

A MEMORIAL TO THE HOME SECRETARY

IN BEHALF OF

MRS. SUSAN WILLIS FLETCHER,
A SPIRITUALIST,

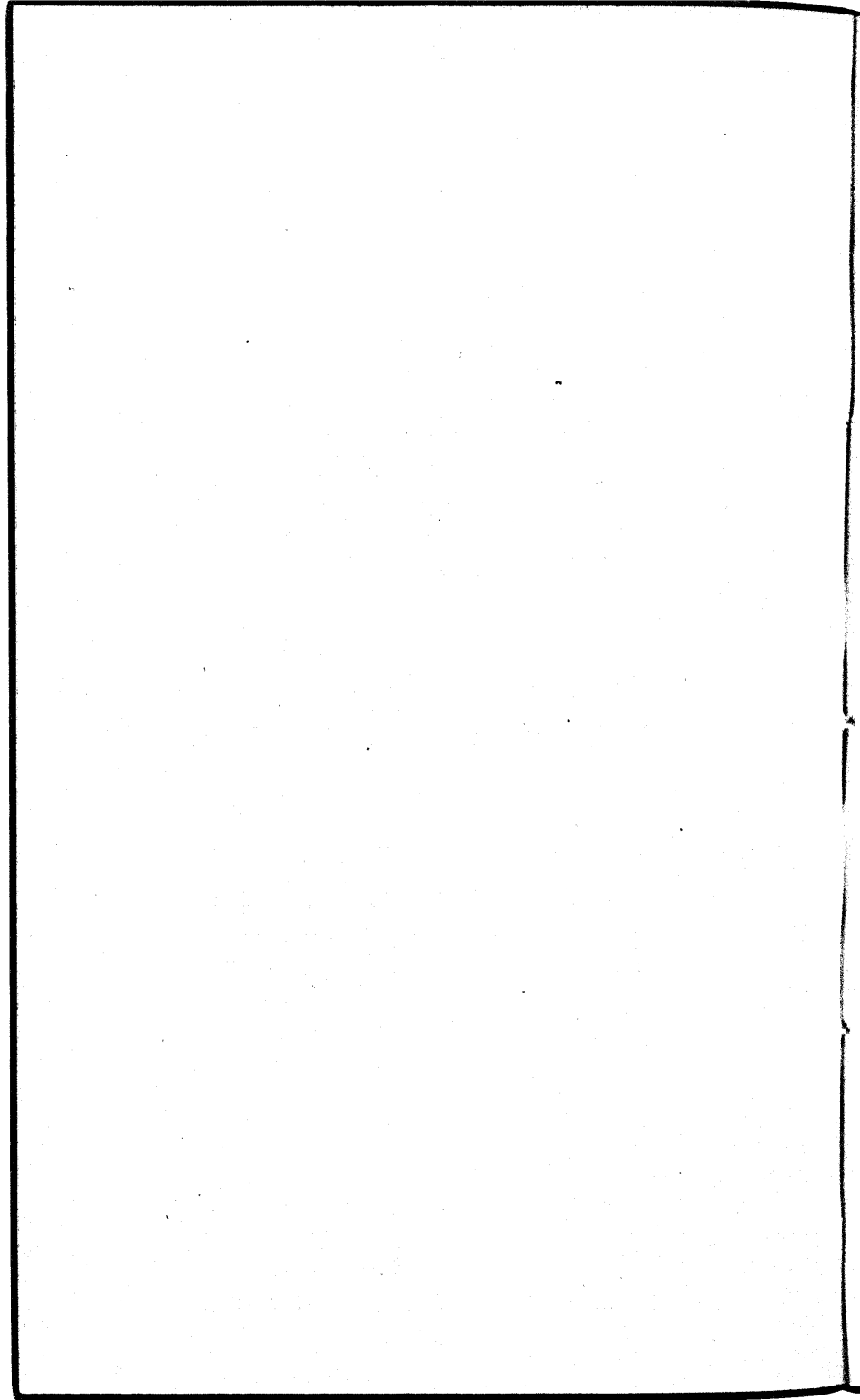
UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED TO TWELVE MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT
WITH HARD LABOUR.

BY

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

WITH IMPORTANT TESTIMONY EXCLUDED UPON
THE TRIAL, AND PROOFS OF PERJURIES
COMMITTED BY THE PROSECUTRIX.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.



PREFACE.

HAVING had this Memorial and its accompanying documents printed on foolscap for the convenience of the Home Secretary, I have taken the opportunity to print a few copies in pamphlet form for private circulation.

I propose to send these copies to the witnesses who have volunteered their testimony; to friends of Mrs. Fletcher in England and America who in this relentless persecution and failure of justice have had entire faith in her innocence; to Spiritualist Societies, for the information of their members; to a few Liberal Members of Parliament who may see the need of changes in the law under which the most honest man or woman may be punished as a rogue and vagabond; and to the conductors of public journals who, in entire ignorance of the facts of the case, took the opportunity to denounce a woman in prison, because she was a Spiritualist, as they would not have done had she been undoubtedly guilty of murder.

I have taken this—perhaps—unusual course, because this is an unusual case. The articles in hundreds of newspapers, echoing the charge and sentence, showed how deep, violent, unreasoning and vindictive is the prejudice against Spiritualism. There was absolutely no proof against Mrs. Fletcher of false pretences. The fact that she was a Spiritualist was enough for the court, the jury, and the press.

It is, therefore, not enough that the proofs of the innocence of Mrs. Fletcher should be laid before Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, so that she may be released from prison. It is right that all who have unjustly

condemned her should know the real facts of this "extraordinary" case, and see how easy it is,—now, as in past ages, under prejudice and excitement, to use the forms of law to perpetrate cruel wrongs.

Hear the other side. Read the testimony of Captain Lindmark, of Colonel Morton, of the other witnesses to facts and to character. Consider that among the millions who believe in the reality of Spiritual phenomena there are men and women as intelligent and veracious as among those who doubt or deny it; and that those who testify to the truth of Spiritualism have examined the facts, while those who deny it have refused to examine, and, as in this case, have condemned without a hearing.

I have been an investigator and a witness of the phenomena called Spiritualistic for more than twenty-five years. I am neither a knave nor a fool. I know what I have seen, and heard, and felt, as I know any other fact in nature. The man who does not know a fact—who has neglected or refused to examine it—has no right to dispute it, or to condemn one who knows it to be true, or believes it upon proper testimony.

It is the intolerance of ignorance that is the basis of persecution, and has caused the failure of justice in this one of many cases, where people are wrongly condemned by public opinion or in courts of law.

I ask for simple justice to all Spiritualists, and for only justice to my friend Mrs. Fletcher.

T. L. N.

32 Fopstone Road,
South Kensington S.W.

THE MEMORIAL

OF

THOMAS LOW NICHOLS, M.D., of 32 Fopstone Road,
South Kensington, London, S.W., in behalf of
MRS. SUSAN WILLIS FLETCHER, a prisoner:

To the Right Honourable SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT,
BART., M.P., Her Majesty's Secretary of State
for the Home Department.

SIR,

I am a citizen of the United States of America, by profession a physician, author, and journalist, for twenty years resident in England, whose hospitality I sought at the outbreak of the Civil War in America in 1861, and where I have since lived in peace and security, and loyal submission to the laws, performing, so far as I know, the duties of a good citizen and subject. In the exercise of what I presume to be my right, and what I feel to be my duty, I make this appeal in behalf of my countrywoman and dear friend, now confined a prisoner, violently parted from loving husband, parents, child, and many friends, because unjustly, and, I think, also unlawfully convicted.

Your prisoner, MRS. SUSAN WILLIS FLETCHER, came to England with her husband, Mr. John William Fletcher, both respectable citizens of the United States of America,

about the year 1877, to follow their recognised and lawful calling of Spiritual mediums and trance speakers for a large and intelligent body of the people of America, England, and other countries, calling themselves Spiritualists. In America these Spiritualists, a growing body for more than thirty years, have been estimated to number several millions, having numerous societies, great lecture halls, licensed speakers and mediums, and several newspapers, one of which is said to have a circulation of 100,000 copies weekly. In Great Britain there are also many Spiritualist Societies, several in London and one or more in most of the provincial towns, with four weekly newspapers, a monthly review, and many registered halls or chapels, speakers, and mediums.

In 1878 Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher established themselves as Spiritual mediums at 22 Gordon Street, Gordon Square, London, and Mr. Fletcher held religious services and gave addresses on Spiritualism on Sunday evenings at Steinway Hall, in Lower Seymour Street, Portman Square, which were attended by a large and fashionable congregation.

Belief in Spiritualism, or the existence of the spirits of men and women who have lived in this world, and their power at times, and under favouring conditions, to communicate with the living, has been and is, I need scarcely remind so accomplished a student of history, common to nearly the whole human race. It was and is the basis of the religions of Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China, and is the faith alike of Christians, Mahommedans, Buddhists, and Brahmins.

The manifestations of the presence and power of spirits of departed men and women, which have become common in America, Europe, and over the world, during the past thirty years, have been witnessed by many thousands of intelligent observers, and been carefully examined and

rigidly tested by many scientific men—as Professor Hare, Professor Mapes, Judge Edmunds, Professor Denton, Mr. Epes Sargent, and others in America; by Mr. William Howitt, Dr. Robert Chambers, Professor De Morgan, Mr. S. C. Hall, Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, F.R.G.S., the late and present Earls of Dunraven, the Earl of Crawford, and many more in England; and lately and notably by Professor Zöllner, of the University of Leipzig, an Astronomer of world-wide reputation, who, with his fellow Professors has most carefully examined and tested the manifestations made in presence of two celebrated mediums, Henry Slade, American, and William Eglinton, Englishman, with both of whom I am well acquainted, as I have also been with many mediums during twenty-five years of careful examination of the phenomena of Spiritualism.

I assert, and am ready to prove by hundreds of unimpeachable witnesses, and by expiemental demonstration, the fact and truth, or objective reality, of Spiritualism; but there is no need to prove the strong and violent prejudice against it. Materialists and Religionists, from different motives, deny its facts and refuse investigation. On the trial of Mrs. Fletcher all testimony to prove its reality was excluded by the presiding judge, while the jury was asked by the Government prosecutor to crush Spiritualism as a pestilent heresy, so that religious persecution became the animus of the trial and motive of the verdict.

Under these circumstances, you, as a liberal and enlightened Minister of the Crown, standing in the place of Her Gracious Majesty, to whose clemency and justice I am making this appeal, will pardon me if I give a brief yet faithful history of this prosecution of Mrs. Fletcher under the direction of a department of the Government of which you are the responsible Minister.

Pursuing his lawful calling as a Spiritualist minister or medium in 1879, Mr. Fletcher was invited by one Mr. Hart-Davies to visit his wife, at Upper Norwood, in his capacity of healing medium; Mr. Hart-Davies and his wife being members of his congregation at Steinway Hall. The result of this visit was that Mrs. Hart-Davies, already a Spiritualist, according to her testimony, became attached to Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, and to their doctrines; and, living unhappily with her husband, who, as she alleged, was intemperate, cruel to her, wasting her means, and threatening to confine her in a lunatic asylum, she resolved to leave him and proposed to live with the Fletchers, placing certain property inherited from her mother, Mrs. Heurtley (who had held some unexplained relation to the late Mr. Sampson, formerly connected with the *Times* newspaper), in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, for safety, which she endeavoured to secure to them by a deed of gift, and also by a will, with the honourable understanding, according to her evidence in court, that this property, consisting of dresses, jewels and laces, was to be held for her, and returned whenever she required it, but, in the event of her death, to be inherited by the Fletchers, and expended "for the promotion of Spiritualism in its higher phases."

In preparing the letter or deed of gift, Mrs. Hart-Davies asserted that she asked and received the aid of Col. Morton, an American lawyer, then staying with the Fletchers; but, in making the will, she, at his suggestion, got the assistance of Mr. Francis, one of a respectable firm of solicitors, Messrs. Field, Roscoe and Francis, to whom Col. Morton had brought letters of introduction.

During this intercourse with the Fletchers Mrs. Hart-Davies, or Mrs. Heurtley, as she now wished to be known (taking the name of her deceased mother when she aban-

doned her husband—and having been divorced from a previous husband for adultery), received through Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher messages purporting to be from her deceased mother, approving of her friendship for them, and of the disposition of her property which she had made. How far she was influenced by these communications cannot be accurately gathered from the contradictory evidence.

From all that appears, Mrs. Hart-Davies and the Fletchers lived amicably together in accordance with their mutual agreement, she finding a pleasant home and congenial society with them, and the three forming, according to her evidence, a social trinity, in which she represented the element of Love, while Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher represented respectively the functions of Wisdom and Work. They appear to have had all things in common, Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Heurtley, or Hart-Davies, wearing alike the clothes and jewels left by the deceased Mrs. Heurtley.

At the end of the season of 1880 they made up a party to visit America and attend the great Spiritualist Camp-meeting held annually at Lake Pleasant, in Massachusetts. The Fletchers and their adopted sister, Mrs. Heurtley, were joined by an English lady of title and Captain Canute Lindmark of the Swedish Engineers, who had been a friend of Mrs. Heurtley, while she was living with her first husband, from whom she had been divorced, in South America. At the Camp-meeting, or in its vicinity, Mrs. Heurtley met with one James McGeary, known in London as Dr. Mack, who exercises the profession of healing the sick by the laying on of hands. Being, for some reason, an enemy of the Fletchers, he persuaded Mrs. Heurtley, *alias* Hart-Davies, that she ought to get back from them the property she had given them or confided to their care. He induced her to give him a power of attorney, armed with

which he demanded and received the jewels and clothing which had been given them, and returning with Mrs. Hart-Davies to London, they obtained a search-warrant, and entering the house of the Fletchers in Gordon Street, with the aid of an Attorney, Mr. Abrahams, removed from it such property as she claimed to a Pantechicon for safe keeping.

Here the matter might have rested, but for malicious interference, by which Mrs. Hart-Davies was persuaded to go before a magistrate and procure a warrant for the arrest of the Fletchers, on a charge of obtaining property by false pretences. Mrs. Maltby, a friend of the Fletchers, who had occupied their house in their absence, hearing of this warrant, telegraphed the news to them. Mrs. Fletcher decided at once to return to England and meet this accusation—insisting that her husband, on account of his health, which unfitted him for a winter voyage, should remain in America. As she expected, she was arrested on the arrival of the steamer at Greenock, and brought to London.

On the 3rd of December, 1880, Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher was brought before Mr. Flowers at Bow Street, and charged by Mr. Abrahams with robbery, obtaining property by false pretences, and an attempt to murder the prosecutrix with poisoned coffee. After hearing this sensational and libellous charge, which was reported in all the newspapers in a manner to strongly prejudice the public, the magistrate refused bail, but upon further consideration granted it, holding the accused in £1000, with two sureties in £500 each, one of these being Hensleigh Wedgwood, Esquire, of Queen Anne Street, W., a London magistrate of fifty years' standing, who was well acquainted with Mrs. Fletcher; the other, the present writer, who had known her for three years, and had, as he still has, entire confidence in her probity and honour. The case was now taken up by the

Government, for what reason it is difficult to see, unless from the sensational character given to it by the newspapers, and its connection with Spiritualism. Had the Fletchers been Methodists, Baptists, or Plymouth Brethren, the matter in dispute would have been settled in a Court of Equity. The property formally given to the Fletchers had been in great part restored. No injury had been inflicted. Mrs. Hart-Davies was really indebted to the Fletchers. Nothing had been converted or concealed. When the Fletchers went to America they took their friend as well as a portion of the property with them. Mrs. Fletcher had come from America expressly and solely to meet the charge of fraud against her, expecting a fair trial, and not doubting that she would have a triumphal acquittal.

After hearing all the evidence offered on one side, and declining to hear any on the other, the Bow Street magistrate committed Mrs. Fletcher for trial at the Central Criminal Court, increasing the bail to £1200 with two sureties of £600 each. The Grand Jury did not hesitate to find a "true bill." It appears to be as easy in our day to indict, and convict, and imprison a Spiritualist, as it was some time ago to burn a heretic, or hang a witch, or whip or imprison a Quaker. It being a Government prosecution the various counts of this wonderful indictment were spread over sixty skins of parchment, so that the unrolling of one hundred and twenty feet before the eyes of an Old Bailey jury might have gone far in itself to secure a conviction. The Ninth Count charged that the prisoner

"Unlawfully did pretend to wit (to the said Juliet Anne "Theodora Heurtley Hart-Davies), to exercise and use divers kinds "of *witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, and conjuration*, against the "form of the statute in such case made and provided, against the "peace of our said lady, the Queen, her Crown and Dignity."

The greatest cruelty of this indictment was that it included in a charge of conspiracy a most important witness for the defence, Col. Morton, who had crossed the Atlantic expressly to give his evidence, the substance of which is hereto appended. Arriving in London, he was told by his friend, Mr. Francis, that if he ventured to appear in Court he would be placed beside the prisoner in the dock, and his mouth closed as a witness. Probably his evidence might have been accepted against the prisoner; but, being in her favour, and contradicting the prosecutrix on many material points, it was excluded, and he in his absence formally convicted. This may be law,—surely it is not justice.

Practically, as the presiding judge, Mr. Justice Hawkins, told the Jury, the whole case rested upon the testimony of Mrs. Hart-Davies. The letters to her from Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher read in court proved that they had professed to be the mediums of communications from her deceased mother. This was, in fact, the only charge against them. But there was not offered one word of evidence, either of the non-existence of the spirit of Mrs. Heurtley, or that she could not communicate with her daughter, or that she did not actually make such communications through Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. The only false pretences alleged were these communications, and no evidence was given of their falsity. It is believed with religious faith, or recognised as a scientific fact by millions, that spirits exist and that they can communicate with mortals, and do so communicate. There was no evidence to show that Mrs. Fletcher did not believe in such communications, or that they might not or did not come to or through her, or that she had not acted in simple good faith. Her coming to meet her trial, and her remaining on bail to the end when she saw that the trial was utterly unfair—that all her witnesses were shut out, and

that the court, and probably the jury, were against her, are strong proofs of her sincerity.

A hundred witnesses could have been called to prove the reality of Spiritual Manifestations—among them men of the highest rank and position—but the Court ruled that no amount of such testimony would be of any avail. Surely this was wrong. Surely it was important to show that the pretences charged as false might be true, or at least that Mrs. Fletcher, like thousands of others, might honestly believe in such communications.

The counsel for the defence had to content themselves with calling witnesses to character. In ordinary cases such evidence has weight with courts and juries. I have seen a man acquitted in the Central Criminal Court against strong evidence of guilt because two witnesses gave him a good character. In the same Court a woman, against whom a series of frauds was clearly proven, was acquitted on the ground that she had probably acted under the influence of a man who might have been her husband. But these were not sensational cases, and the persons accused were not known to be Spiritualists.*

* Permit me to add that I have seen an English judge put on a black cap, and deliberately sentence a man to death, when he knew, from the man's own story, *after* the verdict, at the first opportunity he had to tell it, that he was falsely accused and entirely innocent; so that, in the absence of any Court of Appeal, the life of this poor innocent man could only have been saved by the action of that most important of Ministers, the Home Secretary for the time being. This case, one of many, where men's lives depend upon the convenience of a Minister, was that of one of the five persons convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of a police-serjeant in Manchester. It is awful to think that some innocent persons may lie long in prison, and others be hanged, if one of Her Majesty's Secretaries of State should forget, or for any reason neglect, his duty; and it is absurd that persons absolutely innocent of crime should escape punishment only by a Royal Pardon!

The witnesses to character, who testified to the honesty of Mrs. Fletcher in the strongest terms that legal formalities would permit, in answer to *the single question permitted to be asked*, were—Mr. Desmond FitzGerald, Rev. Maurice Davies, D.D., E. Dawson Rogers (journalist), Mrs. Western (wife of Lieut.-Colonel Western), Mrs. Mary Boule, Mr. H. Wedgewood (retired magistrate), Mrs. Maltby, Miss Gay, Miss Maltby, Mr. J. J. Morse, Mr. J. F. Collingwood, Dr. Nichols;* but most of these witnesses are Spiritualists, and their testimony had no more effect than in other times the testimony of Dissenters or Quakers would have had in favour of John Bunyan or William Penn, or that of the early Christians for the martyrs. The jury was exhorted by the Government prosecutor to “crush a pestilent heresy,” or as otherwise reported, to “give a death-blow to a great danger.”

At the close of the trial, if that can be called a trial in which only one side is heard, the presiding judge occupied five hours in his charge to the jury. I beg to call your attention to a few sentences in this charge. His lordship said—

“Great excitement had been manifested during the case by “persons who had come forward to give the prisoner a character

* I gave my testimony to character in Court. Solemnly sworn to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” in the case on trial, and when I could have given what I considered important evidence, I was only allowed to answer the single question as to the reputation of the prisoner. I managed to say that I had known Mrs. Fletcher’s friends in America—such men as the late William Lloyd Garrison, and women like Paulina Wright Davis; that I had seen letters of introduction which Mrs. Fletcher had brought from persons in high official positions in Massachusetts to Mr. James Russell Lowell, the American Minister; and I expressed my perfect faith in her honesty. But I felt myself perjured in not being allowed to tell what I had just sworn to tell—“the whole truth” concerning the cause on trial. The witness has rights and duties as well as the judge or the jury.

"for honesty and integrity, and to say that she and her husband were enthusiastic believers in Spiritualism and in the doctrine of communion with departed spirits. Now, he must take leave to say that it was absolutely immaterial to the issue they were trying whether or not there might be in this world several millions of persons devoutly believing that communion might be had with departed spirits."

I was present in Court during the whole trial, and I saw no evidence or manifestation of such excitement; also, I think the fact that millions of persons devoutly believe in communion with departed spirits renders it not improbable that the Fletchers held that belief.

His lordship said—

"Of course the whole of this case depends upon whether you believe the evidence of the prosecutrix or not. If you do not, the whole fabric of the case comes down."

Yet he resolutely and persistently excluded testimony affecting the character, and therefore the credibility, of this witness, apparently agreeing with the Bow Street magistrate, that though she had led the life of a demon, she might be believed when she charged another person with fraud.

"It was given in evidence by Mrs. Hart-Davies that there was an honourable understanding that the goods should be returned when required."

The goods had been so returned—then why these criminal proceedings?

"In conclusion, the judge directed the jury as to the weight which the evidence as to character should have with them. An illustration might assist them. Supposing a man were to be seen to steal a watch from the person in the street, and afterwards to pawn it, what avail would a host of witnesses as to character be in such a case? The man had been seen to commit the theft. One of the witnesses, he said, had gone the length

"of saying that the prisoner was a pure, honest, and honourable lady. Well, honest and honourable she might be—that was for the decision of the jury in this case—but any one who had read the correspondence, and had seen the photographs which had been put in, could hardly come to the conclusion that she was "a model of purity."

I have seen nothing in the correspondence to bear out this imputation. As to the photographs, the costumes of any Royal Drawing Room give precisely similar testimony in favour of a conviction for obtaining goods by false pretences. The assumption contained in the above comparison of this case to that of a man who had been seen to steal a watch and afterwards to pawn it, was the final appeal to the jury to convict the prisoner. I hope I am not wrong in asking your attention to its utter inappropriateness and evident injustice.

The jury retired, and for more than an hour and a half considered their verdict. It is evident that they were not at first unanimous; but they had a resolute looking foreman, and as usual the minority gave in to the majority, or the weak to the strong. They brought in a verdict of guilty against all the persons included in the indictment.

The sentence, though not as severe as, from previous sentences of Mr. Justice Hawkins, sometimes modified by your predecessors in office, had been anticipated, was in its wording more unjust and more cruel in its gratuitous imputations than the charge to the jury. The prisoner was in his power, and he did not spare her feelings nor the feelings of her friends—of her parents, husband, or child. He said—

"I am not going to pass sentence upon you for anything except that of which you have been found guilty. I myself feel that there is a great deal in these letters which shows to my mind that both you and your husband had entered into—I

"do not like to call it a conspiracy in one sense, but into a filthy league to throw this wretched woman into the hands of your husband. That is not a matter for which I am going to punish you, because it is a matter of immorality—which the criminal law does not punish; and if the criminal law does not punish it, I have no right to take it into consideration. At the same time it shows how little you deserve the character which a great number of witnesses thought fit to go into the witness-box to give you—one of them stating you to be almost a model of purity, honour, and honesty."

This confessedly gratuitous insult to prisoner and witnesses belongs to an earlier period of English jurisprudence. Further on he said—

"It was a miserable, mean, paltry trick which you resorted to for the purpose of getting possession of her property. Fortunately, very fortunately, she has succeeded in obtaining possession of the greater part of it"—

And this when it was distinctly in evidence that the bulk of the property had been, as soon as it was asked for, voluntarily surrendered. A deeper insult to a woman who tenderly loves her husband, was the judge's reason for not sentencing her to penal servitude—

"I nevertheless take into consideration this circumstance that but for your husband you never would have embarked in such a fraud as this, or have been guilty of those false pretences which have brought you within the pale of the criminal law."

I am quite aware that the entire press, almost without exception, approved the verdict. The "leaders" of the London journals, daily and weekly, were echoes of the charge and the sentence—but I am too old a journalist not to know what such clamour is worth. It was simply an embodiment of an ignorant and prejudiced public opinion, taking the place of the pillory to which good and bad men were subjected in a ruder age when the populace threw

their own dirt, because they had no "leader" writers paid to do it for them.

I give you my opinions freely, because I think you wish to know how intelligent and fair-minded men look upon such a failure of justice and triumph of prejudice as this trial and its result.

But the charge to the jury and the sentence were as remarkable for what they omitted as for what they asserted. Just and humane judges are eager to place before a jury any evidence or circumstance which may tell in favour of a person accused of crime. In this case, the fact that Mrs. Fletcher came across the Atlantic in mid winter solely to meet this accusation—the fact that during four months at Bow Street and the Old Bailey she had regularly surrendered to her bail, when she might have kept away or taken her departure—were not so much as hinted at. The fact that no article of the property had been sold, secreted, or made away with; that Mrs. Hart-Davies, with a portion of it, was taken with the Fletchers to America; that the remainder was left where she herself had placed it—these most important facts were left unmentioned as if they had not existed.

I appeal to you, Right Honourable Sir, as to the one man to whom the administration of Justice, and also of the Royal Clemency, in these Realms is confided; to the one whose functions are to a vast number the most important of those of any of Her Majesty's Ministers; whether I have not shown reason why this case should be reviewed in the only tribunal before which it can be brought; and I respectfully ask you to consider some of the evidence which ought to have been given at the trial, and which is contained in the following pages.

But, besides the grave doubts that every one must feel as to the motives and evidence of the prosecutrix, there

remains the fact that there was no *proof of fraud or false pretences*. It was a matter of inference or opinion. There was no proof given that one word spoken or written by Mrs. Fletcher to Mrs. Hart-Davies was untrue. The charge of the judge and the verdict of the jury were based upon preconceived opinions. Mrs. Fletcher, perfectly innocent, as I and thousands more believe her to be, upon this mere opinion, based upon no actual proof, might have been sentenced to penal servitude. Some years ago she might have been transported or hanged, as I much fear thousands of innocent victims have been, when there were no Home Secretaries to revise the verdicts of prejudiced juries, and the sentences of judges who condemned poor women to death for witchcraft and sorcery, for pretending to which Mrs. Fletcher was gravely indicted in a count which Mr. Justice Hawkins condemned as bad in law and unsupported by any evidence. The charge of false pretences, I contend, was equally unsupported, and conviction without proof is contrary to law.

Submitting what I have said and what I have appended to your wise, just and merciful consideration, I have the honour to remain,

With the highest respect,

Your most obedient servant,

THOMAS LOW NICHOLS.

32 FOPSTONE ROAD,
SOUTH KENSINGTON, S.W.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS.

I BEG leave to call the attention of the Right Honourable Secretary of State for the Home Department, as the Guardian of Justice, to the following statements bearing upon the case of REGINA *versus* FLETCHERS AND MORTON.

I ask special attention to the affidavits of Captain Lindmark and Colonel Morton, both of whom should have been witnesses at the trial, and also to the statements of several witnesses who are ready to confirm them by oath.

I have also added testimonials to character, and a further statement in regard to the Status of Spiritualists in both hemispheres.

CAPTAIN CANUTE LINDMARK, late Captain of the Royal Swedish Engineers, a gentleman of honourable position and character, who knew Mrs. Hart-Davies in South America, and accompanied her and the Fletchers to America, has transmitted to me a copy of the following affidavit, which has been sent through the Swedish Minister to the Home Secretary.

Captain Lindmark was virulently assailed, during the trial, by the counsel for the prosecution for having permitted letters from Mrs. Hart-Davies to be brought forward as evidence against her. It was a very difficult position ; but I do not see how an honourable man could have refused to do what he was advised that justice required.

Captain Lindmark is a gentleman, whose conduct, so far as I have observed it, has been most honourable ; and he has frankly explained his connection with the case, and given very important testimony. When he saw a woman, trying by foul perjuries to send another woman whom he respected, and knew to be innocent, to prison, he was bound to do what he could to prevent so great a wrong. Captain Lindmark, I may observe, and as will be seen from his affidavit, is not a Spiritualist.

THE DECLARATION of CAPTAIN CANUTE LINDMARK *in matters concerning* MRS. SUSAN WILLIS FLETCHER, *a Prisoner in London.*

I am late Captain of the Royal Swedish Engineers, and at present engaged as consulting engineer and shareholder in various industrial undertakings.

I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Hart-Davies in Buenos Ayres about the year 1872. She was then married to a gentleman named Rickard, who for some time was employed by the Argentine Government as inspector of mines. I was at the time vice-director of the engineering department of the Argentine Republic, and chief engineer of the public works. I also know Mrs. Davies' brother (who, married to an Argentine lady, is living in Buenos Ayres), her second husband, and her pretended aunt, Mrs. Sampson; and I was personally acquainted with Mr. Sampson, the late editor of the *Times*, whom she always represented to me as her mother's brother. Her mother, Mrs. Heurtley, I saw only once, when living at Hampton Court with Mr. Sampson. As regards her father, I understand that it is not known whether he is living or dead; he was a quack-doctor, who, leaving his wife, went to America years ago.

Soon after I had made Mrs. Rickard's acquaintance, she made me her confidant, describing how much she had suffered, and how badly she now was treated, not only by her husband, who needed to go away travelling, leaving her alone in Buenos Ayres without protection, and sometimes without sufficient money to subsist on, but also by her own mother, who had forced her to marry Mr. Rickard, whom she never loved, and now would not allow her to return to London. Believing her statements to be true, I felt pity for her, and gave her what assistance I could afford. On several occasions I advanced her money, and in 1873, when her husband was away in Europe and her health was very bad, I took her to the mountains, distant 400 miles from Buenos Ayres, in order that she might improve by the change of air. This step, however, I afterwards regretted, because instead of getting strong she rather grew weaker; nevertheless, and in spite of my earnest protestations to the contrary, Mrs. Rickard from that time always used to speak of me as the saviour of her life.

In 1874 Mr. Rickard came back to River Plate to take his wife and son over to England, where he had determined to settle. They all landed at Liverpool about the month of June of the same year. There Mr. Rickard left his wife, and together with his son went to London, where he immediately instituted proceedings against her for adultery committed on board the steamer with an Italian named Amadeo. The proofs being convincing, her mother, Mrs. Heurtley, in order to avoid scandal, suggested to her not to dispute the charge, and thus the divorce was granted. When Mrs. Rickard came to London neither Mrs. Heurtley nor Mr. Sampson would see her, and she was obliged to go and live with strangers. But Mrs. Heurtley would not even allow her daughter to live in the same country where

she lived, and thus Mrs. Rickard was obliged, after some months, to leave England and settle in Tours, in France.

When these events took place I was in London, having been commissioned by the Argentine Government to inspect some railway materials, and during that time, and also afterwards, Mrs. Rickard used to write to me about her private affairs. Soon after, I returned to River Plate, which country I left in 1876 to settle in Sweden. On my way home I visited Mrs. Rickard in Tours, and found her occupying a small bed-room in one of the hotels, evidently in a very poor condition. She complained to me bitterly that her mother not only kept her in exile, but refused to give her sufficient to live on, her yearly allowance being only £150. Moreover, this allowance was paid only to herself in person at Tours in small instalments, so that she could not go and live anywhere else.

The following year Mrs. Heurtley and Mr. Sampson both died, and then Mrs. Rickard was not prevented from returning to England.

Mrs. Rickard had often stated to me that her mother was very rich, having a yearly income of from £9000 to £12,000, and on the death of her mother and uncle she wrote to me from France, stating that she and her brother had inherited all their property. She also informed me that she already had had three offers of marriage, but refused them all. In reply, I wrote to her that in my opinion the best thing she could do, under the present circumstances, was to marry again, and some time after she engaged herself to Mr. Hart-Davies.

Returning from France, Mrs. Rickard went to live with Mrs. Sampson at Hampton Court. There I visited her twice, once before her marriage with Mr. Hart-Davies, and once after. She told me that she had married Mr. Davies, not because she loved him, but out of pity; seeing how deeply attached he was to her she meant to use her influence over him to improve his mind and raise him from the low position he had formerly occupied. Speaking of her trustees, she said that they would not give her any money, and insinuated that they systematically robbed her.

Again in the autumn of 1879, I came to London on business, and went to see Mrs. Hart-Davies, who was then living with her husband at Vernon Place. I found her in a state of great excitement. She told me that she was most unhappy. Her husband was a drunkard who would do no work, and only wanted to live on her money. She had been obliged to move from Farquhar Lodge, where they lived before, to London, because she had noticed that her husband intentionally left her without medical assistance when she was very ill, thus endangering her life. While I was sitting in the drawing-room with Mrs. Davies, her husband came home, and without entering the drawing-room passed upstairs to his own private apartments. I then saw Mrs. Davies on his approach become very agitated, seemingly trembling with fear. Upon that she began to speak of her new friends, the Fletchers, who had been very good to her during this time of unhappiness, and asked if I would not allow her to

introduce me to them. I replied that it was hardly possible, as I was going to Sweden in a couple of days, and my time was very much engaged, but finally, on her insisting, I consented, and on the following evening I accompanied her to their house at 22 Gordon Street.

On our way home Mrs. Hart-Davies said that her hope was to come and live with the Fletchers, and that she would do everything in her power to become a member of their family. I got rather surprised at this statement, and did my best to show her the imprudence of such a step. "The Fletchers," I said, "have both of them impressed me very favourably; but they are North Americans and spiritualists, and as such it would not be advisable to place your future in their hands." She replied that she was sorry to see that I shared the common prejudice of the English people; that the Fletchers' house was frequented by the very best people in London, and that she herself had seen the Princess of Wales come and pay them a visit. In fact, she would not at all listen to my advice, but continued to speak of the Fletchers in the most enthusiastic terms. Soon, however, I found that Mr. Fletcher was the principal, if not the sole, object of her admiration. Indeed, neither on this occasion nor afterwards, did Mrs. Davies, speaking of Mrs. Fletcher alone, represent her friend in a favourable light; on the contrary, she described Mrs. Fletcher to me as a cold-natured woman, devoid of the natural feelings of her sex.

I returned to Sweden the following day or the next. After my arrival in Sweden, I received a letter from Mrs. Davies requesting me to lend her £500 in order to defray the expenses of her intended voyage to France. This money, however, I declined to advance her.

In the beginning of last year I returned to England, and six or seven weeks after my arrival in London, I went to see the Fletchers. They informed me that Mrs. Hart-Davies was going to live with them after her return from France, and that they expected her in a month's time. Mrs. Davies had solicited their protection, because she found it impossible to stay any longer with her husband, and because her aunt, Mrs. Sampson, would not receive her in her house.

In May, Mrs. Davies arrived from France, taking up her abode with the Fletchers. I now visited their house frequently, and being an old friend of Mrs. Davies, I also became intimate with Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. Mrs. Hart-Davies availed herself of the first opportunity to explain to me more fully the reasons why she had left her husband. Mr. Davies, she said, had after their marriage endeavoured to impress upon her the necessity of making a will, and one day while they were living at Farquhar Lodge, he brought with him from London two men, whom she did not know, but who were introduced to her as solicitors. They laid before her a document, which she found to be a will in favour of her husband, and which they forced her to sign. After this she began to suspect her husband of entertaining plans against her life, and said she had once discovered him bringing a glass of port wine that was poisoned; and

that, not succeeding in poisoning her, Mr. Davies had taken measures to have her shut up in a lunatic asylum, and for several days she saw men of suspected appearance strolling about her house at Vernon Place. It was then she secretly left her husband and went to France without letting him know her address.

All these incidents Mrs. Davies related to me in full details, and with such an air of conviction, that for some time I believed her. Afterwards, however, I found from what her husband and her trustee, Mr. Burrows, told me, that her story was false from beginning to end. At Farquhar Lodge she had really made a will in favour of her husband, but it was made entirely of her own accord, and without her husband interfering at all. This will she soon after cancelled. The Rev. Mr. Burrows, a trustee of Mrs. Davies, was under the impression that she never gave her husband any money. "Mr. Davies (he said) possessed before marrying, a little capital of his own, and that capital, together with a considerable sum which his brother had advanced him, was spent in sustaining the house." When Mr. Davies could not procure any more money, his wife left him.

I asked Mrs. Hart-Davies if her husband, knowing that she lived with the Fletchers, could not compel her to come back to his house. She answered that he would not dare to do such a thing, because he knew that the moment he evinced such an intention she would petition for a divorce on the ground of his physical failing. In fact, he never to my knowledge, made the slightest attempt to induce his wife to return.

With regard to her trustees, Mrs. Davies used still more abusive language than before, declaring it was her intention to bring them up before the Court of Chancery as soon as she could procure sufficient money to pay the law expenses.

Mrs. Davies had not been a fortnight with the Fletchers, before she commenced to reveal her true character. Finding her intentions frustrated with regard to Mr. Fletcher, who, she saw, loved and respected his wife too much to be more than a friend and brother to her, she suddenly changed from the pure and suffering victim she had artfully represented herself to be to the Fletchers, to a jealous and capricious woman.

When I saw how disagreeable she made herself to her hosts, and that neither of them was capable of pacifying her bad temper, I one day, in a private conversation, expressed to her my surprise at her strange conduct, which appeared to me the more inexplicable as she was treated with the greatest kindness. She interrupted me, saying, "They ought to be kind to me. I have shared with them my worldly goods, and even made a will in their favour. But that, of course, I can all cancel to-morrow, if I like," she added ; and with these words she left me. When I next saw Mrs. Fletcher, I asked her if Mrs. Davies had made a will in her favour, to which she answered, "No." "But she herself told me so," I said. "Then she has done so without our knowledge," Mrs. Fletcher replied ; "the only docu-

ment I know of, is a deed of gift, by which she made over to us the things she brought to the house, so as to prevent her husband from claiming them." Thinking that Mrs. Davies, using the word will, had really meant the deed of gift, I did not inquire any further into the matter.

Mrs. Fletcher, although she occasionally wore Mrs. Hart-Davies' jewellery, and had some old china and crystals belonging to Mrs. Davies in her drawing-room, did never, to my knowledge, pretend that these things were her own. In fact, one day when Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Hart-Davies, and myself were sitting in the back drawing-room, Mrs. Fletcher, pointing at various things, said to me: "Nearly all these dainty things you see in this room belong to Juliet."

Mrs. Davies' extraordinary conduct, as also the fact that none of the many old friends she pretended to have in London came to visit her after her return from France, greatly astonished Mr. Fletcher, and caused him to make inquiries about her former life, of which she evidently had given him quite an erroneous idea. One afternoon, when I happened to be alone in the drawing-room, Mrs. Davies entered in a very agitated state. Throwing herself on the sofa, she began to cry hysterically. "Willie has made me confess," she said, "and now he despises me."

Indeed, after this it seems to have become clear to the Fletchers that Mrs. Davies could not continue to be an inmate of their house, but that she must, sooner or later, leave them. On one occasion I was present when Mrs. Davies began to complain, as she often used to do, to Mrs. Fletcher of the coldness of her husband. "He is my brother," she said, "and as such he ought to be more kind to me than he is; now he scarcely notices me." And so she went on till at last Mrs. Fletcher, growing angry, told her plainly that if she was not satisfied with her husband she had better take her things and leave the house at once, upon which Mrs. Davies had a hysterical attack, and then asked Mrs. Fletcher's pardon.

In the meantime I returned to Sweden, having previously agreed to accompany Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher on their voyage to America, which country I intended to visit for the purpose of inspecting certain manufacturing establishments. Consequently I returned to England towards the end of July, when we all left for America, Mrs. Davies and Miss Spencer being also of the party.

On board the steamer Mrs. Davies became so conspicuous for her imprudent behaviour, remaining on deck till late in the night after all the other lady passengers had retired, that I felt bound to signify to Mr. Fletcher that for the decorum of the party he should compel Mrs. Davies to conduct herself properly. In this he succeeded; but only after threatening to separate her from the party and send her back by the returning steamer to England.

We disembarked at New York, and went from there to a Spiritualistic Camp-meeting at a place called Lake Pleasant, not far from Boston. At this meeting were also two men, both spiritualists, of whom Mrs. Fletcher had on several occasions spoken to me as her

bitterest enemies ; they had come over from England only a few days before us. One of them calls himself Doctor Mack, and the name of the other is Rondi. The latter is an Italian artist, who, among the acquaintances of the Fletchers, is generally known to be a rejected suitor of Mrs. Fletcher.

With these men, whom Mrs. Fletcher did not even recognise at the camp, and of whom at least Doctor Mack was entirely unknown to Mrs. Davies, she immediately formed intimate relations, and in concert with them the plan to defame the Fletchers was conceived, which afterwards was so successfully carried out. About a week after our arrival at the Camp-meeting, Mrs. Davies told me that she was going to spend a few days at the watering place, Saratoga, with an American family whose acquaintance she had just made, but that she would be back soon. She then left the camp, taking scarcely any luggage with her ; but instead of going to Saratoga, she went with her two friends, Dr. Mack and Rondi, to a village in the neighbourhood. There they got a search-warrant, and, provided with this and a power of attorney from Mrs. Davies, Dr. Mack presented himself at Lake Pleasant to recover Mrs. Davies' stolen property from the Fletchers. I did not then know that there had been any difficulties whatever between the Fletchers and Mrs. Hart-Davies with regard to her property, nor do I believe that there ever existed any. I had heard Mrs. Fletcher say to her husband shortly after Mrs. Davies had left the camp : " I asked her to take her things with her, but she would not, saying that she intended to come back in a few days." Consequently I thought Mrs. Davies' behaviour atrocious, and advised the Fletchers not to give up the property to Dr. Mack. However, they did not follow my advice ; so he got the things. It seems natural, if there had actually been any dispute about her jewellery and other things, Mrs. Davies should have addressed herself to me, her old friend, who, on various occasions before, had assisted her, instead of having recourse to two strangers, whom she, moreover, knew to be enemies of the Fletchers ; but on that subject she never said a word to me.

From Lake Pleasant Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, Miss Spencer and I went to Boston. Dr. Mack, Mr. Rondi and Mrs. Davies also went there. There they got a new search-warrant, claiming part of Mrs. Davies' property that was left in the Fletchers' house in London, such as a string of Oriental pearls, &c., &c., mentioned during the trial. Dr. Mack and Mrs. Davies, accompanied by detectives, came to the house where we lived between three and four in the afternoon, and had the house ransacked. Some linen clothes belonging to Mrs. Davies being found in Mrs. Fletcher's trunk—they, on that account, arrested Mrs. Fletcher, and as they had fixed the bail at the enormous sum of £10,000, which, of course, could not be procured in the afternoon, she was obliged to go to prison. The following morning the judge released her on a bail of only £300. Mr. Fletcher was out of Boston at the time, and was not imprisoned. Mrs. Davies also caused my trunks to be searched, evidently in hopes of finding some

of her things amongst mine, which would have given her an opportunity of implicating me in the affair.

The reporters of the newspapers being now invited to interview Mrs. Davies, she told them the most extraordinary stories about herself and the Fletchers, which afterwards circulated through the whole American press, numerous copies being also sent by Mrs. Davies and her associates to Mr. and Mrs. Fletchers' friends in England. She there represented herself to be a high-born young lady, and very rich, and stated that the property alone which she had recovered from the Fletchers at Lake Pleasant was worth £16,000. As for the Fletchers, there is not an infamy with which she did not charge them.

When the case was brought before the police-court in Boston, it was at first postponed in order to allow the Fletchers to get over from London certain documents referring to the transfer of Mrs. Davies' property. Before they arrived, I asked Mr. Fletcher about their contents. "I cannot tell you," he answered; "I never saw them, and I do not know whether there are two or only one." I then put the same question to Mrs. Fletcher, and her lawyer also asked her, but neither could she tell. "There is a deed of gift," she said, "which Mrs. Davies made in our favour before she went to France, but I cannot remember what it contains. It was read to me only once, and then I remember to have remarked that a clause must be put in explaining that she made it entirely of her own accord and free from any influence of others."

After the arrival of the documents the case was again postponed for about six weeks, because a settlement had been offered and accepted, by which Mrs. Davies was to pay the Fletchers compensation for all their trouble. Mrs. Davies however, instead of carrying the agreement into effect, escaped with Dr. Mack to England, while the Fletchers were detained in Boston to answer the charge at the next hearing before the Police-Court.

In October I returned to Europe. Before leaving Boston, Mrs. Fletcher asked me, when I arrived in London, to go to their house and have all their letters from Mrs. Davies collected and secured. "These letters," she added, "are of the greatest importance in case of any future complications, as they show how Mrs. Davies came to live with us and make out the deed of gift." Accordingly, the very day I arrived in London I went to 22 Gordon Street, where I was received by Mrs. and Miss Maltby and Miss Gay, who were taking care of the house during the Fletchers' absence. On inquiring about the letters, I was told that Mrs. Davies and Dr. Mack, accompanied by Mr. Abrahams and a detective, had eight days before my arrival forced themselves into the house and ransacked it from the top down to the cellar. Mrs. Davies had taken away not only what belonged to her, but also a quantity of things which they knew belonged to the Fletchers, as well as their private letters and other papers. "Then," I said, "there is no use for me to look for Mrs. Davies' letters." To which Miss Gay replied, "After they had gone, there was not a letter

of her's left in the house except one, which I found in one of the bed-rooms, and which I afterwards sent to Mrs. Fletcher." I was also told that Mrs. Davies, after coming back from America, had been calling on numbers of people whose acquaintance she had made in the Fletchers' house, calumniating them in every imaginable way. Amongst other stories she told was that the Fletchers had tried to poison her both in London and America. In this laudable occupation she seems to have been faithfully assisted by her two associates.

I now went to call on Mrs. Davies' trustee, the Reverend Mr. Burrows, at Hampton, to request him to see Mrs. Davies and prevent her from creating any further scandal. He answered that he had not seen Mrs. Davies since she had come home from America. She had written to him asking him to visit her, but he would not go, because he considered her such a bad and "dangerous woman," who by her slander might damage his reputation as a clergyman. He considered the Fletchers respectable people, and believed them entirely innocent of the crimes charged in Mrs. Davies' vile accusations. "If anybody has been deceived in this affair," he said, "it is not Mrs. Davies; she is too shrewd and clever a woman to be duped in such a coarse manner as she pretends." Moreover, he told me he suspected that jealousy was at the bottom of the whole affair, and asked me if Mrs. Davies had not been Mr. Fletcher's mistress. With regard to me he said that Mrs. Hart-Davies had felt greatly disappointed because I did not make her an offer of marriage when I visited Hampton Court soon after the death of her mother and Mr. Sampson.

Speaking of Mrs. Davies' property, he said that the only thing of value that she brought to the Fletchers' house did not belong to her, but to the trustees, and that her own property was worth nothing to speak of. I told him that he must be mistaken, as I myself had seen some jewellery of considerable value that formerly belonged to Mrs. Heurtley, and now was in her daughter's possession. Mr. Burrows looked rather surprised at this statement, and wondered how her possession of these things could have been kept a secret from him.

I also visited Mrs. Sampson, who is living at Sandgate. She stated to me that she delivered up to Mrs. Davies her mother's jewels and wardrobe, when she came back to England, after Mrs. Heurtley's and Mr. Sampson's death.

When Mrs. Fletcher was brought up before the police-court, in Bow Street, Mrs. Davies represented herself through Mr. Abrahams, as a lady of great wealth and of high social position and moral character, while she charged Mrs. Fletcher with defrauding, stealing, attempts at poisoning, and keeping a free-love establishment. Being convinced that all these vile accusations were utterly false, and knowing that I myself, by my attentions to Mrs. Fletcher, had contributed to awaken Mrs. Davies's jealousy and hatred, and that Mrs. Fletcher after having been robbed of all her letters and other papers, was left without any means of defence against an unscrupulous enemy, whose

evidence, according to English law, would be valid before the court, I thought it my duty in order to save a person, in my opinion, unjustly accused, to deliver up to Mrs. Fletcher's solicitor, certain letters which, written by Mrs. Davies, and showing her true character, would, to a great extent, invalidate her testimony. These letters were not admitted as evidence before the court, and consequently Mrs. Davies remained to the end of the trial, in the eyes of the judge and the jury, the pure and victimised woman she represented herself to be. And as might be supposed from the nature of her character, she did not hesitate to make the gravest mis-statements in her evidence before the Central Criminal Court, so as to get the object of her hatred convicted. To my knowledge, she perjured herself when stating—

- 1st. About her relations to me.
- 2nd. That she was not guilty of the adultery on account of which her first husband obtained a divorce.
- 3rd. That she always lived on the best terms with her mother; a statement sufficiently contradicted by the fact admitted at the trial, namely, that during several years before her mother's death, she (Mrs. Hart-Davies) was not allowed to see her.
- 4th. That Mrs. Heurtley, during her life-time, gave her the jewels and other things which Mrs. Davies herself values at £10,000, and which she accused the Fletchers of obtaining from her by false pretences. This statement Mrs. Sampson contradicted to me as above-mentioned; she allowed Mrs. Hart-Davies to take possession of her mother's jewels and wardrobe after the death of Mrs. Heurtly and Mr. Sampson. Mrs. Davies consequently had already committed perjury before the Probate Court, when she stated that the property she took from Hampton Court was worth only £100.
- 5th. That she never told anybody that her husband tried to poison her.
- 6th. That she never spoke of her trustees in abusive terms.
- 7th. That she never pretended to be a spiritualistic medium. On several occasions she spoke to me of her mediumship, and that she was in constant communication with her deceased mother.
- 8th. That she did not take away any letters when she and Dr. Mack, on their return from America, ransacked Mr. Fletcher's house in Gordon Street.
- 9th. That she only loved Mr. Fletcher as a brother.

When I first made Mrs. Davies' acquaintance in Buenos Ayres she wanted me too to be her brother, yet her feelings to me had nothing of a sister's. Mrs. Hart-Davies is naturally a woman of great intelligence and penetrating mind, which qualities are further enhanced by a good education and travels in foreign countries. She

speaks French and Spanish tolerably well, is clever at drawing, and writes both prose and poetry beautifully. Unfortunately these qualities are neutralised by her sensual propensities, which, greatly developed during the last few years, not only make her forget her own dignity and her family's honour, but cause her to grow nearly insane. To gratify her desires in this respect she is capable of anything. Being infatuated with Mr. Fletcher, she makes him believe that she is a fervent Spiritualist and an innocent victim of the ill-treatment of her husband, her relations, and her trustees so as to awake his sympathy and pity. Upon that she asks him to take care of her property in order to save it from her rapacious husband and trustees, and thus succeeds in becoming a member of his family and circle of friends. At last, seeing that all her efforts with regard to Mr. Fletcher had been made in vain, she addresses herself to me and others with similar intentions.

Not gaining her object in any way, she naturally ascribes her failure to Mrs. Fletcher, whom she sees admired by everybody visiting the house while she herself is scarcely noticed. Her jealousy of Mrs. Fletcher I discovered immediately after her coming to live with them, and my conviction is that she never loved Mrs. Fletcher, nor suffered herself to be influenced by her, as she stated before the court. This became so obvious to me that once or twice I warned Mrs. Fletcher, saying I believed that Mrs. Hart-Davies hated her. She, however, would not believe it.

With regard to Mrs. Fletcher, I entertain a high opinion both of her intellect and moral character, and believe her utterly incapable of committing a fraud such as that of which she has been convicted, and which has been justly stigmatised as one of the coarsest and most clumsy that ever were attempted. Indeed, I cannot believe that any woman having in view to defraud another of her jewels should, on the second time they meet, be so stupid as to reveal her intentions in the way Mrs. Davies testifies with regard to Mrs. Fletcher, nor that there is any woman that could possibly be deceived in such a coarse manner. Mrs. Fletcher is a sincere believer in Spiritualism, and among Spiritualists she is considered to be a powerful medium. However, of her mediumship I cannot myself judge, as I never was present at a seance neither with her nor with Mr. Fletcher. But I could not fail to notice, during the time I frequented her house, and during the voyage to America, how, with the Fletchers, as with other Spiritualists whose acquaintance I made, spiritual communications interfered even with the most trivial occupations of daily life, at the same time that they furnished a constant subject of conversation. Mrs. Fletcher, though fully aware that my opinions in this respect entirely differed from hers, would often tell me that she had seen my deceased mother's spirit, and that it had spoken to her, and after I had parted from her in America and gone home to Sweden, she wrote me several letters, in which visions of this kind were referred to.

Contrary to the jury's verdict, I therefore fully believe that Mrs.

Fletcher, when writing to Mrs. Davies while in France, about her deceased mother, really was convinced that Mrs. Heurtley's spirit communicated with her.

(Signed) CANUTE LINDMARK.

[The above Affidavit, duly sworn and certified, has been sent to the Home Secretary by the Swedish Minister.]

The following sworn and legally certified Affidavits of FRANCIS T. MORTON, ESQ., Counsellor-at-Law, of Boston, U.S.A., embody the testimony to the innocence of Mrs. FLETCHER, which was shut out of Court by the Government Prosecutor having included Mr. MORTON in the indictment:—

In the matter of Mrs. Juliet Anne Theodora Hart-Davies *versus* Mr. J. W. Fletcher, and Mrs. Susie Willis Fletcher, now pending in Bow Street Police Court, London, England.

I, Francis T. Morton, of Boston, Massachusetts, U.S., America, hereby depose and say, That the statement made by Mr. S. B. Abrahams on the 3rd of December, A.D. 1880, at Bow Street Police Court, to wit: "That I influenced Mrs. Hart-Davies in the making of a certain will dated October 23rd, 1879," either by word, action, or in any other manner whatsoever, is absolutely untrue in each and every particular.

That the statement, "That I have ever at any time been, or acted as 'private secretary to J. W. Fletcher,'" is devoid of truth.

That the statement, "That in coming over to America, Mr. Fletcher, Mrs. Hart-Davies, and a lady went one way, and Mrs. Fletcher and Mr. Morton another way," is equally untrue.

I further depose and say, That Mrs. Fletcher was not a passenger on the steamer which brought me to America in September, 1880; and That Mrs. Fletcher was not in England when I left there, but was in America.

I further depose and say, That I have good reason to believe that Mr. S. B. Abrahams and his client, in making the above statements, and in saying, "that I was in the abode of free-lovers, and that I was a disciple of free-love," did so for the sole purpose of maliciously assailing my character and good name, and that of others, both in open court and through the press, and that of my family and friends, not only here, but in England as well. And I regard it as a duty that some correcting statement should be made, not only on my own account, but that these public slanderers be prevented from doing further injury in future, and this high-handed injustice be hunted down.

I further depose and say, That upon my return to London from the sea shore, in the month of August, A.D. 1879, Mrs. Hart-Davies requested and obtained an interview with me in my study, at No. 22,

Gordon Street, Gordon Square, where I was then living ; and after alluding to the relations existing between herself and husband, of his and her solicitors, of her trustees, and of her aunt, from whom she derived her only income of £300 per annum, she said substantially these words, " I have not one friend in this world whom I can trust, and to whom I can go for advice and assistance. Will you give me counsel and advice ? " I answered that I was not conversant with English practice, and could not in any way be mixed up in her affairs, and thereupon advised her to go to some responsible firm of solicitors, who would see that she was protected in her rights, if they had been in any manner infringed upon. She replied that she knew of no solicitors, and had no friends who could or would give her such introduction, and again asked for my assistance and advice, and thereupon declared her purpose to make a conveyance of certain property, and stated in most unmistakeable language the subject-matter contained in a certain deed of gift, dated August 25th, 1879, and which after signing she requested me to sign my name as a witness thereto, and which I accordingly did. The schedule of certain property therein referred to was never given nor annexed to the said deed of gift, although so intended by Mrs. Hart-Davies, on August 26th, 1879. Before subscribing my name as a witness to this deed of gift, I asked Mrs. Hart-Davies why she had made this conveyance to Mrs. Fletcher, and if she had given the matter careful consideration, and whether she had been influenced by anyone in making this conveyance. To which she replied, That no persons, either spirits or mortals, had at any time or in any manner whatever, influenced her in making this conveyance. That Mrs. Fletcher was the best and truest friend she had in the world ; that she had by her kindness saved her life, when she was friendless and knew not which way to turn ; that she had no relatives other than a brother who was living in South America, and could take care of himself, and that she wished to leave this property to Mrs. Fletcher, and was determined the property should go to no one else. I said I doubted very much if Mrs. Fletcher would allow her to do so ; Mrs. Hart-Davies replied, " That she did not expect to live a great while longer, and that there was no one else to whom she wished to leave her property. " The statement of Mrs. Hart-Davies or that of her counsel, That I at any time, or in any manner whatsoever influenced her either directly or indirectly to make the said conveyance above-referred to, is a base and malicious falsehood, and as outrageous and villainous as it is false.

I further depose and say, That in the following month of October, Mrs. Hart-Davies came to me and declared her purpose of making a will, and not only asked, but *begged* my assistance in so doing. I replied, that while I would cheerfully assist as far as I could I was not familiar with the requirements of the English practice in such matters ; that in a matter of this nature she ought to go to a good solicitor, who would see that whatever she did would be rightly and properly done, and suggested that the trustees would probably know

of some reliable solicitors. She said, "No, I don't wish to ask my trustees for anything;" and then asked me, if I would take the responsibility of introducing her to some solicitors whom I might know. That she would be under lasting obligations.

I further depose, and say, That I did subsequently introduce Mrs. Hart-Davies to one of the most respectable firms of solicitors I knew of in London, (and this upon her urgent solicitation, and from no desire of my own;) to whom she stated her case in terms and language that admitted of no doubt as to her motives, intentions, and purposes. That she subsequently gave or sent to the said solicitors a "will," written in her own handwriting, in order (as she said) that there might be no question as to her intentions, and to prevent the possibility of future litigation, the original draft of which, I presume and trust, is still in existence. The solicitors in question declined at first to have anything to do with her matters in view of her having previously employed other solicitors, and the uncertain condition of her affairs; but subsequently were kind enough to act as her solicitors. The introduction was made by me in good faith, while good faith on her part has been most shamefully violated. It was made at great personal inconvenience, and with intent to wrong no one, but to help this woman, Mrs. Hart-Davies, who came to me representing that she was persecuted and wronged. And the statement made by her or her counsel, "That I either influenced her in the making of any will, or conspired with any person or persons whatsoever in so doing," is a most infamous falsehood, and without a semblance or shadow of truth, calculated to deceive the court and poison the mind of the public before a reply thereto could be made, and its falsity be proved.

I further depose and say, That I have always regarded Mrs. Hart-Davies' interviews as a professional matter, and until September, 1880 (after Mrs. Hart-Davies had brought her suit in this country [America]), have never spoken of the will to any person or persons whatsoever, in England or elsewhere (other than to her solicitors), either directly or indirectly. And furthermore, to be more explicit, I never had a word of conversation with J. W. Fletcher, or Susie Willis Fletcher, about the subject-matter of this or any other will, until September, 1880. Nor did Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher ever consult with me as to the making of the said will, or of any codicil, or of any solicitors in connection therewith, in behalf of Mrs. Hart-Davies, or any other person or persons. And furthermore, Mrs. Hart-Davies stated to me in the most positive terms, viz., "That she had *not* been influenced by anyone, either spirits or mortals, in the making of, or in her purpose of making, the said will, or in the making of any will whatsoever." And the statement of Mrs. Hart-Davies or her solicitors, "That J. W. Fletcher or Susie Willis Fletcher conspired with me, or I with them, to influence in any manner whatsoever, or to induce Mrs. Hart-Davies to make this or any other will," is a most contemptible, barefaced, and outrageous falsehood; a statement which she failed to make, and dared not make in the suit she brought

in this country in August, A.D. 1880 (and quite similar to that now pending in London), and in which she was non-suited, having fled the country before it was tried, and without the knowledge of her counsel, as the records of the court will show.

I further depose and say, That between the first and twelfth day of June, A.D. 1880, and on two different occasions, Mrs. Hart-Davies, after stating that she was about to visit America, asked me to draw up a paper which she might take with her to America, the better to protect herself and Mrs. Fletcher in the property she intended to take over with her. I told her she should consult her solicitor in London, or her lawyer in New York on her arrival there, and did not draw up the paper as requested.

I further depose and say, That from the first Mrs. Hart-Davies came to me not only of her own accord, but quite unsolicited. That I gave her the best advice, counsel, and assistance in my power. That I have never asked, nor received one farthing from her for any services rendered her, and that up to within two days of her leaving London for America, she expressed her gratitude to me for such kindness in terms of confidence and respect.

I further depose and say, That the attempt of Mrs. Hart-Davies and her advisers to injure my character and standing in the courts, and through the press, both socially, and at the bar, not only in this country, but in England and on the continent, whether to serve her own purposes, or for any other reason, is unparalleled, most outrageous, and without cause or justification.

The purpose of this statement is to hunt down and punish injustice whenever and wherever found. And the better to serve this purpose I forward herewith certified certificates as to my standing in the courts of this State, and other papers, as to my character in this community.

FRANCIS T. MORTON.

Counsellor-at-Law.

40. Simmons Buildings, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S. America,
December 27, A.D. 1880.

United States of America,
Suffolk ss., Boston, Dec. 27, 1880, State of Mass.

Personally appeared the above-named Francis T. Morton, and made oath that the above statement subscribed by him is true, before me.

WARREN A. REED,

Notary Public.

[SEAL].

I hereby certify that Warren A. Reed, whose true seal and signature I believe to be respectively affixed and subscribed to the annexed document, was on the day of the date thereof a Notary Public in and for the county of Suffolk, Massachusetts, one of the United States of America, duly commissioned and sworn, to whose acts as such faith and credit are due.

In testimony whereof, I do hereunto set my hand and seal of office at Boston, in the United States of America, this twenty-eighth day of December, 1880.

[SEAL.]

W. H. STUART,
British Vice-Consul.

And further, Testimony of Mr. FRANCIS T. MORTON, copy as follows :—

40 Simmons Buildings, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.,
December 13th, 1880.

To whomsoever it may concern,—I, Francis T. Morton, Counsellor-at-Law, of Boston, Mass., U.S.A., hereby depose and say, That on the twenty-ninth day of August, A.D. 1879, I was requested by Mrs. Juliet Anne Theodora Hart-Davies, of London, England, to sign my name as a witness of her signature to a certain document bearing date of August 29th, in which she made a conveyance of certain property to Mrs. S. W. Fletcher; and before doing so, she stated to me a full determination to make the said conveyance to Mrs. Fletcher, and stated expressly "That no one, neither spirits nor mortals, had in any manner, or at any time, influenced her in making the said conveyance; that she was determined her relatives should have no portion of the property; that Mrs. Fletcher was the truest friend she had upon earth, and that she expected to live but for a short time." Knowing how easy it will be for her to swear that spirits influenced her action in this matter (in view of the public feeling against Spiritualism), and the better to cover up her actions in this country, in her attempts to injure the character of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, I have made this statement, viz., "That no one, neither spirits nor mortals, had in any manner, or any time, influenced her in making the said conveyance," was made to me before my name was affixed as a witness to the said document, and for the further object, viz., that justice and truth may prevail.

In witness whereof I have herewith set my hand and seal this thirteenth day of December, A.D. 1880.

FRANCIS T. MORTON.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Suffolk County,
13th December, 1880.

Personally appeared, Francis T. Morton, and made oath that the above statement by him subscribed is true. Before me,

[SEAL.]

CHARLES H. DREW.
Notary Public.

[ATTACHED.]

I hereby certify that Charles H. Drew, whose true seal and signature I believe to be respectively affixed and subscribed to the document hereunto annexed, was on the day of the date thereof, a

Notary Public, in and for the County of Suffolk, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, one of the United States of America, duly commissioned and sworn, to whose official acts faith and credit are due.

In testimony whereof I do hereto set my hand and seal of office at Boston, in the United States aforesaid, this thirteenth day of December, 1880.

W. H. STUART.
British Vice-Consul.

[SEAL.]

[Verbatim copy of Mr. Francis T. Morton's testimony on oath now in the possession of the solicitor of Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher, viz., Mr. Edward Dillon Lewis, of 52 Old Broad Street, E.C.]

In confirmation of the above Testimony, I append the following statements of Miss Gay, Mrs. Maltby, Miss Maltby, and Ellen Partridge, all of whom were in attendance at the Central Criminal Court ready to be sworn to the truth of the following particulars:—

STATEMENT OF MISS S. E. GAY.

I, SUSAN ELIZABETH GAY, of 45 Torrington Square, W.C., and Penzance House, Weymouth, Cornwall, hereby solemnly testify to the truth of the following condensed statement of the evidence handed in by me to Mr. E. D. Lewis, of 52 Old Broad Street, E.C.

In passing through London in the autumn of last year, I was detained at the house of the Fletchers in Gordon Street, owing to the promise made by Mrs. Maltby to the trustees of Mrs. Hart-Davies, that no box should be removed, and I was therefore present on the occasion of the visit of Mrs. Hart-Davies on October 19th. On that date, Mrs. Hart-Davies, accompanied by James McGeary, otherwise known as "Dr. Mack," forced an entry into the house, through the threats of Mr. S. B. Abrahams; and having done so, they both entered every room in the house, and Mrs. Hart-Davies proceeded, without any order from the Fletchers' solicitor, to remove all the property she alleged to be hers. She opened every drawer, box, and desk in the house, including those belonging to the Fletchers, and turned out the contents upon the floor. On our calling in Mr. Flegg, who was acting as the solicitor of the Fletchers,—who, in consequence of the agreement drawn up in Boston between themselves and Mrs. Hart-Davies (the copy of which is appended), had forbidden other than legal access to the house, and had stipulated that James McGeary should not enter it, I urged him to allow Mrs. Hart-Davies to possess herself of the property, believing that the Fletchers would be otherwise made the subjects of an unjust and cruel prosecution owing to their position as public mediums, and it was arranged the property should be removed under protest, Mrs.

Hart-Davies representing to us that she "desired to avoid legal proceedings."

In her evidence she stated that "things were concealed under the beds." I saw a few muslin curtains and one or two muslin dresses only, removed from under the mattress in her room, placed there evidently for the sake of convenience. She proceeded with the work of removing the property. I saw her search the private desk of Mr. Fletcher in the dining-room, and remove letters from it, the said desk having been previously arranged by me for the sake of convenience, in the presence of Miss Maltby, when we both noticed that the whole of the letters were addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher; and I also noticed that letters which were placed behind the mirror had disappeared, by which proceedings Mrs. Hart-Davies was enabled to deprive the Fletchers of an important part of their defence. On the trial she denied on oath that she had even seen any letters. The cellar door was burst open forcibly, and the whole of the wine removed, and the house left in confusion. A few days subsequently, we heard from a person sent from Mr. Abrahams' office, that Mrs. Hart-Davies threatened legal proceedings against the Fletchers. I telegraphed the occurrence of her visit to them, and also wrote to inform them of the threatened arrest, which letter was received by them before Mrs. Fletcher left Boston to return to England, which she said she should do to vindicate her character, although we learned from Captain Lindmark, on his return to London on October 31st, that she had been very ill from the anxiety and injustice she had already experienced. She requested me to secure bail, which I did, but before she could reach London she was arrested at Greenock on December 2nd, and her boxes were seized and private papers, including the agreement, which papers have remained in the hands of the prosecution. Mrs. Fletcher informed me that she had sent copies of a Boston daily paper, a copy of which was also forwarded to me, notifying her intention of sailing by the s.s. Anchoria, to both Mrs. Hart-Davies and James McGeary.

(Signed)

SUSAN E. GAY.

STATEMENT OF MRS. MALTBY.

On the departure of the Fletchers to America in the previous summer, I, AGNES FRANCIS MALTBY, was left in charge of their house at 22 Gordon Street, where I now reside, and I hereby testify to the truth of the following statement.

On October 19th, in my temporary absence, Mrs. Hart-Davies and James McGeary entered the house, and on my return I found them and Mr. S. B. Abrahams in possession of it. Owing to the threats and representations made, it was finally agreed that Mrs. Hart-Davies should possess herself of whatever she alleged to be her property, and Mr. Flegg reluctantly agreed to it under protest. Mrs. Hart-Davies then ransacked the house, opening all drawers, boxes, and

desks, and searched a private desk belonging to Mr. Fletcher, and removed letters from it. The cellar door was forcibly burst open, and the house left in confusion, and the property was conveyed to the Bedford Pantechnicon by the advice of Mr. Abrahams. A few days subsequently we heard from a person sent from his office, that Mrs. Hart-Davies threatened to arrest Mrs. Fletcher, to whom notice was at once given, and who returned to London with the hope of obtaining justice for the wrongs she had already met with, and the hope of clearing her character from the aspersions that had been cast upon it.

(Signed) AGNES FRANCIS MALTBY.

STATEMENT OF AGNES MALTBY.

I, AGNES MALTBY, now residing with my mother at 22 Gordon Street, hereby declare and testify to the truth of the following statement of the evidence handed in by me to Mr. E. D. Lewis of 52 Old Broad Street, E.C.

I was acquainted with Mrs. Hart-Davies, while she resided with the Fletchers, and several times saw her alone, on which occasions she always spoke of them in high terms, stating she had adopted them as brother and sister. She also told me that her husband was given to drinking, and that she had been very unhappy with him. I saw her leave London with the Fletchers for America last summer, in apparently good health and spirits, and the legal proceedings in America very much surprised me.

On October 19th, Mrs. Hart-Davies, accompanied by James McGeary, otherwise known as "Dr. Mack," forced an entry into the house, through the threats of Mr. S. B. Abrahams, and having done this, they both entered every room in the house, producing on demand no order from the Fletchers, and Mrs. Hart-Davies proceeded to turn out the contents of all their drawers, boxes, and desks. I called in Mr. Flegg, who was acting as the Fletchers' solicitor, and it was finally arranged that the property should be removed under protest, owing to the injustice with which public mediums are liable to be treated in the present state of the law. Mrs. Hart-Davies stated she wished "to avoid legal proceedings" at first. A few muslin curtains, etc., were found under the mattress in her own room, which had been placed there for convenience. I saw Mrs. Hart-Davies search the private desk of Mr. Fletcher, and remove letters from it. Miss Gay had arranged the desk in my presence, and all the letters were addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. While Mrs. Hart-Davies was in Mrs. Fletcher's room, I overheard James McGeary ask her if she had looked for letters and papers, alluding to letters which she was selecting from boxes on the table. After she had left, I noticed letters had disappeared from behind the mirrors, etc., where they had been placed. On the trial I heard Mrs. Hart-Davies deny on oath that she had even seen any letters.

The cellar-door was forcibly burst open, and the house completely ransacked ; and after this we heard that Mrs. Hart-Davies threatened to arrest Mrs. Fletcher, who was at once informed of her intention, and returned to London, as stated in letters received from her by us, with the hope of obtaining justice and a fair hearing of the case.

(Signed) AGNES MALTBY.

STATEMENT OF ELLEN PARTRIDGE.

I, ELLEN PARTRIDGE, now residing at 22 Gordon Street, entered the service of Mrs. Fletcher in 1879. One day, so far as I can recollect, in the month of August in that year, Mrs. Hart-Davies came to the house with only her hat on, and with her dress torn, in an excited and trembling condition. She begged to see Mrs. Fletcher, and I conducted her to the drawing-room, when she told me her husband had been threatening to put her into a lunatic asylum, and had tried to poison her. (Denied on oath by Mrs. Hart-Davies on the trial.) Mrs. Fletcher saw her. I mentioned these statements to a fellow-servant who can state that I did so at the time.

I remember many letters arriving from France while Mrs. Hart-Davies was in Tours, and I placed some of them behind the mirrors in Mrs. Fletcher's bed-room, and in boxes on her table.

Three or four days before Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher left for America, I saw Mrs. Fletcher with Mrs. Hart-Davies in her bed-room, and both were looking over the jewellery. I heard Mrs. Fletcher propose to Mrs. Hart-Davies that she (Mrs. Hart-Davies) should take charge of it herself, which she refused to do, saying that "if she wanted any of it she could have it, as Mrs. Fletcher would have the jewels with her."

(Signed) ELLEN PARTRIDGE.

The following statement was made by Mr. H. BASTIAN, a well-known and most honourable Spiritualist medium, legally licensed in New York as a preacher, who has been my frequent and always welcome guest, and whom I believe, from intimate acquaintance with him, to be thoroughly honest and trustworthy in every way. Mr. Bastian took this declaration to the Police-Office at Bow Street, wishing to make oath to its truth, but was told that he could not do so:—

"To whom it may concern,—I, Harry Bastian, of Chicago, Illinois, at present residing at 32 Fopstone Road, South Kensington, make this declaration :—

"In the month of October, 1880, Mrs. Juliet Anne Theodora Hart-Davies called upon me at my then lodgings, No. 2 Vernon Place, Bloomsbury, saying she had heard about me in America, and asked me if I was acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Fletcher. I

said I knew them by reputation. She asked if I had heard of the trouble she had had with them in America. I replied that I had read about it in the papers, and asked her how she came to give them her property. She said that Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher had been very kind to her and that she had loved them, and gave them her clothes, laces and jewels in consideration of having a home with them. She said further, that her husband, Mr. Hart-Davies, was intemperate and abusive to her; that he was pawning or selling her jewels, and had threatened to put her into a lunatic asylum and also to take her life. Therefore she had gone to live with the Fletchers, and given them her property.

"Mrs. Hart-Davies further said they (the Fletchers and herself) had lived amicably together until they went together to America, where she met with James McGearey, *alias* Dr. Mack, and other persons, who told her that the Fletchers were not what she supposed them to be, and advised her to get back her property, which was surrendered to her; she, in the settlement, giving to Mrs. Fletcher certain things to pay for her board, passage, and expenses in America. Then she returned to London and went to 22 Gordon Street and got the rest of her property. After this, Mr. H. W. Harrison and others advised her to prosecute the Fletchers on the ground that it would be a benefit to Spiritualism to get rid of them and have them punished; but she said that she did not wish to do them any harm, and did not know what to do about it. As I was about leaving England for the continent, she asked me to call on my return upon her. I saw Mrs. Hart-Davies next, when she appeared against Mrs. Fletcher at Bow Street, and she asked me to visit her at her lodgings, in Upper Baker Street, which I did, when she said that those who were interested in the prosecution of Mrs. Fletcher, fearing she would drop the case, had got the public prosecutor to take it up.

(Signed) "HARRY BASTIAN."

Mr. WILLIAM EGLINTON, late of Walthamstow, near London, whom I have known for more than five years, and who has been for most of that time a member of my family, and whom I believe to be entirely truthful and honourable, makes the following declaration:—

"I, William Eglinton, residing at 32 Fopstone Road, South Kensington, am ready to swear to the following facts, viz.: That in the month of June, 1880, I called at the residence of Mr. J. W. Fletcher, 22 Gordon Street, Gordon Square, and was introduced to Mrs. Huertley, whom I have since known as Mrs. Hart-Davies. In conversation with her she was enthusiastic in her praise of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher for their kindness to her, and, though I was up to that time an entire stranger to her, she informed me that in gratitude to them she had decided to permanently reside with them, and to com-

pensate them, was going to will them all her property, though she could never fully repay their kindness. She also spoke in the most affectionate manner of Captain Lindmark—with whose brother I had become acquainted in Stockholm, Sweden—and declared that he was the only man she could ever love and respect. This was my only interview with Mrs. Heurtley, *alias* Hart-Davies, until I saw her prosecuting Mrs. Fletcher at the Police-Office in Bow Street.

(Signed) "WILLIAM EGLINTON."

Mr. J. G. MEUGENS, a well-known English merchant in Calcutta, India, has written the following letter to the Editor of *Light*, a London Spiritualist newspaper, published in the number for June 11th, 1881:—

"THE CASE OF MRS. FLETCHER.

"To the Editor of LIGHT.

"Sir,—Last mail brought us the result of the Fletcher case, and I learn with great regret that Mrs. Fletcher has been sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for a period of twelve months (the imposition of hard labour being, according to my way of thinking, in any case an unnecessary piece of cruelty). . . .

"I believe in Mrs. Fletcher's innocence, and although I have no wish to alter the honest opinions of others, I think it only fair to give you the following extract from a letter she wrote me just at the commencement of her trial:—

"'Before you receive this letter my fate will have been decided. It is evident that conviction and not justice is what the Crown seeks. Before God and His holy angels, I am innocent of all wrong-doing, but I have no thought of being set free. Even should I be acquitted of the charge of fraud, I shall be found guilty of being a medium and of giving messages from spirits, and I shall be imprisoned. I can only say, "God's will be done;" nor could I seek for a better fate than that of being a martyr to the truth. If I am convicted, do you use your pen and your influence to turn my martyrdom to good account, and work for a change of the law, as it at present affects mediums, so that I may be the last of the sufferers, and that mediums in the future may at least benefit by my sufferings in being left free to follow their vocation without fear of punishment.'

"To my thinking these words have the true ring about them, nor can I bring myself to look upon Mrs. Fletcher as the miserable and guilty wretch that so many consider her. If she were guilty it is simply incomprehensible that she should have left America, where she had triumphed over her accusers, to stand her trial in England, for she knew before starting that she would be arrested on arrival.

"My wife left for England last February, and at the last séance we held prior to her departure we asked the spirit of my mother (who

has always held control at our séances) her opinion of Mrs. Fletcher, and her answer was, 'A noble and true-hearted woman; cruelly and bitterly wronged and persecuted, but whose innocence shall yet be made manifest;' and to this I say 'Amen!' I have known Mrs. Fletcher for a long time, and I have never heard her utter, or known her write, so much as an unkind or ill-natured word about any human being. Nor in her letters to me, although she was smarting under a sense of injustice, has she breathed a syllable against those who were prosecuting her. . . .

"With best wishes for the success of your paper, and trusting that you will not cease to agitate until the law as it affects mediums is altered,—I am, yours for the truth,

"J. G. MEUGENS.

"Calcutta, 9th May, 1881."

In connection with the above extract from Mrs. Fletcher's letter, and to show how faithfully and heroically she met the result of her trial, which, being to the last day free on bail, she might easily have avoided, I give here a copy of probably the last letter she wrote before her sentence. Before going to the Old Bailey for the last time to hear the judge's charge, the verdict, and the sentence, more cruel and unjust in its words than in the punishment inflicted, she wrote to Mrs. Nichols—

"Dearest Mama,—It is all God's [will?]
—and I am content. I suffer only for *mine*, but God will care for them.

"If His hand is under the shadow instead of the light, what matters, so that I see the hand?—and *I do*.

"Write to my *boys*—dear, brave, patient souls! All this long night I have held their photos over my heart—they *inside* it. My Easter will come when God wills. Is not that enough?

"Mama mine! God bless you and make you know my heart.—
Always your child, "BERTIE."

The "boys" are her husband and her son, a lad of fourteen, whom she had with her, and at the London University School, but who is now with her parents in America, whence he has written to the Home Secretary a most pathetic letter, begging to be allowed to come and take his mother's place in prison.

MRS. NICHOLS, who perhaps knows Mrs. Fletcher as intimately as any person in England, and who was at the Central Criminal Court, but accidentally not called upon, to add to testimony to which no heed was given by judge or jury, has written the following to the Home Secretary, which I venture here to reproduce :—

*"To the Right Honourable Sir WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT, M.P.,
Bart., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department.*

"SIR,—I am an American woman, who for nearly twenty years has lived in England. I am a friend of Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher, who is now a prisoner in the Tothill Fields Prison. I knew some of her friends in America who were and are among the greatest and best of my countrymen and countrywomen. I also know many of her friends in England—excellent people, who esteem and love her as I do. I have known Mrs. Fletcher nearly all the time she has resided in England. She is a heart-child to me.

"I am now engaged in preparing a memorial which I hope to be permitted to lay before you, Sir, which will contain evidence to prove her entire innocence, which evidence was ruled out or neglected on her trial. I wish to prove to you that all she received from her prosecutrix was a voluntary gift, freely returned as soon as demanded, and that Mrs. Fletcher is an honourable, upright woman, kind and true, with whom such a crime as she was charged with would be impossible.

"In preparing this memorial I need some information that Mrs. Fletcher only can give. I therefore beg of you to grant me the favour of your permission to visit this your prisoner; and as I am seventy-one years old, and may not be able to get all the information I require in one interview, I beg that you will give me permission to make more than one visit.

"And I will pray that you may have the blessing of Him who said, 'I was in prison, and ye visited me.'

"I have the honour to be,

"Right Honourable Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"MARY S. G. NICHOLS.

"32 Fopstone Road, South Kensington, S.W.,

"June 13, 1881."

Testimony of Mr. E. DAWSON ROGERS, Vice-President of the British National Association of Spiritualists; a journalist of high reputation and position:—

"Rose Villa, Church End,

"Finchley, N., Aug. 26, 1881.

"DEAR MRS. NICHOLS,—I am glad to find that you are taking so active an interest in Mrs. Fletcher's case. I have known Mrs. Fletcher for about three years, during which time I have seen a good deal of her in private life, and I do not believe for one moment that she was capable of the fraud imputed to her. As I watched the trial day by day it seemed to me that the various allegations against her were easily explicable in a way quite consistent with her perfect innocence, and that they would have been so explained if her counsel had taken the line of defence which, as

I understand, she desired to be taken. It is a thousand pities that she did not defend herself.

"I feel that she is suffering most unjustly, and I may add that I have had the assurance of this from one of the strongest friends of Mrs. Hart-Davies.

"Yours very truly,

"E. DAWSON ROGERS."

Capt. JAMES, a retired Army Officer, residing at 129 Gower Street, who was prevented by a domestic affliction from giving testimony at the trial, writes to Mrs. Nichols :—

"August 5, 1881.

"Since Mrs. Fletcher's first arrival in England, I have had many opportunities of meeting her, as she has been a frequent guest at my house. During my acquaintance with her, I always considered her to be a lady-like and honourable woman, and I most heartily hope that your kind and sympathetic appeal to the Home Secretary may lead to a satisfactory result.—Believe me, dear Mrs. Nichols, yours very sincerely,

"J. JAMES."

MRS. BOOLE, a lady of scientific reputation, writes from 103 Seymour Place, Bryanstone Square, W. :—

"August 3, 1881.

"DEAR MRS. NICHOLS,—In reply to your question as to what opinion I formed of Mrs. Fletcher's character, I can only say that I had opportunities of knowing a good deal about her, and had reason to believe her incapable of a meanness, though capable of almost anything in the shape of quixotic generosity and imprudent confidence in strangers. I formed this opinion of her in spite of a strong prejudice against all spiritualistic mediums ; and perplexing as some of the evidence given in Court seemed, I cannot help, knowing what I know of her, thinking that there must be some mistake in her being thought guilty of wilful fraud.—Believe me, &c.,

"MARY BOOLE."

MR. ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE, F.R.G.S., the celebrated Naturalist and Author of one of the best works on Spiritualism, writes to Mrs. Nichols :—

"July 16, 1881.

"DEAR MADAM,—My knowledge of Mrs. Fletcher is far too slight to render it proper that I should give any testimony as to her character of which I really know nothing, except by report. It appears that she does not want friends who do know her well, and esteem her highly. While believing her to have been wrongly convicted of any fraud in the matter, yet, in the present state of public opinion, and with the strong expressions of the judge against her,

after hearing all the evidence, I much fear you will obtain no remission of her very hard sentence.—Believe me, yours faithfully,

“ALFRED R. WALLACE.”

Mrs. Nichols has also received the following additional testimony:

“33 Palace Gardens Terrace,
“London, W., August 10th, 1881.

“DEAR MRS. NICHOLS,—I willingly comply with your request. I consider Mrs. Susan Willis Fletcher one of the noblest of women—brave, pure, and true-hearted; devoted to the good of her fellow-creatures, and wholly incapable of committing a fraud.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

“J. H. G. WESTERN.”

“33 Palace Gardens Terrace,
“London, W., August 11th, 1881.

“MY DEAR MRS. NICHOLS,—In answer to your request, I most willingly send you my opinion of Mrs. Fletcher. I hold her to be a most upright, good, and noble woman. I have ever found her disinterested and unselfish in her dealings with everyone, and believe her to be quite *incapable* of any mean or dishonest thought or action. I have seen her in many varied circumstances, and have found her the same, viz., thoughtful for others and self-sacrificing.—Yours, very sincerely,

“GRACE WESTERN.”

When the news of the result of the trial of Mrs. Fletcher was telegraphed to America, trial, conviction and sentence were naturally denounced by the leading Spiritualist papers as outrageous, while societies and individuals sent letters and resolutions of sympathy. From the latter I select the following from societies in Philadelphia and Chicago, which may be supposed to express the general feeling of the great body of American Spiritualists.

LETTER TO MRS. FLETCHER FROM THE FIRST
ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS OF PHILADELPHIA.

[L.S.]

“Philadelphia, April, 1881.

“DEAR IMPRISONED SISTER,—The undersigned, officers of the First Association of Spiritualists of Philadelphia, by the authority of that chartered body, hasten to extend to you the sympathy of its entire membership and to say that the intelligence of your imprisonment, which has but just reached our shores by cable, fills our hearts and minds with grief and surprise. It is hard to credit the fact that in enlightened England to-day, a woman can be condemned to imprisonment with hard labour for believing and teaching what all the Churches of Christendom claim—communion between spirits and mortals. We assure you that we shall do whatever may be in our

power to alleviate your sad condition, and we have every reason to believe that, notwithstanding you may *seem* to be alone, you will be aware of the presence of those who are able to sustain and strengthen you in your trying situation, until release shall be obtained.

"We hardly need say to you that ours is perhaps the largest and oldest Association of Spiritualists in America. From the earliest time, since the advent of Modern Spiritualism, we have held religious meetings, and societies for the advocacy of our faith are now spread over our great country, and, we believe, their sympathy, prayers and efforts will be yours, as will ours.

"While we deeply sympathise with you, we are not unmindful of him who, though outside of prison walls, must be almost as great a sufferer as yourself; and we shall in the coming month, as in the last, welcome him to our homes, our hearts, and our platform; and we feel that, though deeply stricken, yet he will have strength given to devote himself yet more fully to the great redemptive work, to which we believe High Heaven has called both you and him.

"May that courage and faith, dear Sister, which took you across the stormy Atlantic *alone*—from home and friends—to meet your persecutors, remain with you until this heavy affliction shall be seen by you to be the Divine method of outworking the best good of the cause you cherish and have so effectively promoted.

"With confidence and hope in this dark hour,

"We remain, yours fraternally,

"J. P. LANNING, *President*.

"JOSEPH WOOD, *Vice-President*.

"JAMES E. SHUMWAY, *Recording Secretary*,

"Per EDWARD S. WHEELER, *Corresponding Secy.*'

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CHICAGO SPIRITUALIST MEDIUM SOCIETY.

Whereas it has been reported to us that Mrs. J. W. Fletcher, a Spiritualist medium, formerly a resident of this country, has been convicted upon a charge which, as we understand, if she had not been a medium she would not have been so convicted, and is now undergoing punishment in a prison in England, therefore be it *resolved*,

That we extend our warmest sympathy and condolence to her in this her hour of persecution and suffering.

And be it further *resolved*,

That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to Mrs. Fletcher, and also be spread upon the Record of this Society.

JOHN B. CROCKER,
SARAH E. BRAMWELL, } *Committee.*
ZENO T. GRIFFEN,

To MRS. J. W. FLETCHER,

I, John Mathew Shea, President of the Chicago Spiritual Medium Society, have the pleasure of forwarding to you the above resolutions, which were adopted by the Society June 5th, M. S. 34, A.D. 1881, at its room, No. 13 South Halstead Street, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of said Society to be affixed at Chicago, this 5th day of June, M. S. 34.

J. MATHEW SHEA, *President.*

[L.S.] *Attest* ZENO T. GRIFFEN, *Secy.*

Spiritualists are too numerous to be outlawed, and there are among them so many persons of high ability and position that their rights must be respected. In a recent will case in Chicago, Judge Tuley, two of whose four colleagues on the bench were pronounced spiritualists, ruled that belief in Spiritualism is no evidence of insanity.

"Prominent men," he said, "in various professions, whose integrity, intellectual ability, and perfect sanity would not be questioned, had testified that they had seen Spirits, had had communications with departed friends, and generally that they believed in the same Spiritual phenomena as Colonel Cushman did. Such phenomena could not now be dismissed, as in the case of *Lyon v. Home*, with the remark that they were 'mischievous nonsense.' It was a notorious fact that men who stood high in science, judges who adorned the bench, attorneys and solicitors among the foremost at the bar, clergymen, physicians, literary men of the highest ability, and, in effect, persons of prominence in every walk and profession of life, honestly believed in the truth of such phenomena, and it would be the sheerest nonsense to hold that such belief was any evidence of an unsound mind."

Quite recently the Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS, a well known Unitarian clergyman of Leicester, taking the chair at a Spiritualist lecture, said:

"Hundreds of thousands of persons—one might safely say millions of persons—in all circles of society, in America, in India, in Africa, in China, in Australia, in Russia, in France, in Germany, in Italy, in England, solemnly and pertinaciously declare that Spirit-communion is a reality. Professors of science in Universities and mechanics at the bench, clergymen and colliers, statesmen and shop-keepers, poets and porters, titled ladies and seamstresses, artists and hard matter-of-fact manufacturers, in all parts of the world, hold to the belief of Spirit-communion. Horace Greely was a believer in Spirit-communion, so was Lloyd Garrison, so was Abraham Lincoln, so was John Pierpoint, so was George Thompson, Robert Chambers, Archbishop Whately, and William Howitt. So, it is believed, were Lord Lytton and W. M. Thackeray. So, I believe, is the poet Long-

fellow; so are men like Professors Scheibner, Weber, Hoffman, Zöllner, and Fechner, in the Universities of Germany, Butleroff and Wagner in the University of St. Petersburg, and many men like our own Alfred Russel Wallace, William Crookes, C. S. Varley, S. C. Hall, T. L. Nichols, Professor Barrett, and Lord Lindsay. But, after all, these more modern men only echo what has been affirmed from the days of Plutarch, Tertullian, and St. Augustine to the days of Lord Bacon, Thomas More, and John Wesley. There is, besides, a varied, important, and cultured literature on the subject, with a mass of evidence that is positively overwhelming, whether from a scientific, personal, or religious point of view. It seems to me, therefore, that we shall do well to give a respectful hearing to any intelligent person who declares that he also has investigated and is convinced that this thing is true."

In *Light*, one of the four Spiritualist periodicals published in London, I find a list of ten Spiritualist societies in the metropolis, and thirty-four provincial societies. The same paper, *Light*, publishes in each number the following list of eminent persons, who, after careful investigation, have fully satisfied themselves of the reality of the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism :—

Archbishop Whately; the late Lord Brougham; the late and present Earls of Dunraven; the late Lord Lytton; the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain; the late William Howitt; the late George Thompson; Gerald Massey; T. Adolphus Trollope; S. C. Hall, F.S.A.

The late Abraham Lincoln, President U.S.A.; the late W. Lloyd Garrison; the late Hon. R. Dale Owen, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Naples; the late Hon. J. W. Edmunds, sometime Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York; the late Professor Mapes, the eminent chemist, U.S.A.; the late Dr. Robert Hare, Professor of Chemistry at Harvard University, U.S.A.; Bishop Clarke, of Shooe Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, of Washington.

William Crookes, editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, Fellow, Gold Medallist, and Member of the Council of the Royal Society; Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., the eminent naturalist, sometime President of the Biological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; W. F. Barrett, Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge; the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President of the Royal Astronomical Society; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S., long one of the editors of the *Journal of Science*; the late Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; the late Professor de Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society of London; the late Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of

Edinburgh; the late Dr. Ashburner; the late Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; Professor Ch. Cassal, LL.D.; Captain R. F. Burton, the celebrated traveller.

The late Emperor of Russia; the late Emperor Napoleon; President Thiers; the Hon. Alexandre Aksakof, Russian Imperial Councillor; the late Prince Emile de Sayn Wittgenstein; His Imperial Highness Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; the late Baron L. de Guldenstubbe; Count A. de Gasparin; the Baron and Baroness von Vay; the Baron du Potet; Mons. Leon Favre, Consul-General of France; Victor Hugo.

Professor Friedrich Zöllner, of Leipzig, the eminent physicist, author of "Scientific Treatises," "Transcendental Physics," &c., whose recent researches in this subject have attained a world-wide fame; Gustave T. Fechner, Professor of Physics in the University of Leipzig, also the author of many volumes bearing on the general subject of Psychology; Professor Scheibner, the renowned teacher of mathematics in the University of Leipzig; W. E. Weber, Professor of Physics in the University of Göttingen, and known as one of the main workers in connection with the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy; Immanuel H. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of the University of St. Petersburg; Dr. Maximilian Perty, Professor of Natural Science in the University of Berne; Dr. Franz Hoffman, Professor of Philosophy, Wursburg; Dr. Robert Friesé, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, the well-known astronomer; *and many other members of learned societies in this and other countries, and a vast number of persons eminent in literature, science, and art, and in the ranks of social life, whose names we are not at liberty to mention.*

Judging from my own observation, as well as from the nature of the subject, as one requiring careful, patient, and scientific investigation, and as at variance with popular beliefs and ignorant prejudices, I should say that the millions of spiritualists in all parts of the civilized world belonged to the more intellectual and better informed portion of every community, and that it is an act of ignorance and bigotry to assume that a spiritualist must be either a knave or a fool. Spiritualism, in its broadest sense, has been the religious belief of the great mass of the human race from the earliest historic times. What is known as Modern Spiritualism is not only a religious faith—it is a science resting upon experiment and observation. It adds knowledge to faith, and restores and revives faith by added knowledge of facts as evident and palpable as those of chemistry or natural history.

Therefore I hold that it was the duty of the presiding judge on the trial of Mrs. Fletcher to have admitted the evidence of such facts, and that there has been a failure of justice from his refusal to hear such evidence.

Finally, I copy from the leading Spiritualist newspaper in America, *The Banner of Light*, the following observations by a London correspondent on the case of Mrs. Fletcher, in which, I need not say, I heartily concur :—

“The man who strikes at a helpless woman in prison commits an outrage against every Spiritualist. Her cause is our cause. Every medium and every aider and abettor of a medium can be imprisoned by English law as well as Mrs. Fletcher. It seems to me mean and cowardly in the last and lowest degree to attack a woman in prison in any case, though almost the entire English press did so the day after Mrs. Fletcher was sentenced. But it is not their custom. They would not have done to a murderer what they did to a Spiritualist.

“The fact of Mrs. Fletcher being a Spiritualist was the only proof of her guilt; and that in English law is sufficient. It made Slade a rogue and vagabond; it convicted Mrs. Fletcher of false pretences. The only false pretence alleged was that Mrs. Fletcher pretended to receive messages from the spirit of Mrs. Heurtley. Not a shadow of proof was offered that she did *not* receive such messages. It was assumed by judge and jury that she *could not* have received them. The verdict was based solely upon this assumption. If it had been admitted that the spirit of Mrs. Heurtley existed, and had power to communicate with persons in this stage of being, it would have seemed probable that she had spoken to her daughter through Mrs. Fletcher, and not in the least improbable that she had advised her to avail herself of the protection and friendship of the Fletchers.

“There was no testimony on the trial to show that there was no such spirit, or that she had not given such advice. It was preconceived opinion and the assumption of English law, upon which Mrs. Fletcher was made a martyr for Spiritualism. It has been the same in every religious persecution. When Roman Christians were brought before Nero, there was no proof of guilt. It was not shown that Christianity was a pestilent imposture. That was assumed: ‘My religion—the religion of the State—is true. Your religion contradicts that; *ergo*, it is false. Take these Christians to the Flavian amphitheatre, and throw them to the lions. It will amuse the populace.’ Spanish inquisitors, Calvin at Geneva, Henry VIII., who with perfect impartiality burned Catholics who denied his supremacy, and Protestants who denied the Real Presence, had the same convenient method of procedure. In the same fashion, Elizabeth filled the prisons of England with non-conformists, and Charles II., and James II., imprisoned Quakers and other dissenters; and women were whipped from town to town, tied to the cart’s tail, in old Massachusetts, while the parsons of the period, like some Spiritualist editors now, stood by and encouraged the executioners to lay on harder, and make their lashes cut deeper into the naked flesh of their victims.

“Surely, so near the opening of the Twentieth Christian Century, it is time that we put an end to convictions without proof, and

punishments for opinion or belief. England is proud of her freedom and justice—but when a Spiritualist is brought into court up rises the old persecuting spirit rampant as ever.

“In the case of Mrs. Fletcher it was not proven that Spiritualism is a false pretence; nor that Mrs. Fletcher falsely pretended to be a medium; nor that one word she ever said or wrote to Mrs. Hart-Davies was untrue. It was not shown that one article freely given to the Fletchers, or placed in their hands for safe keeping, had been converted into cash. The Fletchers took Mrs. Davies with them to America. They gave up the property when it was demanded. Mrs. Fletcher voluntarily, foolhardily some say, but I say nobly, heroically, and in a true martyr-spirit, came here to meet the accusation of dishonesty. Rogues and imposters do not do such things. Who ever saw a swindler—an obtainer of money by false pretences—rush across the ocean and into prejudiced and hostile courts to clear his character? Had the Fletchers been imposters and thieves they would have converted diamonds, laces, and dresses, into cash, and gone as far and stayed away as long as possible.

“Even when caught in the toils, and assured that she would be condemned without a hearing, or the least chance of justice, with no escape but by the possible disagreement of the jury, Mrs. Fletcher was at liberty on bail. Any day she could have found perfect safety in France, or have returned to America. She chose to take her trial, and she is now bearing her martyrdom.

“Seriously, what we are to have is an arraignment of English law before the English people.

“When Mrs. Fletcher is at liberty, I think she will show that her martyrdom has not been in vain. Some of the best work in this world has been done or prepared for in prisons. St. Paul was ‘in prisons often,’ and the repetitions he got of ‘forty stripes save one’ were far more cutting than Mrs. Fletcher is likely to get from her cowardly and insignificant calumniators.”

I AM sorry that I have been obliged to speak harshly of the extraordinary course taken by a large portion of the public press, usually so fair in its comments upon public trials, but which has been anything but fair, to say nothing of charity or generosity, in its treatment of Mrs. Fletcher. I ask the editors to whom I send this Memorial to read it. I believe that they will see that they owe some reparation to a much-wronged woman, and I cannot doubt that they will do what justice demands.

