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THE RELIGION OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY ISABEL DE STEIGER.

No. II.

“THE word adieu is the expression of hope; for all that is beautiful and good in us will go to God—à Dieu. To God all that is love; to God all that is our highest ideal.” So says Arsene Houssaye in his recent and admirable work, *The Destinies of the Soul*.

I assume that it is proven that we require some fresh impetus to give us cause for the longed-for feeling of enthusiasm and emotion. The cry for commonplace or uncommonplace sensation is one of the proofs. This seeking after sensation is the vulgar outcome of the higher want, as the feeling penetrates from one plane of mind down to another. From the yearning poet and artist or philosopher, those who in their hearts wish that the old so-called fables were true, that they could reproduce with all the fire of their natures the thoughts engendered by the contemplation of the mighty “myths” of antiquity,—from these minds demanding freedom for the expansion of their wings, fluttering aimlessly in the trammelled present, we come to those which are less ardent, but are still seeking after some breathing-place for the soul. The latter have no ideas beyond the religion of orthodoxy; the fulfilment of their desire for sensation, or food for the imaginative faculties, is sought for in high ritualism, or in startling sermons—sermons in which something is said out of the common order of thought; and so on through all classes, from those who only seek animal pleasures from morning till night, from year to year, throughout their lives, down to the very poorest and lowest, whose only idea of the highest enjoyment of mankind is the excitement of their starved faculties by the only methods they know—“crime and drink.” It is not a particularly bright picture of the present time, and on its surface it is not a true one; but any one who seeks below that surface must know that it is a true one.

And why is it possible that such a state of things should be permitted, by either the Being we call Almighty, or by ourselves, who ought to enjoy, at all events, the results of all improvements for the welfare of mankind from past ages to the present century? The reply will not seem difficult to Spiritualists; and it is that we are suffering from spiritual starvation. The “materialising theology” of the present day has at length almost finished its labours. It has taken us farther and farther from the source of life for the soul. By condemning us perpetually to the past it has shut up that sixth sense which nature has given to every man—that of the future. The science of the soul is lost, and man is perishing for the want of it. People feel this, and so the cry goes upwards, and is reaching its utmost strength. No cry has ever ascended for spiritual light without being heard. This is a law which cannot be evaded any more than any of our known and demonstrated physical ones. An answer therefore is coming in the great wave of spiritual force which is sorely needed on the earth to wash and refresh our wearied souls, and to invigorate and give fresh life to us all.

Spiritualism is coming exactly at the time the world is ready for it. Of course, I know with all Spiritualists that there never has been, and never *could* have been, a time in any sense whatsoever without it, inasmuch as man has had a soul since his creation; but what I mean to say is, that the present development of it is arising in our minds just because we are in a receptive condition. We have emptied our minds, so to speak, and are ready for a fresh influx of divine light. However, as all religions come from God, though some may be more or less injured in their passage through human channels, so we must look upon Christianity as having been the means of strengthening our reasoning faculties, and stimulating our moral natures to righteous action. But where it has erred we now see, and that is in the deadening effect its teaching has had upon us, from the *untruth* it has been guilty of in saying that it is all over with revelation, and that there is at present a dead silence on all questions between man and his Maker—that, for the present, all is said that is required for our good. And so in this deathly silence sleep many souls in the despair of unbelief. Now, as this saying is that of man only, it is not needful for us to take it as from God, without inquiry as to the probability of its absolute truth. It appears more like an absolute falsehood. And yet this gilded lie has held us in chains for centuries. For a long time we were content in our prison-house; now, starved and dying, we struggle for exit and fresh air. The world demands spiritual knowledge. And, lo! *the answer comes*—not in anger, not in reproach, not in threatenings, as theologians would have us believe, *if any answer would come at all*. We find nothing but love and welcome: words of hope and encouragement are the replies we hear. And, like dark clouds of storm and cold, the old fears of the past roll away, and show us the sunshine of the future—a sunshine we could all have enjoyed long ago, and which was waiting for us if we would only have asked for it. This knowledge coming to us is the knowledge of *ourselves*, of the powers of our own souls, as taught from the old Archaic times by the seers of God's universe, and in still older times when these men were sons of God on the earth; and, again, in the times of the so-called occult sciences, the sciences pertaining to the emanations of God's will upon this planet, and our part and parcel in it, in which we have a divine right, we being in the essence of our natures one with Him. Then, again, it was taught in the flood of divine light spreading over the world through the teaching of Jesus Christ, and subsequently mistaught by those who professed to explain His doctrines to the world. This is the knowledge we should all have had; and the knowledge of the Lord would long ago have covered the land as the waters cover the sea, had it not been for the one grand flaw throughout all times, and that was false teaching, and truths being misinterpreted in permeating through false mediumship. So the people have always suffered, and religion after religion has died away, not because it was false in itself, but because false teaching became engrafted on its roots. Once upon a time the priests of ancient religions were all true seers and priests. Their sacred knowledge they held and taught as sacred truths: souls were known and distinguished; to the strong, strong food was given; to the weak, what was suitable to their needs. All was peace and harmony for a time, and then one law after another was infringed and broken, and the material counterparts of spiritual facts took unlawful positions; so on and on, downward, downward, through all the historic times, we read the one fact that it is not good for man to dwell alone. As soon as spiritual pride predominates, and it is said that there is no God, or that we don't want God; or ideas are

invented, and it is said "This is what God's teaching is or should be," so surely comes spiritual decline. I won't say death, but a kind of reverse trance comes over mankind, in which all men's material faculties are in working order, but their spiritual powers are asleep, and so they deny everything they cannot demonstrate. Most people are in this trance; and were it not for the strong crying of those who are not, this miserable sleep of our higher faculties might go on and on far into the future. Thanks be to God that He has given His angels charge over us, and that signs of awakening are seen in all quarters, and uplifted faces and hands are held to the golden future. I say "golden future," a common symbol, after all, to express that which may be in store for us. It *is* in store for us; for we Spiritualists know that what was formerly called "mysterious" and the "unknown" is nothing of the kind; that it was only the laziness and incapacity of our minds which made the mystery.

If, as Buddha rightly argued, we can contemplate and appreciate the works of creation, it follows that we possess somewhat of the faculties of the Creator. Anything that is actually incomprehensible to us is not perceived by us; it is as if it did not exist. If, therefore, we find that we have a spark of the Divinity in us, what hinders us from fanning that spark? Nothing. What would help us? Seeking God? Yes! We are told, "Can we, by searching, find out God?" No! we can't, if we look in the wrong places, and the right ones every man's soul knows. Vague directions, vague teachings and preachings, have been, however, our bane for centuries, and we ought to have done with these; for modern Spiritualism teaches us *how* as nothing else yet has done. It gives no "uncertain sound" or vague directions, telling us to have faith and all will be well; it gives us no material counterparts, and tells us we must imagine spiritual ones. We try to live upon this imagination; but our souls have a material side, that is, they require suitable sustenance, and don't find it in orthodoxy. Spiritualism has no forms and ceremonies, or outside shows, from which the spirit has fled; nor monotonous services which still go on and on while men wonder at the want of spiritual life in them. Spiritualism has nothing of this, but it says to the soul of each person, "You live, and you can prove and know that you live now and will live hereafter; and there is no mystery or science in the matter; the knowledge is meant for all." Such is the opening Spiritualism affords us. No need for the poet and artist to go back to spiritual life in old times, and to sigh for the beauty of Aphrodite, or the devotion of Alcestis, or the great deeds of Ulysses, to express the devotion and enthusiasm of their natures; what *has been, can* be done by man, if once more inspired to grand action. No need for people to bury their feelings in ritual or services which go no higher than the roofs of their cathedrals: if once the enthusiasm and glory of true worship are kindled, when once doubt is forever removed by the knowledge that that doubt is mere black ignorance; if once all the divine faculties of man are kindled in the flame of true devotion and true enthusiasm; if *men know God*, if they have found Him, what is to hinder them building finer and larger temples than were ever built in the world before? And when once they understand and know the divine law of mediumship, what is to hinder our having grander prophets than ever we had before? What is to prevent higher truths descending into our midst? If Christ said—and He *did* say so—that where two or three are gathered together in His name there will He be in the midst of them, what will prevent Him doing so, when the real spiritual *seance* is held—the real communion of saints? There will be no doubt of His appearance and presence then.

In vain now is it said so over and over again of the material counterpart, that empty form, the Lord's Supper, the eucharist of the Church. In vain the priests and clergy multiply its celebration; in vain, for "He cometh not." The divine law necessary for His appearance is unknown or broken, and He *cannot* come.

But the time is coming when these material counterparts of the spiritual realities will disappear, and soon in London will be laid the foundation stone for the first temple of the *living* God, whom we have had since the days of old. We have long tried to worship, and built places for the worship of a sleeping God. We say, or act at least, as if He were sleeping, and our worship is the worship that one would pay to a sleeping God, as long as we maintain that He never manifests Himself *in any way* whatsoever nowadays; and though our clergy will—so little do they understand what they are talking about—solemnly maintain that the Ineffable Being, the Sacred One whose name we cannot even utter, spoke personally to Gideon, and arranged the whole plan of the dry or bedewed fleece, and though He in those days gave personal communications about comparatively trivial matters in one small corner of the earth, He has now refused for centuries to the whole world and the greatest minds in it, who interrogate on the most important topics of the universe, the very slightest acknowledgment of His presence at all. No! Spiritualists do *not* worship a sleeping God; they do not require to be told, with the fine irony of the followers of Elijah, that their God is only a human being like themselves. On the contrary, this is what *we* tell the world. We say to the priests of Baal, "You have raised up a God according to the sum of your knowledge; and because *you* know no more, you say it is irreligious to inquire more: *we*, the worshippers of a real living God, know that there is no end to knowledge, and that the Author and Being of us all is as ever the essence, and origin, and sustainer of the universe."

Once upon a time three philosophers were talking under a portico. They were speaking of the gods. One ignorant pretender declared that he knew of no life after death, therefore there was none. "My friend," said one of the others to him, looking down from aloft from his spiritual plane—"My friend, go and die three or four times, then come to me, and after that you may speak to me under this portico."

Yes. Experience can teach us some truth, if not all truth; we have had, at all events, the experience what it is to live under the dominion of a sleeping God; and the truth it teaches us is, that as things are so very wrong, perhaps the error may be in *us*, and not in God at all. We know that He has given us this world as a garden to live in, flourish in, and develop our faculties in, whereas we are vegetating only. We believe in the great alchemist nature, but not in the real mission of his crucible death; at least, we talk vaguely enough about it, and the uses of this crucible. We say that it sends us somehow to the kingdom of this sleeping God, in whose deaf ear we shall at once begin to sing psalms, of whose authorship no one knows. But it is wearisome to go over the tedious list of our mis- or non-beliefs, so many of us are beginning to know them so well, and so many also know therefore so much better, and so many know, too, that they must gird up their loins to receive and respond to the wave of spiritual food which comes now, and will come with still greater strength amongst us all. Girt with this strength and power we shall be ready to welcome the religion of the future. A while ago I said and wrote that I did not suppose or presuppose that Spiritualism could mean a

new religion. I don't say so now either. "A *new* religion." No religion can be in its essence "new;" it must always be a reformation—that is, a continual righting of the deviations of a compass, which ought always to point to an eternal truth; but I do say that all existing religions must be *reformed* by Spiritualism, or that they will cease to exist at all. Spiritualism is the only thing on this earth that contains within itself the true kernel of knowledge, and the clue to the future. It is a development of old sciences, and one required for our needs; within its precincts will be contained all that there is of the future for our race, as far as the coming cycle is concerned—the philosophy, the music, the art, the literature of the future. There is no limit to the development of the spirit, as our sacred writers tell us. By these I do not mean only those whose writings are bound up in the book called the Bible, but all through whose writings God's Spirit has spoken, from Plato and Swedenborg to Böhme or Harris, or any other seer, whose sixth sense God has opened. These writings will then be understood, and not estimated, as they are, by the unenlightened—that is, by most minds—as the ravings of hallucinationists or madmen; and they will be looked upon as Bibles; and who knows but that Bibles may come and Bibles may go *ad infinitum*, for as knowledge increases we shall want fresh food.

We want it, at all events, now, and we look for real spiritual teachers who can tell us more than we know ourselves, and through whose mediumship the reformation of our souls can begin: with that our emotions and our enthusiasm will spring joyfully forth; we shall not question "Is life worth living?" "Do we wish we were out of it?" Such thoughts will be far from us. Life will be but a bright resting-place for our bodies while our souls are preparing for their flight to the next sphere, and we shall none of us think of wishing to be out of it while we have work to do in this world, both to the suffering souls and bodies of those amongst us still in the darkness of superstition and still sleeping, worshipping their imaginary sleeping Deity. We have also work to do for the souls of those who have passed from among us, either in sin or violence, and who are still causing sorrow and death in our midst.

This last is a great work for Spiritualists, and until it is accomplished, and until "the souls that are in prison" are released, and they no longer come to instil evil into the world; until then we cannot hope for peace on earth. ALL evil influences must be removed from without and from within before our task is ended in this world, or the next, or in any of the next worlds. But there will be no dulness in this life, no aimlessness, no stagnation when *this* work is understood, and *it* is now understood by many people. Death will be no longer the tragedy taught by Mr. Greg, nor life any longer the needless martyrdom, to serve no end, taught by Winwood Reade. He teaches us better, no doubt, now; but life is simply a station on the road, and we each of us, as *not* taught by theology, take our own path. Some of us, at our peril, take tortuous and dangerous ones, and we shall suffer; but all these roads have but one ending. It is our duty as Spiritualists to light the lamps and point the way, instead of being ashamed of our calling, and holding or shielding our belief under the shelter of this or that great name known to the material world as great in philosophy, or science, or religion. We ought to cry shame upon ourselves for so doing; and if the lamp of truth is put into our hands to show to mankind, let us boldly do so, and not mind if in our ranks are to be found only the unknown and humble in this world. He will be the greatest pioneer who trims his light and keeps it burning best; and it should signify nothing to

us if distinguished names are absent. They ought not to be distinguished to us, who should own no hierarchy but that of the soul; so for ever let us put aside this contemptible habit of quoting known names to support us. If our house is built on the rock—as we know it is—it needs no other support, and those among us who look for props outside are unworthy to dwell within. We have all of us something to look forward to—hope and peace.

BRITISH MUSEUM LECTURES.

YESTERDAY Dr. Carter Blake delivered the first of this series in the Geological Gallery on the "Class of Fishes, and the Modes of Preservation of Fossils." The lecturer pointed out in detail the character of the Ganoid fishes and the relations borne by them to the lower amphibia. He selected a few types for consideration, such types being those of the more common fossil forms from the chalk formations. He commenced subsequently the class of Reptilia.—*The Times*, July 8, 1879.

The second of this course was delivered by Dr. Carter Blake yesterday in the Geological Gallery. Commencing with the lowest forms he gave an account of the remains of fossil birds, of a type allied to *Odontopteryx*, which had been discovered in various secondary and tertiary rocks. The evidences of other fossil remains of birds belonging to the strata of the chalk were described in detail.—*The Times*, July 10, 1879.

The third of the British Museum lectures was delivered yesterday. After a few introductory remarks by Dr. Carter Blake, Mr. H. St. Chad Boscawen, F.S.A., spoke at length in the Assyrian Gallery on some of the recent discoveries which have been made, as well as giving a general description of the sculptures of the reigns of Assur-dan-ibal (Sardanapalus) and of Sennacherib in the basement Assyrian Gallery. The class was excessively numerous, and the crowd great, owing to the limited space. The President of the Arya Samaj of Bombay (a Hindoo) was present.—*The Times*, July 12, 1879.

The last of this series was delivered yesterday by Dr. Carter Blake in the Geological Gallery. He entered at length into the description of the fossil forms of South America, selecting the glyptodon, megatherium, and toxodon as examples. Subsequently he gave a minute description of the characters of the vegetable-feeding as contrasted with the carnivorous pouch-bearing animals of Australia. At the close of the course, he stated that he was "anxious to divest his lectures from all appearance of Museum authority," and, while accepting full responsibility for the conduct of his class, returned his sincere thanks to the authorities of the British Museum for the privilege and facilities accorded him.—*The Times*, July 15, 1879.

Some Spiritualists and others were present at this course, including the Rev. P. Melia, D.D.; the Rev. J. Nolte, D.D.; the Rev. W. W. Newbould, M.A., F.L.S.; Prof. R. Owen, F.R.S., C.B.; Mr. E. A. Bond, F.S.A., principal librarian of the British Museum; Mr. E. T. Wakefield, Mrs. Lowe, Miss Kisingbury, Mr. S. Burasjoon, of Mossul; Dr. Herschell, Mr. J. Mew, B.A.; Mr. C. Carleton Massey, Dr. Perfit, and Mrs. Clay.

No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors and wanderings, and mists and tempests in the vale below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling pride. Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the jewels of truth.—*Bacon's Essays*.

Correspondence.

THE RELIGION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

SIR,—In my good friend Madame de Steiger's essay on "The Religion of Spiritualism" occur two remarks which seem to me to be almost as untrue as it is possible for words to be.

She says "Christianity has done its duty well, but its purposes are now ended," and again "Christianity has dimmed the spiritual side of humanity, and taken out its poetry."

These statements appear to me to be utterly contradicted by fact. In the first place, I should say that the many churches and the innumerable sects have most signally failed to do their duty well as exponents of Christianity, having expended their force in attempts to set up theological dogmas in the place of the life and teachings of Christ, and in aiming at self-aggrandisement instead of self-sacrifice.

Far from the "purposes of Christianity being now ended," it is infinitely truer to say that the grand purposes of Christianity would appear, after eighteen hundred years of misunderstanding, to be only now beginning to be understood and acted upon by the advancement and spread of a spirit of mutual forbearance and charity, and the teachings of a broad Christian philanthropy.

Again, how can it possibly be said that "Christianity has dimmed the spiritual side of humanity and taken out its poetry?"

Surely the very reverse of this is true; for where can the ancient Pagan world show any parallel to the spiritual, artistic, and poetic memories and emotions which are called up by the names of Dante, Michael Angelo, St. Francis, St. Teresa, Savonarola, Shakspere, Fénelon, Madame Guyon, Pascal, Beethoven, Mozart, Chalmers, Channing, Martineau, Longfellow, Maurice, Robertson, Tennyson, Swedenborg, and hundreds of others, all more or less truly and profoundly Christian?

But it would seem that these men and women, their love, and works, and faith, are to vanish before the newer *light* of modern Spiritualism!

So far as I have been able to see, the light of *public* Spiritualism is chiefly darkness.

We have dark *séances* with chairs and tables moving here and there, and John King floating overhead and chaffing his audience!

Or we have dark cabinets, out of which are thrust bundles of muslin, presented to us as angels from the seventh heavens, amid the sobs of weeping women!

Or we have "inspirational orators" in America preaching doctrines of abomination, or in old-fashioned England sneering at Christianity, and presenting us with imbecile namby-pamby verbiage in its place!

Nevertheless, true Christianity, the essence of which is love to God and man, has been expressed by doctrines and illustrated by a life which cannot possibly be surpassed.

Let any man or woman truly attempt to live up to the Christian standard, and he or she will very quickly discover that it is infinite in its applications, and contains the highest possible revelation which the human mind can conceive.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

SIR,—Madame de Steiger's article suggests so many thoughts that I hope that all critical remarks may be postponed till after the publication of the series. With a view, however, to simplify the controversy which will inevitably arise, to facilitate the efforts which will doubtless be made to sweep out of her way ignorant persons like myself, and to enable your readers to give a definite "Aye" or "No" to any propositions that may be laid down, I hope that her sentiment of kind feminine pity may induce her to give some definition of the following words and phrases used by her: "Religion," "Spiritualism," "Spiritualists," "Christianity in its various forms or phases," "Church of Christendom," "Point of faith," "Orthodox party," "Unorthodox [party]," and "Our religious guides."

Possibly, in the history of this planet, various definitions have been given of these phrases, which the proverb *error latet in generalibus* may condemn. Late controversies perhaps indicate that some different interpretations have been given by various persons. Madame de Steiger is, of course, only concerned with her own definitions, and the above eight are perhaps sufficient for a week or so.

C. CARTER BLAKE.

THE HIGHER USES OF MESMERISM.

SIR,—A young gentleman of strong medial powers, who is developing for clairvoyance and physical manifestations, has been

advised (spiritually) to have himself mesmerised in order to facilitate his progress.

Will any of your readers, who is an experienced (non-professional) mesmerist, kindly give his aid?

The case may probably afford an interesting experiment in relation to the higher uses of mesmerism. Full particulars given on application to

LENTUS, 21, Gower-street, W.C.

July 15, 1879.

VISITORS TO THIRTY-EIGHT GREAT RUSSELL-STREET.

SIR,—It is always worth while to answer Mr. Stainton Moses, but it is not usually so easy to do so as in this instance.

He is discursive, and wanders from the point. I will recall it for those who may care to form a judgment on the proceeding in question.

Reading Mr. Bennett's letter to Dr. Carter Blake by itself, every one would have inferred that Dr. Blake had been a constant, or very frequent visitor to the rooms since his resignation. In that case the prohibition addressed to him would have been quite justifiable, without supposing any special reason in the judgment of the Council, for excluding him. Had our information rested there, the reply of the Council to Mrs. Lowe was complete and obvious. But Dr. Blake had cut away the foundation of the defence by his letter in your paper of the 23rd May. In this he informed us that, so far from continuing to use the privilege of a member, he had only availed himself of the invitation to visitors to the extent of two calls in two months. Now, let us suppose anything we like, within permissible limits, against Dr. Blake, and I would ask how, in the name of common sense, could the repetition of these casual calls, at distant intervals, be prejudicial to the Association? How can we believe that it seemed so to the Council? But Dr. Blake's statement was not contradicted in their letter to Mrs. Lowe. We had, therefore, to choose between two suppositions—either that it was intended to inflict a gratuitous insult upon Dr. Blake individually, or that it was a vindictive proceeding, to which all the seceders might equally be exposed by calling at the rooms.

Dr. Blake assumed that the latter must be the true explanation, and I followed him in adopting it. I could not but remember that act of small revenge upon the editor of *The Spiritualist*, which, and the manner of which, disgusted so many of us into retirement. Does Mr. Stainton Moses tell us that we are mistaken? Not a bit of it. Does he say, contrary to the statement of Dr. Blake, that it was necessary to stop the visits of the latter on account of their frequency? No. Does he tell us what the proceeding did mean, if not what we supposed? No. I drew an inference, in which I might be personally concerned, and Mr. Stainton Moses does not say that my inference was erroneous. Mrs. Lowe resigned because she disapproved of the exercise of a right, and he tells her that she has "ignored" the right. Somebody from outside has described the "National" Association as only a London club, and therefore a member is inconsistent who questions the motives from which a club right is exercised. It is all "they" with Mr. Moses, though Mrs. Lowe has never disparaged the position of the Association, and I have never imputed to it bigotry. "They" shift their ground, though I have had but one say on the subject; and Mrs. Lowe, while politely accepting a disclaimer, has only pointed out a logical alternative which she considers not less objectionable than her first supposition. Then "they" are "self-appointed critics," and this phrase conventionally veils a suggestion of impertinence. Why, what are you, the Association, according to your own account, that any criticism of your proceedings should be objected to on that ground? You call yourselves a "National" Association of Spiritualists; and are Spiritualists not to question your acts and pretensions? You pose before the public as representing us all; and if we say you don't, and that you are only a club, then are we inconsistent, as if our right of criticism were limited by our estimate of you, instead of being co-extensive with your professions. I will not say that only a "mind beclouded by prejudice" can perpetrate such reasoning as the above, but I must say that it is as little conducive to controversial clearness as is that phrase to controversial amenity.

I certainly did not intend to "assail" Mr. Calder (for whom I have a sincere respect) in the passing allusion I made to his language, and if there is any use or meaning in inverted commas, I have not misrepresented him. I wrote inferentially, as I supposed any one would see from the position of the quotation marks in the phrase "weak and feeble" persons. And does it not occur to Mr. Stainton Moses that if the Council wish to be

left alone, they had better leave others alone, and not publicly describe our acts and reasons as "weak," "feeble," and "idle"? Of course, they are quite at liberty so to attack us (by way of inviting our return), but then they should not cry out and ask to be "left alone" if we hit back.

Wishing your columns a speedy relief from these not very edifying topics, which I cannot find even "amusing," I am, sir, your obedient servant,

C. C. MASSEY.

Temple, July 12th.

THE PRINCE IMPERIAL'S PRAYER.

AMONG the papers in the desk of the late Prince Imperial was found in his own handwriting the following prayer, written in French. "The elucidation of his high character alone," says the *Morning Post*, "justifies the publication of a sacred document which will prove to the world how intimately he was penetrated with all the feelings which most become a Christian, and which give higher hopes than are afforded by the pains and perils of this transitory life." The last two paragraphs exhibit his sympathy with Spiritualism:—

My God: I give to Thee my heart, but give to me faith. Without faith there is no strong prayer, and to pray is a longing of my soul. I pray, not that Thou shouldest take away the obstacles in my path, but that Thou mayest permit me to overcome them. I pray, not that Thou shouldest disarm my enemies, but that Thou shouldest aid me to conquer myself.

Hear, O God! my prayer. Preserve to my affection those who are dear to me. Grant them happy days. If Thou only givest on this earth a certain sum of joy, take, O God, my share, and bestow it on the most worthy, and may the most worthy be my friends. If Thou seekest vengeance upon man, strike me.

Misfortune is converted into happiness by the sweet thought that those whom we love are happy.

Happiness is poisoned by the bitter thought: While I rejoice, those whom I love a thousand times better than myself are suffering.

For me, O God! no more happiness. Take it from my path. I can only find joy in forgetting the past. If I forget those who are no more I shall be forgotten in my turn, and how sad the thought which makes one say, "Time effaces all!"

The only satisfaction I seek is that which lasts for ever, that which is given by a tranquil conscience. O, my God, show me ever where my duty lies, and give me strength to accomplish it always.

Arrived at the term of my life, I shall turn my looks fearlessly to the past. Remembrance will not be for me a long remorse. Then I shall be happy.

Grant, O God! that my heart may be penetrated with the conviction that those whom I love, and who are dead, shall see all my actions.

My life shall be worthy of their witness, and my innermost thought shall never make them blush.

LAST week, in error, the name of Mr. J. W. Fletcher was published instead of that of Mrs. J. W. Fletcher, in the list of those who have just resigned membership of the National Association of Spiritualists.

Is it not some reproach on the economy of Providence that such a one, who is a mean, dirty fellow, should have amassed wealth enough to buy half a nation? Not in the least. He made himself a mean, dirty fellow for that very end. He paid his health, his conscience, his liberty, for it, and will you envy him his bargain?—*Barbault*.

THE DAILY CHRONICLE ON SPIRITUALISM.

In the provinces one among the penny daily newspapers in several of the large towns not unfrequently tells the truth about Spiritualism. In London this has not been the case, until of late the *Daily Chronicle* has sometimes reported Spiritualistic meetings without bias, and dealt with the whole subject in a fair and rational way. All the other London penny papers have simply bespattered the whole subject with misrepresentation and abuse, except in a few isolated instances. They have never taken any trouble to investigate the matter, and seem to be nearly dead to all sense of moral responsibility. The *Times* and *Punch* have always dealt fairly with Spiritualism, and in London the general rule has been that the more respectable the journal, and the higher its class of readers, the more truthful has it been in relation to psychology and its phenomena. But among the penny papers, the *Daily Chronicle* at last shows a disposition to treat Spiritualism as fairly as any other subject, so the least Spiritualists can do is to support that journal in return, and it cannot but find the adhesion of so large and influential a body to be exceedingly beneficial to its interests.

The following leading article is from the *Daily Chronicle* of last Friday:—

There has recently appeared in the City of New York a clairvoyant who adds to his gifts of Spiritualism that of clairaudience, which may be described as the faculty of hearing angels' whispers and the low-toned conversation of those ethereal beings of the other and supernatural world. The new medium has published a work on the subject of the new discovery, and the sceptics and the credulous are said to be rapidly buying it up, inasmuch as it is the work of a man of superior education, who until recently would only believe what he could see or understand to exist by putting it to the test of his five senses. Whilst this convert is reviving the drooping hopes of Spiritualists in New York, a young lady is causing quite a sensation in San Francisco by her "marvellous power over the spirits of the defunct friends of all her visitors." Knowing only the English language, she possessed a wonderful facility in compelling the immortals to communicate their thoughts in any language which their living friends may indicate. A gentleman, whose testimony is said to be unimpeachable, and whose faith in clairvoyance was previously at zero, has made public the result of his visit to this wonderful medium. He took the precaution to arm himself with a double slate, hinged strongly, and so made that when folded no human ingenuity could insert any writing instrument to the interior, and before entering the house of the medium, he placed a piece of genuine pencil within it. Without inquiring into the peculiar construction of the slate, the lady asked the especial object of her visitor's call. On being informed of it she laid one hand on the wooden cover of the slate, and immediately a scratching noise was heard. She withdrew her touch, and the sound at once ceased. The visitor opened his double slate, and found one side written closely over in English in a clear and bold hand, whilst on the other the answers were written in French. Though his incredulity was fast being sapped, he begged another trial. After cleaning the slate, he closed it and held it tightly between his two hands, and on this occasion the medium did not even touch it. At a wave from her hand, the scratching noise was repeated, and ceased when she motioned negatively

with her head. The whole slate, on being opened, was found to be covered with answers, all in English, to the holder's previous questions. During this manifestation of power strange "rappings" were heard; the air seemed charged with murmurings of soft voices. Later on, the lady astonished her visitor by commanding a trumpet to sail round the room, which the instrument did in a series of gyrations, during the whole time emitting sounds and speaking words as if with a human voice. The lady does not pretend to read the future, nor does she cause the spirits to indulge in prophecies. With the dead, however, she claims to hold communion, and she asserts her power of summoning to her presence the departed friends or relations of any person living who will honour her with a call, and, of course, with a fee!

ARRIVAL OF A NEW AMERICAN MEDIUM.

MRS. LOUIE M. LOWE, a celebrated American medium, has just arrived in London, at 23, Upper Baker-street, and intends to remain for three or four weeks before departing for France. She is accompanied by her husband, and she has brought us a letter of introduction from Mr. J. L. O'Sullivan, New York, who testifies to remarkable and exceptional phenomena he has seen in her presence. The columns of the *Banner of Light* have often been largely filled with descriptions by Mr. Newton and others of the phenomena which take place through her mediumship. In America she has frequently appeared before large audiences, and given public tests relating to the problem of spirit identity, and in private she obtains strong physical manifestations.

DEPARTURE OF MR. AND MRS. TEBB FOR AMERICA.—On Wednesday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. William Tebb left London, and yesterday afternoon sailed from Liverpool in *The City of Berlin* for New York. After a few days' stay in that city they will go up the Hudson to the Catskill Mountains, the scene of the somnolent feat of Rip Van Winkle; thence they will proceed to Lake George, afterwards to Montreal and Quebec, and, after visiting Philadelphia and Boston, will return to London in about three months' time. Mr. Tebb is travelling for the benefit of his health, which has been considerably weakened by his prolonged resistance to the unsuccessful attempts of the St. Pancras authorities to force him to vaccinate his child Beatrice. Mr. and Mrs. Tebb are among the most active workers connected with Spiritualism in England; their names are also connected with a multiplicity of good works for the benefit of the helpless and afflicted.

A JEWISH SABBATH.—Mr. A. L. Green, a Jewish gentleman, writes to the *London Express* to correct a very common mistake regarding the observance of the Sabbath. He says:—"According to Jewish law and practice, intelligent recreation and even amusements which carry with them nothing vicious or degrading, are not only permissible but are enjoined for the due observance of the Sabbath. Our reading rooms are open on the Sabbath, and the most pious Jews take pleasure, as well they may, in visiting art galleries and museums on the Sabbath day. We are punctilious in regard to servile work. We would not, for instance, permit our servants to remain outside the church listening to the neighing of carriage horses while the devout congregation inside were listening to the Bishop eloquently reminding his absorbed listeners that the blessings of a Sabbath day must extend to all men alike, even if they are servants, and to all beasts, even if they are carriage horses; and that the prohibition against servile work should in Mosaism be associated with what, to us, may appear untold rigour, is perfectly natural when we reflect that the inhibitions were primarily addressed to a nation just emancipated from a cruel and long-continued bondage, and who, on the one hand, had to be elevated to a knowledge of the dignity of labour, and to the appreciation of intellectual culture on the other hand. One visit to the house of an observant Jew on the Sabbath day would do more to give Christians a clear and comprehensive notion of the serene and happy social influence of the Sabbath and the true religious character of Jewish home life, and how important a place the Sabbath occupies in Judaism, than the most graphic delineation in word painting.

EXTRAORDINARY PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA
IN DAMASCUS.

THE following narrative is from the *Sun* (New York) of July 1st. Similar records, but more lacking in details, have sometimes been printed by travellers of repute, but if some recognised scientific authority like Captain Burton would carefully verify the facts, there would be a feeling of more security henceforth, in building theories upon them. Notwithstanding Madame de Steiger's closing remarks in another column, there is a limited amount of use in authority:—

Damascus, May 30th.

In this most quaint and ancient of Oriental cities there is a quarter called the Meidan. It stretches away from the almost circular town in a long, narrow suburb to the south, like the handle of a frying-pan, and is of all parts of Damascus the most characteristic. It is the road by which the Hadj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, leaves Damascus, and it is the road by which long caravans from the Hauran and southern deserts enter the city. It terminates in the Bawabet Allah, or God's Gate; and its mixed commercial and sacred character has attracted a curious floating population of dervishes and religious devotees, and of Bedouins, Kurds, and Druses, who are in trading relations with the Hauran or more distant oases. On the right-hand side and not far from the end of the street is a small, unpretentious house. Indeed, many of the houses in the Meidan are little better than hovels; but this one house can boast a small courtyard, at the further end of which is the usual room, entirely open to the court on one side, while it opens into the rest of the house, and is surrounded by divans on the other sides. In this court are two or three orange trees in blossom, and it is overlooked by the flat roofs of neighbouring houses, where closely-veiled women can squat in rows and take part in any ceremony of interest of which the courtyard may be the scene.

This little house contains a very remarkable personage, not much known excepting to Moslems, and not altogether approved by some of them; but among the poorer classes enjoying an immense reputation, and altogether holding a position which it would not be safe to treat with contempt. His name is Sheikh Ruslan Abouton, and I discovered him, with the help of the police, in my search after living curiosities, in which I take a deeper interest than in Cuphic coins or Damascene blades. He was the hereditary Grand Sheikh of the Dervish Order of the Bedawi, founded about five hundred years ago by the well-known Moslem saint, Sheikh Said Ahmed El Bedawi, whose tomb is still a place of pilgrimage for his followers, and is to be found in the old Crusaders' Church of Tantal, in Egypt. At the present moment the order numbers about ten thousand members, scattered throughout Islam, but they all own allegiance to the Sheikh Ruslan at Damascus, who claims to be a lineal descendant of the great founder, and to whom have been transmitted the supernatural powers with which his ancestor was endowed. Such powers, however, are by no means confined to Sheikh Ruslan and his disciples, but exist to a greater or less extent in three other orders, viz., the Kilani, the Rifai, and the Sukki.

But my friend the Bedawi Sheikh maintained that he had certain gifts which none of them possessed, while they had none which he could not exercise. At any rate, I was anxious to see his powers put to the test, and, accompanied by some friends stimulated by the same curiosity, we made an expedition to the Meidan one afternoon, and found the little courtyard half full of people, and the neighbouring housetops thickly occupied by female spectators. Among those assembled in the

court were two or three wild-looking men, stripped to the waist, while others, clothed, but apparently not altogether in their right mind, were about to take part in the performance. The Sheikh's eldest son, a particularly handsome boy, with the large, lustrous eyes of the gazelle, was a conspicuous figure in the group, while the Sheikh himself was a man whose countenance and bearing stamped him at once as not being of the common herd. His face was somewhat of a Jewish type; the short grey beard and moustache partially concealed a mouth decidedly pleasing in its expression; the eyes were bright and piercing, and the nose was aquiline.

Taking a handful of skewers similar to those used for cooking purposes, each about a foot long, he called the eldest half-stripped disciple to him, and opening his mouth, muttering the while with great apparent intensity of concentration a prayer or invocation, he with a sudden jerk forced the point clean through the cheek, so that it could be seen projecting on the other side. He repeated the process with the other cheek, the man showing no sign of pain, and not a drop of blood flowing from the wound. He then went to his son, who calmly gazed at him with his large swimming eyes, opened his mouth, and received a similar stab through the cheek without the quiver of an eyelid. I was watching him closely, and could not observe the slightest muscular contraction. The point was clearly projecting through the skin, and deception was impossible, as there was every opportunity afforded for the closest inspection. Leaving the two victims with their mouths thus trussed, as it were, the Sheikh took a square box, which, when it was opened, was found to contain several live scorpions of unusual size. Taking up one of these, as large as an ordinary land crab, he handed it, all wriggling, darting its tail in its efforts to sting, to a man who came forward, and calmly but rapidly dropped it into his mouth, and crunched it with great apparent relish, eating it completely up. Then we saw a much larger box, containing serpents of various sizes. These he turned out upon the floor, dominating them after the manner of serpent charmers, and allowing them to twine and curl round him. In this, of course, there was nothing marvellous, nor indeed in what immediately followed, though it was sickening to behold. Drawing a live snake about two feet long out of the box, he held it up by the tail, when suddenly a tall man, afflicted apparently with St. Vitus's dance, with hair dishevelled, rushed forward with a loud cry, and with foaming lips seized the snake with both hands, tore it violently asunder, and plunged its bloody and palpitating end into his mouth. This seemed the signal for a general scramble. In a moment three or four men were tearing the writhing fragments with their teeth, and with eager greediness devoured them in large mouthfuls until not a particle of the snake remained. They then drew back with seeming reluctance, wiping their bloody lips with their hands.

But the excitement seemed to have produced a sort of fit in the man who had first seized the snake, from which the Sheikh restored him by clasping his head with both hands and pressing it violently, while he again concentrated himself on incantations, the veins starting out on his forehead with the intensity of his efforts. In a few moments the dervish had become comparatively calm, though for the rest of the time I observed that he continued to twitch and jerk convulsively, while his eyes rolled wildly.

Meantime the man and boy who had been pierced watched the proceedings with the utmost unconcern. As it was difficult to believe that to remain with one's cheeks skewered did not at all events produce a feeling of discomfort, and as they must have been standing for

at least a quarter of an hour in the same attitude, I told the Sheikh to pull out the skewers. This he did, in each case preceding the sharp pull with which he extracted them by an earnest invocation. When they were drawn out the points were bloodless, while, excepting that there was an apparent induration of the cheek at the spots through which the skewers had passed, there was no sign of what had happened.

A brazier full of live charcoal was now brought in and fanned into flame. When it was glowing with a blue and lurid light, the Sheikh, calling suddenly on Allah several times, jumped literally on the blazing mass with his bare feet, and stood there for nearly a minute. Then getting down, the charcoal was again fanned into flame, and the men who had eaten the scorpions and serpents, and who had been skewered through the cheeks, rushed forward, plunged their hands into the burning mass, and tossed the glowing embers into their mouths, crunching them up with the greatest unconcern. Meantime, the smell of burned flesh became unmistakable, which somewhat militates against the theory that their flesh is impervious to fire, though I am bound to say no one showed any signs of feeling pain.

A light-coloured man, stripped to the waist, now came forward, armed with a curved, pointed knife about eight inches long and an inch broad, with a short wooden handle, and was about to plunge it into his abdomen, when one of the gentlemen of our party became so faint and one of the ladies so sick that they begged the Sheikh to omit this part of the performance. In vain he assured us that it would be unattended with the slightest pain or danger; in vain the victim to be operated upon manifested the utmost eagerness to be allowed to stab himself: the civilised nerves of my friends were unequal to the shock. He was by no means a fanatical-looking man, this adept in the magic art, but a calm, intelligent-looking person, whose white skin gave him quite an air of Western civilisation. He showed us a whole row of scars extending completely round his waist, each about an inch long, some twenty or thirty in number, as evidence that he was accustomed to the experiment, and that it was safe. In every case, while bearing a very distinct indurated mark, the skin had healed beautifully, and he assured us that the operation was as bloodless as the one we had already witnessed. At least he begged, if we would not allow him to plunge a knife six inches long into his stomach for our gratification, to let him exhibit the minor spectacle of having a skewer, to which a large iron ball was attached, passed through his throat at his windpipe and come out at the back of his neck. He showed us the hard lumps at the lower part of the throat in front and at each side of the spine in the nape of the neck, where former skewers had penetrated.

The Sheikh was so disgusted with the weak nerves of our party that he treated us with a shade of contempt henceforth, and seemed very nearly determined to go on with the ceremony whether we liked it or not.

I confess I regretted that it should have been brought to a close at the moment when it was becoming really interesting; but the testimony of an English medical man of high reputation and experience, who has been long resident in the East, and who has witnessed both the piercing of the abdomen and the neck, will have more weight than mine. This gentleman has informed me that the operation in both cases is genuine. The knife goes in about six inches. I myself saw that there was no possibility of its being slipped back into the handle. As it is drawn sharply out by the Sheikh, he wets his forefinger with his tongue, and instantly places it on the wound, which then closes, leaving only a scar,

but there is no sign of blood or inflammation. I was unable on this occasion to remain behind and satisfy myself on the subject, but the Sheikh and his disciples evidently took umbrage at our refusal to see all they were prepared to show, and attributed it probably to scepticism, though, in fact, a too vivid belief in the reality of the performance on the part of some of our party was what so abruptly terminated our visit.

I asked the Sheikh, however, to come and see me on the following day, which he did, and I had a long and interesting conversation with him. He said that from early youth he had been trained to intense concentration and prayer, and repeated to me the forms of invocation by which both Allah and the Sheikh Bedawi could be approached. Partially closing his eyes and lowering his voice to a whisper, he pronounced these formulas, the breath becoming longer and lower until it was almost imperceptible, and the whole frame being apparently at an extreme tension. The sentences were constantly and almost automatically repeated. Rousing himself, after he had shown me the manner of invocation, he said that had he gone on a little longer he would have fallen into a trance; that trances thus induced were common to him, and that while he was in them he could become conscious of the presence of the Sheikh Bedawi and converse with him; that he repeatedly did so, but that it was never permitted to him to divulge what had passed. He said it was not absolutely necessary to be a Mohammedan in order to be a member of the order, but a profound and entire belief in the Sheikh Bedawi as the source of their power was essential; and as Bedawi, while on earth, had been a devout Moslem practically, none but Moslems ever sought to belong to the order. At the same time, he admitted that such practices were not recognised by the Koran, and they are, indeed, opposed to its spirit; but he claimed that Allah permitted them for exceptional purposes, and that the object of the order was to prove the truth of the miracles recorded of great prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, and Christ, all of whom could perform similar wonderful works; and persons doubting the truth of this could be convinced that they were possible in old times by seeing what was possible now. If, however, they were attempted even by members of the order from any other than a religious motive, the protection of Bedawi would be withdrawn, and they would certainly prove fatal. Nor could other than holy and devout men, though members of the order, exercise these gifts with safety. It was necessary also to bind oneself by oath to the seven nomothetical precepts of Mohammedanism. When a man decided to become a member of the order, and had taken the vows, the powers of the Bedawi were imparted by the process of writing on a piece of sugar a formula, which he wrote for me thus:—

The handwritten formula consists of several lines of symbols. The top line starts with a cross-like symbol (an asterisk with four points), followed by a horizontal line, then a series of circles (some solid, some hollow), and ends with a star-like symbol. The second line contains a series of circles and lines, some resembling the number '3'. The third line starts with a star-like symbol, followed by the number '60', then a series of vertical lines, and ends with a star-like symbol.

Then, dissolving the sugar in water, and drinking it, henceforward the saliva had a special healing virtue, and could stay the flow of blood. He was enabled to exercise a great power in many ways over the human organism, and spent his time curing people who came to him.

At the same time he was fully alive to the value of money, as I afterwards discovered, and both he and his followers lived on what they could obtain by the exercise

of their art. He did not profess to have any power of telling the future, but said that he could do far more wonderful things than we had seen, or than he had intended to show us; that the special strength of the Bedawis lay in their power of dealing with serpents and with fire, and that he had a furnace which, when it was heated red hot, was entered by his disciples, who suffered no more than Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego did under similar circumstances thousands of years ago.

Altogether, the Sheikh was a calm and earnest man, apparently believing profoundly in all he said, and with none of the airs of an impostor. When it is remembered that various orders claiming to exercise powers of this description have existed in the East from all time, that at the present day they number forty or fifty thousand in Islam alone, not counting innumerable dervishes with various pretensions, while as fakirs and devotees they swarm both in Hindoo and Buddhist countries; and when we find their gifts believed in and their powers accepted by the masses in all these countries, it is not to be wondered at if the leaders believe in themselves, or have some ground for so doing.

The foundation of Christianity, as of every other religion, is the supernatural, and those who deny the possibility of powers existing in the present day identical with those which they point to in the past, as evidences of the truth of their own religion, place a weapon in the hands of sceptics of which the latter will not be slow to avail themselves.

APPARITIONS AND THE POWER OF EVOCATION.

The *Daily Chronicle* of last Friday gave the public the following lengthy article about Apparitions:—

SPIRITS BEFORE OUR EYES.*

Philosophical observers have declared that everybody more or less believes in ghosts. Books have not been wanting to foster this view, and the activity of modern Spiritualists is well known. Mr. Harrison is, we believe, a distinguished member of this body, and he seeks to make converts by gathering together a collection of wonderful stories such as the world calls supernatural. Many of them are old, culled from Mrs. Crowe's *Night Side of Nature*, Mr. Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, and other equally well-known sources; but a few possess comparative novelty for the general reader, who does not happen to have enjoyed what Mr. Varley calls the "satisfaction" of seeing an apparition. With a book of this kind quotation will be better than comment, and we shall, therefore, select a few of the stories, the first being narrated by a clergyman nearly two hundred years ago:—

Rev. Sir,—Being informed that you are writing about spectres and apparitions, I take the freedom, though a stranger, to send you the following relation.

Mary, the wife of John Goffe, of Rochester, being afflicted with a long illness, removed to her father's house at West Mulling, which is about nine miles distant from her own; there she died, June 4th, 1691.

The day before her departure she grew impatiently desirous to see her two children, whom she had left at home to the care of a nurse. She prayed her husband to hire a horse, for she must go home and die with her

children. When they persuaded her to the contrary, telling her she was not fit to be taken out of the bed, nor able to sit on horseback, she entreated them, however, to try. "If I cannot sit," said she, "I will lie all along upon the horse, for I must go to see my poor babies."

A minister who lives in the town was with her at ten o'clock that night, to whom she expressed good hopes in the mercies of God, and a willingness to die.

"But," said she, "it is my misery that I cannot see my children."

Between one and two o'clock in the morning she fell into a trance. One Widow Turner, who watched with her that night, says that her eyes were open and fixed, and her jaw fallen; she put her hand upon her mouth and nostrils, but could perceive no breath; she thought her to be in a fit, and doubted whether she were alive or dead. The next day this dying woman told her mother that she had been at home with her children. "That is impossible," said the mother, "for you have been here in bed all the while." "Yes," replied the other, "but I was with them last night when I was asleep."

The nurse at Rochester, Widow Alexander by name, affirms and says that she will take her oath of it before a magistrate, and receive the sacrament upon it, that a little before two o'clock that morning she saw the likeness of the said Mary Goffe come out of the next chamber (where the elder child lay in a bed by itself, the door being left open), and stood by her bedside for about a quarter of an hour; the younger child was there lying by her; her eyes moved, and her mouth went, but she said nothing. The nurse, moreover, says she was perfectly awake; it was then daylight, being one of the longest days in the year. She sat up in her bed, and looked steadfastly upon the apparition; at that time she heard the bridge clock strike two, and awhile after said, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what art thou?" Thereupon the appearance removed, and went away; she slipped on her clothes and followed, but what became of it she cannot tell. Then, and not before, she began to be grievously affrighted, and went out of doors, and walked upon the wharf (the house is just by the river side) for some hours, only going in now and then to look at the children. At five o'clock she went to a neighbour's house, and knocked at the door, but they would not rise; at six she went again; then they rose, and let her in. She related to them all that had passed; they would persuade her she was mistaken or dreamt; but she confidently affirmed, "If ever I saw her in all my life, I saw her this night."

One of those to whom she made the relation (Mary, the wife of J. Sweet) had a messenger, who came from Mulling that forenoon, to let her know her neighbour Goffe was dying, and desired to speak with her; she went over the same day, and found her just departing. The mother, amongst other discourses, related to her how much her daughter had longed to see her children, and said she had seen them.

This brought to Mrs. Sweet's mind what the nurse had told her that morning; for, till then, she had not thought fit to mention it, but disguised it rather as the woman's disturbed imagination.

The substance of this I had related to me by John Carpenter, the father of the deceased, the next day after the burial. July 2, I fully discussed the matter with the nurse, and two neighbours, to whose house she went that morning.

Two days after, I had it from the mother, the minister that was with her in the evening, and the woman who sat up with her last night. They all agree in the same story, and every one helps to strengthen the others' testimony.

* *Spirits before Our Eyes*, By William H. Harrison, 33, British Museum-street, London.

They all appear to be sober, intelligent persons, far enough off from designing to impose a cheat upon the world, or to manage a lie; and what temptation they should lie under for so doing I cannot conceive.

THOMAS TILSON,

Minister of Aylesworth, near Maidstone, in Kent.

It is somewhat satisfactory to learn that in nearly all the cases quoted the primary cause of the effect was the love of the dying person for the observer who saw the apparition. At a meeting of the Psychological Society, on May 17, 1877, Mr. Gordon, who is put down as an anti-Spiritualist, said:—

He wished to narrate an occurrence which had taken place among persons known to him, and he had no doubt as to the authenticity of the facts. Some years ago two sisters living in Scotland were married, and lived within a few miles of each other; one had been married to a gentleman of considerable property who farmed his own land, and the other to a minister of the Church of Scotland. One morning, in harvest-time, Mrs. A— appeared at breakfast in a state of mental disturbance, and told her husband that she wished he would lend her one of his horses, as she desired to go to see her sister. This being inconvenient in the middle of harvest-time, he replied that he could not spare one, and asked why she wished to go. She then said that she had dreamt she was in church listening to her brother-in-law preaching; she heard him divide his sermon into “firstly” and “secondly,” and at last he came to “thirdly;” at that moment her father—who was dead—entered the church, and beckoned to the preacher to follow him; he then followed the figure out of the church. Upon this her husband lent her a horse, and when she arrived at the house of her sister she found the blinds all down, and the servant said, “How could you possibly have heard the awful news so soon?” “What news?” The servant replied, “Don’t you know that master is lying dead upstairs?” He had been found in his study stone dead; he had been writing his sermon, and after getting through two-thirds of it he stopped when he reached “thirdly.” These facts were well known to all the relatives of the deceased clergyman.

The following is introduced as a most disagreeable dream, which is accounted for by the inference that the thoughts of the deceased were taking symbolical form, and were not of an elevated character:—

A sailor in Her Majesty’s ship *V—* writes:—“A strange thing happened once in our ship that I cannot account for. W. S. was the cleanest man on board the *V—*. One night he woke, feeling uncomfortable; he turned out of his hammock, took off his flannel, and found it full of vermin. He rolled it up, laid it aside, put on a clean one, and turned in again. Soon after, feeling again uncomfortable, he got up, took off his flannel, and found that one in the same state as the other. I was sleeping in the next hammock to him; we were fast friends, so he roused me, and showed me the flannel full of live vermin. I started back; I would never have believed it if I had not seen it, knowing how clean the fellow was. After that he put on a cotton shirt, and turned into his hammock again; he would not try another flannel one. Next morning, at mess, he was telling his mates what had happened. All laughed at him. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘if you won’t believe me I’ll prove it to you,’ and went to fetch the flannels, rolled together and put by themselves. He opened them in the presence of all, and, to his great astonishment, found them perfectly clean; upon which all his mates laughed

more than ever at him. He said nothing more, but just made a note of the date. Two months after letters came to the ship. I and W—, being stokers, were in the boiler together. A mate came and sang out, ‘A letter for you, K—,’ ‘All right,’ said I, and took it. ‘And one for me?’ said W—. ‘Yes, edged with black.’ ‘My father is dead,’ he said; and opening the letter, found it contained the news that his father had died suddenly on the very night he had noted down two months before.”

The next is the case of the spirit of a man still in the body, seen by two witnesses at once, which is somewhat rare.

Mr. John Bonnell was a commoner of Queen’s College, Oxford; he was remarkable in his person and gait, and had a particular manner of holding up his gown behind, so that to any one who had but once seen him, he might be known by his back as easily as by his face.

On Sunday, November 18, 1750, at noon, Mr. Ballard, who was then of Magdalene College, and myself were talking together at Parker’s door. I was then waiting for the sound of the trumpet for dinner, and suddenly Mr. Ballard cried out, “Dear me, oh! who is that coming out of your college?” I looked, and saw, as I supposed, Mr. Bonnell, and replied, “He is a gentleman of our house, and his name is Bonnell; he comes from Stanton Harcourt.” “Why, bless me!” said Mr. Ballard, “I never saw such a face in all my life!” I answered slightly, “His face is much the same as it always is; I think it is a little more inflamed and swelled than it is sometimes; perhaps he has buckled his band too tight; but I should not have observed it if you had not spoken.” “Well,” said Mr. Ballard again, “I never shall forget him as long as I live;” and seemed to be much disconcerted and frightened.

This figure I saw without any emotion or suspicion; it came down the quadrangle, came out at the gate, and walked up the High-street: we followed it with our eyes till we came to Catherine-street, where it was lost.

The trumpet then sounded, and Mr. Ballard and I parted, and I went into the hall, and thought no more of Mr. Bonnell.

In the evening the prayers of the chapel were desired for one who was in a very sick and dangerous condition. When I came out of the chapel I inquired of one of the scholars, James Harrison, in the hearing of several others who were standing before the kitchen fire, who it was that was prayed for, and was answered, “Mr. Bonnell, senior.” “Bonnell, senior!” said I, with astonishment; “what is the matter with him? he was very well to-day, for I saw him go out to dinner.” “You are very much mistaken,” answered the scholar, “for he has not been out of his bed for some days.” I then asserted more positively that I had seen him, and that a gentleman was with me who saw him too.

This came presently to the ears of Dr. Fothergill, who had been my tutor. After supper he took me aside, and questioned me about it, and said he was very sorry I had mentioned the matter so publicly, for Mr. Bonnell was dangerously ill. I replied I was very sorry too, but I had done it innocently; and the next day Mr. Bonnell died.

Inquiry was made of Mr. Ballard afterwards, who related the part I was witness too, in the same manner as I have now related it; adding that I told him the gentleman was one Mr. Bonnell, and that he came from Stanton Harcourt.

From this century-old story we come to one told four years ago by the late Prince Emile de Sayn-Wittgenstein,

who was in attendance upon the Emperor of Russia during the Russo-Turkish war of 1878. He said:—

I had, about a year and a half ago, tried in vain to convert a young lady to the belief that, under special conditions, her spirit might quit her body and act independently of it. After repeated requests she at last consented to give me a glove she had worn, and by which I hoped to establish between us the mesmeric *rapport* necessary for the experiment.

We parted that same day, and as soon as circumstances allowed it, I set to work, late in the evening, at an hour when I supposed her to be asleep: taking the glove in my left hand and a pencil in my right hand. I evoked her, concentrating all my will upon her. Presently I felt myself controlled, and began to write different answers to the questions I was mentally uttering. We were at that time separated from each other by about half a day's travel.

I continued the same practice for several weeks, during which the glove gradually lost its power, and the manifestations grew weaker and weaker, and finally they ceased altogether.

I afterwards ascertained that she had often dreamt of me very clearly, and that she even remembered having once seen me writing at my table. Her description of my dress and of the room I occupied, answered exactly to the reality. She also confirmed several facts and episodes of her private life, the particulars of which I had obtained in the way described.

Every time her spirit answered my call I felt a pleasant sort of shiver running down my back, while a sort of dim circular light, about as big as a plate, and of a pale yellowish hue, appeared moving to and fro near the ceiling. This light came with the first stroke of my pencil, and disappeared as soon as the writing stopped. Sometimes the pencil gave a violent jerk, and the writing ceased abruptly, placidly to be resumed some moments later, as if nothing had occurred. This was explained to me as the result of outward disturbances having momentarily interrupted the sleep.

But the strangest of all these facts is the following. I am unable to explain it, and would be thankful to any person who might undertake to do so.

I was tracing, under the usual control, an account of a ball, where she pretended to have been the evening before; she describing, in her merry girlish way, her pretty dress, the persons who had talked to her, making malicious remarks about them, and finally accusing herself of having been out of temper, and of having sat in a corner, giving saucy answers, and refusing to dance. Several months afterwards I met her sister, who informed me that on that very evening my spiritual correspondent had been absent on a week's excursion, but that she, *the sister*, had actually been at the ball, her dress, her behaviour, in one word every particular of her narrative answering exactly the details I had received under control.

After describing an interview with "The Prophet Elijah," now roaming through Kent in an artistic white dress of sheepskins, Mr. Harrison says "he is one of those psychic sensitives who are misunderstood by the doctors, the police, the world, and themselves, and who are born to suffer. I heard that originally he was an artist, and that his native place was Hastings."

In connection with a visitation by the spirit of a drowned man, some strange remarks are made on the subject of the clothing of ghosts.

Spiritualists who have seen much of materialisation

stances know that spirits have a remarkable power of duplicating, not only the forms of their mediums, but their clothes; and the Count de Bullet, of the Hotel de l'Athenée, Rue Scribe, Paris, has had special experience of this phenomenon. Still, there is no creation of new matter. The law of the conservation of energy is not broken. Recent experiments, initiated by Mr. Charles Blackburn, of Didsbury, and carried out by the Research Committee of the National Association of Spiritualists, have shown by means of self-recording weighing apparatus that, while the duplicate form of the medium and his clothes is being materialised in one place, the weight of his normal body and clothes is diminishing in another, and *vice versa*. There is a play of forces between the two, underlying the vulgarly-known phenomena of molecular physics. The apparatus used consisted of a suspended cabinet, in which the medium was placed, and any alterations in his weight, while the manifestations occurred near to or some yards from the cabinet, were recorded by means of the rise and fall of a pencil, which drew a line upon a vertical rotating drum driven by clockwork. Thus the weight of the medium at any given time was automatically recorded, and the variations in his weight were considerable.

My opinion is, that at the time Captain Ridd saw the spirit and clothes of his brother, a diminution took place in the weight of the normal clothes and the body of the recently-drowned man at the bottom of the sea near the East Indies. I also think it probable that when the apparition disappeared, the distant clothes and body resumed their normal weight, as in the crucial experiments connected with materialisation just described. But spirits have one or two other methods of making themselves and their dresses visible, and I think that the various methods can be identified and classified.

But there are further wonders in store, for Mr. Harrison contends that the evidence he possesses shows that—

It is by no means necessary that a man should lie upon his dying bed, or should pass through the gates of death into the eternal world, before his spirit can travel hither and thither at will. When his body is in a state of sleep or trance his spirit can sometimes travel without his being any the worse for the achievement, but he does not usually remember in his normal condition what he has seen with spiritual eyes, nor are such spiritual powers under experimental control when thus exercised spontaneously. Nevertheless, under control they can be brought. Mesmerism furnishes the means.

The present volume, of which our readers will be able to judge by the foregoing extracts, is only the opening of the subject; and Mr. Harrison promises a second in the autumn, showing that the phenomena of apparitions continue in all their distinctive lines months and years after the death and burial of the earthly coverings.

MURDER OF MRS. HULL.

MRS. HULL, the wife of a physician in New York, and a well-known Spiritualist, has been foully murdered. Some years ago she lived in England, and was presented to the Queen by the American Minister.

At half-past nine on Monday evening, June 23rd, Police-officers Mitchell and Files, of Station Five, and Officer Wood, of Station Three, Boston, arrested Castine Cox, a mulatto, thirty-two years of age, at the Ebenezer Methodist Church, No. 85, West Concord-street, on the

charge of the murder of Mrs. Jane DeForest Hull, fifty-eight years of age, at her home, No. 140, West Forty-second-street, New York, on the night of June 10th. Early on Monday evening Lieut. Johnson, of Station Five, received a despatch from Superintendent Adams, stating that the murderer of Mrs. Hull would be at the church above mentioned some time during the evening. A good description of the man was also given, which description had been furnished by the pawnbroker who had lent money on some of the stolen goods a few days previously. Officers Mitchell and Files were sent into the church in plain clothes, while Officers Driscoll, Misner, and Hunt, of the same station, surrounded the building on the outside. The man they wanted was easily discovered, sitting near the back of the church, and just before the close of the meeting the officers entered the church and arrested Cox in his seat. The prisoner made no resistance, but at once followed the officers out. He was taken to Station Five, where he was searched. A gold watch, with hunting cases and with the letters J. DeF. H. written on the inside of the back case, and a valuable ring, both of which were recognised as the ones stolen from Mrs. Hull, were found on his person.

Upon being shown these damaging proofs of his guilt, Cox broke down, and owned the whole transaction. He says that on the evening of June 10th he came home at about six o'clock, and at once retired to his room, where he lay down until about ten o'clock, when he crept out of the house without disturbing any one. He had a key which he thought would open the front door of Dr. Hull's house, but was unable to make it work. He then tried the windows, and succeeded in raising one, through which he entered. A light was procured, with which he crept softly along to Mrs. Hull's room, but as he went to open the door he thought he heard a man snore, which caused him to quickly blow out his light. He then entered the room in the darkness, but as he neared the bed Mrs. Hull awoke, and asked, "Who is there?" to which he answered, "The Doctor," meaning her husband; she evidently hardly recognised the voice, and put out her hands to feel his face, which he avoided by leaning backwards.

A bottle of *eau de cologne* was lying on a stand near the bed, which he seized and dashed into her face, at the same time bringing one hand down over her mouth to keep her from crying out. He then, while he was holding her in that position, struck a light, but the alcohol on her face ignited, burning her severely. He smothered the flames, and kept her from screaming by the aid of a heavy shawl which was lying near at hand, which he held down over her face. She soon became more quiet, upon which he bound and gagged her, and then took all the valuables he could find and ran out by the way of the front door. He says he did not intend to kill her, only to quiet her, and steal what he could. Upon leaving the house he went to Boston, where he stopped at the house of Mrs. Diggs, No. 12, Grove-street. Had he not been arrested, his intention was to have gone to Providence, and have sought for a position as cook on some foreign-bound vessel. He was born in Powhattan County, Ky., and claims to have served three years in the Union army during the late war. He does not look like a very desperate character.

In consequence of the increasing circulation of *The Spiritualist* the last two numbers were sold out within three days after publication, but a few "returns" have since come back from the trade. Readers who wish for complete volumes should be careful not to part with their copies. Henceforth, back numbers may not be so readily obtainable as in the past.

INFORMATION FOR INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES AT HOME.

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

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

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

1. Let arrangements be made that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.
2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit in subdued light, but sufficient to allow everything to be seen clearly, round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is of little importance. Any table will do.
3. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is weakening.
4. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature.
5. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first indications will probably be table-tilting or raps.
6. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion let one person only speak; he should talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three raps be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.
7. Possibly symptoms of other forms of mediumship, such as trance or clairvoyance, may develop; the better class of messages, as judged by their religious and philosophical merits, usually accompany such manifestations rather than the more objective phenomena. After the manifestations are obtained, the observers should not go to the other extreme and give way to an excess of credulity, but should believe no more about them or the contents of messages than they are forced to do by undeniable proof.
8. Should no results be obtained at the first two *séances* because no medium chances to be present, try again with other sitters. A medium is usually an impulsive individual, very sensitive to mesmeric influences.

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