

MODERN
SPIRITUALISM:
AN
EXAMINATION AND EXPOSURE.

BY G. H. REDDALLS,

(AN "INFIDEL MEDIUM.")

—O—

"If charnel-houses, and our graves, must send
Those that we bury, back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites."

* * * * *

"The times have been,
That, when a man's brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end : but now, they rise again."

—*Macbeth.*

—O—

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That, when a man's brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end : but now, they rise again."
—*Macbeth*.

GLENDOWER—I can call up spirits from the vasty deep.
HOTSPUR—Well, so can I—
—*King Henry IV.*

—

Professional conjurors are utterly unable to produce anything like the spiritual manifestations, if subjected to the conditions imposed on the Medium. Even the simple phenomena—the simplest of all—of table-rapping can only be produced with the aid of elaborate machinery.—Dr. G. SEXTON, Editor of the *Christian Spiritualist*.

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MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

READING the history of the Witch mania that afflicted Europe a few centuries ago, one could hardly credit that mankind—old and young, wise and foolish—could be so misled by their prejudices and imaginations, and by the superstitious teachings of a book which has been characterised by JOHN STUART MILL as only fitted for a barbarous age and a barbarous people, were it not that we find its counterpart in our own day. What has been called Modern Spiritualism might more appropriately be designated Modern Witchcraft, for it is simply a revival, under a somewhat different form, of the older superstition. The absurd stories related by Modern Spiritualists are similar in character to those that were at one time circulated by the believers in witchcraft. The ancient Witch—withered, ugly, and old—has been superseded by the modern “medium,” —“ fat, fair, and forty.” They are both said to travel through the air, but the latter dispenses with the broomstick which has always been regarded as requisite to the arial flights of her prototype. The Witches had their “Sabbaths,” at which they held their midnight revels with the “imps of hell,” and mediums now follow the example thus set them, and have their “dark seances” at which they “hold communion with the dead.” It might be said of mediums as it used to be said of Witches “they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”

It is a standing argument with Spiritualists that no one can examine the claims of Spiritualism honestly and without prejudice for even a few months without being convinced of its truth. Those who presume to criticise its claims are accused of prejudice and

ignorance, and of the unfairness resulting therefrom. So far as I am concerned, at least, this argument possesses no force whatever. By the force of circumstances I was thrown into the society of Spiritualists, conversed with them, read their literature, and attended their meetings regularly for about two years. No one could have given it a fairer examination. At the time I commenced my inquiry I was a Christian, though slightly heterodox and dissatisfied with the prevailing modes of faith, and was in a state of mind most favourable to the acceptance of Spiritualism if proof of its truth had been forthcoming. No proof, however, was ever given me, and when I ceased to attend so-called Spiritual *seances* regularly, I could sincerely declare, as I do now, that throughout my experience of "spiritual manifestations," I have seen nothing which might not be accounted for without appealing to the Spiritual theory. My experience of "Spiritualism" only helped to destroy my faith in Christianity—for which I am grateful—while it failed to convince me that it had anything better to offer. I commenced my investigation a Christian—I closed it, an opponent of all supernaturalism.

To those who wish to know how credulous and superstitious man can be, I would say—study Spiritualism. Its history is one of self-delusion and wilful deception—self-delusion, on the part of the honest dupes of the movement, and wilful deception practised by many who are living upon the simplicity of the credulous believers.

Modern Spiritualism may be said to date its origin just a quarter of a century back. The first systematic communication with the invisible world was opened in the house of a Methodist, named Fox, at a little village called Hydesville, on the outskirts of New York, in 1848. The Fox family soon became notorious, and visitors thronged to the "haunted house," and as a charge of one dollar for admission was made, there can be little doubt the occupants were materially as well as spiritually benefited. The mania for spirit-rapping and table-turning rapidly spread throughout America and extended to England, where, however, it received a sudden check from the hands of the great electrician,

Professor FARADAY, who demonstrated that where wilful deception was not practised the movements of the tables were due to involuntary muscular action. Though checked for a time the believers were not convinced. The spiritual hypothesis was far more congenial to their minds than the purely natural one. They increased in numbers in England and America, and, in fact, extended their influence throughout Europe. To-day we are told that the believers are numbered in England by thousands while in America they are numbered by millions.

The rapid spread of a belief, however, is of no value as evidence of its truth. The claims to acceptance of no "ism" can be judged by the number of its adherents. If it were otherwise, the practice of idolatry would be a duty, and the divine origin of Mormonism would have to be admitted. What is wanted is proof of the truth of that which is believed. History has furnished so many proofs of the "madness of crowds" that the expression has become proverbial, and rational men decline to follow in the wake of one without good reason. Man is naturally a superstitious animal, but his superstition is but the measure of his ignorance. Spiritualists witness "manifestations" the causes of which they are unable to discern, and they at once ignorantly ascribe them to "spirit power." As GEORGE HENRY LEWES has pointed out, Spiritualistic logic, by a common fallacy, "confounds the cause it does not know with an unknown cause." Spiritualistic "facts," as a rule, are as unreliable as their syllogisms are fallacious. Very few Spiritualists appear to acknowledge that man does not always see what he thinks he sees, that he is apt to draw false inferences from appearances and credit them as the evidence of his senses,—to take the creation of his own imagination for real objective existences.

With the Spiritualist it is a settled question that after having "shuffled off this mortal coil" he still retains consciousness, and can communicate with the friends he has left behind. With pretensions to scientific knowledge which they do not possess and an affectation of Free-thought, Spiritualists combine a dogmatic belief in the most outrageous and mischievous superstitions.

Nothing appears to be too incredible for their acceptance. The miracles of CHRIST are scarcely to be compared with the wonders of Spiritualism. The Four Gospels are eclipsed by the papers published in the interests of the new religion. The accounts of a table dancing a polka or a ghost appearing in regimentals, of a spirit coming down a chimney and blackening the faces of the persons present or sitting to have its photograph taken, of the transportation of a medium a distance of forty miles through the air or the appearance of the ghost of a water-bottle, are related with the utmost seriousness in Spiritual periodicals. According to these publications spirits are not content thus to "revisit the glimpses of the moon," but they interfere in worldly affairs in a manner which, if true, would make one desire them to return whence they came as speedily as possible. It must be anything but consoling to believe that we are surrounded with innumerable mischievous sprites, who delight in damaging our furniture, and who are only watching an opportunity to run away with any little valuable one may have in one's house, and convey it into the possession of a medium. We read of this kind of thing being done, and the editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*, the principal organ of the Spiritualists in England, admits that, though it is rather unfortunate, many of the spirits will be so mischievous.

The Spiritual theory is as uninviting as it is unsatisfactory. One might easily be excused for preferring annihilation to being ushered into a world, the occupants of which appear to have no more elevating employment than knocking tables and chairs about, playing on accordians and tambourines, and talking high flown rhodomontade—similar to Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan's "inspirations"—to those who are willing to pay for and have patience to listen to it; and all this for the sole benefit of a few men and women in the "spirit trade," who advertise regularly their "places of business" where strangers may "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," on payment of from one shilling to two guineas, or even more, the "terms" "donation," or "fee," as it is variously called, depending upon the reputation of the medium.

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I do not charge all "spirit mediums" with being guilty of intentional imposition. On the contrary I have met with a few whom I believe to be thoroughly honest. I believe these deceived themselves before they commenced to deceive others. Besides, the phenomena they professed to have the power to produce, with the help of the spirits in attendance upon them, were of a comparatively simple character, and are easily explainable without accepting any supernatural hypothesis. I have invariably found that those mediums with whom I have come in contact who lay claim to extraordinary powers, unexplainable by any natural hypothesis, were persons who were least worthy of credit. Their characters were either bad or weak. I could give several instances of the dishonesty of some mediums and the propensity for "evolving facts from their inner consciousness" possessed by others. One medium, in Nottingham, through whom some wonderful revelations were said to have been given, was eventually charged at the Police Court with robbing the widow lady with whom she resided, and whom she had imposed upon with pretended communications from her husband. Another case is that of an apparently respectable young lady who was at one time a medium. She related an account of a *seance* which she had attended, and at which a small table had danced about the room without human contact! Perceiving that I appeared incredulous she assured me it was true. Upon asking who were present besides herself, the names of several gentlemen were given, with one of which I was acquainted. I called upon him a few days afterwards when I was informed that he was favourably disposed towards Spiritualism, but he never in his life saw anything of the kind. He had never been present at a *seance* at which a table had moved without contact!

I am prepared to admit the ordinary manifestations of table tilting and turning, and even the simplest forms of trance "mediumship," but all these kinds of phenomena are explainable without plunging into the supernatural. Professor FARADAY years ago demonstrated that the phenomena known as "table turning" was due to unconscious muscular action, and, where

the honesty of the "mediums" is beyond question, table-tilting may be proved to be the result of the same cause. Involuntary muscular action frequently takes place in obedience to a dominant idea. This fact is illustrated in the history of almost all those epidemic religious delusions which have appeared and are appearing in the world. The Convulsionaries, Irvingites, Jumpers, Quakers, and Shakers, besides Spiritualists, might be cited as cases in point. Under the influence of an idea, men, women, and children have thrown themselves into convulsions, have jumped about until they have fallen down upon the ground from sheer exhaustion, and have jabbered a lot of twaddle under the impression that they were talking in unknown tongues.

That the communications purporting to come from the spirit land are but a reflex of the medium's own thoughts and desires, is practically admitted by Spiritualists, for they endeavour to account for the similarity existing between the communications and the knowledge and thoughts of the medium by the hypothesis that like attracts like—that spirits are attracted towards those in the flesh having similar mental characteristics to their own—an ingenious theory to account for a suspicious fact. I once attended a *seance* in Birmingham, at which the medium was a Mrs. Downs. There were about eight persons present. The room was darkened and we sat round the table. After a short time the table began to rock, and several questions were asked and replied to; one knock signifying "No," and three knocks "Yes." A "spirit" expressed its wish to communicate with one of the persons sitting at the table. Several of the sitters asked if with them, but a negative reply was given to each. I then asked, "Is it with me?" "Yes." "Is it my Grandmother THOMPSON?" The table hesitated a moment, and then replied, "No." "Is it Cousin JOHN?" "Yes." Have you seen Grandmother THOMPSON and Cousin Ellen in the spirit world." "Yes." "How many miles from here is the place where you resided when in the flesh?" The table knocked out "Seven." This conversation appears on the face of it clear and satisfactory, but, unfortunately for the credit of the spirits, Grand-

mother THOMPSON and Cousins JOHN and ELLEN were purely mythical personages, and even Spiritualists could not imagine the possibility of a spirit that never existed replying to questions. It is evident that the medium was led astray by my leading questions, and the replies were in accordance with the ideas with which I purposely impressed her.

It is urged that the evidence of the many respectable witnesses of "spiritual phenomena" must have some weight. In reply to this, I object to the value of any testimony to the occurrence of phenomena opposed to all that has been learned of the order of Nature and the processes employed in carrying on her operations. I do not say the testimony cannot be true. I only say that to me it appears easier to believe that a man lies, or has been deceived, than that what appears directly opposed to experience of the facts of Nature should be true. Something more than testimony is required, and that is—demonstration. Again, in the more extraordinary occurrences stated to have taken place a manifest motive exists for deception. They principally take place in the houses or in the presence of mediums who have a direct and pecuniary interest in keeping up the delusion. Some idea of the value of "testimony" in proving "spiritual phenomena" can be gained by the fact that respectable witnesses have testified to the genuineness of manifestations, which have been admitted to have been produced by trickery, as is abundantly proved in the Appendix.

It is, however, of the more remarkable phases of so-called "spirit phenomena," and the pretensions of "physical manifestation mediums" that I have to write. It is persons like those who played upon the credulity of Professor CROOKES, who did his best to dignify Spiritualism by attributing their trickery to "psychic force," that I have to expose.

Nearly all the principal "Spirit Mediums" have, at one time or another, been exposed and denounced as impostors. On one occasion, some months ago, at a *seance* held in London, a Mr. VOLCKMAN threw his arms round the waist of what purported to be the "spirit" of "Katey King," but which he suspected, with very good reason, to be the "medium," Miss

Florence Cook. The "spirit" instead of "melting into thin air," as orthodox spirits are said to do,—scratched Mr. Volckman's face! Mr. Volckman was, however, compelled to let the "spirit" have its liberty, as he was at once violently assailed by the Spiritualists present, and the medium then made her escape.

Another "lady medium," a Miss SHOWERS, was detected some time ago by Serjeant Cox with a white head-dress on, with the aid of which she was simulating a "spirit form."

Dr. MONCK, another "celebrated medium," was denounced some time ago as a trickster by Mr. SIMKISS, a Spiritualist of Wolverhampton, with whom he had been staying.

At a *seance* at which the far-famed Mrs. GUPPY was present, Dr. EDMONDS exposed an attempt at fraud. A sheet of paper was placed in a portfolio upon the table. Just before commencing the *seance* it was proposed that the paper should be marked, and upon the portfolio being reopened for this purpose it was discovered that what had seemed to be an ordinary sheet of quarto letter paper, was in reality three-quarters of a twice-folded sheet, the third quarter being *folded inwards*, and containing an elaborately drawn figure of an angel. If this had not been detected there can be little doubt it would have been palmed off as a genuine "spirit drawing."

A correspondent of the "English Mechanic," (April 10, 1874), says:—"In 1871 Mr. SPILLER did actually catch Mr. HOME pushing a table, tilting up the legs of his chair, &c., while Mr. CROOKES, poor credulous Mr. CROOKES, sat by taking notes in the most childlike faith that the dear spirits were active agents in the production of the movements." When Mr. HOME was subjected to a strict test by scientific men at St. Petersburg, the *seance* was a complete failure, and Mr. HOME found himself "unable" to give them another trial.

Mr. and Mrs. HOLMES, who lately left London for America, have been exposed in that country by the young woman whom they had engaged to personate the spirit of "Katey King," and both ROBERT DALE OWEN and Dr. SLADE, who had given their testimony

to the genuineness of the phenomena, find themselves humiliated by the knowledge that they were deceived, and are now doing their utmost to remedy as much as possible the evil which has been done. The Doctor has bought from the publishers of his book on "John and Katie King" every volume on hand, some two or three hundred dollars' worth, and has ordered its publication to be discontinued.

Mr. HERNE, who, at the present time, gives seances at the Spiritual Institution, was denounced two or three years ago, by a brother Spiritualist "for lending himself to the production of sham spirit photographs," his then partner in the "spirit business" (Mr. WILLIAMS), and a Mr. HUDSON, (who styles himself a spirit photographer), being also implicated in the imposture. Some time after this the following was inserted in a leader in the *Medium and Daybreak*, apparently written by its editor, Mr. J. BURNS:—"We may, perhaps, in this place mention the fact that Mr. HERNE has been circulating the report that the face of 'John King,' as exhibited at Mr. WILLIAMS' seances, is a fabrication, and that he assisted in the fraud while he was in partnership with Mr. WILLIAMS. . . . Recently we have had a series of special sittings with Mr. WILLIAMS, that an artist might make a sketch of 'John King' in daylight for publication as an engraving in *Human Nature*. At the last seance Mrs. BURNS held Mr. WILLIAMS through one of the doors of the cabinet all the time 'John King' manifested. When this was told to Mr. HERNE he had the boldness to say that he could simulate such a manifestation himself. He tells those who have leisure to listen to him that he *knows* that the agents of all the mediums frequent a shop in Houndsditch to purchase masks in which to simulate spirit faces." In the course of a two nights' debate on "Spiritualism" I had with Mr. BURNS in Yorkshire, I asked the question, How is it that Mr. HERNE, after this confession, is still allowed to carry on his *seances* at the Spiritual Institution in London? The only reply I could obtain from Mr. BURNS was, that HERNE was a "pig-headed fellow," and accustomed to take too much to drink. He (Mr. BURNS) "never said HERNE was a discreditable person. It was Mr. HERNE who called

himself a cheat and impostor. He only quoted Mr. HERNE's own words, and did not believe him when he said so. When a man was down he would not push him down more, and he therefore allowed Mr. HERNE to carry on his *seances* under strict test conditions." This needs no comment on my part. I need only say that Spiritualists' "strict test conditions" serve the purpose of preventing exposure far better than of preventing imposture.

Messrs. BASTIAN and TAYLOR, two other London mediums, were exposed a month or two ago, while holding *seances* in Holland. A light being introduced into the room by means of electricity, Mr. BASTIAN was detected holding the Guitar over the head of one of the sitters. The following ingenious if not ingenuous, theory has been advanced by *The Spiritualist* to explain this kind of exposure: "The same rapid retreat of the hands which made the handle of the instrument fly towards Mrs. Fay [another medium], has often been observed when deceitful persons, among ostensibly friendly sitters, have struck lights at dark *seances*; on such occasions the instruments have been seen flying towards—and sometimes actually within—the outstretched hands of the mediums, much to their chagrin, the materialised hands and the real hands being drawn towards each other by the necessitated sudden union of the two." The Editor of the *Medium* says: "A light is suddenly introduced into a *seance*, and figures, of course, are for a moment seen holding the instruments, but these figures are much nearer to the medium than they ought to be, or in fact they become incorporated with him, and hence the unscientific observer or novice at once blazes it abroad that the medium was enacting the manifestations. Not so. The spirit-figure being in great part derived from the medium's body, must return to it again, and it is this process of assimilation that causes the observer to suppose that it is the medium himself. The whole is over in an instant, and an idea of trickery having prepossessed the mind of the sitter, he is convinced that he sees the medium hold the instrument, and the shortness of the time does not enable him to verify his observation."

In referring to a *seance*, the mediums at which were Messrs. EGLINGTON and HAXBY, Mr. BURNS, the editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*, in the issue of that paper for March 12, 1875, says: "We have received a host of letters on this *seance* and a previous one held at the same place. The general opinion is that not only mismanagement but gross trickery on the part of the spirit-face medium was too plainly apparent. We think it quite unnecessary to print the letters pointing this out, as a trickster is too contemptible an object to warrant so much attention. The person who would endeavour to simulate the spiritual phenomena is below the level of a rogue. He is a fool and a madman—not only so, but a moral suicide, and stands condemned by his own acts, which generally commit him at the first trial. We do not pass any judgment in this case as we were not present, and the phenomena under unfavourable conditions sometimes take an anomalous form even when perfectly genuine." I should be inclined to admire the "honest indignation" of Mr. BURNS were it not for the fact, that he rather inconsistently gives facilities to confessed cheats to "simulate the spiritual phenomena," and impose upon the public, and encourages mediums to keep at their work after they have been repeatedly exposed. He either does this with the intention of assisting imposture, or he is so credulous that he would rather accept the Spiritual hypothesis and believe a medium to be a liar when he confesses to being a trickster, than he would accept the confession and believe the medium to have repented of his imposture.

Professor CROOKES has just been subjecting a Mrs. FAY, another medium, who charges 10s. admission to her *seances*, to a number of pseudo-scientific tests, so transparent in their character, and offering such facilities for trickery on the part of the medium, that the Professor's credulity in accepting the tests as satisfactory is far more to be wondered at than that the "medium should be able to produce the phenomena she did. It would take up too much space to describe Mr. CROOKES's so-called scientific tests, and I will therefore only say that either myself or my "fellow medium," Mr. JOHN RUSSELL would undertake to produce exactly similar

phenomena, if placed under the same conditions as Mrs. FAY is reported in the *Spiritualist* to have been placed. Personally I have heard little of the history of Mrs. FAY, but the following extract from the *Medium and Daybreak* will show that her "mediumship" like that of all the other "physical manifestation mediums" that have been for any length of time before the public, has been the subject of considerable suspicion. The *M. and D.* says:—"The genuineness of Mrs. FAY's mediumship has been widely questioned—as, indeed, has been the probity of every other medium—more particularly because she permitted herself to be advertised and exhibited in showman fashion. The phenomena occur at her *seances* with such pre-arranged regularity, that many cannot escape the suspicion that the experiments are a series of tricks, inscrutable to the public, but capable of imitation by experts. Others again boast that they can permit themselves to be tied and then perform 'all her tricks.' At the present moment the showman who worked her *seances* at Hanover Square is imitating her manifestations by the reproduction of the old advertisement and the exhibition of a 'phenomenon' in the very unspiritual figure of a young lady in tights!"

I will now give a brief account of the exposure in Birmingham, in which Mr. JOHN RUSSELL and myself were the prime movers. It is unnecessary to state the whole of the particulars here. Suffice it to say that having been repeatedly assured by Spiritualists that it was impossible to imitate the so-called spirit phenomena, we determined to test the matter for ourselves. We gave *seances* twice a week for nearly three months. In consequence of our known opposition to Spiritualism Spiritualists came to the *seances*, very suspicious of trickery, but they went away convinced that the manifestations were genuine spirit phenomena. Reports were published by Spiritualists in their own papers, in which the "phenomena" were repeatedly declared to be genuine. In these reports the public were told that the most extraordinary occurrences took place under strict test conditions, that every means were taken to prevent fraud, that "Mr. Reddalls was courteous and wished to give everything a fair trial," and that

"the circle was conducted by Messrs. Reddalls and Russell with all fairness and honesty, affording to each the fullest opportunity of investigating the phenomena." Four "clairvoyants" have been present at "the infidel mediums' *seances*, and have declared the phenomena to be genuine spirit manifestations, while the Spiritualists declared that if there were trickery the "seeing mediums" would detect it. Alas, for the credulity of man! The "clairvoyants" did not detect trickery, but stated they saw spirits producing the phenomena! One Spiritualist offered £5. to anyone who could produce the same manifestations by trickery. Throughout the whole of these *seances* both myself and Mr. RUSSELL—the "infidel mediums"—have declined to give any opinion as to the cause of the phenomena, invariably stating that the facts should be judged by themselves, the audiences being advised to impose conditions that would render it unnecessary to trust to the word of anyone. At last we made the announcement that the whole of the manifestations had been produced by trickery. To the amazement and mortification of the Spiritualists we informed them that they had been cruelly hoaxed, and that what they, in their unsuspecting innocence, thought to be Spiritualism, was merely Reddalls-and-Russellism. Dr. Sexton, in his "Spirit-mediums and Conjurors," published last year, laid down the proposition that "Professional conjurers are utterly unable to produce anything like the spiritual manifestations, if subjected to the conditions imposed on the medium," and he also made the additional statement, "Even the simple phenomena—the simplest of all—of table-rapping can only be produced with the aid of elaborate machinery." We have proved in the most practical manner the falsity of both assertions. We have, without the aid of elaborate machinery, produced not merely the table-rapping but every kind of so-called spirit phenomena, and we have produced them under conditions which Spiritualists admit professional "spirit mediums" never submit to, and yet our *seances* have been successful. We even set apart one night a week on which we submitted to any conditions the audience chose to impose, a thing which professional

"spirit mediums" have never dared to do. The success of this exposure may be judged from the fact that many of the Spiritualists who attended the *seances*, still decline to believe that the manifestations were produced by trickery, still clinging to the belief that they were genuine spirit phenomena. The exposure was fatal to the pretensions of the clairvoyants, and in self-defence they refuse to admit that they have been "sold." Birmingham Spiritualists "know" that the manifestations which took place in the presence of the "infidel mediums" were "genuine spirit phenomena," and they "could not possibly have been produced by trickery." Poor deluded simple-minded mortals! how they strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!

It is urged by some Spiritualists, that, even granting that the whole of the manifestations at our *seances* were produced by trickery, that would be no proof that there was no genuine spirit phenomena. This might be replied to by drawing attention to the fact that the onus of proof lies on the shoulders of those who maintain the existence of such phenomena, and we have furnished conclusive proof that the manifestations hitherto relied on by Spiritualists to prove their case can be produced by trickery. We have furnished presumptive proof against the genuineness of all so-called spirit phenomena. We have shown how easily well-meaning men may be deceived, and consequently how unreliable is human testimony on matters of this kind. We have also directly exposed the pretensions of those "clairvoyants" who testified to the genuineness of the phenomena produced at our *seances*. Another way in which Mr. RUSSELL and myself have indirectly shown the folly of Spiritualism is by the fact that we held our *seances* nearly three months, two and three times a week, and yet during the whole of that time not a single Spiritualist discovered one solitary trick. Had Spiritualism been true is it credible to suppose that the Spiritualists would not, by the aid of the spirits, have been able to expose our tricks? Some of the "professionals" in London—for instance, Messrs. HERNE, WILLIAMS, BASTIAN, and TAYLOR—could have exposed a few of them without consulting the inhabitants of "the land beyond the river," for they have

practised them often enough themselves. they did not however, wish to spoil the trade!

It is said that "Spiritualism is the only theory that squares with all the facts." Is this true? Supposing it were true that the "facts of Spiritualism" were unexplainable by mundane causes, does the Spiritual theory explain anything? Supposing the genuineness of all the facts claimed by Spiritualists were granted, how can they be explained by the Spiritual hypothesis? Is the suspension of a table in the air without any visible means of support any proof that the attributes of man's brain exist after the brain itself is destroyed? If such an occurrence ever took place can the hypothesis of the existence of "spiritual bodies"—whatever they may be—explain it? What is a spiritual body, and how can it affect material substances? Can it be shown to be equal to the production of the phenomenon cited? It is no answer to this to say that it does do so, for that is the very point in dispute. We are told, however, that intelligence is manifested in the movements of the table. Well, what then? Would that be any proof that it was the intelligence of a friend whom one knew to be dead? If it pointed to any conclusion at all it would be the utter absurdity that the table itself was intelligent, and that under certain conditions, it could manifest its intelligence to man! I will go even farther to test the value of the Spiritual theory. Allowing for the moment that facts occur proving the existence of intelligent beings not cognisable by man in the ordinary manner, what proof does the Spiritual theory afford that they are what they represent themselves to be. It may be said that they give proofs of their identity—that they communicate things only known to themselves when on earth. Granting even this, there is no evidence to show that the same information could not be obtained by other beings than man, admitting the possibility of the existence of such beings. Some Christians admit the appearance of all the phenomena that can be claimed by Spiritualists, but maintain it is the work of evil spirits, and this theory is quite as well, if not better, supported by facts than that ordinarily put forward by Spiritualists. It is urged against this Christian view

of the matter, that "a house divided against itself cannot stand,"—that the fact that charity, morality, and mercy, are inculcated through some mediums, proves the intelligence cannot be evil. There is no force in this argument, however, for the Devil would not be half so clever as he is accredited with being if he did nothing but evil, for he would soon get found out. SHAKSPEARE has told us "the devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape" that he may more effectually carry out his ends.

The Spiritual theory is unproved and unprovable, and the information imparted through "mediums" is absurd, useless, and unreliable. For instance a "spirit face," said to have been seen repeatedly at *seances* in London, is represented to be that of "Katey King," who left this earth sphere for the other world 300 years ago. According to one witness "Katey" is a "perfect type of the Eastern style of beauty," while other authorities state that she has a "broken nose" and a "cut lip!" Imagine a ghost with a broken nose! yet Spiritualists believe this, in spite of the repeated exposures of Spiritual mediums.

Judged by its fruits, Spiritualism stands condemned. It has nothing to offer worthy of acceptance. It fails in its facts, and it fails in its theory. It originated in, and has been kept up by, imposture, self deception, and credulity. The communications purporting to come from another world are generally trivial, frequently misleading, and contain no information which might not be obtained by other and better means. The most fatal objection, however, to this latest epidemic delusion is the effect it has upon those who come under its influence. Dr. EDMUNDS, to whom I have before referred, informs us that out of a comparatively small number of persons who were conspicuous as advocates, or "mediums," during the investigation made by the committee of the Dialectical Society, one person had been the subject of well-marked mental illness, and another had been confined in a lunatic asylum, and I have myself known two cases of "mediums" who have been driven into an asylum by this Spiritual mania. I cannot give better testimony upon this point than that of a Spiritualist who writes

as follows in the *Medium*: "Evil disposed spirits are continually plunging their mediumistic victims into all sorts of troubles, including every species of crime, and I believe our gaols and lunatic asylums are filled with such, and the swaggering drunkards of our streets are, for the most part of this class," The same writer observes: "Persons who live grossly, and derived their chief enjoyment in the earth-life from the gratification of their bodily senses, seem to endure a large amount of bodily suffering in the next state, and they are generally driven by their cravings to seek out media upon earth through whose bodies they can continue to gratify the horrid passions which have grown up in their nature. I truly believe that many of our drunkards, gamblers, and even murderers, are urged upon their reckless course by spirits in this way, merely to gratify in the persons of their victims the vicious propensities or spiteful feelings they have acquired." This is a fitting set-off to the argument derived from the *consolatory* power of the belief in Spiritualism. What a consolation! It is not sufficient that we have an army of scoundrels in this world, but we must cope with a larger army in another, with the additional consolation that "an evil spirit is much less dangerous in the body than out of it!" I remember once reading a statement in the *Medium and Daybreak* that there are insane spirits and lunatic asylums in the other world! Taking the reported doings of the spirits into account the asylums would probably be well filled, though there must be a difficulty in procuring sane keepers.

In conclusion I ask, what is the utility of Spiritualism? What does it offer to man? Is it calculated to make him wiser, better, and happier? The only thing that can be urged in favour of it is that if true it proves that the termination of this earthly life is not the end of man's conscious existence. Mr. T. M. SIMPKISS, a Spiritualist, in his evidence before the London Dialectical Society, admitted that "Beyond solving the important question, 'If a man die shall he live again?'" there is to him "little that is consistent or reliable in what is revealed through different mediums," The future existence of the Spiritualist, however, is a very

questionable good, as the accounts given of the occupations of the denizens of the "spirit land" are the reverse of what intelligent men would desire. I have no objection to another life providing it is an improvement on the present one, but I decidedly object to a worse. I do not want to go to a world where pick-pockets still carry on their vocations, and where gamblers, drunkards, and murderers congregate, and work their mischief without fear of the law or the prison. With perfect agreement with Professor HUXLEY, I can say that, "the only good that I can see in demonstration of the truth of 'Spiritualism' is to furnish an additional argument against suicide. Better live a crossing-sweeper than die and be made to talk twaddle by a 'medium' hired at a guinea a *seance*."

APPENDIX.

GLENDOWER.—*I can call up spirits from the vasty deep.*

HOTSPUR.—Well, so can I——

—*Shakespeare.*

Professional conjurors are utterly unable to produce anything like the spiritual manifestations, if subjected to the conditions imposed on the Medium. Even the simple phenomena—the simplest of all—of table rapping can only be produced with the aid of elaborate machinery.—DR. G. SEXTON, Editor of the *Christian Spiritualist*.

[The following extracts, besides giving a history of the exposure of “spirit-mediumship” by Messrs. REDDALLS and RUSSELL, furnish ample proof of the unreliability of human testimony as to the genuineness of so-called spirit phenomena, and conclusively disprove the idea that “spirit manifestations” cannot be produced by trickery under the “strict test (?) conditions” imposed by Spiritualists.]

[From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Dec. 25, 1874.]

To the Editor,—Dear Sir,—I read in the *Medium* of December 11th, 1874, that Mr. Reddalls, of Birmingham, challenges the Spiritualists for discussion. I think this must be a mistake, or else I am misinformed. Was Mr. Reddalls refused the privilege of attending a *seance* at the Spiritual Institute, Birmingham, which caused him and some of his Secular friends to form a circle at their own room; and is it true that they ob-

tained in the gaslight movements of the table with intelligent answers, and without contact with the table, and they were requested to put out the light, and on doing so flowers were brought and the direct voice of a spirit heard and spoken to? If these statements are true, what has Mr. Reddalls to discuss with Spiritualists, unless it be another person of that name? I hope these statements are true, and that they are continuing to investigate, and that we soon shall see a statement in the *Medium* of their investigation.—Yours respectfully,
INQUIRER.

[Mr. Perks, Birmingham, sent us a report written by Mr. Russell, who is said to be a brother to the president of the Birmingham Secular Club. This report gave an account of extraordinary phenomena which took place as indicated by our correspondent. Mr. Chamberlain telegraphed to say that the report was a "catch." We publish what we know about it, and leave the parties to be dealt with by the public—Ed. M.]

[From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Jan. 8, 1875.]

BIRMINGHAM SECULARISM.—We do not call it Spiritualism, for as yet we do not know what it is. We have received the following from Mr. Reddalls to insert as an advertisement:—"Birmingham.—*Seances* are held every Sunday evening, after the lectures, at about 8.30 p.m., at the Secular Club, St. George's Hall. Extraordinary phenomena take place, see *Medium*, Dec. 25. Admission 6d. each, to defray expenses." We insert it as "news" but prefer being favoured with some account of the proceedings before we advertise the meetings.

[From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Jan. 15, 1875.]

To the Editor.—Dear Sir,—Last evening I went to the Birmingham Secularists' Institute, St. George's Hall, Upper Dean Street, and after the lecture was ended, Mr. Reddalls announced that a *seance* would be held, and that in consequence of your refusing to insert his communication as an advertisement, the charge

would be 3d. instead of 6d. I attended at the *seance*, and the following is a truthful account, as far as I can remember.

There were present Mr. and Mrs. Reddalls, Mr. J. Russell, and eight others, including myself. Mr. and Mrs. Reddalls, J. Russell, myself, and four others sat at the table with hands and feet in close contact with each other, and the three others with hands joined and placed on the shoulders of three of the sitters at the table. Upon the table were placed two paper tubes, a small hand-bell, and a small tambourine. A gas pendant was, with full light, over the table, which was an ordinary round table, with pillar on three claws.

We hummed the tune of "Annie Lisle," and presently the table began to move, and shortly afterwards it kept up its movements without any contact at all from any of us. Afterwards, the doors being secured and the room searched by several of those present, the gas was then turned out, and Mr. Russell asked if we sat in our proper places, and the answer was given to each one by very distinct raps upon and under the table. One of those at the outside asked if he was standing up, and the answer was a loud knock on the seat behind him, which was true. We then took up the tune of "Home, Sweet Home." I then heard the sound of the bell; then it appeared to be suspended in the air over the table, moving about, and continuing its tintintabulations to the tune. Then the tubes and tambourine were moved about upon the table. The tambourine seemed floating about, and was struck and shaken, and kept up an accompaniment to the tune also. Then two hands, tangibly plump, and neither hot nor cold stroked my face, whiskers, and beard very firmly, yet gently, several times, and I felt as though a substance like a body was between me and the centre of the table. Afterwards the tube struck me on the forehead and the hands several times; then I felt as though a stem, with leaves and buds, was being drawn across my face and hands. I spoke out at these times, and heard others say they had experienced similar things. The bell and tambourine then fell upon the table, and in answer to a great number of very vigorous raps, the gas was lighted, and then upon the table we found four or five

stems of ivy, &c., and I recognised a stem of ivy, with leaves and buds, which, I feel sure, produced the manifestations upon me. Some phosphorescent oil was then rubbed upon the tambourine, and the gas turned out. Singing was resumed, and a hand was seen to take up the tambourine to one side the table as high as the heads of the sitters, and then it was thrown back again to the centre of the table, causing a cloud of light; it then suddenly sprang up as high as our heads, and descended upon Mr. Russell's knuckles, the phosphorescent oil causing them to smart. A number of raps came, and the gas was relighted, and so the *seance* ended.

The circle was conducted by Messrs. Reddalls and Russell with all fairness and honesty, and affording to each of us the fullest opportunity of investigating the phenomena.

I have stated the bare facts, as far as I remember them, and I leave it to your own judgment as to your publishing them.

Hoping that something good and of an elevating character may result from these *seances*, I remain yours respectfully,
H. MANN.

1, Lennox Street, Birmingham, Jan. 11, 1875.

P.S.—A strictly test *seance* is to be held this evening at Mr. Reddalls's house at half-past eight, and a *seance* next Sunday evening at half-past eight at the Hall.

[Our correspondent is a stranger to us, but we give his letter that it may be supplemented by other writers if necessary.—Ed. *M.*]

[From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Jan. 22, 1875.]

Mr. Burns.—Dear Sir,—On Monday night, January 11, at 8.30, a strict test *seance* was held at the house of Mr. Reddalls, there were eleven persons present. The room was well searched, the doors were securely fastened, and every precaution taken to prevent any exterior help. Upon the table were placed a small bell, a tambourine, and two paper tubes. We were then fastened together by some stout string being tied round each one's wrist, which necessitated our rising

all together to put out the gas over the table, for one could not move without affecting the others. We then sang, the bell floated about the room ringing, and the tambourine also being vigorously beaten while in the air; we were struck by the tubes, touched repeatedly by hands, one was pulled up from his seat by the nose, and his legs at the same time were tightly pinched, causing him to cry out; one was struck on the back very hard, by what sounded like hands, questions were asked and replied to by knocks on the table and on the floor with some hard substance, and once a voice answered "No," from the ceiling; then for some seconds there was a snapping of a finger and thumb in various parts of the room near the ceiling. Other manifestations occurred, and the string having become very tight, we all rose together, relighted gas and discovered a fine cocoa-nut on the table which we divided amongst us and ate, finding it very good.

Last night (January 18), a *seance* was held at the same place, every one was well searched, and every means taken to prevent fraud, about twelve being present. We sat round the table at a distance from it, not touching it at all, with hands and feet joined together. The gas being turned out, we sang, and the table at once began an accompaniment to the tune, the bell and tambourine floated about playing; we were touched with the tubes and tambourine, and with hands, the table keeping up its movements round the circle, a number of knocks came. We lighted up once again, and found the table upside down in the middle of the circle, one tube on the hands of one of the sitters, the tambourine on Mr. Reddalls' lap, the bell by the side of the table on the floor, and the other tube inside the table. All things being put straight, we commenced again, and heard the bell and tambourine floating about and playing, and some hard substance rattling in the tambourine; then a sound as of nuts dropping on the table, and upon lighting up we found some peppermints had been brought which we took possession of. Afterwards, seating ourselves again, we turned out the gas and commenced singing, when the bell was taken up and sent to one corner of the room, the tambourine also was thrown outside the

circle, the tubes passing round striking us, and the table commenced very violent movements round the circle, and causing great confusion and alarm; and upon lighting up we found the table was gone from the midst of the circle, had been taken over the heads of the sitters, and was found turned upside down in a corner of the room outside the circle! In wonder and astonishment the proceedings ended, and I was requested to forward this statement to you, as being a fair supplement to the account given of a previous *seance* by our friend Mr. Mann in your last issue, I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

CHARLES GRAY.

71, Pershore Road, Birmingham, Jan. 19, 1875.

[From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Jan. 29, 1875.]

To the Editor.—Dear Sir,—Let me advise your readers not to be too elated with the reports that have been published in the *Medium*. May it not only be a catch, so that they may laugh at the credulity of Spiritualists? With the aid of confederates I do not see anything very wonderful. If the phenomena *are* produced by others than those in the circle or confederates, I shall be well pleased. We are not informed by the two writers whether they are Secularists or Spiritualists. I cannot help thinking that it would have been more manly, supposing the phenomena to be genuine, had Mr. Reddalls endorsed the reports sent.—Yours, &c., ON THE LOOK-OUT. Jan. 25.—[Mr. Gray, our last correspondent, is a most reliable man, and he endorses Mr. Mann. We second our correspondent's warning to be on the look-out.—Ed. M.]

[From the *Birmingham Morning News*, Feb. 2, 1875.]

To the Editor.—Sir,—I beg permission to make a few remarks on the letter of "Quiz." If he has attended Houdin's dark *seance* he has seen that Houdin ties himself, and all that occurs after can be accounted for by his releasing his hands. He says that the phenomena are the same as produced by the Davenport Brothers, but there is this difference, the Davenport Brothers submitted to be tied by the audience. But if "Quiz" is

anxious to acquire information on the subject of spiritual phenomena, I would recommend him to attend the *seances* held by the Secularists of this town. They have been holding *seances* lately with the view, I suppose, of examining the subject, and detecting the trick; but things have transpired that have not a little surprised them. While sitting under strictest conditions a table has been moved without hands, and carried over the heads of the circle. And they have had a cocoa-nut and peppermints thrown on the table by invisible agency, accounts of which are given in the last two numbers of the *Medium*.—Yours respectfully
Birmingham, Jan. 30, 1875. PROVE ALL THINGS.

[From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Feb. 5, 1874.]

To the Editor.—Dear Sir,—Your correspondent in the *Medium* of last week I think need not be afraid of the genuineness of the phenomena at the Secularist's *seance* in Birmingham. I may say that Mr. Mann is well known as a Spiritualist amongst many of us, and his statement, with Mr. Gray's, may be received with confidence.

Last night I visited the circle of the Secularists, and witnessed the phenomena, and declare them to be genuine. I found Mr. Reddalls courteous, and wishing to give everything a fair trial; he alluded to the letter in the *Medium*, and wished those who were Spiritualists to take in charge every Secularist in the room by sitting between them, and holding their hands, and placing each others toes together, and give information directly any person moved. This was the arrangement carried out by the circle. The small tambourine was at one time played at my feet with vigour and in time. It was also played considerably above the head of anyone in the room if he had been standing up (or so it appeared by the sound); the bell was also ringing at the same time. There seemed to be a difficulty in keeping the power equal. This all Spiritualists can partly account for with such a young circle and a continual change of sitters. The circle does not seem to have any recognised medium as Spiritualists look for. There were also answers to questions given by a noise

of a cracking sound, resembling the snap of lucifer match when lighting. This was tried to be accounted for by some gentleman present as muscular action, saying persons could do this by their muscles, and it was not a phenomenon of the kind looked for. This began a discussion, which was obliged to be stopped because it prevented the phenomena proceeding.

My train being about due, I left the circle sitting, and what may have followed I do not know. I am of a different opinion to your correspondent, and think it a good job Mr. Reddalls has not furnished any statement of the phenomena, as I suppose he and others of his party are not satisfied it is spirit, but I hope that they will continue to go on with their investigation as honest as I found them, and they must soon have further proof for what their minds require.—Yours truly,

Walsall, February 1, 1875.

T. BLINKHORN.

The *Birmingham Morning News* for Monday, Feb. 8, had the following in its "Local Gossip":—

I have heard rather a funny thing in connection with the Spiritualistic propaganda, in Birmingham. Two Infidel lecturers, who have been vainly trying to put down Spiritualism by argument, have lately joined together to hold *seances*, and they have "phenomena" which, to use a vulgar expression "flabbergast" the Spiritualists. A table floats about without visible agency, instruments play, mysterious hands (the "mediums" being bound) stroke the faces of the sitters, and fruit and flowers are thrown into the circle. The Infidel "mediums" submit to more stringent conditions as to light, inspection, &c., than Spiritualists are accustomed to. The getters up of this farce do not reveal how it is done, and meanwhile the Spiritualists declare that the Infidels are powerful mediums *malgre eux*. Which side will convert the other, I cannot venture to predict. I understand that the next move will probably be an official endorsement by a Spiritualist committee of the "medium" theory; after which we shall see what we shall see."

[From the *Birmingham Morning News*, Feb. 12, 1875.]

Strange things are now taking place in Secularist circles in Birmingham. Towards the end of last year Mr. G. H. Reddalls, Mr. John Russell, and other local sceptics, anxious to investigate Spiritualism, applied for permission to attend *seances* at the Spiritual Institute, Suffolk Street. It seems, however, that their presence was not desired. They were informed, at all events, that their request could not be complied with. But Mr. Reddalls and his friends were not the men to be easily turned aside. Having heard so much of Spiritualistic phenomena, they were resolved, as far as they could, to satisfy themselves as to its genuineness or the reverse. Of course they were encouraged in this determination by the direct bearing of Spiritualism upon the Infidel opinions they entertained. They saw that either Spiritualism or Secularism must be untrue, and, as honest seekers after the truth, their minds were fully made up to test Spiritualism for themselves. About the beginning of December, therefore, they commenced to hold *Seances* for investigation in St. George's Hall, Dean Street, which, as our readers are aware, is the headquarters of Secularism in the Midland Counties. According to their own account, remarkable things were witnessed almost from the first. Night after night the manifestations increased in power, variety, and marvellousness. The object of the sitters, was, first of all, to collect facts, and then from these, in course of time, and, after reflection, to draw their own conclusions. Reports spread as to the strange events taking place in the Camp of Secularism, and the number of investigators increased, until, at last, in order to prosecute the enquiry under satisfactory conditions, it was found necessary to make some charge for admission. Threepence was the fee originally imposed; but, so great was the curiosity awakened, that even this did not sufficiently restrict the number of visitors. The price was next raised to one shilling, at which sum it still remains—and yet there is quite a run for tickets. Latterly, therefore, a public character has been given to these Secularist *seances*, which are now two in number weekly, namely, on Thursday and Sunday evenings at half-past eight; and, for con-

venience, the place of meeting has been changed from St. George's Hall to the house of Mr. Reddalls, 136, Digbeth, who, it should be stated, is generally regarded as the leading Secularist in these parts. Mr. Reddalls, indeed, is pretty well-known as editor of the *Secular Chronicle*, a weekly journal, established to promote free enquiry into social, political, and theological questions, and as a record of Freethought progress. He carries on an extensive business as a printer at 136, Digbeth, and is generally a leader in all local movements connected with freethought and questions specially affecting the working classes. Having received an invitation to attend a *seance* held last night, our reporter, who was present, thus describes what occurred:—The company numbered fifteen, including myself, the meeting took place in a room behind Mr. Reddalls's shop. The two mediums were Mr. Reddalls and Mr. Russell. I was told, upon enquiry, that four of the gentlemen present were Spiritualists, the others being unbelievers. The only lady in the room was a young niece of Mr. Reddalls. The mediums stated, in answer to a question, that they would cheerfully submit to any test which might be imposed. The doors, which open outwards, were securely fastened, the handles being tied with ropes to the legs of the tables in the room. Every person present was searched, and I, like the others, had to turn out the varied contents of my pockets. The sitters, forming themselves into a circle round a plain deal table, were next tied to one another. The right wrist of one person, and the left wrist of the sitter next him were tightly joined together by means of a string, and so on all round the room until it was impossible for Mr. Reddalls, Mr. Russell, or anyone else to do anything with his hands without the person next him being painfully aware of the fact. Each sitter was further required to let his legs and feet touch those of the person next him, so that any movement on their part might be detected. All this having been done, a unanimous opinion was expressed that no other precaution could be adopted against the practice of fraud. A general movement among the sitters was necessary—so closely were they bound together—before one of the company could reach the gas to turn it out. That difficult operation

having been performed, however, Mr. Russell asked us to sing something as a means of bringing those present into a state of harmony. Such songs as "Home, Sweet Home," "Annie Lisle," "John Brown," "Rule Britannia," and "Beautiful Star" were sung at intervals. Hardly had the singing commenced when a small hand-bell, previously lying on the table, began to jingle as it seemed to be floating through the air, high over our heads. Several of us, myself amongst the number, were struck about the shoulders, hands and face, apparently by paper speaking tubes, which also occupied a place on the table at the time the light was extinguished, and immediately afterwards, what felt—and eventually was seen—to be an egg was gently pressed into my left hand. Another gentleman was equally fortunate. A triangle was lifted from the table and went floating about beating time to our singing, which I must confess, was far from first-class. The table seemed to be upset, falling heavily on the floor; but when the gas was relighted a few minutes later, it was found that the table had in the meantime been got on to its legs again. Having examined and explained what had taken place as best we could, the circle was re-formed, and once more we went to work, as before, in the dark. The phenomena that followed turned out to be more wonderful still. Although the sitters were no longer tied, the conditions appeared to constitute satisfactory safeguards against treachery and trickery. Yet three more eggs were slipped into gentleman's hands—another coming "my way"—an equal number were presented with oranges; the triangle and bell were used as before; a concertina was wrenched from the hands of one of the company, and, while being played, went floating over our heads; cold hands touched our faces again and again; and one hand was so unkind as to give me several pretty severe pinches on both legs. While this was going on, heavy and rapid rappings were heard on Mr. Russell's chair, and the power answered several queries evidently to the satisfaction of the questioners. The proceedings lasted about one hour and a-half, and it is only right to add that, although I have attended many wonderful *seances*, I never was present at any, taking all the circumstances into account, more remarkable than that of last night.

(From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Feb. 12, 1875.)

Messrs. Reddalls and Russell have been to Nottingham giving *seances* to the Secularists and having successful phenomena. Messrs Peck and Sadler are expected to visit Nottingham in March. The Secularist mediums are causing quite a commotion amongst their materialistic brethren.

(From the *Medium and Daybreak*, Feb. 12, 1875.)

THE BIRMINGHAM SECULARISTS' "PHENOMENA."—Mr. Perks writes to say that he has visited the sittings, and admires the fairness of Mr. Reddalls and Mr. Russell, the mediums. Our correspondent, "On the Look-out," writes again, in the course of which he remarks, "After so long ridiculing the phenomena, and holding the theory that they were more of a subjective than objective nature, it does not appear to me too great a favour to have expected Mr. Reddalls to have admitted this much (his testimony as to the genuineness of the phenomena), especially as Secularists are such zealous searchers after truth and such heroes in proclaiming it."

(From the *Birmingham Morning News*, Feb. 13, 1875)

To the Editor.—Sir,—Being one of the sitters at the *seance* reported in the *Morning News* of to-day, I can add my testimony as to the fairness and truthfulness of your reporter; for I had hold of his left hand with my right, and felt an egg being pushed gently into his hand; I also felt the thumb and fingers accompanying it. I was afterwards stroked down my face firmly and slowly. A concertina was held by the strap being passed round your representative's little finger, and the instrument, while resting upon his knee, was vigorously pulled, causing your reporter and myself to raise our arms as high as we could, when upon the consent of the owner being obtained, the concertina was let go. It then floated about in the air while playing. The sitter at my left hand also received an egg in the same manner, and upon his requesting the Power to give one to another sitter at the circle, the tambourine, which was

being struck while floating high above our heads, suddenly descended between my arm and his, and, striking his hand, caused him to drop his egg, which fell upon the floor, and was broken. Upon lighting up, it was found that some sitters had been freely sprinkled with water. These are marvellous occurrences, and seem to be attracting a great deal of attention.—I remain yours respectfully,

Lennox St., Lozells, Feb. 12, 1875. H. MANN.

From the *Birmingham Morning News*, Feb. 17, 1875.

To the Editor.—Sir,—In reply to your correspondent "Inquirer," in your issue of the 9th instant, permit me to say that the *seances* were held in the dark, and that, therefore, the term "invisible" cannot be applied in a strictly literal sense. I simply meant to infer that the agency was a power not usually to be fathomed by mortal "ken;" consequently the human understanding, viewing it from a material standpoint, fails to perceive how it was accomplished.

Now, in Houdin's *seances*, although it was quite dark, I could account for all that took place. The various articles were placed within reach, so that, when the gas was extinguished, he could release his hands and throw them about; but can anyone give any explanation as to how the eggs and oranges were brought into the circle your reporter attended?

Spiritualists, as I know them, do not love darkness, or resort to it because their deeds are evil, as "Inquirer" seems to insinuate. Darkness, though, appears necessary to procure physical phenomena with most mediums—not with all—the reason is not yet fully understood. I believe I might ask, why is darkness necessary to photography?

Besides, Spiritualism does not depend on the dark *seance* alone, or its facts. Your correspondent may pursue his inquiry by his own fireside, with his family and friends, as I have and have had phenomena quite as convincing, though not so remarkable, as that reported in your columns.

The Secularists have courage to investigate Spiritualism. Why cannot the Christadelphians seriously take

up the subject? They are not so noble as the Secularists, for the latter pursue their investigations daily to see if they can obtain a satisfactory solution to the question, "If a man die shall he live again".—Yours respectfully,
 PROVE ALL THINGS.



THE EXPOSURE.

From the *Birmingham Morning News*, March 2.

The "Spiritualistic" *seances* which have lately taken place in Birmingham under the auspices of Mr. G. H. Reddalls, of Digbeth, and Mr. John Russell, two of the leading Secularists of the district, were last evening brought to a somewhat startling conclusion. As on former occasions, the *seance* was held at Mr. Reddalls' residence, there being present, in addition to Messrs. Reddalls and Russell, Mrs. Reddalls, and our reporter, six avowed Spiritualists, one of whom was a lady. For some time past the two gentlemen we name have conducted an exhaustive examination into the "Phenomena of Spiritualism," and have been able to give, under the strictest "test conditions," all the manifestations upon which "mediums" pride themselves. The levitation of musical instruments, spirit writing, photographs, and drawings, the mysterious conveyance of sweets, fruits, and flowers, into a room, through doors and windows well closed—these and many other supposed proofs of spirit-power Messrs. Reddalls and Russell have produced at will. The "manifestations" last night were in many respects more remarkable than any as yet shown by the two gentlemen we have named, and whom many Spiritualists in the district believed were being converted to a belief in the phenomena against their own wish. At half-past eight last night, the audience being assembled at Mr. Reddalls', the proceedings commenced by the doors being locked, bolted, and fastened with slips of paper, which were gummed over them in such a manner as to prevent their being opened without the slips breaking. Those present immediately formed into two circles, one of which sat round the table, the others forming a second one behind the first line. On the gas being

turned down, slight noises were heard about the room, although hands were joined all round the table and between the sitters behind. Several hymns having been sung, the light was finally turned out, and Mr. Russell immediately "subjected" by the spirit of a certain Job, who in this life, judging from the choice elegance of his conversation, must have been a Black Country collier. This individual conversed with the company present, and assured one gentleman, who said he had lately lost a child, "ther' wur noa need to greave, th' child wur 'appy." A tambourine and bell now floated about the room, beating time to the music, and what appeared like several pairs of hands—very warm palpable human-feeling hands, it must be confessed—stroked the heads of most of those present. This concluded the first part of the *seance*, and the audience now formed a larger circle. The table was placed aside, and Mr. Russell sat in the centre of the room. The hands of each of the sitters were then connected, and immediately the light was turned out a variety of manifestations were produced. Noises and scratchings sounded from the ceiling, showers of sweetmeats were dashed upon those present, accompanied by a considerable agitation of the atmosphere, and the presence of a large quantity of volatile scent. The Spiritualists did not hesitate to say that they could see the wings of the attendant spirits who were present, especially as luminous light points were noticed moving in different parts of the room. The lady Spiritualist now affirmed that she could see a gigantic figure standing in the centre of the apartment, professing to speak through the medium. This being announced to be a fireman, No. 88. Several of those present felt hands pulling their hair, large animals rubbing against their legs, and had articles of personal property taken from them, and deposited in different parts of the room. Eggs, sprigs of laurel leaf and fir were now given by invisible hands to the sitters, and the triangle, tambourine, and bell sounded violently. The light was now turned up, and "spirit forms" were found to have been traced upon various slips of paper on the floor. In the third part of the *seance*, Mr. Reddalls was lashed securely to a chair, and the circle

formed again. On the light being turned out most of the preceding manifestations were produced, and after an interval of silence Mr. Reddalls was found lying full length on a table behind the circle, having become loosed from the rope, and as the Spiritualists affirmed, carried over the heads of those present. Several gentlemen emphatically stated that they had felt him floating in the air, and a large coconut on the floor was said by one gentleman to have been brought by "the spirits" from his own house some distance away. Mr. Reddalls having asked the company if they were satisfied "the spirits" had been present, received an answer in the affirmative. He then, much to the astonishment of those present, in a somewhat sarcastic speech, avowed that the whole of the proceedings during the night had been mere tricks and conjuring deceptions, and said that at in thus disclosing the utter folly of Spiritualism, he wished to prevent people, not only wasting their time, but their money on those who out of mediumship made living by preying upon the superstitions of their fellows. It was patent to our representative that many of the "spirit manifestations" were purely illusions, and Mr. Russell, addressing those present in similar terms to his *confrère*, said he trusted all who had assisted in the *seance* would go home wiser, if sadder men.

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