemetery, and found that the principal entrance was constructed after the Egyptian order, and corresponded in appearance to his vision. It is only necessary to add that the victims of the pestilence of 1853 were buried so densely, and so near to the surface, in portions of that enclosure, that the remains were here and there visible through small fissures of the earth.

In the summer of 1853, Mr. Harris, in company with two other gentlemen, whose names are in the writer's possession, was induced to visit an unsettled and mountainous region in the northern part of the Empire State, for the purpose of trout-fishing. They were obliged to camp out in the woods over night, during which the whole party was exposed to a heavy rain. On the following morning, in attempting to retrace their steps, they were lost in a wide and trackless forest. After wandering until they were quite exhausted, one of the number proposed to ask if their guardian angels

\* This singular experience occurred before publicity was given to the fact—through outward channels accessible to the medium—that the terrible epidemic of 1853 was approaching, and which resulted in the death of more than ten thousand persons.

could direct them out of the forest. In a few moments the right arm of Mr. Harris began to oscillate like the needle of a compass, and soon became rigidly fixed in one direction. They were then informed by the spirit-friends of the medium that his arm was controlled by their agency, and that, by pursuing the course thus indicated, they would soon reach the point of destination. This instruction from the invisible guides was implicitly followed, and in as straight a line as could be drawn they were conducted to the very place they had most desired to find.

In January, 1854, while Mr. Harris was in New Orleans, he was one day conversing with a Mr. Robbins—an entire stranger—when he was suddenly entranced, and proceeded to introduce and identify several of Mr. Robbins's departed relatives. Among the number was a distinguished soldier, who was killed in the attack on Quebec; his military costume, and the distinguishing traits of character were described; several of the more interesting facts of his private history were mentioned, and the circumstances of his death disclosed; he was in the front rank of the assailants, and fell by a cannon shot. These statements were confirmed by Mr. Robbins, in whose mind they were sacred recollections.

On the same day the spirits produced an unusual phenomenon in the presence of Mr. Harris, with the recital of which we must conclude these evidences of his mediumship. The phenomenon to which I refer consisted in projecting, through the mediatorial sphere of Mr. Harris, the essential properties or essences of various spices and aromatic gums—camphor being most apparent—into the external atmosphere, so that, first the spacious room where Mr. Robbins and the medium were sitting, and finally every room in the house (a large three-storey building), was filled with aromas. On examination it was found that no camphor or other substances capable of diffusing an odour were in the house. It was said that this manifestation was given by an Israelite who had been for several centuries in the spirit-world, and whose employment on earth had been that of a dealer in *spices*, silks, and precious stones.

#### THE RING TEST.

BY CHRISTIAN REIMERS.

IN anticipation of a detailed report from Herr Gillis himself, after his return to St. Petersburg, I give an outline of a succession of splendid results, culminating in a demonstration which forms an "event" in the development of our science.

A few weeks ago I received a letter from Herr Gillis, then in Paris, requesting me, on the recommendation of Professor Zöllner, of Leipzig, and Herr Wiese, of Wiesbaden, to aid him in the further investigation of Spiritualistic phenomena, some of which he already accepted as established facts, after several sittings with Dr. Slade at Professor Zöllner's. If these names alone had not inspired me to do all in my power, the spirit of the letter of Mr. Gillis laid the foundation of my confidence in his love of truth as his only motive. My hope for marked results in a given time was somewhat shaken when I learned that my friend desired a special phenomenon, and that one the interlinking of two solid unbroken rings of different materials, to form permanent and portable proof of the "new force." Vain attempts of mine had been made for years in this direction in many powerful circles. I once had for months two rings cut out of different pieces of printed paper on my *séance* table. I urged Mr. Gillis to give up all hope, as the time for such immense tests seemed not ripe. To my surprise Herr Gillis informed me that an analogous result had already been obtained through Dr. Slade's mediumship.

On Thursday, the 18th July, we went to Mr. Williams, at his semi-public evening *séance*, where the fine manifestations satisfied him of good results of some kind, even if the desired one should not be granted; and his cheerful resignation pleased me much, because mental conditions are such at *séances*, that eager and concentrated expectation towards one end has a deterrent effect. A sitting at Mr. and Mrs. Herne's the next day was likewise highly interesting, and acquaintance made with "James Lombard." Both mediums, Mr. Williams and Mr. Herne (with Mrs. Herne), were at once

engaged for five private sittings, one every day, but the difficulty of finding suitable hours was readily met by the mediums agreeing to sit together. The first of the *séances* came off on Monday last week. I was present on all occasions except one, when Herr Gillis was quite alone with Mr. and Mrs. Herne, and obtained tremendous tests, surpassing all he had had before. At lunch in his hotel (the Royal Hotel, Blackfriars), where he took the mediums, a roll of paper was thrown at his feet from his *locked* portmanteau in his locked bed-room, and this was but one among other strong items.

On the Monday Herr Gillis brought to our *séance* a number of small rings of ivory, wood, and also of paper, and a piece of leather with strips cut within its margin, to receive knots like those already given to Professor Zöllner in a common cord with sealed ends. "Peter" made us feel in the dark something like knots, but on examination they proved to be slip knots only, so strongly tied that it took some time to undo them, and then presented only a proof of clever finger-work, with a touch of suspicion that he had been playing "a lark," or did not clearly comprehend the nature of the original demand. Then the ends of a cord were sealed by Herr Gillis, and to his delight a knot was made in it, but so tightly drawn that it took a long time in plucking open to show a real knot, as obtained through Slade with Professor Zöllner, and in London through Eglinton. A repetition of this resulted in three true knots on the same cord, and seemed to revive the hopes of Herr Gillis, and to inspire ours, although Peter, in a tone of despair, seemed not to believe in the possibility of his interlinking the rings. Beautiful materialisations of spirits, and other marvels, now and then diverted us. After vainly searching for my umbrella in Mr. Herne's room, it suddenly dropped to my feet, Mr. Herne putting his finger to his mouth and crying: "It hurt me!" Herr Gillis felt something pushed gently into his inside breast pocket, and when a light was struck he discovered his note-book, which he positively declared to have left in his locked portmanteau at his hotel. We were not sitting for these phenomena, and the spirits were evidently keeping their thread of action in hand themselves, doing all things in their own way. It struck me, as I know not the nature of their intelligence, that Peter might not have perfectly understood the word "interlinking" in relation to our request about the rings, for once he gave us a paper ring cut in two in a remarkable way, and spirally, all done in the dark—a wonderful performance in itself. So I advised Herr Gillis to *really interlink* two paper rings, by cutting open one and pasting its ends together, after threading it on the other, to show Peter by ocular demonstration "the look of the thing." "Oh! I see what you mean!" Peter said, with his peculiarly melancholy tone of doubt. "Can't be done!" he sadly continued. But the other spirits encouraged us, although they said that it might not be accomplished this time. Again Herr Gillis declared himself perfectly satisfied with what he had already obtained, and kept up the harmony by the kindest remarks to the spirits and attention to the mediums, the only way to get the best results.

Herr Gillis next invited the mediums to a friendly supper in his room. Mr. and Mrs. Herne could not come, so Mrs. and Mr. Williams and myself were the only guests, besides the spirit "Peter," who partook of some champagne to wash down the piece of fowl handed to him under the table, both the liquid and the solid substances *being dematerialised only*, as he explained on being asked how he managed to cause them to disappear. Other remarkable facts which occurred the same evening I pass by, and come to last Friday morning's sitting, when Mr. Rita joined the already strong force of mediums, after having delighted us with a splendid *séance* the previous evening. On this occasion, after giving manifestations which greatly pleased Herr Gillis, John King wound up with a fine slate-writing test under absolute conditions. Herr Gillis had his hands on the double slate, and we all plainly heard the writing produced, which runs thus:—"My dear friends,—We have done our best for you. We will still try to do more to-morrow. For you, friend Reimers, there is good time coming. God bless you all.—JOHN KING."

In the course of this *séance* I asked Peter why the test was so difficult. He replied: "If two bodies *have* thus to be

interlinked, one should be big and strong to resist the action of the power."

On Saturday last we had the farewell sitting, and all the four mediums seemed happy. The table was covered with refreshments, and seemed to claim a share in the last and crowning success. After several toasts, I expressed our thanks to John King, and my hope that all would now give him the lead in further proceedings. We went into the dark room, and no sooner was the light out than a perfect uproar ensued, and hammering and other noises began, impossible to describe. After John King ordered a light, we found the greater number of the wooden rings smashed like nutshells. This seemed to me a proof of the presence of great physical force. The deafening tumult contrasted with our own states of mind, which were cool and serious. After resuming our seats, we did not expect much after the sight of the smashed rings. Peter or Charlie invited my attention to two rings, asking me to feel them interlinked, which I did; so also did Herr Gillis. "It won't keep," Peter said, sadly, and he withdrew when we considered victory achieved. Again a hammering ensued, like a real carpenter's shop, and Peter exclaimed, "There! There! There! Reimers! take hold of the ring! Mr. Gillis! hold it too! Don't let go! Stick to it!"—and to be sure no power in the world would have forced our hands from this couple of rings. All the spirit voices were a-going until the signal for a light came, and there we had in our possession the two rings united. The effect was impressive alike to mediums and investigators.

After having on the road exhibited the new wonder to several friends, we went to a photographer to have a truthful picture secured of the strange phenomenon of a wooden and an ivory ring, each in one piece, interlinked, and forming a stone which the engine of science must either crack or itself leave the rails. Two rings, one of which could be cast, would be nothing; but before our rings either the charge of trickery must break down, or the brain insisting on trickery. Who was the medium? None; but all united, perhaps the whole circle; and with pleasure all we witnesses will interlink Dr. Slade's name also with this success, for he has obtained something of the same kind. With a few more such results, many hostile elements may be harmonised, and science and religion may be interlinked, to be separated only by the destruction of the one or the other.

#### MESMERIC HEALING.

IN addition to the certificates given last week, we publish the following letters addressed to Mr. Omerin, of 5, Northumberland-street, Strand, London, and handed by him to us for publication:—

British Museum, 20th October, 1877.

MY DEAR SIR,—After the many cures which you have effected, you will not be surprised that I should assure you of the good effect of your manipulations upon my eyes.

The result is certainly remarkable.

Why do you not use your power professionally? Surely you might do so without fear of being thought a charlatan.

You can point to so many extraordinary results, that your proceedings would soon ensure respect even among the superstitious.—Yours very truly,

R. H. CAUNTER.

The following letter is from a gentleman holding a position in the City, who, however, does not wish his name published, although he is anxious to bear testimony to the cure effected. He is known to the President of the British National Association of Spiritualists:—

20th May, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—I have great pleasure in bearing testimony to a cure of an attack of gout last winter performed by your hands. I had for some days been suffering; my left knee was swollen and highly inflamed, so much so that it could not be bent without agony. Indeed, so helpless was I, that I could not get out of bed without assistance. You came, and for about an hour made passes over the parts affected, and brought immediate relief. The pain rapidly subsided; and in the evening of the same day I was able, to the astonishment of my family, to walk down stairs to dinner.—I am, dear sir, yours truly,

J. B. W.

Royal Adelaide Gallery, Adelaide-street, Strand, 30th May, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—As you desire that I should state all that occurred in respect to my illness and cure, I give the following account:—

I was suffering the most acute rheumatic pain in the left leg in such a manner as to be unable to move, and was quite in despair. You

passed your hands for fifteen minutes over my leg, and the pain entirely disappeared. I rose full of joy, found myself able to walk without any difficulty, and said to you, "Have you magic in your hands?"

You repeated the operation on the following day to complete the cure, since which time until now (nineteen months) not the least rheumatic pain has returned.

Deeply grateful to you, I have much pleasure in giving you this testimony, and remain, dear sir, yours respectfully,

BENEDETTI GIACINTO.

18th May, 1877.

SIR,—In complying with your request, I beg to state that, when suffering from very severe rheumatic pain in my legs, I asked you the favour of treating me. You kindly called upon me, and by passing your hands several times over the affected parts, within a few minutes the pain was gone, and I was able to walk very well.

After a second operation the pain left me entirely, and since then I have felt quite cured.

I take this opportunity of thanking you very much for your most efficacious treatment.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

A. ROSSETTI, *Civil Engineer.*

#### SPONTANEOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA.

BY ELIZA BOUCHER.

THE next cases of the above phenomena which I shall bring before the notice of the readers of *The Spiritualist* help to show:—1st. How far more widely the faculty of clairvoyance is distributed than is popularly imagined. 2nd. How extremely erratic and uncertain are its manifestations. 3rd. That it does not always require the stimulus of any great mental excitement to call it into action. The following was told me by a respectable woman of Torquay. I am not certain whether the impression was given in her sleeping or waking moments, but she was strongly possessed with the idea that her husband had met with an accident, and would be brought home in a blue fly. So great was her moral certainty of the truth of her vision, that on looking from the window, and seeing a vehicle of that description approaching she immediately prepared for the reception of the injured man, who, in a few minutes, was brought to her door in the very vehicle she had seen in her clairvoyant vision.

The following was given me by the daughter of the seeress, and took place in Wiltshire. The subject of this strange experience was at the time of its occurrence prostrate with typhoid fever, and whilst in that state two of her children died of the same fell disease; though no one mentioned the distressing circumstance to her, she was perfectly aware of it. But stranger still are the following facts:—The invalid before her illness had shown great sympathy to a poor neighbour who had been unkindly treated by her own relatives. During the attack of typhoid, Mrs. E— (as we will call her) had a frightful vision of her friend going over walls and "flinging down the stones as she went." She cried out to her attendants, "Save her! Save her! She'll be drowned!" In this case again the awful vision was realised. Her poor friend committed suicide by drowning, and it was found that to gain access to the piece of water where her rash purpose was accomplished, she had actually gone over some low garden walls, where the loose stones had been thrown down by her in her dark passage to a self-chosen watery grave. I know the daughter well, and she has often heard her mother speak of these, to her, inexplicable phenomena.

In this case we may imagine that *rapport* between the brains, and the strong mental excitement attendant on disease, might have quickened this wonderful faculty into intense activity; but the following little incident which happened to a near relative of mine proves that these two conditions are not always necessary to this end.

My relative dreamt one night that a gossip of the neighbourhood called and announced (taking his usual liberties with the Queen's English) that a Mrs. H—, a person with whom the dreamer had scarcely even a passing acquaintance, had presented her husband with "two twins." After breakfast, a servant on return from the town announced, as the latest piece of country news, that Mrs. H— had actually given birth to twins, verifying the dream in detail by using the very words "two twins," which my relative so distinctly remembered in her vision of the night.

Albion Villa, Fremantle-square, Bristol.

"THERE IS SOMETHING IN IT."

BY F. CLAVAIROZ, CONSUL-GENERAL OF FRANCE.

AN article in the July number of *La Religion Laïque* closes with these significant words: "Since learned men, physicians, and the Protestant clergy give so much zealous study to Spiritualism, it is probably because they see in it the beginning of something better."

Yes, certainly there is something in it, and that something, which is about to overrun the world, presents in its phenomena, in its slow progress, and in its aims, a striking analogy to the beginnings of Christianity.

The teaching of Jesus contained no dogmas, neither does that of Spiritualism.

Christianity came at a time when the religious beliefs of Paganism were breaking up all over the world; the mass of the people were casting them aside through indifference, and the learned and thoughtful through the strength of their reason.

Spiritualism comes at a time when Catholicism has enveloped itself in the winding-sheet of the Syllabus; whilst Protestantism, divided into an infinite number of sects, is leading to an utter disunion of thought; when the Mahometans are drinking wine and making constitutions—two things forbidden by the Koran; and even the Jews themselves have their free-thinkers.

It is in the midst of this general confusion of old beliefs that Spiritualism first appears.

Christianity began by miracles; and if the miracles worked by Jesus were made the first steps of the Christian power, it is because the senses are like sentinels on guard, ready to rouse the sleeping intelligence. The best means of carrying conviction is by such involuntary testimony as can find an entrance into even the densest organism. The seal which is given to the records of fact produces surprise, emotion, and interest. Reflecting minds, under the impression of a fact thus demonstrated, feel the need of inquiry into its cause, and examination thus with one bound enters along the path which sense has opened to it, making the facts which have been recognised by an unconscious sensory perception pass within the domain of reason.

Intended to act upon the masses, it was necessary that the religion founded by Christ should give some material proof: it was for this reason, then, that it was built upon miracles. The progress of human knowledge varies but little in the elements at the heart of which it operates. Christianity works through its miracles, and Spiritualism is revealed by the aid of its phenomena, two parallel words given to describe the same facts; but the change in their signification gives us an accurate measure of the progress made by the spirit of man during eighteen hundred years.

A miracle is superior to natural law. The Divine Will governs, orders, and suppresses the latter at its pleasure. The phenomenon, on the contrary, obeys the law. It is only the result of a law as yet unknown or misunderstood. The experience of ages proves that this alone is possible. No one now believes in the suspension of a law of nature. All laws have their *raison d'être*, and it is the uninterrupted fulfilment of their function which constitutes the harmony of the universe.

The "something" of which I first spoke is then the seed of a new religion, or, rather, it is the return back through the last eighteen hundred years to the religion conceived by Christ—namely, a belief in God and in individual immortality; in the responsibility laid upon us by our deeds, and in the progression of the soul in wisdom, power, and love throughout eternity.

This, then, is what Spiritualism announces to the world; this is its mission, to strip off from the evangelical teaching all the material wrappings which have since the time of its birth encased it, so that it may act efficiently in our midst. No more creeds, no more mediation, no more ceremonies appealing only to the senses, but direct communion of the soul with God, leading to progression without end in the midst of acts of love.

This is a beautiful prospect, without doubt. But the careless world would never have been brought to look into the subject if matter had not been brought into the work. Thus one sees that everywhere furniture begins to move, and, even when loaded with enormous weights, rises in the air. Tables ran about wildly, without contact. Raps are heard on all sides, on the walls, the furniture, the floors. Then, after this first phase, which is exclusively material, intelligence begins to show itself. The raps are intelligently regulated; they take the character of personal communications, and the possibility of communion between the visible and the invisible worlds becomes a great novelty, upsetting all customary ideas, but opening a door to eternity. The soul no longer hesitates to cross the threshold, because it is attracted by the grand conceptions of God free from all anthropomorphism, and by visions of the gradual ascent of the human race, gravitating towards infinite perfection.

Then an interesting spectacle presents itself to the eyes of the attentive observer. For as fast as Spiritualism gains ground, so do the phenomena change in their character. There is progress as the phenomena spread. Little by little the mere material part gives place to the psychical, or the physical manifestations become impregnated with spirituality. The tables continue to give their proof of unknown laws at work, at the same time that the mediums receive inspiration mechanically or intuitively, the source being far beyond their own power or knowledge. Then by degrees arises a fresh development, calculated to popularise the movement; common men become healers and orators, and science begins to take into consideration the new facts, and to prove the truth of the strange phenomena. Known laws are overcome by others; solid bodies pass through other solid bodies. Things are brought from no one knows where, musical instruments are played without contact, direct writing is obtained inside closed and sealed slates, and finally the inhabitants of another world again take on a physical form, come amongst us for a moment, live again our material life, moving, speaking, drinking, and vanishing at last, to wear again

their fluidic bodies, and giving us thus, by their re-appearance, proof positive that after death they live and retain their individuality.

This is something, is it not? And the movement is progressing. To-day the belief in an invisible world is spreading over all parts of the globe; no other equally new creed has so many journals. No other has shown such a tendency to become popular. Never have principles more pure been proclaimed. Never has a call, more constant, more earnest, more harmonious been made. Never through the world has rung before so grand a cry of love.

Worn-out society, oscillating between the past and the future, tossed about like a ship without a pilot, not knowing on what to fix its hopes, shuddering at the sight of its hidden perils, destroying like a useless garment all that has hitherto made up its moral force, reduced to quiet itself by the intoxication of material pleasure—one would have thought that the "glad tidings" would have been received like the hope of new life. But it has not been so. Society leagued itself against the birth of this new faith.

Science again, for the most part, believes in nothing but mere force, and revolts against any demonstration of a first cause. It does not tremble about it, convinced that its silence is sufficient to stop the movement.

The world, composed chiefly of superficial people in love with their easy mode of life, without faith, and fearful of the trouble that research may give them, remains indifferent, or treats the matter with ridicule. The press—which initiates all our organisations, and which ought to have a conscience if it is to teach the truth—the press lacks courage to put on one side the verdict of learned men, and to doubt their expressions of irony, so is forced to treat the facts with sarcasm, or to keep an absolute silence, which shall be its shame in the future. It will be asked, by-and-by, how it could disregard facts so plain as those which I have cited. What! The press throughout every country in Europe; the press whose mission it is to spread that which is useful, and to assist the march of progress and discovery, has nothing but silence or disdainful words for a movement which has penetrated to the very heart of society. And the astonishment will be greater as we examine the moral and humanitarian side of this new truth.

All thinkers, economists, and politicians agree that our present society is passing through a great crisis. Man has lost his way, and travels blindly, hoping to stumble on the right road. Moral laws are like to physical laws. Unity reigns over all, and maintains its equilibrium in the midst of seeming disorder. The seed must perish in giving birth to the new plant. Decay everywhere precedes life. It is because we are journeying towards a higher stage that we see falling around us all that belongs to the past. There is fermentation going on; at the bottom there is future renovation; and the agitation causes an undue excitement of animal passions.

Catholicism wages its last battle, under the banner of temporal power, to the detriment of human liberty. In politics, might controls right. The most sacred engagements, the most solemn treaties, are put aside if they stand in the way of self-interest, suppressing the popular voice on all moral questions. In the world material pleasures, the need of making a great appearance, the sway of the passions, all menace the destruction of honour, chastity, and faithfulness. The outcasts, whose eyes are fascinated by the inequalities of wealth through which they suffer, begin to number their adherents and to unite. On the day when they have organised, and when the similitude of their interest has extinguished all national jealousies, this great crowd will rise, and all Europe will tremble.

But, behold, Spiritualism rises above all, bright with a glory from heaven, and cries:—

"Stay, my brothers! I am Love! Yes, the love of the resurrection; for the love which I preach shall reign upon the earth, and flourish during eternity. And in the home I would enforce parental authority, the chastity of the mother, the obedience of the child; for I preach the immortality of the soul, and personal responsibility for all acts. To those who suffer I advise resignation; for suffering leads to purification, and purification is recompense. To those who bewail the lost, heaven is opened, so that these may return to console the mourners. I overcome death, by the material proof of these apparitions. A double conquest, for the fear of death troubles their consciences, and the certainty that they shall live again makes devotees. To the incredulous, to all who seek, I furnish the elements of incontrovertible conviction. I open to science new fields of thought, and my inspiration enables her to reach them.

"I sit at the tribunal of the directors of the people, showing them the false work they have engaged in, in taking selfishness for their guide instead of solidarity. To the people ready to engage in a suicidal strife to revenge their sufferings or appease their hate, I cry unceasingly, 'You are brothers, and only form one family in the sight of God; your souls come from the same source and await the same end, for happiness on earth as in heaven is not in strife but in love, not in vengeance but in unity of heart and work.'"

This is what Spiritualism preaches. And this is what the world will be when its voice is heard. If humanity has felt an undeniable moral depression by abandoning the ideal of the gradual attainment of happiness, it will rise great and strong when it understands its error, and the idea of God shall again take its place in the thoughts of mankind; and the belief in the immortality of the soul, in personal responsibility, and the happiness that springs from universal solidarity shall shine in its turn upon the earth, and shall lead a step forward in the march of progress. This day will come, and will not tarry, and it behoves all Spiritualists to hasten its coming by working with ardour, holding in common their souls, their science, and their love.

Kreuz Kirche, par Neuwied, Prussia. July 26th, 1878.

CAN anybody furnish us with information in what books or periodicals (with their dates, titles, and places of publication) the spontaneous manifestations were recorded which happened in the family of Dr. Phelps in America about 1850?

## A PERMANENT "MIRACLE" FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATION.

A SOLID RING OF IVORY AND A SOLID RING OF WOOD INTERLINKED BY SPIRITS WITHOUT BREAKAGE.

THE PASSAGE OF MATTER THROUGH MATTER.

SOLID objects have not unfrequently been passed through other solid objects at *séances*, but the evidence of the fact has hitherto been limited to the weight of the testimony of the witnesses. One of the best of the well-authenticated cases occurred with the Hon. Alexandre Aksakof, of St. Petersburg, during his last visit to London to investigate spiritual phenomena. A thick welded iron ring, eight or nine inches in diameter, was "threaded" on his arm by spirits, while he held the hand of Mr. Williams, the medium. As this was done in the dark, he took off the ring when a light was struck; then by permission of the spirits grasped the hand of Mr. Williams again, tied the wrists of the joined hands together in a secure way with tape, then put out the light, and asked the spirits to thread the ring on his arm once more. This they did. M. Aksakof next took the ring off his arm in the light, and asked Mr. Williams if he might keep it; permission to retain the ring as evidence of its homogeneousness was given, and it was taken by M. Aksakof to St. Petersburg.

For some three or four years past various Spiritualists have occasionally taken solid rings, turned out of different kinds of wood, to *séances*, in the hope of getting them interlinked, because the accomplishment of such a feat being beyond the power of man, the rings themselves would be permanent evidence of the reality of the manifestation, and no error arising in human testimony could affect the result. But the manifestation was not obtained, and this raised the hypothesis whether it was not a matter of necessity that one of the substances used in the presentation of the phenomenon should be, like the human arm, a portion of a living organism.

But more recently, as published in the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, and *The Spiritualist*, Herr Zöllner, Professor of Astronomy at Leipzig University, obtained in broad daylight four knots upon an endless cord in the presence of Henry Slade, whose hands were in sight all the time. The knots were of such a nature that no mortal could have made them without having free ends of the cord to pass through the preparatory loops. The knots cannot now be untied without first cutting the cord. In this experiment solid matter was passed through solid matter, no portion of which belonged to a living organism.

Since then Professor Zöllner has obtained more remarkable results still, which, however, we are not at liberty to publish, in deference to his expressed desire that they shall first be made known in the second volume of his book now in the press.

But last Saturday a result which crowns all was obtained in London, a ring of solid natural ivory being linked by spirits into a ring of wood.

Mr. Julius Gillis, of Wassili Ostrow, 1st Line No. 36, St. Petersburg, having recently been convinced of the reality of spiritual phenomena by Henry Slade, has since been travelling in Europe to see all the additional manifestations he could. He recently came to London from Leipzig, where he had attended some of Professor Zöllner's *séances*, and he placed himself in communication with a well-known Spiritualist, Herr Christian Reimers, of 47, Mornington-road, N.W. Mr. Reimers then kindly gave time and attention, and introduced him to various mediums and their *séances*. Mr. Gillis brought some solid rings to the *séances* with him; one of them was of ivory, the others made in unbroken pieces of various woods, and he wanted any two of these interlinked. This feat was not accomplished at the earlier *séances*, although he witnessed other manifestations of a remarkable kind. But last Saturday morning, at a dark *séance* at which the four mediums—Mr. Williams, Mr. Rita, Mr. Herne, and Mrs. Herne, were present, in addition to the two investigators—Mr. Gillis and Herr Reimers, the ring of ivory, which Mr. Gillis had brought with him from the Continent, was linked into a ring of wood.

At 1.15 p.m., after the *séance* was over, the two witnesses brought the interlinked rings to Mr. Harrison at *The Spiritualist* office. Inspection in strong daylight failed to show

any trace of a joint, even as fine as a hair line, in either of the rings. The one ring was of finely polished natural ivory; the other a common wooden curtain ring, varnished, with the natural grain of the wood everywhere clearly visible. Mr. Gillis left the same afternoon for Leipzig with the rings, where the best thing which he could do with them would be to have a thin shaving taken off one side of each, all the way round, in the presence of all the Professors at the University, who could then submit to microscopic observation the two annular areas laid bare. No artificial joint could escape detection beneath such microscopic examination, and the continuity of the cellular fabric of both wood and ivory could be ocularly traced. But so far as critical observation without the aid of a microscope can give information, there is no doubt that the two solid rings have been interlinked.

When Mr. Gillis left *The Spiritualist* office, he sent a telegram to Professor Zöllner, of which the following is a translation:—

After getting in former sittings direct writing, and three knots like yours in an endless cord, I have just had my ivory ring interlinked in a wooden one. Julius Gillis from St. Petersburg. In the presence of the mediums Mr. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Herne, and Mr. Rita, with the additional presence of Mr. Christian Reimers.

This is the second great new scientific phenomenon observed this year, which ought to have been first published in *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, but which is missing from those pages in consequence of the neglect of public and scientific duty on the part of the Society in not investigating psychic phenomena, and in officially rejecting the paper once sent in to it by Mr. Crookes, containing some of the simpler and more elementary facts. The other great discovery of the year, missing from the pages of *Philosophical Transactions*, is that the body of an adult medium varies so in weight during strong physical manifestations that at times it amounts but to forty or fifty pounds, as indicated by automatic self-registering apparatus. Whatever theory anybody may apply to the phenomenon, the observed fact is of transcendent interest.

The circumstance is significant, and will long discredit English science, that when the rings were interlinked they were at once taken to the Professors at Leipzig, no representatives of any scientific body in London being now generally employed in the investigation of psychic phenomena.

Mr. Gillis and Herr Christian Reimers had the rings photographed, true size, before they were taken to Leipzig, and one of the prints can be seen at *The Spiritualist* Branch Office. Although the photographing is not of the worst quality, neither is it of the best, for at the top of the picture are faint line markings, due to the projecting edge of the "dipper" having caused the nitrate of silver solution to play in unequal streams against the collodion film when it was lowered into the bath.

The word "miracle" at the beginning of this article is not used in the sense that there is any infraction of law in the interlinked rings phenomenon. Natural laws, not yet understood, govern spiritual phenomena.

## A PRIVATE SEANCE.

LAST Sunday night a private *séance* took place at the residence of Miss Ottley, 41, Denbigh-street, Belgravia, London. Mr. Rita was the medium, and the guests present were seated round a table in the following order:—Mr. Rita, Mr. W. S. Inglefield, Miss Emmet, Mr. W. H. Harrison, Miss Laura Emmet, Mr. James Hope, Mr. G. Ottley, Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, Mr. G. Y. Robson, and Miss Ottley. Thus Mr. Rita was held by the hands all through the *séance* by Miss Ottley on the one side of him, and Mr. Inglefield on the other; the remaining sitters had their hands interlinked.

Under these conditions playing musical instruments flew about like bats in the locked and darkened drawing-room, occasionally touching every sitter present gently on the head in their flight. All present were also occasionally touched by materialised spirit hands. The bust of a living form robed in white was seen for a moment over the table by all present, as it illuminated itself with a flash of light



from something held in its hands. An accordion in the lap of Mr. Robson was taken thence at his request, and afterwards played upon triumphantly in mid air. A heavy arm-chair was floated over the heads of the sitters and deposited on the table. A very heavy ornamental steel fender was next placed with one of its ends in the lap of Mr. Robson, a disbelieving barrister, the other end projecting over the table at an angle of about forty-five degrees. Next a chair was placed horizontally on his shoulders, with his head between the rails and legs. The tongs and other fire-irons were placed on the table, and all these things were found in the position described when a light was struck. Mr. Rita was in a state of trance almost all through the *séance*, and his hands from first to last were never free.

Conjurers who impose upon the public by saying that their tricks are the same as spiritual manifestations, never go alone like this to a private house among responsible people, and permit their hands to be held from first to last.

#### SAVAGE MODES OF PRAYER.

THE Sioux Indians, abusing their Great Spirit for sending them storms, or the Kamschadals cursing Kutka for having created the mountains so high and the streams so rapid, expose a state of thought relating to the gods which is most difficult to reconcile with the savage's habitual dread of them, but which is too well authenticated to admit of doubt. Franklin saw a Cree hunter tie offerings (a cotton handkerchief, looking-glass, tin pin, some ribbon, and tobacco) to the value of twenty skins, round an image of the god Kepoochikan, at the same time praying to him in a rapid, monotonous tone to be propitious, explaining to him the value of his presents, and strongly cautioning him against ingratitude. If all the prayers and presents made to their god by the Tahitians to save their chiefs from dying proved in vain, his image was inexorably banished from the temple and destroyed. The Ostiaks of Siberia, if things went badly with them, would pull down from their place of honour in the hut, and in every way maltreat the idols they generally honoured so much; the idols whose mouths were always so diligently smeared with fish fat, and within whose reach a constant supply of snuff lay always ready. The Chinese are said to do the same by their household gods, if for a long time they are deaf to their prayers; and so do the Cinghalese, so that the practice is more than an impulsive manifestation of merely local feeling. That such feelings occasionally crop out in civilised Catholic countries is matter of more surprise; but it is an authentic historical fact that the good people of Castellbranco, in Portugal, were once so angry with St. Anthony for letting the Spaniards plunder their town, contrary to his agreement, that they broke many of his statues in pieces, and, taking the head off one they specially revered, substituted for it the head of St. Francis. Neapolitan fishermen are said to this day to throw their saints overboard if they do not help them in a storm; and, if occasion calls for it, the images of the Virgin or of St. Januarius, worn in Neapolitan caps, are in danger of being trodden under foot and destroyed. And once during a famine the latter saint received very clear intimation that unless corn came by a certain time he would forfeit his saintship. It is, perhaps, a refinement of thought when a present becomes an advisable accompaniment to a simple petition; but the principle of exchange once entered into, the relations between man and the supernatural lead logically from the offering of fruits and flowers to the sacrifice of animals and of men. Some Algonkin Indians, mistaking once a missionary for a god, and petitioning his mercy, begged him to let the earth yield them corn, the rivers fish, and to prevent sickness from slaying or hunger from tormenting them. Their request they backed with the offer of a pipe. The whole of the savage's philosophy of sacrifice is contained in this ridiculous incident. Prescott coming with some Indians to a lake they were to cross, saw his companions light their pipes and smoke by way of invoking the winds to be calm. And the Hurons offered a similar prayer with tobacco to a local god, saying, "Oki, thou who livest on this spot, we offer thee tobacco. Help us, save us from shipwreck. Defend us from our enemies. Give us good trade, and bring us safe back to our villages." In the island of Tanna, the village priest, addressing the spirits of departed chiefs (thought to preside over the growth of yams and fruits), after the first-fruits of vegetation had been deposited on a stone, on the branch of a tree, or on a rude altar of sticks, would pray, "Compassionate father, here is some food; eat it, be kind to us on account of it." In Fiji, when the priests and leading men assembled to discuss public affairs in the yaquona, or kava circle, the chief herald, as the water was poured into the kava, after naming the gods for whom the libation was prepared, would say, "Be gracious, ye lords, the gods, that the rain may cease, and the sun shine forth;" and again, when the potion was ready, "Let the gods be of a gracious mind, and send a wind from the east."—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

MARRIAGE.—At St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle, by special license, on the 18th inst., by the Rev. W. Bernard East, assisted by the Rev. Rowland East, James Barr Mellon, to Annie, second daughter of the late Mark Fairlamb, both of Newcastle.

Just before going to press, a communication has reached us from the Rev. John Tyorman, one of the chief pioneers of Spiritualism in Australia, who has reached the United States on a lecturing tour, and whose present address is 319, Kearney-street, San Francisco, California.

#### SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS DESCRIBED IN ICELANDIC SAGAS.

BY BARON C. DIRCKINCK-HOLMFELD.

THE tender germs of experimental Spiritualism have been developed since 1848 to world-wide importance in a variety of forms. It has now a realm of its own, the boundaries of which are still unexplored, science having in only a few instances tried to form settlements on the new territory. Spiritualists nevertheless know that the ruling power, the spiritual world, has from time immemorial exercised sovereign sway in the natural world, manifesting itself to the senses by facts which appear miraculous and supernatural, namely, by visions and apparitions. It has also manifested itself to the intelligence of man by communications, revelations, oracles, warnings, and prophecies as evidence of a superior order and power. Deeper reflection shows that as we mortals live in an external world of effects, the spiritual world is a corresponding and internal world of causes; and that as the external world, of which we naturally are conscious, is made perceptible to one of our senses by a natural, sensuous light, the spiritual world can only be made perceptible by a corresponding spiritual light, as far as the internal organisation of the rational man is receptive of the same, which cannot be until a corresponding eye, or spiritual organ of sight is formed and developed. The condition of this development is that the rational mind opens itself to ideas of spiritual truth, and makes them the leading principles in the natural sphere or plane of life. This rational way of being made aware of the reality of the spiritual world by internal illustration and consequent elevation being so very rare now-a-days, auxiliary means are provided for levelling the road; the orderly means being ineffective, extraordinary means are provided, working on the same natural plane on which sensuous light prevails, to assist the rational mind in its aspiration for spiritual elevation. Thus we see agencies at work whose effects on the natural plane cannot be explained by natural causes, and they act as impartial witnesses to the supernatural. Whether these witnesses speak in the form of inexplicable, sensible facts, such as apparitions, visions, materialisations, or speak to the intellect as in communications, warnings, prophecies, or revelations, made in states of clairvoyance or trance control, they are mainly the consequences of a supreme dispensation for the purpose of ultimately restoring the receptivity to spiritual light. And such they have shown themselves even in the remotest periods of history.

History tells, and reflection explains, how predominant selfishness and lust of power gave the rational-spiritual tendency a false direction, turning faith into superstition, and using corrupted forms of truth and religion to further purposes of clerical dominion, thus making ecclesiasticism unreasonable and despicable, and establishing doubt, infidelity, and scorn of all religion and Spiritualism. Natural theology tried in vain to sever itself from absurdity by reducing corrupted dogmas to rational views. In making spiritual faith natural, science became sceptical, and materialism or naturalism was doctrinally spread among all classes of mankind. The appeals to spiritual truth itself, and the attempts to restore its evidence and its authority being inefficient, the question arises how external facts and manifestations came, as it were, to the rescue of beleaguered humanity, but the interesting problem would here be out of place. I only venture to observe that, in the midst of the consummated extinction of spiritual faith in the last century, men of considerable intellect and learning like Johnson and Kant, did not hesitate to admit that spiritual manifestations were so strongly attested through all periods of history that their reality could not be denied. Many sceptical thinkers taught that spiritual doctrines, particularly those of faith in a Supreme Being and in the immortality of man, were so universally rooted in the consciousness of mankind in all its branches, that realities must be at the bottom of them. When now, in spite of prevailing unbelief, modern Spiritualism, with its overwhelming abundance of facts, gives indubitable testimony against naturalism, the archives of the past have to be ransacked to enable us to compare the phenomena of all countries and periods with what now is going on. The interesting collection of reports

made by the Morses, Dale Owens, Wm. Howitts, and *The Spiritual Magazine* before its last stage of decrepitude, ought to be completed; and as a rich mine, yet unexplored, is found in the Norrain Sagas, as also in Snorra-Sturleson, and Saxo, the Dane. I wish, by quoting from the *Antiquitates Americane* (published in 1837 by C. C. Rafor, the learned secretary of the Society of Norrain Antiquities) two reports of the mediumship of Gudrid and her companions, to give an opportunity for some one of the more learned successors of Rafor, to furnish us with an exhaustive account of what the Norrain records contain about such manifestations.

In the *Antiquitates Americane* (p. 4,833) we are told—Thorstein Eirikson (together with Gudrid, a widow he recently had married) went with twenty-five companions from Iceland to Vinland, the northern part of the United States, in search of the body of his brother Thorvald, who had lost his life there. His voyage and search were unsuccessful, and he was obliged to seek shelter in Greenland, which was then colonised from Iceland and Norway. After having found quarters for his crew, he and his wife were invited by Thorstein Svarta to pass the winter with him, and he accepted this offer of hospitality. Gardi, a heathen who had declined to accept Christianity (which in the year 1000 had been introduced into Iceland by the free consent of the whole population), fell ill, and his disease caused a foul infection to spread among Thorstein's crew. Grimhild, the wife of Thorstein Svarta, the host, died, and lastly Thorstein Eirikson himself. Grimhild, after her demise, was seen lifting herself on her elbows and fumbling with her feet as if to find her shoes. When she was lifted on to the bier all the wooden pillars in the room shook, and were cracking with a great noise. When Thorstein Eirikson afterwards succumbed, his widow, in her grief, was sitting on a stool close to the bed. Thorstein Svarta asked her to come and sit with him on his bench, and he tried to console her in her deep affliction, when, lo! the corpse of Eirikson was seen rising from the couch, asking thrice, "Where is Gudrid?" She asked her host whether she should go and speak to her deceased husband. Advising her not to do so he stepped himself over the floor, took his seat on the stool before the couch and asked the corpse: "What do you wish, namesake?" After some time the deceased Thorstein replied: "I wish to tell Gudrid her fate to soothe her grief after my demise, because now I have reached a good place for repose. I have to tell thee, Gudrid, that thou hast to marry a man in Iceland; you will live a long life together and have numerous children, energetic, bright, and eminent, sweet and of good flavour. You will now (she and Thorstein Svarta) sail from Greenland to Norway, and thence to Iceland, where thou art to settle and remain a long while, outliving thy husband. Then thou wilt go abroad in the South, to Rome, and return to thy homestead in Iceland, build a church there, and take the veil until thy death." Thorstein Eirikson then sank backwards and was carried on his bier to his ship. There is, of course, no other evidence of the truth of such a manifestation and communication after death occurring more than 800 years ago, than the exactitude inherent in traditions among the Icelanders. That Gudrid herself was a strong medium, in the sense of modern Spiritualism, is probable, and is confirmed by another version of what happened in connection with her at the mansion of Thorstein Svarta, of Lysefjord, related in the Thorfin Karlsefore's Saga, in the same *Antiquitates Americane* (p. 125). Thorstein Eirikson, with his wife, who is called promiscuously Gudrid and Thurid, soon after his marriage paid Thorstein, of Lysefjord, a visit. Many people thereabout had died that winter from an epidemic caused by the aforementioned disease. Gudrid and her host's wife (there called Sigrid) had walked to the other end of the yard. On going back to the mansion Gudrid heard Sigrid shrieking, and said, "We have acted imprudently. Let us make haste to avoid catching a cold. Let us try to get back to the house as quickly as possible." Sigrid replied, "It is not so easy to get back to the house. I see standing before the entrance a host of those who recently have died. Thy husband Thorstein is there among them, and I myself too. It is a dreadful sight." When the crowd had vanished she continued, "Now we may go in, Gudrid; I don't see any more of the men." Thorstein,

whom she had seen standing among them with a whip to dispel them, had disappeared, so they went in. Sigrid died before the next morning. In the evening of that day, when Thorstein had returned from inspecting the fishing, he called for his namesake, telling him that there were disturbances in the house. The deceased housewife was trying to rise from the couch and to shelter herself under his cloak. She had risen from her bed when he came in, so he had to firmly grasp her hands, and he laid the house-axe upon her chest. The next evening Thorstein Eirikson died, and Thorstein, the host, persuaded Gudrid to go to rest. He offered to sit up during the night watching the corpse. She followed his advice. In the middle of the night Thorstein Eirikson arose, saying that he wanted Gudrid to be called that he might speak to her, adding, "God wills that this hour is allowed me for reparation." Thorstein Svarta, the host, went to awake Gudrid, telling her her husband's words, and admonishing her to pray to God for assistance. "He wants thee, and thou must thyself decide what to do. I cannot advise thee either the one way or the other." She answered, "This may be to the purpose of something, which afterwards may be worth recollection. It is a wonderful thing. I trust in the guardianship of God. I feel confident in His mercy, and I am resolved to meet Thorstein's call, and to learn what he wants to communicate. If harm is to come out of it, I am unable to avoid it. I wish he would not proceed any further, and I presume his course must be of importance to him." She then went to meet her deceased husband, and it appeared to her that he was shedding tears. Then he spoke to her in a subdued tone, so that she alone could hear him, but afterwards he spoke so that all who were present could hear. He said: "All will enjoy a life of bliss who are true in their faith, and thence derive assistance and mercy. In this many are failing. It is a bad custom in Greenland, since it has been so christened, to bury the dead in unconsecrated ground, without the singing of hymns. I wish, together with my companions who died here, to be brought to a Christian church; but Gardi (the heathen who was thought to be the cause of the infectious malady) ought to be burnt on a funeral pile as soon as possible, as it was through him all the spectres have manifested themselves this winter." Then he predicted to Gudrid all that would happen her, foretelling a remarkable career. He forewarned her not to marry a man from Greenland, and exhorted her to give a part of her property to the Church, and a part to the poor. After this speech he fell back again. His corpse, like those of his companions, was removed to Eiriksfjord Church, and buried amid the singing of the priests. Eirik received Gudrid as his foster-daughter, and managed all her affairs, soon after which Thorbiörn died and left her all his property. This version does not differ essentially from the former. It appears though to have gone through clerical hands in order to make it subservient to the interests of the Romish Church. Such colouring of all reports was then habitual. A mere superstitious fiction among such cool, close, and clever observers as the old Icelanders are known to be is improbable, howsoever disfigured the details of the reports may be. For us it is sufficient to know that faith in apparitions, clairvoyance, and clairaudience, prognostics and spiritual manifestations was far from uncommon a thousand years ago in Iceland.

Pinneberg, Holstein, July 27, 1878.

IN forming an opinion whether a spirit hand has during experiments been dematerialised inside any particular paraffin mould, the great point is to see—by means of a magnifying glass or otherwise—that the cuticle marks are complete and unbroken all round the narrowest part of the wrist, with no sign of a longitudinal cut having been made to enable the hand to be withdrawn by natural means. In the case of a foot, the narrowest part should be examined all round in the same way.

"PASSED TO THE HIGHER LIFE."—We regret to have to record the death of Mary Pearson, wife of Mr. Cornelius Pearson, who is a well-known Spiritualist and a member of the Council of the National Association. Mrs. Pearson, in common with her husband, had been an earnest believer in Spiritualism for the last twenty years, and her sympathy for all connected with it, and her faith in it, remained steadfast to the end. She passed away in the sixty-sixth year of her age, on the 10th inst., after a painful and protracted illness, to that higher, fairer life which she had so looked forward to while here. Her death will be felt and mourned by many friends outside the loving circle of her own home.

## SPIRITUALISM IN MARYLEBONE.

ON Tuesday evening, last week, Miss Kislingbury read a paper before the Marylebone Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism at 25, Great Quebec-street, London. Mr. Chas. White was in the chair. The meeting was attended by several members of the Association; there were also present Mr. G. R. Tapp, Mr. A. Vacher, the Rev. W. W. Newbould, Mrs. Gordon, Dr. C. Carter Blake, and other well-known Spiritualists.

Miss Kislingbury read the following paper on "Spiritualism: its Moral Benefits and Dangers:"—

It has been frequently remarked with regard to modern Spiritualism that, if it be true, it is of the utmost importance that men should believe and know it; if false, it is of equal importance that its falsity be exposed to the full.

With the latter proposition we shall all most unreservedly agree; the first requires some modification, I think, before we can give to it our unqualified assent.

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient," expresses, perhaps, in a few words, the conclusion at which we shall arrive when we have examined the subject a little more closely in the aspect which I venture to bring before you this evening. Speaking, as I believe to be the case, to an audience composed chiefly of Spiritualists, it is my intention not to dwell much, as has been so often and so well done before, on the benefits which Spiritualism brings—for that may be regarded almost as a work of supererogation in the presence of a body of believers and adherents—but to point out some of the dangers which the too eager student is likely to meet with in his pursuit of the marvellous, and to indicate some of the pitfalls which even the more wary and experienced have not been always fortunate in avoiding.

Some of these dangers are inherent in the nature of the subject, and may be called *actual*; others proceed from the disposition or temperament of the inquirer, and may be classed as *accidental*; others, again, attend more particularly on the practice of mediumship, and may be considered *special*: each kind of mediumship having its own particular evil or danger.

In the exercise of my function of replying to inquirers, I have made a great point of warning fresh hands against likely shoals and quicksands, according to my judgment of their knowledge and character (often, of course, formed cursorily from the imperfect observations made on short acquaintance), because I have found it better to go slowly and cautiously to work, than to rush unprepared into a subject and into the presence of influences of whose potency the novice can form no idea; and I have not found that by so doing I have deterred any from inquiry; on the contrary, my action has rather inspired them with respect for the reasonableness of facts which will bear to be deliberately faced and calmly investigated.

Not to deal too much in generalities, I will now define some of these dangers, or difficulties, as you may prefer to regard them, and ask you whether or not you agree with me as to their existence and importance.

In the first joy of discovery of a new world, everything is apt to appear in glowing colours. The country is an "El Dorado," and all that glitters is taken for gold. The emotions are excited, imagination is aroused, exaggerated descriptions are given, and belief is strained to the utmost. This state of things is peculiarly dangerous in Spiritualism, both on account of the delusive nature of some of the appearances, and of the class of interests involved. For what is it that many of us come seeking in these phenomena, so unattractive in themselves, so strange and weird in their presentment, so elusive and will-o'-the-wisp-like in their proceeding? Do we not approach them with a dim, far-off hope that they will furnish us with some proof of a hereafter, and restore our shattered belief in man's immortality? And as soon as we get a clue to that proof, how anxiously we follow it up, through endless mazes, baffled at every turn; but so long as we hold the clue, *i.e.*, so long as the manifestation of intelligent force continues, how unwilling are we to relinquish the hope that the proof will be given, indubitable, undeniable! And this very eagerness of hope it is which is a snare. When the very name we desire, though we were not thinking of it at the moment, is rapped out at a first sitting, with a medium who has never seen us before, and knows nothing of our life, history, or surroundings; when the pencil, guided by some influence which affects us with a sensation unknown before, traces the very words which the signature reminds us were spoken by that beloved one's voice when we met for the last time; when the actual features are presented, and indicate by signs or well-remembered gestures that they are indeed those of a long-lost relative or friend, then we can doubt no longer. We have the proof at last; the dead live still; they return to the old earthly scenes; Spiritualism is true; the Churches are all wrong; all our early lessons must be unlearned, and life begun anew! Then follows a crusade against existing creeds and worship: Christianity is assailed, a new code of morals is enacted, and propagandism of the new faith absorbs for a time all the energy, time, and means of the believer.

This first danger may be considered both actual and accidental: actual, as being inherent in the nature of the phenomena, which are in many cases deceptive and difficult of observation; accidental, as proceeding from the disposition and temperament of the inquirer, and varying in degree according to his mental status and physical constitution. And if this be true of what are known as the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, I think it is often more true and more dangerous in regard to the mental stages, *viz.*, trance-speaking and written communications. This is because, appealing to the mind often on subjects about which we have no information and no settled convictions, or on those which affect our personal happiness or weaknesses, they enlist first the imagination, and finally lead captive the judgment. I have seen persons who would take no advice from earthly friends, however

skilled or well qualified to judge in a particular case, take counsel with spirits, and follow their behests, however foolish. In some lamentable cases this has been carried to the point of unhinging the judgment, and of plunging the believer into deep seas of trouble; yet, after this, the practice has been continued with the same ardour, and the advice followed with the same implicit obedience. Yet these same persons fight against every sort of authority which has been previously instituted in the cause of order, morality, and religion.

And now, after all, what are the foundations on which this inflated, balloon-like superstructure of belief is reared? Answer: The *dicta* of spirits. What spirits? Those who communicate through writing or trance mediums. But do these all agree? By no means; they all have their opinions, just as we have here. Then what is your test for truth? "My own opinion; I do not believe blindly what spirits tell me, any more than mortals." So it comes to this—that each person communicating with spirits in another life, receives not what that spirit from his superior standpoint might be supposed to know better than himself, but just as much as will square with his pre-conceived notions derived from some other source, and resting on some other authority. The special dangers of mediumship are many. The chief among them I hold to be the facilities given to spirits of a low order to take possession of the medium, while at the same time we are as yet without much knowledge of the means for relieving the medium of undesirable controls. The practice of mediumship means opening the door to evil as well as good spirits to come in and dwell with us. We have all learned by experience that it is dangerous for an undeveloped medium to sit at mixed circles until his own "controls" are well established; nevertheless, some of the worst cases of obsession and of visitings from tricky or lying spirits occur to persons sitting alone. It would be well, I think, if this part of the subject were to be more studied. In olden times we read that incantations and certain exorcist formulæ were used for keeping away evil spirits. As a general rule we know that like attracts like, and that the spirits frequenting certain circles will be more or less on a level with those of whom the circles are composed. Nevertheless, I have known pure, well-intentioned mediums, and whole families annoyed and seriously troubled by most unwelcome visitants. Even the all-powerful aids of earnest prayer and a holy life seemed to be not entirely efficacious in keeping off the intruders. In the life of the Curé d'Ars, a French priest of eminent saintliness, it is related that the good man's sleep, of which he allowed himself extremely little, was disturbed by his bed being drawn about and objects thrown all over the room in the night; once the room was set on fire, apparently from unearthly causes.

The following anecdote is related of Pascal:—In the year 1654 he had an escape from a frightful death. He was in a coach-and-four with some friends, and in crossing the Seine over a bridge, part of the parapet of which was thrown down, the leaders took fright and leaped into the water; their weight as they fell happily broke the traces and left the carriage free. But Pascal's nervous system received a shock which it seems never to have recovered, and he was haunted by the thought that on the left side of him—that on which the danger threatened on this occasion—there yawned a deep chasm; nor could he, it is said, sit at ease unless fortified on that side by the sensation of some solid obstacle, though, strange to say, an empty chair would answer the purpose.

But this empty chair contained, as all who read *l'Amulette de Pascal* would admit, a true and living spiritual presence. This we might call Pascal's demon, or attendant spirit, who seems to have employed this artifice in order to convince Pascal that some force, at any rate, existed outside his own mind. If Pascal had not seen this empty chair; if he had not filled it with a supernatural entity, which may have in part proceeded from his own mind, his astute mathematical intellect might have led him to the conviction that his own body was the solitary being whose existence he could have proved to his own senses and reason. And this constant presence also led him constantly to remember that the time had once occurred in his life when he was face to face with the insoluble, and that its recurrence was the one certain and real thing in our life-history. Nevertheless, we may question whether such a haunting presence was not altogether abnormal, and one which Pascal would have gladly dispensed with had he known how to set to work.

It seems to me that, with all our study and modern experience, we have not yet arrived at a knowledge of the means of controlling the lowest of the forces we are dealing with. Theosophy claims that this control can be effected by will-power; if this should be found effectual, then theosophy will have proved itself indeed an invaluable aid to Spiritualism. And it will at the same time teach another lesson, which is that only persons of certain temperaments and constitution are fitted to investigate these matters, and that they should be by no means universally or indiscriminately entered into. And if it is necessary to heed this warning here in England, where caution is, on the whole, a national characteristic, we feel it to be doubly so when we look to the consequences of its neglect in America. Though we are indebted to that country for some of the best mediums, yet we have only to glance at the pages of its spiritualistic journals to see the frequency of fraud, and of terrible consequences resulting from following the suggestions made by spirits. This is partly owing, I believe, to the greater trustfulness of the American character, and partly, as I have often said before, to the want of organisation of the Spiritualist movement in that country.

That Spiritualism may, however, be practised to advantage, if pursued with caution, and in a religious spirit, I conscientiously believe, and in support of my statement I have great pleasure in quoting from a paper published in the July number of the *Psychological Review*.\*

"We may even live to see the time when arguing upwards, according to the strict scientific method, from acknowledged facts and self-evident truths, the philosopher may arrive at conclusions identical with those

\* See *The Abate of San Gaudolfo*, pp. 136-138.

which have during long ages been accepted as the heirloom of tradition, and the boon brought by messengers of heavenly descent. We shall thus, from distant and opposite quarters, meet in the same centre of confluent truths, and be established in positions impregnably fortified. Nor is it easy to calculate the increase of happiness, holiness, and mental power which such a measure of assurance may bring to mankind. Of course there will always be minds which the full blaze of evidence will only blind; but this, we may hope and expect, will not be the general effect of such increase of light. The wide diffusion of democratic tendencies and institutions is causing men to drift more widely into individualism in philosophy and religion, but a firmer apprehension of truths regarding the spiritual world, obtained by scientific means and sensible demonstrations, may bring about, by courses we least anticipate, more unity of principle, thought, and feeling among the prayerful thinkers and scholars of every communion and clime. It is by sounding the depths of old truths that we shall attain to new, for new truths are, for the most part, only new developments of truths that were known of old."

To bring about this desirable result, however, it will be necessary to proceed on methods which are as yet only just beginning to find favour amongst us. Instead of each one experimenting for himself, often at peril to health and mental and moral balance, I should prefer to see the subject made one of special study and research, like chemistry, astronomy, and other sciences. The study would, of course, always be free and open to all who choose to undertake it, as is the case with the other sciences I have named; but by the means proposed it would be lifted out of the stage of empiricism (a necessary one, and natural to all new growths) which it has now, I hope, nearly outgrown, and be raised to a more dignified position than it at present occupies. If not destined itself to become a science, Spiritualism will, I think, be an aid to the right understanding of all science as of all religion. But that its so-called teachings or communications should be taken as a rule of individual conduct or belief, cannot, in my opinion, from long and intimate experience, be too strongly deprecated or discouraged.

I might have added to this paper by copious examples of injurious effects and undesirable results from the causes which I have here only briefly indicated. But no doubt such cases are sufficiently well known to you all, and their repetition would be painful as well as unnecessary. What I principally wished to point out is the general principles to which they are traceable. Whether you agree with me or not, will be shown by the discussion which is about to follow. If I have too much condensed my remarks, I shall be willing to amplify them on any point which you may do me the honour to indicate.

In the discussion which followed the reading of the paper, Mr. Tapp said he thought that Miss Kislingbury had done a great service in boldly bringing forward the unpleasant side of Spiritualism, which some were too apt to keep out of sight. He quite agreed as to the dangers indicated. He would, however, advert to one great benefit which Spiritualism brought with it, which was that it taught men and women to be themselves. They learned from the facts revealed that there is no escaping from our true character and our true position. With regard to obsession, he had observed that it was a common feature in the experiences of saints and other holy persons. He thought it was easily accounted for—first on account of the opposition which good men are sure to meet with from evil spirits; and second, because asceticism lays people open to attack from a variety of influences. The physical power being at a low ebb, they are less able to resist the action of spirits. Mr. Tapp also deprecated undue enthusiasm. Enthusiasm meant egotism, and egotistical people would be sure to suffer for their pride.

Mr. Wilson, Mr. Bull, Dr. C. Blake, Mr. C. White, and others took part in the discussion.

In reply to Mr. Tapp's remarks on obsession,

Miss Kislingbury said that asceticism meant subduing the flesh to the spirit, and that, therefore, those who practised it should be in a better position to resist the attacks of spirits if they were instructed that they could effect their purpose by a strong exercise of will-power. This was one of the lessons the Theosophists wished to inculcate, and to encourage activity of will rather than the passivity prevalent when developing mediumship, which placed persons under the power of influences they knew nothing about, often to their great detriment.

The meeting closed with the usual votes of thanks.

FATAL ACCIDENT TO MR. OXLEY, JUN.—The following sad news is from *The Manchester Courier* of July 26th:—"The coroner of the hundred of Fordingbridge, Hants, at Ibsley, near Ringwood, held an inquest on the body of a young man found drowned in the Avon at Ibsley. Mr. W. Pollock, the land steward of Lord Normanton, was passing, and seeing some people on the river bank, obtained a boat, and by means of a boathook lifted the body, and found one of the legs wrapped with weed, which evidently had been the cause of the fatality. Deceased was a good swimmer, and had been seen to cross the river twice. The water was eight and a half feet deep at the spot. Mr. Pollock found some papers in the pockets of the young gentleman's clothes, and communicated with his friends, who identified the body as that of Mr. William Herbert Oxley, son of Mr. William Oxley, of Higher Broughton, Manchester. He was going on his bicycle from Pool to Fordingbridge, and went into the river for a bathe, which ended so fatally for him."

## Poetry.

### THE TOUCH OF THE UNSEEN.

As feel the flowers the sun in heaven,  
But sky and sunlight never soo;  
So feel I Thee, oh God, my God,  
Thy dateless noontide hid from me.

As touch the buds the blossed rain,  
But rain and rainbow never see;  
So touch I God in bliss or pain,  
Thy far, vast rainbow veiled from me.

Orion, moon, and sun, and bow  
Amazo a sky unseen by me:  
God's wheeling heaven is there I know,  
Although its arch I cannot see.

In low estate, I, as the flower,  
Have nerves to feel, not eyes to see;  
The subtlest in the conscience is  
Thyself and that which toucheth Thee.

Forever it may be that I  
More yet shall feel but shall not see,  
Above my soul, Thy wholeness roll,  
Not visibly, but tangibly.

But flaming heart to rain and ray,  
Turn I in meekest loyalty;  
I breathe, and move, and live in Thee,  
And drink the ray I cannot see.

*Scribner's Monthly.*

### SPRING'S REPLY.

Oh would fair Spring that we could chain thy feet,  
So transient yet so exquisitely sweet;  
God's earth so changed, as though some now command  
Had raised the curse from off His weary land.

The field of blue-bells in yon distance seems  
A lake where quivering sunlight gleams;  
Soft dewy ferns their bonding fronds unfold,  
Rich cowslips wave their many bells of gold.

The sleek cows standing by the river's brink  
Reflect themselves, then take their harmless drink;  
Gay singing birds 'tween earth and heaven soar,  
Rejoicing the fair Spring returns once more.

So full of life, sad heart what ail thee?  
My spirit cries, "Restore the dead to me.  
Bring me them back, oh Spring! With restless pain  
I long to hear those voices, yet in vain:

To hear them even for one moment's space;  
To clasp that hand, once more behold that face.  
Oh love! Thy glory and thy curse are one,  
All things save thee have change beneath the sun."

Then Spring replied: "This earth hath no control  
On the unfathomed laws which rule man's soul;  
Thy dead still live; unknown their dwelling place;  
Perehance in some bright world which rolls through space."

"One came as strong as fate; his frozen breath  
Breathed on thy loved, then sealed those eyes in death;  
He robs man's heart, turns joy to blinding tears;  
The soul released, death bears to other spheres."

ALICE WORTHINGTON.

## 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.*

### THE SEANCE AT MR. ST. CLAIR'S HOUSE IN BIRMINGHAM.

Sir,—I feel myself justified in asking you to insert a reply to Mr. St. Clair's accusation against me in last week's *Spiritualist*.

1st. He charges me with not giving a full and accurate account of the seance held at his house with Mr. John Summerfield, medium.

Now, sir, I wish to tell him I would expose Mr. Summerfield or any other medium, even if he were my own brother, if I saw any imposition going on. In reference to the table, I still maintain that a table 4 × 6 by 3 × 6 is a large one; and I think that it was the largest in the house. Again, I beg to say that Mrs. St. Clair sat opposite to me, not opposite the medium, who sat two seats above; also, that flowers were asked for by some of the sitters, and the guides said that they would try to bring some. When I stated that the flowers were dropping, I stated what I saw, and it would be well had Mr. St. Clair stated what he saw only, and not given the testimony of another. As regards Mr. St. Clair getting down from turning up the light, I saw him hastily resume his seat, and that his face had a very confused expression when he looked towards me. He states that nothing was prearranged between Mr. Tait and himself; but I noticed when darkness was called for, that he and Mr. Tait had a conversation in whispers at the end of the room, and that when he was asked to turn the gas out he left a small jet on. I also asked for matches, and offered to hold them, but Mr. St. Clair stated that he had got them all right. In reference to Mr. Lawson Tait's accusations against Mr. Summerfield as regards the flowers and bell, I leave him to defend himself; but still, I and other friends, who could see the medium as well as Mr. Lawson Tait, do not believe it.

Mr. St. Clair says, further, that the medium would have staid supper if I had consented. I can only say that when Mr. Summerfield refused to stay, he came to me, saying, "If the medium leaves, you are not

obliged to go;" and to the last I wished Mr. Summerfield to take something, as I feared he would be ill, but he refused, and we came away together, with the expressed wish of Mrs. St. Clair that we should give another sitting, but we replied that we must consult the controls first. Mr. St. Clair must not think me uncourteous in refusing to overlook the ungentlemanly treatment of Mr. Lawson Tait and himself by not accepting a supper.

I may state that both myself and Mr. Summerfield are still willing to assist both Mr. and Mrs. St. Clair in their investigation of Spiritualism to the best of our ability, if Mr. St. Clair will be true, and honest to his own conscience, instead of being influenced by outsiders.

JOHN COLLEY.

312, Bridge-street West, Birmingham.

SIR,—In last week's *Spiritualist* I notice a letter from Mr. St. Clair, also a few words from Mr. Lawson Tait. Now, in answer to Mr. Tait, I beg to say I did not place any bell on the mantelpiece; I simply removed it as far as I could away from my reach, remarking at the same time that I would not have it near me. I also suggested that we should have the largest table in the house as a guard against any trickery.

Mr. St. Clair states that he was prompted by curiosity to turn up the light; yet to me and others he said he wished he had not turned up the light, and he apologised by saying it was a mistake. That a light had been called for by some one—by Mr. Lawson Tait—all the sitters know. If my guides should say that he did it on his own account, I must for ever put them down as lying spirits. As regards hands, he was told that it was not necessary to hold hands, but to simply touch. But Mr. St. Clair knows the conditions. He sat the week before with other mediums, and has had sittings with mediums in London and elsewhere; he has also read upon the subject. Now, as regards the supper, I must say that supper was mentioned in the invitation to Mr. Colley and myself, and it was understood that my visit was a non-professional one; but I must deny either showing or having the least inclination to stay to supper, although much pressed both by Mr. St. Clair and his wife. (Mr. St. Clair remarked in his sermon that mediums who go into trance are, as a rule, hungry, or have a disordered stomach.)

Mr. Glydon, who I thought was a Spiritualist, stated that he should let no spirits interfere with him in the matter of partaking of his friend's supper. Now, one word more to Mr. St. Clair. He says the flowers were deposited "irregularly" over the table, and, as he mentions Mrs. St. Clair, I beg him to remember a remark made by her—viz., that no human being could possibly have placed the flowers in the dark in the position in which they were found.

Now, let me meet the accusation of Mr. Lawson Tait. Mr. George St. Clair charges me, on that gentleman's testimony—first, with loosing my hand from my wife's, who sat on my right; secondly, with trying to find or to reach the bell with my right hand, when the bell was far away on my left; thirdly, with throwing the flowers, which implies that I must have had them in my pocket.

Now, Mr. Lawson Tait sees all this, and it is well known that he came to find out the trickery. I throw the flowers. Mr. Tait allows it to go on. I try to reach the bell instead of sitting in my seat (as I must have got up to get anywhere near it). Instead of holding my hands and calling for a light, he simply draws himself in a little and allows the trickery to go on—allows his friend, Mr. St. Clair, to be imposed upon.

Now, sir, I think your readers from the following will be able to draw their own conclusions. When I came to my normal state, I asked what was the matter. Several of the sitters told of Mr. St. Clair turning up the light, also that my guides had instructed them to take me home, and not to stay any longer. I said then, "I go." I said farther that I had come there with honest intentions, and expected to find myself among gentlemen and honest investigators, but that as my guides had told me to leave, I should not stay any longer. Mr. St. Clair said it was a mistake. I told him it was something more than a mistake, or I should not have been told by my guides to go. I told him that I came at his invitation as a friend, and had not been treated as I expected. As already stated, he apologised, said it was a mistake, and tried to make me believe that my guides only told them to give up sitting, but that I could stay to supper. He said that he was sorry that one guest should be the means of driving us all away. By the way, who was that "one guest?" No one spoke except Mr. Tait, who said that all spirits told lies.

Mr. St. Clair hoped I would come again and give him another sitting. I told him that I should consult my spirit friends. He seemed surprised that I should be guided by them, but he till the last—joined by Mrs. St. Clair—pressed us to stop, but I declined. I then wished all individually good-night, and came away with my friends.

Now, sir, I am sure you will think with me that Mr. Lawson Tait played a cowardly and ungentlemanly part—first, by allowing his host and hostess and friends to be imposed upon, and to receive from me (the impostor) not very complimentary language, and to listen to Mr. St. Clair pressing us to stop, and trying to get us to promise to come again, wishing us good-night, and allowing us to depart.

Not till we are gone, and he is over his wine, does he bring this accusation against me. Not till then does he charge us as impostors; not till then, when we are away, and cannot defend ourselves, does he give Mr. St. Clair his weighty testimony. Such conduct from an assembly round a washtub we may look for, but from such an important person as Mr. Lawson Tait we should not have expected it.

I know, sir, I have written strongly, but my reputation as a medium is at stake, and I trust this will be inserted.

JOHN SUMMERFIELD.

109, Grove-place, Clifford-street, Birmingham.

WHERE IS DR. MONCK?

SIR,—Having heard that Dr. Monck is now residing in Switzerland, but not knowing his address, may I take advantage of your courtesy by begging of you to publish in your paper, for his information, that should he think of extending his trip to Naples, I should be most happy to receive him as my guest?

G. DAMIANI.

2, Vico del Vasto a Chiaia, Naples, 23rd July, 1878.

#### SPIRIT INDIVIDUALITY.

ON Saturday afternoon a *séance* was held at 61, Lamb's Conduit-street, London. Mr. Williams and Mr. Rita were the mediums. The primary object of the *séance* was to obtain a test of the identity of "John King" with a spirit professing the same name who manifests at Cambridge. I, therefore, hoping to be recognised during the *séance*, went under an assumed name, and my visit was kept a secret from all but my companions, who were equally interested with myself in the result of the experiment. Our fullest hopes were realised. I was completely recognised, and several facts were mentioned which could not have been known to either of the mediums. I should mention that I have seen Mr. Williams before, but only for a few minutes, and I believe that he could not have known my name, even if he had recognised my face, while several of the tests given were absolutely out of the range of his knowledge. One fact in particular, mentioned to us at the *séance*, was known to only four living persons besides myself, none of whom were present, or had the slightest idea that I was at that moment in London, but which had been mentioned fifteen hours previously at Cambridge, in the presence of an intelligence purporting to be "John King." This test I had from the lips of the materialised spirit, and it ought to prove conclusively that neither the medium's body nor his spirit had anything to do with the matter.

The *séance* was also a satisfactory one, in a phenomenal point of view. The usual manifestations began almost immediately after the light had been put out; that is to say, bells were rung, instruments floated about, and spirit hands felt in great abundance. The voices of "John King" and "Peter" kept up a continuous conversation with us. Mr. Williams then entered the cabinet, and the materialised form of John King shortly appeared, passing freely to all parts of the room, and conversing with us. At our request the head floated over the table, the distance between the head and table being certainly insufficient for the admission of a human body. We were also allowed to take hold of the spirit drapery, and felt it in our fingers. The spirit then handed me a slate, on which the following words were afterwards found to be written:—

"We are glad to meet you, and see that you are interested in this grand cause."

"God bless you all."

"J. K."

This slate was said to have been carried away during a previous *séance*, and had not been seen since.

After "John" had gone, the spirit of "Peter" appeared. He seemed very anxious that we should examine his light, holding it immediately under our eyes, and this gave me plenty of opportunity to examine his face, which was about three inches distant from my own. I was thus enabled to satisfy myself of the great difference between the faces of the medium and spirit, and to make quite certain that the lips of the latter moved when he spoke. Finally, a short conversation took place in the cabinet between Mr. Williams, "John," and "Peter," the voices of the two last being heard at the same time; thus concluding a most satisfactory *séance*.

E. O. FOUNTAIN,

Pembroke College, Cambridge.

The other persons present who are willing to testify to the truth of all that is here stated are—

C. DAVIESON,

14, Store-street, Bedford-square, London.

H. S. SMITH,

7, Grove End-road, St. John's Wood, London.

PRESENTATION TO MR. JOHN AINSWORTH.—A gathering of an agreeable nature took place on the evening of July 22nd at the Camden Hotel, Liverpool, for the purpose of presenting to Mr. John Ainsworth a handsome inkstand, also an album to Mrs. Ainsworth, on the occasion of their removal to Bristol. As a Spiritualist Mr. Ainsworth has endeared himself to his co-workers by his fearless and able advocacy of the cause, and Liverpool Spiritualists will feel the effects of his departure. Messrs. Morse, Moore, Lamont, and others addressed the meeting.

THE MARRIAGE OF MR. F. BARRETT AND MISS FITZ-GERALD.

ON Wednesday last week, as briefly announced in the preceding number of *The Spiritualist*, a marriage took place between Mr. F. Barrett, of Langley House, Denmark-hill, and Emily Geraldine, only daughter of Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, M.S.Tel.E. The wedding party left Mr. Fitz-Gerald's house at 10 a.m. for Brixton Independent Church, which was thronged with relatives, friends, and neighbours, anxious to witness the ceremony. The youthful bride was dressed in plain white silk, trimmed with orange-blossom, myrtle, and jasmine, and wore a wreath of these flowers, with a veil of tulle. She also carried a magnificent bouquet of exotic and home flowers. The bridesmaids, sisters of the bridegroom, wore dresses of pale pink brocaded silk, trimmed with white lace, quilted satin petticoats, and white lace hats with feathers. The officiating minister was the Rev. Samuel Eldridge, whose reading of the unusually brief service was impressive. On leaving the church, where the path of the bride was strewn with flowers, showers of which also were thrown into her carriage, the party drove to Langley House, the residence of the bridegroom's father, and spent some time in the grounds and in listening to music. They then proceeded to 29, Eastbourne-terrace, Hyde-park, the temporary residence of Mr. Fitz-Gerald's mother, where over thirty guests sat down to breakfast. After some justice had been done to the good fare provided,

Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald said: Dear Kindred and Friends,—I rise to propose the health of the bride and bridegroom. (Cheers.) When first I heard of the engagement of my daughter Emily to Mr. Barrett, my reception of the news was, I confess, rather cynical. I had heard of young people making engagements and breaking them off; young people who are attached to each other sometimes have quarrels, and very serious quarrels too; so, not knowing what might be in the future, I did not consider this union a *fait accompli*. But from the first there has been no misunderstanding of any kind—not even a lover's quarrel—(applause)—and you other young people here have a good example set before you. (Hear, hear.) A little sermon on such occasions as these is good, because the circumstances cause it to be better remembered. We have here the example of two young persons coming together under the motive of love alone, and thus we have good reason to hope that they may always love each other under all circumstances, through good and evil report. Let me give them these few words of advice as to the future. If you should at any time feel inclined to “fall out,” read Will Carleton's little poem about “Betsy and I.” Women are so constituted—I speak it respectfully—that they are not always in the same equable temper. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) The men are much the same; and in married life there must always be some “give and take.” Let me advise you not to run after happiness, but to let happiness run after you; occupy yourselves with useful work—that work which is ready to your hand; and always have an earnest purpose in life—one of benefit to the world. Do not look upon the accumulation of the means of subsistence as the chief purpose of life; look upon it as a means rather than as an end. In this world there is always going on a struggle of good against evil, of light against darkness. I hope to see you ever on the side of good, on the side of humanity. I thank God for having sent my daughter such a protector—a good son, a good brother, a manly and open intelligence. Such a man must prove a good husband; and with joyous confidence I send my darling child, hand in hand with Fred. Barrett, down her smiling stream of life. (Loud applause.)

Mr. Pulvermacher next spoke to the same effect.

Mr. Frederic Barrett, in response, thanked those present for their kind wishes, and especially did he thank his father-in-law. He hoped that his future with Mr. Fitz-Gerald's daughter would exemplify all that had been said. It had been stated that he and his bride were setting an example to the young persons present; he thought that the married persons present, with their happy faces, had set them the example. (Hear, hear.) He wished to return thanks for the honour that had been done them. (Applause.)

Several other speeches were made. One by Mr. Bernard C. Molloy, of the Inner Temple, who, while in an able and humorous way proposing the health of the bridesmaids, observed that he did not know why he had been selected to do so, for an Irishman was always timid, and yet expected to have much self-confidence; he hoped next time to propose their healths not as bridesmaids but as brides.

Among the other speakers were Mr. Herbert Allport (bridegroom's best man), who made an amusing speech; Mr. Barrett, senior, Mr. T. Barrett, Mrs. Fitz-Gerald, Mr. Reginald Barrett, Mr. F. Cowley, and Mr. W. H. Harrison.

At five p.m. the newly-married couple drove off amidst showers of rice and several projectile slippers, for their residence at Leacroft,

Staines, where they proposed to remain for a few days prior to starting for their wedding tour in Wales and the Lake district.

PRESENTATION BY THE BRIXTON PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Amongst the numerous presents received by Miss Fitz-Gerald on the occasion of her marriage, was one from the Brixton Psychological Society, of which the present Mrs. F. Barrett was the honorary assistant secretary from the period of its formation. This present consisted of two handsome dining-room and drawing-room clocks, with ornamental vases, and was accompanied by a beautifully illuminated address, the work of Mr. H. C. Frances, of which the following is a copy:—

The members of the Brixton Psychological Society desire to offer to Emily Geraldine Fitz-Gerald their warmest congratulations upon her marriage, accompanied by a wedding gift, in token of their sincere regard, and with their heartiest wishes for her welfare and happiness.

July, 1878.

It may be mentioned that both Mr. and Mrs. F. Barrett remain members of this society; so also do Mr. and Mrs. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, who have always been among the most energetic and faithful supporters of the cause of Spiritualism in London.

CRICKETING MISUNDERSTOOD.—Muscular High Church Curate: “Wonderful things ‘Grace’ does!” Low Church Vicar (surprised at the serious observation from his volatile friend): “Ah, my dear sir, true—” High Church Curate: “Yes. Only fancy, y’know!—Ninety-two, and not out!”—*Punch*.

ANCIENT BABYLON.—Dr. Samuel Kinn, in lately lecturing at the British Museum on Assyrian antiquities, said that Nineveh and Babylon were nearly twice the size of London and its suburbs, and has subsequently explained:—“By London and its suburbs I meant what is included in Kelly's map, representing about 120 square miles, whereas Babylon, according to Herodotus, occupied 225 square miles, and was sixty miles in circumference. This would enclose all the space north and south from Highgate to the Crystal Palace, and east and west from Kew to Woolwich; and when we conceive a wall as high as the Monument, and 75 feet in thickness, surrounding all this space, we cannot be but amazed at the magnitude of the erection.”

DANGEROUS SOMNAMBULISTS.—Referring to the recent murder by a somnambulist in Edinburgh, the *Solicitors' Journal* says:—“Dornblüth, the German psychologist, tells of a young woman who, in consequence of a fright occasioned by an attack of robbers, was seized with epilepsy, and became subject to somnambulism. While in that condition she was in the habit of stealing articles, and was charged with theft, but, on the advice of Dornblüth, was released, and eventually cured. Seltzer (cited in Wharton and Stillé) gives an account of a somnambulist who clambered out of a garret window, ascended into the next house, and killed a young girl who was asleep there. And the same learned writers quote from Sarvarin an account of a somnambulist monk (related to Sarvarin by the prior of the convent where the incident happened): ‘The somnambulist entered the chamber of the prior; his eyes were opened, but fixed; the light of two lamps made no impression upon him; his features were contracted, and he carried in his hand a large knife. Going straight to the bed, he had first the appearance of examining if the prior was there. He then struck three blows, which pierced the coverings, and even a mat which served the purpose of a mattress. In returning his countenance was unbent, and was marked by an air of satisfaction. The next day the prior asked the somnambulist what he had dreamt of the preceding night, and the latter answered that he had dreamt that his mother had been killed by the prior, and that her ghost had appeared to him demanding vengeance; that at this sight he was so transported by rage that he had immediately run to stab the assassin of his mother.’ Sarvarin adds that if the prior had been killed, the monk could not possibly, under these circumstances, have been punished.”

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