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PIRIT PEOPLE



A SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF
MANIFESTATIONS RECENTLY PRODUCED BY SPIRITS,

AND SIMULTANEOUSLY WITNESSED

BY THE AUTHOR AND OTHER OBSERVERS IN LONDON.

July 1878
BY WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

"He who asserts that, outside of the domain of pure mathematics, anything is impossible, lacks prudence."—Arago.

LONDON:

W. H. HARRISON,
SPIRITUALIST NEWSPAPER BRANCH OFFICE,
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1875.



The Spiritualist Library.

THE present is the first of a series of books of moderate price, and uniform size, giving valuable information about the science and ethics of Spiritualism. It is hoped that each book will be received with such favour as to cause the advent of its successor to be anticipated with pleasure.



THE SEARCH AFTER SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

The following lines are extracted from a piece of Spirit poetry, entitled "The Prophecy of Vala," given through the trance mediumship of Miss Lizzie Doten, of Boston, U.S., and as they deal with the subject of unfettered search after Spiritual truth, they form an appropriate prefix to the present treatise:—

I have walked with the fates and the furies 'mid the wrecks of the mighty
past,

I have stood in the giant shadows which the ages have backward cast,
And I've heard the voices of prophets come down in a lengthened chain
Translating the truth eternal, and making its meaning plain;
Backward still, ever backward, 'mid wreck and ruin I trod,
Seeking life's secret sources, and the primal truths of God.

"Tell me," I cried. "O Prophet, thou shade of the mighty past,
What of the truth in the future? Is its horoscope yet cast?
Thou didst give it its birth and being, thou didst cradle it in thy breast—
Show me its shining orbit, and the place of its final rest!"

* * * * *

Then I saw that the truth of the present is but the truth of the past
But each phase is greater, and grander, and mightier than the last;
That the past is ever prophetic of that which is yet to be,
And that God reveals His glory by slow and distinct degree;
Yet still are the nations weeping o'er the graves of the Truth and the Right:
Lo! I summon another Vala—let her prophesy to-night,
With the amaranth, and the myrtle, and the asphodel on her brow,
Still wet with the dew of the Kingdom doth she stand before you now:

"Not with sound of many thunders,
Not with miracles and wonders,
Would I herald forth my coming from the peaceful Spirit shore;
But in God's own love descending,
With your aspirations blending,
I would teach you of the future, that you watch and weep no more.

"God is God from the creation;
Truth alone is man's salvation:
But the God that now you worship soon shall be your God no more;
For the soul, in its unfolding,
Evermore its thought remoulding.
Learns more truly, in its progress, 'how to love and to adore!'

"Evil is of Good twin brother,
Born of God, and of none other;
And though Truth seem slain of Error, through the ills that men
deplora,
Yet still nearer to perfection,
She shall know a resurrection,
Passing on from ceaseless glory, unto glory evermore."



Preface.

EIGHT years ago my attention was drawn to the subject of Spiritualism by Mr. Cromwell Varley, the Atlantic cable electrician, who gave me facilities for a long time for observing certain of the phenomena in his own house. At that time I was actively engaged as a writer and reviewer, chiefly in connection with scientific subjects, upon five or six influential London newspapers, but from the vast amount of prejudice against Spiritualism, found it impracticable to gain as much publicity for this subject as for others. Seeing no reason why any truths of nature should be either tabooed or suppressed, my way out of the difficulty was to start a scientific journal of my own to deal exclusively with this subject, and that is how the *Spiritualist* newspaper came into existence in the year 1869.

Ever since the first publication of the *Spiritualist* newspaper, my experiences have been recorded in its pages, but before that time I witnessed a great many deeply interesting facts, records of which were preserved in manuscript, but were not made public until the memoir which forms the contents of the present little work, was read before one of the local societies of Spiritualists in

London. The present treatise, then, professes only to be a plain record of observed occurrences, and to contain little in the way of opinion or of argument, although in the course of the discussion which followed the reading of the paper, some opinions were elicited bearing upon the religious aspects of Spiritualism. The philosophical and religious bearings of Spiritualism are subjects too great to be dealt with in a small treatise like the present, but I hope soon to bring out a book which will deal with these vital problems and embody the results of many years' experience in the observation of the facts at the root of the whole matter. During the last eight years I have, as a general rule, attended two or three *seances* per week, for the purpose of gaining practical knowledge of the phenomena which take place in the presence of most celebrated media, and in order to learn some of the principles lying at the root of the manifestations; for it is only upon a clear knowledge of the actual facts of the case, that a true philosophy can be reared.

The facts set forth in this little work are as coolly and impartially recorded as if I had been observing any other scientific phenomena. I had no theory to uphold, no prejudice to overcome, and no anxiety to make proselytes from among those who have an antipathy to Spiritualism. Nobody has any right to force his opinions upon his neighbours if they have a dislike to the same. If a man is aware of a great truth of which most of his neighbours are ignorant, it is his duty to state that truth, and to give further information relating to it when requested, but not to attempt to force a new revelation upon those to whom it is unacceptable.

The experience of all ages has proved that whenever a new truth has been retarded by apathy, by opposition, by prejudice, or by persecution, the world has always suffered in consequence, and the progress of civilisation has been impeded. Gas, steam, and railroads were all ridiculed by the populace and by the less intelligent section of the press when they were first attempted to be introduced, and from the days when Galileo was imprisoned because he asserted the rotation of the earth, down to the time when Spiritualism is ridiculed because its phenomena are little known or understood, the old spirit of antipathy to new truths has been rife. But the experience of the past should teach us no longer to fear the truths of nature, which, in other words, are the works of God. They should be examined fearlessly and without prejudice, because the more they are understood the more will they burst in blessings upon all mankind. Therefore it is high time that men should begin to approach new subjects with a pleasurable hope that they may be proved to be true, rather than with a cowardly fear that the facts of nature may give them something to unlearn, or with a craven hope that the limits of our knowledge of this wonderful universe have been reached.

WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

Wilmin Villa, Chaucer-road, Herne Hill,
London, June 25th, 1875.





Spiritual Gifts to Mortals.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit. And to another is given faith by the same spirit; and to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit; and to another the operation of great works; and to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another diversities of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues."—*Paul*.

The Outlook of Materialists.

"As the darkness over a deep sea, billows riding upon billows below, and clouds above; one darkness on another darkness: when a man stretcheth forth his hand he is far from seeing it; he to whom God doth not grant light, no light at all hath he."—*Mohammed*.





SPIRIT PEOPLE.

THE following paper was read by me on Thursday, February 25th, 1875, at a meeting of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, 74, Navarino-road, Dalston, London, under the presidency of Captain J. James, late of the 90th Light Infantry.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The contents of the paper which I have the honour of reading before you this evening are of a somewhat personal nature, but as the spiritual manifestations which I shall have to describe have never yet been published, and extend over a large range of *seances* with noted media, perhaps the personal feature may be overlooked, the more especially as I will endeavour not to present facts which I have observed, except when they are connected with subjects of public interest. There will be little or nothing of argument in what I have to say to you this evening, consequently not much which will tend to elicit discussion. Facts are the stones with which wisdom builds, and facts chiefly will be brought under your notice to-night, for in this movement our facts are all too few, and so far as they go, do not warrant the whole of the religious and scientific teachings which are sometimes put forth from our own platforms in the name of Spiritualism. The honest hard work of collecting facts, which to dreamy and uneducated minds is so uninteresting, must go on for years yet in our midst before we can become the possessors of a broad and reliable philosophy.

Most of my early experiences in Spiritualism took place at Fleetwood House, Beckenham, Kent, the residence of Mr. Cromwell Varley, the Atlantic cable electrician, and without his consent I had no right to give to the public facts which were observed under his roof and among the members of his family. That consent he has given to me in order that this paper may be read here to-night.

The first I ever heard of Spiritualism was from the Rev. T. G. Stamper, of Haverfordwest, who frequently told me of his belief in mesmerism, and once narrated to me the contents of some circular or pamphlet he had received from Mr. S. C. Hall about table manifestations. I ridiculed the idea of solid objects moving contrary to the law of gravitation, and Mr. Stamper seemed to have come to the same conclusion. This was ten or twelve years ago. Afterwards I saw paragraphs at rare intervals in newspapers, attacking the impostors who made their dupes believe that "the spirits of the just made perfect" spent their leisure time in rapping on furniture, and I thought the editors of those journals were to be commended for their conduct.

I was first brought directly into contact with Spiritualists at a lecture on Spiritualism, delivered by Mr. D. D. Home, at Willis's Rooms, St. James's, London, in the year 1867, and on my way there wondered that Mr. Willis should let his rooms for such a purpose. I expected to find a thin audience of simple-looking people, with retreating foreheads, and their mouths wide open, listening to a villainous-looking speaker. The refined and superior-looking body of listeners was a surprise to other strangers as well as myself, and I remember that the *Morning Star* next day published a comment recording this impression. A Spiritualist sitting next to me at that lecture told me that the daily newspapers did not give Spiritualism fair play, and I remember shrugging my shoulders and discontinuing the conversation, in the belief that the subject was beneath contempt. I have often tried to remember who that Spiritualist was, and to this day am not quite sure on the point, but think that it was Mr. Thos. Shorter, the late editor of *The Spiritual Magazine*. The effect of the lecture upon the minds of the strangers present was simply to puzzle them. There was nothing in it to fit into the previous experiences of unbelievers. Had a little philosophy been mixed with it, to the effect that the theory was that the human body gave off certain imponderable elements visible to spirits, and which they could use in producing the manifestations, a rude kind of connecting link between the known and the unknown would have been furnished. Probably it is a general mistake, in lecturing to the outside public on Spiritualism, to feed them too much with wonders, and too little with points of contact with their previous knowledge. A few days after the

lecture had been delivered, I had forgotten all about the subject.

The next I heard of Spiritualism was at Gresham House, Old Broad-street, where I went one morning to see the secretary, the electrician, and the engineer to the North Atlantic Telegraph Company, who had arranged to give me particulars relating to their undertaking for publication in the *Engineer* newspaper. The *Great Eastern* steamship was at that time at sea, attempting to lay one of the early Atlantic cables, and they told me that Mr. Varley and some of the other electricians on board were Spiritualists. This assertion startled me, for I knew Mr. Varley, who, however, had up to that time never mooted any of his religious opinions to me; but I felt that if the statement about his belief in Spiritualism were true, the subject was a serious one. Consequently, after the return of the *Great Eastern*, when I met him one evening in the library of the Royal Institution, I asked him, "Is it true that you believe in Spiritualism?" He said that he did, and invited me to a *seance* at his house on the following Wednesday, which *seance*, however, I was unable to attend. A few days later we were travelling together down the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, and he told me a great deal about his experiences in Spiritualism, about the movement of solid objects, about raps, about the occasional appearance of spirits, about clairvoyance, and about Mrs. Varley's mediumship, until I scarcely knew whether I was on my head or my heels. I knew him to be truthful, but that the things which he related were impossible, the result being general confusion of mind.

MY FIRST SEANCE.

The first *seance* I ever attended took place on Sunday, May 24th, 1868, at Fleetwood House, Beckenham, Kent, the residence of Mr. Varley. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Varley and myself were talking in the library about one of his new inventions, when he suggested a *seance*, to which I readily agreed; he accordingly asked Mrs. Varley and two of his nephews to join us. We sat round a small table, and had our hands upon it for about twenty minutes without any manifestations, when it was suggested that the circle should be broken up, but Mrs. Varley remarked, "We had better wait another ten minutes." After the lapse of

another five minutes, the table began to tilt; then the alphabet was called over. The first sentence spelt out, and the first message I ever received was—"We are glad you are trying to investigate this power." The next sentence was—"We are not used to this circle yet." Mr. Varley asked—"Can you lift the table off the ground to satisfy Mr. Harrison?" The reply was—"No, he ought to be satisfied, but we will try to show you some more." At the close of the *seance*, they inclined the table more and more, and at last laid it down on the floor; then it moved along the floor to the fire-place, our hands, however, touching it; then it tried to lift itself up, and did so after several ineffectual attempts, without our hands having anything to do with such vigorous movements, so far as I could see. Mr. Varley remarked that it was an unusual thing for such strong physical phenomena to be seen at all in his house, Mrs. Varley having but feeble power as a physical medium, her gifts being chiefly trance and clairvoyance.

I was puzzled by this first *seance*. Although perhaps nothing took place which might not have been done artificially by any skilful person, that way out of the difficulty was out of the question in this instance, from the character of the sitters. The next day I wrote out a full account of the *seance* and sent it to Professor Tyndall, who accepted my statements, and criticised what took place at this and subsequent *seances* in a fair spirit, but as the correspondence was private, I have no right to make known the contents thereof. That same week, after I had taken a little time to consider the matter, I had framed in my own mind a kind of psychic force theory as one which might possibly invalidate the spiritual hypothesis, so I called upon the editor of *The Engineer* newspaper, told him all that had taken place at Beckenham, and asked him to write some question upon a piece of paper, without telling me the answer. I would put the question to the spirits at the next *seance*, and if they gave the right reply, it would be clear proof that some intelligence was there, not that of the medium or any member of the circle. I did not see then, as I do now, that this test assumed spirits to possess almighty powers and to know everything; neither did I then know that the thoughts of the members of the circle, more especially those of the medium, have an influence on the contents of many spirit messages. At the next *seance*, held at the same place with the same sitters, on Sunday, May 31st, I mentally put the question,

"What is the name of the sister-in-law of the editor of *The Engineer*?" A name was given, but as I afterwards ascertained, it was the wrong name, though it was a little curious that a person's name should have been given at all. At this *seance*, I first saw writing mediumship. Messages were written out backwards and bottom upwards through Mrs. Varley's hand, while she was looking at me and talking.

At the close of this *seance*, Mr. Varley again remarked that Mrs. Varley was not a physical medium, and that I ought to see manifestations through somebody who possessed more power in that direction. He recommended me to go to a *seance* with Mrs. Mary Marshall, the younger, who then resided at 13, Bristol-gardens, Maida Vale, Paddington, and Mrs. Varley made an appointment to meet me there on the afternoon of Friday, January 5th. When we arrived, young Mrs. Marshall was ill; her husband and the elder Mrs. Marshall gave us a *seance*, at which we had some table tiltings, and a few raps, but nothing remarkable took place. We left, looking upon it as a decided failure, but I resolved to attend again at a future time when the stronger medium could be present.

On Thursday, June 25th, 1868, I had my fourth *seance*. It took place at the house of a scientific man, living at Wood-green; there was no developed medium present, and we obtained no manifestations.

MRS. MARY MARSHALL'S MEDIUMSHIP.

Next day, June 26th, I again went to Mrs. Marshall's, at two o'clock in the afternoon, and on this occasion met young Mrs. Marshall for the first time. I asked if she would let me examine the tables before the *seance* began. She replied, "Yes, of course I will," and pulled the tablecloth off the large table. It was a round table, six or seven feet in diameter. I went underneath, unscrewed the upper portion, then rolled off the top like a wheel, and examined the pedestal upon which it had been standing, to see if anything passed from the pedestal to the top of the table, for at that time I had a notion that good raps might be made by the aid of electro-magnetic apparatus, and I wanted to find out how the wires from the battery passed up the stem into the woodwork of the table; however, I found nothing, and observed that the floor

was carpeted, and that I could place the table on any part of the carpet I pleased. Next I examined the small table, which had a top about a yard in diameter, made of an honest piece of solid mahogany, and no veneering, wherefore I requested Mr. and Mrs. Marshall to sit with me at the small table, and not at the large one. I took out my note-book and pencil, and placed them on the table, round which we then sat with our six hands on its surface. Sunlight was streaming in through the two large windows in the room, so no fault could be found with the amount of illumination.

A TABLE FLOATING UNDER TEST CONDITIONS.

We had no sooner taken our seats than the table gave a jump, and sent my note-book and pencil flying over my shoulder. The table then lay down on one side, till its edge touched the ground; it jumped up again; then lay down on the other side; after which it began to rotate upon its vertical axis, and to travel about the room, jumping now and then. This was startling; I could not see that our hands were doing it, but I asked Mrs. Marshall whether it was necessary that our hands should touch the table at all. She replied—"Yes, to let the electricity go through, but the slightest touch will do." I did not quarrel with her about the word "electricity," but suggested that we should each of us touch the table with the tip of the middle finger only of each hand, bending up all the other fingers, so that they should be well clear of its surface. We did so; nothing but the points of our six fingers touched the top of the table, yet it was travelling about the room, occasionally jumping off the floor, in as lively a manner as ever, we walking with it. I then bent down, so as to see under the table, and asked Mrs. Marshall if she would be kind enough to keep her dress clear of its legs, which she did. Then I suggested that we should all stand as far away from the table as we could, so that we had to bend over and stretch out our hands, in order that the points of our six fingers might remain in contact with its upper surface. We did so, and I again bent down to see if anything was touching the table underneath. Then I remarked—"Now I am quite satisfied that nothing is touching the table except the tips of our six fingers." Directly I said this, the table rose off the ground slowly to a height of about eighteen

inches. Then it fell from our fingers and was dashed down on to the floor, so that one of its claws was broken off at a place where the solid wood was two or three inches thick ; then the table turned itself bottom upwards, and stood rocking upon one of its edges, with its broken foot moving up and down close before my face, as I stood with my hands on my knees looking at it. "There," said Mrs. Marshall, "they are showing you the broken leg!" Then the table turned over again by itself, and set itself nearly upright, but not quite, because, having lost its foot, it could no longer stand level. After it regained its perpendicular position, it continued to move about the floor with great violence, our hands again touching it. I sat down in a chair, and remarked—"Well, Mrs. Marshall, I am quite sure that not one of us did that." This acknowledgment seemed to please her, since, as we all know now, it is not everybody who will admit the physical facts of Spiritualism, even when they see them with their own eyes.

DIRECT SPIRIT WRITING.

We resumed our seats at the table. At this moment Mrs. Varley came in and joined the circle. Mrs. Marshall told me to put a sheet of paper and a pencil under the table, in order that the spirits might give us some direct writing, and she told me that I must not look at the paper while they were doing it, which order seemed to me then to be rather peculiar. All our hands were on the top of the table. I heard a scratch on the paper near my feet, then the table by tilts signalled out "Mend the pencil." I picked it up, and found that one broad line had been drawn half across the paper, and that then the point of the pencil had broken. Another point was cut, the paper and pencil were placed under the table again, scratching noises began upon the paper immediately, and lasted for about a minute, when the table began to jump about, which Mrs. Marshall said was a signal that they had finished the writing. I picked up the paper, and found "God bless you" written upon it. The table next told me that I was a medium, in which it seems to have made a mistake, for I have never been able to obtain any manifestations from that day to this. While we were sitting round the table I heard a lumbering noise behind me, and on looking round saw the great six-foot table

running up to us all by itself; after taking a run of about four feet, it rested with its edge against the edge of the little table round which we were sitting.

JOHN KING AT MRS. MARSHALL'S.

Mrs. Marshall then proposed that we should go into the dark room, where the spirits would talk to us with their own voices. This suggestion was all news to me; I had read paragraphs in the newspapers about the spirit-rapping and table-tilting impostors, but had never heard till that minute anything about spirits talking with their own voices, so this proposition was rather a startling one. We went into the dark room, taking a lamp with us, and at the request of Mrs. Marshall I examined the cupboards; the room was nearly empty, there was nothing in it but a table, a few chairs, and some musical instruments—which I casually examined—on the top of the table. Mr. and Mrs. Marshall sat on one side of the table, Mrs. Varley and myself on the other, and the light was put out. A great bang, which might have been heard in the street, then came upon the table, which noise the Marshalls said was the sign John King usually gave of his presence; then the guitar rose from the table and began to play over our heads; it went round the heads of Mrs. Varley and myself with great velocity, describing a course of the shape of the figure 8 in so doing, and playing all the time; it also banged against the walls or ceiling when desired. Next it floated under my chair, then came up again and tapped me lightly on the eyebrows, head, and face as it passed and repassed me in its bat-like flight. At dark *seances* musical instruments very rarely pass under the chairs of persons placed at a distance from the medium; I suppose that they were able to do it in this instance in consequence of the presence of Mrs. Varley adding to the power.

REVELATIONS FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

The first remark I ever heard in the direct voice from the spirits of the departed, from the loved ones gone before, was a bad pun. John King exclaimed—"Harrison, don't be harassed." This remark was rather di-appointing to one who supposed that spirits were a kind of archangels, and I suppose my feelings exhibited themselves in my face, for John King next

remarked, "You ought to look upon Spiritualism as a jolly thing. I'm jolly enough! Look here, now! I'll sing you a song of my own composition—

'I wish I had a bird,
I would stick it on a spit—"

and so on; I cannot remember the rest of the doggerel. I asked John King, "who he was," as I did not remember the name to be that of any departed relative of mine. He replied that he was a Welshman, a native of Carmarthen. I tried to get evidence that he had some local knowledge of Carmarthen, as I knew a little about that town, but could draw nothing further out of him.

SPIRIT LIGHTS AND SPIRIT HANDS.

Next some spirit lights were seen; they were about eighteen inches long, and as large as a shilling at one end, tapering off to a fine tail at the other; some of them were straight, and some were curved, but all of them in rapid motion.

"Katie" then came and said a few words, after which I remarked to John King—"Do you speak to me by moving the air outside of my ear in the usual way?" John King replied, "Of course I do. I will blow upon your face now." Then his breath, beautifully scented, came down upon my face. After this I was stroked down the face, and felt spirit hands for the first time.

A SPIRIT WORKING OFF HIS SINS.

On Monday, June 29th, 1868, I attended another *seance* at Mrs. Marshall's, with Mrs. Varley and one of Mr. Varley's nephews. We had a dark *seance*, and the spirits devoted most of their attention to Mr. Varley's nephew, perhaps because he was a new inquirer; they gave him advice about his health, told him what mode of treatment to adopt, recommended regular baths, and told him to take a small bottle of stout every day at dinner. I asked John King "What stout?" and he said, "Guinness's." The patient laid hold of a roll of paper which John King was using as a speaking tube; John King seized another, and began to fence with it; I could hear the noise of the two tubes striking against each other. Soon

John King gave a vigorous pull at the tube held by Mr. Varley's nephew, and took possession of it; then proceeded to rumple his hair by violently rubbing the tubes over his head, remarking, "This is hair-brushing by machinery."

I asked John King why his manifestations could not take place in the light. He replied, "Why cannot you finish a photograph without shutting off white light?" I suppose he saw by my face that I was not particularly pleased, in consequence of my preconceived notions making me think that the spirits of the departed might have something better to talk about than "bottled stout" and "hair-brushing by machinery," for he turned round and said quite unsolicited, "Look here, Harrison! I have been put to do this work of convincing mortals for a certain number of years to work out my own salvation, and as I have to do it I think it is well to make myself jolly over it." He then began to whistle in a devil-may-care kind of way. Afterwards he made some remarks showing that he knew I had to do with newspapers; he asked me to promise him to speak well of him when I had the chance, and not to say anything bad about John King. I replied that I knew nothing against him, and had no wish to say any harm about him. I put several mental questions to the spirits at this *seance*. They could not answer them, and were evidently unable to read my thoughts. Scent was then thrown upon us from above. Mrs. Marshall remarked that John King had often told her that spirits who bring scent to dark circles carry it in their mouths. She also told me that spirits sometimes brought fruits to *seances* when fruits were asked for by the sitters. I remarked, "Then I should like to ask for some tropical fruit, not to be found on this side of the globe." John King replied, "So you may;" upon which I said, "Thank you;" whereupon John King added, "But you won't get it!" When the spirits said good-bye to us at the close of the sitting their voices were heard gradually dying away; high in the air, as if they were passing through the ceiling. Indeed most of Mrs. Marshall's dark *seances* closed with a series of muffled raps upon the ceiling.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING MEDIUMSHIP.

By this time my friends and acquaintances had begun to make jocular remarks to me about my holding converse with

spirits, and being taken in by the spirit-rappers, one intimate friend remarking, "If you go on at this rate you will be what Artemus Ward calls a 'sweet mejum' in a few days."

On the 3rd July, 1868, I went to Chatham Dockyard to get up a description of the Dockyard Extension Works there for the *Daily Telegraph*. In my absence, the friend who made the remark just quoted called to see me, and finding me from home sat by himself in the front parlour, to see if he could get any manifestations; he placed his hand upon a chair for ten minutes, but it did not move. He next took a pencil in his hand, and held it over a sheet of paper. After the lapse of about seven minutes, he was surprised to see his hand scribbling over the paper, and wondered whether his own brain were not causing him to do it unconsciously. His hand wrote out "You will prove a medium; do not fear the spirits." He said that a feeling of fear then crept over him, and he almost resolved to throw away the pencil; but he did not do so, and he asked mentally, "Is Spiritualism from God or from the Devil?" The reply through his hand was "From God." Afterwards it was written, "You will seek us again to-morrow, yet remember what the spirits have done for you, and be not afraid."

THE FIRST STAGES OF MEDIUMSHIP.

I knew nothing about this *seance* until the next evening, when he told me about it with a serious face and produced the writings. That evening we tried for more writing manifestations through him, when his grandfather and grandmother, my father, a schoolfellow of ours who was drowned in the river Lea, and a departed friend of his mother, all professed in turn to communicate. The handwriting was changed as each spirit came, and the names of these people were not in his mind until after they had been written. The messages and the writing should be examined in the light of present experience, to see whether they furnish good proofs of spirit identity. It has been the experience of Dr. Maurice Davies and of several others, that the best proofs of spirit identity have been obtained just at the outbreak of mediumship, whilst perplexities have crept in at a later stage. If this experience should prove to be general, does the fact arise from the medium and sitters being in a more receptive state at that time; or is

it that the natural guardians of the medium can then communicate, but are sometimes driven off at later stages by lower and more earth-bound spirits, who eagerly avail themselves of the opportunity of communicating when they see a channel opened? At the *seance* now under notice we asked the spirits if they would carry a message to Mr. Varley, to the effect that we wanted to talk to him about Spiritualism before he went to Switzerland, and the spirits promised that they would do so.

On the 10th and 17th of July, 1868, I sat at a developing circle among private friends at Wood-green, but no manifestations were obtained.

MALICIOUS SPIRITS.

On Saturday, July 18th, my medial friend and myself called upon the editor of *The British Journal of Photography*, at Covent-garden, to triumphantly prove to him that we had acquired the power of communicating with the spirit-world. An experimental trial was then and there made, and the communicating spirit began by telling Mr. Taylor, the editor, "that he had disease of the heart, but did not know it." Mr. Taylor explained that this comforting intelligence was all news to him, and asked the spirit to tell him the name of his family doctor, upon which the spirit replied, "Martin." Mr. Taylor said that this was not true, upon which the spirit told us not to believe Mr. Taylor, for he was a deceitful man. The communications were evidently malicious. These disagreeable experiences among three persons who certainly wanted nothing but truth was a heavy blow, so that evening we asked the communicating intelligences the cause of the bad messages in the afternoon. The answer was—"You may judge for yourselves. This is but malice in spirits who are imperfect, but be not discouraged by what they say." The spirit then claimed to be a schoolfellow of ours who had been drowned through the upsetting of a boat. We said to him—"How shall we know when bad spirits are about?" He replied—"You will feel sleepy." We asked—"How can we do you good?" The reply was—"By being good yourselves. You will have a visit from Mr. Varley to-morrow." "Has he had our message?" "Yes he has." "Then why does he not answer it?" "Because he intends to come himself."

The spirit then, at our request, did some drawings while the eyes of the medium were averted from the paper, for he wanted to make quite sure that the effects were not produced by the unconscious action of a part of his brain. The drawings consisted of a locomotive, a swallow, and a landscape. All of them were drawn in one continuous line, the pencil never being removed from the paper from the moment it first touched it. The acting intelligences apparently required the use of the medium's eyes, for the stoker was drawn out of proportion, with his feet through the bottom of the tender, and resting upon the rails.

On Monday, July 20th, 1868, we again tried for writing manifestations, and different kinds of handwriting were given through the medium; this I now take to be evidence that different spirits were communicating, because when we afterwards discovered that one spirit was almost always with the medium, and gave us a great deal of trouble, we found that the handwriting and the manner of control of that spirit were always the same. We asked who was the spirit who gave the malicious message at Mr. Taylor's on Saturday, and received in reply the following statement:—"He was a bad man, and told lies." He also said, "that a spirit of the name of Robert Nash was present, who had been dead about five years, and who was four years old when he left earth." When quite a child I had a schoolfellow named William Nash, but whether he had a brother of the name of Robert I do not know, and have no means of ascertaining. We asked the spirit, "Why did not Mr. Varley call yesterday?" "He met his father." Why did we have such malicious communications on Saturday?" "Because the place was bad."

A day or two afterwards I met Mr. Varley, who said that no messages had been delivered to him by the spirits, and that he did not meet his father on Saturday; on the contrary, he was at Dover. We accordingly taxed the spirit with making untruthful statements, upon which he began to abuse us, calling us "fools and asses."

In spite of these discouragements we resolved to investigate further.

SPIRIT IDENTITY.

On Saturday, July 25th, 1868, a remarkable *seance* took place, which tended to atone for our previous discouragements.

The communicating spirit said, "*I was with you on Friday; but a spirit I did not like was in my place: this is truth that I tell you.*" The spirit then claimed to be my father, upon which I asked him to prove it, for I had passed into a state of mind in which I was prepared to believe no more than I could help. I asked him to tell me something about his affairs which I did not know, and which could be afterwards proved to be true. He replied, "*The man who threw half a brick at me is dead.*" "Who was he?" "*Henry Minter. Much depends upon your assiduity in trying the spirits many times.*" "I wish to come into communication with higher spirits than myself." "*You will in time if you persevere; you should trust in God. There are good and bad spirits; but if you search out truth in the right way, all will be well with you. I made many mistakes in my lifetime; I several times doubted the existence of God, but I know better now.*" "Are you really my father?" "*Ask Fanny if what I have said is not right; make haste! The power will soon be gone. Make haste! You must not rest.*" Here the writing slowly died away, and the power was gone.

I afterwards ascertained that many years previously a brick, thrown by a man passing through the street, had come in through the window, and narrowly missed my father's head. No doubt it was thrown by accident; it was never known by whom. The expression "Fanny" was one we had never heard applied to my aunt since my father's death; but he invariably called her by her Christian name. This is one of the best proofs of spirit-identity I have ever had; in fact, I have never had more than two altogether.

THE TREATMENT OF UNDEVELOPED SPIRITS.

On Sunday, 26th July, the spirit came who had furnished us with malicious messages. He said that he was without malice, and would go away if we liked; he also asked us to think well of him.

I may here remark that we reasoned with him and treated him kindly, which Spiritualists had told us we ought to do when visited by undeveloped spirits; but this plan failed most signally; he gained more and more power over the medium, became more and more untruthful, was not amenable to kind treatment, and at last my friend was obliged to break off his

mediumship altogether to get rid of him, after many months of patient forbearance.

JOHN KING'S ADVENT AT THE MARSHALLS'.

On Tuesday, July 28th, 1868, I was at a public *seance* at Mrs. Marshall's, when the spirits calling themselves John King, Katie King, and Roger Bacon communicated. I then first noticed that the spirit voices decreased in power as the distance from the medium increased, but that musical instruments could be carried to a greater distance from the medium than the vocal organs of the spirits. Diagrams in my note-book illustrate these circumstances. Mr. Marshall told me that he had only known John King about ten months. He and his wife first discovered that they were mediums by obtaining table-tiltings, which frightened them at first, after which the power gradually developed, but it was about three years before it became strong. Thus John King first came to the Marshalls towards the close of 1867. He introduced himself to the Davenport's in 1853.

At the request of the spirits at Mrs. Marshall's, a *seance* was held through Mrs. Varley's mediumship at Mr. Varley's house, at Beckenham, on Sunday, August 2nd, 1868, and violent physical manifestations were obtained, tending to prove that the spirits really had come there from the Marshalls' as they said they would. They told us to sit again on the following day, which we did; some unpleasant messages were obtained and we broke up the *seance*.

DISTURBANCES AT A PUBLIC SEANCE.

On Tuesday evening, August 4th, there was a public *seance* at Mrs. Marshall's, at which sixteen or twenty persons were present, including an unbelieving photographer. At the dark *seance*, when the guitar began to float he thought that it was attached to wires, so he seized it and hurled it across the room, raising a bruise on the arm of Mrs. Varley. John King shouted, "*Mr. — threw that.*" The culprit was not known until his name was thus given by the spirits. This raised an outcry against him, so he called John King a "lying spirit;" he afterwards continued to interrupt the *seance* with strong

remarks and speeches, until John King said, "Mr. — has got hold of the guitar." Then there was another outcry, and the offender was unanimously requested to leave the room, which he did. Later on John King said, "I cannot come close to you people at the further end of the room, because Mr. — is sitting close to the wall in the next room, fretting and fuming fit to burst."

In my diary I find many entries about the developing circle at Wood Green; but no manifestations were obtained at it, except one night while I was away at Norwich. On that occasion a few table tilts were obtained, and one of the sitters felt himself grasped on the shoulder by a strong but invisible hand. One night also, while I was absent at the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Norwich, the table in the nursery at Mr. Varley's house was twisted round while the children were playing near it, which frightened them, so they came downstairs and told what had occurred. The spirits then said that henceforth they wanted our circle to sit in that room instead of downstairs, which was why they called attention to it in the manner described.

On Monday, August 31st, 1868, I first met Miss Houghton, who told me that she and her mother sat for three months every night at a table before they obtained any manifestations, and that she had to wait eighteen months longer before her spirit drawings began.

A PROPHECY.

On Friday, September 4th, 1868, I called upon the Rev. J. Murray Spear for a *seance*, and met him for the first time. He went into the trance state, and told me that I should become "the spiritual reporter," because I was fitted for the work, and could attend spirit circles without interfering with the manifestations or being influenced myself. I wrote to him afterwards, and told him that I thought that this message came from his own mind, while he was in another state of consciousness, and was given in consequence of his knowing me to be connected with newspapers, and thinking that it was desirable I should do the prescribed work.

Years have passed since then, and the sequel shows that he was not so far wrong.

SPIRIT PEOPLE.

MORE CURIOUS MANIFESTATIONS AT MRS. MARSHALL'S.

On Tuesday, September 8th, 1868, I took a highly educated young friend, related to some of the foremost families in Germany, to Mrs. Marshall's. He could speak many languages, and had a general knowledge of the physical and mental sciences, also of mathematics. He seated himself in a cane-bottomed chair, which sprang up and twisted round about ninety degrees while he was sitting upon it; this was in a bright light, and while nobody was sitting near him. He sprang to his feet, turned up the little chair, and looked at the carpet, but could find nothing. Afterwards raps told him that his guardian spirit was present, that her name was "Agapa," and that she died 1,200 years ago. At the dark *seance* John King told me that the spirits had two ways of making raps. They made them ordinarily by gathering some of the aura surrounding the medium, moulding it in their hands as if it were clay, and throwing it down like a ball upon the table, where it made an explosive noise. He illustrated this by making several loud splashes rather than bangs, which might have been heard in the street outside. I asked him how spirits lifted tables. He said that "he sometimes lifted the table personally until it made his shoulders ache, but that generally spirits outside and above the house lifted it with a stream of power under their control; when the table tilted more from one side than another it showed that there was an excess of power on that side." As materialised arms and hands are sometimes formed under tables in the partial darkness there, then are thrust out so that the observers can see them, I am not prepared to say that materialised shoulders may not occasionally be there also. Andrew Jackson Davis, in one of his clairvoyant visions, saw spirits outside and above a dwelling raising tables within the house; I am not now prepared to say whether I had not read this, and afterwards put leading questions to John King on the subject; if so, it detracts from the value of his statement. He said that many spirit friends of the sitters always came to the *seances* with them, but that they had no power of communicating except through the speaking spirits. He said that there is usually a circle of spirits above the

house in which a *seance* is held, corresponding to the circle of mortals below.

I sat next to Mrs. Marshall at this *seance*, and held her hand while John King spoke to me from the opposite side; I could feel his breath blowing into my left ear as he spoke to me, while Mr. and Mrs. Marshall were seated on my right. By close observation I had discovered long before then that John King and Mrs. Marshall never spoke at the same time, in consequence, as we now know, of voice spirits using the breath of the medium when they speak. Thus, by patiently watching the manifestations, instead of hastily forming theories about imposture, I was rewarded by discovering that John King, on this occasion, spoke by the direct voice, quite independently of the medium. At this *seance* my friend put several questions in a provincial German dialect, and he obtained answers in the same language by raps; the answers related to his family affairs and were correct. Some weeks afterwards, he was discovered to be a medium, and I have noticed that when two mediums meet each other for the first time, such test messages are common.

On Saturday, Sept. 12th, 1868, I went alone to a private *seance* with Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, in order to have a long conversation with John King. At first we sat in the light, when the raps said, "*I am your good familiar spirit.*" "Then please tell me who you are." "Yes. *I am yourself.*" I turned to Mrs. Marshall, and asked what was the meaning of these messages. She said that "she did not know; she had never heard any like them before; perhaps it was my 'double,' as some people were said to have doubles of themselves in the spirit world." This was the first I had ever heard of the human double, and it was too great an hypothesis to be suddenly received, so I jumped to the conclusion that probably the message was a joke of John King's. I said, "Will you tell me more in a dark room?" The raps said, "Yes." We entered the dark room, where in a short time some luminous comet-like bodies, about a foot long, thick at the head and tapering away to a fine point at the tail, occasionally flitted about with a curvilinear motion. After a little delay, a voice near me said, "*I am your spirit self. I spoke to you in the other room.*" I still thought it probable that this was a joke of John King's, and did not pursue the conversation, a circumstance I have always regretted, now that we know what an

important part the double, or something that resembles the double, plays in a vast number of spiritual manifestations.

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE STATES OF VOICE SPIRITS.

John King said, in answer to my questions :—" You mortals look to us exactly the same as you look to each other. When a spirit from our world first returns to speak to his mortal friends, he is surprised that they do not answer, for the spirit has to gain experience. Spiritualism will spread, and in time spirits will appear by daylight and talk to mortals, for we have not yet reached the end of our manifestations. The lights you saw were of phosphorus which we took from your bodies. In speaking, we take power from your organs of voice, and your own voice is weak, for I feel it to be so now. We travel as swift as thought, and have the power of visiting other planets, many of which are better than this earth. There are mediums among spirits as well as among mortals, and it is not every spirit who is able to communicate. I belong to the sphere next to your earth, but there are other spheres. Some spirits of the higher spheres communicate with men direct, and others with spirits in my sphere, but the communications are always coloured and altered by the channel they pass through, especially when the mediums are undeveloped. In my sphere there are many different kinds of life, for 'in my Father's house there are many mansions.' Looking forward to my own future, I see a change before me analagous to earthly death, but it is only a kind of sleep, which I must pass through to enter the next stage of being. The hands sometimes seen at spirit circles are not our hands, but hands made by us out of substances taken from the medium; we can make them like our own hands if we like. Some time or other I will bring an artist with me, and draw you some sketches by direct spirit action, showing our arrangements for moving tables."

A great deal of this is now known to be true.

I asked John King if he could then and there go to my home and tell me what was taking place. He replied, "Yes." There was then an interval of two seconds, after which John King said, "There are four persons there who have been having something to eat, and two of them have gone for a walk." I afterwards learned that this was not true.

I asked the spirit who called himself Roger Bacon why he did not give the direct voice manifestations in the light? He

replied, "*Because the light burns up our atmospheres; we like moon-light, or light without heat.*" This spirit always communicated with more difficulty than John King, and his voice usually came from high above our heads; he always claimed that he was a spirit sent there to teach and raise other voice spirits.

A DRAWING TEST.

By this time I had discovered that there was a general sameness in these physical manifestations, and that the messages were much coloured by the opinions of the mediums, and by leading questions put by the sitters, so I ceased to keep a record of all the many *seances* I attended during the next five months, although at the end of that time I recorded from memory several of the chief things that had come under my notice in the interval. During this period I visited Haverfordwest, in company with the medial friend already mentioned, and we made the subject of Spiritualism known to several personal acquaintances there. In one case a rather curious incident occurred. A friend was asked to draw something out of sight of the medium and of everybody else present, to see if the spirit could discover what it was, and copy it through the hand of the medium. The experimentalist went to the other end of the room, and drew something upon a piece of paper. The medium instantly drew two triangles upon one base, and of exactly the same form as those which it was afterwards discovered that the inquirer had drawn upon his piece of paper. It will be remembered that Dr. Maurice Davies, by writing on paper at one end of the room, could get answers from the medium at the other, and Mrs. De Morgan has recorded several similar cases in her book, *From Matter to Spirit* (Longmans).

HAUNTINGS BY A TROUBLED SPIRIT.

One dark night, just about the close of the year 1868, a fierce storm blew over London, and rocked even small houses to their foundations; the wind, after speeding over the flat open country round Beckenham, caught the houses there with such violence as to blow in several of the windows; some of the windows in the tower of Mr. Varley's

house were thus shattered. Mr. Varley was travelling on the Continent at the time. Mrs. Varley and some of the servants got up and did the best they could to stop out the wind by means of shutters and boards, after which Mrs. Varley's maid and a new cook resolved that they would not go to bed again, so lighted a fire in the kitchen, and sat up waiting for day-break; the rest of the servants and Mrs. Varley returned to bed. The new cook had only been in the house a day or two, and had not entered it above half an hour before she learned that her new master and mistress were Spiritualists, upon which she said to the other servants that she wished she had known that before, for then she would not have taken service with such lunatics.

On the stormy night in question, the new cook sat toasting her knees by the kitchen fire, when she looked round and saw what she at first thought to be Mrs. Varley's maid playing tricks with a white sheet over her head, for a woman was standing in the doorway; but on gazing more attentively she found that this woman was clad in dirty white robes, she had dark evil-looking eyes, in one hand she held a staff, in the other a wreath of *immortelles*, and her feet did not touch the ground. As soon as the new cook obtained a fair look at this unexpected visitor she rolled off her chair on to the carpet, and went into a fit of screaming and crying, with her heels kicking on the floor. The noise soon brought Mrs. Varley and some of the servants down to see what was the matter; they did what they could to compose her, and when she began to calm down she gave them the information that she had seen a ghost. Mrs. Varley told her that "it was all nonsense, that it must be fancy, and that only superstitious people believed in ghosts." This was rather a peculiar statement to be made by a medium; it did not quiet the poor girl, who went off into another fit of crying, and did so occasionally during the whole of the next day; in fact, her nerves were thoroughly unstrung, and it was with difficulty that she could be persuaded to remain in the house; after a few days had elapsed, however, the serious impression gradually wore off.

A few days after this incident, Mrs. Varley was walking upstairs, and saw the same woman standing on the top of the first landing. She grew nervous, and thought, "Well, I don't like your appearance," so she turned back and went into the

drawing-room, after which she thought that it was foolish of her as a medium to be afraid of a spirit. One of the younger servants afterwards saw the same apparition, and later still Mrs. Varley saw the woman standing one night in one corner of her bed-room; she then walked up to the apparition with a candle in her hand, and the woman vanished. On another occasion she was walking from one room to another, across the hall, with one of her nephews; the hall was lighted by gas; a slap came upon her back, which they both heard, and which she felt; she turned round sharply, but there was no one there, and she exclaimed, "Oh, it's that woman!" By this time everybody in the house was getting nervous; it was plain that some low spirit was haunting the place, and the servants began to talk about giving warning.

A REMARKABLE SEANCE WITH MR. HOME.

Just at this time, one Sunday afternoon, I went to Fleetwood House, and Mrs. Varley said she would have telegraphed for me had I not have come, for Mr. Home was there, and she wished me to have a *seance* with him, with no strangers present. This was the first occasion on which I ever met Mr. Home in private; for some time previously, I believe, he had been on the Continent. He proposed that a *seance* should be held in the evening, and as accounts had been published of the wonderful things he had done in the way of handling red-hot coals, and putting a red-hot coal on Mr. S. C. Hall's head without burning him, the servants were instructed to make a large fire of coal and coke in the nursery, in which our usual *seances* were held; to that room we all adjourned after tea.

SOLID OBJECTS MOVING WITHOUT BEING TOUCHED.

We sat at a round table, which had a top of about one yard in diameter, supported upon a central stem which branched out into three feet at the bottom. The sitters consisted of Mrs. Varley, her maid, who was a medium, two of her relatives, Mr. Home, and myself. A three-light chandelier was suspended over the table, so there was plenty of light, although we turned it down a little to favour the manifestations. The table began to swing as if it were suspended at the end of a

crane; it rested upon one foot, and, with its upper edge in the air, rocked from side to side, so that the amount of inclination of the top of the table to the plane of the horizon was about 45° . Some cream-laid note paper which had been placed upon it, on which to write down any messages which might be given, began to slide down the inclined surface of the rocking table, when Mr. Home said to the spirits, "Can you stop that paper from sliding?" Two raps came from the table, meaning "perhaps," or that they would try. Soon the paper appeared to be pinned by one corner, as if by an invisible finger, the table rocking more rapidly, and there was the paper swinging also, and apparently fixed to the table by one corner. Then I said, "Can you take it up the table against the force of gravitation?" Two raps again signified that they would try, and after a short pause, the cream-laid note paper was seen travelling a foot or more up the inclined surface of the polished table, under the eyes of all six persons present.

This is one of the prettiest examples of the abnormal movement of a solid object without contact with any human being, that I have ever seen.

REMOVING A TROUBLESOME SPIRIT.

Mr. Home next passed into the trance state, rose from his seat, and went to a corner of the room, then he bent his arm, and appeared to be talking to some invisible person leaning upon it, with whom he walked across the room to the door. He opened the door, and we could see into the passage outside, for a gas-light was burning there. A thought flashed upon the mind of Mrs. Varley, for she exclaimed, "Oh, I know what he's doing, he is turning out that woman." He then went down on his knees in the open doorway, with his face towards the passage, in an attitude of prayer, then he kissed his hand and waved it once or twice as if signalling somebody to depart, after which he rose from the ground, closed the door, and walked towards us. After he had advanced two or three yards from the door, three loud raps came from its surface; this seemed to startle him in his somnambulic state. He paused as if listening, returned to the door, opened it, and again went down on his knees in an attitude of supplication. Once more he kissed his hands, closed the door, came towards us, but again did the three raps greet our ears. Once more he

returned to the door and prayed; he also placed his finger upon his lips, pointing towards Mrs. Varley with the other hand, and shaking his head as much as to say, "You must not go near her again." Then he closed the door, and all was quiet. On returning to his seat he said to Mrs. Varley, while he was still entranced, "She has gone now, and she will never trouble you again." "I know it was very foolish of me to be afraid of her," said Mrs. Varley, "but I prayed for her, and I did all I could for her." "That made her all the more sympathetic, and gave her more power to keep near you, but we have promised to give her what she wants, and she will never trouble you again." "But who was she?" said Mrs. Varley. "Well, she was a poor woman who broke one of nature's laws by committing suicide, and those who break the laws of nature must pay the penalty. She thought that by coming to this house she could get an opportunity of communicating with her friends."

The troubled spirit of the woman was never seen in Mr. Varley's house afterwards.

HANDLING RED-HOT COALS UNDER SPIRIT INFLUENCE.

Mr. Home, still in the trance state, then paced up and down the room, after which he walked to the fire-place and placed his hand on the top of the fire in the act of plunging it in, when I gave a slight shudder. He snatched his hand away from the fire and said, "What did you do that for? You nearly burnt Dan then! You nearly burnt Dan then! Little faith! Little faith!" He walked up and down the room rubbing his hands, and muttering to himself in a discontented tone; then went once more to the fire and looked round at me, saying "Don't you do that again." He next plunged his bare hand into the burning coals, and, after feeling about for a time, brought out a lump about the size of a cricket ball and returned to his seat at our table, holding the coal in the middle of his bare hand, palm uppermost, over the centre of the table and within a few inches of our eyes. We could feel the glow warming our faces, and I noticed that the coal was so hot down to the level where it touched the skin of his hand, that the light from the coal reflected from the surface of the skin made the skin itself

appear to be incandescent at places. He held the coal in this position for two or three minutes, during which time he gave us a short lecture to the effect that "God did not care for great stone buildings with weather-cocks on the top, but the churches he loved were kind words, warm hearts, and loving deeds." After he had finished his discourse the coal was nearly black, except down in the cracks, from the depths of which a red glow still issued, when he remarked, "Perhaps some of you may think that it is not hot now. You may touch it if you like." Upon this, one gentleman present put out his hand, touched the coal, then drew his hand back with a shake, exclaiming, "Yes, by Jove, it is hot!" which was a somewhat irreverent remark to make in the presence of such a great manifestation of power. The entranced medium then drew back his hand, and said in a quiet, dignified way, "No, *not* by Jove!" upon which the first speaker looked considerably rebuked, and said, "Well Dan, I know I ought not to have said it. No harm has been done, I hope. I did not mean any harm," whereupon the medium remarked, "Oh no, no harm to Jove," and continued his discourse.

A MARVELLOUS MANIFESTATION OF SPIRIT POWER.

At this moment a rocking-horse at the further end of the room, belonging to one of the children, began to rock of its own accord, and continued to do so steadily for some time. Next Mr. Home, still entranced, rose from his seat, and came round to my side of the table, and as he stood by my left side, Mrs. Varley exclaimed, "Look! they are stretching him," and I noticed that the bottom of his waistcoat, and the top of his trousers were separating, so as to disclose a white garment underneath. All the time his heels were making half-second beats on the floor, to show that he was not standing upon tiptoe, and his body proceeded apparently to elongate, after which it contracted; but I thought to myself that if the power about him were to raise his waistcoat and let it fall in the manner described, there might be an appearance of elongation, without such really being the case, and I wished that I had observed whether the top of his head obscured the pattern of the paper on the wall behind while his head rose, thus making sure of the fact of elongation. Although I said nothing, this doubt of mine was apparently read, for the

entranced medium put down both his hands, raised my hands from the table, and placed one of them over each of his hips; then, with his heels beating upon the ground as before, the top of his trousers and the bottom of his waistcoat again separated till they were clear of each of my hands, by about half an inch, above and below, and all this time I could see his rising head cutting off my view of more and more of the pattern of the paper on the wall behind, after which his body contracted again.

Lord Lindsay, a nobleman well known for his scientific acquirements, also Mr. H. D. Jencken, a member of the Royal Institution, and a well-known barrister, have, with others, testified to having seen the same very unbelievable manifestation in other places, and under such conditions that the elongation could be accurately measured. Lord Lindsay's testimony was given by him to the Dialectical Society, and is published in their report (Longmans, 1871,) page 207. He says:—"I saw Mr. Home, in a trance, elongated eleven inches. I measured him standing up against the wall, and marked the place. . . . I can swear that he was not off the ground or standing on tip-toe, as I had full view of his feet, and moreover, a gentleman present had one of his feet placed over Home's insteps, one hand on his shoulder, and the other on his side where the false ribs came near the hip-bone." The facts indicate the existence of some general inter-atomic repulsive force, which under certain conditions can push asunder the multifarious atoms of various descriptions, which build up the different parts of the human body.

THE FIRE TEST AGAIN.

I asked the controlling spirit how it was that the coal did not burn Mr. Home's hands while he was handling it? He replied that "all the time the coal was in the hand the spirits were sending a stream of some force, of which we knew nothing, down the arm and hand, and thus counteracted the influence of the heat; if the flow of that stream had been stopped for an instant, the coal would have burnt his hand." Mr. Home then went to the fireplace once more, and after turning over the coals again with his bare hand, brought out the largest piece in the grate. It was a piece of coke having the shape of a rough pyramid; the base of it nearly covered

the palm of his hand and the fingers, and it was about eight inches high. This lump of coke was so hot, that as he walked round the nursery with it on the palm of his hand, the light from the coke threw a glow over the walls of the room, which glow was clearly visible in spite of the fair amount of gaslight tending to obscure it. He carried this lump of coke in one hand for three or four minutes, then dropped it into the fender, and so ended my first and best *seance* with Mr. Home.

SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS IN THE ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN DARK
CIRCLE MANIFESTATIONS IN THE LIGHT.

Early in January, 1869, I tried some experiments at Mrs. Marshall's, at Paddington, in the attempt to abolish dark *seances* by the use of monochromatic light. I constructed a dark lantern, with a paraffin flame inside, the light from which flame was made to pass through glass troughs filled with various solutions, before the rays entered the room in which the *seance* was held; for example, in one glass trough I sometimes placed a solution of ammonio-sulphate of copper, a salt which is of a beautiful blue colour, and in the other glass trough I placed a solution of alum, which is colourless. Solutions of alum have the power of cutting off most of the heat rays which accompany light, but are not visible to the eye, for the dark rays from the sun and other luminous sources contain eight or nine times more warmth than those rays which can be seen by the eye. The alum thus cut off most of the heat rays; the warmest of the visible rays, namely, the red, yellow, and green, were interrupted and absorbed by the ammonio-sulphate of copper. Thus I obtained a rich blue light, so cool as to be incapable of producing a tithe of the molecular disturbance which is invariably set up in material substances by the action of ordinary white light. I first tried this light in the presence of a large circle of friends, among whom were Mrs. Varley, Mr. G. R. Tapp, a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and several scientific witnesses. Great shadows were seen moving over the walls of the dimly illuminated room while my lamp was standing on the floor behind us at one side of the room. So far the matter was thought to be a success, until I looked round to see whether anything caused these shadows, and I saw Mrs. Marshall's cat walking backwards and forwards before the blue solution, and rubbing

against the front of my lamp as if it had been placed there for her special entertainment. We did not get the direct spirit voice from any part of the room illuminated by the flame, but once in the course of the *seance* I saw a guitar floating in the air, between my eyes and the illuminated part of the wall; this circumstance I now attribute, however, more to the harmonious character of the circle, than to the beneficial effects of the monochromatic light. I have since discovered that the supply of the right mental conditions at *seances* has infinitely more power in bringing about manifestations than any such physical modifications as these; in a circle with thoroughly affectionate and truthful people, where such a proposition as that of tying the medium or holding each other would be thought degrading to the character of everybody present, manifestations are witnessed in the light which cannot be obtained with equal power under other conditions. Those who wish to make headway in the investigation of the nature of spirit life and spirit power, should begin by reforming their own hearts and their own lives, instead of playing with lamps, and ammonio-sulphate of copper.

PAID MEDIUMS.

At this time, that is to say early in January, 1869, I visited all the mediums who advertised in the spiritual magazines, for there was then no newspaper in the movement; and I must say that I felt greatly indebted to paid mediums. I could not expect private mediums to sit for me whenever I desired to see manifestations, and I felt that to obtain practical proof of the reality of the life beyond the grave was worthy of any amount of expenditure. Consequently, if the vitality of the medium were exhausted, and his or her premises were used in displaying these phenomena, I felt that the mediums were as much entitled to recompense as the ministers or clergy of any denomination; indeed, rather more so, because mediums can prove that they actually possess some powers connected with the realms of spirit, whereas in the case of preachers, we have merely their own assertions backed by hereditary authority, which we are not allowed to examine or to question.

MR. HERNE'S CLAIRVOYANCE.

In this month of January I first met Mr. Herne, and was the first person for whom he ever sat professionally. I find the following remark about him in my shorthand diary:—“Mr. Herne is a promising medium, about nineteen or twenty years of age. He says that he sees spirits; they are dressed in loose robes, drawn in round the neck and having a girdle at the waist. Some of these spirits are always near mediums, making passes over them and showering down flowers. Mr. Herne says that he sees coloured auras round all people; a green aura he does not like, for it implies there is something bad in the person. Blue is symbolical of wisdom, and red of love.”

This first *seance* of mine with him took place at 3, Tyssen-place, Shacklewell-green, not far from the rooms in which we meet this evening.

STRANGE MESMERIC PHENOMENA.

One evening this month of January, 1869, Mrs. Varley called upon my young German friend and his wife. After casting his eyes upon Mrs. Varley, and muttering a few remarks, he abruptly left the room, which was thought to be strange behaviour. He had never seen her before. After the lapse of about half an hour, he returned and fell down in a trance, in which state he remained all the evening. Mr. Tapp, and, I think, Mr. Keningale Cook were present on the occasion. A few days later the young German went to Mrs. Varley's by invitation, and had not entered the room above two minutes when he passed into a state of insensibility, and sank to the floor. It was thus accidentally discovered that he could never remain in Mrs. Varley's presence in a conscious state, although she had not made any attempt to mesmerise him, and nobody on the first occasion knew what was the matter with him. As he was rather sensitive to public opinion, he took it into his head that he was being laughed at because he could not enter Mrs. Varley's presence without losing consciousness, and this thought was intolerable to one who had been an officer in the Prussian army. He accordingly screwed up his courage, and paid a third visit to Beckenham, when he fell down insensible as before.

He averred for weeks afterwards that on that occasion everybody else in the room went into a trance, whilst he was the only one who remained in a rational state. This third experience frightened him, and from that time he abstained from going anywhere where he thought he might meet Mrs. Varley. One evening he was at one of the Royal Institution lectures while she was present, but on the opposite side of the theatre: directly he saw her, the sleepy look came over his eyes, and he averted his gaze; after a time he rose from his seat, and went out. At subsequent meetings this power of Mrs. Varley over him gradually died away, until he was no longer mesmerically affected by her presence. I have never seen or heard of another case of mesmerism resembling this one.

CLAIRVOYANT AND TRANCE MANIFESTATIONS.

On Sunday, Feb. 21, 1869, at one of the sittings of our private circle at Beckenham, Mrs. Varley passed into the clairvoyant state, and saw the departed relatives of some of the sitters present; it was a deeply interesting *seance*.

By this time I had discovered that high teachings or wise revelations scarcely ever accompanied powerful physical manifestations, so for some months I gave time to the study of trance mediumship, attending dozens of *seances*. At first I saw only the beauty of the messages, but as experience was gained, I discovered how much the communications were coloured by the thoughts of the medium, and I found that I could get no evidence of spirit identity, or of the presence of the spirits of departed persons known to me, from those mediums to whom I had access; also that the best ideas in the best messages had been equalled by writers upon religious subjects who had no medial powers. Consequently, after some months of such examination, I was obliged to go back to the physical manifestations, in the attempt to discover some of the laws and conditions governing spiritual phenomena; for the same laws and conditions, when discovered, apply to a great extent to the trance and higher forms of mediumship, but could not be discovered in the first instance by the examination of trance and clairvoyance, the effects of disturbing conditions and of favouring influences being so much more intangible than when dealing with physics.

SPIRIT IDENTITY.

I have already mentioned that notwithstanding the hundreds of *seances* I have attended with celebrated mediums, on only two occasions have I had any evidence coming home to myself of spirit identity. The first case has already been stated, so the second example may be introduced here.

One evening, about five years ago, at a *seance* at the residence of the Rev. J. Murray Spear, near Bryanstone-square, I met an American lady, Mrs. C. Anderson, who was well acquainted with many leading Spiritualists in the United States, and whose personal experiences, narrated to me that evening, were of considerable interest. She is the same lady who, a few months ago, published an account in *The Spiritualist* setting forth how a spirit light illuminated the road, as she and friends were driving home in the Isle of Wight, on a pitchy dark night.

After our first meeting she went to Heidelberg, and I saw and heard no more of her for a very long time, until she returned from Germany, and one evening asked me to call upon her at Pimlico. She told me how she had been developed as a test writing medium, and in the course of the evening her hand wrote—"Your uncle James is here." I said that it was true I had an uncle James, but the spirits were out in their reckoning, for he was not dead. It was then written—"He was here a few minutes ago, while his body was asleep; he is dangerously ill, and it will be a *narrow shave* if he recovers." I replied that so far as I knew there was nothing the matter with him.

That Sunday night I narrated the circumstance at home on my return, and was told that my uncle James, who was a farmer in the country, was well enough when last heard from, so the spirits of Mrs. Anderson must be in error.

Next morning (Monday) a telegram arrived stating that he was dangerously ill, and before the night of Monday he departed this life.

Mrs. Anderson knew nothing of me or my relatives. I knew nothing of my uncle's illness, and he was not in my mind when the message was given, so this is a fair instance of spirit power revealing facts not previously in the mind of the medium, or in the thoughts of any of the sitters.

The recent revelations proving that the spirits of mortals

can travel during the sleep of their bodies, tend still further to remove this case from the region of accidental coincidence.

THE FOUNDING OF "THE SPIRITUALIST" NEWSPAPER.

In the spring of 1869, interesting conferences in connection with Spiritualism were held regularly at Lawson's Rooms, Gower-street, London. Some of the foremost workers in the movement, such as Mrs. Hardinge, Mr. Luxmoore, Mr. A. R. Wallace, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Enmore Jones, Mr. S. C. Hall, and others, addressed the public from its platform. Most of the interesting experiences related at those meetings are now lost, because no records were taken except shorthand notes of one or two by Mr. Tapp, which may or may not be now in his possession. Several of the speakers therefore complained from the platform of the want of a newspaper in the spiritual movement to publish records of such meetings, so as we had no newspaper at that time, there being nothing but monthly periodicals filled with magazine literature, I resolved to bring out a newspaper which should give news and reports of meetings, and furthermore should be adapted to meet the requirements of minds of a scientific order. *The Spiritualist* newspaper was accordingly first published in the course of 1869, as a fortnightly journal, with the announcement in its first leading article that it would be brought out weekly as soon as such a step was considered to be reasonable. Afterwards, in the natural course of events, other newspapers came into the field, but when the system was introduced by them into our movement of asking money from the public to keep them going, I held aloof from the subscription system because I did not like asking for money, and had never had anything to do with any newspaper which was a financial burden to the general public. The consequence was, that for three years thousands upon thousands of pounds of the money subscribed with the best intentions by Spiritualists were sunk in competition with me, without even my private friends being told what heavy financial injuries were thus inflicted on me, and I worked for and paid out for years single-handed all the expenses thus quite unintentionally and with the best of motives inflicted upon me. I do not say this by way of complaint against anybody, for if I had spoken of the injury the public were doing me, they would probably have provided a re-

medy, as a few kind friends have recently done. It was my own fault for not speaking out sooner; I kept silence for three or four years, in consequence of being full of Utopian ideas about Spiritualism being too sacred a subject for the introduction of the grievances or sufferings of individuals.

NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

My later experiences are probably well known to most of you, because so many of them have been published. Two or three years ago I saw that dissension and disunion were springing up in Spiritualism, and that these might have been nipped in the bud had there been any public body elected by free vote to deal impartially with the questions at issue, since it was evident that the decision of solitary individuals on such matters would carry little weight. The existence of an elected court of appeal, should anybody ask for one, would be a protection to good workers, and a terror to evil-doers of all kinds, who previously could impute personal motives to any single individual who might try to check any malpractices. Organisation also would strengthen the movement, and give Spiritualists the power of managing their own public business.

In April, 1873, I accordingly published an article suggesting national organisation, and united friendly action amongst Spiritualists, sketching out much the same scheme which is now at work, and at the Liverpool Conference, towards the close of the same year, Mr. Chapman and myself read papers advocating the same views. The result of the proceedings of that Conference has been the formation of the British National Association of Spiritualists, which I believe to be one of the best steps taken of late years for the welfare of the movement, and to rest upon the solid foundations of honour, truth, and usefulness.

In the course of my narrative this evening, I have made reference to no more than a small fraction of the number of *seances* which I attended, while practically examining some of the foundations upon which modern Spiritualism rests, before throwing my life into the movement, and starting *The Spiritualist* newspaper. Records of many of those *seances* would be of no interest to you; in fact, a very large amount of time has to be sacrificed in observing tangled masses of phenomena, in

order to gain a very small amount of newly discovered scientific law. Progress in building up a sound philosophy upon the facts of modern Spiritualism would be considerably facilitated if disbelievers and non-spiritualists were not admitted to any of the *seances* at which the more advanced phenomena are produced, until they have made themselves acquainted with the simpler facts of the subject, and fully understand the conditions to be observed at spirit circles. Would the Astronomer Royal place the great equatorial telescope at Greenwich Observatory in the hands of a man who knew nothing of astronomy? He would rather tell the tyro to begin his inquiry at home with simpler and rougher instruments, until he understood the conditions of working, until he was able to appreciate the value of better appliances, and could see the un wisdom of employing delicate and valuable instruments for the performance of rough elementary work.

THE DISCUSSION.

At the close of the reading of the foregoing paper,

The Chairman, in a few complimentary remarks, said that the thanks of the meeting were due to Mr. Harrison for the interesting paper he had just read. He (Captain James) was but a recent investigator into the nature of Spiritualism, a subject into which he had been inquiring for eight months only, but he fully believed in all the phenomena which he had seen during that period. He had had great advantages in studying the subject, because during a large portion of his life he had made himself practically acquainted with the subject of mesmerism. When he first began to inquire into Spiritualism he asked who had the largest practical knowledge of the subject, and some one had told him Mr. Harrison and Mr. Tapp; he therefore thought that Mr. Tapp ought to have occupied the chair that evening, and he hoped that he would do so during the discussion.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF INQUIRERS.

Mr. Tapp said that his modesty would have deterred him from taking the chair, and he was sure that every one present was pleased to see Captain James presiding over the meeting

that evening. He did not know, before the paper was read, that Mr. Harrison had kept such exhaustive notes of those earlier *seances*; he (Mr. Tapp) had been present at many of them. If it had not been for Mr. Harrison, he would never have inquired into Spiritualism at all; in fact, he kept no records of the earlier *seances* he attended, but after a time he discovered the vast importance of the subject, also its many difficulties, then saw the value of accurate records of facts; he had, therefore, made careful notes of everything he had seen during the last four years, and possibly his records would some day be published. (Hear, hear.) If Mr. Harrison were to go further with his account, and publish the chief things he had witnessed during the past five years, the narrative would be so very startling to those who knew nothing about Spiritualism, that they would most likely consider it unworthy of belief; only those who had some practical knowledge of the subject and had been educated by experience to a certain point, could receive and appreciate the value of the more remarkable phenomena. After a very short experience he discovered there was no royal road to obtaining a knowledge of Spiritualism. Many people thought they only had to sit round a table, and their departed friends and relatives—the spirits of the just made perfect—would return to talk to them; that was very pretty in theory, it looked beautiful in print, and sounded grand when spoken from the lips of platform orators, but hard experience did not bear out the truth of the assertion. Inquirers had to fight with many difficulties, some of which were even calculated to frighten and deter them, so that it required both courage and perseverance to proceed, and a great deal had to be observed before the first grain of truth was obtained, but when obtained, it was of all the more value, and served as a stepping-stone to the discovery of other truths; he wished therefore to impress upon inquirers that it was only by hard work and strict research that they could learn the real nature of these wonderful phenomena. What the spirits were, where they came from, and the means they employed to produce their manifestations were still matters of mystery, contravening what our men of science at present understand to be the laws of nature. Nothing conclusive was yet known as to the way in which the materialised spirit form was built up; the spirits said that they took some of the atoms com-

posing it from the body of the medium, some from the sitters present, some from the atmosphere, but it seemed to him that the spirits were as much in the dark about these manifestations as were the mortal observers, so that knowledge had to be worked for on both sides. Many things were done in common life that could not be explained, such as the raising of the arm in obedience to the action of the will. It was only by painstaking research on earth, and the acquisition of knowledge by the spirits on the other side that the mystery could be unravelled. Inquirers should not be disgusted by first failures and difficulties, but have patience, and make careful observations. Mr. Harrison had given the last seven or eight years of his life in order to gain a large and unbiassed knowledge of the facts of the subject, and had stuck to his task well all the time, the work being on his part a pure labour of love, and every fact of value he seemed to have carefully recorded; consequently, he had a most extensive knowledge of the subject, and perhaps there was hardly anybody in the whole of the spiritual movement who knew so much about the proved facts of Spiritualism. He would therefore propose a vote of thanks to him for the excellent paper he had read. (Applause.)

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM.

Mr. G. W. Forbes Playfair said that he had listened with pleasure to the paper, and rose to second the proposed vote of thanks. The narrative given to them that evening had been clear and unbiassed. From what experience he (Mr. Playfair) had had in Spiritualism, he saw that its votaries had different religious beliefs, and he wished that Mr. Harrison had said something upon the religious aspects of the question. He should like to ask him whether Spiritualism did or did not tend to alter the current beliefs of the day. There seemed to be as many different sects and creeds inside Spiritualism as there were outside; had Mr. Harrison formed any opinions on this subject? He had much pleasure in seconding the motion.

The motion was then put by the Chairman, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. Harrison, in returning thanks, said: My thanks are due to your society for the invitation to read the paper here this evening. The Dalston Association is the oldest and best-

managed local society in London; it has managed its own affairs well, and has proved itself competent to deal with all the difficulties of the position, so that it has never been a financial burden to the movement. In reply to the question of Mr. Playfair, I think that Spiritualism has a powerful religious influence of a negative character; that is to say, that when people get thoroughly interested in its facts it tends to sweep away narrow-minded notions which previously were dying a slower natural death, and it leaves the mind free for the reception of new ideas. Thus it acts as a mental stimulus, and promotes freedom of thought, which in itself is a great blessing, for I lay it down as an unquestionable truth that every man ought to have the most unbounded freedom of thought, and that the more we permit other people to do our thinking for us, and to govern us as they please, the more shall we suffer, and the lower will be the level of national happiness. These principles hold good both with respect to nations and to individuals. But as to the positive teachings of Spiritualism, I think that many of the assertions uttered from our platforms in the name of Spiritualism cannot be substantiated by facts, and that some of the utterances can be absolutely contradicted by an appeal to the real circumstances of the case. Directly people begin to think freely, and to get rid of old notions, new ones spring up naturally in their places; these new ones are more adapted to the requirements of the age, consequently these "ideas of individuals" get put forward as "the teachings of Spiritualism." The messages through mediums are as a general rule tremendously coloured, quite unconsciously to themselves, by their own opinions; in fact, if any spirit communicates who teaches what they think he ought not to teach, they drive him away and call him wicked. Through a teetotal medium the spirits teach teetotalism; through another medium, like Mrs. Marshall, for instance, they will recommend bottled stout, so in the middle of all this fog and perplexity, we have to separate that which comes from a spiritual source from that which comes from the medium, and long years of research will have to pass before this can be done with anything like certainty. The teachings through trance mediums are more true to nature and to the inner responses of the human heart than many of the artificial creeds of the day, hence they go home to the hearts of the listeners as infinitely superior to ordinary ser-

mons. To judge trance addresses by another standard, namely, the free-thinking utterances of the most intelligent men who have reverently sought after religious truth by the exercise of their normal powers—the same teachings in better language, and supported by more cogent reasoning will be found in their books than in most of the utterances of trance mediums. Thus, I take it that the first religious effect of Spiritualism is to clear the ground of weeds, and to promote free thought, after which the facts of Spiritualism are too few at present to warrant much positive teaching. A large proportion of the positive teaching which has sprung up arises from the exercise of normal common-sense thought, but very little of it from the spirits of the departed.

Mr. Parkes then proposed a vote of thanks to Captain James for the able manner in which he had occupied the chair. This was seconded by Mr. T. Blyton, and carried with acclamation. The meeting then broke up.

