

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

#### MEMBERS.

Laurie, R. Northall, Palace Chambers, Westminster, S.W.  
 Robinson, Arthur, Jesus College, Cambridge.  
 Stanhope, The Rt. Hon. E., M.P., 23, Eccleston Square, London, S.W.

#### ASSOCIATES.

Barnett, Mrs. S. A., St. Jude's Vicarage, Whitechapel, London, E.  
 Coit, Stainton, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A.  
 Farmer, John S., 16, Craven Street, London, W.C.  
 Hascall, Mrs. Myra P. F., Switzerland.  
 Partridge, Mrs. 118, Queen's Road, Bayswater, London, W.  
 Richardson, P., King's College, Cambridge.  
 Robinson, Mrs. Lionel, 19, Kensington Square, London, W.  
 Tattersall, Wm., 90, High Street, Oxford.  
 Ward, The Hon. Miss, Castle Ward, Downpatrick.

#### MEETING OF COUNCIL.

A Council meeting was held on the 6th inst., Professor H. Sidgwick in the chair, when the following members were also present:—Professor W. F. Barrett, Messrs. A. Calder, W. H. Coffin, Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, C. C. Massey, F. W. H. Myers, and Frank Podmore.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and signed as correct.

Three new Members and nine new Associates, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected.

Miss Marten, an Associate, applied to become a Member, in order that she may borrow books from the library. It was agreed to accede to her request.

The following donations were reported, and were directed to be acknowledged with thanks:—From Mrs. Chas. Holland, £5; from Mr. W. G. Arkwright, who, in sending his annual subscription as an Associate, inclosed it in a cheque for £5; and from Mr. E. T. Nisbet, an Honorary Associate, £1 1s.

Mr. Myers informed the Council that Mrs. Chas. Kingsley had presented the Society with some valuable books which had belonged to the Rev. Chas. Kingsley. Resolved that the thanks of the Council be conveyed to her for her gift.

The usual Cash Account, made up to the 28th ult., was presented, and one account passed for payment.

A desire having been felt for greater facilities for the judicious private circulation of the *Journal*, it was resolved that Members and Associates have the right of purchasing additional copies at 1s. each. New Members and Associates, on joining the Society, can still purchase back numbers of the *Journal* at 6d. each.

It was resolved that the following Honorary Associates be re-elected for the coming year :—Mr. Sidney H. Beard, Mr. James Birchall, Mrs. Brietzcke, Rev. A. M. Creery, Miss M. Curtis, Rev. A. T. Fryer, Mr. Edward Grubb, Miss Hancock, Captain James, Mr. E. Vaughan Jenkins, Mr. J. G. Keulemans, Rev. J. A. Macdonald, Hon. Mrs. Montgomery Moore, Mr. E. T. Nisbet, Mrs. Saxby, Mrs. Scudamore, Rev. E. H. Sugden, Major Woodhull.

The next Meeting of the Council will be held on Friday, the 2nd of April, at 4.30 p.m.

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#### REPORT OF THE GENERAL MEETING.

A General Meeting of the Society was held on the evening of Saturday, March 6th, at the Rooms of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall.

In the absence of the President, the chair was taken by Professor H. Sidgwick.

The Chairman, before calling on Professor Barrett to read his paper, "On some Physical Phenomena commonly called 'Spiritualistic' witnessed by the author," thought it desirable to state that the paper was intended to initiate a discussion which might be continued at future meetings; and in which it was hoped that the evidence already accumulated on this branch of the Society's inquiry, might receive full consideration.

As the commencement of this discussion was to a certain extent a new departure, he might perhaps offer a few words of explanation to show why this new departure was taken now, and also why it was not taken before. It would be remembered that the Society was originally formed by a combination of two elements occupying distinct positions on this subject,—those whom he might call broadly believers in the phenomena of "Spiritualism," and those who merely thought that the evidence for these phenomena was, in quantity and quality, such as to deserve serious and systematic investigation. These two portions of the Society, disagreeing as they did as to the exact weight of the evidence

already collected, were thoroughly agreed on what then seemed the most important point, viz., the desirability of further experiment.

At the outset of the Society's work it seemed in the interests of harmony desirable to prosecute the new investigation in which both parties were prepared to co-operate, rather than to raise discussion—which, from the delicate nature of the arguments that must inevitably be introduced, was liable to become acrimonious—on the question on which the two parties were disagreed. Accordingly, a Committee was formed for experimental investigation of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism. Experiments were made both by the Committee and by private individuals belonging to the more sceptical element of the Society outside the Committee. Unfortunately, these experiments have so far led to no positive result. The Committee expired without seeing their way to present a report, and—speaking as one member of the sceptical party—he was obliged to say that he had not advanced beyond the position he occupied when the Society was founded, viz., that of holding that there was a *prima facie* case for serious investigation.

In the meantime he thought that, in the period that had elapsed since the Society's foundation, it had acquired a tolerably established position, and that, consequently, the dangers involved in a public discussion between its two somewhat heterogeneous elements were by no means so great now as they would have been four years ago. It appeared also that a prolonged exclusion of this subject from the published records of the Society's work would be liable to be misunderstood, and would probably be attributed to a disinclination to face unpalatable facts, or to a desire to avoid the expression of unpopular opinion. He therefore had much pleasure in calling on Professor Barrett to read his paper.

Professor Barrett began by pointing out that whether Spiritualism were regarded as worthy or unworthy of serious inquiry depended chiefly upon the place where each person drew the boundary line that, in his own mind, divided the possible from the impossible. It would be folly to waste time upon such things as circle-squaring, or a search for perpetual motion. These are placed beyond the pale of investigation, from already existing knowledge. But there are other things which involve no *contradiction* of what is already well established, but only an enlargement of our knowledge in certain directions; e.g., the sea-serpent, thought-transference, clairvoyance, the phenomena of Spiritualism, and only a few years ago we should have said the telephone and the phonograph. There were some who regarded "Spiritualism" as so intrinsically impossible that its investigation should not have formed one of the objects of the Society, while others thought it should have been in the forefront of the Society's programme.

Professor Barrett regretted that no report had been published by the Committee originally organised to investigate the subject, although this omission no doubt arose from their being unable to obtain any conclusive evidence. A record of the conditions and results of experiments was desirable. The instruments necessary for the inquiry into Spiritualism were living beings, and comparatively few in number, and if, after an adequate examination, no phenomena new to science should be exhibited, we should publish the negative evidence, and pass on to more profitable fields of inquiry. But such an adequate examination had not yet been made. The real difficulty was in arriving at *conclusive* evidence pointing one way or the other. Non-professional mediums were difficult of access, and professional mediums were open to the charge of being conjurers. Nevertheless, he thought that tests might be employed which would exclude the hypothesis of conjuring, and that the difficulty of arriving at conclusive evidence had been exaggerated. In this connection he referred to the evidence of the late Professor de Morgan, and Professor Zöllner, and also that of Mr. Crookes, and stated his own conviction that at any rate some of the simpler phenomena of Spiritualism were inexplicable by any causes at present recognised by science. He then proceeded to refer to phenomena witnessed by himself. Most of these were of no evidential value in favour of Spiritualism. But four or five cases stood out as exceptions; they occurred in the years 1875 and 1876, and full notes of each were taken at the time.

In the first two cases the sittings were with private mediums; in the last case the sitting was with a professional medium.

In the first case he would describe he had every opportunity of close and frequent investigation, and he had the records of numerous sittings extending through the months of August and September, 1875. At one sitting there were present besides himself, Mr. and Mrs. C. and their young daughter F.—the medium—a bright, frank, and intelligent child, then about ten years old. Time, 10 a.m. They sat at a large dining-room table facing the French windows, which let in a flood of sunlight, so that the sitters' feet as well as hands could be perfectly seen. Shortly, a sort of scraping sound was heard on the surface of the table; the sound moved about, but was loudest when near the medium, F. Raps were also heard sometimes on the table, sometimes on the back of the chairs on which they sat. F.'s hands and feet were closely watched; they were absolutely motionless when the sounds were heard. After a few sittings the sounds grew in loudness, often being as loud as, and very much resembling, the hammering of nails into a floor. They came more readily and more loudly when music was played, or a merry song struck up, and invariably they kept time with the music. Sometimes a loud rhythmic scraping, as of a violoncello bow on a piece of wood, would accompany the music. Again and again he placed his

ear on the very spot on the table whence this rough fiddling appeared to proceed, and felt distinctly the rhythmic vibration of the table, but no tangible cause was visible either above or below the table. Experiments were made on the possibility of localising sounds such as were heard; and so far as his experiments went he found that he could tell, within six inches, the position on a large table, when a knock was made by a friend beneath the table, and out of sight. The ability to localise a sound depended very much on the nature of the sound; the sounds made by a siren or by a singing flame were extremely difficult to localise. But he felt pretty confident that the knocks and scraping sounds proceeded from a source certainly within a foot of the position assigned; and he noticed particularly that the sounds, though feebler than when near, were sometimes heard ten or twelve feet away from the medium. On one occasion, when no one else was in the room, and it was broad daylight as usual, he asked the medium to put her hands against the wall and see how far she could stretch her feet back from the wall without tumbling down. This she did, and whilst she was in this constrained position, he asked for the knocks to come. Immediately a brisk pattering of raps followed, the child remaining quite motionless the whole time. Professor Barrett gave further details concerning the sounds occurring in connection with F., mentioning that on one occasion a word was misspelt by raps exactly as the child misspelt that word, as he afterwards ascertained; but that a long and careful examination convinced him that trickery on the part of the child was a more improbable hypothesis than that the sounds proceeded from an unknown agency. After some three months, the sounds disappeared as unexpectedly as they had arisen. In reviewing the evidence, Professor Barrett said that we must take into account the hypothesis that some children exhibit an amazing passion for deceiving their elders, and some possess an extraordinary love of notoriety, but he confessed that in this case he could come to no other conclusion than that we had there a class of phenomena wholly new to science.

He then gave some of the details of phenomena occurring in connection with a middle-aged lady in private life, who had found this abnormal "mediumistic" power gradually develop in her presence, and he said that in this case also he could not avoid the conclusion that the phenomena described were inexplicable by any known hypothesis. He considered this case, however, to be of less evidential value than the previous one, where his opportunities were greater for testing the phenomena under varying conditions.

The third case described by Professor Barrett was, he said, exactly of the sort he would wish to have a conjurer's opinion upon before affirming that it could not be produced by trickery. The sitting he would describe was with the professional medium, Mr. Eglinton.

On January 5th, 1878, Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood arranged for a sitting at his own house at Queen Anne-street. The observers present, besides Professor Barrett, were Mr. Wedgwood, his sister, Mr. A. R. Wallace, and Mr. F. W. H. Myers. The séance was held in Mr. Wedgwood's library at 4 p.m. When the medium arrived, Professor Barrett was permitted to take whatever precautions he thought necessary to prevent fraud on his part. Professor Barrett then described the fastenings to which he submitted the medium, so that, although the medium (who was placed sitting on a chair in the corner of the room, with his hands together behind him) could, if he chose, move his legs freely and also turn or nod his head, he could not move the trunk of his body nor his hands nor arms without breaking the fastenings. A couple of small curtains, running on a rail over the medium's head, were then drawn nearly together in front of the medium, leaving a space of from four to six inches exactly opposite the central line of his body. Through this space his face and front of his body could be seen. The curtains hung down on each side of the chair on which the medium sat, so that his legs, from the waist downward were entirely in front of the curtain. A gas jet, which was the principal light in the room (the window curtains having been drawn), was then lowered, but there was plenty of light to allow of the observers' seeing one another. They seated themselves close to the medium, Professor Barrett being so close that not a foot intervened between himself and the medium. Professor Barrett could see that the medium's head presently drooped, and that he went into a sort of trance, whether real or assumed Professor Barrett could not say. Knockings were then heard, and upon repeating the alphabet slowly a message was spelt out. Professor Barrett asked, "Can you move anything in the room?" It said by knocks it would try, but nothing was moved. Either one of the observers or else the knocks suggested putting some objects near the medium. Professor Barrett got up and took out three or four books at random, and placed them in a pile on the lap of the medium, and catching sight of a small handbell, added this on the top of all. Upon seating himself by the medium's side, he noticed there was enough light in the room to read the time by his watch true to a second. In a few minutes after this, whilst closely watching the motionless figure of the medium, he distinctly saw the upper half of the pile of books move, the cover of the middle book opening, and allowing the ones above it and the bell to incline to an angle of at least 45°, which he subsequently found was considerably beyond the angle of repose for the bell on a cloth-bound book. The bell did not fall off, did not stir, in fact, in the least relatively to the cover of the book; the leaves of the book were then dropped after one another, and then opened up again. Then the lower

book opened, and its leaves were deliberately let fall. The whole proceeding was exactly such as would occur if two hands were placed on each side of the volumes, and their leaves slowly run over by first lifting up the body of the book, and then allowing the leaves to drop past, the fingers rubbing against them as they fell. During this process a third hand would seem to be required to keep the bell in its place. He brought his eyes to within 12 inches of the books whilst they were moving, and certainly no human hands were there. Professor Barrett gave other details, and stated that at the end of the sitting the medium was found fast asleep, and the fastenings intact. He then discussed the hypotheses of hallucination and fraud, and said that if the medium was the operator he could not conjecture how the performance was accomplished. The most plausible explanation, he thought, was misdescription on his part, a clever bit of juggling in moving books being mistaken for a larger movement, and ultimately exaggerated into the effect described. But he had quoted from his notes taken at the time, and was not conscious of any exaggeration. Nor did he think it legitimate to apply this exaggeration hypothesis to each case as it arose, and so dispose of an army of observers in detail. When the first observers of a slowly-moving electric fireball recounted what they had seen, they were naturally suspected of exaggeration, or as the victims of some illusion. But as concordant testimony from other independent observers came in, disbelief had been given up, and electric fireballs were now accepted as an enigmatic freak of that inexplicable agency electricity. Similarly, physical phenomena, such as he had described, might be regarded as unaccountable freaks of that mysterious agency we called mind.

He thought there was enough evidence from trustworthy independent observers, to outweigh the antecedent improbability of the alleged facts, and even to establish a strong presumption in their favour, and was of opinion that the most hopeful advance on the subject would be made by daring hypotheses based upon the study of existing evidence. We must clear the ground first by the theories of imposture, unconscious muscular action, hallucination, exaggeration, and telepathic action, but these hypotheses did not, in his opinion, exhaust all the evidence that exists. Nothing that he had seen or read had given him any adequate proof of extra-human intelligence, but he had been led to conjecture that under conditions which are so restricted that we are not put to intellectual confusion by frequent interruptions of the ordinary course of material laws, *mind could act upon matter directly*. Upon the organised matter of the brain, mind could and did act, i.e., if we admitted mind apart from matter. He then referred to conditions of success in experimenters, and urged that sympathy, or at any rate the absence of mental antagonism, might possibly be one

of these conditions, and just as necessary in the psychological world as certain material conditions in the physical world. This sympathy was quite compatible with calm judgment and a clear and accurate observation. Illustrating these remarks by an analogy, he then said that it was because all theories on this subject were so unrelated to our existing knowledge of the physical world that the psychological problems before us received such scant recognition at the hands of scientific men; but he had good hope that "Spiritualistic phenomena" would eventually be accepted as an integral part of the dual world of matter and mind in which we live, and that a reverent, hopeful, and withal more humble attitude would prevail towards the infinite possibilities that are in each of us.

As no one offered any remarks upon Professor Barrett's paper, the Chairman called upon Mr. F. W. H. Myers, who desired to make a communication upon a cognate subject.

Mr. F. W. H. Myers made some remarks, of which the following is a modified abstract:—I have been asked to reply to a question which has been sent to the editor of the *Journal*, namely, whether we have as yet obtained satisfactory evidence of the communication through planchette of facts unknown to any of the sitters. Since the publication of a paper in *Proceedings VIII.* (May, 1885), I have received about a dozen cases more or less valuable, and the editor of *Light* has published some cases, and informs me that he has received some others yet unpublished. I have also several other cases still in view. I have not as yet got enough evidence to justify a positive assertion that unknown facts are given through planchette, except, perhaps, as regards one special kind of information, namely, the details of objects present in the room, but unseen by the sitters. Professor Barrett's paper has contained some similar cases, where raps formed the medium of information instead of writing. But if we accept the phenomenon, we ought surely first to consider whether the narrowly-defined knowledge thus communicated may not be gained by unconscious clairvoyance on the part of the sitters.

Again, I have good evidence of the production of handwriting resembling that of deceased persons—a better imitation than the writer can normally produce. It is, however, quite in accordance with analogy to suppose that our unconscious selves may be more skilful in mimicry than our conscious selves. This is the case with the subjects of hypnotic suggestion of various kinds; and M. Richet has lately made some interesting experiments (which I have repeated on a subject of my own) on the handwriting of a hypnotised person when told that he is Napoleon, or a young child, &c. The results present a pretty close parallel to my planchette cases; and I think that we must not take the reproduction of known handwritings as a proof of anything beyond some supernormality in the writer's state.

I earnestly wish that the example of diligence and care set by Mr. and Mrs. Newnham in the persistent continuance and immediate record of these planchette experiments might induce other persons to do the like. Here is a form of experiment which lies within the power of many people, and which may in anyone's hands lead to most valuable results. It has been practised, more or less, for thirty years or so; yet what published records have we of any prolonged trials except "M.A. (Oxon)'s" and Mr. Newnham's? We have some good accounts of single sittings, but of course one desires that anyone obtaining success in one sitting should keep a record extending over weeks or months, so as to repeat that success, if possible, and to exclude the possibility of chance. I would venture to ask those who are convinced that these writings do come from extraneous intelligences to make a far more persistent and careful effort to prove this than anyone except "M.A. (Oxon)" has yet given to the world.

The most remarkable fact, perhaps, bearing on automatic writing, which has come to light since I last reported to you on the subject, consists of certain details in the later life-history of Louis V——, the man of many personalities, of whom I have repeatedly spoken. An account of his present state, by Dr. Myers, will be found in the *Journal of Mental Science* for January, and no doubt our Society will concern itself further with some of the phenomena involved. For the present I will take one point alone. Louis V—— is now in the asylum at La Rochelle, and has six personalities. I speak here only of the transition from State I. to State II. In what is now classed as State I. (though it was not the patient's earliest condition), he is paralysed and insensible on the right side. He is talkative, violent, and arrogant. His language is coarse, and he addresses everyone with gross and impudent familiarity, giving nicknames, and making bad jokes. He is a Radical in politics, and an atheist in religion. He is extremely fond of holding forth on these topics, but his speech is indistinct and defective. Of his past life he remembers only certain portions, more or less akin to his present state. Among the six states this is the only one in which there is right hemiplegia; and it is also the only one in which the character is violent and bad. Whenever the left brain dominates, Louis V——'s disposition is good, though there are many variations in his intelligence and his memory, linked with variations in his motor and sensory systems.

Now let a bar of steel be placed on his right arm. His respiration becomes quick, his expression anxious; in about a minute the paralysis and the anæsthesia are transferred from the right side to the left. At the same time the difficulty of speech disappears, and the patient's pronunciation becomes easy and clear. Thus far, though the case is remarkable, it is not quite unique. But now comes the unique point.

Together with the sensory and motor changes there is a change in memory and a change in character. He is now gentle, well-mannered, and modest. He speaks respectfully to the physicians whom a couple of minutes before he has been calling by abusive nicknames. Asked his opinion on politics or religion, he prefers to leave those matters to wiser heads than his own. He is obedient to discipline, and his expression of countenance is gentle and sympathetic. His memory embraces part of his stay at Sainte Anne, and at Bicêtre, at which latter asylum he imagines himself still to be.

And now for the connection of this case with our present subject. It will be remembered that Mr. Newnham, puzzled to account for the freakish and non-moral character of some of the replies written by Mrs. Newnham's hand, suggested, as a possible hypothesis,\* that "if the untrained side of the brain be suddenly stimulated to action, its behaviour is apt to resemble that of a child whose education has not been properly attended to." In commenting on this and other cases, I endeavoured to show that there was reason to suppose that the *right*, or less-used, hemisphere was concerned in supernormal mentation; and I traced especially analogies between aphasia and cerebral automatism; the inference being that in each case work was thrown on dextro-cerebral centres which was habitually performed by sinistro-cerebral. I summed up (p. 60) by saying that "although I hold that the right hemisphere had much to do with Mrs. Newnham's replies, . . . I cannot find any well-recognised doctrine of cerebral localisation which authorises us to draw any conclusion as to the way in which a temporary predominance of dextro-cerebral centres might affect the manifestation of moral character; . . . and I should of course be unwilling in such a matter to go a step beyond the consensus of the best scientific opinion. So far as the questions at issue are purely physiological, I can aim at nothing more than attentive study of the labours of others." I do not regret the caution of the tone here used. For I hold it eminently important that we who are thus speculating in a novel realm should not improvise a fancy physiology to suit our own ideas—that we should cite chapter and verse for any physiological fact or theory on which we base further deductions. But now I find that the suggestion which I hesitated to accept in full, although all my own arguments pointed directly that way, simply for lack of a recorded case where right hemiplegia had involved a moral tone different from that involved in left hemiplegia in the same subject,—I find, I say, this very suggestion of the moral difference of the two hemispheres put forth and endorsed by physicians of eminence, *à propos* of a

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\* *Proceedings*, Vol. III., p. 22.

case\* on which no theory of the kind had been founded at the time when my paper was written. Corroborative instances, of course, are still needed, for the coarse organic injuries of the brain which are most commonly met with do not show themselves in *nuances* of character.

But it is to be observed that the most crucial test which could have been devised for the theory in question would have been one where (as in Louis V——'s case) the functions of the two hemispheres were subject to so profound a disassociation that there was actually a co-exclusive alternation of memories according as one or the other hemisphere assumed the predominance. Suppose that in an ordinary case of hysterical hemiplegia the hemiplegia is transferred by metallic contact, suggestion, or otherwise, from the right side to the left. Suppose, further, that the patient exhibits more irritability, &c., when paralysed on the right than on the left side. Such a case would hardly afford a presumption that the highest ideational and emotional centres were *directly* affected by the transfer of the paralysis; the change in temper might merely depend on the greater or less *malaise* caused by some change in the affection of lower centres; for, of course, we cannot assume that a hysterical hemiplegia, whose external signs may be symmetrical whether it affects the right or left side, is in reality symmetrical in its internal or subjective manifestation.

But in Louis V——'s case the character, as it were, *starts fresh* with the transfer of the hemiplegia; it can exhibit itself untrammelled by any continuity of memory with the previous state; we can judge it *de novo*, and, so to say, from top to bottom. And we find that the predominance of the right hemisphere comports a marked reversion to savage characteristics, a marked emotional explosiveness and ideational crudity.

Let us see how this view coheres with what we already know of the difference between the two hemispheres. We start, of course, from the notorious fact that our right hands are more "dexterous" than our left; that is, that the sinistro-cerebral hand-governing centres are superior in development to the dextro-cerebral hand-governing centres. There has been some controversy as to how far this is the result of education in the individual, or how far it depends on some asymmetry of the circulatory system. I cannot, of course, give any opinion as to the original anatomical reason for the selection of the right as the dominant hand, but I can hardly doubt that the superiority in the sinistro-cerebral centres concerned is now a hereditary thing,—does not depend merely on the education of the individual child.

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\* M. Jules Voisin writes in the *Archives de Neurologie*, September, 1885. The opinion of MM. Bourru and Burot is given (with complete adhesion) by Dr. Berjon in his tractate "La Grande Hyatérie chez l'Homme" (Paris: Baillière, 1886), page 53. I need hardly say that the transfer of activity between the two hemispheres is almost certainly not the *only* alteration of cerebral action which occurs in these changes of state. See *Proceedings* III., p. 43.

Going one step higher, it is now pretty generally admitted that the sinistro-cerebral speech-centres are more evolved than the dextro-cerebral. And here we come very near to an actual difference in the power of summoning up ideas or emotions. For *signs* are so closely connected with thinking that it would surprise us to see an aphasic patient retaining for long the same mental clearness as before his affliction. And our emotions themselves are greatly modified by the expression which we give to them. An aphasic (for instance) who can express disagreement only by an oath is likely to lose his sense of controversial deference and courtesy. Well, what is now contended is, that just as there may be a right hemiplegia which does not involve aphasia, and, again, a right hemiplegia so far involving the higher centres that aphasia accompanies it, so also, in this case of a dissociation almost unique in its profundity between the activities of the two hemispheres, there was made manifest a difference in stage of evolution between the *highest* sinistro-cerebral and dextro-cerebral centres—those which preside over emotion and ideation. And I go farther, and conjecture that this difference may exist in all of us, and that just as certain of our visceral arrangements retain the traces of our pre-human ancestry, and just as our dextro-cerebral speech-centres are often stammering, childish, or wholly inefficient, so also our dextro-cerebral “character-forming” centres—the centres which on that side of the brain sum up or represent our highest activities—may retain, in their inferior evolution, traces of that savage ancestry which forms the sombre background of the refinements and felicities of civilised man.

And, furthermore, I suggest that while we habitually use our sinistro-cerebral character-centres with the same unconscious choice as leads us, for instance, to catch at a rope flung at us with our right hand and not with our left, there are nevertheless certain states—supernormal as well as abnormal—in which our Ego (whatever that may be) expresses itself more readily through the dextro-cerebral centres, and assumes, therefore, a comparatively savage character.

If this be so, much light will be thrown on almost all that class of Spiritualistic manifestations which have been ascribed to *diabolic* agency. Anti-Spiritualists and Spiritualists have combined, I think, to exaggerate the alarming character of these occasional displays of waywardness and anger. Anti-Spiritualists have, so to say, tied two incompatible sticks together to beat the dog with, and have exclaimed, “It is all your own imagination, and the devil is at the bottom of it!” And certain Spiritualists who decorate their strings of sermonising platitudes with the imagined authorship of Abraham, or Abraham Lincoln, or Isaac, or Isaac Newton, or Isaac Comnenus, or Jacob, or Jacob Böhme, according to fancy—as readily as the street-seller labels his penny ices “pineapple” or “vanilla”—are strongly inclined, on

the other hand, to think that if planchette says, "I like to be bad, and I wish I was worse," the very Prince of Darkness must needs have dictated the appalling sentiment.

Perhaps beneath these radiant or sombre trappings there may lurk nothing worse nor better than our own small selves; and these oscillations may have no greater amplitude than between one and another centre of our own irregularly-developed brains. And if we are not ashamed of possessing a digestive system which includes the rudimentary "vermiform appendix,"—a motor system which includes the comparatively defective motor innervation of our left hands,—then surely we need not be ashamed of possessing an emotional and ideational system which includes dextro-cerebral elements some twenty generations or so in arrear of the epoch to which our brain, taken as a whole, entitles us to belong. For those who believe that our evolution has no assignable limit, there may even be something pleasing in such a token as this of the rapidity with which we are mounting on the endless way.

This theory of the moral duality of the brain is, of course, still on its trial. And even if it should be found to be a true theory, and to cover some part of the facts of automatic writing, that would not prove that it covered them all. It is for those who deem it insufficient to test and, if they can, to support their own opinion by carefully-made and candidly-recorded experiments.

The Meeting then assumed a conversational character.

### PROFESSOR BARRETT ON SPIRITUALISM.

Professor Barrett has requested us to reprint the following extracts from letters written by him to *Light*, in reply to an inquiry made by Mr. Dawson Rogers :—

"I do not know that my own attitude of mind towards Spiritualistic phenomena is of much interest to any one, but as Mr. Rogers refers to it I may say it has not changed; on the contrary, wider experience has only added to the conviction of the mingled causes which are at work in producing the phenomena, and the mingled feelings with which I regard the whole subject. Unquestionably of value in certain states of mental doubt and darkness, it must not be forgotten that Spiritualism belongs not to the spiritual but to the phenomenal order of things, and as such comes within the scope of scientific inquiry. Doubtless, its general acceptance, as part of our recognised knowledge, will profoundly enlarge and modify our present limited scientific conceptions, though the explanation of its phenomena may then be very different from that usually entertained by Spiritualists.

But whilst I regard scientific inquiry into these phenomena as wholly right and necessary, I am bound to say that in my opinion a casual inquiry, or indiscriminate circles, or even the habit of regular family séances, are not

only likely to be misleading but are open to grave intellectual and moral risk. The intellectual danger is the natural tendency of the human mind to give undue importance to occult phenomena, which are apt to assume a magnitude in our minds proportional to the neglect or ridicule of the matter by the world at large. And the moral risk I venture to think comes in when, as is almost inevitably the case, we exalt the value of information coming to us from unknown agencies, or make it affect the conduct of life, whereas such information may be derived from the automatic action of one's own mind or, at furthest, from beings whom we cannot control, and whose power and character we do not know."

"I have no right to speak for the Society for Psychical Research, but I have not the least objection to state that, so far as I am concerned, and so far as I know the opinion of my friends on the Council of that Society, it is not true to suppose there exists amongst us an attitude of hostility towards Spiritualism, or 'the habit of speaking of it in terms of depreciation and disparagement.' On the contrary, some of us consider, and I am one of that number, that the time has come when we may wisely advance beyond our present position, and put on record in our *Proceedings* some of the evidence on behalf of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism that has come under the personal observation of credible and careful witnesses.

As for myself, I feel, what I hope in time all lovers of truth will feel, both respect and gratitude to those who amidst much obloquy, ridicule, and petty persecution, have dared to avow and to maintain their belief in the phenomena of Mesmerism and Spiritualism. They have, no doubt, sometimes been deceived, and their methods of research were in general far from what science demands; they have, perhaps, been ignorant of well-known scientific truths, and their conclusions have often been hasty and erroneous; but in spite of all this they have, in my opinion, got hold of certain remarkable and valuable facts wholly new to science, and instead of being treated by men of science with arrogance and disdain they should have been welcomed as fellow-workers in the great laboratory of nature. Then patiently and perseveringly 'the dry and clear light of science' should have been brought to bear on every asserted fact, and the false winnowed out from the true. That, in fine, is the aim and object of the Society for Psychical Research. But if that Society has endeavoured, and I think to a great extent successfully, to bring scientific opinion round to examine these phenomena, it is incumbent on those who are believers in Mesmerism and Spiritualism to exert themselves in order to present to scientific scrutiny the best evidence they can collect. It is incorrect to say the Society for Psychical Research will not examine this or that phenomenon when it is doing all it can to get hold of the evidence, and when those who can furnish the evidence make no effort to bring it before the Society. Let me therefore entreat any reader of this letter who has any facts to communicate, or any suggestions to offer, to write to the hon. sec. of the Society, 14, Dean's-yard, S.W., or to myself, and I can promise him the most patient attention.

It is needful, perhaps, to say a word or two to those of our friends who are complaining of the slow progress of the Society for Psychical Research; I think Mr. Rogers' letter reflects that feeling. Such friends are, perhaps, hardly aware of the extremely slow rate of progress involved in every secure

advance in natural knowledge; exact scientific inquiry demands the most laborious processes, it must make firm every step it takes in proceeding from the known to the unknown. And when facts such as those under consideration, unrelated to existing knowledge, have to be examined, the progress must be expected to be slower still. I shall feel satisfied if in my lifetime I see so much as a general acceptance of the phenomena of thought-transference. But I am glad to know the opinion Mr. Rogers quotes is not shared by so distinguished and advanced a thinker as Mr. A. R. Wallace, who writing to me recently remarks: 'I am not at all dissatisfied with the progress of the Society's work. The energy of Messrs. Myers and Gurney is admirable, and I feel convinced that if they go on much faster they will be classed with "deluded Spiritualists," and will get no more attention from the literary public than the Spiritualists themselves.'

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### "SPHINX."

The first two numbers, for January and February, 1886, of this handsome monthly publication, the object of which is the furtherance of psychological research, have reached us. They may be obtained, we may add, at Redway's, 15, York-street, Covent Garden. The magazine is published at Leipzig, and the editor is Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, well-known in Germany as a publicist, and author of "Ethiopien" and other works which have had an important influence on German colonisation. A leading contributor is Baron du Prel, whose interesting work "Die Philosophie der Mystik" will, we hope, soon appear in an English translation of Mr. Massey's. A larger part of the contents of these two numbers consists of literary than of experimental matter; but the editor is doubtless the best judge as to the means of attracting and increasing the German public interested in these discussions. There are various articles on which we should have been glad to dwell, but lack of space compels us to select one only, containing an account of experiments which, if confirmed and repeated, promise to be of high importance.

This is a letter from Herr W. Zenker, of Schöningen (a town between Magdeburg and Brunswick), detailing certain experiments with a tilting table, which, if correctly reported, show *at least* thought-transference from persons not touching the table, *probably* the attainment through the tilts of facts not known to anyone present, and *possibly* something like identification of the communicating intelligence. Reduced to their briefest expression the experiments were as follows:—

I. Frau Markworth is said to be communicating. Herr Markworth takes six photographs from his deceased wife's album and holds them at

random, not knowing which he holds, nor touching the table, under the table. Two are rightly told, and the experiment is stopped. Why not prolong it?

II. Herr Markworth, without touching the table, holds a photograph, which he knows, underneath the table, and asks for the name, "mit ihrem Vaternamen also Zunamen." He expected the name "Graffan," which was his wife's maiden name, for the picture was of Frau Markworth; but "Markworth" was tilted out and defended by the "spirit" as correct.

III. Frau B. and two children sit at the table. Herr Fr. and Herr Zenker look on. Table tilts out "Zimmermann" as communicating spirit. This is the name of a telegraphist, known to Herr Fr. alone. They ask him to answer by Morse alphabet. No response. They explain that a long tilt is to stand for a dash, a short one for a dot. The table then answers by Morse alphabet questions of which the answers are known to Herr Fr. only. None of the persons at the table know the Morse code. Of this Herr Zenker is quite certain.

Various details show that the answers are not reflections of thoughts *consciously* in the minds of persons present. This, however, is not (in the present writer's view, at least,) conclusive as to the presence of an intelligence separate from theirs; since it is possible that such manifestations may reflect an *unconscious* part of our minds in preference to the conscious stream of thought. The experiment with the unknown photographs (itself possibly suggesting clairvoyance rather than an extraneous mind) should be varied and repeated as often as possible. And we should be glad to know more about Herr W. Zenker and his group. Herr Zenker writes clearly and with moderation, but cannot Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, or Baron du Prel, or Professor Sellin gain personal admittance to the circle, and report his experience? Herr Zenker says that this is the only occasion on which he has got phenomena which exclude thought-transference. He implies that he has often got phenomena which must be referred to thought-transference. We beg to assure him that if he has well-attested facts of this kind to report which exceed the space which *Sphinx* can give them, they will be very gratefully received by our Secretary in Dean's-yard. But when a report is given of a phenomenon occurring in the presence of several witnesses, it is desirable to have the signatures of all the witnesses, appended to a record made at the time. If our *πρωτεύουσα* Σφίγξ will pose her problems with minute and patient care she may end—we hope she will—by becoming her own *Œdipus*.

F. W. H. M.

ERRATUM.—In the *Journal* for February, p. 204, line 23, for "ringing" read "pinging."