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The BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS is formed to unite Spiritualists of every variety of opinion for their mutual aid and benefit: to aid students and inquirers in their researches, by placing at their disposal the means of systematic investigation into the facts and phenomena, called Spiritual or Psychic; to make known the positive results arrived at by careful research; and to direct attention to the beneficial influence which those results are calculated to exercise upon social relationships and individual conduct. It is intended to include Spiritualists of every class, whether members of Local and Provincial Societies or not, and all inquirers into psychical and kindred phenomena.

The British National Association of Spiritualists was formed in the year 1873, at a national conference of Spiritualists held in Liverpool, at which all the great Societies of Spiritualists, and the Spiritualists of the chief towns in the United Kingdom, were represented. The amount of the annual subscription to the National Association is optional, with a minimum of five shillings a year. Each member has a single vote at the general meetings, and is eligible for election to all offices.

FRIENDS wishing to join the Association, and Local Societies wishing to become allied, are requested to communicate with Miss Kinslingbury, Resident Secretary, at the offices of the Association, 38, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury, W.C., of whom copies of the Constitution and Rules may be had upon application. The entrance to the offices is in Woburn-street.

THE LIVERPOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

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- 1.—By frequent meetings of its members for conference, inquiry, instruction, mental improvement, spiritual culture, social intercourse, and healthful recreation.
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# The Spiritualist Newspaper,

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

VOLUME EIGHT. NUMBER TWENTY-ONE.

LONDON, FRIDAY, MAY 26th, 1876.

## DEVIL AND GHOST WORSHIP IN WESTERN INDIA.\*

BY M. J. WALHOUSE, F.R.A.S.

In Two Parts.—Part I.

ALTHOUGH the lower castes and classes in India acknowledge and reverence the Brahminical gods, their familiar household cultus is much more especially addressed to inferior supernatural beings analogous to the evil spirits, devils, ghosts, and goblins of European superstition. According to Hindu doctrine there are ten classes of such beings, the first seven of which are demons, created aboriginally with the world, or by acts of the higher gods, on whom they wait as attendants or servants, receiving some share of their worship, and avenging any omission or neglect of ceremonies due. Though not invariably, they are for the most part evilly-disposed towards human kind, especially the female powers amongst them, which are many. But the last three classes, of whom more particularly it is now intended to speak, are of exclusively human origin, being malignant, discontented beings, wandering in an intermediate state between heaven and hell, intent upon mischief and annoyance to mortals; chiefly by means of possession and wicked inspiration, every aspect of which ancient ideas, as well as of the old doctrine of transmigration, they exemplify and illustrate. They are known by the names of Bhuta, † Preta, and Pisacha; the first name being ordinarily applied to all three, and even vulgarly to the seven superior classes. These beings, always evil, originate from the souls of those who have died untimely or violent deaths, or been deformed, idiotic, or insane; afflicted with fits or unusual ailments; or drunken, dissolute, or wicked during life. The precise distinction between the three classes is that the Preta is a ghost of a child dying in infancy, or of one born deformed, imperfect or monstrous; events attributed to neglect in performing certain ceremonies prescribed during the ten days when, according to popular notions, the limbs of the embryo are forming in the womb: such a ghost becomes a misshapen, distorted goblin. The Pisacha, on the other hand, is derived rather from mental characteristics, and is the ghost of madmen, habitual drunkards, the treacherous and violent-tempered, as though realising the idea that the evils that men do live after them in the guise of malicious spirits. Bhutas, however, emanate from those who die in any unusual way, by violence, accident, suicide, or sentence of law; or who have been robbers, notorious evil-doers, or dreaded for cruelty and violence. The death of any well-known bad character is a source of terror to all his neighbourhood, as he is sure to become a Bhuta or demon, as powerful and malignant as he was in life. Some of the Bhutas now most dreaded were celebrated personages of old days. All such persons on death are liable to become Bhutas, and attach themselves to any beings of the higher classes whom they first meet on entering the spirit-world, and derive from them power and assistance in tormenting and afflicting men and animals. As an example of how forcibly this idea possesses the popular mind, I will read an extract from a recent Indian newspaper:—"We learn from a correspondent at Cochin that, a couple of days before the Christmas holidays, a Nair of Chenganoor, in cold blood, murdered his paramour on suspicion of her infidelity. The noteworthy and strange feature of the case is, that when he was taken up and arraigned before the Sessions Court, he pleaded 'guilty' to the charge, but earnestly implored that the extreme penalty of the law, which he admitted he fully deserved, might be carried out, not at the usual place of

execution, but at the scene of his crime, in order that he might, according to his theory of the transmigration of the soul, assume the form and life of a 'demon,' and thereby have full scope for revenging himself on the man and his associates who were the cause of leading his unfortunate victim astray." It is also held that by certain ceremonies and expiation this form of existence can be dissolved, and the unquiet spirits remitted to regions of reward or punishment, according to their deserts on earth.

In their haunts and modes of appearance, Bhutas repeat the popular beliefs of many countries. They wander borne upon the air, especially in uninhabited, dry, and desert places; and tall trees are a favourite abode. The third watch of the night, or from twelve to three o'clock, is the time when they wander abroad most freely, and belated travellers sometimes meet them then in the shape of dark shadows. As the ancient Jews would speak to none whom they met after midnight, for fear they might be addressing a devil, so Hindu villagers will speak to no one they may meet at that time, lest he should be a Bhut, nor, indeed, willingly then stir out of their houses. The eddies of wind that career over plains in the hot weather, whirling up leaves and columns of dust, and flickering lights seen gliding over marshes, are regarded as Bhuts passing by. Objects seen indistinctly moving in the dusk or mists, are attributed to them, and so, indeed, are all visions

Of calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire,  
And airy tongues that syllable men's names  
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

The Gools of Arabian superstition closely resemble Bhutas, assuming monstrous shapes of men or animals, frequenting desert places and burial grounds, and feeding on carcasses.

The before-mentioned classes are believed more particularly to afflict human beings by entering into and possessing them. Gaping or drawing deep breaths is supposed to give them opportunities for this, and no Brahman ever gapes without snapping his fingers before his mouth, as a charm to prevent an evil spirit entering. After gaining an entrance they seat themselves in the lower part of the abdomen, and feed upon all the unclean excreta. Whilst so dwelling they are held, by interrupting digestion and circulation of the humours, to cause fits, paralytic strokes, temporary aberrations, outbreaks of madness, cramps, and rheumatic pains. All this closely tallies with the beliefs regarding possession current amongst the Jews and early Christians; the former in particular believing that unclean spirits, by reason of their tenuity, were inhaled and insinuated themselves into the human body, injuring health through the viscera, and forcing the patients to fulfil their evil desires. The grosser parts of the body and all unclean places were their especial abodes. Besides diseases and bodily afflictions, the evil influence of Bhutas is believed to occasion family discord, hatred between brothers, ill-temper and gloominess, the death of children during the life of parents, the non-survival of births, barrenness in women, atheism, and neglect of religious ceremonies. Although, properly speaking, they are not held to have power over human life, the villagers and common people believe they have, and outbreaks of disease, sudden deaths, and wasting away are always ascribed to their malignant power. Cattle diseases of every kind are invariably attributed to them, as in Scotland and Ireland to elf-bolts, as celts and flint arrow-heads were called, and popularly supposed to be missiles formed and discharged by malicious fairies: an imagination commemorated by Collins in his Ode on Highland Superstitions:

There every herd by sad experience knows  
How, wing'd by fate, the elfshot arrows fly.

\* A paper read before the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain.

† *Bhutas*.—"Malignant spirits, goblins, or ghosts, haunting cemeteries, lurking in trees, animating dead bodies, and deluding and devouring human beings."—Thompson.

It may be readily conceived that superstitions like these, entering into every part of daily life, would exercise a much deeper influence over a sequestered, ignorant, rural population, than the loftier, more abstract Aryan conceptions; and they are also distinctly Turanian, to which race the great underlying stratum of the population of India appears to have belonged, and over which the subsequent Aryan invasion spread itself, each in the course of ages influencing the other, characteristics of the one cropping up, and of the other filtering down. All demonologies and ghost-systems belong to the Turanian races, and are antagonistic to the Aryan genius and feelings, though, after ages of intercourse and blending, some of the superstitions of the lower race may have crept into the intellect of the higher.\*

In proceeding now to give some account of the ceremonies and worship paid to the Bhutas, I shall confine myself principally to those current in Canara, on the western coast of India. The same cultus, with some variations, obtains, however, all over India and Eastern and Northern Asia; the Bhuta belief being found everywhere under different names and forms.

The edifices and observances connected with Bhuta worship are both domestic and public. In villages, and very generally in towns, there is in every house a wooden cot or cradle, placed on the ground, or suspended by ropes or chains, and dedicated to the Bhuta of the spot. On these are placed a bell, a knife, or sword, and a pot filled with water, all which are collectively called the Bhandara of the Bhuta, and kept either in a part of the house itself, or in a small separate building. The idea seems to be of placating the spirit that haunts the spot by making a sort of abode for it, much in the same way as the cream-bowl was nightly set for the "drudging goblin," or brownie, in England. On the last day of every lunar month flowers are laid on the cot, and perfume burnt before it; and once a year, towards the end of April, a ceremony called Tambila is performed. First, a fire is lit on the spot where the cot and paraphernalia stand, to make it "shoodha," *i.e.*, clean; then fried rice, mixed with coarse sugar and grated cocoanut kernel, is heaped on two plantain leaves, which are placed on the cot, together with some young cocoanuts, pierced ready to drink from. A ball is then formed of boiled rice, coloured yellow with turmeric, and laid on a piece of plantain leaf on a small stool, which is placed before the cot, and a lighted torch stuck on it. A fowl is held above the rice-ball and torch, its throat cut, and the blood let drop upon the ball; some perfume is burnt, and the ceremony ends. The cocoanuts placed on the cot are then taken and dashed on the ground, or cloven in half. If the pieces fall with the kernel upward, it signifies the Bhuta is pleased with the offering; if with the kernel downward, the reverse. Should a member of the family be stricken with any unusual attack, such as apoplexy, paralysis, cholera, &c., or should disease break out amongst the cattle, it is at once ascribed to the anger of the Bhut, and a propitiatory sacrifice is offered. A fowl is turned three times round before the patient's face, its neck then twisted, and the blood let fall upon him, and some rubbed on his forehead and joints, the meaning being to offer life for life—the fowl in lieu of the man. Powdered sandal-wood is then sprinkled over the Bhuta's cot, and water from the pot kept there dashed upon the sick man's forehead and eyes. The family priest is then consulted, who, after much grave meditation, usually recommends alms to be given to himself to satisfy the hostile stars, with a promise to perform a special ceremony to the Bhuta, and give a banquet to all the patient's castemen should he recover. Medicine is not neglected, but, in event of recovery, the credit is ascribed to the influence of the Bhuta.

The general buildings dedicated to these demons are called Bhutastans, and when dedicated to one of the superior, or very popular Bhutas, sometimes of considerable size; but far more commonly a small plain structure, four or five yards deep, by two or three wide, with a door at one end, covered by a portico supported on two pillars, with a thatched roof, and windowless. In front of it there are usually three or

four T-shaped pillars, the use of which is not clear. They are said to denote that the building is a Bhutastan, and flowers are placed, and cocoanuts broken on them at ceremonies. It may be worth noticing that pillars of exactly the same shape are found accompanying the mysterious Balearic Talyots, the purpose of which has hitherto baffled antiquaries. Inside the Bhutastan there is usually a number of images roughly made in brass in human shape, or resembling animals, such as pigs,\* tigers, fowls, &c. These are brought out and worshipped as symbols of the Bhutas on various ceremonial occasions. The Bhutas themselves are usually represented by mere rough stones. Some of the brass figures are now on the table, and the difference between the Turanian and Aryan mind will appear on comparing these rude village idols with images of the Brahmanical gods. Brass basins, bells, a peculiarly-shaped sword, and some other articles used at ablutions are also kept within. These rustic fanes are thickly scattered over the face of the country in very various situations—under a green tree, on hill-sides, down in hollows, in jungles, on plains, by roadsides, in villages, amid rice-fields, but always on a small plot of waste ground, which is kept uncultivated, like the "guid-man's croft" in Scotland. A rough drawing of one of ordinary size and appearance is before the Society.

Once a year a festival called Kolla is held at the village Bhutastan, in honour of the local Bhuta, at which all the villagers attend. There is no fixed time for this, but the village priest, after consulting with the principal inhabitants, determines an auspicious day. This being settled, a tall pole is fixed upright in the ground before the Bhutastan, and a flag, that is always kept within, hoisted upon it. The Bhut's Bhandara, or paraphernalia, and the images, &c., are brought out and cleaned, and a large fire kindled to purify the spot. The festival always takes place at night, and about nine o'clock all the villagers assemble in their best attire, the women wearing all their ornaments, and their heads, as well as often the men's, thickly garlanded with flowers. Tom-toms and drums are beaten, and the Pujari, or Priest, takes the Bhuta-sword and bell in his hands, and whirls round and round, imitating the supposed mein and gestures of the demon. But he does not aspire to full possession, which in aboriginal rites like these, is only given to a representative of the aboriginal tribes, now the lowest castes. A Dhér, one of the slave caste, at other times regarded with contempt, but now advanced to the foremost post, comes forward naked, save a waist-band, and with all his head and body grotesquely and frightfully besmeared with white, yellow, and red paint. Over his head, and tied to his back, there is a sort of an arch, termed Ani, made of green-cocoa-tree leaves, with their ends radiating out. For some time he paces up and down, within a ring formed by the crowd, flinging about his arms, gesticulating wildly, leaping, and shaking his body furiously. Meanwhile a dozen or more tom-toms and drums are beaten incessantly and stunningly, with a continually increasing din; and the Dhér presently breaks into a maniac dance, capering, bounding, and spinning vehemently whilst the instruments redouble their noise, the power of the Bhuta being estimated by the fury and persistence with which the Dhér dances. The multitude around joins in raising a long, monotonous, howling cry, with a peculiar vibration. At length the Dhér stops, he is full of the demon, and stands fixed and rigid, with staring eyes. Presently he speaks, or rather the demon speaks from him, in loud, hoarse, commanding tones, wholly unlike his own, or indeed any natural voice. He addresses the head man of the village first, and then the principal inhabitants in due order, for any neglect of etiquette on this point by the Bhuta would infallibly give rise to great resentment. After thus speaking to the principal villagers and asking whether all the people are present, the possessed Dhér goes on to say that the Bhuta is pleased with the performance of the ceremony, and exhorts all the people to behave justly and charitably to one another. Various disputes and litigated matters, especially when evidence and ordinary means of adjustment fail, are then brought forward and submitted to the decision of the Bhuta, and his award, pronounced through the Dhér, is

\* A trace of this is, perhaps, seen in the Laws of Manu, where (xii. 71-2) it is declared that a Kshatriya who neglects his duties will, at the after-birth, be changed into a demon that feeds on ordure and carrion; and a Sudra into an evil being, that eats rotten carcasses—that is, into Bhutas.

\* In the British Museum there are some marble images of swine, sacred to Persephone, found in the temenos of the temple of Demeter at Cnidos, which may have been offerings, like these Indian ones of brass.

generally, though not always, submitted to. After this the demon desires to have food, and the Dher eats fried rice, and drinks the milk of young cocoa-nuts; or if the demon he represents be one of low degree, he eats animal food and drinks arrack. He then distributes areca flowers and pieces of cocoa-nut to all assembled in due order of precedence, and the Bhuta passes away from him, he loses his commanding mien and tones, and relapses into the servile drudge. The assembly then addresses itself to festivity; there is much drinking of arrack, the drumming and wild music go on vehemently, interminable songs are sung, and at the first dawn the people disperse on all sides to their homes. The houses and farmsteads composing a village in Canara lie widely scattered over a surface picturesquely diversified with hill and hollow; and not unfrequently, when riding over the country before sunrise, as Anglo-Indians do, I have met long files and troops of people returning from these nightly celebrations. They are a tall and comely race on that western coast, and looking at the women, with their many-coloured, classically-adjusted garments and garlanded heads, I have thought that groups of Bacchantes or Mænads descending from the valleys of Citharon, where all night long the tambour and cymbals had been resounding, and the torches flaming beneath the pine trees, might not have been so dissimilar to them, and that had we exact details of the wild Bacchic orgies and rites of the Mighty Mother, manifestations might be disclosed not distantly akin to those now witnessed in the East.\* It may not even be too bold to conjecture that a cultus springing from the same general idea, namely, demons or the dead, speaking through the living, may have existed in German and Gaulish forests or British valleys in the ages before the Roman invasion; and that much, looking that way, might have been picked up by any Latin archaeologist who troubled himself about barbarian folklore. Cæsar and Tacitus record only the names and rites of the higher gods, just as the English in India know generally something of Shiva and Vishnu, and the principal Brahmanical deities, but seldom anything of the obscurer divinities and worship of the common people.

It is indeed striking to survey how ancient and how widely spread are the ideas and observances already described. In Tinnevely, the extreme southern province of the Indian peninsula, the popular cultus is devil-worship, essentially the same as the Bhuta-worship of Canara, and has been described minutely by the Rev. R. Caldwell, of the Tinnevely Mission. There the devil-dancer, as the officiating person is called, grotesquely arrayed and bedizened, dances, with gradually increasing frenzy, to the quickening clamour of drums and cymbals, whirling and leaping till the afflatus descends; then, when under full control of the demon, he is worshipped as a present deity, and consulted by the bystanders respecting their diseases, wants, and the welfare of absent relations. Mr. Caldwell has also pointed out that all such observances are identical, point for point, with the Shamanite worship of Siberia, the hill-tribes of South-western China, and of Northern Asia, as the subjoined passage will show:—"When the Shaman, or magician, performs his rites, he puts on a garment trimmed with rattles and bells, he cries horribly, shakes his robe, beats a drum, whilst the bystanders increase the din by striking on iron kettles. When the Shaman by his contortions, yells, and whirling, has succeeded in assuming the appearance of something preternatural, the assembled multitude are impressed with the belief that the demon has taken possession of him, and regard him with wonder and dread. When quite exhausted, he makes a sign that the spirit has left him, and then imparts to the people the intimation he has received." As Mr. Caldwell remarks, such identity of usages is evidence of a common origin. I have witnessed oracular responses given under the supposed control of a demon, after gesticulatory dances amongst that peculiar tribe, often mentioned before this Society, the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills. In Siam spirit-dances are held in a shed built for the purpose, in which

offerings are set out for the demon, who is invited by the usual wild music to come down to the dance; but there is this peculiarity, that there the demon always enters a woman, which is scarcely ever heard of in India. She herself does not dance, but bathes and rubs herself with scent, dresses in a red waistcloth and dark silken jacket, and awaits the descent of the demon, who is incited to come by redoubled din of music and chanted incantations. When he comes she shakes and trembles, and then, assuming the airs and manners of a great personage, all present worship and pay her homage. Sometimes the spirit of one of their ancestors, sometimes a foreign demon, is supposed to have taken possession of her body. She answers questions, and gives commands and directions in a haughty, imperative tone, and all her words are humbly listened to, and afterwards she partakes of the offerings provided for the demon. An old woman usually plays the part, and after the influence has left her, she declares she knows nothing of what took place, or what she may have said. All these practices are in full force amongst the Chinese, and are described in the most ancient Chinese works "by the Emperor Fuh, probably nearly 3,000 B.C.," says the Rev. Mr. Nevius, in his work, "China and the Chinese." "They burn incense, beat a drum to call the attention of the desired spirit," writes Padre de Mae, "and then by idolatrous methods, one of which is a spasmodic ecstasy, they get responses from the dead. Had Mr. Layard penetrated more fully into the meaning of the wild rites and dances of the Yezidis, or devil-worshippers, of Kurdistan, which he describes so vividly in his work, "Nineveh and its Remains" (vol. i. 293), or been admitted further into the secrets of the cultus, the same belief and manifestations would probably have been found to be at its root. In New Zealand the Tohunga, or priests, evoke, after certain wild ceremonies, the spirits of the dead, who speak through them in strange, unearthly tones. Nearly the same practices have lately been described as prevailing among the Greenland Eskimo. Other instances might be cited of these ideas and usages in widely-separated nations; and amongst ourselves a trace or survival of them may perhaps be discerned in the unknown tongues of the Irvingites, which were said frequently to break forth after violent contortions; amongst the Shakers and Jumpers, too, of America and England, rapturous prayers and adjurations are reported to be sometimes uttered after violent, prolonged dancing;\* and in Spiritualist circles manifestations are said to be much assisted by those present joining in hymns and singing.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

At the ordinary fortnightly meeting of the Psychological Society, held on Thursday, last week, at 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, London, Mr. Serjeant Cox presided.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Walter Spencer, C.E., was elected an ordinary member of the society.

#### CLAIRVOYANT REVELATIONS.

Mr. F. K. Munton, honorary secretary, said that the investigation committee of the Psychological Society had put advertisements in the newspapers asking for information which would be of use to it, and had received a reply from a gentleman dated May 11th last. This correspondent said:—

"Some twenty-five years since a young lady who was a friend of my wife was found (a fortnight after her marriage) with her throat cut in her own bedroom, and, as she was a most cheerful and amiable young woman, we were inclined to think she had been murdered. However, a coroner's jury sat on the body, and, as no reason could be given, and

\* The newspapers contain a report of an extraordinary scene at Exeter recently (December, 1875), when "Mother Girling," the head of the New Forest Shakers, gave a lecture at that place.

"Mrs. Girling was listened to with some attention at first, but the audience soon began hissing and cheering. Suddenly one of the eight girls who accompanied the lecturer rose from her seat, and began to dance, with eyes closed, and arms waving to and fro. This demonstration (says the *Western Morning News*), caused loud laughter at first, followed by groans and hisses, which were redoubled when Mrs. Girling explained that it was the operation of the Spirit. The dancing girl next commenced singing snatches of hymns, and one of her companions fainted for a moment, and then began to dance as well. Great disorder followed. Appeals were made to the Shakers to stop the dancing, to which they replied they had no power to do so. By this time the number of dancers had increased, and a rush was made to the platform, which was speedily occupied. The scene at this time defies description—three or four girls, with dishevelled hair, and faces streaming with perspiration, dancing within a circle of policemen, and an infuriated mob trying to get at them and their companions, and hustle them from the platform. One of the men of the Shaker party, who had up to this time remained comparatively cool and collected, suddenly commenced to jump, and defied the efforts of three or four stalwart men to keep him still.

\* Circe, whose name is derived from the whirling, magic dance, with her herd of transformed Bhûta-like votaries, may be also cited; and the Sali, or leaping priests of early Rome. Compare, too, in Arabian story, the striking picture in Southey's "Thalaba" (Cant. ix.) of the terrible witch Khawla, possessed by Eblis, and uttering inspired warnings after wild gyrations and a bloody sacrifice; a shadow of such rites may survive in the spinning Dervishes to-day.

there were no tokens of insanity, a verdict of *felo de se* was brought in. About twelve months after this happened, some remarkable discoveries were made by a clairvoyant, and, as one of the gentlemen there who had profited by these discoveries was a friend of mine, I applied to him for an introduction to the clairvoyant, and certainly (assuming they were to be relied on) some awful disclosures were made. When I went not a single syllable was said by me about the errand on which I had come, and no one but my wife knew why I went. The place where the lady had died was fifty miles away, and twelve months had elapsed since her death, yet, on putting one of her letters into the hand of the clairvoyant (who could not read), and asking where the lady who wrote it was at the time, she pressed it to her head and immediately said, 'She is a shell'—that meant she was dead. She then went on to describe the murder as distinctly and with as much detail as if she had witnessed it—the dress the lady wore, the woman (for she said it was a woman) who did it, the razor with which it was perpetrated, and many other particulars. The murder (if a murder at all) had been committed by a left-handed person, although she was not left handed, and the razor was in her left hand when she was found, although it is hard to suppose that if she had done it herself she would have retained hold of it in her last agony. But this was not all. As I said, a verdict of *felo de se* was returned by the jury, and consequently she was buried at midnight without any religious rites, but there was some informality in this verdict which induced the family to appeal against it and it was set aside. Now all this was described by the clairvoyant—the strange funeral in the dark, the judge and barristers, and their curious wigs, were accurately described. Ten years after, the then mayor, who is a friend of mine, and also a great believer in the extraordinary powers of the clairvoyant, was requested by me to ask her to his house, but was desired by me not to say a word to her who wished to see her. She was accordingly brought into his drawing-room, and I was concealed behind a curtain until she was mesmerised. I then came out and put the same letter into her hand, and she told me the same story, with some modifications, one of which was that the woman who had committed the murder was dead. It was curious to observe how the touch of the letter revived her memory of what she had said ten years before, and she went through all the various matters she had seemed to see so vividly, and that she had told me so long before."

Mr. C. C. Massey asked whether the writer of the letter stated that the clairvoyant had described judges and barristers in their wigs.

The Secretary replied, "Yes."

Mr. Massey added—"Then that could not have been an inquest."

The Secretary explained that the letter stated that they appealed to a higher court to set aside the verdict.

#### LORD CLARENDON'S ACCOUNT OF THE APPARITION OF SIR GEORGE VILLIERS.

MR. GEORGE HARRIS, F.S.A., then read the following paper:—

Of the various narratives of apparitions which have been afforded to us by different persons, and at different periods, there is none more remarkable than that given by Lord Clarendon in his *History of the Rebellion*,\* of the ghost of Sir George Villiers, father of the Duke of Buckingham, whose violent death was predicted, and which happened shortly afterwards, he being stabbed to death at Portsmouth by an assassin named Felton.

Before giving the story itself, I may perhaps be allowed to state very briefly the correct principles which appear to me to be applicable to test the reality of phenomena of this description.

When an apparition is said to have been heard as well as seen, this is some, although not conclusive, proof of its reality; inasmuch as it is less likely that two of the senses should be out of order, or should at once deceive us, than that only one of them should be in that condition. Besides, what can be the object of a ghost appearing unless he has something to say, and to the purpose of his visit? So also, when an apparition is said to have been seen by two or more persons, instead of by one only, and on separate occasions, there is of course a much stronger ground for believing the story than if one individual only said that he had seen it. Not merely because two witnesses are in every case better than one, but for the still more satisfactory reason, that two persons are not likely to be at once labouring under false impressions of the senses, or a disordered imagination. In all these cases a great deal must of course depend on the character, state of mind, and condition in point of health of the parties. So, also, the time at which the apparition presented itself may have some influence in determining the credit to be given to it. An apparition seen at mid-day would command considerably more belief than one witnessed at midnight. If, again, an animal—a dog, for instance—accompanying the person who sees the apparition, gives token of the presence of some supernatural being, either by its cries, or by exhibiting unusual symptoms of terror, as is alleged to have happened in some avowedly well authenticated cases of apparitions, this must undoubtedly be regarded as a strong additional proof of the reality of its appearance, and that no mere illusion of the senses occasioned a belief in its existence. If, however, other individuals, and those persons of character and intelligence, are consulted at the time about the supposed appearance of a ghost, and are convinced of the sincerity of those who assert that they have seen one, this may be considered as a strong corroboration of their testimony.

Another decisive confirmation of the reality of a supernatural visitation of this kind is when some important fact, with which the person who narrates the circumstance could not have become acquainted in the ordinary course of things, is communicated by it: as in the case of the intelligence of the death of some one in a distant foreign country at the moment when the apparition presented itself—the detection of a murder by announcing where the body lay concealed—the discovery of

hidden treasure—or the foretelling of an important event, which actually happens in the precise way predicted.

Lord Clarendon's narration is as follows:—"There was an officer in the king's wardrobe in Windsor Castle, of a good reputation for honesty and discretion, and then about the age of fifty years or more. This man had in his youth been bred in a school in the parish where Sir George Villiers, the father of the duke, lived, and had been much cherished and obliged, in that season of his age, by the said Sir George, whom afterwards he never saw. About six months before the miserable end of the Duke of Buckingham, about midnight, this man, being in his bed at Windsor where his office was, and in a very good health, there appeared to him on the side of his bed a man of very venerable aspect, who drew the curtains of his bed, and, fixing his eyes upon him, asked him if he knew him. The poor man, half dead with fear and apprehension, being asked the second time whether he remembered him—and having in that time called to his memory the presence of Sir George Villiers, and the very clothes he used to wear, in which at that time he seemed to be habited, he answered him that he thought him to be that person. He replied 'he was right, that he was the same, and that he expected a service from him; which was that he should go for him to his son, the Duke of Buckingham, and tell him if he did not somewhat to ingratiate himself to the people—or, at least, to abate the extreme malice they had against him—he would be suffered to live but a short time.' After this discourse he disappeared; and the poor man, if he had been at all waking, slept very well till morning, when he believed all this to be a dream, and considered it no otherwise.

"The next night, or shortly after, the same person appeared to him again, in the same place and about the same time of the night, with an aspect a little more severe than before, and asked him whether he had done as he had required him? and perceiving he had not, gave him very severe reprehensions; told him 'he expected more compliance from him; and that if he did not perform his commands he should enjoy no peace of mind, but should be always pursued by him;' upon which he promised him to obey him. But the next morning, waking out of a good sleep, though he was exceedingly perplexed with the lively representation of all particulars to his memory, he was willing still to persuade himself 'that he had only dreamed,' and considered that he was a person at such a distance from the Duke that he knew not how to find any admission to his presence, much less had any hope to be believed in what he should say. So, with great trouble and inquietness, he spent some time in thinking what he should do, and in the end resolved to do nothing in the matter.

"The same person appeared to him the third time with a terrible countenance, and bitterly reproaching him for not performing what he had promised to do. The poor man had by this time recovered the courage to tell him 'that in truth he had deferred the execution of his commands, upon considering how difficult a thing it would be for him to get any access to the Duke, having acquaintance with no person about him; and if he could obtain admission to him, he should never be able to persuade him that he was sent in such a manner; but he should at best be thought to be mad, or to be set on and employed by his own or the malice of other men, to abuse the Duke; and so he should be sure to be undone.' The person replied, as he had done before, 'that he should never find rest till he should perform what he required, and therefore he were better to dispatch it. That the access to his son was known to be very easy; and that few men waited long for him, and for the giving him credit he would tell him two or three particulars which he charged him never to mention to any person living but to the Duke himself, and he should no sooner hear them but he would believe all the rest he should say; and so, repeating his threats, he left him.

"In the morning the poor man, more confirmed by the last appearance, made his journey to London, where the Court then was. He was very well known to Sir Ralph Freeman, one of the masters of requests, who had married a lady that was nearly allied to the Duke, and was himself well received by him. To him this man went, and though he did not acquaint him with all particulars, he said enough to him to let him see there was somewhat extraordinary in it, and the knowledge he had of the sobriety and discretion of the man made the more impression in him. He desired that 'by his means he might be brought to the Duke to such a place, and in such a manner, as should be thought fit,' affirming 'that he had much to say to him, and of such a nature as would require much privacy, and some time and patience in the hearing.' Sir Ralph promised 'he would speak first with the Duke of him, and then he should understand his pleasure.' And accordingly, in the first opportunity, he did inform him of the reputation and honesty of the man, and then what he desired, and of all he knew of the matter. The Duke, according to his usual openness and condescension, told him 'that he was the next day early to hunt with the king; that his horses should attend him at Lambeth-bridge, where he would land by five of the clock in the morning; and if the man attended him there at that hour, he would walk and speak with him as long as should be necessary.' Sir Ralph carried the man with him the next morning and presented him to the Duke at his landing, who received him courteously, and walked aside in conference near an hour, none but his own servants being at that hour in that place, and they and Sir Ralph at such a distance that they could not hear a word, though the Duke sometimes spoke, and with great commotion, which Sir Ralph the more easily observed, and perceived, because he kept his eyes always fixed upon the Duke, having procured the conference, upon somewhat he knew there was of extraordinary. And the man told him in his return over the water, 'that when he mentioned these particulars which were to gain him credit, the substance whereof he said he durst not impart to him, the Duke's colour changed, and he swore he could come to that knowledge only by the Devil, for that those particulars were known only to himself and to one person more, who, he was sure, would never speak of it.'

\* Vol. II., pp. 42-43. (Edit. 1712.)

"The Duke pursued his purpose of hunting, but was observed to ride all the morning with great pensiveness, and in deep thoughts, without any delight in the exercise he was upon. And before the morning was spent, he left the field, and alighted at his mother's lodgings in Whitehall, with whom he was shut up for the space of two or three hours, the noise of their discourse frequently reaching the ears of those who attended in the next rooms. And when the Duke left her, his countenance appeared full of trouble, with a mixture of anger; a countenance that was never before observed in him, in any conversation with her, towards whom he had a profound reverence. And his mother was at the Duke's leaving, found overwhelmed in tears, and in the highest agony imaginable. Whatever there was of all this, it is a notorious truth that when the news of the Duke's murder (which happened a few months afterwards) was brought to his mother, she seemed not in the least degree surprised, but received it as if she had foreseen it; nor did afterwards express such a degree of sorrow as was expected from such a mother for the loss of such a son."

It seems to me that in the case which I have cited, and which I have stated in the exact words used by Lord Clarendon, there are several circumstances which, according to the principles that I have laid down, warrant our belief in the reality of the apparition. For although it was only seen by one person, yet to him it appeared several times, and he seems to have been a man of character, and sense, and credit, and communicated what he saw and heard to the person desired. Moreover, the information afforded by the apparition, both as regards the private matter relating to the Duke, and the prediction of his death, could only have been in some extraordinary way. The narrator of the story, Lord Clarendon, was not at all inclined to be superstitious or credulous, although living in an age when such stories commanded much more belief than they would be likely to do at the present day.

The Chairman remarked that Mr. Harris had started a very fertile theme, and he hoped that those present would have something to say for or against ghosts.

A member asked whether it was known whence Lord Clarendon obtained the particulars.

Mr. Harris replied that he seemed to state them from his own knowledge. In his *History of the Rebellion* there were also other ghost stories, to which others, however, Lord Clarendon seemed to give no credit.

Mr. Gordon wished to know what was the position in life of the man who saw the spirit.

Mr. Harris stated that he was keeper of the robes at Windsor Castle.

The Chairman said that the only remarkable part of the story was, that the man told the Duke something which was not known to any other person.

Mr. Massey: Yes; the spirit said, "Tell him this, and then he will know that you come from me."

Mr. Coffin said that Mr. Harris's statement that it was a genuine case of an apparition should be examined. The person was not only seen, but heard, and that, too, on separate occasions; he further gave credentials. Mr. Harris, in dwelling upon these facts, had said that only one sense was likely to be out of order at one time, but he (Mr. Coffin) thought that such an abnormal state would influence all the senses of the individual, unconsciously to himself, so that the fact of the apparition at all. He (Mr. Coffin) had dreamed the same thing, not only three times, but half-a-dozen times, and certain stock dreams he had dreamt all through his life. (Laughter.) The man mentioned in the narrative had twice confused a dream with the apparition, consequently there was doubt whether the case before them came under the ordinary category of apparitions; the man might also have known some private particulars of the life of the Duke of Buckingham which had come to him in a roundabout way. Thus the whole thing seemed to fail in many points of importance.

Mr. Gordon remarked that little could be added to the words of Mr. Coffin, which seemed to demolish the story altogether. No man in his sober senses would confound a dream with an apparition; a clear-headed man would know whether he was awake at the time.

The Chairman stated that there were further difficulties in the case. Why should the man make the communication in a garden early in the morning, instead of in the house of the Duke of Buckingham. Their holding such a meeting made it look as if there had been something between them before, and the whole story of the dream might have been a contrivance to obtain an interview. Even if the whole account were *bona fide*, there was no evidence that it was not a mere dream, and, as Mr. Coffin had said, dreams had a tendency to repeat themselves. People who awoke suddenly from dreams sometimes thought that they saw people by their bedsides. When a person was put in the mesmeric condition on several successive occasions, a dream-story would sometimes be carried on from one mesmeric sleep to the other; he had known the phenomenon carried even to this extent—a person had been awakened from the mesmeric sleep in the middle of a song he was singing, and when he was thrown into the mesmeric state again a month afterwards, he took up the song at exactly the point where he had left off. According to the story which had been told them, the Duke seemed to have received in an irrational way a perfect stranger to him; that they should meet where nobody could see them—not even his own servants—was a suspicious fact. Looking at all the circumstances of the case, he thought that the narrative furnished no proof of the existence of ghosts. He should like to see a ghost very much. The seeing of a ghost by one person only would be no evidence of its existence at all, because the vision might have been subjective; ghosts were never seen by two persons at the same moment, or at least such instances were very rare, and in those very rare cases it was necessary to be sure that one person had not first suggested the idea of a ghost being present to the other, thereby making the second person see it by mesmeric influence.

## THE CHURCH-HAUNTING SPIRIT AT YORK.

The Rev. W. Stainton-Moses, M.A., said that he should like to know what was meant by ghosts. One gentleman sitting by his side (Mr. Massey) had seen them by fifties and sixties. Were they to pass by the more tangible ghosts said to appear at the present day? Were they to pass by the stories about the palpable manifestation of spirits in materialised human form, like those recorded in the last number of *The Spiritualist*? He had been immensely struck with three separate reports in that number, of the appearance of temporary human forms.

Professor Plumtree asked whether Mr. Stainton-Moses would read one of the accounts mentioned.

Mr. Moses replied that he had not a copy of the paper with him. One of the accounts stated how—in the light—several persons together had seen a spirit gradually form and afterwards dissolve. Perhaps Mr. Harrison had the account with him.

Mr. Harrison remarked that he had not, but another account had been printed in the same journal about a spirit being seen with tolerable regularity in broad daylight in a church in York. The said account had been quoted from the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and he had since received information that the editor considered the writer of the account to be an honourable and trustworthy man. Further, another correspondent stated that Mr. Baring-Gould confirmed the story.

Mr. Serjeant Cox remarked that ten months ago a gentleman had written to him from York about the regular appearance of the same alleged ghost.

Mr. Stainton-Moses asked whether the Psychological Society would do well to send a committee to York to inquire into the matter. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Gordon wished to know whether Professor Pepper had been there.

## THE APPEARANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF A DYING WOMAN.

Mr. Stainton-Moses continued that if they were not facts, they would, if not contradicted, pass into the region of facts. It had been said that spirits were not usually seen by many persons at the same time, but the *Spiritualist* contained an authenticated account of a dying mother, who wished to see her children, and all the children saw her spirit. He knew of another case of the kind. It was narrated by the Rev. F. G. Lee, Vicar of Lambeth, who tried to prove Spiritualism to be of diabolical origin. Mr. Lee quoted the following document:—

"A lady and her husband (who held a position of some distinction in India) were returning home (A.D. 1854), after an absence of four years, to join a family of young children, when the former was seized in Egypt with an illness of a most alarming character, and though carefully tended by an English physician, and nursed with the greatest care, grew so weak that little or no hope of her recovery existed. With that true kindness which is sometimes withheld by those about a dying bed, she was properly and plainly informed of her dangerous state, and bidden to prepare for the worst. Of a devout, pious, and reverential mind, she is reported to have made a careful preparation for the latter end. The only point which seemed to disturb her mind after the delirium of fever had passed away, was a deep-seated desire to see her absent children once again, which she frequently expressed to those who attended upon her. Day after day for more than a week she gave utterance to her longings and prayers, remarking that she would die happily if only this one wish could be gratified.

"On the morning of the day of her departure hence she fell into a long and heavy sleep, from which her attendants found it difficult to arouse her. During the whole period of it she lay perfectly tranquil. Soon after noon, however, she suddenly awoke, saying, 'I have seen them all; I have seen them all. God be praised, for Jesus Christ's sake,' and then slept again. Towards evening in perfect peace, and with many devout exclamations, she calmly yielded up her spirit to God who gave it. Her body was brought to England and interred in the family burying place.

"The most remarkable part of this incident remains to be told. The children of the dying lady were being educated at Torquay under the supervision of a friend of the family. At the very time when their mother thus slept they were confined to the house where they lived by a severe storm of thunder and lightning. Two apartments on one floor, perfectly distinct, were then occupied by them as play and recreation rooms. All were then gathered together. No one of the children was absent. They were amusing themselves with games in company of a nursemaid who had never seen their parents. All of a sudden their mother, as she usually appeared, entered the larger room of the two, pausing, looked for some moments at each and smiled, passed into the next room, and then vanished away. Three of the elder children recognised her at once, but were greatly disturbed and impressed at her appearance, silence, and manner. The younger and nursemaid, each and all, saw a lady in white come into the smaller room, and then slowly glide by and fade away.

"The date of this occurrence, Sept. 10, 1854, was carefully noted, and it was afterwards found that the two events above recorded happened almost contemporaneously. A record of the event was committed to paper, and transcribed on a fly-leaf of the family Bible, from which the above account was taken and given to the editor of this book in the autumn of 1871, by a relation of the lady in question, who is well acquainted with the fact of her spectral appearance at Torquay, and has vouched for the truth of it in the most distinct and formal manner.

"The narrative of the spectral appearance of a lady at Torquay, forwarded to Dr. F. G. Lee at his special request, is copied from and compared with that in the family Bible of H. A. T. Baillie-Hamilton, by the undersigned.

"C. MARGARET BALFOUR.

"MARY BAILLIE-HAMILTON.

"Witness, J. R. GRANT."

Princes-street, Edinburgh, Oct. 7, 1871.

## REINCARNATION?

Mr. F. K. Munton said that Mr. Stainton-Moses's remarks about the objectivity of apparitions, had brought to his mind a statement made to him by a celebrated scientific man, well known by name to everybody in that room, and who had assured him that one night in his bedroom, the door of which was always bolted, he awoke under the impression that some one was speaking to him. He opened his eyes,

and saw what he thought to be a human form near the foot of the bed. Gradually the form became more distinct, and he saw before him a woman who said, "I am your sister." As he had no sister he doubted the statement, and asked what she meant. She replied that his spirit had been in another body two hundred years before, and that she at that time had been his sister. He (Mr. Munton) remarked to the narrator of the anecdote that he supposed he must have been in a dream. The reply was that he knew he had not been dreaming, because he got out of bed and wrote down the story he was then telling. He further stated that the form diminished and disappeared, and not through the door. The man who made this statement was one of the most eminent scientific men living. Perhaps he dreamt it, then rose and wrote it out on paper. The society should investigate all the alleged cases of apparitions it could, because whether it exploded them or proved them to be true, it would equally be doing good.

A member asked whether the scientific man just mentioned was a believer in Spiritualism?

Mr. Munton replied that he thought that on the whole he was convinced of its truth, but not because of the particular event just narrated.

#### THE TRAVELLING OF THE SPIRIT DURING THE SLEEP OF THE BODY.

Mr. Stainton-Moses asked whether records of phenomena were received by the society?

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Stainton-Moses continued that he should like to submit a case. A friend of his who lived in Lincolnshire died, and he was invited to the funeral. He could not go, and was sitting quietly at home in London at the time, without being conscious in any way of anything abnormal. He became unconscious, and afterwards found by his watch that he had been in that condition for two hours. Afterwards, bit by bit, the details of the funeral of his friend came into his mind; or, rather, bit by bit he brought to recollection a scene he had witnessed. He remembered seeing the officiating minister and the mourners, just as if he had been present at the funeral, so he put all the details down on paper; moreover, he the same day posted a full account of the funeral to a friend of his who had been at it, who wrote back in complete astonishment as to how he could have obtained the details. The minister was not the one whom he had previously expected would officiate at the funeral, the clergyman having been changed at the last moment. That was a fact for Dr. Carpenter. The funeral started from Lincolnshire, but took place in Northamptonshire; he saw and described the churchyard, a particular corner of the churchyard, and a particular tree there. He did not think that he dreamt all this, but if he did dream it was every word of it true. He put this forward as a curious psychological fact.

#### SENSATIONS EXPERIENCED IN MOMENTS OF EXTREME BODILY DANGER.

Mr. Stainton-Moses continued:—"In the early days of this society I narrated how a drowning person saw all the events of his life pass before his eyes in a short time. I have now another case of the kind which I wish to lay before the Society; it is quoted from Whymper's *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, in the years 1860-1869, and describes his sensations in falling from a great height. In ascending the Matterhorn, Mr. Whymper, who was alone, slipped and fell in attempting to pass a difficult corner at an angle of the cliffs of the Tête du Lion. He thus describes the result:—"The knapsack brought my head down first, and I pitched into some rocks about a dozen feet below: they caught something, and tumbled me off the edge, head over heels, into the gully; the *bâton* was dashed from my hands, and I whirled downwards in a series of bounds, each longer than the last—now over ice, now into rocks, striking my head four or five times, each time with increasing force. The last bound sent me spinning through the air in a leap of fifty or sixty feet, from one side of the gully to the other, and I struck the rocks luckily with the whole of my left side. They caught my clothes for a moment, and I fell back on to the snow with motion arrested. My head fortunately came the right side up, and a few frantic catches brought me to a halt in the neck of the gully, and on the verge of the precipice." The injuries Mr. Whymper had received were sufficiently serious. His head was badly cut, and his body showed more than twenty cuts, from which the blood spurted 'in blinding jets at each pulsation.' Crawling to a place of safety he fainted away, and remained in an unconscious state till sunset. His description of his sensations is worth noting. He thus describes them:—"I was perfectly conscious of what was happening, and felt each blow, but like a patient under chloroform, experienced no pain. Each blow was, naturally, more severe than that which had preceded it, and I distinctly remember thinking—Well, if the next is harder still, that will be the end. Like persons who have been rescued from drowning, I remember that the recollection of a multitude of things rushed through my head, many of them trivialities or absurdities, which had been long forgotten; and, more remarkable, this bounding through space did not feel disagreeable. But I think that in no very great distance more consciousness, as well as sensation, would have been lost, and upon that I base my belief, improbable as it seems, that a fall from a great height is as painless an end as can be experienced. The loss of blood, although so great, did not seem to be permanently injurious. The only serious effect has been the reduction of a naturally retentive memory to a very commonplace one; and, although my recollections of more distant occurrences remain unshaken, the events of that particular day would be clean gone but for the few notes that were written down before the accident."

Mr. Serjeant Cox said that a relation of his served in the Abyssinian war, and went elephant hunting. After he shot at one animal the elephant ran after him, caught him, and tried to toss him with its tusks. The elephant missed its aim, broke two of his ribs, and then lifted him in the air on its tusks, at the same time twisting its trunk

over him to kill him. At that moment the commanding officer fired at the elephant, and killed it. This adventure occurred to his (Mr. Serjeant Cox's) own son-in-law, who stated that while upon the elephant's tusks he was in constant fear of death, but had not the slightest feeling of horror. The sensation was one of perfect calmness.

Mr. Gordon asked whether Mr. Stainton-Moses thought he had seen the funeral in a dream.

Mr. Stainton-Moses replied that he had not said that it was a dream. He had not said what it was, but had left it for the members of the society to give their own explanations. If any of them said that it was a dream, the *onus probandi* rested with those who made the statement.

#### THE GHOST AT YORK.

The Chairman remarked that the case of the ghost at York really merited investigation. It appeared outside the church window, above ground. It was a female form which first passed across the window in one direction, and on her return in the other usually brought with her a child. It was said that this ghost had been seen with more or less frequency in York for more than 300 years.

Mr. Gordon: Is she performing now? (Laughter.)

The Chairman continued that she was still in the habit of appearing. The writer in the *Newcastle Chronicle* stated that she had a definite and distinct figure, and that even her features could be distinguished. Those who had seen the appearance were not able in any way to account for it, while persons inside had been looking at the figure, people had been watching the church outside and had seen nothing.

Professor Plumtree asked whether the name of the church had been published.

Mr. Harrison: Yes. Holy Trinity Church, York.

The Chairman added that he thought it was a very proper thing for the society to investigate.

Mr. F. K. Munton, hon. secretary, said that he would make official inquiry into the matter. (Applause.)

Mr. George Harris then replied to such of the remarks as had borne reference to his paper. He thought that the story could not be so very easily explained away. In the first place a prediction had been made, which prediction afterwards came true. Then again the identity of the alleged spirit seemed to be proved. The reason why the Duke made the appointment early in the morning was because he was at that time at leisure, but during the rest of the day he spent much of his time hunting with the king. It had always been considered to be a well-attested story, but he must leave the members of the society to form their own opinions about it, and to provide their own explanations.

The Secretary announced that at the next meeting a paper would be read by Mr. Serjeant Cox.

#### A SPIRIT MATERIALISING FOUR DAYS AFTER DEATH.

BY WILLIAM OXLEY.

ON Thursday evening, May 11th, 1876, an event took place which is perhaps the most remarkable on record connected with modern Spiritualism, and as I believe the spirit when embodied was well known to many of the readers of *The Spiritualist*, the record may be interesting.

At the meeting held at the house of Mr. —, in Manchester, there were present seven of us, including Dr. Monck, the medium. Taking our seats round an oval table, I sat at one end, a *good light* from a gas lamp being behind me; Dr. Monck sat at the other end of the table. After a time he became entranced, and, rising from his seat, came up to me on the left-hand side, close to where I was sitting. Samuel was the controlling spirit. He took a white lawn handkerchief from Dr. Monck's pocket, and placing it on his right hand, the handkerchief appeared to be "absorbed," or metamorphosed, and in a few seconds there, at the extremity of his arm, appeared a beautiful, unmistakable feminine face, as large as a good-sized infant's; it was a *perfect human head*, with the features clearly delineated. So clearly are the features and form impressed upon my memory, that were I an artist I could even now produce them on canvas. The head and face were of pure classic form, and very beautiful to look upon. While I was looking intently on the object before me I heard a whispering voice, at first very faintly, issuing from the head; the words were, "Do you hear me?" I replied, "No, not distinctly," as Samuel, through Dr. Monck, was speaking at the same time. I then said, "Come closer, so that I may hear you." The reply was, "I will try." I now saw that the lips moved in giving articulation to the words. Dr. Monck then pressed his lips close to my right cheek, which I felt distinctly all the time that the head was within a few inches of my left ear. Listening intently I heard the words, "My name is Rhondda, and I wish you to write to my parents in Cardiff, and tell them not to grieve for me, as I am very happy. I have seen my beautiful and glorious home, and I shall often try to come through this medium, and hope to be very useful."



(The rest I did not clearly catch.) Four of the other sitters were then called up, to whom words were spoken, but which I did not hear distinctly. A strange fact then occurred. As soon as the others came up to where Dr. Monck was standing I observed the face alter, and the kerchief hung suspended from the hand, but the voice came as before from under the kerchief. When this part was concluded, Samuel said, "You have had the most wonderful phenomenon in this room this evening that has been enacted on your earth."

Dr. Monck now retired behind the curtains in the corner of the room, and the light being extinguished a luminous hand appeared and touched some of us; the light reflected from the hand enabled us to distinguish the outline of a head and bust. I then felt what appeared like hair touch my face three times, also the wafting of a fine gauzy garment which passed over my head, and almost enveloped it in passing. This ceased, and a voice (I presume using the organism of Dr. Monck, but it might have been direct for aught I know to the contrary) addressed us for about five minutes, but being unprepared I took no notes, and the statements passed from memory, so that I cannot repeat what was said.

In accordance with instructions I wrote to the parents in Cardiff, giving particulars concerning the face as they appeared to me, to which a reply was sent that they had "been informed by Rhondda that the message was genuine, and that she did materialise herself; the description of features does not correspond with herself when in health, but as at her departure is perfectly true."

From what I have learnt, the spirit of Rhondda passed out of the body on Sunday evening, May 7th, at 8 p.m., and on the fourth day between 8 and 9 p.m. (three clear days and nights intervening), she appeared to us in the manner above described. To those who can give credence to the facts narrated, a new view of the resurrection will be presented, and cogitation thereon will be instructive and interesting.

Higher Broughton, Manchester, May 22, 1876.

#### MR. BLACKBURN'S SEANCES.

STRONG MANIFESTATIONS WHILE THE MEDIUM WAS CLOSELY SEWN IN A BAG.

THE usual weekly *séance* at the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, on Friday evening last, was attended by Mrs. Desmond FitzGerald, Mr. A. Galbraith, Miss Withall, Rev. D. Saunders, Mr. T. Johnson, Miss A. Hinton, Mrs. Gunyon, Miss Glover, Capt. Rolleston, Mr. W. J. Woodhouse, and myself for the *Séance* Committee of the Association.

It is of course unnecessary to mention manifestations of the ordinary character, but I have the satisfaction of reporting that we had some excellent results of experiments under the most stringent test conditions. Mr. Eglinton's arms were placed behind him, and his coat sleeves were sewn together, his coat being also sewn together in front. He was then placed in a chintz bag, the opening of which was sewn close round his neck. In this helpless condition he was placed in a chair in the cabinet, and a tape, placed round his neck, was fastened to the chair back. The curtains of the cabinet were then dropped so as to conceal his head and body, leaving his knees and legs outside. On his knees, which were thus under the full view of the company, was placed a little stringed instrument, known as the "Oxford chimes," and upon this a book was laid. During the sitting this book was two or three times opened and shut without visible means; the strings of the instrument were played upon; and both the instrument and the book were lifted two or three inches from the medium's knees, and replaced in the same position. When Mr. Eglinton was sewn up in the bag he was wearing a peculiarly shaped ring, which was observed by several of the company, and especially by Capt. Rolleston, who did the sewing. In the course of the sitting this ring was taken off his hand and placed outside the curtains upon the "chimes" without visible agency, and a diamond ring, which Mrs. Desmond FitzGerald laid upon the instrument in view of the company was removed by an unseen power, and when Mr. Eglinton was immediately afterwards unpacked, was found on one of his fingers. Before

the medium was released, the stitches by which the bag and the coat had been sewn were inspected by the company, who were satisfied that they had not been disturbed, and a minute inspection of the bag showed that there were no holes in it. All present expressed their conviction that the test conditions had been in every respect perfect and complete.

E. DAWSON ROGERS,

Chairman of the *Séance* Committee.

#### SEVERE TREATMENT OF MEDIAL SCANDAL-MONGERS BY SPIRITS.

(From Miss Blackwell's Translation of Allan Kardec's "Book of Mediums.")

THE moral imperfections of the obsessed are often an obstacle to their deliverance, as seen in the following remarkable example, which we here bring forward as being of general application:—

Several sisters had been subject, for many years, to deprecations of a very unpleasant nature. Their clothes were constantly scattered about in every corner of the house, and sometimes even upon the roof; they were cut and torn, and holes were made in them, no matter how carefully they had been locked up. These ladies, living in a little provincial town, had never heard of Spiritism, and their first idea was, naturally enough, that they were the victims of some malicious practical joke; but the persistency of the annoyance, notwithstanding the precautions they adopted in the hope of putting a stop to it, soon showed them that this could not be the case. It was not until the annoyance had gone on for some years, that, having heard of Spiritism and spirits, they addressed us on the subject, in the hope of learning the cause of the damage thus inflicted on them, and the means of preventing its recurrence, if possible. There could be, to our mind, no doubt about the cause of the annoyance, but to suggest a remedy was a more difficult matter. The spirit who manifested his presence by such acts, was evidently animated by a sentiment of hostility; and, in fact, such was found to be the case when we evoked him. He showed himself, moreover, to be exceedingly perverse, and inaccessible alike to persuasion and counsel. Prayer, however, appeared to exercise a salutary influence over him; but after a short respite, the deprecations complained of began again. We subjoin the communication of a superior spirit consulted by us in regard to these persecutions:—

"The ladies thus tormented must treat their protecting spirit not to abandon them; but they must also examine their consciences, and ask themselves whether they have always practised *neighbourly charity*; I do not mean the charity which gives alms, but *the charity of the tongue*. Unfortunately for them, they have not yet learned to restrain that member, and therefore do not deserve the deliverance which they desire from the spirit who torments them; for they are much too fond of slandering their neighbours. The spirit who obsesses them does so out of revenge; for, while living, he was their drudge, and suffered much through their hardness and their exactions. They have only to consult their memory to see who it is that they have to do with.

"Nevertheless if they set themselves resolutely to amend what is amiss in their daily life, their guardian angels will come back to them, and their presence will suffice to drive away the revengeful spirit, whose power is principally in connection with one of them; her guardian angel having been forced to leave her by her indulgence in reprehensible acts and thoughts. Let these ladies pray fervently for all who suffer; let them practise the virtues required by God from every one according to his condition, and they will be delivered from the obsession that has so long tormented them."

On our remarking that these strictures appeared to us to be rather severe, and that it might perhaps be well to soften them before transmitting them to the ladies, the spirit added:—

"It was my duty to say what I have said, and in the way in which I have said it, because the persons in question do not perceive that they make an evil use of their tongues, although they do so habitually, and to a deplorable degree.

It is therefore necessary to give them a warning that may strike home to them."\*

From the foregoing we learn a very important lesson, *viz.*, that our moral imperfections bring us under the power of obsessing spirits, and that the surest method of getting rid of these is to attract good spirits to us by the practice of virtue. Good spirits are more powerful than bad ones, and their will suffices to keep off the latter, but they only assist those who second the action of their will by the efforts they themselves make for their own amendment; when no such efforts are made good spirits retire, and their withdrawal leaves the field free to the evil ones, who thus become, in certain cases, instruments of punishment, the higher spirits allowing the lower ones to act for the accomplishment of this end.

#### A CURIOUS ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENT AT A *SEANCE*.

BY WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

ON Wednesday evening last week a *séance* took place at the house of Mr. Desmond G. Fitz-Gerald, Member of the Society of Telegraph Engineers, at 6, Loughborough-road North, Brixton, London. Fifteen or sixteen members of the Brixton Psychological Society were present, and Mr. Eglinton was the medium.

Mr. Fitz-Gerald produced a box about two feet square, with lock and key, which had been purchased that afternoon, and with which it was intended to test the powers of Mr. Eglinton's spirits in a peculiar manner. A single cell battery, a telegraphic relay, and an electrical bell were placed inside the box. The connections were made with wires, so that when the armature of the relay was depressed the electrical bell rang. The relay was so adjusted that when it was most violently shaken the armature of the magnet would not move, thus no accidental jolting could cause the telegraphic bell to ring. Moreover, it was impossible to shake the relay when inside the locked box without detection, because the said shaking would have upset the battery and all the liquid contained therein. All the apparatus and wires being placed inside the box the lid was closed and locked. No amount of shaking the bell itself would ring it, it being an electrical one. Two strips of paper were then gummed over the crack between the lid of the box and the box itself, so that if the lid were opened the pieces of paper would have been torn. The pieces of paper were specially marked with pencil by the observers so that they could be subsequently identified.

What was required to be done was that the spirits should depress the armature inside the box so as to cause the electrical bell to ring, thereby displaying if possible their power of producing mechanical effects inside a closed and locked box. The medium never saw the box until shortly before the *séance*; he was present while the pieces of apparatus were being placed in it, and what was required to be done in the matter of the depression of the armature was explained to him, it being a well-known fact that whatever is known to the medium comes to the knowledge of his attendant spirits. The spirits said that they did not think that they should be able to do it, although in the course of the evening they would try. If they failed they would arrange a special *séance*, during which they would endeavour to achieve the desired result. They wished the box to be placed in a dark place with the medium.

In the course of the evening Mr. Eglinton's wrists were placed across each other behind his back, and the cuffs of his coat were sewn together by Mrs. Fitz-Gerald with strong thread; afterwards one of the cuffs was also sewn to his jacket at the small of his back. His coat was buttoned in front, and further sewn at one place in front.

Curtains suspended between the front and back drawing-rooms formed a cabinet; the spectators sat on the one side of the curtains, and the medium, in the dark, on the other. He sat at the opening of the curtains facing the audience,

\* When this message was given neither Allan Kardec nor the medium by whom it was written had any knowledge whatever of the ladies to whom it referred, and who lived in a remote country town, but subsequent inquiries showed that its allegations were true, and that its severity was fully deserved. Happily for the parties to whom it was addressed, the lesson it conveyed proved effectual; they renounced the uncharitable habits which had brought them under the power of the obsessor, and were consequently freed from his influence.—*Translator*.

with his knees and boots in full view. There was light enough to see them distinctly, to see the colour and pattern of his trousers, and to read large print, not small print. The upper part of Mr. Eglinton's body was placed in darkness by the curtains being drawn together by spirit hands just above his knees. A book was placed on his knees. Its lid opened, and page after page was raised without anything visible touching them. A little later two hands were seen. The spirits asked for pencil and paper, which were placed on the book. The hands then began to write on the paper in the presence of the observers; four or five words were written of no particular import.

Afterwards, Mr. Eglinton was drawn inside the cabinet, so that he was completely lost to view. He could be heard making a shuddering noise, and appeared to be shaking violently. The spirits said that they had received an accession of power because of the arrival of one of Mr. Cöلمان's spirits named Johnny Grey, and they asked the members of the circle to sing. This was done, and perhaps about ten minutes after Mr. Eglinton disappeared from view the electrical bell rang; it stopped, and afterwards rang again for about half a minute amid the applause of the sitters outside.

Shortly afterwards the spirits announced the *séance* to be over, and Mr. Eglinton came out of the cabinet. The observers went in and brought out the box, which was found locked as at first. The pieces of paper were dry and unbroken, and were the same that had been gummed on originally. They were critically examined, and beyond some discussion as to whether the lower end of one of them had not been shifted about an eighth of an inch to the left of its original position, or whether that shifting had been done in the act of gumming, nothing of a doubtful nature could be found. It was suggested that the test was not so perfect as it might have been, because the lock was one of common make, and the idea was broached that it would be well to repeat the experiment with another box having a complicated lock, since, if results of this kind can be obtained with certainty under unquestionable conditions, they will be of great use as a means of producing conviction in the minds of inquirers.

#### AN EXPLANATION OF THE "GHOST" MYSTERY AT YORK.

THE ghost at Holy Trinity Church, York, is an old-established one, and a description of it, agreeing with that published in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, has been published in Mr. Baring-Gould's *Yorkshire Oddities*.

The rector of Holy Trinity, York, writes the following apparently sensible explanation of the whole mystery to the *York Herald*:—"I think the time has come when it is, perhaps, necessary for me to give a word of explanation in regard to this imaginary apparition. The fact is simply this:—Any one seated in the gallery of the church, which is at the west end, can see, through the east window, any person or persons walking in the vicarage garden. The wall at the east end of the church, below the east window, is too high to allow any one in the body of the church to see either the garden or anyone in it. This fact explains at once the reason how it is absolutely necessary for anyone to be in the gallery in order to see the 'ghost.' This is the real truth of the matter. What is seen is not a 'ghost;' it is not a 'reflection,' but it is a living being, or beings, walking in a garden. Of course, the east window being of stained glass, and of a rather peculiar pattern, a distinct form is not always visible. And I may say that this simple explanation has been attested and verified over and over again both by myself and others. One argument of proof is all, I think, that I need give. The Vicarage House was at one time empty for about twelve months, during which time the 'ghost' was neither seen nor heard of, and then it was let to a person with a large family; and on the very first Sunday after the family took possession of the premises, I was told by a simple-minded youth that the ghost had returned, and five or six young ghosts with it. After what I have here stated, I need hardly say that all the sensational matter in regard to vivid lights, mother, nurse, and child, and extraordinary displays on Trinity Sunday, is as pure an invention as ever was fabricated by a morbid imagination."

Should there still be any doubt as to the nature of the ghost, the whole matter can easily be reduced to experiment by causing persons to walk outside the church in places pointed out to them by the rector; observations made at same time inside will reveal whether any ghost effect is produced as stated.

#### THE MATERIALISATION OF SPIRITS IN MANCHESTER.

BY C. REIMERS.

THE meeting I am now reporting eclipsed in many respects that of the 17th of April held in my rooms. We assembled at Mr. Gaskell's, 69, Oldham-road, on the evening of the 16th inst. My rooms I fancied to be far more favourable for spiritual gatherings, as I am a musician, and the surroundings point to devotion to an art, spiritual in its essence and mission, although its material media of expression consist of sheep's-gut, horse-hair, resin, pieces of wood, and brass. Music, in its lowest manifestations, may well be compared with the rude beginnings of these modern experiments to draw our attention to something beyond our level. In its highest flights, however, music joins hands with sister messengers of celestial birth. The study of these beautiful and inspiring strains is my profession. Mr. Gaskell deals in leather. Such a contrast! But stop a bit. In his shop are strong materials with which to fasten mediums—thick skins, at which sceptics may smile with envy, hanks of whipcord, eminently useful for inquirers who require special tests. When Mr. Gaskell has done his work in his shop below, and closes its door, he ascends to his own room, where books (some bound in leather) take him to higher regions, and he soon finds himself in company with fellow-labourers; on this occasion, however, with several in the flesh, and so we were all on the same level—music and leather shop. We had, also, one and the same business before us.

Our mediums were again Mrs. — and Dr. Monck. We placed them this time under the most severe test-conditions that human ingenuity could devise for probing honesty, namely, *none whatever*. They were bound by unbounded confidence and affection, the slightest attempt at moving out of which would have plunged all into an abyss of self-contempt. We had ascertained the humbug of rope, iron, bag, or other scientific hobby-tests long ago, and acknowledge the value of their occasional appliance only as preparatory to more sensible precautions; besides, we have in the mean time no desire to be dragged into the ridicule which will come from the more enlightened generations of the future. We excluded external lights, and lit up *within* to receive our guests from the other side of life. They came soon, because they were already there. Evil and tricky spirits have no chance under such conditions, but poor and low ones may come to draw with us from the same higher source. After sundry tokens of the presence of power, we felt in turns touches like those of floating drapery. I was ordered to go to the piano. I played as well I could, but it was of no scientific value whatever, for "it was all in the dark." The mysterious drapery flapped over my head, and for a time rested there. I felt the soft muslin (?) hanging over my face, and was for a moment tempted to snatch it with my teeth, but I blushed and could not do it. Suddenly a sitter at the opposite end, far away from the mediums, felt the same touch. There was something floating and flying about in the room. It did not feel like leather, it was more like gauze. I returned to my seat, and the small musical box, with phosphoric light upon it, travelled through space; and after several other trifling incidents had occurred, notes on the piano were struck. The instrument could not be reached by any of us, and, what is more important, *would* not. There was no sense in the playing itself, it was a mere thumping at hazard. "Very silly in its effect?" True; but tremendous when one is called upon to explain the *cause*.

Next we had to turn up the lamp and arrange a cabinet, consisting of damask curtains across the corner of the room, the table in front, and we seated around it, close enough for good observation. Dr. Monck went in and sat down at once. Soon the form known as Bertie appeared plainly at the top of the open cabinet, with the glittering crown and cross, exactly as we had seen it through the mediumship of Mrs. —, who was sitting near me. The head of Lily peeped out. Both heads were out at the same time very distinctly, dismissing all ideas of doubles or trebles here, the bother or hobby of other troubled observers, who secure their mediums so tightly that only their *nearest* relations can put in appearance. Now followed the most marvellous display of power. The curtains opened in the front, and a white mass filled the whole gap, the medium standing close by. After closing awhile the curtains opened again, and the medium stood between both the faces and the nearly full figures in shining white, all three plainly visible, but close to the body of the medium, who, while gesticulating, stretched his hands towards us. At times it looked as if he carried both forms on his arms, and, if conditions were not utterly against the possibility, a sceptic suddenly introduced would have come to the conclusion that Mrs. — had handed the large basket, with all paraphernalia, to Dr. Monck to go through the performance, for the forms presented the same features as on former occasions.

I thought that this would be the culmination of the already prolonged meeting, but the climax had to come after we had put the light out. John King's direct voice greeted us in a manner which made me almost believe myself transported to Mr. Williams' rooms in London, so perfect was the repetition. "Mike" also spoke in his own voice, which is somewhat modified when Dr. Monck is the only medium.

A splendid circular light then advanced, and it reminded me of John King's; it came close to me, and the face of Bertie presented itself under the mysterious illumination, the ethereal beauty of which, under the changes of light and shade, excited me with a delight I cannot describe. Then came another similar light, and both—Bertie and Lily

—were thus seen by each and all, keeping us spell-bound in silence, as if attempt at expression might disturb the unearthly visitation. I hardly remember any moment, in all my experiences, of receiving so pure an impression of sublime beauty as seen in the expression of the angelic faces, triumphant in having succeeded in forcing their way through the barriers created by sceptical and mistrusting minds at so many previous meetings. The final blessings and loving words seemed almost as a soothing relief, permitting us to return to the normal state of things. We accordingly went for an after-chat to the snug little room below, and our return to reality found welcome confirmation in the recollection that we were close to the—leather-shop. But were these manifestations not realities? Most decidedly; for we received by sight, and touch, and ear (I must also not forget the lovely perfume) over and over again the proofs of their existence, which were equally convincing to all of us, except the medium, who had to believe the best part on trust. To certain self-sufficient sceptics and other illusionists, who conjure up hosts of ghosts of possibilities, to account for these strange occurrences, we must leave the task of bridging over the gap between these facts and those of our acquired knowledge. They are ever ready to guess the *modus operandi* hidden from other mortals' eyes; if they skilfully escape the demand to "do it themselves," they only increase our astonishment, or shift it to another ground, themselves generally not getting the best of it.

Most naturally, hints from curious inquirers who desire to be present are getting pressing. But our conditions are rather exacting. We *test the new witnesses*, after the mediums have gone sufficiently through the same process, and it generally proves that their own sincerity and honesty are not sufficiently up to the mark to permit them to sit in judgment on that of the mediums' and their spirit guides. The other day a gentleman, a highly agitated sceptic, offered to come with a party of friends to observe from a certain distance, so as not to interfere with our own influence. A kind of "ring" this around our field of operations! A new sport which, if it should become successful and fashionable, might result in much profit; indeed, liberal offers towards that end enlivened the temptation. We place the decision about this plan in the hands of our "good spirits," and shall faithfully report the first "grand performance"—if they will let us have it. In conclusion, it is evident that the demand to witness these strange facts is on the increase, and the republishing of rules for forming spirit circles at home would seem to be advisable. If I may suggest a preliminary step, it would be that each new candidate should sit awhile by himself, and ask his own better self what he is going about; also, whether he is prepared for a little change in his former views of life, if certain proofs should be presented. It is a question of comfort, and we all know that most animals like their own "stable" best, after all.

That the facts narrated in correctly-stated details as above have been witnessed by all of us, except Dr. Monck (who, being mostly in trance, could only testify to a certain part), we confirm by our signatures.

CHRISTIAN REIMERS. THOMAS GASKELL.  
WILLIAM OXLEY. ABRAHAM ROYSE.  
HENRY MARSH.

THE RELIGION OF THE KAFIRS.—The religion of the Kafirs, like that of all other varieties of "the noble savage," is nothing more than a vile superstition, accompanied by customs of a most debasing character. By this religion woman is degraded to the lowest level, and classed among beasts of burden and the goods and chattels of her masters. Polygamy, of course, is universally allowed, and under the system of purchase which prevails, the number of wives bears proportion to the wealth of the husband. Concubinage is permitted, and no idea of purity or virtue is permitted to exist. Witchcraft is the great leading feature of the Kafir religion, and "witch doctors" are its priests. In those places where British influence does not exist a system is regularly carried out by means of which men with property are sacrificed to the rapacity of the chiefs. A witch doctor "smells out" some person who has caused, or is causing, sickness or some evil. Cruel tortures, followed by death, are immediately applied to the unfortunate victim, and his wives and cattle taken from him. This is an everyday occurrence among the Kafirs, and urgent representations are very frequently made to British colonial authorities upon the subject. The Kafirs believe in a Supreme Being, but most of their rites are connected with the worship of their deceased ancestors, whose ghosts they endeavour to propitiate. A Spiritualist of the nineteenth century holds a belief something similar, and no doubt could fraternise with these savages on the same "religious platform." Christianity has made no real impression upon them, although the great intelligence and aptitude for learning of the people has been proved at one or two well-conducted industrial institutions. To use the words of an officer of the Government, who spent many years among them, "The Gospel has been preached to them for the last fifty years, and some attempts have been made towards civilising them; but the Kafirs, nationally considered, remain just as they ever were; no visible difference can be discerned. They are as perfectly heathen now as they were in the days of Vander Kemp (one of the first missionaries, 1798), and so they ever will continue so long as their political government continues to exist in its present pagan form." This extract points to the fact which Sir George Grey thoroughly recognised, and of which the governments of the colonies and the states of South Africa must be well aware, that unless the power of the witch doctors be destroyed, neither can civilisation progress, security be secured, nor Christianity prosper. The one great means of stirring up strife, fomenting war, and binding the people to their cruel and infamous religion, is the superstitious belief in the powers and influence of their priests, commonly known as witch-doctors. Physically, the Kafir races are particularly fine, stalwart, well-formed, manly, and brave. They are also intelligent, and there are now in and on the borders of the colony a number of Christians among them.—*The Month*.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

LAST Tuesday, the annual general meeting of the British National Association of Spiritualists was held at 38, Great Russell-street, London, under the presidency of Mr. Henry D. Jencken, M.R.I., Barrister-at-Law. The members present were Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald, M.S. Tel. E.; Mrs. D. Fitz-Gerald; Miss Houghton; Mr. George R. Tapp; Mr. Martin R. Smith; Mr. C. Carter Blake, Doct. Sc.; Captain John James; Mr. Stanhope T. Speer and Mrs. Speer; Miss Withall; Miss H. Withall; Mr. Alexander Calder; Mrs. Maltby; Mr. Edward T. Bennett; Mr. T. P. Barkas, F.G.S.; Mr. D. H. Wilson, M.A., and Mrs. Wilson; Mr. W. H. Harrison; Mr. Richard Pearce; Mr. J. J. Morse; Mr. J. H. André; Mr. Thomas Blyton; Mrs. Wiseman; Mrs. Makdougall Gregory; Mr. J. Frederick Collingwood; Mr. Morell Theobald; Dr. George Sexton; Mrs. Lowe; Mr. Keningale Cook, LL.D., and Mrs. Cook; Mr. H. Cook; Mr. W. D. Meers and Mrs. Meers; Mr. T. Everitt; Mr. G. H. Andrews; Mr. W. E. Bassett; Mr. Joseph Ivimey; Mr. Charles Edward Williams; Miss Lottie Fowler; Mr. Algernon Joy, M.L.C.E., Honorary Secretary; and Miss Kinslingbury, Secretary to the Association.

## THE ANNUAL REPORT.

The following annual report, which had been unanimously adopted at the last meeting of the Council, was then read by the Secretary:—

To the Members of the British National Association of Spiritualists,

## LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN presenting to you our report for the past year, it may be well, before entering into the details of the work we have accomplished, to compare the present position of the Association with that which it occupied the last time we had the pleasure of meeting in general assembly.

The Association had then been but a short time in possession of the premises which it still occupies, and the benefit of which was then a doubtful, or, rather, an unproved experiment. Since then the wisdom of taking a commodious house instead of mere offices for business purposes has become thoroughly apparent. This house is looked upon by all who are in the habit of visiting it as a home, where those interested in our great subject are able to resort for social intercourse, as well as for purposes of business and study. Nothing could be better evidence of this than the number of members who have been added to our list since we have been located here, and the fact that a large proportion of these have, by their own admission, joined the Association in consequence of a visit to our rooms. Only the other day a member from Newcastle, who spent a few hours here, expressed himself so well pleased with all he saw that, though not a frequent visitor in London, he at once doubled his subscription. At the conference last November a gentleman from Liverpool, who had been for some time on our books as a member, but had never paid any subscription nor taken any interest in the Association, on visiting this establishment expressed his great satisfaction with all the arrangements, and desired to be re-elected as a guinea member. Several members have increased their subscriptions for the year 1876, partly in order to share in the advantages of the lending library, and partly from a desire to aid in keeping up an establishment which, if somewhat costly, they feel to be worthy of support. Altogether, since the month of April last year, when the Council held its first sitting here, 165 new members have been elected, giving an average of between eleven and twelve per month, as against six per month during the previous year; of these eighty-two are resident in London; fifty-three in the provinces; twenty-six are honorary members; three have retired, and one has been lost to us by death. Altogether twenty-two members have resigned membership during the year. The entire number of our members is at present 403; of these forty-eight are honorary members, which leaves 355 paying members. By the report which your Finance Committee presented at the end of the year 1875 it will be seen that during that year the subscriptions and donations from members amounted to £273 10s. 9d., a sum evidently inadequate to support the expenses of the Association, but which was supplemented by contributions to the guarantee fund to the amount of £198 17s. 6d., and by the proceeds of the bazaar, £102 7s. 3d. It has been found that this year's expenses will also necessitate a call upon the guarantee fund; but should our members increase as rapidly this year as they have done during the last, there is reason to hope that the ordinary funds will be sufficient, or nearly so, to meet all current expenses. The account of income and expenditure appears in full at the end of this report.

We will now give some account of the work accomplished by your Council during the past year.

At the annual meeting in May last you were informed that the Board of Trade had refused to register the Association, on the ground that it did not come within the meaning of the Companies Act; that is to say, that it was not formed for the promotion of "science, art, religion, charity, or any other useful object." As the articles which had been prepared with a view to registration differed, of necessity, in some points from our original rules, a new and completely revised edition of these was issued shortly afterwards; they have been found to work admirably, and have served as a basis for the regulations of other societies. In the month of June the attention of the Council was called by one of its members to the persecution in Paris of M. Leymarie, editor of the *Revue Spirite*, and Mr. Firman, a young American medium, in consequence of their alleged complicity with the fraudulent photographer, Edouard Buguet. Steps were taken to collect evidence in favour of the reality, in certain cases, of spirit-photography, and of materialisation; and the number of letters and legal attestations forwarded on this occasion to Paris by our members may be seen by reference to the Buguet-Leymarie trial in the *Procès des Spirites*. A petition for presentation to the French president for the remission of the unjust sentence upon Leymarie was drawn up by our corresponding member in Paris,

Mr. O'Sullivan, and printed and circulated with sheets for signatures, at the expense of the Association. About eleven hundred signatures were collected and forwarded to Paris, and, although the petition has not been yet presented, nor the desired result attained, the efforts made in his behalf have been fully appreciated by M. Leymarie, and have cemented the bond of union between the Spiritualists of England and the Spiritists of France.

At the end of September M. Aksakof, the noble promoter and representative of Spiritualism in Germany and Russia, paid a visit to England in search of mediums for the Russian investigation of Spiritual phenomena, which had been set on foot by the University of St. Petersburg. A special reception to M. Aksakof and his friend M. Butlerof, Professor of Chemistry at the St. Petersburg University, was given at these rooms on the 6th October, at which Mr. Martin R. Smith presided. In an interesting speech M. Aksakof detailed the object of his visit, an object which, you will have seen with regret, he has failed to attain, through no fault of his own. M. Aksakof and Butlerof spent a portion of almost every day of their stay in the reading-room of the Association, and many pleasant hours were enjoyed by those who held converse with them.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

In the month of November the Association held its annual conference, also at these rooms. The opening meeting was made the occasion of giving a welcome to Mr. J. J. Morse, the well-known trance lecturer, who had just then returned from a lengthened and successful tour in the United States. This meeting was held at the Cavendish Rooms, and was presided over by our veteran friend and co-worker, Mr. Benjamin Coleman. Mr. Morse's account of his travels and the state of American Spiritualism was listened to with great interest by a crowded audience. The meeting was a financial success, a surplus of £5 5s. being handed to Mr. Morse at the close of the entertainment.

The conference meetings were four in number, and extended over two days. The subjects treated of were—*Healing Mediumship*, by Mr. Shorter; *Nature and Varieties of Mediumship*, by Mr. W. H. Harrison; *The Twofold Nature of Man*, by Mr. T. Everitt; *The Influence of Spiritualism on the Working Classes*, by Mr. J. T. Rhodes; *Combined Action amongst Spiritualists*, by Mr. T. Blyton; *Spiritualism as a Religious Influence*, by Mr. E. T. Bennett, Mr. J. J. Morse, and Mrs. Parkes; *The British National Association of Spiritualists*, by Mr. Martin R. Smith; *Popular Errors in Spiritualism*, by Mr. H. T. Humphreys; and *Spiritualism and its Critics*, by Mr. J. T. Markley. The chair was occupied by Dr. Sexton, Mr. J. Lamont, Mr. Martin Smith, and Mr. Everitt respectively. The meetings were well attended, many members coming up from the country for the purpose, and more favourable reports appeared in the daily papers than have perhaps ever before been accorded to the meetings of Spiritualists. The Conference was followed by a course of four trance lectures by Mr. J. J. Morse on Sunday evenings at the Cleveland Hall, under the auspices of the Association. Special subscriptions being given towards the expenses, the trifling loss of 3s. 7d. only was incurred; but the bad weather at that season (November), and other causes, combined to thin the audiences, and the attendance was not as great as could have been desired.

## DISCUSSION MEETINGS.

The next useful work undertaken by the Council was the organisation of fortnightly discussion meetings, which began on November 22nd, and continued over a period of five months. Attention was given to the subject of mesmerism in various forms, to spirit photography, and other classes of spirit manifestation. Many interesting facts were brought forward and theories discussed, and a mass of interesting information elicited from experienced Spiritualists, such as Dr. Gully, Mr. C. F. Varley, and many others. The records of these discussions will form a literature of permanent value, and will be read with interest wherever Spiritualism finds a footing. Among ourselves the result has been the formation of an Experimental Research Committee for tabulating and classifying the facts of mediumship in the manner of other scientific bodies; on the whole, perhaps the most important work that can be undertaken by such a society as ours.

The *soirées* have been held monthly throughout the year, and are now self-supporting.

Of late an attempt has been made to minister to the requirements of our country members by instituting a course of lectures, to be delivered by Dr. Sexton, at various towns in the North of England. The lecturer's fees have been paid by the Association, and Dr. Sexton seems to have met with his usual success.

The Council has done what it could to assist some of the industrious and deserving workers in our movement. Donations have been severally made in aid of the labours of Dr. Sexton, Mr. R. Cogman, and Mrs. Bullock. The same help was offered towards the support of the Doughty Hall Sunday Free Meetings, but was declined by Mr. Burns.

## SEANCES.

It remains to mention the *séances* which were begun first at wide intervals, and are now, through the generosity of Mr. Charles Blackburn, carried on weekly with great success. Up to the present, Mr. Williams and Mr. Eglinton have been employed, both of which excellent mediums have given the greatest satisfaction. Last summer two *séances* were held by Mrs. Hardy, of New York; the Bamford brothers have also sat here, and Mrs. Olive receives sitters weekly at the present time. Our *séance* room has sometimes also been let to members for their private use, and the Council room has also been engaged for committee meetings, thereby assisting to defray the permanent expenses of the Association.

## PRIZE ESSAYS.

The medals for the first year's prize essays, on the subject, "The Probable Influence of Spiritualism on the Religious, Moral, and Social

Condition of Society," have been awarded to Miss Anna Blackwell and Mr. G. F. Green respectively. It has been decided to print the essays, and it is expected that they will appear very shortly.

ALLIANCE OF KINDRED SOCIETIES.

Although a year ago only one local society, the Liverpool Psychological Society, had accepted our proffered hand of brotherhood, several others, both at home and abroad, have since entered into terms of friendly alliance with us. The first example, in the month of July last, was set by *L'Union Spirite et Magnétique*, of Brussels, which has itself since become the centre of a National Confederation of Belgian Spiritists, formed on the model of our Association. This was quickly followed by the newly-formed Brixton Psychological Society, in the month of August; by the Buda-Pesth Society of Hungarian Spiritists, with whose patrons, the Baron and Baroness Von Vay, our Association has always been on close terms of friendship; by the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism; and, latterly, by the Cardiff Spiritual Society. Mutual privileges have been interchanged, and we are all working in harmony together. A correspondence has lately been set on foot with the chief Spanish societies, both on the European and American Continents—societies representing many thousand professors of the doctrines of Spiritism. In the United States, where Spiritualists are less organised than in countries of older civilisation, no alliance of societies with our Association has taken place, but our relations with the most eminent Spiritualists, and with the leading newspapers of that country, are of the most satisfactory nature. The same may be said of Paris, the Hague, Leipsic, and St. Petersburg.

The last event we have to chronicle is the recent adjustment of our relations with *The Spiritualist* newspaper. A discussion having arisen on the question of Mr. Harrison's occupancy of a room on the premises of the Association, an agreement has been entered into with Mr. Harrison, terminating in March next.

We have now but to enumerate those kind friends who have, at various times during the past year, been the benefactors of the Association. Mr. Charles Blackburn, who has defrayed the expense of twenty-four *séances*, thereby making them nominally free to our members, and entirely so to investigators; Mr. Martin Smith, who has given handsome presents of books to the library, in addition to large donations to all our objects, and various other favours; Mr. Calder, the donor of the two valuable oil-paintings which adorn the walls of our reading-room; Mr. Martheze, Mr. Whitear, Mr. A. Tod, Mr. T. E. Partridge, who presented us with twenty-five musical boxes, for our own use and for the benefit of our funds; Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Dixon, and Sir Charles Isham; also Mrs. Everitt, who has kindly given numerous free *séances* to our members. To all of these and many others our thanks are due for gifts and favours of various kinds. We must also, in justice, include Mr. W. H. Harrison, the Editor of *The Spiritualist*, who has reported our meetings and inserted many of our advertisements free of cost, introduced a large number of influential members, and generally endeavoured to forward the interests of the Association.

The work which your Council has effected will, we venture to hope, appear to you to have been, on the whole, of a character likely to enhance the strength and dignity of our movement, by placing Spiritualism before the world in a form which it has not hitherto been encouraged to assume—a form which will stand the rigid investigation of the critical, and satisfy, to some extent at least, the demands of the scientific mind.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending December 31, 1875.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Balance from 1874	11	11 10	Public Meetings, etc.	0	16 9
Subscriptions, 1875	249	10 6	Donations	8	8 0
Donations	24	0 3	Stationery and printing	36	16 5
Guarantee Fund	198	17 6	Rent, rates, etc.	79	11 8
Bazaar account	192	7 3	Advertising	35	16 1
Interest account	0	10 4	Postage	14	7 5
<i>Séances</i> , balance still in hand	9	0 0	Salaries	139	4 0
			Furnishing account and library	201	4 9
			<i>Soirées</i> , etc. (loss)	3	15 1
			Housekeeping and sundries	18	11 10
			Balance	57	5 8
	£295	17 8		£295	17 8

Audited and found correct,  
 MORELL THEOBALD, *Chairman*.  
 ALEXANDER CALDER,  
 MARTIN R. SMITH, *Hon. Treasr.*

Finance Committee, February, 1876.

Signed on behalf of the Council,

ALEXANDER CALDER, *Chairman*.

The adoption of the report was moved by Mr. Algernon Joy, and seconded by Mrs. Makdougall-Gregory.

Mr. E. Dawson Rogers moved an amendment, that the words "generally endeavoured to forward the interests of the Association" be omitted. This was seconded by Miss Houghton, supported by Mr. Everitt, and negatived by the meeting by a majority of twenty-two to eight.

Mr. Rogers moved that the vote be taken by proxy instead of by show of hands, but withdrew his demand at the request of Mr. Bennett.

The report was then unanimously adopted.

ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS OF COUNCIL.

Mr. Morell Theobald and Mr. D. H. Wilson, M.A., were appointed scrutineers to count the votes by proxy. After doing so, the following twenty-six members were declared duly elected to serve upon the Council:—Mr. A. Calder, Mr. W. H. Coffin, Rev. T. Colley, Mrs. Kenningale Cook, Mr. N. F. Dawe, Mr. D. G. Fitz-Gerald, M.S.Tel.E., Mrs. D. G. Fitz-Gerald, Mr. A. Glendinning, Mrs. Makdougall-Gregory, Mrs. Honynwood, Mr. C. T. Hook, Mr. Geo. Hudson, Sir Chas. Isham, Bart., Mr. H. D. Jencken, Barrister-at-Law, Mr. Algernon Joy, M.I.C.E., Mr. George King, F.S.S., Mrs. Maltby, Mr. F. W. Mansell, Mr. C. E. Mas-

sey, Barrister-at-Law, Rev. W. W. Newbould, Mr. Martin R. Smith, Mr. St. George W. Stock, M.A., Mr. M. J. Walhouse, F.R.A.S., Mr. H. Wedgwood, Mrs. Wiseman, Miss H. Withall.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS.

Mr. André and Mr. Henry Cook were unanimously appointed auditors for the ensuing year on behalf of the ordinary members of the Association.

The following amended motion by Mr. Tapp was then passed—"That, in addition to the Annual General Meeting in May, another general meeting be held in each year."

Mr. A. Joy moved that the following words be added—"And that no election of officers or members of Council shall take place at such second annual general meeting."

Mr. Tapp said that was what he intended, and that he wished the words to be added to the resolution. The object of a second annual meeting was, that a large and important Association like that should have an opportunity of talking over its public affairs twice a year instead of once.

Mr. Rogers said that there was no necessity to make the proposed addition, because the rules provided against two elections in a year.

Mr. Joy's addition to the resolution was consequently not made.

The following amended resolution by Mr. E. T. Bennett was then passed—"That it would be desirable for the Council to arrange two or more Conferences, to be held during the summer at some of the principal provincial centres of Spiritualism, such as Liverpool, Birmingham, and Newcastle, by invitation from Spiritualists in such localities, the interest and support of local Spiritualists being as much as possible aroused to render the Conferences successful."

Mr. Calder moved, and Mr. Tapp seconded, a vote of thanks to Mr. Jencken for the ability with which he had conducted the business of the meeting as chairman.

This was carried unanimously, and the proceedings closed.

We are glad to be able to state that news has recently been received that Mr. John Lamont is fast recovering from the effects of injuries which he suffered in a recent railway collision.

A TELEGRAM informs us that Mr. Eglinton is so prostrated by illness at the house of Mr. Harries, of Landport, Portsmouth, as to be unable to travel.

RECEPTION AT MRS. MAKDOUGALL GREGORY'S.—Last Saturday night Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, of 21, Green-street, Grosvenor-square, London, gave a reception to Spiritualistic and other friends, among whom were Mr. Eyre, Lady Milford, Dr. J. M. Gully, Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman, Lady Vere Cameron, Mrs. Limoud Strong, the Misses Strong, Mr. W. H. Harrison, Count Wimpffen, the Countess Wimpffen, Mr. Davidson, Mr. George Sutherland, Mr. Algernon Joy, Lady Georgiana Hobart, Mr. and Mrs. Cholmondeley Pennell, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Barber, Mr. Stainton-Moses, Miss Hope, and Mr. Drummond, of Hawthornden.

A DEATH WARNING.—The *Birmingham Daily Post* says that "the circumstances of the death of Thomas Lord Lyttleton in 1779 were of the most extraordinary kind, the day and hour of his dissolution having, it is said, been foretold to him; and though his friends altered all the clocks in his house to dispel his gloom, die he did at the time named. There is such authentication of this story that the explaining of it away has never been satisfactorily achieved, and it was a ghost story which even Dr. Johnson was willing to believe. The title became extinct with the death of this nobleman, to whom a curt inscription in Hagley church is devoted; but it was revived again in 1794, in the person of William Henry, Governor of Carolina County, Jamaica."

SPIRITUALISM IN LIVERPOOL.—We have received the following characteristic letter:—"To my Sister and Brother Spiritualists, in town and country. May it please you!—I beg to notify, herewith, that (God willing) Meyerbeer Hall, 5, Hardman-street, in the centre of this town of Liverpool, will be inaugurated as a new Temple of Truth, or Spiritual Church of the Future, on Whit Sunday next, June 4th, when it is hoped that all friends of 'The Cause Divine' (to whom it may not be inconvenient or disagreeable) will lend the favour of their countenance, either by personal attendance or sympathy of soul; *i.e.*, if separated in body, not disunited in spirit. Mrs. Noworthy has kindly consented to give an address in the evening, at seven o'clock, on 'Alleged Experiences of the Future Life,' and I hope to make some introductory observations, at three o'clock, on 'The Vocation of the Truthseeker in this our Age and Nation.' Mr. John Priest will preside. Fraternalty ever, WILLIAM HITCHMAN, M.D."

MR. J. J. MORSE IN THE PROVINCES.—On Sunday last Mr. J. J. Morse delivered two trance addresses in the Islington Assembly Rooms, Liverpool, to fair and appreciative audiences. On Whit-Sunday next the meetings held as above will be removed to Meyerbeer Hall, Hardman-street, Liverpool, Dr. William Hitchman having generously undertaken the responsibility of so doing. On Monday evening, the 22nd inst., Mr. Morse delivered a trance address—the first public one ever given—in the Temperance Hall, Sheffield, Mr. Councillor Bacon in the chair; a good audience was present. A committee selected a subject, and an excellent address was given, which was warmly applauded at the close. Mr. Morse proceeds to Jersey this evening, and will deliver trance addresses in the Prince of Wales's Rooms, Jersey, on the nights of May 30th, 31st, and June 1st; Lieut.-Col. Fawcitt will preside on each occasion. Mr. Morse will afterwards speak as follows: Doughty Hall, Bedford-row, London, Sunday, June 4th, 7 p.m.; Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sunday and Monday, June 11th and 12th; Liverpool to follow; Halifax, June 25th. All letters to be addressed, Mr. J. J. Morse, Warwick Cottage, Old Ford-road, Bow, London, E.

## Poetry.

## LIFE—NOT DEATH.

*On the departure at Easter of a dear young friend.*

STREW not poor flowers o'er his grave,  
 Things with ill tidings-rife;  
 The tokens which our spirits crave  
 Should toll of joy and life,  
 For greater beauty decks his tomb  
 Than any earth-born wreaths that bloom.  
 The loving word, the kindly smile,  
 When cares our life o'ercast;  
 The bright young spirit to beguile  
 Our own, when youth was past:  
 All ever bloom in memory  
 Among the things which never die.  
 The tale your passing flower tells  
 Is one of death and woe;  
 So chime the merry Easter bells  
 That all around may know!  
 A pure young soul with Christ is risen,  
 Another angel lives in heaven.  
 Or shouldst thou cry, "Alas! alas!  
 Lord, give him back to me;"  
 Your honest prayer may bring to pass  
 A vision fair to see—  
 A sight too good for common eyes,  
 Which faith to holy love supplies.  
 Thou Source of light, these visions rare  
 To Thy poor sons be given,  
 Still living on with him to share  
 In Thee some glimpse of heaven;  
 For heaven, Thou hast said, shall be  
 Within the soul that lives for Thee.

R. A. Cox.

## Correspondence.

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

## SPIRITUALISM IN NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM.

SIR,—The committee of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Society of Spiritualists at Weir's-court, Newgate-street, have instructed me to inform the Spiritualists in the counties of Northumberland and Durham, that it is the intention of the society to hold a conference on Sunday, June 11th, at the Freemasons' Old Hall, Newcastle. The object is to make an organised effort to further the cause of Spiritualism; to utilise local mediumship; and to bring the various centres of Spiritualism into greater unity of action. Therefore, all Spiritualists or secretaries of societies who are desirous of aiding in the above plan will greatly oblige by communicating with us at once. The morning meeting, at 10.30, will be devoted to receiving reports, along with suggestions for carrying on the work, by the formation of a district committee. The afternoon meeting, beginning at 2.30 p.m., will be occupied in electing a general executive to carry out the designs of the committee; after which, at 4.30 p.m., tea will be provided, tickets, 1s. each. In the evening, at 7 o'clock, a public meeting will be held (admission free), at which Mr. J. J. Morse will be present. A cordial invitation is extended to all who are desirous of working for the cause.

JAS. T. RHODES,

*Corresponding Secretary to the Newcastle Society.*

30, Tynemouth-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

## MR. EGLINTON IN MANCHESTER—REMARKABLE MOULD OF A MATERIALISED SPIRIT HAND.

SIR,—I went with Mr. Oxley to see the gentleman who obtained through Mr. Eglinton's mediumship a mould of a female hand under circumstances which, as stated in my last, cast suspicion on the honesty of Mr. Eglinton, although, it seemed to me, more from the manner the facts were viewed than in their intrinsic force as evidence; as in most cases where truth is caught by the lobster-fangs of suspicion. It is, therefore, to me a pleasant duty to state the real facts as they present themselves to us towards Mr. Eglinton's vindication. Instead of the alleged difference of colour in the mould, we found *none* whatever; the mould was *clean*, the remainder of the paraffin *dirty*. The colouring stuff, also, had sunk to the bottom to a large extent, and the spirit had successfully fished out the clean surface of the mixture.

The mould is a most interesting one. The skin-marks are clearly discernible, although few and far between. Its general appearance is that of a decayed hand; it has crampy contractions; but the most remarkable feature is the extreme thinness of the thumb. I have well studied the flexibility of moulds when still warm, and learnt to be exceedingly cautious as to dematerialisation, even where no slit-line is perceptible. If I can with *one* eye perceive the greater part of the inside, without shifting the point of view, I do not believe in it, but accept "extrication," in spite of some curvature. The effacing of nearly all the finer marks in this mould leads me to believe in the extrication of the hand whilst the wax was still very soft. But the unnatural smallness of the thumb is the puzzle. Pressure on a warm mould may flatten or distort, but the space of the hollow fingers remains the same. Here the whole length of thumb is strikingly in disproportion, and looks like a piece of a skeleton, rather than flesh. Whether the dipping arrested the process of materialisation, or the latter could not reach the climax, are points for reflection; and, from this point of view, the result of Mr. Eglinton's visit may prove scientifically valuable.

In conclusion, it gives me pleasure to find the tone of local papers on

the subject evidently improving, and keeping the clumsy "trickery" twaddle carefully within certain limits. I read a little attempt at ridicule in *The Manchester Critic*. It amuses, helps digestion, and pays.

C. REIMERS.

## A MATERIALISATION SEANCE.

SIR,—We had a very striking sitting for materialisation with Miss Lottie Fowler on Saturday last. The company consisted of Mr. Bydder, R.N., and his wife, Mr. Forster, Mr. Poole, Mr. and Mrs. Regan, and myself. Miss Fowler's bedroom was converted into a cabinet by curtains across the doorway, and previous to the sitting we were invited in to make a thorough search. I looked under the bed, the only place where a person could be concealed, and locked the doors, leaving the only open access through the sitting-room in which we were. My chair was within six feet of the doorway, with a very good light. Three figures in white came out into the room, of different sizes, from two or three inches taller than the medium to two or three inches shorter. The first was a young man with dark moustaches, said to be Hendrik, a brother, I believe, of Madame Von Vay. He struck himself sounding blows on the chest, to show, I suppose, how solid he was, and made me examine his face within a few inches. He asked for a pair of scissors, gathered up the front of his long night-shirt-looking garment into a bunch, hacked off enough of it to give us all a piece, and then shook out the robe, showing no hole in it. Then we had a nun, who also was very anxious to show me her face, taking my hand and passing it all over her features, and rubbing it strongly down her nose, making me clearly feel that it was no mask. She called up each in turn, kissing Mrs. Bydder. Then we had a shorter figure, who said she would try to bring out Miss Fowler into the room, but we were not to expect that she would do that at every sitting. On this occasion, however, she succeeded completely, pushing her medium before her, and standing beside her against the doorway in open sight of all of us, Miss Fowler all in black supported by the white spirit, who stroked her face, led her about, and on one occasion sank down by her side. Miss Fowler was repeatedly brought out in this way, and the two must have been together before our eyes for more than five minutes. Finally the spirit went inside, leaving Miss Fowler to recover from her trance before us. As soon as she was awake we went inside the bedroom, found both doors locked, and no one there. I looked under the bed again.

H. WEDGWOOD.

May 22nd, 1876.

## WAX MOULDS FROM TEMPORARILY MATERIALISED SPIRIT HANDS.

SIR,—Mr. Willie Eglinton had great success with us at our Portsmouth circle (No. 1) on Sunday last. The great feature of the evening was the casts of psychic or spirit hands, under the most perfect test conditions, and in good light. The proceedings began (when, like all good people, we had been to church) by a full-light sitting for clairvoyant purposes. Several remarkable tests of this nature were afforded various members and visitors of our circle, whose circumstances and spiritual surroundings could by no means have been known to Mr. Eglinton, and conviction was in this way carried to minds antagonistic to the matter, that this phase of Spiritualism, at least, was a fact. We then had a dark sitting, when the usual phenomena occurred. The musical box being wound up by spirit-power, and carried playing about the room, touching one and another in its transit. At request, the music was suddenly, upon the instant, stopped, then renewed, then played very rapidly, then very slowly, as required. One tune was also made to shift into another, without a moment's pause, at our will, courteously expressed. Then two tunes were played together. Then a strange instrument, the like of which had never been heard, was played to the accompaniment of the musical box, weirdly beautiful. Joey said this strange instrument was materialised for the occasion, and dissipated again. Spirit-lights were seen, and various other matters, with direct voices and raps, were our portion to puzzle over.

Then the cabinet sitting was formed, simply a curtained corner of the room. Several draped forms appeared, and walked out in light sufficient to read by. In the dark portion of this sitting "Ernest" walked about with his phosphorescent light, illuminating therewith his features and dress. But the point of the evening previous to this was, as I have said, the successful taking of the cast of a little hand, announced to be that of a little fellow, a relative of the family of the house where we were gathered, and a very frequent and most welcome visitant to us from higher spheres. One other small hand was partially cast, but the circumstance to be particularly noted was that all was done in the light, Mr. Eglinton's hands being thrust through the curtain in view of all, and inspected by several, and held by one of us throughout the entire process. We heard the splash of the materialised glove of the spirit as it was dipped into the hot paraffin, and then plunged into the cold water, and so backwards and forwards several times. I was then told to enter the cabinet and take charge of the pails, floating on the surface of the cold water in the one of which was the beautiful cast so mysteriously taken. We have just had in one of the staff of the *Hampshire Telegraph* to inspect the cast before it is filled with cement, and under microscopic scrutiny with a Stanhope lense, in the presence also of a medical gentleman, who was with us last night when it was taken; the flesh marks and dimples are clearly seen, and a report of the marvellous matter will appear in the local press.

THOMAS COLLEY.

11, Bellevue-terrace, Southsea, Portsmouth,  
 May 22nd, 1876.

MISS RHONDA LAWRENCE, of Cardiff, a young lady well known and much respected by many of the readers of these pages, and who possessed medial powers, passed to the higher life a few days ago.

BOOKS ON SPIRITUALISM, PSYCHOLOGY, MESMERISM, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND BIOLOGY,

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