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Truth Seeks no Mask, bows at no Human Shrine, Seeks neither Place nor Applause: She only Asks a Hearing.

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## DR. CARPENTER ON SPIRITUALISM.

By Alfred Russell Wallace.  
(From the Popular Science Monthly.)  
(Continued from last week.)

Still more important, perhaps, is the testimony of many eminent physicians to the existence of these remarkable powers. Dr. Rostan, Parisian Professor of Medicine, in his article "Magnetisme," in the "Dictionnaire de Médecine," says (as quoted by Dr. Lee): "There are few things better demonstrated than clairvoyance. I placed my watch at a distance of three or four inches from the occiput of the somnambulist, and asked her if she saw anything. 'Certainly,' she replied, 'it is a watch; ten minutes to eight.' M. Ferrus repeated the experiment with the same successful result. He turned the hands of his watch several times, and she presented it to her without looking at it, she was not once mistaken." The Commissioners of the Royal Academie de Médecine applied the excellent test of holding a finger on each eyelid, when the clairvoyant still read the title of a book, and distinguished cards. (Quoted in Dr. Lee's "Animal Magnetism," p. 22.) Dr. Esdaile had a patient at Calcutta who could hear and see through the stomach. This was tested by himself with a watch as in the French case quoted above. ("Zoiist," vol. viii., p. 226.) Dr. Tjeste's account of the clairvoyance of Madame Hortense is very suggestive. She sometimes read with ease when completely bandaged, and when a paper was held between her eyes and the object; at other times she could see nothing, and the smallest fatigue of excitement caused this difference. This excessive delicacy of the conditions for successful clairvoyance renders all public exhibitions unsatisfactory; and Prof. Gregory protests against the notion that it is to be judged by the rough experiments of the public platform, or by such tests as can be publicly applied. For the same reason direct money-tests are always objected to by experienced magnetizers, the excitement produced by the knowledge of the stake or the importance of the particular test impairing or destroying the lucidity. This is the reason why gentlemen and physicians like Prof. Gregory, Major Buckley, and Dr. Haddock, who have had the command of clairvoyants, have not attempted to gain the bank-notes which have at various times been offered. Dr. Carpenter was very irate because I suggested at Glasgow—not as he seems to have understood that there was no note in Sir James Simpson's envelope—but that the clairvoyants themselves, if they heard of it, might very well be excused if they thought it was a trick to impose upon them. I find now that in the other case quoted by Dr. Carpenter—the note for one hundred pounds publicly stated to have been inclosed by Sir Philip Stampton in a letter, and placed in a bank in Dublin, to become the property of any clairvoyant who should read the whole of it—this was actually the case. After six months the letter was opened, and the manager of the bank certified that it contained no note at all, but a blank check? The correspondence on the subject is published in the "Zoiist," vol. x., p. 35. Dr. Carpenter's indignation was therefore misplaced; for, as a medical knight in Ireland did actually play such a trick, "the more opposition, on my part, that ignorant clairvoyants might think that a medical knight in Scotland was capable of doing the same, was not a very outrageous one.

We now come to the last part of Dr. Carpenter's lecture—table-turning and Spiritualism—and here there is hardly any attempt to deal with the evidence. Instead of this we have irrelevant matters put prominently forward, backed up by sneers against believers, and false or unproved accusations against mediums. To begin with, the old amusement of table-turning of fifteen or twenty years ago, with Faraday's proof that it was often caused by unconscious muscular action, is again brought to the front. Table-tilting is asserted to be caused in the same way, and an "indicator" is suggested for proving this; and the whole matter is supposed to be settled because no one, so far as Dr. Carpenter is aware, "has ever ventured to affirm that he has thus demonstrated the absence of muscular pressure," and "until such demonstrations shall have been given, the tilting—like the turning of tables—may be unhesitatingly attributed to the unconscious muscular action of the operators. We suppose Dr. Carpenter will shield himself by the "thus" in the above sentence, though he knows very well that a far more complete demonstration of the absence of muscular pressure than any indicator could afford has been repeatedly given, by motion, both turning and tilting of the table occurring without any contact whatever. Thus, in the Report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society, we have (p. 375), Experiment 18, nine members present; all stood quite clear of the table, and observers were placed under it to see that it was not touched, yet it repeatedly moved along the floor, often in the direction asked for. It also jerked up from the floor about an inch. This was repeated when all stood two feet from the table. Experiment 22, Six members present, the same thing occurred under varied conditions. Experiment 23 (p. 360). Eight members present; the conditions were most rigid; the chairs were all turned with their backs to the table at a foot distant from it; every member present knelt on his chair with his hands behind his back; there was

abundance of light, yet, under these test-conditions, the table moved several times in various directions, visible to all present. Finally, the table was turned up and examined, and found to be an ordinary dining table with no machinery or apparatus of any kind connected with it. Similar movements without contact have been witnessed elsewhere and recorded by Sergeant Cox and by Mr. Crookes, as well as by many other persons; yet the man who comes before the public as the "historian" of this subject tells his audience and his readers that "he is not aware that any one affirms that he has demonstrated the absence of muscular pressure!" How are we to reconcile this statement with Dr. Carpenter's references to each of the books, papers, or letters, containing the facts above quoted or referred to? But we have evidence of a yet more conclusive character (from Dr. Carpenter's own point of view), because it is that of a medical man who has made a special study of abnormal mental phenomena. Dr. Lockhart Robertson, for many years an editor of the *Journal of Mental Science*, and Superintendent of the Hayward's Heath Asylum, declares that his own heavy oak dining-table was lifted up and moved about the room, and this not by any of the four persons present. Writing was also produced on blank paper which the medium "had not the slightest chance of touching" ("Dialectical Report," p. 248). Dr. Carpenter is always crying out for "skeptical experts," but when they come—in the persons of Robert Houdin and Dr. Lockhart Robertson—he takes very good care that, so far as he is concerned, the public shall not know of their existence. What, therefore, is the use of his asking me (in a note at p. 108) whether my table ever went up within its crinoline in the presence of a "skeptical expert"? The very fact that I secretly applied tests (see "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," p. 134) shows that I was myself skeptical at this time, and several of my friends who witnessed the experiments were far more skeptical, but they were all satisfied of the completeness of the test. The reason why some skeptical men of science never witness these successful experiments is simply because they will not persevere. Neither Dr. Carpenter nor Prof. Tyndall would come more than once to my house to see the medium through whom these phenomena occurred, or I feel sure they might, after two or three sittings, have witnessed similar phenomena themselves. This has rendered all that Dr. Carpenter has seen at odd times during so many years of little avail. He has had one or at most two sittings with a medium, and has taken the results, usually weak or negative, as proving imposture, and then has gone no more. Quite recently this has happened with Dr. Slade and Mrs. Kane; and yet this mode of inquiry is set up as against that of men who hold scores of sittings for months together with the same medium; and, after guarding against every possibility of deception or delusion, obtain results which seem to Dr. Carpenter incredible. Mr. Crookes had a long series of sittings with Miss Kate Fox (now Mrs. Jencken) in his own house, and tested the phenomena in every way his ingenuity could devise. Dr. Carpenter was recently offered the same facilities with this lady and her sister, but as usual had only one sitting. Yet he thinks it fair and courteous to make direct accusations of imposture against both these ladies. He revives the absurd and utterly insufficient theory that the "raps" are produced by "a jerking or snapping action of particular tendons of either the ankles, knees, or toes." The utter childishness of this explanation is manifest to any one who has heard the sounds through any good medium. They vary from delicate tickings to noises like thumpings with the fist, slapping with the hand, and blows with a hammer. They are often heard loudly on the ceiling or on a carpeted floor, and heard as well as felt on the backs or seats of chairs quite out of reach of the medium. One of the skeptical committees in America tested the Misses Fox by placing them barefooted on pillows, when the "raps" were heard as distinctly as before on the floor and walls of the room. Mr. Crookes states that he has heard them on the floor, walls, etc., when Miss Fox was suspended in a swing from the ceiling, and has felt them on his own shoulder. He had also heard them on a sheet of paper suspended from one corner by a thread held between the medium's fingers. A similar experiment was tried successfully by the Dialectical Committee ("Report," p. 383). At a meeting of the same committee raps were heard on a book while in the pocket of a very skeptical member; the book was placed on the table, and raps were again heard; it was then held by two members, supported on ivory paper-knives, when raps were still heard upon it ("Report," p. 386).

Again, there is the evidence of Prof. Barrett, an experienced physicist, who entered on this inquiry a complete skeptic. He tells us that he examined the raps or knockings occurring in the presence of a child ten years of age—that in full sunlight, when every precaution to prevent deception had been taken—still the raps would occur in different parts of the room, entirely out of reach of the child, whose hands and feet were sometimes closely watched, and at other times held. The phenomena have been tested in every way that the ingenuity of skeptical friends could devise; and as Prof. Barrett is well acquainted with Dr. Carpenter's writings on the subject and his explanations he gives, we have here another

proof of the utter worthlessness of these explanations in presence of the facts themselves. The Hon. R. D. Owen has heard, in the presence of Miss Fox, blows as if made by a strong man using a heavy bludgeon with all his force, blows such as would have killed a man or broken an ordinary table to pieces; while on another occasion the sounds resembled what would be produced by a falling cannon-ball, and shook the house ("Debatable Land," p. 275); and Dr. Carpenter would really have us believe that all these wonderfully varied sounds under all these test-conditions are produced by "snapping tendons." But what is evidently thought to be the most crushing blow is the declaration of Mrs. Culver given at length in the appendix. This person was a connection of the Fox family, and she declared that the Misses Fox told her how it was all done, and asked her to assist them in deceiving the visitors; two gentlemen certify to the character of Mrs. Culver. The answer to this slander is to be found in Capron's "Modern Spiritualism," p. 423. Mr. Capron was an intimate friend of the Fox family, and Catherine Fox was staying with him at Auburn, while her sisters were at Rochester being examined and tested by the committee. Yet Mrs. Culver says it was Catherine who told that "when her feet were held by the Rochester committee the Dutch servant-girl rapped with her knuckles under the floor from the cellar." Here is falsehood with circumstance; for, first, Catherine was not there at all; secondly, the committee never met at Foxes' house, but in various public rooms at Rochester; thirdly, the Fox family had no "Dutch servant-girl" at any time, and at that time no servant girl at all. The gentlemen who so kindly signed Mrs. Culver's certificate of character did not live in the same town, and had no personal knowledge of her; and, lastly, I am informed that Mrs. Culver has since retracted the whole statement, and avowed it to be pure invention (see Mrs. Jencken's letter to *Athenaeum*, June 9, 1877). It is to be remarked, too, that there are several important mistakes in Dr. Carpenter's account. He says the "deposition" of Mrs. C. was made 705 more than six years ago, whereas it was really twenty-six years ago; and he says it was a "deposition" before the magistrates of the town in which she resided, by which, of course, his readers will understand that it was on oath, whereas it was a mere statement before two witnesses, who without adequate knowledge, certified to her respectability. This is an example of the reprehensible eagerness with which Dr. Carpenter accepts and retails whatever falsehoods may be circulated against mediums; and it will be well to consider here two other unfounded charges which, not for the first time, he brings forward and helps to perpetuate. He tells us that the "Katie King" imposture, which had deluded some of the leading Spiritualists in this country, as well as in

United States, was publicly exposed. This alleged exposure was very similar to that of Mrs. Culver, but more precise and given on oath—but the oath was under a false name. A woman whose name was subsequently discovered to be Eliza White declared that she had personated the spirit form at several stated seances given by two mediums Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, she having been engaged by them for the purpose; and she described a false panel made in the back of the cabinet by which she entered at the proper time from a bedroom in the rear. But Colonel Olcott, a gentleman connected with the New York daily press, has proved that many of the particulars about herself and the Holmeses stated in Mrs. White's sworn declaration are false, and that she is therefore perjured. He has also proved that her former character is bad; that the photograph taken from "Katie King," and which she says was taken from her, does not at least resemble her; that the cabinet used had no such movable panels as she alleged; that the Holmeses' manifestations went on just the same on many occasions when she was proved to be elsewhere; that she herself confessed she was offered a thousand dollars if she would expose the Holmeses; and, lastly, that in Colonel Olcott's own room, under the most rigid test-conditions, and with Mrs. Holmes only as a medium, the very same figure appeared that was said to require the personation of Mrs. White. The full details are given in Colonel Olcott's "People from the Other World," pp. 425-478.

Another alleged exposure is introduced in the following terms: "I could tell you the particulars, in my possession, of the detection of the imposture practiced by one of the most noteworthy of these lady mediums in the distribution of flowers. These flowers having really been previously collected in a basin up-stairs and watered out of a decanter—as was proved by the fact that an inquisitive skeptic having furtively introduced into the water of a decanter a small quantity of ferrocyanide of potassium, its presence in the dew of the flowers was afterward recognized by the appropriate chemical test (a per-act of iron) which brought out a crimson blue."

In his article on the "Fallacies of Testimony," in the *Contemporary Review* of January, 1874, where Dr. Carpenter first gave an account of this alleged exposure, it is stated that "a basinful of these flowers (hollyhocks) was found in a garret with a decanter of water beside it, that the ferrocyanide was mixed with this water, and that all this was not hearsay, but a statement in writing in the hand of the 'inquisitive skeptic' himself. It turns out, however, that this part of the statement was wholly untrue, as we know on the authority of a letter written by the lady of the house, and afterward published, and Dr. Carpenter now seems to have found out himself; but, instead of withdrawing it wholly (as in common fairness he ought to have done), he still retains it ingeniously modified into an inference, but so worded as to look like the statement of a fact; 'these flowers having really been previously collected in a basin, etc.—' as was proved—not by finding them, but by the chemical test! What an extraordinary notion Dr. Carpenter must have of what is really proof! Let us, however, look a little further into the matter, of which more is known than Dr. Carpenter aduces, or than he thinks advisable to make public. Dr. Carpenter's informant was a member of the family in whose house the medium was staying as a guest. He had therefore full knowledge of the premises and command over the servants, and could very easily have ascertained such facts as the bringing of a large bunch of hollyhocks, asters, laurels, and other shrubs and flowers, into one of the visitors' bedrooms, and whether they disappeared from the room when the lady medium left it previous to the seance. This would have been direct evidence, and easily attainable by one of the family, but none such is forthcoming; instead of it we have the altogether inconclusive though scientific-looking chemical test. For it is evident that the flowers which appear must be brought from some-where, and may naturally be brought from the shortest distance. If there are flowers in the house, these may be brought—as a baked apple was actually brought when an apple was asked for, according to one of the reports of this very seance; and if a skeptic chooses to put chemicals with such flowers or baked apples beforehand, these chemicals may be detected when the flowers or apples are examined. The wonder of such seances does not at all lie in where the flowers are brought from, but in the precautions used. The medium's hands, for instance, are always held, as they were in this instance, yet when thus held the flowers drop on to the table, and even particular flowers and fruits drop close to the persons who ask for them. This is the real fact to be explained when, as in this case, it happens in a private house; and the alleged chemical test has no bearing on the gravest. But here the test itself is open to this suspicion. The person who says he applied it had struck a light in the middle of the seance, and discovered nothing. He was, then, in consequence of some offensive remarks, asked to leave the room, or the seance could not go on; and subsequently high words passed between him and the medium. He is, therefore, not an unbiased witness, and to support a charge of this kind we require independent testimony that the chemical in question was not applied to the flowers after they appeared

at the seance. This is the more necessary as we have now before us the statement in writing by another resident in the house that some of the flowers were sent to a medical man in the town, and that no trace of ferrocyanide of potassium could be detected. The accuracy of the supposed tests is also refuted very doubtfully by another fact. In the published account of the affair in the *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, indorsed by Dr. Carpenter's informant (in a letter now before me) as being by a friend of his and substantially correct, it is stated that the "same authority" who is said to have "demonstrated the presence of potassium ferrocyanide" on the flowers also examined some sand which fell on the table at the same sitting, and found it to contain salt, and therefore to be sea-sand, and to agree microscopically with the sand from a sea-beach near which the medium had been staying a few days before. This reads very like truth, and looks very suspicious, but it happens that another gentleman who was present at the seance in question took away with him some of the sand for the purpose of subjecting it to microscopic examination; and from that gentleman—Mr. J. Traill Taylor, editor of the *British Journal of Photography*, and an occasional contributor to other scientific journals—I have received the following note on the subject: "I remember the seance to which you have alluded, and which was held on the evening of August 23, 1874, during the Belfast Meeting of the British Association, which I was attending. At that time, among other by-products, I was engaged in the microscopical examination of sand of various kinds, and I omitted no opportunity of procuring samples. During my visit to Ireland I obtained specimens from the sea-coast of Counties Down and Armagh, as well as from the shores of Lough Neagh. When the shower of sand fell upon the table during the seance I appropriated a quantity of it for subsequent examination. The most careful inspection under the microscope satisfied me that it was absolutely identical with some that had been procured from the Antrim coast of Lough Neagh, while it differed in certain respects from that obtained at the sea-coast. Having subsequently seen a communication on this subject in the *English Mechanic* (by a writer who, I believe, had not been present at the seance), the purport of which was that the seance sand was similar to some obtained from a part of the sea-coast where the medium had been recently residing, I again subjected these various sands to microscopical examination, only to be confirmed in my previous conclusion. I followed this by a chemical test, as follows: I washed each sample of sand in a test-tube with distilled water, to which I then added a solution of nitrate of silver. A precipitate of chloride of silver was obtained from all the samples of sea-sand, but no precipitate was formed by that which came from Lough Neagh nor by that obtained at the seance, which last, under this chemical test, behaved in a manner precisely similar to the Lough Neagh sample. I recollect that the result of this test was my feeling sure that the writer to whom I have alluded had not had the same data as those in my possession for arriving at a conclusion. In about a year after that time I threw away over a dozen different samples of sand, including those to which I have referred, as I required for another purpose the boxes in which they were kept."

This clear and precise statement demonstrates the untrustworthiness of the authority on whom Dr. Carpenter relies, even if it does not indicate his disposition to manufacture evidence against the medium in question. At all events, with the more complete account of the whole episode now before them, our readers will, we are sure, admit that the evidence is by no means free from suspicion, and is quite insufficient to justify its being used to support a public charge of deliberate imposture. It also affords another example of how Dr. Carpenter jumps at explanations which are totally inapplicable to the facts in other cases, as, for example, to the production of flowers and ferns in my own room, as narrated in my "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," page 164, and to that in the house of T. Adolphus Trollope, as given in the "Dialectical Report," pages 277 and 372, in which case the medium had been carefully searched by Mrs. Trollope before the seance began.

### A Crowd, Not Always Indicative of Success.

We regret to see a disposition on the part of some of our friends, to draw a crowd to our grove-meetings by other than legitimate means. We trust nothing of the kind will be attempted another year. When we play a charlatan, a harlequin, or a political trickster as the best card and get people out to see the show, it is no evidence of any true interest in Spiritualism, or that any special good is effected. Good, true-hearted, eloquent lecturers and honest mediums can be found in sufficient numbers to supply all demands of healthy, earnest investigators. Let us depend on them and ourselves to render these meetings attractive and instructive.

A MAN in Cobb county, Ga., says his bees support him. A good healthy live of bees can give almost any man as much business as he cares to attend to.













