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# The Spiritualist Newspaper,

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

VOLUME TWELVE. NUMBER NINE.

LONDON, FRIDAY, MARCH 1st, 1878.

## UNPROVED SPECULATIONS.

ALL that Spiritualists have asked of disbelievers for years is a fair hearing and the full publication in opposition journals of our proved facts, without our necessarily insisting upon the reception of our theory. This desired fair hearing which the outside world has not had the honesty or love of truth to give to Spiritualists, we have willingly awarded to Theosophists. Nay, more; when they have given us columns upon columns of speculation—all words, words, words—without one single fact to substantiate them, we have accepted their plan of putting the cart before the horse, the theory before the evidence that the theory is true, so now think that our Theosophical friends should spare us from further speculations, and briefly give cumulative evidence, if they have it, in support of any one of the points of their doctrine. What proof have they of the alleged conditional immortality of man? What proof of the existence of sub-human spirits? What proof that men by will-power can produce any of the manifestations called spiritual?

The latter field of research seems likely to be more profitable in its results than the others, for if spirits out of the body can produce certain phenomena, those in the body ought to be able to do so in the same way. We saw this long ago, and in *The Spiritualist* of September 15th, 1871, published a long article showing the desirability of experimental research in this direction, and recommending the promoters of the Psychological Society to undertake the work. But such research belongs to Spiritualism proper, and necessitates no "new departure."

The chief claim of the Theosophical Society originally lay in quite a different direction. It set forth that the great majority of the phenomena were not produced by human spirits, and, in the words of the president, Theosophists recognised "in most of the physical phenomena called spiritual, the agency of elementary spirits, who often falsely personated persons not communing with the circles." Colonel Olcott, in his opening presidential address, further said—"Our Vice-President [Mr. Felt] promises, by simple chemical appliances, to exhibit to us, as he has to others before [Who?], the races of beings which, invisible to us, people the elements . . . . What will the Spiritualists say, when through the column of saturated vapour flit the dreadful shapes of beings whom, in their blindness, they have in a thousand cases revered and babbled to as the returning shades of their relatives and friends? Alas! Poor Spiritualists!" Naturally, after this programme, an official communication from the Theosophical Society was expected by us, telling how—

A thing with horny eyes was there,  
With horny eyes like the dead;  
Its long thin nose was all of horn;  
Its ears were like thin cases, torn  
From the feet of kine; its jaws were bare,  
And fishbones grew instead of hair,  
Upon its skinless head!

But, sad to say, the dreadful shapes have not yet been seen in the column of saturated vapour. The smoke may have been there in abundance, but no imps.

Of late there seems to have been a change of front among the Theosophists. Instead of their original elementary "black spirits and white, blue spirits and gray," much is now said about unfortunate human beings who have "lost their trinity," who are perishable; and a doctrine of conditional human immortality has been launched, unaccompanied by any evidence of its truth.

If disbelievers said to Spiritualists—"We desire to witness your facts, and to examine your evidence, but as yet do not care to give attention to your conclusions," the position would be universally felt to be an honest one. But

the position of English Spiritualists to Theosophists has been much fairer, for they have listened to speculations and doctrines set forth at great length, without as yet an atom of experimental or produced evidence in their support. It is now high time to cease endless and profitless talk about matters of doctrine, and to bring the facts and experiments to the front.

A few Spiritualists whose minds are not strong enough to appreciate the value of the free discussion of all subjects whatever, and who base their opinions upon the speculations of men, rather than upon facts, have had their minds disturbed by the free spirit of inquiry abroad. Such may take heart, for the well-established phenomena of haunted houses are amply strong enough in themselves, to establish the Spiritualistic doctrine of the occasional return to earth of the spirits of the departed. No spirit-of-the-medium theory will cover the ground, for, as a rule, no medium is there. No elementary-spirit theory meets the facts, for it will scarcely be argued that one set of spirits takes the trouble to manufacture a sham spirit—the spirit of the departed person who visibly haunts the house.

## BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

### SEANCES FOR INQUIRERS.

ON Wednesday, 13th February, one of this series of *séances* took place at 38, Great Russell-street, London. Mr. Eglinton was the medium, and nine persons were present in the circle. Mr. Eglinton's sleeves were sewn together, and the thread passed through the back of the coat, according to the method of "nearly absolute tests," with which several experienced Spiritualists have on previous occasions been satisfied. Apparently the present circle, the conditions of which were completely harmonious, were perfectly satisfied with this "test," as some called it. This sewing took place at the second or "cabinet" division of the *séance*, an abortive dark sitting having taken place around the table, at which nothing occurred, except a very slight upward motion of the table. A short time after the medium had been placed in the cabinet the usual voices were heard, and the usual "manifestations" took place of motion of the book cover, playing on the "fairy bells," projection of large white hands in front of the curtain, writing on a clean piece of paper (provided by a gentleman present), and cutting off the point of a pencil by a knife provided by another gentleman and handed into the cabinet by me. Nearly every person in the circle stepped into the cabinet immediately after a hand had been shown, and ascertained the fact that the medium was asleep. Just when leaving the cabinet their dress was pulled, or they were touched by some object, which was compared to fingers by some in the circle.

The message given by Joey was of the usual character, being "JOEY, God bless you;" and was written in sight of the circle, a gentleman present steadying the paper whilst the pencil moved on it. The manifestations shown at this circle were of a far better character than those observed on many previous occasions, and the circle of inquirers seemed very pleased at the repetition, in a good light, of phenomena which have been often described.

C. CARTER BLAKE,  
Member of Séance Committee in charge.

A NEW weekly Spiritualist newspaper, *The Voice of Truth*, has just been started in the United States, and can be had post free throughout the United Kingdom from *The Spiritualist* branch office, for fifteen shillings a year.

FLEXIBLE FEATURES TO SPIRIT FORMS.—Several correspondents, who have not read our articles with care, write that we assert that materialised spirit forms have no flexible features; but this has never been stated in these pages. When the medium is held or tied in one place, forms with flexible features often appear in another; but, in the hundreds of times we have seen those features in a good light, they have always, in the lines of the eyes and nose, strongly resembled those of the medium. We are searching now, and have searched for years, for a "recognisable" living spirit face, produced off the premises of the medium, in a strong light, and bearing no resemblance to the medium, but such faces have never yet had life in them in our presence. Nevertheless, this does not prevent others, who have had different experience, testifying differently. What we want is, cumulative evidence that a medium—say a boy—can give a *séance* off his own premises in the presence of educated critical witnesses, and produce a living head of an old man—for instance, that of the late Duke of Wellington—in a strong light, so that every wrinkle of the Duke's face can be seen by everybody present as he talks.

## THEOSOPHISTS ON THEIR DEFENCE.

BY "M.A., OXON."

THE remarks which I made in the pages of this journal on the various theories advanced, especially by Theosophists, to account for the facts of Spiritualism, have served at least two purposes. They have elicited a strong expression of opinion favourable to the attitude that I took up; and they have drawn out an exposition of faith from the leaders of the Theosophists which I have every reason to congratulate myself on having been able to study. It is by far the clearest statement that is before the public; and, especially, the letter on p. 68, No. 285, states with much elaboration, and with more precision than it is put anywhere outside of *Isis Unveiled*, the idea of Madame Blavatsky as to the spiritual organisation of man.

As the discussion progresses it becomes more and more clear that the Occultists have a well-reasoned and coherent speculative belief, just as it grows more and more evident that that belief is Oriental in essence, and alien from our Western habits of thought. It becomes plain, too, that the issue which it is possible to discuss with any hope of profit is not wide. The argument runs the risk of becoming like the celebrated wrangle as to the colours of the chameleon. It was black, said one. It was green, said the other; and when the creature was produced, "Lo! 'twas *white*."

I do not propose to enter into elaborate argument as to matters of speculative opinion. It is the idlest waste of time to split hairs about matters respecting which there is no final standard of decision. But it is necessary to say something, where otherwise misconception would be perpetuated. I have no desire to be controversial. Madame Blavatsky has felt, she says, "the scratch of challenge" in what I have written. No; not so. But, if she has, I cannot affect to be sorry, since it has elicited from her so much which is worthy of consideration. If I cannot agree with some of her statements of opinion, I have, at any rate, read them with some relief, for I began to think that there must be some truth in the oft-repeated accusation that Spiritualists were pursuing a course of mental depravation to end, sooner or later for all, in idiocy. It has been a relief to find that I was able to understand, if not always to follow; and that my previous bewilderment was shared by not a few who are credited with capacity and sanity, as times go.

Madame Blavatsky's personal reply to myself I need not argue upon. I must say a few words on some of the principles involved in it; and if, in jumping into the bramble bush to which she unpoetically compares herself, I scratch out both my eyes, I may jump into another that stands near and scratch them in again. She does herself injustice. I should not be so ungracious as to compare a lady to anything so prickly as a bramble bush. I called her a rose. I did not, however, say that the rose was not amply provided with thorns.

The discrepancies and contradictions have been so fully dwelt upon by others that I need not say much more than that they exist. Whether from our fault or from that of our teachers, there is a lamentable lack of a clear understanding between us. And perhaps I shall not be far wrong if I attribute that fog as much to the purely speculative and unsubstantial character of the Theosophist platform as to the fact that there is very little room for exact statement in what is mere airy theory, or for profitable argument about it.

This stands clearly out amidst much that is vague. "When a Spiritualist," says Madame Blavatsky, "pronounces to us the words 'dogma' and 'facts'; debate is impossible, for there is no common ground on which we can meet" (p. 63). That is so; but I hardly expected to find the fact so clearly stated by her.

"At the very beginning of what must be a long struggle, it is imperatively demanded that the Theosophical position shall be unequivocally defined (p. 62). 'M.A. Oxon,' is not content with mere suggestions. Nothing but the whole naked truth will satisfy him. . . . We must lay our theory down on exact lines of demonstration" (p. 63). Most decidedly my request is for plain definition for logical deductions, for the nearest approach to exact proof that the questions admit of.

I desire this for the plainest reasons. I know, as every logician knows, how dangerous it is to admit a hypothesis on which argument may be founded. The most seemingly innocent statement may be made to carry a whole mountain of speculation, substantial enough till its foundation is tested, and then found to be baseless. The hypothesis with which the Theosophists and Theorists start are of this character. They are either (1) mere speculations, neither provable nor disprovable; or (2) incompatible with some other statements put forward by others on the same side; or (3) incompatible with our observed facts, and based on an insufficient knowledge of the system against which they are aimed. These sources of fallacy may be warranted to produce a fruitful crop of error if allowed to run wild. And I, therefore, for one, stand rigidly on my determination to follow none of them into devious by-paths. I will wait with patience till the various Theorists have decided what they mean, and can produce reasonable evidence for their assumptions. Nothing can be fairer than the request put forth in the *Editorial* on p. 72 for some precision and exactness of statement. We must reiterate over and over again such demands, and we must abide by them if we would avoid the danger of frittering away all our strength on combating shadowy theories. At present if Col. Olcott be read on the one hand, and Madame Blavatsky on the other, we shall find the latter modifying considerably what was to me so shocking in the doctrine of annihilation, as "M.A. Cantab" and "Scrutator" point out (p. 92). We have Professor Wilder confessing that he neither has nor desires to have any "experience with *doppels*," which Madame Blavatsky propounds as the true method of arriving at self-knowledge. The Professor indeed, for one who belongs to a society that knows no dogma, is sufficiently dogmatic to astonish one. He tells us that "spirits just emerging into new modes of existence are likely to be too much and too well employed to render it proper for me to meddle with them." How does he know that? The facts, so as I observe them, are against him. And again we have in the last paragraph of his paper on pp. 89, 90, a remarkable statement of belief that "at death the soul goes out with the light of the spirit, but sometimes is sufficiently enveloped with earthy or corporeal particles as to be able to become visible to clear-seeing persons, sometimes to make a voice heard, and certainly to *impinge the thought* (?). But this condition is not or should not be lasting. . . . In due time the two (entities) are separated as by another dying, and the good repair to heavenly places." And the non-good, I suppose, to places not heavenly! For one who starts with a confession that he has no experimental knowledge, this strikes me as about the naivest piece of dogmatism I ever read.

"Theosophists," says Madame Blavatsky, "have no dogmas, exact no blind faith." She would have been nearer the truth if she had omitted her negatives, and stated the reverse of her proposition. No dogmas! Why, what else have they? Exact no blind faith? I should have thought that their whole system was founded upon that, and on little else. I should have said that not only was faith their creed, but that they had transmuted their faith into works when, in "blind faith," on the pretensions of Mr. Fell, the Theosophical Society first announced itself to the American public through the address of its President.

Faith is good. Blind faith is dangerous; and very soon the Theosophical Society found it to be so. Dogma is good, if it be founded on observed facts; dogmatism is bad, and should be discouraged. It seems, I think, to most of us that from the glass-house in which Theosophy dwells, it is dangerous to throw stones.

Instead of all this crude speculation, these modifying particles, "it is likely," "perhaps," and so forth; instead of this semi-theological theorising as to the future, this shuddering horror of "disturbing the manes of the dead" (who desires to do anything of the kind?) we desiderate a reverse process. We would proceed from facts to theories; not assign theories as a reason for ignoring facts. I have had much, and desire to have more experience with *doppels*, or, as I call them, spirits; and from them, and from observation of their acts and words, I have arrived at conclusions the reverse of *some*—not by any means of *all*—that

Theosophy propounds. I start from my facts, and when in doubt do not spin a theory, but prefer to wait, or possibly to ask.

"The true scientist is always a Theosophist first of all," says Professor Wilder. One is tempted to wish that the proposition could read the other way, and that the Theosophist were a Scientist so far as to use the scientific method of deduction. But what is Theosophy? Then I come with my definitions again. I read Miss Kislingbury's paper with open eyes, for I found it started with the question, What is Theosophy? (p. 76), and was headed, *Theosophy Simplified*. But, alas! my hopes were blighted; for I found no answer to the question, and the simplification consisted in leaving out the difficulties. Half-a-dozen answers might very easily be given to the question by six different readers of the late correspondence; and it is of that variety of statement that one has a fair right to complain. As each little Bethel is erected on a text, ignoring inconvenient contradictions in the other inspired writers, so a number of rival societies might be founded for eternal wrangling on the *dicta* of the Theosophists.

I fear that I must omit a great part of what I should like to say. But I again protest that definitions must be laid down before any profitable argument can be had. For instance, I feel sure that I mean by Spiritualism something very different from what my Transatlantic friends mean, while I can and do accept as mediums what Madame Blavatsky says are "not mediums . . . but incarnate illuminated souls, working consciously in collaboration with pure disembodied human and unembodied planetary spirits for the elevation and spiritualisation of mankind." That is pretty much what I mean by the highest form of mediumship.

When they speak of the dangers of mediumship I can follow them; but I turn aside when they speak so glowingly of the duty of cultivating the powers of one's own spirit as being free from all danger. I recognise the ditty.

"I know my soul hath power to know all things,  
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all.  
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,  
Yet for the least and vilest things am thrall."

I recognise my potencies, but I am by no means sure that the Theosophist recipe for developing them is one that may be safely followed. I speak with reserve, but, having seen both, I tried both. I am disposed to say that experiments with one's own spirit, in the way of cultivation of its latent power in abnormal directions, are both dangerous and, in the pressure of daily work, impossible, and *that* in a far greater degree than the practice of mediumship under properly guarded conditions. But, of all this, each must judge for himself. The fruit of the tree of knowledge is not plucked without much trouble and some risk, if it be only the risk of having one's eyes opened so as to know one's own mental and spiritual nakedness.

Each, I say, must decide for himself in a matter that concerns himself. I have no quarrel with all the theories I have lately read beyond this: that I see no beauty in them that I should abandon for any of them what to me is a sublimer faith and a more assured belief. I see points in all that I can accept and agree with, and I have the less difficulty in doing so, that they already exist in my own system. I know it is very easy to point the finger of scorn at the blots that defile what is popularly known as Spiritualism. That is a cheap and easy method. The question with me is not the least affected by any such course of argument, which I put aside as I do Maskelyne's assaults on the phenomena, which I know really to exist. I take a higher ground, and here I find myself in sympathy with one who, in this matter, I should think, would be accepted by us all as speaking words of truth and soberness. I quote from the Journal of June 8, 1877:—"Spiritualism differs from mere psychology in this, that it is a religion as well as a science, and that, in proportion as Spiritualists forget this they are helping to weaken its influence as a moral regenerator. . . . If we encourage what I must call a growing affectation of unbelief in our own facts, and are continually wasting our strength in endless disputations on points about which no real Spiritualist feels any doubt, we shall end by finding ourselves unable to meet the attacks

of outsiders, or to impress them with the importance and beauty of our subject. If Spiritualism is worth having, it is worth holding fast; and we should endeavour to put it forward in its best aspects, and not as though we had no longer any faith in that which we profess to advocate."

The writer is Miss Kislingbury; and I am glad to find myself in entire accord with her sentiments. They find indeed a new appropriateness now which may excuse my reproducing them; and they express, in terms of admirable clearness, a duty which, as "a real Spiritualist," I am profoundly impressed with, that of "holding fast" to Spiritualism and endeavouring "to put it forward in its best aspects."

And in so doing, it is something more than a passing satisfaction to feel assured that within the ranks of those called Spiritualists there is a large body of strenuous and earnest souls whose sympathies are deep and rooted, and whose divergences lie on the surface, and so are plain for men to see; while their real and abiding faith rests deep down below these superficial ripples, unmoved in its serenity by the winds of controversy and disputation.

At no time, I firmly believe, were there more such amongst us. At no time, I am fully sure, has their presence been more needed. Dr. Wyld has expressed a fear that discussions such as these may split us into two camps. I, on the contrary, sincerely hope that the very fact that so many can be found whose inner and real agreement will stand the shock of external and superficial difference is a hopeful indication that we may one day realise the prayer of the Master for his children—that *they all may be one*.

#### WRITING MEDIUMSHIP IN RELATION TO SPIRIT IDENTITY.

BY EMILY KISLINGBURY, SECRETARY TO THE BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

"The individual who first perceives a new fact, puts himself in advance of, and more or less in antagonism with, others. If his perception be true, but not accepted, it is not his fault that "he be right and everybody else wrong." Such a state of things has happened more than once in the history of science, but it is happily transitory; the many moving one-ward, the one onward."—Owen, *Anatomy of Vertebrates*, vol. iii., p. 165.

OF late there has been much examination and discussion amongst us of new theories and possible new explanations in regard to what we have known as spiritual manifestations, and some of us have shown no little alarm, lest in so examining and discussing, we should lose our hold on views hitherto most generally received, and which are more or less dear to the hearts of us all. For myself, I consider it of such supreme importance that we should arrive at right conclusions in these matters, that I shall not allow myself to be driven back or frightened away from due examination of every theory, new and old, which may or can be presented to us, in explanation of the strange things occurring in our midst, and for a true and faithful account of which the world will hold us Spiritualists to a certain extent responsible. I intend, therefore, to go on exercising full freedom of inquiry, looking carefully all round both facts and theories, turning them over, and handling them familiarly, until I get right into the heart of things, and learn something of their true nature, instead of being satisfied with that which *appears* only. This is laborious, and often thankless work; but on the whole it is to me pleasant as well as profitable, and I mean to go on with it, openly and fearlessly. This evening, however, I propose to leave the thorny wilds of the great unexplored, where one gets terribly torn and scratched by the brambles, and to wander awhile up the old, sunny, familiar highway of Spiritualism proper, endeavouring to gather, as best I may, some traces of the identity of our loved and lost, as they lie scattered in the various records to which I have had access. Others will doubtless be able to furnish, from the storehouse of their private experience, many far better proofs than those with which I have been privileged to meet.

I have confined myself to proofs given through writing-mediumship, and to only a particular phase of that, for you are all aware that writing mediums present a great variety of manifestation, and as this theme has been treated by a far abler writer than myself, whose published work will shortly be in our hands, I will only allude to it in a cursory manner.

Broadly speaking, writing through mediums is of two

kinds, direct and indirect. That which we call direct is mechanical or automatic, that is to say, it is independent of the conscious thought or will of the medium, and is often produced by other agencies than his own hand. Under this head I would class some planchette writing, and some writing produced when the medium holds the pencil in the ordinary way; so long as the writer's mind is unconscious of what is written, the writing may be considered mechanical. For instance, I have known Miss Florence Cook write a prayer while she was reading a novel; or the writing would be done backwards, only to be read afterwards by reflection in a looking-glass. The same thing happens in the case of Mrs. Jencken. At such times Miss Cook has told me that she felt a grip upon her arm, and she entirely lost all control of her hand, and almost all feeling in it. Other kinds of direct writing are those which take place altogether apart from the medium, though his or her presence is essential to its production. In the case of Mrs. Everitt and some others, the writing is produced in the dark in an incredibly short space of time, in minute and distinctly legible characters, a paper and pencil being placed on or under the table for the purpose.

In other cases slates are used—the manifestation varying with every medium. The Baron Guidentstübbe procured writing by simply placing a sheet of paper and a pencil in a box; afterwards the paper alone without any pencil; later, on tombs, in various churches and cemeteries, before witnesses, believers or sceptics. I myself lately found some very distinct pencil marks (three particular-shaped stars) on a newspaper left lying on the library table in this room while I was absent from it, for about a quarter of an hour; the two persons remaining in the room concurring in their testimony that no one had approached the table, or touched any paper on it, during my absence; and no pencil being on or near that table. The slate-writing through Dr. Slade and Mr. Watkins presents varieties of handwriting, signature, language, and diction; yet I fail to find in this class of manifestation any evidence of the identity of those whose signatures are attached to the writing. Evidence of intelligence there certainly is; and of a kind often very different from that of the medium, that I think is altogether beyond dispute. Perhaps some of the most interesting cases on record and which are little known to English readers are to be found in the works of a German writer. Mr. D. Hornung, entitled *Neue Geheimnisse des Tages* (Leipzig, 1857) and *Neueste Erfahrungen aus dem Geistesleben* (1858), from which I will cite a few examples. These works contain the history of experiments dating from the year 1853 onwards, and are in the highest degree entertaining and instructive. The origin of an instrument of communication which should be less cumbrous and more rapid than a table, is described on page 22 of the first work above-named. The idea was originally taken from the ordinary pantagraph used by architects and draughtsmen, and, after some modifications suggested by the musical director, Wagner, was called by him a *psychograph*, or soul-writer (*Seelenschreiber*). This appears to have been very much of the nature of a planchette, and the latter is probably a modification of the earlier-devised machine. With this psychograph Hornung set to work, experimenting with great diligence whenever an opportunity offered. He carried it about with him all over Germany, sought out mediums of every degree, irrespective of age, rank, education, or sex, and, by questions, elicited a mass of communications as curious as they are interesting. Arithmetical problems were often solved with great precision, and, to use Hornung's own words—"almost with the rapidity of thought." Sometimes the tables were turned, so to say, and the psychograph propounded riddles, to which, after unsuccessful guesses by the mortals, the psychograph, less mysterious or more gracious than the Sphinx, supplied its own answers. Mr. Hornung also drew up a list of fourteen "cardinal" questions, which he submitted to mediums in Munich, Stuttgart, Regensburg, Vienna, Prague, Turin, and other cities, in order to observe what variations would occur under the several different conditions. When the answers were found to agree in the main points, Mr. Hornung considered himself justified in accepting them as true, or approximating to truth. The conditions under which the sittings were held, the witnesses, the age, religion, and

other peculiarities of each medium are given in his book. The questions bear for the chief part on the nature of the influences exhibited through mediums, and on the method and process of their externalisation. I will give two examples. Question V.—*By what means is the indicator of the psychograph enabled to give, letter by letter, correct answers to questions, when the medium does not know how to answer them?* Answer (2)—"By increasing the power of the medium; otherwise spirits will often give foolish answers. Be careful never to call on such, for their influence is dangerous to body and soul." (The medium for this answer was a Roman Catholic lady, who, with her husband, did not believe in the spiritual origin of modern manifestations.) Answer (6)—"All inanimate objects can only receive life from the magnetic power of a spirit, or of an earthly being. You have, therefore, a clearer and more convincing proof of the presence of a spirit when questions are answered, the insight into which does not lie within the domain of human knowledge. It is true that the words of invisible supernatural beings are things incredible by the human understanding, because man cannot feel and grasp their personal existence; and yet he can give no satisfactory reason for doubting their existence." This answer was procured through the joint mediumship of three young girls, who combined in holding the same pencil.

Question VI.—*Certain reasonable persons assert that the spirit-guides and guardian-angels of mediums are only a fiction of their imagination, in which they firmly believe, though no such spirits are personally present; how can one refute this opinion?* Answer (1)—"When a man asserts that the medium speaks only from his own imagination, and that every man has not a protecting spirit, then it is he who is following his own imagination; for God has so ordered it in His wisdom that every man has a good being who leads and directs him. If any one doubts my words, let him reflect on them in connection with some accident or dangerous event in his life from which he has been happily delivered." This was given by a child of thirteen years old, of evangelical belief. Answer (4)—"Both are true. What the mind dwells upon as possible, becomes at last possible, and appears finally as a phenomenon. If another steps in to speak, I do not hold myself called upon to do so." The medium for this answer was a government official, a man of ripe age, who had accepted the spiritual hypothesis. Taking the answers as a whole, we find this hypothesis predominating throughout, and the direct action of disembodied spirits asserted, though in cases of clairvoyance it is generally granted that the medium's own spirit (or soul) is alone concerned. In his concluding chapter Mr. Hornung expresses his opinion that the collective highest thought of the persons operating is the chief factor in the manifestation; "the echo of our own soul, our higher spirituality, the divine unknown, the hidden prophet, the universal spirit."

I will now cite the instance given by the Baroness von Vay, in which she received through her own hand, communications from a cousin engaged in the Austro-Prussian war in 1866, every particular thus communicated being afterwards verified. This is a case of the action of an embodied human spirit, whose identity (as we understand identity) can be proved beyond dispute. I will quote from my review of the Baroness's work *Studien über die Geisterwelt*, in *The Spiritualist* newspaper, May 22, 1874.

A cousin of the authoress, called W—, who was in the campaign, professed continually to give accounts of himself through the hand of the medium while his body was asleep, which accounts always agreed with subsequent letters received from him. On the 4th July W—'s spirit wrote—"We have had a great battle. I am well, but so tired." On the 6th a letter came from W—, dated July 2nd: "We expect a decisive battle to-morrow. I have a feeling that I shall not escape, but do not fret about me; my trouble will soon be over." A day or two afterwards W—'s name appeared among the list of those slain in the battle of Königgrätz (Sadowa), which took place on the 3rd July. On the 9th W—'s spirit again wrote: "I assure you I am not dead. I came safely through the fearful battle of Königgrätz. Do not doubt my words. I will write you a letter in the flesh shortly." Three days later the Baroness received a letter from her cousin, dated July 11th: "God and the good spirits protected me in that frightful carnage; thousands fell; 450 privates in our battalion, and two officers."

Another interesting case of an intelligence apparently altogether apart from the medium communicating between

two persons, is the following, which I give in the words of a letter written to myself by the lady concerned.

Two days ago I received a most remarkable and conclusive proof of the reality of spirit intercourse. Four or five days since, having been unwell for some time, I requested of my guides information and advice regarding my state of health, and also information upon another subject about which I was anxious. About thirty-six hours later I received a letter from a friend of mine, a private lady medium, stating that she had fallen into a deep trance, and on awaking had found a letter before her addressed to me, which she thereby enclosed. This letter contained complete answers to all my questions, as well as a Latin prescription (not one word of which my friend understood) which I had made up immediately, and from which I have derived the greatest benefit. I doubt whether any earthly doctor could so completely have met my necessity. I need not tell you that the lady was entirely ignorant of my requests, and I therefore consider this as conclusive a proof of the reality and separate identity of our spirit friends, as can possibly be given. My experience is that nothing occurs at professional *séances* to be compared with what is received through private mediums. Therefore, although I do not wish my name published, you are perfectly welcome to mention the circumstance to your friends, and as you know me, your authentication ought to be sufficient.

We now come to *indirect* writing, which though often produced without conscious mental action on the part of the medium, is yet impressionally received by the brain at the moment that it is being written. This kind of writing is sometimes called inspirational, and has a tendency to become more and more normal, the more frequently it is employed. A striking example of this kind of writing is Mr. E. Maitland's work *England and Islam*, the manner of whose production is described in *The Soul and how it found me*. The writings of the Baroness von Vay are chiefly of this order, and many of the French and Spanish Spiritist communications are conveyed in the same manner.

Some of these writings are so similar in style to the authors whose names are attached to them, that to some this fact alone is a sufficient proof of the identity of their authorship. Take for instance the examples of Dickens's unfinished work of *Edwin Drood* continued through the mediumship of Mr. J. P. James, of Brattleboro', U.S.A.; some of the lyrics in Harris's *Golden Age*; many of the inspirational utterances of Miss Lizzie Doten, and in particular a little book by the Baroness von Vay called *Tales of the Sun-Rays*, said to be given under the inspiration of Hans Christian Andersen, and which is really very like *What the Moon Saw*, one of the earlier works of that writer. But all this is still far from proving identity, to my mind at least, because it seems to me that such cases may be explained by some subtle, hidden laws of mental action, under the heads of memory, imitation, and imagination, with the whole capabilities of which we are far from being acquainted. The only proofs which can be deemed at all satisfactory, to my thinking, are those in which precise information is given on subjects or events quite unknown to any one present, and which are verifiable. To this class of facts belong the case of Abraham Florentine, published some time ago in *The Spiritualist*, and other cases given to the world by "M.A., Oxon." As the writer of these is present with us this evening, I hope he may be induced to favour us with some further account of them.

A lady has very kindly furnished me with an instance of proved identity occurring through her own mediumship. I quote from her diary.

May 10th, 1865.—At seven o'clock in the evening I felt a powerful impression that A— was with me. She told me impressionally that I was to write down a message for her mamma; that I was to tell her her brothers were well and happy, and would soon be home. I believed this to be quite false—because, as I thought, the brothers referred to were in the West Indies, one being very ill. So, as I feared yielding to an untruthful spirit, I would not take the pencil to receive any spiritual writing. But I could get no rest all night, and the next day the impression was so strong that I took the pencil, and received a very beautiful message from A— for her mother. This was at once sent off to my friend. By return of post came a reply. On the evening, and at the very hour that I had felt the presence of A—, my friend, being anxious about her invalid son, begged A—, if it were possible, to go and see how her brothers were, and to come and tell me, that I might write the message for her. The vessel in which the brothers were returning reached England on Saturday, May 13th, and they arrived at home well and happy.

Other similar proofs have been given through the same medium.

In France, Spain, and other Continental countries, the study of Spiritualism is pursued almost exclusively by means of writing mediumship, chiefly of an indirect character, and

in this manner the doctrines of the erraticity of spirits, and of their reincarnation in earthly bodies, have been elaborated. In fact, the works of Allan Kardec are composed almost wholly from teachings received through a vast number of writing mediums in all parts of France.

Tests of identity are not so much insisted on by our Continental brethren as by us more positive-minded English-speaking people; they set more store by instruction and moral and religious teaching. We find consequently that Spiritualism, or to give its own distinctive name Spiritism, on the Continent has a more elevating and refining influence than is common with us, who view it more from the physical science standpoint. I was so much struck with this during my visit to France in August, 1876, that on my return I endeavoured to raise a discussion on that point in *The Spiritualist* newspaper. But some of our orthodox friends were so shocked at my ventured innovation that I retired from the impending contest. Since then much exposure to fire has made me bolder, and I again raise the question whether it is not more ennobling to judge of these communications by their intrinsic merit, according to their tone and influence, than to be perpetually seeking for tests of the personal identity of our friends, to accept the teacher for the sake of the teaching, no matter what his name or insignia. But as this opens up altogether a different part of the subject, I will not attempt to enter upon it this evening; perhaps some friend present may think well to enlarge upon it either now or on some future occasion.

#### ATTEMPTS TO MAKE A DOG BELIEVE IN GHOSTS.

(From "The Evening Standard," Feb. 22nd.)

A GENTLEMAN, named Romanes, has been anxious to find out whether dogs are believers in ghosts and Spiritualism, and has been making experiments accordingly, with results for a knowledge of which the world is indebted to the *New York Times*.

Mr. Romanes began his researches into these mysteries with a bone; and this, the critic says of him, "is alone sufficient to show the heartless and irreverent character of the man. If there is anything which a dog holds peculiarly sacred, it is a bone. A terrier will submit to be deluded by false representations that there are eligible cats in the coal-scuttle, or that the piano is full of rats, but he feels that bones are too sacred to be made the subject of jest." Mr. Romanes, however, took the bone, and tied round it a thin silken thread; and, just as the little Scotch terrier with which his investigations were conducted was in the act of seizing it, his master slowly drew it away. The poor dog regarded the moving bone with an amazement which found expression in erect ears, and a tail gradually thrust between his hind legs, and, becoming convinced, as Mr. Romanes supposes, that it was but the ghost of a bone, incontinently fled, howling dismally.

On the whole, the *New York Times* considers that the dog behaved much more sensibly than many men would have done under a similar belief. "In all probability," the journal says, "had Mr. Romanes ever seen a piece of roast beef in the act of cruising unassisted around the table, he would instantly have asked it preposterous questions, and would subsequently have let his hair grow long, and have become a confirmed Spiritualist. His intelligent dog did none of these things, but as soon as he decided that he had seen a spiritual bone, he refused to have anything more to do with it, and continued to wear his hair of the usual length, and to cling to that faith in which he was educated."

Mr. Romanes was not yet satisfied, however. He took a pipe, got some soap and water, and began to blow bubbles along the floor. It took some time to convince the terrier that these airy nothings were not a new kind of particularly dangerous rat; but presently he put his paw on one, and it, of course, collapsed. He tried a second, and it likewise vanished, and then, recollections of the ghostly bone overwhelming him, again he fled.

Still Mr. Romanes was not satisfied. He proceeded to "make faces" at his victim, and the grimaces he made were so hideously ugly that we are told the dog mistook him for the worst ghost he had ever seen, whereupon he crept under the sofa and tried to die. Lovers of dogs will sympathise with the poor little terrier; and if Mr. Romanes continues his investigations, will hardly regret to hear that he has had to deal with a larger dog, which pursues a more spirited polish with regard to ghosts.

DR. ALEXANDER WILDER, vice-president of the Theosophical Society of New York, is the American editor of Payne Knight's *Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, and Thomas Taylor's *Eleusian and Bacchic Mysteries*. He is an accomplished physiologist, and at the present time is preparing for the press a book on *Serpent Worship*.

MR. DESMOND G. FITZ-GERALD, M.S.Tel.E., will read a paper "On the Effect of certain Creedal and Conventional Limitations in Relation to Spiritualism" before the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, on Monday evening next, the 4th of March, at half-past eight o'clock.



DR. SLADE'S SEANCES WITH THE GRAND DUKE  
CONSTANTINE.

ON Wednesday last week, Dr. Slade, accompanied by M. Alexandre Aksakof and Professor Boutlerof, gave a *séance* to the Grand Duke Constantine. The Duke gave them a cordial reception, and after a few minutes' conversation, the manifestations began with great power. The Duke held a new slate, alone, and obtained independent writing upon it.

The Grand Duke Constantine has before this shown his appreciation of new branches of science. When Lieutenant Maury was obliged to flee from the United States during the late civil war, the Duke recognised the then scarcely appreciated value of his researches on the physical geography of the sea, and oceanic currents, so offered him a home and a welcome in Russia.

Dr. Slade is fully engaged in St. Petersburg, and sometimes obtains messages in the Russian language. At one of his sittings last week, he obtained writing in six languages upon a single slate.

PRIVATE SEANCES.

LAST Saturday evening, at a private *séance* at the house of Mrs. Makdougall-Gregory, 21, Green-street, Grosvenor-square, London, Mr. W. Eglinton was the medium, and Mrs. Gregory, with six or seven of her friends, witnessed the manifestations. At first all the members of the circle, including the medium, sat with their hands interlinked round the drawing-room table in the dark. After a few ordinary manifestations, in the shape of the floating in the air of solid objects and of playing musical instruments, a spirit form was seen with its head and bust illuminated by a large phosphorescent-looking light covered with drapery, which it held in its hands, near its breast. This form was seen by everybody, and several times glided round the circle; below its bust all was darkness, and no footstep was heard. It was seen by all present, and presented itself for about a minute each time, then disappeared by the cutting off of the light. At the request of one of the sitters, it floated over the centre of the table, a moment after it had been seen outside the circle. Once it raised Mr. Harrison, chair and all, three or four inches from the floor, while the medium was held, as stated, at the opposite side of the table. The light was not strong enough to permit particular features of the moving form to be carefully criticised.

Last Tuesday night, at a dark *séance* with Mr. Eglinton, at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, 41, Wimpole-street, London, little took place, although all present were either Spiritualists or favourably inclined towards Spiritualism. Among the latter was a poet and literary man, who had a heavy musical box floating about his head, sometimes resting upon his head and playing there, and sometimes playing against the small of his back. His head and shoulders were frequently fingered by materialised hands. Beyond this, nothing of moment occurred.

ON Sunday next Mr. J. J. Morse will deliver a trance address in the Spiritualists' Hall, Weirs-court, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Subject: "Elements of Cosmic Philosophy: Society." Service to commence at 6.30 p.m. Monday, March 4th, same hall; subject, "Is the Devil Dead?" Lecture to commence at eight o'clock.

RECEPTION TO MR. J. J. MORSE AT DERBY.—A pleasant and numerous-attended gathering of the Spiritualists of Derby, including a fair number from the surrounding district, took place in the Temperance-hall, on the evening of Wednesday, February 20th. The object of the meeting, held under the auspices of the Derby Psychological Society, was to give Mr. Morse a public reception and welcome to the town he has adopted as his future residence. Tea having been disposed of, at which over ninety sat down, Mr. H. P. Adshear, of Belper, was called upon to preside. In well-chosen sentences he briefly addressed the listeners about the interesting event which had caused them to meet. Mr. A. Smedley then, in the name of the Spiritualists of Derby and the surrounding districts, extended a hearty welcome to Mr. Morse and his family. He spoke of the valuable services Mr. Morse's guides had rendered to the cause, and closed by expressing his pleasure that Mr. Morse was a resident among them. The audience cordially endorsed the sentiments expressed, and enthusiastically received Mr. Morse on his rising to reply. Mr. Morse, in a few remarks, expressed his appreciation of the honour done him. Other speakers addressed the meeting, and friends furnished vocal and instrumental music. Dancing terminated the proceedings, which were of a lively nature.

THE VIEWS OF THE THEOSOPHISTS.

BY DESMOND G. FITZ-GERALD, M.S.T.E.L.

"The doctrine of motion has been justly called the key of Nature."—MACCLARIN.

IN your issue of February 22nd a vice-president of the Theosophical Society of New York comes forward to support Colonel Olcott's proposition that there are certain beings called "elementals," who "of themselves have no more desire to harm than to help us, and are no more responsible for their actions than the wind that blows, the fire that burns, the flood that devastates;" and who "are the force of the wind, the fire, the flood." In his paper on *The Soul and the Spirit* Professor Wilder begins by bringing against me a charge of making an *ad captandum* statement in a very plausible manner; but the charge is so vague, from the statement in question not being specified, that I cannot make out wherein I have erred. He, in fact, confirms my impression of the views held by the New York Theosophists, by immediately afterwards stating that "The forces of nature, though 'errant, unthinking, and soulless, are not lifeless, but are operated by a power superior to themselves.'" Reading this with the context of Colonel Olcott's paper, I interpret it to signify that "the force of the wind, the fire, the flood," is *alive*. Now, although we have all heard of *vis viva*, such a statement seems to me clearly to imply that its author can have no conception whatever of the real nature of what is known to science as "mechanical energy." I am one of those who freely admit that this, like "matter," is but one of the manifestations of a creative Will; and, of course, both matter and energy may, within certain limits, be directed and influenced by the will of other beings. But that which directs a force can in no case be the force itself: nor can the "force of the wind, the fire, the flood," or—as I prefer to say—any "mode of energy" known in mechanical dynamics, have an individuality such as that ascribed to the "elementals."

I purpose taking up this question when I have sufficient time at my disposal to give it a somewhat adequate treatment.

The equation I gave has been somewhat maltreated. I may express it as follows:—

$$\text{Kinetic energy} = \frac{m \cdot v^2}{64 \cdot 38} \text{ foot-pounds.}$$

Here *m* is the mass, in pounds avoirdupois (of the "wind" or "flood"); *v* its velocity, in feet per second, which has to be squared, or multiplied by itself, and the foot-pound is the work done in raising one pound avoirdupois through one foot. The "force" or energy of "the fire" is 772 foot-pounds for every unit of heat, *i.e.*, the quantity of heat that will raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit.

ASTROLOGY.

THE common saying that "two of a trade never agree" might be illustrated by the history of the astrologers. Many a time have they fallen out among themselves as to what should come hereafter, and have so mocked and abused the credulity of mankind, that all ages have, by experience, detected the falsehood of their pretences. For example, Nostradamus, with his magical glass, was supposed to predict the death of Henry II.; but Cardan and Gauricus, two lights of astrology, foretold for their royal master a happy old age. Henry, as we know, perished at a tournament in the flower of his youth.

A few instances of the false predictions of astrologers and magicians may be here appropriately introduced.

Zica, of Arabia, was promised by his seers long life to persecute the Christians, and died the very year of the prediction.

Albumazar, the oracle of astrology, left in writing that he found the Christian religion, according to the influence of the stars, should last but one thousand four hundred years; he has been belied four hundred years already.

In 1524 the astrologers foretold the destruction of the world by water, in consequence of the great conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, in zodiacal sign Pisces. The world survived the prediction.

It was foretold of a constable of France that he should cross the Alps, and die before a besieged city in the eighty-third year of his age, or, if he survived the sign, should live to above a hundred. He did not cross the Alps, and died in his bed, aged eighty-four.

Without referring to more of these absurd predictions, which have established their own falsehood and the folly of their propounders, we may mention the case of that astrologer who foretold in a sudden manner the death of his princely employer. "Dispose, sir," said he, "of your affairs with what speed you may, for it is impossible that you should live long in this world." "Why so?" said the prince. "Because," replied the other, "the stars, whose sight and position on your birthday I have well observed, threaten you, and that not obscurely, with death." "Well," said the prince, "you who believe in these birthday stars, how long are you to live through the bounty of the fates?" The astrologer answered that he had many years before him; whereupon the prince ordered him to instant execution, and triumphed over both predictions, by hanging the astrologer and living himself to a good old age.

The astrologers were, of course, usually careful to predict what was likely to happen.

When, however, the subject of the prediction was far off, the astrologer might safely give the reins to his fancy, and indulge in any speculations he thought proper. Thus, in 1203, a monk predicted that an earthquake should swallow up London in 1842. Dr. Dee followed in the same strain, and declared that this dreadful catastrophe would take place—which of course did not happen. Another plan of the astrologers was to speak in obscure language which would admit of almost any interpretation.

Lilly averred that a prophecy in Greek character foretold all the



disasters of the Cromwellian civil war, and ended by a prediction of the Restoration, couched in these singular terms—"And after him shall come a dead man, and with him a royal C of the best blood in the world, and he shall have the crown, and set England on the right way." The meaning of which was declared to be the restoration of Charles II., thus:—"Monkery being extinguished, and the Lord-General's name being Monk, is the dead man. The royal C (the gamma of the Greek answering to the C of the Roman alphabet) is Charles II., who, from his extraction, may be said to be of the best blood in the world." If such interpretations as this were to be admitted, any sort of jargon might be made to foretell any imaginable events. Why might not the astrological prediction mean that after all the troubles of civil war, and the termination of the Stuart dynasty in the person of Queen Anne, the dead man—that is to say, the apparently dead branch of the old royal family in Hanover—should come, and with it a royal G (George I., of course), who came of the best blood in the world? Surely, one interpretation would be as good as the other.—*The Monthly Illustrated Journal*.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

At a recent meeting of the Psychological Society of Great Britain, held at 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, London, under the presidency of Mr. Serjeant Cox, the debate on Slate-writing Phenomena, as set forth in Mr. A. R. Wallace's letter to *The Spectator*, was resumed.

Mr. Munton, in resuming the debate on Mr. Wallace's letter to the *Spectator*, addressed the society at considerable length. After alluding to the decisive character of the quoted example (that is to say, the writing of Mr. Wallace's own selected word between two closed slates which never left his sight), the speaker examined the variety of evidence adduced by trustworthy witnesses, showing—1, that these direct writings were not due to imposture; 2, that the power, be it what it might, was guided by intelligence; 3, that, apart from physical impossibility, it could not be attributable to the involuntary action of the medium (some messages being in languages unfamiliar to him); and, 4, that it had apparently nothing to do with the mind of the sitter, the messages being frequently inconsistent with that person's own knowledge. Mr. Munton then referred to his professional association with the great Slade trial in 1876, remarking that he had studiously abstained for more than a year from taking any part in public debates bearing upon that *cause célèbre*, as he considered it was inexpedient for an advocate to do so. But, as those law proceedings had long since closed, and Dr. Slade was in a foreign land, never likely to revisit England, and all professional relationship had terminated, there was no longer any reason why he (Mr. Munton) should refrain from stating honestly and candidly the result of his own investigation as a matter of psychological research. It was no part of the duty of an advocate (in fact, it was inconsistent with the very proper etiquette in the legal profession) to give any opinion in the open court on the innocence or guilt of his client, but now he was in a position to fearlessly assert that after numerous sittings with Slade (sometimes aided by skilled witnesses) the conclusion seemed inevitable that the magisterial charge, alleging all the phenomena to be fraud and imposture, was erroneously made. Not that he (the speaker) was by any means disposed to agree that these manifestations were due to departed spirits; on the contrary, the more he examined into the matter the more he dissented from that conclusion. He, however, had great respect for those who had been able to satisfy themselves that the phenomena were attributable to such a cause. There could be little doubt that Slade was personally convinced on the subject; but it was no crime to form a mistaken opinion, assuming it to be so, and but for the popular excitement which existed at the time of the trial, this expression of belief would not have been treated, as it certainly was treated, as more or less conclusive of guilt. Mr. Munton then explained what took place in the shape of several manifestations which had occurred in the presence of himself and friends. Among other things he had induced Dr. Slade to reverse all the alleged favourable practices, that is to say, he made him sit with his face to the light, instead of to the dark; to wear gloves to exclude the finger nail theory, and use new slates to negative the alleged invisible prepared writing. The accusers of Dr. Slade had hastily assumed everything against him, and it must be confessed that, in the absence of explanation, the suspicious manner and convulsive action, common to most so-called medial persons, created unfavourable appearances. He (Mr. Munton) was himself much struck with this at his early interviews with Dr. Slade; but on patient inquiry he was convinced that there was an agency at work wholly beyond the medium, though what the exact nature of the power was he could not pretend to say. One of the main objects of the society was to endeavour by careful investigation to solve this problem. The prejudice on the question under discussion was very remarkable. One might divide the community into three classes. Firstly, those who had taken the trouble to see for themselves; secondly, people who, being absolutely ignorant of even the facts, excluded from their belief everything they were unable to comprehend; and, lastly, those who were ready to accept the word of any public conjurer without further inquiry. It was a singular circumstance in regard to Mr. Maskelyne, that that person had not only never seen the manifestation he pretended to imitate, but his performance had not the faintest resemblance to what actually occurred at Slade's. No one could object to an effort at imitation; but even at the Egyptian Hall some reasonable approach to fact

might be expected. He (Mr. Munton) had had no experience of slate-writing phenomena with the medium referred to in Mr. Wallace's published letter; but when a man with such a reputation as Mr. Wallace (against whose honour and integrity his boldest assailant had never dared to utter a word) came forward to testify to these things, it was surely high time that they should, after every natural hypothesis had been exhausted, be thoroughly, systematically, and scientifically investigated.

#### A WARNING OF DANGER.

BY E. LOUISA S. NOSWORTHY.

An incident has just occurred in this household, suggestive to me of the watchful care of unseen guardians. This morning I sat in the dining-room soon after breakfast, reading aloud to my husband, my little boy writing at a table near.

Suddenly the closed door was violently swung open to the fullest limit its hinges allowed; such a style of opening a door would justly be considered rude, unmannerly, and worthy of rebuke; for an instant my feeling was annoyance at the interruption, but seeing no entrance of a human being, a strong impression seized me that it was a warning of danger, and I flew rather than ran through the open doorway to find no mortal on the other side, or indeed anywhere else on the ground floor of the house, but to discover that the drawing-room on the other side of the passage was on fire. In an instant my cries brought all the household to the work of rolling up and smothering the flames of burning drapery, and the fire was quickly extinguished before it had done much damage.

I am writing this with a burnt hand and scorched eyebrows and eyelashes, for I was the first to seize on a mass of burning drapery. Some one had placed the drapery on a chair so near the fire as to be within reach of sparks, or those dangerous explosive pieces of coal which occasionally fly beyond the limits of the fireplace.

Calmly contemplating this incident now that serenity is restored to a temporarily terror-stricken household, I see that but for that warning by the door opening in a few moments a room, or perchance an entire house, would have been in imminent peril of total destruction. When I entered the room a chair was burning, a mass of drapery burning and a hearthrug in the same condition. In close proximity to these articles stood a large painted and varnished screen of most combustible materials; if the flames had caught it, their fury could not easily have been arrested. I see also that no warning save that remarkable springing open of the door would have had such a decisive effect in causing my immediate exit from the room, as I had settled myself to reading for an hour.

I assert that when the door opened in the manner I have described, no human being save the persons inside the dining-room were on that floor of the house. The servant from the kitchen rushed up from the floor beneath, and those occupied in the bedrooms ran down on hearing the alarm.

Each person of the household has been closely questioned, and the whereabouts of each ascertained at the time of the mysterious door-opening, and there remains no hypothesis by which to account for the occurrence but that of an unseen agency kindly interfering to prevent trouble and damage.

To that unseen agency, as well as to the Supreme Power ruling and directing all agencies, I desire publicly to testify my gratitude for the deliverance.

New Leeds, Leeds, February 24th, 1878.

Mr. J. W. FLETCHER writes:—"Arrangements are being made by the Americans in London for a celebration of the Anniversary of Modern Spiritualism. Announcements of time, place, and the speakers to appear, will be made."

MR. LAWRENCE OLIPHANT.—Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, late M.P. for the Stirling Boroughs, and Paris correspondent of the *Times*, has rejoined the Spiritualistic community of Mr. Thomas Lake Harris, in America, and is now there with his wife. Mr. Oliphant, tired of a useless life in fashionable London, threw it up some years ago, to follow an industrious career in Mr. Harris's community, and to do some good to the world as a consequence of his existence in it. In his excellent novel, *Piccadilly* (Blackwood & Son), he gives a most truthful and amusing picture of artificial life in the Metropolis, both among people of refinement and people of vulgar wealth. It is a book which will exactly meet the taste of intelligent Spiritualists.

## Poetry.

## HYMN.

SEND us, Lord, we pray Thee, from Thy holy sphere,  
Spirits bright to cheer us, midst our darkness here;  
May their light illumine hearts that fear or doubt,  
Bringing souls within, who linger now without.  
Fill our hearts with gladness—Where is now Death's sting?  
Since to us our lost ones back Thou deign'st to bring,  
Telling us of triumph in the life to come,  
When, Earth's trials over, Thou shalt call us home.

Let Thy Holy Spirit on all flesh be poured.  
Be thou, Lord Almighty, by all hearts adored.  
Hallow our affections, keep our souls from sin,  
Cleanso each inmost chamber,—let Christ enter in.  
And, if aught unworthy in our hearts abide,  
Let the Lord's perfection our corruption hide;  
Till He leads us upwards, to the throne above,  
Where enshrined He reigneth, whose best name is Love.

Praise the Lord of Mercy! loving ones He sends,  
Perfect with imperfect, thus the Father blends.  
Guard us, Lord, from evil, who Thy love confess,  
Fill them, Lord, with blessing, sent our souls to bless.  
But, midst all their pleasures, may the brightest be  
Joy, as sight of souls, turned by them to Thee:  
When, at Thy Great Harvest, heavy sheaves they bring,  
And we, with them, worship thee, Lord, God, and King.

GEORGE SUTHERLAND.

## A VISION OF THE LIFE ETERNAL.

BY J. T. MARKLEY.

THROUGH soft blue lightnings in the evening sky—  
Past autumn peak-clouds in the distant west,—  
Methinks I glimpsed the world of endless day,  
Where coffins, tears, and cypress are unknown.  
The heavens open'd to my entranced gaze,  
And sweetly awful was the cloud-fring'd scene—  
The midnight entrance to pure love and life,—  
The realm of gods,—of church'd and unchurch'd saints,  
Of heroes, martyrs; kings awaiting thrones—  
The home of angel-progress evermore.  
I saw no graves, or landing epitaphs,—  
No white-robed priests or books of holy law,  
For death was but a memory of the past,  
And praise became its own interpreter:  
Each worthy soul the saviour of itself,  
And God the premier spirit of the throng.  
I failed to trace the marks of sin or blood,  
Or find the constant agonies of earth.  
No pains, no groans—no harp-strings out of tune,  
No hells of conscience to disturb the peace  
In that fair clime of love, sweet sounds, and truth.  
The widow's bitter wail—the orphan's cry,  
The consecrated shame of lowly birth,—  
The signals of distress by land and sea  
Rent not the breasts of holy crowds aloft.  
Their summer grew eternally more grand,  
As through the chaste unfoldings of new song  
The spirits rose to higher spheres of light  
And reached a paradise of lovelier view.

The light'ning ceased to play; the dream-life fled;  
And darkness, doubt—the pains of flesh-bound man,  
Returned to haunt the student in his muso.  
But why despair?—the light, the love, the flowers,  
The music, goodness, beauty of the skies,  
The tenderness and bliss of yon long life  
Is ours for aye, by birthright and bequest.

Peterborough.

## 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.]

## PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS.

SIR,—In such contributions as I have been able to make to the literature of Spiritualism, I have generally confined myself to facts, and have not cared to discuss, much less to invent, theories. The testimony of a spirit is no doubt a fact to be considered, but his account of the mode by which he produces certain effects is not necessarily to be accepted as true.

The spirits with whom I have become acquainted are reticent respecting the spiritual life. They say that it is very difficult for them to explain and for us to comprehend. But they strongly insist upon their own independent existence, personality, and individuality, and warmly and indignantly resent the accusation that they are the spirits of the mediums, or are other than themselves. Our friend "Joey," for example, declares, speaking in his materialised form, that he is no one but himself, as much an individual person as you are, perfectly remembering who and what he was in this world, and perfectly knowing what he now is—himself and no other; and he speaks with a natural human indignation of the efforts of ingenious theorists to deprive him of his identity, and make him out to be other than he is.

Returning to the facts which seem to me more interesting than arguments, I should like to give a few which I have lately had the opportunity of observing. Sitting a few days ago with four persons who are all more or less mediums around a small table, a card of three by four inches, and a lead pencil, were laid upon it. I examined the card, and to identify it, put a corner torn off into my waistcoat pocket. The gas

was then turned off, and hands joined round the table. It was perfect darkness, which no one will object to when they read of what was done.

In a minute and a half, by estimate, I heard a sound of a pencil on paper, and supposed a message was being written on the card. In less than half a minute there were raps for light. When the gas was lighted, we found upon the card a very beautiful portrait of a lady, which I doubt if the cleverest artist in England could have drawn in the best light in ten minutes, and which it would be utterly impossible for any one to draw in the dark. I know that when the light was extinguished, there was no mark upon the card. I know that it was the same card, for I accurately fitted the torn edge with the corner in my pocket. I believe that all hands were joined, and that, in the perfect darkness I heard the drawing being made. The microscope will show that it was made with a pencil. For those who were present there could scarcely be a more perfect test.

Possibly a better one for some of the persons present was given under precisely similar circumstances a few days before, when I laid upon the table a sheet of note paper marked with my initials. In perfect darkness we heard the sound as of writing, and, on getting a light, found written across the paper in four directions four distinct messages, in four different handwritings, each quite peculiar, and each perfectly recognised by persons present as the handwriting of individuals they had known. I see no flaw in this, and no possibility of deception. The notepaper and the card are pasted in my album, and I could prove what I have stated in regard to them in any court of justice by the oaths of five unimpeachable witnesses.

I had never until quite lately had any personal experience of the production of flowers, and have suspected deception in some cases I have read of. They came to us unexpectedly. We were sitting in a small room, with its doors and windows securely fastened, in the dark. The musical boxes had been wound up, started, stopped, and whirled about while playing in all parts of the room, from floor to ceiling, while all hands were, I have reason to believe, clasped in each other around the table. Then came a breeze of the most delicious perfume. Then fresh ferns and flowers of five or six sorts, fell upon our hands, as they were joined around the table. They were cool and moist with dew. The same night, at eleven o'clock, as I was about to get into bed, on turning down the clothes, I found just below my pillow a handful of violets. The stems were not wet, but the dew in each calyx had left a damp spot on the sheet. There were no violets in or about the house, and no one had entered it; nor is there the least probability that they were brought by any mortal hand. I do not give this as a test, for it is not absolute. One cannot prove a negative in such a case.

But here is an instance of slate writing which I give at second-hand. A gentleman fastened together two small clean slates, with a bit of pencil between them, wrapped them in strong paper, and securely sealed them. He brought the packet to Willie Eglinton, one of the mediums in the test cases given above; and laid it on the table, where it lay in his sight, and was not removed from it for one instant. He took the slates away securely sealed as he had brought them, and on breaking the seals and opening them at home, found the insides covered with writing in several languages. Being a man of science, and a member of various learned societies, he went to a popular Materialist, to show him what he had got. "I wouldn't believe my own father," said the *savant*, "if he told me such a story as that."

And, indeed, how can a man settled in, and committed to, materialism, in a dozen learned volumes, be expected to believe a fact which reduces to rubbish the labours of his life, and destroys the reputation that gives life its value. If only one of the million facts of spiritual manifestations is true, what would become of our philosophers?

In this view of the case, I cannot but wonder at the sneers at "Spiritism" of Mr. Mivart in his criticisms of the hypotheses of Mr. Darwin. One fact would be worth more to most people than all his logic, and if the fact were diabolic, it would not be one whit less valuable. An evil spirit disproves materialism just as well as a good spirit. If one were to raise the devil in the Hall of Science, Mr. Bradlaugh would be confuted all the same.

I have no experience of evil spirits that I am aware of. On one occasion in twenty years I have witnessed the operations of what seemed to me disorderly and, to say the least, impolitic ones. In a dark *séance* the hearth-rug was rolled up and placed upon the table, and a large fender put upon the arms of some of the sitters; my chair, and that of Mr. Eglinton, whose hand I was holding, were in the same moment pulled from under us, and again, a moment after, in the full light, instantaneously and with great force. "Joey" explained that these things were done by some unruly fellows, who had come with one of the sitters, who had been admitted for the first time, and that he ("Joey") had not been able to control them.

I have spoken of the amount of force often exerted. A heavy table is frequently suspended in the air for twenty seconds. I have seen one lifted with a man sitting on it. Several times Willie Eglinton, while I have held his hand, has been lifted so high in the air that I have had to rise from my chair to keep hold of him, and his head must have nearly touched the ceiling, while his feet were above my head. Not only was his weight sustained, but a strong pull was made to draw me up after him.

I think I cannot be wrong in thinking that facts of this kind are worthy of the attention of men of science and philosophers.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

32, Fopstone-road, Earl's Court, S.W.

## TWO CRITICS OF THEOSOPHY.

SIR,—In my experience of controversial caricatures of misunderstood opinions, I think I never met with such a farrago of misconceptions as the three or four columns of your last number, over the signatures of

"M.A., Cantab." and "Scrutator." Nor by the light of the several communications from Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky (*Spiritualist*, December 7th and February 8th) can they be regarded as excusable. The epithets "uncharitable," "self-righteous," "slandrous," "effrontery," "absurd," "cruel," may be considered by these writers a fitting response to the appeal with which Madame Blavatsky's letter concludes. "In the name of logic and common sense, let us, before bandying epithets, submit our differences to the arbitrament of reason." But there is one precaution in controversy which it is never safe, not to say fair, to neglect. Whenever you are about to impute to an opponent, not being a notorious and previously convicted fool, some transparently absurd, monstrous, and even wicked opinion, first make sure that he holds, or, at least, that he may plausibly be represented as holding it, by possible construction or intendment. Both "M.A., Cantab," and "Scrutator," distinctly attribute to Colonel Olcott the dogma, inference, or assumption, which is stated by "Scrutator" in these wonderful terms:—"Every physical medium is already an astral man, that is, a mere soul, who has already lost his trinity." Colonel Olcott had said, "Mediumistic physical phenomena are not produced by pure spirits, but by 'souls,' embodied or disembodied, and usually with the help of elementals," and "the whole range of physical phenomena, from rapping to full form presentations, are manifestations of the power of either earth bound elementaries, helped by elementals, or the souls of the mediums themselves," that is, says "Scrutator," "souls that have lost their spirits." "There is no disguising," he continues, "that the dictum of Colonel Olcott assumes," the proposition above quoted. It is scarcely worth pausing to notice that Col. Olcott's proposition is in the alternative, "by elementaries or by the soul of the medium," and thus that even if "Scrutator" had rightly understood instead of having ludicrously misapprehended the meaning of the "soul" or "astral man," it does not follow that all physical mediums produce the phenomena by their own "souls," which might, therefore, not have lost their "spirits." "Scrutator" vaults over this difficulty by saying "the 'soul' disembodied only comes through the mediumship of the 'soul' embodied, his *confère*." So that if the elementary does it, "Scrutator" appears to think that the medium cannot be an (embodied) elementary also. Where does "Scrutator" find it laid down that mediums must be as bad as the bad spirits, or as good as the good spirits, influencing them, or who, not necessarily influencing their thoughts or actions, merely use their mediumship for the production of physical effects? Such effects do not suppose, and are not usually accompanied by even the temporary "control" of the medium during their production. Admitting, therefore, for the moment, the extraordinary assumption incomprehensibly ascribed by "Scrutator" and "M.A., Cantab," to Colonel Olcott, that only elementaries and embodied "souls," which resemble elementaries in having lost their spirits, can effect physical phenomena, it follows that only those mediums who produce the phenomena themselves need be considered in that condition. But the real answer, of course, is that Colonel Olcott's conception of the "soul" is radically different from what your correspondents suppose it to be. Colonel Olcott, in fact, regards physical phenomena, produced by the "soul" or double, as quite consistent with the purest character, whereas those produced by elementaries do suppose proximity, and therefore a certain affinity, to the medium of these spirits. Witness this passage: "The Katie King of Miss Florence Cook may have been her own double or soul; in fact, I am quite sure it could not have been an elementary, since I am assured that she was a young girl of unblemished character." I do not like to use Scrutator's word "effrontery," but how otherwise in the face of this passage (I could quote others, if necessary) are we to characterise the assertion that Colonel Olcott holds all "souls" producing physical phenomena (including "full form presentations") to be in the dire condition suggested? Where, in any communication of either Madame Blavatsky or Col. Olcott, does "M.A., Cantab," find the proposition, or anything like, or leading to, or possibly involving the proposition that "the astral man, or double or soul," is "a soul that has lost its divine *vocs*"? "Scrutator" quotes from Colonel Olcott what he calls a "definition" of the astral man, but which is not a definition, but an account of the progress of the astral man who has not lost, and will not lose, his spirit, and of the sinking and ultimate annihilation of the astral man who has lost it. Colonel Olcott does not expressly "define" the soul or astral body. He says we all have it "inside the physical body;" it is that which is disengaged by the death of the physical body; it is simply the "spiritual body" which all Spiritualists believe in. The Theosophists hold that it is sooner or later dissolved, either by the man having become identified with his divine spirit, the *αυτοειδής*,\* or, if the man has become identified with his astral body by loss of all affinity with this spirit, then the dissolution of this astral body is no less the annihilation of "the man"—or, as I ventured to interpret the teaching, of what is then more properly called the elementary, since the trinity of man, which must include the spirit, no longer exists. Madame Blavatsky has defined the "astral man" in a passage too long for quotation (*Spiritualist*, February 8th), and to that I must refer those who would like to estimate the care which "Scrutator" and "M.A., Cantab," have taken to inform themselves of the opinions which they make haste to denounce. Madame Blavatsky had in that letter to deal with the blunder that the astral soul is the spirit. I fear she will despair of English intelligence when she finds that the next absurdity ascribed to her is the opposite blunder, that the soul has no spirit at all! In *The Spiritualist* of February 8th, Colonel Olcott says, "the adept's astral spirit" (soul) "works with, through, and in perfect accord with either pure disembodied spirits or his own immortal spirit." According to his critics, Colonel Olcott ought to have denied to the adept the

possession of any astral spirit or soul at all, since the adept has not lost his immortal spirit. But I could multiply extracts indefinitely, which ought to have saved these gentlemen from the possibility of misconstruing Colonel Olcott as they have done. I have only dwelt so long on the subject because "Scrutator" "calls particular attention" to it, and accuses Colonel Olcott of "a very slanderous imputation." It remains to be seen whether carelessness in bringing the charge is atoned for by promptitude in acknowledging its groundlessness. It is certainly not a light charge, as any one will admit who knows some good, worthy, and even very noble and high-minded persons, I could name, who are, or have been, physical mediums. It is only necessary to expose the mistake which identifies the "astral man" with the "elementary," to show the utter inapplicability of all the reasoning by which "Scrutator" attempts to involve me in an inconsistency with Colonel Olcott for suggesting that the *spiritless* being or elementary, in or out of the flesh, is no longer "man" according to the Theosophic definition of man as a trinity. But I must notice another "spoke in our wheel," which "M.A., Cantab," thinks he has detected in my quotation (March 10th, 1876) from "a very learned occultist." Because that writer, in describing the processes of evolution in the lower forms, speaks of all matter as "imbued with that vital principle called spirit," and says that "each grain of sand, equally with each minutest atom of the human body, has its inherent latent spark of the Divine light," this, says "M.A., Cantab," is inconsistent with the loss of the spirit by the astral body, which is itself, at least, matter. If this were so, if the Divine spirit of man were identical with the principle of life, or with the latent spark of Divine light in the grain of sand, identical, that is, not only as affirming their common source, but as negating their differentiation, then is evolution alike needless and impossible. But this same writer I quoted says further on—"When this double evolution has reached a certain point, it is possible for the third principle to come into union, that is, the immortal spirit which makes of man a triad." But if this ascent was not maintained, and this third principle had departed from the form no longer fitted for it, the form would return to the condition it was in before the union, and in its gradual dissolution (which means not, of course, annihilation, but dispersion of its elements, as in the case of the physical body) would be destroyed as a form, its component particles recommencing the process of evolution from the beginning. The "man" in such case is rightly said to be annihilated, for his individual consciousness depends, not on the dispersed elements, but on their combination into an organism through which consciousness can exist and manifest. So much for this "flat contradiction" between this writer and our New York friends.

I must return to "Scrutator," who speaks of "this new-fangled and ill-defined term 'elementary,' not yet two years old." Has "Scrutator" ever heard of Eliphaz Levi, of the "Count de Gabalis," or of the Rosicrucians of the middle ages? He has evidently not read a line of their writings, or of what has been written of their doctrines, and of the terms they used. Let him begin with the *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, published, I think, about twenty years ago, and he will find enough about the "elementaries," though not always, I admit, in a well-defined sense, still under that name, to make him wish, perhaps, that he had not been so ready to publish his confusion between what he does not know and what does not exist. I may also refer him to the same work (second edition, Vol. I., p. 262-3) for the idea ("annihilation") so "entirely novel to Europe and America." Mr. Maitland, who has, or, at least, at that time had no relations with the Theosophical Society, gave the same idea as a revelation received through his "Seeress," in his book *The Soul, and How it Found Me*. If I do not refer to far older authorities, it is only because I cannot, at this moment, give chapter and verse of import wholly free from question, but I have no doubt that the doctrine of "potential immortality" is as old as it is, to my mind, probable and philosophical. Before talking of our "effrontery" in putting forward (and that even by the way, under a sort of compulsion) opinions which he dislikes, "Scrutator" should, at least, ascertain whether ours is the greater guilt of originating, or the more venial offence of transmitting these views.

Then there is "the babe." Well, I have not committed myself to the opinion that the spirit only comes to the child at the age of understanding, though I do conceive that without reason it cannot be manifested. But, in fact, this part of the teaching of my society was new to me, and I only referred to it in a former letter, because I believed I had found what might prove to be historical evidence of its having been an ancient opinion of the church; and in this I am confirmed by a very competent authority, as I believe. The child's early innocence is not to me a formidable objection. Sheep and oxen are innocent.

"Scrutator" seems to think that all students of Theosophy should hold identical opinions on these most difficult subjects, and that any difference amongst them is fatal to the whole teaching. Madame Blavatsky, expressly disclaims the thorough knowledge of the relations between spirit, soul, and body, which could alone render such an unanimity possible; and really the disclaimer, comical as it would otherwise sound, seems to be necessary. There are expressions in Colonel Olcott's letters to you, the meaning of which I do not clearly perceive—probably my ignorance will be found to be the fault. But, on the whole, and especially taken in connection with Madame Blavatsky's, they seem to me a singularly clear exposition, considering the difficulty and unfamiliarity of the subjects, and the requisite conciseness. I am sorry they have not been more carefully read by others, who make their own misconceptions the occasion of flying at him and all who agree with him, with epithets wholly unwarrantable.

C. C. MASSEY.

Temple, February 24th, 1878.

SIR,—I cannot resist the impression that at this most important and critical juncture of occult and theosophical debate, there must be

\* The *αυτοειδής* is not perhaps to be considered the spirit itself, but the pure, ethereal, and luciferic vehicle of the spirit. This was the opinion of some ancient philosophers. The Buddhist *Nirvana*, on the other hand, contemplates the ultimate freedom of spirit from all embodiment. Upon this subject, the best single book to consult is that great mine of ancient Theosophy, *Cudworth's Intellectual System*.

many, with myself, who are not able, by practical inductive means, to solve the points at issue, namely, those of the existence and power of elementary beings, the conditional immortality of humanity, and the wonder-working demonstrations of the human will-power on the *Akasa*, of which we read so much. These things I can by no means verify or see, although favoured with the constant assistance of one of the most highly and sensitively developed psychics in Europe. I, therefore, perhaps shall be pardoned by the many more highly developed advocates of this new and popular phase of the movement, if I give one word of advice and comfort to still the torrent of doubt and anxiety pervading the minds of many otherwise good, simple, pure Spiritualists. Before the improved (*sic.*) Spiritualism, "Occultism," sprang up, with, to the majority of ordinary truth-seekers, its legion of undemonstrable facts, and unproven theories, the life and teaching of that perhaps best abused of men, that truly inspired writer, Andrew Jackson Davis, the "Poughkeepsie Seer," were believed and accepted as being all-sufficient for the needs or even wants of harmonial philosophers, the majority of whom, judging from appearances, must, I should think, have "left their first love." Let not such be the case with those, however, who, still possess a gleam or spark, even though a fading one, of faith in the grand incontestable, uncontroversial, truths of our inherited immortal birth-right, so magnificently proved in that masterpiece of the seer's early writings, the third part of *The Thinker*, fifth volume of *The Great Harmonia*, "The Law of Immortality." After that they can well afford, with all due respect, to leave *Isis Unveiled*, *Ghostland*, and even *Art Magic*, to minds so constituted as to seek shadows "people often read about, but very seldom see." They will not, it is to be hoped, let the substance and truth of the whole matter slip through their fingers and their brains. ONE OF THE "FIVE HUNDRED."

8, Northumberland-place, Bath, Feb. 25th, 1878.

#### WHAT TRUTH IS THERE IN ASTROLOGY?

SIR,—In the discussion of astrology which has for some time been carried on in your admirable paper, I observe that frequent allusions are made to Zadkiel (the author of the well known almanack) as a great authority, and in one letter lately inserted, he is called the *facile princeps* of the (so-called) science.

I know very little of astrology, but of the cognate science of astronomy I do know a little. Now, I have a distinct recollection of having seen in a number of *Zadkiel's Almanack*, some eight or ten years back, a statement by Zadkiel, that he distinctly repudiated the ordinary notion of the earth going round the sun, because it is contrary to the express declaration of Scripture, and asserting that he could prove mathematically that the distance of the sun from the earth does not exceed 360,000 miles.

In the face of such a declaration, I am at a loss to know how any educated man of the present day can pin his faith on any subject, scientific or quasi-scientific, to the opinions of Zadkiel. R. B.

Edinburgh, February 23rd, 1878.

#### MR. CHARLES BLACKBURN'S EXPERIENCES WITH MATERIALISATION MEDIUMS.

SIR,—I have already published that when a medium is in a trance the form comes forth partly covered and pretty solid; but if the medium is conscious the form comes forth all covered and less solid, for the condition of the medium is much altered.

At one of my last sittings with Miss Cook, when the Rev. Mr. Colley and Signor Rondi were present, with dim light, no cabinet, and when I held both hands of the medium, a white form arose from her tiny feet, kissed my forehead, and said, "A kiss through the calico, and not a block." I felt a real warm face, as warm as your own. I then said, "Will you go to the Venetian blind, where there is more light?" The form said, "You go and I will follow." I instantly went, and was followed by the form, "Lillie." I asked Mr. Colley to hold both hands of Miss Cook whilst I did so, which he did. When Lillie and myself were at the Venetian blind I said, "Now, Lillie, let me see your face." She then uncovered it, and I said I was satisfied; she returned to her medium, and with her raiment sank through the floor.

At a subsequent sitting I could get nothing in a cabinet for a whole hour, except a small white form, which kept occasionally rising from the floor, and would keep kissing the medium—the conscious medium—whilst I held her. She said to the form, "You nasty thing, do it to Mr. Blackburn, for you are so sticky and clammy I don't like it." A voice then said, "Take the medium out of the cabinet into the next room, and I will try to form fully there." I did so, and shortly she (Lillie) rose up from the floor, veiled, and took the medium to the Venetian blind, inviting Mr. Rondi to get up and see her face. He did so, and with his finger felt it was warm, and no mask; in fact, that form has more recently sat at a table and tasted wine and biscuit, and vanished.

I finally send you a rough letter for insertion, in further proof of "flexible features" in the forms, which I wrote to my daughter when I was in London—and, therefore, never intended for publication—which ought to settle all doubts; for it was with an unimpeachable medium who belongs to your own Association, viz., Mr. Eglinton. I wrote it when I was at the Viaduct Hotel, Holborn, London. Truth, you know, is all my aim, whatever may be the cost—as all are benefactors but myself in this cause:—

MY DEAR ELIZA,—After my arrival here on Saturday, I went to Signor Rondi's, and had a *séance* there at three o'clock. Dr. Nicholls, Mrs. and Miss Cook, myself, and Mr. Rondi were all present; and an excellent sitting it was, though it took a long time to gather power. A green baize curtain across a corner of brick walls was all the cabinet; we had a dim light. Eglinton went into a trance in the cabinet in a chair, and came out in trance amongst us; then gathered power from each of us in mesmeric fashion, and throw it all

from himself into the cabinet; he then staggered into his chair and sank into a deeper trance. "Joey," the spirit, shouted, "Mr. Blackburn! Glad to see you! I can go on now;" Shortly, he asked each one separately to come and look at, and touch, an illuminated amber-coloured crucifix, floating about; I got him to put it to the medium's face, he did so, and his (Eglinton's) mouth was open, he (Eglinton) being in a deep sleep, with both his hands on his lap: he was meaning heavily. Next a female in white appeared, but could not stay a minute, though she was plainly seen. "Joey" shouted that she was only developing, but he would send "Abdullah" out. "Abdullah" came, and was a head taller than the medium, and with only one arm; he walked about and bowed in Persian fashion, and put his face several times close to mine; our noses were not two inches apart. He tried, but could not talk; yet his lips whispered something. His turban had something like diamonds in it; his nose was rather aquiline, but thin, and his eyes dark and very piercing; he had monstachios, and a totally different expression of face from fat-nosed, smooth-faced, Eglinton. As "Abdullah" retired from me into the cabinet Eglinton had difficulty in passing him, for they jostled together to get out of the cabinet to again gather power from all of us; so we all saw the two faces and forms at the same instant. When Eglinton again returned to his chair moaning heavily, the large form instantly reappeared, and came up to me, Eglinton creaking in his chair, and awfully moaning at that moment. The form retired from me to the curtain, and gradually disappeared through the floor, in view of all, leaving a mass of calico on the floor, when up sprang through that calico another form, viz., the controller "Joey," who sat down and showed us how, by waving it, he could extend the calico several yards. He did so, and drew it in again, when he and the calico all vanished, on his saying "good bye;" so I then suddenly opened the curtain, but no calico or spirit was there, only Eglinton, asleep in his chair. I carefully woke him up. "Joey," speaking whilst I was doing it, said, "Don't do it hastily. Good *séance*, and I'll always do it if I can for you."

CHARLES BLACKBURN.

#### MATERIALISATION MANIFESTATIONS.

SIR,—In *The Spiritualist* of the week before last, under the head of "New Materialisation Phenomena," the writer says:—

With Miss K. Cook forms develop on and arise from the bare carpet, in the presence of several persons, while her hands are held; but these forms have not yet presented living features to the gaze of the observers. But during the other class of manifestation, when Lillie Gordon, who resembles the medium, has been well in view of all the circle, the features of the medium have not been clearly under the observation of all the sitters at the same time.

Having attended Miss Cook's *séances* regularly twice a week for the last ten months, I have twice had opportunity of seeing the form of Lillie Gordon as it was evolved from behind the medium. In both cases the face was uncovered, and I spoke to her, and felt her hands and feet. Standing close by Miss Cook, and holding her hands, I have seen the faces of both medium and spirit form, and I remarked that the latter was as white as marble. At another *séance* in my rooms, a fortnight ago, while Miss Cook was out of the cabinet, the materialised form went close to the Rev. T. Colley, four or five paces away from the medium. He took hold of the spirit's hands, and conversed freely with both medium and spirit at the same time. Last Tuesday, sitting near Miss Cook and conversing with her, I distinctly perceived the spirit emanate from the floor close to her feet; when fully developed, I asked the spirit (not of Miss Cook, as she was speaking with me at the time, but the spirit of Lillie Gordon) to go with the medium near the window. In obedience to my request, the spirit and medium moved and walked together, and stood close to the Venetian blinds facing each other. Being then too far away from them, I asked permission to be allowed to go near the window, so as to enable me to see both faces. Having received an affirmative answer, I sought the most convenient and favourable place, two paces from them, and observed the fully materialised form kiss Miss Cook with her face uncovered, and Miss Cook speaking with Lillie. The form sank and rose again several times. Miss Cook being tired, she sat on the sofa, which was close by her, two minutes or so; Lillie turned round, walked close to me, shook hands, gave me a kiss on my forehead, and, wishing me "good night," returned towards the medium and disappeared. If this does not show flexibility of features, I must confess that I do not understand what flexibility is. E. RONDÌ.

Montague Place, London, February 18th.

#### WILL-POWER.

SIR,—In your impression of the 15th February there appears an article by Miss Kisingbury, in which she expresses her conviction that certain phenomena were produced by her "will-power." I am afraid that she is under a misapprehension. As she did not resort to the aid of clairvoyance in testing the origin of the manifestations to which she alludes, she can scarcely be considered authorised to utter an advanced opinion on the subject.

With the assistance of a very developed clairvoyant, I have carefully investigated phenomena which were assumed to be the results of "will-power," and in every case I discovered that a disembodied spirit, who could be clearly identified, was present and co-operating with the performers, influenced their wills without their being aware of it, accomplished the purpose which was intended, and inspired their minds with ideas which were superficially supposed to be the product of their own powers of thought.

Miss Kisingbury thinks that Theosophy was needed to explain the mysteries and difficulties of Spiritualism. If so, the new system has been very unsuccessful in its mission; it has produced as much confusion and nonsense as it has dispersed.

In preference to Theosophy, I would recommend, in its highest and simplest acceptation, Christianity; which, if devoutly tried, will prove to be an invaluable guide through every puzzling problem which Spiritualism can possibly raise.

THEODORE ELLIS.

Lambeth, Feb. 23rd, 1875.

## REMARKABLE MATERIALISATION PHENOMENA.

MRS. PICKERING'S MEDIUMSHIP.

WITHIN the last three months a decided advance in the evolution of materialisation phenomena appears to have been made through mediums in all parts of the world. In London we have seen materialised spirits appear frequently of late, through the mediumship of Miss Cook, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Eglinton, in the open circle while their hands were held, and without the use of a cabinet. Further, in Miss Cook's case, we have witnessed the process of the formation of spirits whilst holding her hands; white clouds both formed upon the floor, and fell from her side to the floor, and condensed into a form covered with drapery, which rose from the bare carpet close to our feet.

In the United States equally great advances have been made, and at the present time much attention is concentrated upon the *séances* of Mrs. John R. Pickering, of Rochester, N.H. Of the various accounts which have been printed, that by the editor of *The Voice of Truth* (Memphis, U.S.), February 9th, 1878, is one of the best, so we quote it as follows:—

Having been invited to be present at an assembly at Rochester, last Thursday night, with the privilege of inviting four others, we accepted the invitation. The four persons accompanying us were Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Gage, and Mr. and Mrs. J. Merrill Ordway, of this city. The persons met at Rochester were Mr. and Mrs. Pickering, Deacon Micajah B. Wentworth, Mr. and Mrs. William Wentworth, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Goodrich, Mr. and Mrs. John Horney, Miss Emma Wentworth, and Mrs. Waterhouse, all of Rochester, and Mrs. Varney, of Waltham.

We had many times before attended materialising manifestations there, but in the recess there had been an advance made, and much change brought about. We found the cabinet had been discarded, and the essential darkness provided by placing a curtain across one corner of the room, canopying the space with a black covering, thus creating a condition of perfect darkness in a corner measuring four feet in the long angle, and three in depth to the corner of the room joining the other two sides of the angle. This curtain and the space enclosed were subjected to the most rigid inspection, and there was not a single article of furniture, or drapery, or clothing of any kind whatever, within them.

At a few minutes before eight o'clock, Mrs. Pickering, the medium, took her seat near to the curtain, but outside of it, and in full view of those present, with no covering or protection from the light except a piece of white lace curtain material so arranged as to drop down over her eyes in order to somewhat cut off the light, and to enable her, as she said, to go to sleep quicker. The party all knew there was nothing inside the curtain but the solid walls of the house. They saw Mrs. Pickering take her seat outside the curtain; they saw her sitting there, watched the occasional movements of her hands and feet; her slight coughing, heard an occasional moan from her, and saw her rise from her seat as she came out of her entranced condition. Every one present knew Mrs. Pickering to be in clear view of them, as above described, during every moment of the three hours in which the manifestations were taking place.

Mrs. Waterhouse, an orthodox lady, presided at the piano, singing the familiar, sweet devotional hymns in common use at conference and revival meetings. This continued for fifteen or twenty minutes, or till the medium was fully entranced or asleep. At the expiration of that time the manifestations commenced.

The first sign of anything inside the curtain was the appearance of a face at the aperture in it. Very soon a female form, dressed in white, parted the curtain and walked out into the room three times in succession. She was followed by another form, unmistakably a female, in stage costume, and personifying a page. She was dressed in fancy costume, with striped stockings and slippers responding to lively music in a brief dance. The next was the form of a pretty tall, large-framed woman, with marked features,

quite old and wrinkled. She appeared three times, and on her first appearance pointed out the writer of this article as one she knew. The name of the person she so strongly resembled as to suggest it, was spoken, and she acknowledged it to be correct by bowing her head.

The fourth was the form of a tall and stout man, partially dressed in dark clothing. The next was the tall and symmetrical form of an Indian, calling himself Dr. Williams, and said to be the guide of the medium. He was dressed in dark clothing, had upon his head a cap with feathers a foot in length. He walked out into the room five or six times, stood by a table, and by the piano, and at one time made a special clatter with his feet upon the floor to show that there was substance in him. Following him were a succession of male and female forms of different sizes, with different colours of hair, and of varying costume, and there were also youths and little children. At one time three forms appeared at once; one a female which came out into the room, another smaller in stature, stood at the opening of the curtain, and a child at her side.

Another presentation was a female form walking out into the room, leaving standing at the opening another female holding out a child. Still another and most impressive presentation was a female who walked out into the room, when a little tottling child followed her, holding on to her dress.

Another form was that of a female, tall and slender, with lightish hair, which she made great effort to have noticed. She accepted the name of Anna Griffith Burbank, of Groveland, and her friend believed it to be she. A chain made of her own hair was worn by her friend, Mrs. Gage; this was taken and laid upon the table, and the form took it up, holding it in comparison with her own hair, and calling the close attention of Mr. Goodrich to it. Another very comely female appeared with long black hair hanging down each side of her face, and, turning round, displayed a luxuriant growth hanging down her back on the groundwork of spotless white. The form bore in her hand a white scarf, bespangled with stars, which she carelessly drew through her hands, and then put upon her head, where it remained until she disappeared. This was a very beautiful sight. Another female form, with quite light hair, walked out to the table, and up to the looking-glass, where she took a view of herself, and, after promising to come at a future time, and allow her photograph to be taken, she retired. Late in the evening the form of Julia Wentworth, which we have frequently seen before, came out, with her lithe and hurried tread, and cordially and affectionately greeted her father and mother, speaking to them in whispers which were distinctly heard by all of us. This was a scene of interest and emotion not to be forgotten.

In addition, several male forms came out with clearness and force; among them were Freeman Whitehouse, formerly of the Whitehouse minstrels, who was quickly and emphatically recognised by several of the Rochester people, and by Mrs. Varney, of Waltham. Another was the form of a man who claimed to be formerly of this city. His form and general appearance answered the requirements. The thing halted at was the appearance of his beard, but as we have since seen a photograph of him, when in full beard, that point is very well settled. In connection with this it may properly be stated that we were in what purported to be communication with him two weeks previously, when he promised to go to Rochester and try to show himself. On that very night, between nine and ten o'clock, by previous arrangement he was supposed to be communicated with in this city, and said he would meet us at Rochester immediately. What claimed to be him made his appearance there about ten o'clock. These are the leading incidents of this most remarkable and intensely interesting evening. The duration of the *séance* was more than three hours; twenty-two different forms appeared; and during the time, bear in mind, *the medium was outside the curtain, under the close scrutiny of all whose names have been given above.*

One noticeable thing in connection with this *séance* was the light behind the curtain. There could be no light shining into it, because the lamp was so situated as to cast a subdued and mellow light, sufficient to distinguish and recognise persons and see any object in the room. Under

these circumstances there was a light inside the cabinet of a phosphorescent hue so luminous that when the curtain opened the naked walls of the room were seen, while everything inside appeared generally luminous. We could not help thinking of the "wakening light" of Abou Ben Adhem.

We have been a frequent observer of these things for about a year, and have seen them under varying circumstances. Mrs. Pickering has on former occasions, when sitting in a cabinet, been repeatedly examined by committees of ladies to discover materials for the performance of a trick; we have repeatedly enveloped her in a sack with test tying of our own; we have repeatedly examined and sealed the cabinet to guard against confederates, and still the same manifestations went on, only varying in power and interest in proportion as the elements present were harmonious or otherwise. We were there with the critical "committee of ten;" we were there with the much smaller number of scientific men oppressed with a burden of doubt and fear of being humbugged, and we have been there when the elements were confident and harmonious, and have critically watched the varying conditions and results. The last occasion is the crowning one, and has placed the whole thing, in the minds of those present, beyond the reach of doubt and infidel cavil of any and every type. Whatever any man or woman may have thought, or may now think of what they have seen at Mrs. Pickering's on any former occasion, we feel warranted in saying to them that there has never been any sham there, and that whatever has been witnessed was real. With Mrs. Pickering we find a devotion to facts, and when able to do so she sits outside the curtain, although it is a more severe strain upon her powers than to sit inside.

#### HAUNTED HOUSES.

BY HENRY G. ATKINSON, F.G.S., AUTHOR OF "LETTERS TO MISS MARTINEAU."

I STILL feel a great fascination towards haunted houses. When first inquiring into the phenomena of what is called Spiritualism with the late Robert Chambers, our first idea was to advertise for haunted houses, and we did so; but nothing satisfactory came of it. In respect to "Lady Farquhar's Old Lady," printed in the last *Spiritualist*, I think that, notwithstanding all we know of Spiritualism, the chances are a hundred to one in favour of the appearance being a mere vision—just, as it were, a fragment of a waking dream. Yet, after all, the dress is an amazing difficulty in such apparitions. A figure losing itself at the end of a passage is very frequent in such stories, and the impression of the sister passing before her into a room at the end of the passage, might remain with a susceptible person, and become embodied as another person, and as in a dream, with all the appearance, reality, and exact particulars, as related.

I could relate facts in favour of this theory to bear me out. Then again the passage was but "several yards in length," so that the appearance must have been close upon the retiring figure of the sister. With respect to the second appearance, there is a tendency in such states to repeat themselves, and we are left to imagine whether the figure was still there or not, when the seer looked up again. The natural thing would have been to call out, or to ring the bell. Then, the paralysed state the observer was in looks very like some peculiar abnormal condition—I suspect the figure was as much a ghost as the dagger in *Macbeth* passing before the king along the passage in the direction he was going.

With regard to the repetition of such appearances, a friend of mine, a lady, in bed after her confinement, weak, but without fever or being ill in any other sense, would see distinctly each day for several days a snake crawl up the small table near to her bed, and sip from the glass of drink that was there. My old friend, Mrs. Basil Montagu, would continually seem to see an empty arm-chair in the same place, and she would pass her hand through it. After Miss Martineau's six years' confinement, and subsequent cure by mesmerism, she was frequently mesmerised, but never went to sleep, never lost consciousness, yet every time would have a perfectly life-like vision of her own death and of the per-

sons present. So vivid was it that I found it impossible to convince her that it was not a real presentiment; and not until one of the persons supposed to be present died, could I shake her belief. You read in the autobiography how gratefully she expresses herself for what I did for her in this matter, or she might have become very silly, if not insane. I only give the case here as another instance of a vision repeated, and a more striking one cannot be imagined. Now in any such statement as that of Lady Farquhar, some account should be given of the life and peculiarities of constitution of the seer, and we must remember how in such relations people are apt to exaggerate, and, as it were, make the account or picture more complete than was the actual occurrence.

I do not like to take the "shine" out of a good story, but as real inquirers and men of science, our effort should be to reduce marvels into plain things—not to inflate plain things into marvels. Such was Bacon's admonition in respect to these very matters. If these seers and the mediums were mesmerised and made waking somnambules and clairvoyants much would come of it as to the source and nature of many of the phenomena in question. In the fact of all perception being visionary, the marvel is that we are not often deceived by false appearances as in our dreams, and the quotation from *Shakespeare*, about soul and brain, is from *Richard II.*, when seeing double.

Boulogne-sur-Mer.

#### AN EARLY ENGLISH SEANCE.

BY JOSEPH RHODES BUCHANAN, M.D.

IN the spring of 1852 Mrs. Hayden was at the Earl of Zetland's holding a *seance*, at which were present the Marchioness of Hastings (with her two daughters), the Duke of Argyle, the Duchess of Sutherland, Mrs. Catherine Crowe, authoress of the *Night Side of Nature*, Lady Zetland, and about ten others. They were seated round the table, when the spirits requested that the lights should be removed into the two adjoining apartments on each side, and that Lady Hastings should hold the pencil. This being done, a strange and beautiful halo of indescribable delicacy began to appear above the hand of Lady Hastings. Lady Zetland first remarked: "Don't you see a light around Lady Hastings's hand?" Then it became more fully developed, and one and another observed it till it was seen by all.

An observer took a sheet of paper, which he held above the hand, and the halo appeared above it. When this halo was completely organised and at rest, her hand began to write—the light from the halo being sufficient to read the writing. It proved to be a letter from Lord Hastings, addressed to "My Dear Wife," expressing his gratification that she was investigating Spiritualism, his happiness in meeting her, and how much he was with her. He said that her two daughters, Lady Bertha and Lady Edith, were mediums, and that if they would sit for it, he would come to them at her own home. This was done, and he came and wrote for them on many occasions.

In his letter to the Earl of Zetland's, he spoke of Capt. Yelverton, the second husband of Lady Hastings, saying that he had failed to find Sir John Franklin, and that he had just left — (name not recollected), which was afterwards found to be true by the coincidence of dates. The letter of Lord Hastings occupied a space equivalent to two pages of foolscap, and was written on common printing paper, the hand of Lady Hastings being in a benumbed condition while controlled in writing.—*Banner of Light* (Boston, U.S.), Jan. 26th, 1878.

MR. LAWRENCE OLIPHANT, late M.P. for the Stirling Boroughs, and Paris correspondent of the *Times*, has rejoined the Spiritualistic community of Mr. Thomas Lake Harris in America, and is now there with Mrs. Oliphant.

#### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Our new subscribers in the United States who have begun to take in *The Spiritualist* this month, are informed that last month's numbers to make the volume complete are obtainable if wanted, and may be ordered through Messrs. Colby and Rich, of Boston. These American subscribers are requested to call the attention of their acquaintances to this journal, which is an organ for international communication among educated Spiritualists.

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