

# The Spiritualist,

AND JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

The Oldest Newspaper connected with Spiritualism in Great Britain.

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## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF BREATHING NITROUS OXIDE.

WE have received the following letter in connection with the interesting question raised by Dr. Wyld of the psychological influence of anæsthetics:—

To the Editor of “*The Spiritualist*.”

SIR,—Since the publication of Dr. Wyld’s article in your last number, a remarkable statement has been made to me by a gentleman to whom I had just administered an anæsthetic. Knowing my patient (an eminent literary reviewer and critic) to be of great intelligence, I asked him immediately on recovery to describe any sensations or impressions he might have experienced. With considerable earnestness and excitement he said (in nearly his own words), “I thought I had in some way, you know, got to the bottom and behind everything, saw the cause and reason of things, and understood the mystery of life and the great secret that all have sought. And I called to others to put in writing what it was, and how I found it out, but I now remember nothing more than this.”

WALTER H. COFFIN.

Junior Athenæum Club, Piccadilly, W., December 28th, 1879.

The above sensations may be compared with those of Sir Humphrey Davy, who made a long series of experiments upon himself, to ascertain the effects of breathing nitrous oxide. About one of his earlier experiments he says:—

“I gradually began to lose the perception of external things, and a vivid and intense recollection of some former experiments passed through my mind, so that I called out, ‘What an amazing concatenation of ideas!’”

In one of his later experiments Sir Humphrey Davy experienced the following sensations:—

“I began to respire twenty quarts of unmingled nitrous oxide. A thrilling extending from the chest to the extremities was almost immediately produced. I felt a sense of tangible extension highly pleasurable in every limb; my visible impressions were dazzling, and apparently magnified; I heard distinctly every sound in the room, and was perfectly aware of my situation.\* By degrees, as the pleasurable sensations increased, I lost all connection with external things; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through my mind, and were connected with words in such a manner, as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. I existed in a world of newly connected and newly modified ideas. I theorised—I imagined that I made discoveries. When I was awakened from this semi-delirious trance by Dr. Kinglake, who took the bag from my mouth, indignation and pride were the first feelings produced by the sight of the persons about me. My emotions were enthusiastic and sublime; and for a minute I walked round the room, perfectly regardless of what was said to me. As I recovered my former state of mind I felt an inclination to communicate the discoveries I had made during the experiment. I endeavoured to recall the

\* In all these experiments, after the first minute my cheeks became purple.—H. D.

ideas; they were feeble and indistinct; one collection of terms, however, presented itself; and with the most intense belief and prophetic manner, I exclaimed to Dr. Kinglake, '*Nothing exists but thoughts!—the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains!*' About three minutes and a half only had elapsed during this experiment, though the time, as measured by the relative vividness of the collected ideas, appeared to me much longer."

On the assumption that anæsthetics occasionally separate the soul from the body, the above is an example how entrance into the spiritual state suddenly transformed one of the greatest physicists of modern times into an idealist.

Sir Humphrey Davy did not enter this exalted state on the first occasion of breathing nitrous oxide. He frequently breathed the gas, and felt pleasure in so doing; he gradually increased the quantity inhaled until he reached the maximum in the foregoing experiment; consequently, it would seem that a long series of trials with each individual is necessary in order to ascertain by experiment whether the spirit can be temporarily separated from the body by the use of nitrous oxide. The after effects of the experiment just quoted were pleasing; Sir Humphrey Davy was in a happy, lively frame of mind all the rest of the day.

Nitrous oxide has not the same effect upon all who breathe it. Some experience no pleasurable sensations; others acquire a headache; others again indulge in lively muscular exercise. Mr. Wynne, M.P., was one of the first to try its effects; he inhaled seven quarts of it without much effect upon his specially stubborn organism. One James Thomson found it to cause pains of the day before in his back and knees to return to him, and was quite sure of the accuracy of his observations on this point. When nitrous oxide is used before dental operations it is breathed through a large orifice, and the patient quickly passes, as a general rule, into a state of insensibility. To experience its exhilarating effects it must be breathed through a small orifice. Sir Humphrey Davy found that the more he breathed it the more did his susceptibility to its influence increase, in which respect its action upon a sensitive resembles repeated applications of the power of mesmerism. During the state of psychical excitement he found the light of the sun to be painful to him, in which respect his state bore a resemblance to trance-mediumship. In pursuit of knowledge Sir Humphrey Davy intoxicated himself in eight minutes by drinking sufficient wine for the purpose; he discovered no short cut to heaven that way, but acquired a splitting headache, and experienced sensations altogether unlike those produced by nitrous oxide. It is not certain whether when under the maximum influence of this gas he did not see spirits and hear them talk, but was afraid to say so, for he owns, in the statement already quoted, to having seen something, and heard words in an abnormal way, probably by clairaudience. Davy says of the after effects of breathing the gas—"I slept much less than usual, and previous to sleep my mind was long occupied with visible imagery." With a surplusage of oxygen in the blood this result is natural;

much carbonic acid (a retarding influence to ordinary combustion) in the blood promotes sleep.

A wild speculation—wild because dogmatically advanced without power of appeal to proved facts—has been rising into notice of late, to the effect that only those individuals who win it by the character of their lives here are immortal; the rest die out eternally. The advocates of this doctrine are welcome to the following new speculation, equally wild. Some people under the influence of nitrous oxide find all their ideas mixed up in wild confusion, as if barriers had broken down inside their heads. Others find their ideas to flow with crystalline brilliancy, and in true logical sequence. Can it be that the former have no developed spirit to set free, but depend for existence upon an earthly body, whilst the others are fitted to enter a future life? Spiritualism gives facts somewhat against the "conditional immortality" doctrine. Murderers sometimes haunt houses long after the death of their bodies; and if they survive the tremendous shock of the death of the body, very strong evidence would be required to bring conviction that they are annihilated by something else later on. Moreover, spirits of bad men have in all ages frequently announced that they are growing better, are rising higher, and are much assisted in their upward course by the prayers of mortals for their advancement, showing that the Catholic system of praying for the dead had some origin in truth.

If the spirit of man can be separated from the body by the judicious use of anæsthetics, more especially by nitrous oxide, which, when carefully prepared from nitrate of ammonia, is to most people harmless and pleasant to breathe, a new and easy branch of experimental psychical investigation has been opened up. Our opinion is that Dr. Wyld is probably right in his ideas upon this point, because in cases of natural trance, also of approaching death, and of mesmeric sleep, we have already three different causes of the proved occasional separation of the spirit from the body to such an extent that it can manifest its presence at a place far distant from its subdued and helpless mortal envelope. Why, then, should not a fourth method of entrancing the body produce a like result, and for the time being transform highly educated and cultured men into inspirational mediums? Several dentists interested in Spiritualism are experienced in the use of nitrous oxide, and if they try psychical experiments therewith, they should, just at the moment when they appear to have separated the spirit of a sensitive from his body, attempt to control that sensitive by mesmerism, and order his spirit to communicate through a trance, clairvoyant, or physical medium who is then sitting at a *séance* in some place far distant. *Rapport*, in the form of previous personal acquaintance, between the sensitive and the distant medium may possibly be a necessary condition to ensure success, for the law of natural affinity exercises a powerful influence in most spiritual visitations.

Experimental research at *The Spiritualist* office in Bloomsbury has been stopped for a month or two past, to give us leisure to issue new books wanted by the movement. When they are resumed, nitrous

oxide will be used in the physical part of some of the experiments to be tried, so perhaps it may be a little used in psychical experiments such as have been suggested in this article; but those who would take up the latter branch of research at once would confer a public benefit. It is much to be regretted that no mesmerists are trying experiments much needed to elucidate spiritual problems, and that they do not appear to understand their necessity.

## Correspondence.

### THE NEW YEAR.—A GREETING.

STR,—This sentence in the *Medium* has fastened itself upon me, and I would it had, or would now do, upon all Spiritualists, and all earnest workers for the cause, even if working in different grooves, and appealing to different classes of thinkers:—

“We are learning to love one another, and we thank most heartily the many brothers and sisters who have sent us their good wishes.”

I sat up and heard the old year tolled out and the new year rung in. Sadly on the still night lingered the first sounds; merrily did the second waken the echoes and enliven the darkness. Do our best spirits surround us at such times? And as we look back into the pathos of the past, do we look forward with a glow of new hope for the future?—hope golden with inspiration for a new life, in which old mistakes are buried, or remembered only as beacon fingers to point to a nobler way? That old year 1879 was a sad one. Evil seemed to hover over us the year through. “Hard times” they were, indeed, to many, and it seemed often that instead of chastening into nobler life they hardened the soul into adamant, and froze up all the springs of charity. And yet, amidst it all, what love has been discovered in our midst! There has been a union among many for good works which has been as surprising as it has been pleasing, and full of augury for the future.

We have worked together, and, I trust, in the dark days about Christmas, have learnt to love one another. Let us now all take hands and wish each and all a “Happy New Year” and “God-speed” to all. Yes, only as God enters the shadowy future with us will there be light even to the righteous, and a peace that is past understanding.

That is a sad poem of Buchanan’s in this month’s *Contemporary Review*, unless we look upon it as a beacon light which discovers God and the future, for which poor Clifford yearned, yet failed to discover. The spirit of a little child was all that was wanted to ennoble the “pale professor.”

Shall “Spiritualism” this year bear the torch into the dark mazes of materialism and discover what no analysis or curious scrutiny will ever find? Surely the mission is a grand one, and too big with the “potency of life” for any small elements of discord to enter! On the threshold of the year let us recognise *all* workers, and wish each other God-speed in our several ways, for they all lead to

“One far off divine event,  
“And hear at times a sentinel  
That moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the vast of space  
Among the worlds, that all is well.”

MORELL THEOBALD.

### A SEANCE IN NEWCASTLE.

To the Editor of the “*Northern Daily Express*,” Dec. 27, 1879.

SIR,—Your correspondent, who appropriately designates himself “Darkness,” has written a burlesque description of a *séance* at which he was not present, and of which he apparently knows nothing. In that respect, however, he is only in the position of all unbelievers in the phenomena, as I have not yet met with one careful and extensive investigator who does not at least admit that many of the phenomena which occur at *séances* are genuine, and that they have not been satisfactorily accounted for by reference to recognised natural laws. The facts are that at a *séance* held in Newcastle last week there were present two well-known scientific men, nine well-known local ladies and gentlemen, and myself. The two scientific gentlemen carefully examined the enclosure, which formed a perfect closed cabinet for the reception of the medium, and expressed themselves quite satisfied with

the arrangement, stating that it appeared to be the most complete arrangement for the test they had witnessed. The cabinet is formed in the corner of a room; its area is three and a half feet by three feet. It extends entirely from the floor to the ceiling, and is completely enclosed by a framework of wood, covered with a strong closely-woven gauze netting, which is firmly fixed to the wooden framework. The recess is closed by a door, and the door is fastened from the outside by two strong screws in such a manner as to render it impossible by any ordinary means for a person enclosed within the cabinet to free himself without damaging the structure in such a way as to be at once apparent to any ordinary examiner. So secure is the enclosure that I challenge any conjurer to release himself from it without doing manifest and easily discovered damage to the framework by which he is enclosed. At a few minutes past eleven the medium entered the recess, and the door was closed and secured from the outside by the scientific gentlemen, who expressed themselves as entirely satisfied with the conditions. We sat in a semicircle, a scientific stranger being at one end of the semicircle, and myself at the other end. No visitor was nearer the enclosure than seven feet, and the majority of the sitters were from eight to ten feet from the closed recess. The enclosure was covered by a dark curtain in close proximity to it. The light during the whole *séance* was such that I could see with ease every person present in the room, and could at any time read the dial of my watch. The *séance* continued for upwards of two hours, and for the first three-quarters of an hour the time was occupied by conversation and singing. At twelve o’clock the curtain was gradually opened, and a female figure of small adult size made its appearance. It was draped very profusely in white raiment, and had a large greyish-white shawl over her shoulders. This form professed to be a departed friend of a gentleman present. She shook hands with several of the visitors, and embraced one of the ladies present. The form moved cautiously about the room, and was visible about fifteen minutes. She was succeeded by another female form of average size, who moved about with great energy and activity. She came hastily to me, took me vigorously by the arm, and led me within the curtained recess. When there she directed my hand to the screws fastening the door of the enclosure, and I found them tightly and firmly fixed, and the door secure. She then took the greater portion of the audience in succession within the curtain, and directed their attention to the screws and fastenings. This form was quickly succeeded by a diminutive child-like form about three and a half feet high, who spoke in a piping child-like voice. She spoke to almost every sitter in the room. She came towards me and took me to the centre of the room, when she desired me to kneel, and in that position I found that the child-like form before me was about six inches less than I was when kneeling. She patted my cheeks with warm, small hands, laid her right cheek against my right cheek, and afterwards directed me to place my hand on the floor, which I did, and upon it she placed her naked, soft, and child-like foot. She called several of the other sitters towards her, and repeated to them the little tokens of affection and good-will she had manifested towards me. The figure was with us about half an hour, and on retiring she was quickly succeeded by a tall female figure, who indicated that she intended to open the door of the recess and bring out the medium into the room. This she speedily proceeded to do by unscrewing the fastenings by which the door was secured and throwing them into the room. She then took the chair on which the medium sat, and pushed it into the centre of the room with the medium in it, and with the partially obscured form of the medium: when this had been accomplished the psychic figure became invisible. At this stage of the proceedings the two scientific gentlemen had engagements which required them to leave the room, and the result was that the latter part of the *séance* was somewhat disorganised, and the proceedings terminated. The remarkable features of this *séance* were that four different psychic forms appeared, walked, spoke, asked and answered questions, and displayed many of the specific peculiarities of ordinarily organised human beings, when no such normal human beings were in the room, and when it was impossible for the medium by normal means to escape from the recess and personate the figures. I am prepared to appeal to all who were present at this *séance* to corroborate my descriptions, and I challenge any twelve non-believers in the genuineness of the phenomena to produce similar results, under similar circumstances, at any time, and in any place, the audience to consist of the twelve unbelievers, myself, and a friend.—I am, &c., T. P. BARKAS.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, December 25, 1879.

## APPARITIONS AND HAUNTED HOUSES.

THE following article from *The Standard* newspaper, was republished last Saturday in *Galignani's Messenger*, for the benefit of readers in France:—

THIS is the season for ghost stories. Have we not all in our childhood sat round the fire on a stormy winter's night when the wind moaned outside, as it seemed sometimes, with a human voice; when the dark corners of the room looked terribly black; and when a sudden flash from the logs showed us faces almost as scared as our own, while we listened with a fearful pleasure to some old-world ghost story, or it might be a modern tale of a visitor from the spirit world? And the winter time is the season for ghosts, though many of them wander about also in the summer. But in winter the spectre seems, as it were, to be in his element. It is in winter that the Gabriel-ratchet, or corpse-hounds, are heard yelling, as they career along in the clear spaces of the storm-swept sky. It is also in winter that the Bahr-Geist comes ofttest to warn the doomed descendant of an ancient race; and it is when leaves have fallen that strange lights flit about churchyards, and that footsteps are heard in old houses on stairs that echo to no mortal tread. "But all such things," the reader will say, "are dreams of the past. You are not going to ask us to believe that ghosts appear at the present day, that there are any haunted houses in our modern cities? Surely, sanitary improvements have frightened away the spectres of past times, and it would be a bold phantom who would not be scared by the railway whistles and other noises of civilisation." That may be true enough, and it is not our present concern to argue either for or against the possibility of the appearance of departed spirits. The controversy, which is an endless one, may be dismissed with the shrewd summary of Dr. Johnson. "It is wonderful," he said, "that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it, but all belief is for it." It may be interesting, however, at this season to glance at some old ghost stories, and see how, even at the present day, there are people—and sensible people too—who have, like Hamlet, seen more things than were dreamt of in Horatio's philosophy.

The most interesting class of spectres is, undoubtedly, that of family ghosts, and it may be said that the possession of one confers a certain air of respectability on a family. For your *parvenu* cannot manufacture a ghost, though he can order family portraits by the yard. And if he buys an old place and the pictures of the family who once lived there, not for him or his guests will the daughters of the ancient house descend from the canvases of Vandyke and walk the long corridors in the silent watches of the night. There is no trace, says Mr. Hannay, of the family ghost proper among the ancients; like heraldry, it is essentially feudal, and not classical; and we find such phantoms in very illustrious families. Is there not the *Weisse Frau*, a fatal "White Lady," of the Hohenzollerns, who walks the Schloss at Berlin as a warning that kings are mortal?

Frederick the Great's father exclaimed that he saw this ghost just before his death, and her appearance was reported at Aschaffenburg as heralding the decease of Queen Therese of Bavaria. "*Le Petit Homme Rouge*," of the Bourbons, has been immortalised by Béranger; nor would it be difficult to find other ghosts as illustrious. Of ghosts belonging to old families other than kingly races there are enough and to spare. Byron has told us of the Monk of Newstead, the "black friar" that sat "by Norman stone;" and in the same category may be placed "the Lad of Hilton," the spectre of a boy done to death by a baron of that name; the fatal drummer of the House of Airlie, whose ghostly tattoo presages death; the "Bodach Glas," or Grey Man, which belonged to more than one Scottish family; and the hereditary banshees of the M'Carthy, Butlers, and O'Neills. Such ghosts are like the Burg-Geist, or castle spectre, of many a German family; and whether or not they are, as Sir Thomas Browne says, the "wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils," certain it is that they were strenuously believed in by our forefathers, that faith in them exists at the present day, and that the remembrance of them will long live in legend and song.

No belief will ever die so hard as that in haunted houses. The poet has described such a habitation for us, when he wrote—

"O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The house is haunted."

Even in this prosaic age there are those who have had to acknowledge that in certain houses they have seen and heard things which are inexplicable by the ordinary laws of nature. Science has advanced, but it has not explained all that is now and again vouched for by the evidence of credible witnesses in more than one habitation in different parts of the country. There are still houses in existence, we are told, which cause an undefinable feeling of dread to all who cross the thresholds. There are others wherein footsteps are listened to in the silence of the night when no one treads, and bells are heard to ring, although no hand touches the ropes. There are rooms in ancient houses in which a strange shuddering sound seems to quiver through the air when any one enters them, as was the case in one reported some years ago near Enfield Chase. During the last few years there have been stories afloat concerning haunted houses in many parts of the country, and doubtless our readers could supply many more. To instance only a few of them, Sizergth Castle, in Westmoreland, had an uncanny reputation, and there was a house in a London square, of which the late Lord Lyttelton wrote as follows in *Notes and Queries* some years ago:—"It is quite true that there is a house in Berkeley-square said to be haunted, and long unoccupied on that account. There are strange stories about it into which the deponent cannot enter." There was also a house at Willington Dene, near Newcastle, which was closed under the belief that it was haunted. Strange doings, likewise, are reported to have taken place in old days in the rectory of Warblington; and was not Beckington Castle,

near Frome, at one time positively advertised as haunted? The old parsonage at East Lavington had the same reputation; the Easterton ghost at Fiddington, near the same place, was notorious; there was a luminous chamber in an old house near Taunton for many years, and stories that thrilled people were told of Stapleton Castle. There is a house in Coatham, in Yorkshire, in which a weeping woman is said to hang over the cradle of any child who sleeps in a particular room. Nay more, one babe over whom this weird visitor was seen to bend is reported to gaze into vacancy and see her still, though no other eyes are conscious of her presence. There is a house at Catford Bridge in which dwelt, until quite recently, a gentleman well known in London circles, and his wife and child. The wife saw a little man in a grey coat cross her bedroom one night and disappear, as it were, into the cheval glass. She said nothing at all about it, but a short time afterwards, in the same room, the nurse exclaimed that she had seen what must have been her father's ghost; she knew him, she said, "by his grey coat." Still nothing was said to the master of the house, until he, in his turn, called upstairs to his wife in a startled voice, and in his fright dropped the candlestick, exclaiming he had seen a man in grey going up the stairs. Here, then, were three independent witnesses of the same ghostly visitor, evidently one very like the ancestral spectre of the House of Douglas. But, indeed, authentic ghost stories—that is to say, occurrences vouched for by perfectly honest observers, who, at all events, really believe they saw that to which they bear witness—are endless, as are the tales of appearances to friends and relatives at a distance just as the soul was, presumably, leaving the body. There are a vast number, too, of what may be called historic ghost stories handed down in all the books on the subject: such, for example, are the vigil of the Earl of St. Vincent; the Beresford ghost and the withered wrist; the apparition of the dead Wynyard; the warning the second Lord Lyttelton is said to have received of his own death; and the account of the ghost in the Tower of London, where such a visitor, one would think, would not lack company, though there might be a scarcity of heads among them.

Opportunely at this season, when ghostly visitations are held to be more frequent than at other times, and when, at all events, there is generally more talk about them, Mr. Wirt Sikes, who is the United States Consul for Wales, comes forward to tell us, in a handsome volume, all about "British Goblins" (Sampson Low and Co.). It deals with Welsh fancies and ghosts, and, according to his account, that country is especially rich in folk-lore relating to such subjects. We are told that the laws which govern the Welsh spirit world are clear and explicit. For instance, a ghost out on a certain errand has no power of speech until first spoken to, which will be consoling to nervous people for whom the sight of a spectre is quite enough, without the additional unpleasantness of his conversation. It appears, further, that a ghost, like a good many other persons, does not like to be interrupted when speaking, though after it has finished you may ask

questions. These, again, must be strictly to the point, or the spectre will probably lose its temper, and a ghost in a rage seems to be capable of any villany. As to the ghosts of departed mortals we are told that they are very often those of suicides—a belief that prevails in many countries; indeed, a suicide is so certain to "walk" that it is the height of unkindness to bring him into a churchyard full of well-behaved gentlemen who desire to sleep quietly after "life's fitful fever." No, he should be put down at the cross-roads with his own particular stake; and even then we are told, "It is a brave man who will go to the grave of a suicide and play 'Hob y deri dando' on the Jew's harp without missing a note," though we are not informed whether it is that particular tune or the instrument on which it is played that makes the spectre so irritable. Household ghosts are commonly believed in by Welshmen, and we find, too, innumerable stories of transportation through the air. Among the most common of spectral animals is the "Dog of Darkness," which has its counterpart in the Mauthe Doog of the Isle of Man, and the Shock of the coast of Norfolk, while there are many grotesque ghosts addicted to aerial gymnastics and feats of horsemanship, who often appear with coloured faces, and who not uncommonly are of gigantic stature. It is due also to Wales to say that the devil has appeared there, as elsewhere, and we learn that there was even a tailor in Cardiganshire who "had the honour of making a suit of clothes for his sulphuric majesty," which is perhaps not surprising when we remember that, according to the proverb, the devil lives in the middle of Wales. As in other countries, too, compacts with the fiend are described, in which he invariably gets the worst of it, being usually outwitted by some trick that would not have deceived a child. More interesting still are the Cambrian death portents. The Welsh have the Banshee like the Irish, only under another name; and we are also told of the Aderyn y Corph, or Corpse Bird, which chirps at the door of the person about to die, while thunder and lightning are thought to portend the decease of the great man of the parish. Then, again, there is a female goblin of hideous ugliness, called the Gwrach y Rhibyn, another a groaning spirit, and then we come to the Tolacth, an ominous noise, imitating an earthly sound—it may be a voice, a footstep, or the ring of a bell—which always presages death or some great catastrophe. The Cwn Annwn of "Dogs of Hell" hunt in the upper sky, like the "Gabriel-ratchet," and, as Mr. Sikes justly remarks, no form of superstition has a wider popularity than this of spiritual hunting dogs, which may or may not be accompanied by a spectral huntsman. The Teuleu, or goblin death procession, heard and seen as an omen of a real funeral, and the corpse candle, are not peculiar to Wales; but the legend which assigns the origin of death portents to St. David, who prayed that his flock might have a sign of the immortality of the soul and another life by a presage of death, is of course peculiar to the principality of which he is the tutelary saint.

NEXT Monday evening Mr. W. Eglinton, the medium, will read a paper before the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism.

THE DOCTRINES OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND  
ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

THE following inspirational utterances were given through the organism of Mr. Thomas Lake Harris, while he was in a state of trance. They were taken down in shorthand, and published in his *Lyric of the Golden Age* :—

When the thunder-blast  
Devours the blossoms of the woods and fields,  
The budding fruitage and the ripened grain,  
And smites the sheepfold and destroys the lambs,  
The country mourns and chronicles the tale,  
And calls it ruin ;—but when madmen rave  
And curse and foam in pulpits, till the young  
Crowd fearfully and throng the anxious seats,  
And call for mercy from the wrath of God,  
And fear lest, unconverted, they should wake  
From their next slumber where the quivering heart  
Writhes 'neath the crushing heel as writhes the worm,  
Trampled by God Almighty ; when dread groans  
Rise from convulsing bosoms, and the brain  
Is scourged to madness ; when the mother goes  
And drowns her infants in the wintry flood,  
And immolates herself—dear mother-heart,  
Dear woman-heart, likest of all to Christ,  
Yet driven all desperate with mother fear—  
Seeking to save in heaven their tender souls,  
By taking up her home with spirits damned ;  
When young men cut their throats ; and maidens fall  
In terrible convulsions, that bring on  
Consumption and the grave, before the snow  
Has melted from the graveyard ; when despair  
Springs like a wild wolf at the dying man,  
And drives its fangs into the quivering breast,  
And howls through all the chamber of his pain,  
“Perdition, fierce perdition ;” when the home  
Is ransacked and the “unconverted” wife  
Called reprobate, and all one mass of sin,  
Because in her serene integrity  
She will not own herself a wretch all vile,  
And hurl her reason prostrate in the dust,  
Lay bare her secret soul, that snow-white flower,  
Crouch at the knees of sleek Depravity,  
And ask the prayers of Hypocritic Cant ;  
When life-long virtue is no shield against  
The public curse ; when crime and folly thrive,  
And fat themselves, with ignorance and hate,  
And Jesuitic artifice and craft,  
And keen sectarian malice, at the board,  
Heaped with the holocaust of blighted lives ;—  
O then men say, “This is the work of God,”  
Unthinking that a cruel wrong is done  
To body, heart and mind, to old and young,  
To old men on the confines of the grave,  
And unborn infants cursed within the womb.  
The men who do these things are ignorant ;  
The Christ of Love they crucify in each  
Poor tortured heart, that groans, and weeps, and dies  
In utter anguish ; and the Christ of Truth  
Is scourged and beaten ; in each brain the lash  
Of fear and hatred lacerates ; yet still  
These dread assassins know not what they do.

PROFESSOR ZOLLNER'S EXPERIMENTS.

AMONG the new books to be issued from *The Spiritualist* office is a richly-illustrated translation of the remarkable psychical experiments of Dr. F. Zollner, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Leipzig. The translation is now being made by Mr. C. C. Massey, which is a guarantee of careful and conscientious work ; Mr. William Crookes, to whom the last volume of the original work is dedicated, also Professor Zollner and his publisher at Leipzig, have given special facilities in matters of copyright, and the appearance of the book may be expected in some two months' time.

PSYCHIC ACTION FROM A DISTANCE.

(From the “*Religio-Philosophical Journal*,” Chicago,  
Dec. 13th, 1879.)

PROFESSOR CARPENTER related an incident last evening showing his mesmeric power. At one of his exhibitions at Paterson, N.J., he did not find a sufficient number of good subjects in the audience. He strongly wished that a man living in Passaic, six miles distant—the best subject that ever came under his notice—was present. The professor was astonished, about nine o'clock in the evening, to see this man, McAlstine by name, walk into the room and come upon the stage. He said he was at work that evening, and thought the professor called him. He was so strongly affected that he could work no longer, threw down his apron, and, finding himself too late for the train, walked or ran the six miles between Paterson and Passaic, so as to reach the former place in time.

A similar exhibition of this power of mind over mind, at a distance, was once made, to satisfy himself only, by Dr. S. B. Brittan, of New York, the distinguished writer and speaker on subjects related to spiritual science. He was in Connecticut, on the shore of the Sound, on a pleasant summer night, when the thought occurred to him to try the experiment of affecting the mind of a lady friend, then at her residence, thirty or forty miles distant. First ascertaining the hour, he brought her image mentally before him, and then created a mental picture—a scene of great natural beauty, with hills and vales, streams and waterfalls, and with certain features of the landscape altogether peculiar and striking. When next he met the lady her first question was, “Where were you on such an evening (naming the date and hour), and what were you seeing?” Being asked the reason of her question, the lady proceeded to describe the ideal landscape he had projected, detail by detail, with astonishing accuracy, and she told Dr. B. that in this scene she saw *him*—though she had not recently met or thought of him. She was a person, moreover, upon whom Dr. B. had never before tried any psychological or magnetic experiment.

Another case in the same gentleman's experience was more like this one of Carpenter's—for Dr. Brittan having travelled some distance to see a man in Waterbury, on some business errand, found, on reaching that city, that he had utterly forgotten his friend's name, and, a stranger there himself, he knew not where to look for him. In this dilemma he went to his hotel, shut himself in his room, and, recalling the personal appearance of his friend, concentrated his mind upon him, and willed him to come to that room. He had never before attempted this experiment upon this man. After the lapse of perhaps fifteen minutes, the door opened, and in walked the young man himself. His first inquiry was—“What do you want with me?” He said he was at work in his factory—one of the brass or rolling mills, we believe—when he felt himself called or drawn by Dr. Brittan to that hotel and that room, and finally the attraction became so strong that he threw down his tools, put on his coat, and obeyed the summons.—*Hartford (Ct.) Times.*

SPIRIT GUARDIANSHIP.

BY ISABEL BURTON.

A *Spiritualist* was sent to me yesterday, bearing the date, 19th Dec., 1879, containing an article signed "Scrutator." It contained a description of two incidents in my Syrian life, in which I was moved by some power to do things against my will, which had a useful object in the end. "Scrutator," however, says that my husband's farewell note to me reached me at our house, a mile out of Damascus. If that had been so, there would have been nothing extraordinary, but quite natural that I should have joined my husband at Beyrout, as there was only a quarter of an hour's ride between the Consulate and the house. But I was thirty miles away in a cottage at the top of a mountain in the Antilebanon, 5,000 feet above sea level, and quite out of reach of news or communication, save the three lines I received by a mounted messenger; and my difficulty was to descend the mountain, cross the country at dawn, to the probable spot where I could catch the diligence on the road. The power that moved me was therefore so much the stronger, and I think it is very well accounted for by "Scrutator." However, as I am a Catholic, and Catholicism is the *highest order* of Spiritualism, what to "Scrutator" is a force or spirit, is to me simply my angel guardian, and who is to me an *actual presence*, to whom I constantly refer during the day, and who directs everything I ask him to. When I sit with other Spiritualists they say they can see him. I can't, I only feel the power. However, I am quite sure of one thing, that nothing happens by luck or chance, but that we are moved by our good and bad angels, and that those who are in the habit of meditating or reflecting a good deal arrive at a proficiency in knowing and understanding their calls.

Triosto, December 26, 1879.

SPIRIT HANDS.

BY T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

SIR,—I have seen and felt the hands of several materialised spirits, and have now obtained, first a mould, and from that a cast of a beautiful hand, under conditions which I will briefly describe.

On the ninth of December last, at my house, in a *séance* at which were twelve persons, including Mr. W. Eglinton, after some powerful physical manifestations, I placed in the room a zinc pail of melted paraffin, and beside it one of cold water. Dr. Frieze held Mr. Eglinton's hands. After a few minutes, during which we heard splashes as of hands being dipped in the liquids, I found floating in the cold water moulds of two hands—one that of a child three or four years old, the other that of a full-grown woman. Plaster of Paris has been poured into both moulds, and the paraffin melted off with hot water. The child's hand is recognised by its mother, a lady from Cape Town, who was present at the *séance*. I have no doubt that the larger hand is a cast from that of my daughter, who departed this life in 1865. Its resemblance to mine is recognised by every one who has seen it. The texture of the skin and all the lines of the hand are very perfectly marked, and there is no room for doubt as to the method of its production. It is simply impossible that it can be other than what I have called it—a

cast from the hand of a materialised spirit. As such I think it may be worthy the attention of persons who are interested in the phenomena of spirit manifestations.

32, Fopstone-road, Earl's-court, London, S.W., Jan. 6th, 1880.

THE ELDERS AND THE CHILD.

From "*The Banner of Light*."

Softly fell the touch of twilight on Judea's silent hills;  
Slowly erept the peace of moonlight o'er Judea's trembling rills.  
In the Temple's court, conversing, seven elders sat apart;  
Seven grand and hoary sages, wise of head and pure of heart.  
"What is rest?" said Rabbi Judah, he of stern and steadfast gaze.  
"Answer, ye whom toils have burdened through the march of many days."  
"To have gained," said Rabbi Ezra, "decent wealth and goodly store,  
Without sin, by honest labour—nothing less and nothing more."  
"To have found," said Rabbi Joseph, meekness in his gentle eyes,  
"A foretaste of heaven's sweetness in home's blessed paradise."  
"To have wealth and power and glory crowned and brightened by the pride  
Of uprising children's children," Rabbi Benjamin replied.  
"To have won the praise of nations, to have won the crown of fame,"  
Rabbi Solomon responded, loyal to his kingly name.  
"To sit throned, the lord of millions, first and noblest in the land,"  
Answered haughty Rabbi Asher, youngest of the reverend band.  
"All in vain," said Rabbi Jarus, "if not faith and hope have traced  
In the soul Mosaic precepts, by sin's contact uneffaced."  
Then up rose wise Rabbi Judah, tallest, gravest of them all:  
"From the heights of fame and honour even valiant souls may fall;  
"Love may fail us, Virtue's sapling grow a dry and thorny rod,  
If we bear not in our bosoms the unselfish love of God."  
In the outer court sat playing a sad-featured, fair-haired child;  
His young eyes seemed wells of sorrow—they were God-like when he smiled.  
One by one he dropped the lilies, softly plucked with childish hand;  
One by one he viewed the sages of that grave and hoary band.  
Step by step he neared them closer, till encircled by the seven,  
Then he said, in tones untrembling, with a smile that seemed of heaven:  
"Nay, nay, fathers! Only he within the measure of whose breast  
*Dwells the human love* with God-love can have found life's truest rest;  
"For where one is not, the other must grow stagnant at its spring,  
Changing good deeds into phantoms—an unmeaning, soulless thing.  
"Whoso holds this precept truly, owns a jewel brighter far  
Than the joys of home and children—than wealth, fame, and glory are;  
"Fairer than old age thrice honoured, far above tradition's law,  
Pure as any radiant vision ever ancient prophet saw.  
"Only he within the measure—faith apportioned—of whose breast  
*Throbs this brother-love with God-love* knows the depth of perfect rest."  
Wondering gazed they at each other: "Praised be Israel evermore;  
He has spoken words of wisdom no man ever spake before!"  
Calmly passing from their presence to the fountain's rippling song,  
Stopped he to uplift the lilies strewn the scattered sprays among.  
Faintly stole the sounds of evening through the massive outer door;  
Whitely lay the peace of moonlight on the Temple's marble floor,  
Where the elders lingered, silent since he spake, the Undeified—  
Where the Wisdom of the ages sat amid the flowers a child!

MARY E. MANNIX.

## EXPERIENCES AMONG MEDIUMS.

WHEN modern Spiritualism first fell like a stone into the spiritually stagnant waters of the public mind, the consequent agitation was so great, that mistakes in dealing with a subject so novel and so little comprehended might be expected and pardoned. We have many of us, since then, pursued a rough and difficult road in gaining experiences more or less painful in the investigation of this protean and fascinating subject. Many times have I found myself prostrate from the encounter with some huge stumbling block, until that moment invisible in the mental darkness. Many of us have turned back disheartened; and others of us, either lured on like the donkey by a bunch of carrots before his nose, or perchance with our eyes fixed on the star of faith shining brightly in the heavens above, have valiantly fought our way through all obstacles, determined to push on to the end, even if it should turn out to be bitter.

Some of us have met with a rich reward for our faithful perseverance in our firm belief that this wonderful modern Spiritualism is the work of God, and designed, however motley some of the robes it may wear, for the good of the human race. And again, others in our ranks are still halting between two opinions, riding upon the horns of perpetual dilemmas.

Notwithstanding this unsatisfactory condition of a large number of those who call themselves Spiritualists, the "cause," as it is popularly termed amongst us, advances with the steady, majestic power which characterises all great movements. Like the ocean at full tide, it encroaches upon the dry sands of materialistic science, and must eventually overwhelm and destroy all the pigmy bulwarks erected between man and the advancing waters of spiritual truth.

Those of us who have been faithful to our trust have gained much knowledge, and have progressed beyond the clouds of uncertainty. Errors have been corrected and apparent contradictions reconciled; some of our fond delusions, too, have been laid aside, and we have grown into the knowledge that although heaven may be ready to descend amongst us, and may be even at our very doors if we will open them, yet that, without the effort to open the doors of our hearts and minds, without the struggle to make ourselves fit to climb up the mountain height of spiritual progress, heaven may be as far away from us as it used to be before the air became, to our imaginations, newly filled and agitated by the "wings of the angels." Spiritualism does not make us all divinely perfect. Mediums, whether public or private, are not all angels; and though we may say the voice of God has cried out in our very midst, yet the world at large laughs, and we ourselves, as a body, by no means present an altogether edifying appearance.

The cause of much of this is that all sorts of people range themselves under the banner of Spiritualism, and that the mere fact of belief in great truths does not purify the soul unless the soul becomes awakened to a desire for self-purification, and earnestly tries to attain to a more perfect life.

One great fault inside Spiritualism is the wholesale abuse and persecution a few in our ranks will,

upon an emergency, heap upon professional mediums. Priding themselves upon their wideawake astuteness, which is never to be caught napping, some Spiritualists, whether newly in our ranks or of old standing, give to mediums nothing but suspicion. Indeed, the mediums are generally badgered, watched, and pursued by such people with a kind of malevolence, mistaken for cleverness at detection. These groping blunderers can never be brought to acknowledge they are convinced of anything.

The hand of God, and the helping hands of His ministers of grace, must be behind the troublesome scene externally presented of late by Spiritualism, or else the despised and persecuted individuals who have taken up the profession of mediumship would long since have left the field of strife and turmoil of their arduous calling. They would otherwise have sought "fresh fields and pastures new," where they might at least be credited with being as honest as they appear to be. It cannot always be the consideration of money which keeps them in the ranks of the scapegoats. Many of them, if not all, might earn a certain competency in other callings, deemed more honourable of men, instead of the uncertain means they now contentedly scrape along with, many times being in want, and not always from their own improvidence. Discredited and persecuted as they are, I think that, upon the whole, we may congratulate ourselves that our professional mediums are as respectable and well-living a body as they mostly prove themselves to be. Except that it would be invidious to do so, I could name several who—I am sure the general voice would agree with me—are very good members of society, and we consider that as much as we can ask from most people. The old idea that a medium must be a superlatively excellent individual, and even holy beyond the standard of their less-favoured fellow mortals, is long since exploded. We have learned, many of us to our cost, that mediums are of the "earth earthy," and as fallible as any other human beings; indeed, that the gifts of perfect mediumship may occasionally fall to the lot of the immoral and the base, who do not hesitate to degrade their gifts to mere money-getting, honest, if possible, but if not possible, then unscrupulously dishonest.

But are professional mediums, as a rule, any worse than their brothers and sisters, who dabble more or less in spiritual accomplishments under the, in some cases, convenient but very thin veil of so-called "privacy," which, generally speaking, means that they may enjoy all the advantages, and suffer none of the penalties attached to professional mediumship? These belong principally to that class who sanctimoniously pronounce it a sin to receive fees for the exercise of their gifts; but in some instances the beggar's tin cup is always understood to be held out behind the flimsy profession of "no fees;" and if a diamond ring, or other expensive jewel be dropped therein, the complacent pretender is as well satisfied as if it were guineas, and would not think of returning it.

Such deeds speak for themselves: they are a prostitution of high and holy gifts, and merit the utmost scorn; but the fact that such things have occurred and do occur, only confirms me still more in the opinion that the cultivation of mediumship

merely, especially the physical forms, is not as a general rule improving or uplifting. We do not find our mediums, or our friends and relatives who take up mediumship, ordinarily speaking, becoming more angelic in their bearing and in their daily lives. They are just as uncharitable to their neighbours, indulging freely in scandal, just as hot-tempered, deceitful, and mendacious, perhaps intemperate, as before they became what are, *par excellence*, called "mediums." This is, of course, owing to the unregenerate condition of the inner nature: the cultivation of spiritual gifts has been merely external, for some purely selfish reason, such as the love of sensation, of novelty, or perhaps for the gratification of an inordinate self-conceit, or the pleasure of holding an imaginary prominent position in society. Indeed, I have seen some shallow brains completely turned by sudden exaltation, gained because of gifts without which one would be literally nothing and nobody. Such persons are usually excessively slanderous of tongue; whilst they become so extravagantly inflated by self-conceit that they are insufferably offensive. Deeds of meritorious modesty are impossible to such beings.

However, these are only a few exceptions to the general rule; there are hundreds of mediums in private life, under whose modest and becoming reserve the world at large would never suspect the possession of gifts used, unostentatiously, only in the home circle; or given out of pure philanthropy to the poor and suffering, who have no means of paying for soul-refection and necessary remedies. I only wish to draw the veil from the self-deceptions of a few who are unable to rise to higher conceptions of the duties of mediumship; to whom it is indeed not an aid to self-purification by the subjugation of the lower nature, which it should ever be if employed for its highest purposes, but is merely an earthly pastime cultivated for self-glorification, and the love of distinction in society. They may plume themselves upon the number of converts they have made, counting them up as an Indian numbers the scalps hung at his belt, but they never propose to themselves a higher result than this from the cultivation of their spiritual gifts. I allude principally to the fashionable dabblers in mediumship, who can never separate their thoughts from self and the world, and who seem to be incapable of aiming at a high spiritual development of the inner nature.

E. E. B.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—*Truth* of last week contains the following paragraph about the Duke of Argyll:—"The Duke, by the way, tells a story of Bloomfield (towards whose memory he is far from bearing a grudge), which is worth repeating as a specimen of that rare phenomenon, a neat German repartee. It was at a party, where the guests had been amused with experiences of clairvoyance. 'Well,' at length exclaimed Bloomfield, puzzled at what he had seen, and unable to explain, 'but what, then, were our eyes given us for?' Bunsen, who was present, instantly replied: 'To limit our vision, my Lord.' The Duke naively owns he did not consider the reason given as exhaustive. It must be remembered he is a Scotchman."

SOCRATES says:—"Moreover, we may hence conclude that there is great hope that death is a blessing. For to die is one of two things; for either the dead may be annihilated, and we may have no sensation whatever; or, as it is said, there is a certain change and passage of the soul from one place to another. And if it is a privation of all sensation, as it were, a sleep in which the sleeper has no dream, death would be a wonderful gain."

## WHAT IS OUR NATURE?\*

BY WILLIAM HITCHMAN, M.R.C.S.

OUR bodily nature is but the curtain which hides our spiritual nature, and this life in the flesh, when fairly represented, is only the germ from which life in the spirit shall develop itself, conformably to the reign of law. Restricted to the dogmas of exclusive materialism, or the mere assumptions of one-sided secularism, we become the slaves of an execrable idolatry, akin to that of burning our very hearts alive for Moloch, Baal, and the sun; an ideology whose system is not even psychological, since it leaves out of our constitution, as false or groundless, all those moral, social, intellectual, and ideal uses of spiritual beauty and true holiness, which belong to the worship of God in Christ, and shine in the life and character of man, or the divinity of angels higher than mortals. Recognising no moral responsibility to a universal spiritual power, such Nihilists affect to regard the faculties of the mind and the religion of the heart as modifications solely of that outward sensation, or visible mould, which begins in mud and ends in manure. Surely, it is not possible for death of our natural body to annihilate a soul and spirit which had not their origin in gaseous matter, or the life of molecules, in the jelly of protoplasm. Man is external to the works of nature, or the forces of the universe, in respect to the solids, liquids, and gases of chemistry, or the several constituent elements of physics. God, as Spirit, by His Divine agencies from worlds unseen, in form of messengers, angels, and spirits, is internal to phenomena, operating through them and from behind them, visibly or invisibly to us according to conditions, surroundings, and circumstances. Many are the paradoxes, it seems to me, which result indirectly from some pre-ordained contingencies—not excepting "a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets"—or foreseen arrangements, it may be for ulterior objects, as evinced in the facts of geology, zoology, and botany; vegetable life, for example, requiring water for growth and development, yet rain depends upon totally distinct causes, and quite irrespective of vegetation. And what is more superficially fortuitous than that vegetable matter should accumulate in the swamps of past ages, though used for present important purposes? What of the myriads of children, and minute seeds in the centre of flowers, which, like the young whale's teeth, the pappus or "down" of neuter thistles, the rudimentary pistils in bisexual plants, or the parasites of man and animals, cause suffering and death to others, yet never arrive at maturity themselves? God's laws issue in transformation! Their energy, or force, is preserved and directed into *other* channels, and when conditions mutually favour, they are re-developed with capacious and abiding power. Truly the very evolutive forces recognised by science may, in a religious sense, be the ripest outcome of Supreme Will, or differentiations only of one and the same potency, infused into those creative molecules—which are the foundation-stones of things material—when "the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters." I have adduced the rational

\* The concluding portion of a lecture given recently in Woolton Mechanics' Institution.

evidences of science and religion, adapted for peasant or philosopher, cordially disclaiming sect or partisanship, with a view mainly, if not entirely, to prove to each impartial hearer that there are mysterious spiritual riches which far outweigh all material possessions, and that the old and new faith of spiritual philosophy has every advantage over the ancient and modern teachings of materialistic secularism, without one single deprivation or disadvantage that can unfit you and me for service in heart, hand, or intellect; hinder equal success in the battle of life, or operate prejudicially to the best interests of mankind. Those four words, "Enoch walked with God," to my apprehension imply an achievement grander and more glorious, incomparably, than is described in any four hundred volumes—from Charlemagne to Beaconsfield—concerning such deeds of carnage and cruelty as those of Alexander, Cæsar, Wellington, and Napoleon; or that foreign policy of "*Imperium et Libertas*" which Britain's Premier, in 1879, has bequeathed to blood-stained Asia and Africa. The verdict of natural science is now pronounced in favour of "other worlds than ours," and henceforth, therefore, it will be of no earthly or heavenly use for the enemies of a soul and spirit in our nature to "refute" you or to "refute" me, in writing or verbally, by literary warfare or set debates in public. They must learn to confront those cosmical facts to which I have often adverted, and justly controvert them, not by gratuitous opinion or evil-speaking, but by adequate counter-facts, or accept that inexorable condemnation which posterity awards to arrogance and conceit. Despite all the competitive "isms" of this day, the spiritual exaltation of our fallen race can alone be reflected by that Divine Humanity, incarnate from heaven, whose brightness and beauty were embodied in the Prince of Peace, for every age and for all time, even as the manifold reflections of the morning sun, when broken into a thousand dew-drops, again sparkle towards itself in the last rosebud of a dying summer.

#### IDA'S VISION.

*Abridged from last week's "Truth."*

It is a dull thing for a bright-witted girl to be mewed up in a country house in the society of old people who do not care to entertain any but persons of their own age. Ida Coventry's uncle and aunt had meant kindly by her in adopting her as a daughter; but it so happened that they lived in a lonely part of a slow shire, among neighbours whose children were all grown up, married, and settled. There was not a marriageable girl or young bachelor in the district—that is to say, among the gentry—for even the Vicar of Ambleton's curate was a grey-headed man of fifty, troubled with a wife and a swarm of brats. Poor Ida, who was a pretty girl and dearly loved gaiety, dancing, and flirting, felt bored to death at Ambleton Hall; but by far the most miserable ordeals to which she had to submit were the dinners which Sir Bevil, her uncle, gave several times a month to divers of his brother magistrates and their wives. At these dreary banquets the gentlemen talked politics, and the ladies prosed on all topics except those which could interest Ida.

The poor girl, in fact, pined for some sympathetic face and voice; therefore it was a positive relief to her when, one evening, coming down to the dining-room she perceived a guest whose features, demeanour, and general bearing differed altogether from those of Sir Bevil's ordinary friends. He was a young man of about twenty-five; tall, strong, fair-haired, with a light golden beard, and large, soft blue eyes. His head was that of an artist or a poet, whilst his gait and manner were those of a perfect gentleman, devoid of any vulgarity or tendency to self-assertion. He was scrupulously well dressed, in clothes that must have been cut by a first-rate tailor; and such jewellery as he had about him—studs, ring, &c.—denoted a man in easy circumstances.

She expected that her uncle would at once introduce him by name; but, somewhat to her surprise, the stranger, having bowed to her when she entered, sat down to examine some photographic albums, and nobody paid any attention to him. There was something so marked in his isolation, that Ida fell to wondering who he could possibly be.

Not only did the company abstain from all intercourse with him, but he was not asked the common questions which are essential at a dinner-table. The servants filled his glasses and set successive plates before him without inquiring whether he would prefer this dish to that, or one wine to the other. Sir Bevil and Lady Coventry never once showed, by word or sign, that they recognised his presence. So much discourtesy disgusted Ida, who at last resolved to be very brave and to address the stranger herself. She reddened, and had to cough a little before she could say audibly across the table: "Don't you think our country lanes look very well with this winter's frost on their hedges?"

The stranger smiled acquiescence and bowed, but he returned no verbal answer. There was a moment's awkward pause, and the conversation which Ida had meant to start perforce dropped.

"Dear me, can the poor man be deaf and dumb?" reflected Ida, and her heart sank.

Anyhow, there he sat silent, Ida's heart filling with pity for him, and he did not look at her again till towards the close of dessert, just before the ladies left the room, when he raised his eyes and bent them on her with a sudden expression so shocking that it made her grow chilly all over. Up to then the stranger's features had been placid; but now they seemed convulsed with an agony of pain and fear. Gazing at Ida with an appealing earnestness quite horrible in its intensity, the stranger turned his eyes and nodded his head towards Sir Bevil, just as if to intimate that he stood in mortal dread of him. Then he put a forefinger to his lips, as though to enjoin silence. Petrified with astonishment and terror, Ida could only stare, half-doubting the evidence of her senses.

The next morning Ida was alone at breakfast with her uncle and aunt. She had hardly sat down, and was about to lead the way to the question she had determined to put, when she perceived the stranger standing in morning costume on the terrace outside the dining-room, and staring at her through the window. Once again he pointed to Sir Bevil, but this time with his finger, and, flattening his face

against the pane, gazed at Ida with all his soul, and opened his mouth as if he were going to scream rather than to speak. Ida started from her chair trembling in every limb.

"Uncle, who is that man?" she asked, motioning towards the window, but recoiling from it.

The stranger had walked off by this time and was out of sight.

"What man?" asked Sir Bevil, astonished.

"Why, the gentleman with fair hair and blue eyes who dined here last night—the gentleman to whom nobody spoke. I wondered whether he was not deaf and dumb. He was there a moment ago looking through the window."

"There was no gentleman except those whom you have often seen here before," said Sir Bevil; and he named four neighbouring squires. "But none of those corresponds with your description of this stranger."

"Well, then, my senses must be leaving me," ejaculated Ida, shuddering; and she buried her head in her hands. She had heard of dementia in its many forms, and supposed that some hideous monomaniacal idea must suddenly have possessed her.

A month elapsed. One morning Sir Bevil, expecting to receive the visit of his solicitor, who was coming from London on business, closeted himself in his study with a box of deeds and family papers. Ida, not knowing that he had given orders to be left alone, entered the room unawares to carry him a message, and there saw him seated side by side at his table with THE STRANGER.

The stranger's chair was close to Sir Bevil's, but a little behind it, and he seemed to be examining over the baronet's shoulder a miniature portrait on enamel, at which the latter was himself staring in an abstracted contemplation. On seeing Ida, Sir Bevil hastily rose, and endeavoured to hide the portrait away; but it fell from his unsteady hand, and rolled on to the floor.

Ida picked it up. "Great heavens!" she exclaimed, whilst her knees shook from fear. "This is the portrait of that gentleman in the chair behind you!"

"What gentleman?" faltered Sir Bevil, turning deadly pale. "Give me that portrait, Ida. Why—I see nobody in that chair."

"Look!" cried Ida, retreating, as her eyes opened wide with horror. "Look at him, uncle! Oh, what does he mean? Why does he point at you so?"

"Good God!" exclaimed Sir Bevil. He had turned, too, and to all appearance caught sight of that unearthly face, which had now assumed an expression of implacable menace, for, covering his eyes with his hands, he tottered forward, and fell heavily to the ground with his head on the fender.

The stranger had vanished. Ida found herself alone in the room with the body of Sir Bevil, who was dead.

\* \* \* \*

The affair was hushed up, and it was said that Sir Bevil had died from a stroke of apoplexy; but from the family solicitor, who overhauled the family papers, Ida heard waifs of a dismal story about a young cousin of hers who had been heir to the title and estates of Sir Bevil before the latter had inherited

them. That cousin had been found dead at the bottom of a stone quarry. Had he been pushed into it? Had he fallen into it by accident? Ida never sought to fathom the dreadful mystery. It was enough for her that she had seen in a vision, clear as day, the original of that portrait which Sir Bevil had held in his hand just one moment before he had been summoned abruptly to give his life's accounts in the world where there are no secrets.

#### WHAT VICTOR HUGO SAYS OF SPIRITUALISM.

VICTOR HUGO is quoted by Jesupret, in the *Revue Spirite*, as saying:—

Table-turning and speaking has been sufficiently jeered at. Let us speak plainly: this raillery is without support; to displace investigation by mockery is easy, but hardly scientific. As for us, we deem that the strict duty of science is to sound all the phenomena; science is ignorant, and has not the right to ridicule; a scientific man who sneers at the impossible is not far from being an idiot. The unlooked-for should always be expected by science. Its function is to grasp it on its way and search it thoroughly, rejecting the chimerical, and establishing the real; the sole right of science over these facts is to endorse them with its *visa*. It ought to verify and classify them. All human knowledge is but (*triage*) winnowings. The false complicating the true does not excuse the rejection of the whole. Since when has the presence of tares been a pretext for refusing the wheat? Weed out the devil herb error, but reap the fact and bind it with others. Science is the sheaf of facts. The mission of science is to study all things, and to fathom all things. All of us, whoever we may be, are the creditors of examination; we are, therefore, its debtors. It is due to us, and due from us, to study a phenomenon. To refuse the payment to it of that attention to which it has a right, to deny it, to put it to the door, and turn from it in scorn, this is to become a bankrupt to truth, this is to leave unhonoured the signature of science. The phenomenon of the ancient tripod and the modern table has a right equally to any other to observation. Psychological science there will gain without any doubt. Let me add this, that to abandon the phenomena to credulity is to commit a treason to human reason.

Nevertheless, we see the phenomenon always rejected, and always reappearing. It dates not its advent from yesterday.

During Mrs. Hollis-Billing's residence in Paris, Victor Hugo was a frequent visitor at her *séances*.

PRAYER.—The office of prayer is to put the individual in concurrence with the universal; to enable the person, the separate man or woman, to become receptive of those awful powers that are ready to shelter him and to bear him on triumphantly. It is a necessity with every one who wishes to live a great life, with every one who wishes for happiness, power, success, in any high measure, that he should have faith, vital faith in this unusual capacity, in these universal laws, in the realm of ideas, in the universe of principles. It is not necessary that he should confess his faith in words. He need not insist on being technically a religious man.—*Frothingham*.

## MESMERISM AND ITS PHENOMENA,

OR

## ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

By the late Wm. GREGORY, M.D., F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh University.

Dedicated by the Author by Permission to His Grace the Duke of Argyll.

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Spiritualist Newspaper Branch Office 33, British Museum-street, London.

## 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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