

SPIRITUALISM

IS COMMUNICATION WITH THE SPIRIT
WORLD AN ESTABLISHED FACT?

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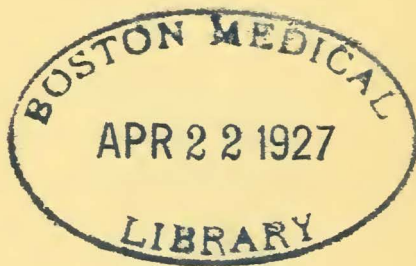
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AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM



LONDON
ISBISTER AND COMPANY LIMITED
15 & 16 TAVISTOCK ST. COVENT GARDEN
1903

19. A. 109.



Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
London & Edinburgh

SOCIETY FOR
PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.
FURNISHED HODGKINS.
SECRETARY FOR AMERICA.
5 BOYLSTON PLACE,
BOSTON, MASS.

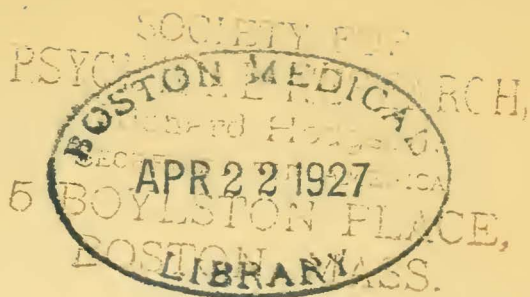
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BY

E. WAKE COOK



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PRO

PART I

I

THE mystery of Existence deepens. Physical Science, whose splendid advance promised to make all things clear, is taking us into mysterious wonder-worlds, revealing profounder depths than were ever dreamt of in our philosophies, and making greater and greater demands on our powers of belief. Materialism, never either philosophically or scientifically sound, seems now to be suspended in mid-air like Mahomet's coffin. What is matter? No one can tell us; Sir Oliver Lodge asserting that we know more of electricity than of matter. Years ago I said that if we had eyes to see by electricity, which is first-cousin to

light, this so solid-seeming world would be almost invisible to us, and we should only see the few things that are non-conductors. What a transformation that would work in our ideas can be realised even by the unimaginative. The recent discovery of the Röntgen rays proves the truth of my contention.

Science postulated indivisible and indestructible atoms, small beyond the limits of thought. Now the chemist finds they can be destroyed, or dematerialised, and put as much out of reach of his most delicate tests as the soul is. The atom of hydrogen, hitherto considered the smallest unit, is now found to contain a thousand forceful entities called "electrons"; while an atom of mercury contains one hundred thousand. To illustrate the relative sizes of the atom and the electron, Sir Oliver Lodge likens the atom to a church two hundred feet long and proportionately high and broad, and the electron to a full stop in ordinary print. The electrons occupy the atom as a regiment of soldiers might hold a country by being scattered all over it; their distance apart recalls Sir Isaac Newton's statement about atoms, that they may be as far apart in proportion to their size as the fixed stars are in proportion to *their* size. Yet these inconceivably minute entities are of awful potency. Sir William Crookes, in his lecture before the Prince of Wales on his enrolment as a Fellow of the Royal Society, said that a gramme of

electrons contained force enough to lift the whole British Navy to the top of Ben Nevis! Years ago Sir W. Crookes made some wonderful researches in "Molecular Physics in High Vacua," and he invented the apparatus known as *Crookes's tube*, which has proved remarkably fruitful in results. A number of valuable discoveries have resulted, including the Röntgen rays, and it has now led to something still more astounding. M. and Madame Curie and M. Laborde recently reported to the French Academy of Sciences the discovery of a wonderful element they call Radium, which not only produces heat without combustion, but throws off spontaneously a stream of particles so minute as to bring about no loss of substance after millions of years! And so the flood of marvels flows on as we penetrate the arcana of nature.

Lord Kelvin, then Sir William Thomson, formulated the brilliant theory that the material atom may be a vortex-ring in a frictionless fluid. This Cosmic Ether is a bundle of paradoxes. It is so fine as to be out of the range of our tactual senses, and yet, instead of behaving like a gas in the last extremity of attenuation, it acts like a solid or semi-solid—like a jelly. In this case it may be stratified, and correspond with matter, having its solid, fluid, gaseous, and radiant conditions. This would bring us to a state of fineness beside which what is called "spirit" would be quite a tangible entity.

Dr. Osborne Reynolds,* one of the “men with heavy scientific appendages to their names,” says that to complete the mechanical explanation of the structure of the universe, and explain with mathematical exactness all the known facts, we must postulate a *perfect solid* in place of the ether, and that all motion through it must be wave-motion; that it must be a granular substance of a mean density “ten thousand times greater than that of water, or, as being four hundred times greater than that of the densest matter on earth”; “the mean pressure being nearly seven hundred and fifty thousand tons on the square inch.” The minuteness of the grains of this solid, and their sphere of motion, all worked out mathematically, go beyond what is said of electrons, and they simply leave us gasping. Wild as these statements seem of these awful pressures, or stresses, they curiously correspond with the unthinkable energy of the electrons;† and the long course of beautiful experiments on which they are founded, give such startling, such unexpected results that they will probably lead to a revolution of scientific conceptions.

But to return to orthodox scientists. Lord Kelvin has had partly to abandon Newton’s Law of Gravitation and confine it to tangible

* “On an Inversion of Ideas as to the Structure of the Universe.” Cambridge Press. 1902.

† Sir Oliver Lodge favours the theory that material atoms consist solely of various groupings of electrons.

bodies, the Cosmic Ether being outside its operation. Science is still groping for an explanation of the cause of gravitation; the guesses put forth postulate an amount of pressure, or energy, ridiculously out of proportion to the effects produced. The theories of Clerk-Maxwell, Le Sage, and Lord Kelvin make impossible demands on our credulity.

Years ago Lord Kelvin, driven by the force of his genius, postulated a seventh sense—a magnetic sense—but the moment he found this was bringing him into line with the spiritualists he shied, and to put himself right threw stones at us. Having done this, he gave the reins to his genius again, and it has done what all such transcendent genius must do—it has brought him straight towards our camp. Confronted by serious difficulties in the undulatory theory of light, which had baffled scientists, he, “with a master hand, has dispelled all these difficulties by a direct denial of a tenet of the Schoolmen that ‘two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time.’ He says that the material atom is permeated by the ether atom, both occupying the same space. The electron is the marvellous worker in the atom of matter, permeated by the ether atom.”* Thus we have a sort of trinity in unity even in the atom! The significance of this will be seen when we

* See Lord Kelvin’s “New Idea about Ether Atoms.” By Dr. J. G. McPherson, F.R.S.E. *Knowledge*, April 1903.

come to the working hypothesis of the Spiritualists.

I have touched on these amazing demands on our powers of belief to show that the sanest scientists are taking us into wonder-worlds, awe-inspiring, transcending all theologic notions, and stirring that "Cosmic Emotion" so essential to religion. I also wished to show that scientific conceptions are changing and deepening, coming more into line with the higher branches of the Spiritualist's Philosophy; and that the only thing absolutely certain is that the grander, the higher, deeper and broader the belief the nearer it is sure to be to the Truth; and that the narrow conservative scepticism, discredited age after age by every new discovery that has blessed mankind, is becoming more and more an out-of-date absurdity.

These changes in fundamental conceptions show that to "establish" a thing as a "scientific fact" does not mean that it is built on quite such a rock of ages as we have hitherto supposed; it only means it is given a temporary halting-place in the progress of thought.

II

The popular notion of Spiritualism figures it as a strange mixture of ignorance, credulity, imposture, and old-world superstitions; founded

on a belief in ghosts, spirit-rapping, table-turning, materialisations, and other physical phenomena that are vaguely supposed to have been exposed as trickery. But, as a matter of fact, it is a Scientific System of thought resting on vast masses of verified facts, of enormous range and variety, involving questions of the profoundest import. The phenomena range through all history, accompany the rise, progress, and revival of all forms of Religion. They persist in spite of all opposition, and the movements founded on them have marched step by step with the splendid but one-sided advance of physical science. Nature's determination to maintain her balance, and to correct all one-sided movements by complementary ones, is a fact of profound significance. The survival, or refflorescence, of these so-called "superstitions" receives quite a new meaning and importance from the discovery of the powers and functions of the super- and the sub-conscious self. The super-conscious self is shown to be the possessor of transcendental faculties in touch with a transcendental or spiritual world, and it sustains these "superstitions" until the laggard intellect grows big enough to grasp the mighty truths underlying them.

Modern Spiritualism founded on these ever-recurring phenomena is at once a religion, a philosophy, and a science. As a religion it is the highest and the broadest that has yet dawned on mankind, embracing as it does the

most advanced free-thinker and the orthodox Christian, the bond of union being a belief that the spirit survives bodily death, and that it can and does communicate, under certain ill-understood conditions, with persons still in the flesh. Whoever believes this is a Spiritualist, no matter what else he believes or disbelieves.

As a philosophy it avoids hair-splitting and premature attempts at exactness, and sketches a grand working hypothesis of the Cosmos and the whole scheme of Existence, leaving science to fill in the exact details as it discovers them. It has given us for the first time a rational conception of the after-life which reveals the purpose and destiny of man. Its distinguishing characteristic is the profound insight which enables it to unite, with a consistency hitherto deemed impossible, all that is true in Materialism with the higher conceptions of Spiritualism. Take the later form of scientific Materialism as expounded in Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe," recently spread abroad in a sixpenny edition. Nearly all that is true in the Monism he so strenuously, so aggressively, propounds is to be found in the earlier works of the "Father of Modern Spiritualism"—Andrew Jackson Davis—published fifty years before. Davis treats Matter as the lowest, the unprogressed form of Substance, and says that all forms of matter are in constant progress, evolving higher and finer forms of substance which elude our senses, but which are cognisable by the higher faculties

latent in all, and which are active in certain super-normal states like clairvoyance. He discards the antithesis of matter and spirit, and regards the latter as the sublimation of the former. From these finer forms of substance a "spiritual" universe is constructed in orderly stages of ever-increasing splendour, each stage the natural evolution or outgrowth of the proceeding one, which in turn becomes the index to more glorious spheres. These upward steps lead straight to the Great Centre, conceived as a vast Spiritual Sun beside which our own great luminary is a mere rushlight. This Sun has thrown off, somewhat on the lines conceived by Kant, Laplace, and Herschel, circle upon circle of suns of unimaginable splendour, which in turn have thrown off planets with attendant satellites. These blazing suns have not only the "promise and potency of all terrestrial Life," they have the promise and potency of spiritual worlds, or spheres grand beyond poet's dreaming.

This is as Monistic as the conceptions of either Spinoza or the great biologist Haeckel, but the young Seer, Davis, outsoars the "God-intoxicated man," and makes the aggressive Haeckel, with his narrow prejudices, look like a scientific Little Bethelite!

These overwhelming conceptions would make the yearning soul feel fatherless and alone in the immensities, were it not for the proofs given of the reality of spirit-communion. The

spirits of those who have "gone before" have passed through all of life's trials, and while higher and more helpful, are not out of range of our sympathies.

I know nothing in the whole range of philosophy so consistent, so scientific, or so profound as the system loosely outlined in "Nature's Divine Revelations" and "The Great Harmonia,"* given through the young uneducated Davis, the Poughkeepsie Seer.

As a science, Spiritualism is as yet in its infancy, but it has already done great work for which the world will thank it, when it can come abreast of its advanced conceptions. It has brought into existence the Society for Psychical Research, which is doing the most valuable work that is being done in science. This fact will not be recognised while we remain in the present purely rudimental, dollar-worshipping stages of civilisation; but we are progressing in spite of petty Pyrrhonists who, when a thing stares them in the face, shut their eyes and say it does not exist; or who persist in viewing such a momentous movement from the standpoint of Scotland Yard, or the platform of Maskelyne and Cooke! Spiritualism has compelled the recognition of forces unknown to science, and latent powers and faculties that

* Sixteen years before Mrs. Eddy's "discovery," Davis in this work had given all that is new and true in "Christian Science"; unless, indeed, there be any truth in her strange distortions of the Scriptures.

are opening a new universe to us. The S. P. R., although strangely timid, and showing a curious desire to be advanced and yet to remain under the wing of all the respectabilities of orthodoxy, is yet doing excellent work in sifting the golden grain from the chaff, and in exposing all sources of malobservation, and the fraud and trickery which hamper all new movements. It has given us the great work on "Phantasms of the Living," has established Telepathy and Thought-transference, and has explored some of the wonders of the Subliminal self. And if it has given us, indirectly, that strange belittlement of the case for Spiritualism—Mr. Podmore's "History"—it has also given us its corrective in Frederic W. H. Myers's epoch-making work, "Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death."

The other aspects of the scientific work of Spiritualism will be shown when we consider its varied phenomena, especially the physical phenomena which form the material basis of its case; and to which we must now turn our attention.

III

The intelligent reader always tries to make the personal equation and allow for an author's idiosyncrasies, so a word about myself seems demanded. The opponents of Spiritualism

always try to discredit the qualifications of anybody reporting in its favour. The philosopher is held to be a bad observer because liable to fits of abstraction. The scientist, whose whole life is devoted to exact observation, is discredited because he is a chemist and not a physiologist, or a biologist and not a chemist; and above all, because he is not initiated in the trickster's art or the mysteries of conjuring. Success in my own profession depends on true seeing, on the cultivation of the eye; but as this will be quite an insufficient qualification as an observer in the eyes of the sceptic, I may say that in my youth I got a fair initiation into the art of conjuring, and had to assist at many amateur entertainments. I hasten to add, to anticipate the ready sneer, that this was before I had heard of Spiritualism, and that I am not, and never was, a "medium." These early experiences taught me how much the conjurer has to rely on apparatus, previous arrangements, confederates, and, above all, on his incessant *patter*, which, by keeping the sense of hearing engaged, to a certain extent depotentialises the power of sight, and things pass unseen owing to attention being divided or directed to the wrong quarters. All this is utterly different from the Spiritualistic *séance*, where absolute stillness reigns, or when music is introduced to "harmonise" the circle it makes no demands on the attention. I have witnessed many phases of the phenomena;

table-turning, more amusing than convincing ; automatic writing ; impressive and most beautiful trance-speaking ; accurate diagnosing, and successful treatment of disease. Strangest of all, I came in contact with quite spontaneous phenomena, which gave me glimpses of the strange powers of the subliminal self. I have had little to do with professional mediums ; but in one case I had no difficulty in detecting trickery, and the phenomena were absurdly trivial. In other cases I witnessed many of the more remarkable manifestations under conditions which rendered trickery impossible. These experiences enable me to judge the evidence of others, and show what absurdly inadequate explanations satisfy sceptics, who will swallow anything that chimes with their prejudices.

The researches in Spiritualism by Sir William Crookes* by means of "apparatus that cannot lie," are some of the most valuable that have been published ; and they are a monument to the splendid courage of the man, so different from the cowardly shrinking of other scientists from truths that come in questionable guise. Sir William had the advantage of the services of D. D. Home, one of the most remarkable of mediums, at whom the usual amount of mud has been thrown, and of whom he says :

"Among the remarkable phenomena which

* "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism." By Sir William Crookes, F.R.S.

occur under Mr. Home's influence, the most striking, as well as the most easily tested with scientific accuracy, are: (1) The alteration in the weight of bodies; and (2) the playing of tunes upon musical instruments (generally an accordion, for convenience of portability) without direct human intervention, and under conditions rendering contact or connection with the keys impossible. Not until I had witnessed these facts some half-a-dozen times, and scrutinised them with all the acumen I possess, did I become convinced of their objective reality."

The first crucial experiment was made in the presence of Sir William—then Dr.—Huggins, "a power in the scientific world"; Mr. Serjeant Cox; Sir W. Crookes's brother, and his own chemical assistant.

A cage of laths, hoops, and copper-wire was constructed, open top and bottom, and placed partly under the table. In this was placed a new accordion, never seen or handled before by Mr. Home, who, seated in an easy chair, took the accordion between thumb and middle finger by the end opposite to the keys, so that the head of the instrument hung down in the cage; Home's other hand was on the table. There was an observer on each side of the medium, and when anything important was occurring they kept their feet on his feet so as to detect the slightest movement:

"Very soon the accordion was seen by those on each side to be waving about in a somewhat

curious manner ; then sounds came from it, and finally several notes were played in succession. Whilst this was going on my assistant went under the table, and reported that the accordion was expanding and contracting ; at the same time it was seen that the hand of Mr. Home, by which it was held, was quite still, his other hand resting on the table."

Sir W. Huggins shortly afterwards made a similar report.

"We then heard distinct and separate notes sounded in succession, and then a simple air was played. As such a result could only have been produced by the various keys of the instrument being acted upon in harmonious succession, this was considered by those present to be a crucial experiment. But the sequel was still more striking, for Mr. Home then removed his hand altogether from the accordion, taking it quite out of the cage, and placed it in the hand of the person next him. The instrument then continued to play, no person touching it, and no hand being near it."

The copper-wire of the cage was now connected with an electric battery, and Mr. Home holding the accordion as before, it was sounded and moved about vigorously, but it was impossible to say whether the electric current assisted or not.

"The accordion was now again taken without any visible touch from Mr. Home's hand, which he removed from it entirely and placed upon

the table, where it was taken by the person next to him, and seen, as now were both his hands, by all present. I and two of the others present saw the accordion distinctly floating about inside the cage with no visible support. This was repeated a second time, after a short interval. Mr. Home presently reinserted his hand in the cage and again took hold of the accordion. It then commenced to play, at first chords and runs, and afterwards a well-known sweet and plaintive melody, which it executed perfectly in a very beautiful manner. Whilst this tune was being played, I grasped Mr. Home's arm below the elbow and gently slid my hand down it until I touched the top of the accordion. He was not moving a muscle. His other hand was on the table, visible to all, and his feet were under the feet of those next to him."

In another part of the room an apparatus was arranged for experimenting on the alteration in the weight of a body. It consisted of a board 36 inches long by $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 1 inch thick. One end rested on the edge of the table in such a way that any pressure exerted there would tend to steady the board rather than depress it. The other end was supported by a spring-balance hanging from a tripod stand. Mr. Home placed the tips of his fingers lightly on the end supported by the table, while he was watched carefully as before. The board soon began to move up and down as if by successive waves of

the Psychic Force. The automatic register on the spring balance showed that the index had at one time descended as low as 9 lb., showing a maximum pull of 6 lb., as the board itself weighed 3 lb. Experiments were then made to see if a like result could be obtained by standing on the board where Home's fingers had been, but, even by jerking up and down, only a 2 lb. pull could be obtained, and that was owing to Sir W. Crookes' foot extending beyond the $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch support. As Home was sitting on a low easy-chair when his fingers were on the board, it was impossible for him to exert much pressure. Both Sir W. Huggins and Mr. Serjeant Cox wrote confirming the correctness of the report of these experiments.

Professor Boutlerow, Professor of Chemistry at the University of St. Petersburg, subsequently repeated these experiments with even more striking results, Mr. Home's hands being placed in contact with the apparatus in such a way that pressure on his part would diminish rather than increase the tension.

In 1854, Count Agenor de Gasparin, in his "*Science versus Spiritualism*," recorded a long series of experiments under strict test conditions giving equally striking results, the "Psychics" being the Count's personal friends. In 1855, M. Thury, Professor at the Academy of Geneva, published a work reviewing Count de Gasparin's experiments, and gave details of simultaneous experiments he had been carrying on, all giving

like results. M. Thury, after considering all conditions, theories, and explanations, rejects them all and considers "the effects due to a peculiar substance, fluid, or agent pervading in a manner similar to the luminiferous ether of the scientist, all matter, nervous, organic, or inorganic—which he terms *psychode*. He enters into a full discussion as to the properties of this state or form of matter, and proposes the term *ectenice force* for the power exerted when the mind acts at a distance through the influence of the psychode."* A. J. Davis announced the existence of this agent or force ten years before, but science always lags from ten to fifty years behind the despised Spiritualists. Dr. Robert Hare, in a communication to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1855, showed that, with even more carefully devised apparatus than that used by Sir W. Crookes, he obtained equally striking results. Sir William says :

"The references I now give (the foregoing) afford an answer to the statement that these results must be verified by others. They have been verified over and over again. Indeed, my own experiments may be regarded merely as verifications of results obtained and published by eminent scientific men in this and other countries."

The results obtained by Sir W. Crookes were

* "Further Experiments on Psychic Force." By Sir W. Crookes.

forwarded to the Royal Society, and its two secretaries, Professors Sharpey and Stokes, were invited to meet Mr. Home and witness experiments for themselves. Professor Sharpey declined, and Professor Stokes replied with some of that curious hyper-criticism and shuffling in which opponents of Spiritualism generally indulge when cornered. Professor Balfour Stewart ventured the conjecture that Home possessed great "electro-biological" power by which he influenced the observers, and made them believe what he liked. Sir W. Crookes' next series of experiments completely upset all such objections, confirming previous results under still more stringent conditions.

An apparatus was arranged as before with a board, one end supported by a spring balance, the other resting on a knife-edge fulcrum on a strong support. Exactly over this fulcrum or support a glass bowl of water was placed, and into this a perforated copper vessel descended an inch and a half, and was supported in this position by a strong iron stand. All this was so arranged that no pressure, or even blows, in the copper vessel could affect the balance in the slightest degree. Attached to the balance at the other end was a clockwork contrivance that would register on a sheet of smoked glass the exact movements of the pointer. Mr. Home placed the tips of the fingers of his right hand in the water in the copper vessel, his other hand and his feet being held, and the clock-

work set going. The pointer recording the varying pressure drew a wavy line that looked something like an outline of the Alps standing on their heads. The lowest point marked was equal to a downward pull of five thousand grains. Further experiments were made with the medium standing three feet from the apparatus, his hands and feet being tightly held, and similar results were obtained. With still more delicate apparatus, tried first with a lady Psychic, and later with Mr. Home, equally striking effects were obtained without contact with the instrument, showing beyond the possibility of doubt that some force proceeding from the human body was capable of increasing and lessening the weight of physical bodies without contact, or contact with water only. In the case of the lady Psychic, percussive sounds were heard on a stretched membrane forming part of the apparatus, while a small particle of graphite, placed on it for that purpose, jumped up with each percussion.

Later researches are summarised and classified in "Notes of an Enquiry into the Phenomena of Spiritualism, during 1870-73," first published in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, January 1874.

CLASS I. *The Movements of Heavy Bodies with Contact, but without Mechanical Exertion.*—These have already been described.

CLASS II. *The Phenomena of Percussive and other Allied Sounds.*—This covers spirit-

rapping, which Mr. Maskelyne, and other too clever folks, believe to be produced by snapping of the toe- and knee-joints. Mr. Maskelyne says: "Rubbing the sole or the upper part of the shoe against the polished legs of a table would produce the rapping sounds!" That rapping sounds can be produced by these means is undoubted, that they should be accepted as a sufficient explanation of the actual phenomena shows how curiously unfitted these clever folks are for handling these matters. Sir W. Crookes says:

"The popular name of 'raps' conveys a very erroneous impression of this class of phenomena. At different times, during my experiments, I have heard delicate ticks, as with the point of a pin; a cascade of sharp sounds as from an induction coil in full work; detonations in the air; sharp metallic taps; a cracking like that heard when a frictional machine is at work; sounds like scratching; the twittering of a bird, &c."

The sounds are found to vary in force and character with every Psychic. No formal *séance* was needed with Miss Kate Fox; with unlimited opportunities for observation, Sir William affirms that Miss Fox had only to place her hand on any substance for loud thuds to be heard in it, like a triple pulsation, sometimes loud enough to be heard several rooms off.

"In this manner," he continues, "I have heard them in a living tree—on a sheet of

glass—on a stretched iron wire—on a stretched membrane—a tambourine—on the roof of a cab—and on the floor of a theatre. Moreover, actual contact is not always necessary; I have heard these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls, &c., when the medium's hands and feet were held—when she was standing on a chair—when she was suspended in a swing from the ceiling—when she was enclosed in a wire cage—and when she had fallen fainting on a sofa. I have heard them on a glass harmonicon—I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands. I have heard them on a sheet of paper, held between the fingers by a piece of thread passed through one corner. With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started, chiefly in America, to explain these sounds, I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences not produced by trickery or mechanical means.”

Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, the great electrician, in his evidence before the Committee of the Dialectical Society, says that on one occasion he was received with a “chorus of raps such as fifty hammers, all striking rapidly, could hardly produce.” Signor Damiani in his evidence, speaking of one *séance*, says: “In a few seconds a *double knock*, like the trot of a horse, was heard approaching, striking the ceiling, the floor, and lastly the table.” He also says, “I

have heard noises, as of sledge-hammers, on the walls of a private house in Clifton, making the whole building shake to its foundations.”* Mr. Serjeant Cox, speaking of a *séance* with Dr. Slade, says : “ Instantly upon taking our seat very loud rapping came upon the floor. This was followed by a succession of furious blows upon the table, jarring my hands as they were lying upon it. These blows were repeated at any part of the table desired by merely touching that spot with the finger, while the blows, as forcible as if given by a sledge-hammer, were being made. Dr. Slade’s hands were on the table upon my hands, and his whole body to his feet was fully before my eyes. I am certain that not a muscle moved.”†

Volumes of such evidence could be given about raps of all kinds, some in locked pianos, yet our opponents insult our intelligence and their own by asserting that all are satisfactorily explained by the snapping of knee- and-toe-joints ! These raps are always associated with, or directed by, intelligence, and are the telegraphic signals for conveying messages, always purporting to come from departed human beings. To the orthodox, or the unthinking, the idea that spirits are engaged in such work will be utterly abhorrent, and they will not have patience to read accounts of such “ trivialities ”

* “ Dialectical Society’s Report,” p. 165.

† “ Direct Writing by Supernormal Means.” By M.A. (Oxon.)

so far beneath the dignity of the departed. It is a curious fact that nine-tenths of the objections urged against Spiritualism arise from misconceptions and want of a philosophic grasp of the problems on the part of the objectors. So I must anticipate my argument by clearing up a little of this confusion of thought before dealing further with the phenomena.

As a matter of fact, Spiritualists and Theosophists are the most consistent of all Evolutionists. The Spiritualists apply the principle of evolution to their whole system of philosophy, and did so before Darwin was heard of. They tell us that a man starts his career on the next stage of existence from the exact point at which he leaves this life; and although he is clothed with a finer, a more beautiful body endowed with much more powerful faculties, he at first realises no change, no break in continuity, and feels entirely himself. If he was ignorant and uncultured here, he will be ignorant and uncultured there at first; but his education and development proceed much more rapidly there than here. Still it takes time, and the more highly cultured on earth may be on a higher mental plane than the less developed spirits in the lower "mansions" of heaven. This view, which is in accord with all we know of Nature's operations and methods, is entirely consistent, logical and scientific; opposed to it are the vaguest, the most inconsistent, illogical, and unphilosophical notions that ever befogged

a human brain. The doctrine of a bodily resurrection at the "last day" need not detain us; the doctrine hinted in the words: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" is nearer the truth. The idea vaguely held is that on awakening from the sleep of death we are ushered into the presence of the Deity, as if we could ever be out of the presence of the Omnipresent God! We are supposed to undergo some marvellous change which lifts us to the level of angels, are brought face to face with the Most High, and spend eternity in adorative psalm-singing. Any such miraculous change would contradict all we know of the Creator's orderly methods of progressive development, destroy our personality, put us quite out of touch with what had gone before, and open out no vistas of future unfoldment. Such utterly unscientific views may be held conscientiously, and when they are brought to bear on Spiritualism they will conflict all along the line. From such a standpoint utterances from the spirit-world ought to be unerring oracles, all giving exactly the same views; and the idea of these first-cousins to archangels turning and rapping tables, personating the great ones of earth, and playing other fantastic tricks will be simply shocking. People holding these unphilosophical, out-of-date views will have such an intense *feeling* of antagonism against the whole thing that no amount of evidence will overcome their prejudices. The

Spiritualist's views will be denounced as grossly material, and their accounts of the next life utterly unlovely. An examination of the criticisms of Spiritualism, even by cultured writers, will reveal that they are nearly all written from this Rip Van Winkle standpoint. Adopt the more philosophical views held by Spiritualists, and the whole scheme of things falls into order, and the great purpose of Existence becomes for the first time discernible.

To regard the Spirit World as the logical evolutionary outcome of this one removes most of the difficulties. The hooligan of to-day is not, on passing the portal of death, made an archangel to-morrow; he is a hooligan still, but placed in new conditions that will rapidly develop the God-like faculties latent in all. That such undeveloped spirits exist, and communicate, is amply proved, and it is a reason why Swedenborgians and Theosophists discourage spirit-communion; but like attracts like, and pure-minded Spiritualists get into touch with spirits whose influence they find most elevating.

But, apart from tricky spirits, are these physical phenomena so unworthy of the inhabitants of another world as the sceptics urge? Before the days of wireless telegraphy, if scientific men here had managed to turn tables, or produce raps, in New York, or in the planet Mars, would not that have been considered a magnificent scientific achievement? To get any

kind of communication between the spirit-world and this, to get any new idea through our thick skulls, may be a vastly more difficult achievement, and require a profundity of knowledge quite beyond our conceptions. So I would urge sceptics to walk warily, lest they find they have been laughing at their own ignorance when they thought they were laughing at Spiritualism; and lest they should find themselves the successors of those clever folks who proved to their own satisfaction that the world could not possibly be round because people on the under side would fall off!

From this standpoint a new significance is given to the physical phenomena, to which we must now return in the order of Sir W. Crookes's classification.

CLASS III. *The Alteration of Weight of Bodies.*—The experiments with the board and the spring-balance already described come into this class; they were repeated in other forms and with other mediums, and with like results.

I am dwelling on Sir W. Crookes's experiments because they are so thorough, and because they can be had in convenient form, and thus save the trouble of looking up later cases scattered through books and journals.*

* In England Spiritualism has always been well served by its Press, and its principal organ now — *Light* — is conducted with singular fairness and ability, and contains the results of current investigations, &c.

CLASS IV. *Movements of Heavy Substances when at a Distance from the Medium.*—A typical case is recorded in the Report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society. After many movements of the table which could not be explained by unconscious muscular pressure, the eleven members of the sub-committee turned the backs of their chairs to the table, at about nine inches from it. They all knelt upon the chairs with their feet turned away from the table. They placed their hands over the table a short distance from it, so that there was no possibility of contact with it without instant detection. "In less than a minute the table, untouched, moved *four* times; at first about five inches to one side, then about twelve inches to the opposite side, and then, in like manner, four inches and six inches respectively." This experiment was repeated with the chairs farther from the table, and the committee, kneeling as before, placed their hands on the backs of the chairs. Then they drew the chairs farther away, and placed their hands behind their backs, the table in each case moving in various directions. The sub-committee "witnessed upwards of fifty similar motions without contact on *eight* different evenings, in the houses of members of your sub-committee, the most careful tests being applied on each occasion." *

Sir W. Crookes obtained several repetitions

* "Report," pp. 10, 11.

of this experiment in full light. He and his friends frequently saw chairs and small tables move slowly about the room under conditions especially prearranged, so as to meet any objection which might be raised to the evidence.

CLASS V. *The Rising of Tables and Chairs off the Ground, without Contact with any Person.*—After replying to questions asking why furniture should be used for this purpose, Sir W. Crookes says :

“On five separate occasions, a heavy dining-table rose between a few inches and one and a half feet off the floor, under special circumstances, which rendered trickery impossible. On another occasion, a heavy table rose from the floor in full light, while I was holding the medium’s hands and feet. On another occasion the table rose from the floor, not only when no person was touching it, but under conditions which I had prearranged so as to assure unquestionable proof of the fact.”

Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, co-discoverer with Darwin of the great principle of development by natural selection, obtained like results with a private medium in his own house under the most ingenious test conditions. He says : “I have since witnessed a great variety of phenomena, but I attach most importance to those which I have carefully and repeatedly tested, and which give me a solid basis of fact by which to judge of what others relate or of

what I have myself seen under less favourable conditions."

Count Agenor de Gasparin, referring to the phenomena witnessed by himself, and confirmed by Professor Thury, under strictest conditions, says: "The experimenters have often seen the legs of the table *glued*, so to say, to the floor, and, notwithstanding the excitement of those present, refuse to be moved from their place. On other occasions they have seen the tables levitated in quite an energetic way. They heard, with their own ears, loud as well as gentle raps, the former threatening to shatter the table to pieces by their violence. . . . As to levitations without contact. . . . We have reproduced them over thirty times." *

CLASS VI. *The Levitation of Human Beings.*
—Under this heading Sir William gives evidence confirming the cases recorded in the lives of the Saints. St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa and others are said to have been raised from the ground while in ecstatic prayer. The evidence for these marvels in the lives of the Christian Saints was always thoroughly sifted, a "Devil's Advocate" was appointed to rake up everything that would discredit the evidence—just as Messrs. Maskelyne and Podmore try to discredit the evidence for Spiritualism—so the facts are well attested.

Sir W. Crookes states that he has seen a

* "Des Tables," vol. i., p. 48.

lady sitting in a chair raised several inches from the ground. This was repeated under closest scrutiny. On other occasions two children were raised from the ground in their chairs, in full daylight, under the keenest observation.

Dr. A. R. Wallace,* in speaking of the mediumship of Miss Nichol, whose powers were first discovered in his own house, says that the table used to rise in her presence under conditions which precluded trickery, and, more marvellous still, the lady herself was placed on the table. He says :

“We sat in a friend’s house, round a centre table, under a glass chandelier. A friend of mine, but a perfect stranger to all the rest, sat next to Miss Nichol and held both her hands. Another person had matches ready to strike a light when required. What occurred was as follows : First Miss Nichol’s chair was drawn away from under her, and she was obliged to stand up, my friend still holding both her hands. In a minute or two more I heard a slight sound, such as might be produced by a person placing a wine-glass on the table, and at the same time a very slight rustling of clothes and tinkling of the glass pendants of the chandelier. Immediately my friend said, “She has gone from me.” A light was at once struck, and we found Miss N. quietly seated in

* “On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism,” p. 162.

her chair on the centre of the table, her head just touching the chandelier. My friend declared that Miss N. seemed to glide noiselessly out of his hands. She was very stout and heavy, and, to get her chair on the table, to get upon it herself, in the dark and noiselessly, and almost instantaneously, with five or six persons close round her, appeared, and still appears to me, knowing her intimately, to be physically impossible."

Sir W. Crookes says : *

"The most striking cases of levitation which I have witnessed have been with Mr. Home. On three separate occasions I have seen him raised completely from the floor of the room : once sitting in an easy-chair, once kneeling on his chair, and once standing up. On each occasion I had full opportunity of watching the occurrence as it was taking place."

Lord Lindsay, in his evidence before the Committee of the Dialectical Society, said : †

"I have seen the levitations, but not in a brilliant light. Home on one occasion was sitting next me ; in a few minutes he said, 'Keep quiet, I am going up' ; his foot then came and touched my shoulder ; I then felt something like velvet touch my cheek, and on looking up, was surprised to find he had carried with him an armchair, which he held out in his hand and then floated round the room, pushing

* "Researches," p. 89.

† "Report on Spiritualism," p. 214.

the pictures out of their places as he passed along the walls. They were far beyond the reach of a person standing on the ground. The light was sufficient to enable me to see clearly." Other cases are given where Home wrote his name on the ceilings of several houses in London; and Lord Lindsay witnessed Home floating horizontally out of one window, in Victoria Street, and in at another, eighty-five feet from the ground.*

Sir W. Crookes says: †

"The accumulated testimony establishing Mr. Home's levitations is overwhelming. There are at least a hundred recorded instances of Mr. Home's rising from the ground, in the presence of as many separate persons, and I have heard from the lips of the three witnesses to the most striking occurrence of this kind (the floating out of one window and in at another), the Earl of Dunraven, Lord Lindsay, and Captain C. Wynne, their own most minute accounts of what took place. To reject the recorded evidence on this subject is to reject all human testimony whatever; for no fact in sacred or profane history is supported by a stronger array of proofs."

In CLASSES VII., VIII., and IX. — Sir William deals with the movements, without contact, of various small articles; luminous

* "Report," p. 214.

† "Researches," p. 90.

appearances of all kinds ; and the appearance of hands, either self-luminous or visible by ordinary light ; the latter are especially interesting, because so many people have felt spirit hands at dark *séances* that have not seen them in ordinary light. The usual explanation of these phenomena is that dummy hands are attached to whalebone, are concealed on the person of the medium, and brought into action on the lights being put out. Such an "explanation" of phenomena witnessed by myself is too ridiculous. These hands have been frequently grasped and held, but with no effort or struggle to get away, they gradually resolve into the nebulous matter of which they are formed, leaving the hand of the would-be detective empty. Sometimes these hands are only partly formed, sometimes a nebulous cloud condenses into the form of a hand, which then will pluck flowers and give them to various sitters. They have also been seen to play an accordion.

CLASS X. *Direct Writing*.—Direct writing is a most interesting phase of the phenomena, and one of the most convincing, when proper tests are applied ; but, with the exception of "spirit photography," no phase of the manifestations sends itself so readily to trickery. Trick-slates of various kinds may be used, and, where there is any kind of conjurer's *patter* going on, the slates may be changed under the eyes of the inexperienced observers. A case has been

recently exposed in the Spiritualist organ, *Light*, in which the slate-writer gets the sitter to write down questions, then under pretence of casting the sitter's "horoscope" in another room finds means of writing the answers on a slate which he adroitly changes for the one the sitter has carefully cleaned. Mr. S. J. Davey assiduously practised slate-writing and other tricks, and gave exhibitions before members of the Society for Physical Research, and puzzled many folks who did not know where to look for the trick. In one case reported in the "Proceedings,"* a sitter is given a slate to hold by one end while Mr. D. held the other; a double slate was then produced and the sitter directed to put pieces of chalk between the slates, lock them, and place them where he could watch them! A more transparent dodge for dividing attention could scarcely have been devised, and when the attention was still further distracted by Mr. Davey's conjurer-like patter there is no wonder the sitter was tricked. The so-called tests given, such as writing certain passages from a book seemingly selected by, but really "forced" on, the sitter, were palpable trickery compared with the real tests given by genuine mediums.

The handiest collection of evidence for Direct Writing is contained in a little work by "M.A. (Oxon.)"—Stainton Moses.† It deals largely

* "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. iv., p. 416.

† "Direct Writing by Supernormal Means." By M.A. (Oxon.).

with the mediumship of Dr. Slade, who is alleged to have been detected in trickery by Professor Lankester. Friends of my own, keen-eyed Agnostics, witnessed Slade's slate-writing, both before and after the so-called exposure, and they scouted the idea of the "explanation" covering the facts. Slade afterwards offered to demonstrate the genuineness of the phenomena at the Professor's own house, and under his own conditions; this he declined, showing a lack of scientific interest and of the British love of fairplay. Some professional mediums, without doubt, resort to trickery when their mysterious powers fail; and some so-called mediums are shameless impostors. All movements are infected by these harpies; even in the selected twelve there was a Judas, tempted by the pieces of silver. Because there is occasional imposture, conscious or unconscious, to regard all paid mediums as impostors is as reasonable as to regard all the disciples as traitors because one of their number betrayed his Master. Yet the opponents of Spiritualism are constantly displaying just such a lack of judgment, such a want of the knowledge of human nature.

Mediumship is a physical, not a moral quality. A peculiarity of constitution enables some individuals to become media of these mysterious Psychic forces, and their power varies from day to day, hour to hour, with meteorological conditions, and especially with the condition of the

sitters ; hence the temptation to give spurious imitations when there is a lack of genuine phenomena. This has to be guarded against, and is so ; and the fact that it is not more effectually guarded against by Spiritualists often arises from that innate delicacy of feeling, that fineness of nature, and honesty of purpose which naturally inclines them to Spiritualism, and to a generous trust in the honesty of other people.

Direct Writing, or Psychography, takes various forms and is as old as the Decalogue. It was known to early students of occult phenomena which are old as the hills, and older than some of them. Intelligent messages are sometimes written upon paper while no human hand is near it ; sometimes a pencil is seen to rise on end and write ; and sometimes a luminous hand not belonging to any person present is seen to be guiding the pencil, thus recalling the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's Feast. But the commonest form of Psychography is that of slate-writing. A slate is thoroughly cleaned by the sitter, a small crumb of slate pencil is placed on it, the slate is then partly placed under the leaf of a plain table, one end supported by the sitter the other by the Psychic, or medium ; the thumb of the latter is on the table and his fingers press the slate close up to the underside. Writing is then heard and felt, and on the slate being withdrawn it is found to be covered with writing, giving replies to ques-

tions, sometimes mentally asked, or spontaneous messages, and always purporting to come from spirits of departed human beings. Information is frequently given unknown to either the medium or the sitter, and afterwards found to be correct. It should be stated, in passing, that all Spiritualists repudiate the terms "miracle" or "supernatural"; they claim that all the phenomena occur through natural laws of which science is only just getting glimmerings. The object of putting the slates under the table, it is explained, is to form a little dark chamber in which the "Odic," "Nerve," "Vital," or Psychic Force can be concentrated and rendered free from the interference of light, which, being first-cousin to electricity, is itself a powerful force. The same end is often attained by using double, or book-slates, with a scrap of pencil between them. These are sometimes placed on the sitter's head or shoulder so that he can both hear and feel the writing.

Baron Guldenstubbé, in his work, *La Réalité des Esprits, et le phénomène merveilleux de leur écriture directe*, showed that he could dispense with ordinary conditions, and had successful experiments in the Louvre, the Museum at Versailles, Cathedral of Saint Denis, Westminster Abbey, the British Museum, and various cemeteries in France, Germany and England. These were witnessed by a vast number of distinguished persons, many of whose names are given. These Psychographs,

of which some fac-similes are given, selected from more than two thousand, in twenty different languages, were obtained by placing a piece of paper on a table in the Baron's room, on pedestals or tombs in churches and cemeteries. He would then retire a few paces without losing sight of the paper, and on taking it up always found an intelligent message written on it.

“The first experiment was made by placing paper and pencil in a box, which was locked, and the key of which never left the Baron's possession. No one was acquainted with the fact that any such experiment was in process. After twelve days, during which no mark was made on the paper, there appeared on it certain mysterious characters, and during that day ten separate experiments gave successful results. The box was then left open and watched, and writing was seen to grow upon the paper without the use of the pencil.”*

Mr. Sainton Moses †—“M.A. (Oxon)”—tried a similar experiment before he had heard of Baron Guldenstubbé; he says:—

“I enclosed a piece of paper in a travelling-desk of my own, which desk I strapped up in its cover, and placed in my private drawer. The key of that drawer, in which my most private

* “Direct Writing by Supernormal Means.” By M.A. (Oxon.).

† Rev. W. Sainton Moses was a Lincolnshire man, not Jewish, the name being originally Mostyn.

papers are kept, never goes out of my possession, and assuredly I kept it consciously in view during the experiment. I left the paper undisturbed for twenty-four hours, and at the end of that time I found upon it a very clear and distinct writing, covering its entire upper surface."

Sir W. Crookes, in his "Researches," p. 93, gives two good cases of Psychography received under the most rigid test conditions. He says:—

"The first instance which I shall give took place, it is true, at a dark *séance*, but the result was not less satisfactory on that account. I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, whilst her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil. A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness."

The second instance was a most instructive failure. It took place in the light, Home was the medium, and a few private friends were present. The power being strong, Sir William wished to witness the actual production of a written message, and was told by rapping tele-

graphy that the “controls” would try. He continues :—

“ A pencil and some sheets of paper had been lying on the centre of the table ; presently the pencil rose on its point, and after advancing by hesitating jerks to the paper fell down. It then rose and again fell. A third time it tried, but with no better result. After three unsuccessful attempts, a small wooden lath, which was lying near upon the table, slid towards the pencil, and rose a few inches from the table ; the pencil rose again, and propping itself against the lath, the two together made an effort to mark the paper. It fell and then a joint effort again was made. After a third trial the lath gave it up and moved back to its place, the pencil lay as it fell across the paper, and an alphabetic message told us, ‘ We have tried to do as you asked, but our power is exhausted.’ ”

Mr. Sainton Moses obtained messages on slates that were new, clean, privately marked, and tied together ; they never left his sight for a moment, nor was his hand removed from them. They were never out of his possession after he had marked them ; there was plenty of light ; yet he had words written on the inner sides of the slates, words that could not have been prepared beforehand. This was with Dr. Slade, and in the presence of two witnesses.

From the vast masses of evidence from men of high distinction, I can only select one or two typical cases that will give the best idea of the

nature of the phenomena. The book itself must be consulted for the names and addresses of the witnesses ; the value of the evidence depends on its cumulative character.

Mr. John Wetherbee, of Boston, U.S.A., a well-known writer on Psychological subjects, says of a *séance* with a medium named Watkins :—

“ I bought two new slates at a store, and had holes bored in the frames, and tied the two slates together, and sealed the knots. The slates were clean, and the medium never touched or saw the inside of them. I had charge of them, and they were never out of my sight. The room was as light as a clear afternoon sun shining into it could make it. The tied slates lay on the table before me and before him—not under the table, but on the table. . . . After a while I heard the atom of pencil, that I had put in the slates before tying them together, beginning to write, after which I cut the strings, and found one of the slates filled with a communication, signed by the name of a well-beloved friend and relative who died some seven years ago.

“ Now I know—*first*, that the slates were new and clean ; *secondly*, that no one in the room or out of the room (the only occupants being the medium and myself) wrote the communication on the slates ; and, *thirdly*, that it must have been done by an invisible, intelligent being or beings, and could not have been done

in any other conceivable way. I make this statement as strongly as I know how, and my oath shall be attached if need."

It is interesting to compare this case with the best that can be done by conjuring. The most successful imitator of the phenomena was Mr. Davey, who, with consummate art, used to get possession of one of the sitter's slates, retire to another room, write a message, put the slate under his waistcoat, and on his return would mix it unobserved with the others. Then he would ostentatiously take the slate, put a scrap of pencil on it, the clean side up, of course, place it under the leaf of the table, get the sitter to hold one end, while by various means he produced a sound as of writing. On withdrawing the slate he would adroitly turn it over so as to make it appear that the writing was done on the upper side which was held close up to the table. How ridiculously inadequate this is as an explanation of the genuine phenomena is manifest. Another point should be noted. In nine cases out of ten the piece of pencil is described as resting at the end of the last word written, but it is obvious that in turning the slate over quickly enough to escape detection it would be thrown off. This is a fatal objection to the assertion that the writing is done with a piece of pencil attached to the middle finger while the slate is held up against the underside of the table; but any kind of explanation satisfies those who are bent on discrediting Spiritualism.

Mrs. Louisa Andrews took a folding slate, wrote a question on one of the inner sides of the slate, addressed to a friend in spirit-life, screwed the slates firmly together, placed them on the table at which Dr. Slade was sitting. The sound of writing was heard almost immediately, and on taking the slate to her own room where she had left the screw-driver, she found a reply to her question signed by the Christian name of her spirit friend.

Dr. R. S. Wyld, author of "The Physics and Philosophy of the Senses," proposed as a crucial test: "Let a box be properly taped, and the tapes knotted and sealed at each crossing. Let it contain a piece of writing-paper, with the signatures of the investigators thereon for identification, and a short piece of lead-pencil. If a few words can be written on the paper whilst it is locked up, it is clear we have a proof which cannot be gainsayed." Messrs. G. H. & W. P. Adshead tried this experiment with Monck as medium, with complete success, and under still more stringent conditions. The box was supplied by Mr. G. H. Adshead. A blank piece of paper, never before seen by Dr. Monck, was thoroughly examined in a full blaze of light, the signatures of nine of the sitters were placed on it, it was folded and placed in the box by a non-Spiritualist. The box was then not only sealed as Dr. Wyld had suggested, it was nailed down as well. The medium sitting back from the table touched neither the paper nor the box.

The medium was then entranced, and the "control," called "Samuel," asked what they would like written, Mr. Adshead said, "Write my love to Louie." He—the spirit-control—said, "It shall be done in the twinkling of an eye," and in the same breath said, "Open the box." This was done with difficulty, and the paper, with all the signatures, was seen to be covered with large writing in Samuel's well-known hand. On one side was a message to Dr. Wyld asking if this would satisfy him ; and on the other was "August 6, 1876. — My love to Louie" — the sentence asked for. A full and detailed report was at once drawn up and signed by all the witnesses whose signatures had been written on the test-paper before the experiment.

Professor Zöllner, in his "Transcendental Physics" (translated by C. C. Massey), gives the results of a long course of experiments with Dr. Slade, especially designed to meet all the objections raised against slate-writing. Consulting with other Professors everything was done that scientific ingenuity could suggest to guard against trickery or illusion, and the results were as remarkable as they were thorough and satisfactory.

Professor Zöllner elaborated an ingenious theory to account for these, and still more remarkable phenomena which transcend current scientific conceptions, and argued that they were done by means of a fourth dimension of space.

CLASS XI. *Spirit-Photographs*.—There is a great deal of curious evidence that spirit forms have appeared beside the sitter on photographic plates, and that these have been recognised as portraits of departed friends; but the fact remains that two of the most notorious spirit-photographers have been convicted of wholesale fraud, and it is still an open question whether any genuine spirit-photographs were obtained by them. The opportunities for trickery are as great as the difficulties of detection. Even where there is no professionalism in the case the investigators may be deceived. A photographic plate that has had a picture on it may be cleaned with the thoroughness necessary to make it “chemically clean,” it may be recoated, and another picture taken on it, yet the “latent image” of the first picture may appear in a ghostly fashion in the new one, so even honest folks may be deceived. With dishonest folks the means of producing secondary figures are too numerous to make it worth while spending time on this class of phenomena while there are such masses of better attested manifestations. Some of the best evidence for spirit-photographs is given by Dr. A. R. Wallace in his “Defence of Modern Spiritualism” in the *Fortnightly Review*.^{*} Photographs of this kind are still being taken, and give rise to endless controversy in *Light*.

^{*} Reprinted in “On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism.” Trübner.

CLASS XII. *Materialisations, or Visible Spirit-forms*.—This is an interesting phase of the varied phenomena, and the manifestations included in this class are sufficiently various. They range from the orthodox ghosts that stalk through all history to the fully materialised forms emerging from the cabinet at the dark *séance*; from the ghostly finger and thumb, seen, by Sir W. Crookes and others, to pick the petals from a flower in Home's button-hole and place them in front of several persons sitting near him, to the full-length figures that move about the room. Sir William says that on one occasion "a beautifully-formed small hand rose up from an opening in a dining-table and gave me a flower; it appeared and then disappeared three times at intervals, affording me ample opportunity of satisfying myself that it was as real in appearance as my own, This occurred in the light of my own room, whilst I was holding the medium's hands and feet."* Under like conditions a hand has been repeatedly seen by several witnesses playing the keys of an accordion; other hands, as already stated, have been seen engaged in direct writing, and doing various other things. I (the writer), have seen and felt such hands. They often appear first as a faint luminous cloud which gradually condenses into the form of a hand, leaving the wrist cloudy. These

* "Researches," p. 92.

hands are sometimes cold, sometimes warm and life-like, giving a good hearty grasp. On being held they gradually dissolve into vapour.

What has been said of hands is true of heads, busts, and full-length figures. Phantom forms and faces, Sir William says, are the rarest phenomena he has witnessed, but under satisfactory test conditions he has witnessed the following :—

“In the dusk of the evening, during a *séance* with Mr. Home at my house, the curtains of a window about eight feet from Mr. Home were seen to move. A dark, shadowy, semi-transparent form, like that of a man, was seen by all present, standing near the window, waving the curtains with his hand. As we looked, the form faded away and the curtains ceased to move.”

“The following is a still more striking instance. As in the former case, Mr. Home was the medium. A phantom form came from a corner of the room, took an accordion in its hand, and then glided about the room playing the instrument. The form was visible to all present for many minutes, Mr. Home also being seen at the same time. Coming rather close to a lady who was sitting apart from the rest of the company, she gave a slight cry, upon which it vanished.”* Similar

* “Researches,” p. 94.

phenomena have been since frequently witnessed in connection with Eusapia Paladino and other mediums.

Dr. Venzano recently gave an account in the *Revue des Etudes Psychiques* of a *séance* with Eusapia Paladino, held in an apartment No. 29, Rue Caffaro, Genoa, in the presence of Dr. Henri Morselli (Professor at the University of Genoa), M. and Mme. Montaldo, M. Ernest Bozzano, and Mme. Avellino and her two sons. Dr. Venzano arranged everything. The medium allowed the ladies, in a private room, to undress and thoroughly search her, and these ladies did not leave her until she was led into the *séance* room.

After some remarkable table-turning, or levitating, as the table rose and remained suspended in the air, after every precaution had been taken to preclude trickery, the medium went into the cabinet, previously arranged by Dr. Venzano. She was securely tied to the couch, and the light was lowered slightly. Under these stringent conditions a female face appeared, (I am quoting from *Light*)* then, the curtain being drawn aside, the head of a man, with big shoulders, enveloped in white drapery and a thick beard, was discernible. This face remained about a minute, bowing several times to the sitters.

“The medium, still entranced, then called

* *Light*, Nov. 8, 1902.

Professor Morselli, and complained that the fastenings on the wrists were too tight. The professor loosened the fastenings with some difficulty, the knotting of the cord being complicated. The only fastenings left were those of the feet and round the waist.

“The professor then changed places with one of the other sitters to avoid the effect of the light of the lamp, which, standing between him and the cabinet, hindered his observation. A young female face, like the one previously seen, then appeared again outside the curtain, casting a shade on the wall, the shadow following the movements of the body, the materiality of which was thus attested. Another female figure also appeared, with head enveloped, and the body swathed, like an Egyptian mummy. The form was near enough to the sitters for them to observe that the wrappings seemed thicker than ordinary gauze. The figure bent forward and leaned an elbow on the piano; the arm was evidently only partly formed, the forearm being deficient; the drapery of the sleeve fell over the piano . . .

“This figure retired, and again the medium begged to have the fastenings loosened. The professor hastened into the cabinet, intending to free her at once from the two remaining fastenings, when to the surprise of all it was discovered that the medium had been re-attached to the iron bar of the couch, by several twists of the cord, fastened with knots, both

more numerous and tighter than those made at the beginning of the *séance*. The professor was obliged to give up the task of untying them ; and one of the sitters attempted it, but only succeeded after long and patient efforts. All the fastenings were loosened at last except one cord round the waist, which still attached her to the couch. A female figure then appeared holding a child. The woman seemed about forty ; she had a white cap with white embroidery. The part of the body which was visible was also in white drapery. The child looked as if it might have been three years old. The head was bare, the hair short, and the body seemed to be draped in fine linen, very white. The woman's gaze was turned affectionately towards the child, whose head was bent a little towards her. This apparition was seen for more than a minute. All rose and approached more closely to it, so that the least movements were visible. The child several times kissed the woman audibly. As Eusapia continued to complain of discomfort, it was decided to go into the cabinet. It was found that she still occupied the same position and looked tired and distressed." So the *séance* was closed and the medium taken into another room and again searched. "The medium," says Dr. Venzano, "submitted to a system of investigation as complete as could be desired. . . . It is not possible in this case to suppose there could have been trickery on the part of Eusapia,

and it is still less possible to have recourse to the old theory of hallucination." Dr. Venzano insists that scientists should examine these facts, the study of which is destined to illuminate the field of science with a new and dazzling light.*

A vigorous protest has recently been made by Dr. Peebles against the cruel tests to which mediums are subjected in such experiments. One has had her mouth filled with salt, and raw ammonia placed under her nose to test the genuineness of her trance, causing great suffering when she awoke. Others have been subjected to brutal tying. Yet Professor Ray Lankester said the other day that, "Not one medium exists who will venture to undergo the simplest experimental testing of his or her pretensions!" This amazing statement throws a lurid light on the value of testimony given against mediums.

Sir W. Crookes made an exhaustive series of experiments with Miss Florence Cook,† then a girl of fifteen, and proved to demonstration the genuineness of her mediumship; despite the aspersions of people who have no conscience when dealing with Spiritualism. The spirit-form appearing at her *séances* was called "Katie King," whom Sir William finds prose too poor to describe. Five cameras recorded this lovely form, but if photography could map the features

* See "Revue des Études Psychiques," Sept. 1902.

† "Researches," pp. 104, 108

it could give no record of Katie's charm of manner, or the matchless purity of her complexion, or the transfiguration of her noble features by the ever-varying expression.

“Round her she made an atmosphere of life ;
The very air seemed lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies ;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.”

Some very profound questions are involved in these materialisations. The forms are largely dependent on the medium for the material which enables them to become visible, and there is an intimate relation both mentally and physically. The spirit seems sometimes to be the medium's spirit, or double, in its astral body. Mrs. d'Espérance, in her fascinating book, “Shadow Land,”* relates that on one occasion, when she came out of the cabinet, she found herself face to face with her own double, so like that she seemed to be looking at herself in a mirror. This book is especially interesting as giving these things from the psychic's point of view, and as throwing some light on the mysteries of mediumship.

A dreamy child, endowed with second-sight, living in a large “haunted” house, only a few rooms of which were used, she delighted to take

* “Shadow Land, or Light from the Other Side.” By E. d'Espérance.

her rag doll into the haunted rooms and watch her "shadow-people"; always wondering that others could not see them, and, of course, getting into endless difficulties for her "queerness," and for declaring she saw things that others could not. To prevent her going into these unused rooms the servant told her dreadful ghost stories, and so frightened the child that she used to cover her head with the bedclothes, and only felt really safe when she was with her shadow-people—little dreaming that they were the dreaded ghosts! This is as good as the matador who should find his only safety in the ring!

Such a ghost-seer was a born medium, and later in life chance threw her among investigators of Spiritualism, and her gifts quickly displayed themselves; table-turning being the first phase. Her powers are shown in an amusing story of a contest which took place years afterwards. Mrs. d'Espérance had been instrumental in converting the learned and accomplished Dr. Friese to Spiritualism, thus reconciling him to his old friend Professor Zöllner, with whom he had quarrelled on account of his belief in it. The doctor had a friend, a perfect Sandow, enjoying the reputation of being the strongest man in Silesia, who was one day boasting of his feats, when the doctor challenged him to hold a table down, if "Walter" (a spirit control) chose to lift it. Squaring his herculean shoulders, Herr X.

accepted the challenge. Then began a pretty little contest. The table, acting "like a thing of life," played with him for a time until he had exhausted his strength; then it began business. Rocking gently, but resistlessly, this Sandow was powerless to stop or retard its movements. Throwing himself upon it he was rocked like a child in a cradle.

This reminds me of an early experience of my own. Although rather above the average in strength, I tried, in vain, to hold a little table still, while the medium, a mere slip of a girl, had only four fingers resting lightly on it.

Mrs. d'Espérance's next phase of mediumship was that of automatic writing; this was followed by materialisations, the subject we were dealing with before this digression. Unlike other psychics she did not fall into trance when sitting for this class of phenomena, so was able to record her experiences, which throw valuable light on the deeper mysteries of mediumship. She always felt dreadfully exhausted, and her mind seemed numbed while the spirit-forms were moving about among the sitters, and any attempt to think weakened the figures and compelled them to return to the cabinet. She also felt that they were part of herself, and that if anything happened to them it would recoil on her. One materialised form, "Yolande," a graceful young Arab girl, was sprightly and venturesome and caused the medium much vague uneasiness.

One evening she was sitting in the cabinet, feeling very unwell, and Yolande was outside moving among the circle :

“What actually occurred I had to learn afterwards. All I knew was a horrible excruciating sensation of being doubled up and squeezed together, as I can imagine a hollow gutta-percha doll would feel, if it had sensation, when violently embraced by its baby owner. A sense of terror and agonising pain came over me, as though I were losing hold of life, and was falling into some fearful abyss, yet knowing nothing, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, except the echo of a scream which I heard as at a distance. I felt I was sinking down, I knew not where, I tried to save myself, to grasp at something, but missed it; and then came a blank from which I awakened with a shuddering horror and sense of being bruised to death.”

On recovering her scattered senses she was told that a man, suspecting trickery, had seized Yolande, thinking it was the medium.

Another curious point is noted. The medium once was suffering from severe toothache and a scorched arm. On the spirit-form appearing all pain left the medium, but Yolande carried her arm as if in pain, and flinched when accidentally touched. A still more curious thing occurred several times. A piece of the drapery clothing the spirit-form was cut off by a sitter, and the medium found afterwards a hole of the same shape in the skirt of her new dress. The

dress was of a heavy dark woollen material, while the abstracted piece was the same shape, but larger, white as snow, and fine as gossamer in texture. The recurrence of this showed that the clothing of the medium and sitters supplied the materials from which the spirit's dazzling raiment was formed—or abstracted. This should help to answer the ever-recurring question why ghosts should wear garments so earthly in appearance; and, to the wise, should give clues to these mysterious operations.

Mrs. d'Espérance, speaking of Yolande, says :

“There seemed to exist a strange link between us. I could do nothing to ensure her appearance amongst us. She came and went, so far as I am aware, entirely independent of my will, but when she had come, she was, I found, dependent on me for her brief material existence. I seemed to lose, not my individuality, but my strength and power of exertion, and though I did not then know it, a great portion of my material substance. I felt that in some way I was changed, but the effort to think logically in some mysterious way affected Yolande, and made her weak. The stronger and livelier she became the less inclination I had to think or reason, but the power of feeling became intensified to a painful extent; I do not mean in the physical sense, but the mental, my brain apparently becoming a sort of whispering gallery where the thoughts of other persons resolved themselves into an embodied form and resounded

as though actual substantial objects. Was any one suffering, I felt the pain. Was any one worried or depressed, I felt it instantly. Joy or sorrow made themselves in some way perceptible to me. I could not tell *who* among the friends assembled was suffering, only that pain existed and was in some way reproduced in myself."

These glimpses from the medium's standpoint hint the wonder-worlds we are opening up, and reveal vistas of possible discoveries. But they also explain the suspicions so often aroused, the charges so often brought, that the medium is masquerading as a spirit. That some of these charges have been well founded is undoubted; but it is equally undoubted that for one true charge brought there have been half a dozen false ones.

CLASS XIII. *The Passage of Matter through Matter.* — The deepening mystery of matter was touched upon in the opening pages, and some hints were given of the wonderful properties of this paradoxical something that we, with unconscious humour, call "gross matter." The "atom" is discovered to be, as Spiritualists said sixty years ago, more like a microcosm than a solid particle. The wondrous radium, producing heat without loss of substance, makes plausible the accounts of the ever-burning lamps of the alchemists. The transmutations of matter in modern laboratories prepare us to believe that the more marvellous a statement

the more likely it is to be true. So, while foolish folk will disbelieve, wise men will wait, knowing that the impossibilities of to-day may be the commonplaces of to-morrow.

The passage of matter through matter is one of the recognised facts among Spiritualists who form the vanguard of that spiritual science into which materialistic science is gradually transmuting itself. There is no such thing as "solid" matter; the nearest thing to it is more porous than a sponge, the "ultimate" atoms being separated by something like interstellar spaces compared with their size. The "ultimate" atom, inconceivably small, is yet a mere shell (composed of what?) occupied, as Sir Oliver Lodge tells us, by electrons in lonely isolation, as a regiment of soldiers might occupy a country if scattered all over it!* These atoms are held in position by loves and hates—I mean attractions and repulsions; increase these momentarily by spiritual or psychic forces, which dominate all below them, and matter may pass through matter as water passes through a filter. There is abundance of evidence that objects can be dematerialised and rematerialised by the beings operating in spiritual *séances*. One of the most common occurrences is for flowers to be brought into locked rooms, the perfume being the first inti-

* Sir Oliver favours the theory that the "material" atoms consist solely of varied groups of these wonderful electrons.

mation of their presence. These flowers are fresh and often covered with dew. Mr. John Carson, President of the Horticultural Society of Victoria, assured me that when in London, he had especially wished for some camellias to be produced at a *séance*, and his wish was gratified. He asked for them as a special test, knowing that the slightest pressure on those delicate blooms turns them brown; so to cover them with a light apron would be risky, to conceal them under a dress would be fatal. Mr. Carson examined those brought to him into a locked room, and found every petal perfect.

The recent trial in Berlin of the celebrated Frau Rothe, the flower medium, produced masses of testimony in support of her claims. The nature of this evidence, and the character and high social standing of the witnesses have made a profound impression; and the prosecution, or rather the persecution, is seen to have been a blunder, helping the cause it wished to crush. The authorities show up very badly, and their action recalls aspects of the Dreyfus case.

When it was found that Spiritualism was progressing rapidly among the upper classes, and had invaded his own *entourage*, the alarmed Kaiser issued an edict that it must be suppressed. As was to be expected in that police-ridden land, the medium was seized, and on *police evidence* was imprisoned for twelve

months and three weeks before being tried! That damning fact gives the case for the prosecution clean away; and when the police had got their conviction, in the teeth of the splendid evidence for the defence, the court emphasised the unspeakable meanness of the whole affair by deducting only eight of those twelve months imprisonment from her sentence. Yet that imprisonment had been so severe that the poor woman was not allowed to attend her daughter's funeral.

Even if the charges were proved they would only show what we knew before and always admit, that genuine mediums sometimes resort to trickery rather than have a blank *séance*. The only thing the prosecution really *proved* was its own gross unfairness. The fact that Frau Rothe bought a quantity of flowers and other things is all in her favour, as the flowers were *real* ones, and if she had not bought them the spirits would have had to steal them, the contention being that the flowers were dematerialised by a chemistry more subtle than that of Crookes or Dewar, and were rematerialised in the *séance* room. The fact that our chemists have recently succeeded in dematerialising matter shows that they are on the track of these secrets.

The array of witnesses for the defence was, as the *Express* says, amazing; and, although it comes through hostile channels, it gives me up-to-date evidence in favour of nearly every

kind of phenomena referred to in these pages. The supporters of "Sister Anna," as the ladies called her, included the Countess von Moltke, whose daughter is a writing medium, Princess Karaschka, Princess Karadja, Countess Wachtmeister, Baroness Grünhoff, and the mother of the Court chaplain. Of the sterner sex there were General von Zastrow, Baron von Ruediger, and Herr Stöcker, late Court chaplain. Among those who had come far to give evidence in favour of Frau Rothe were Judge Sulzers, President of the High Court of Appeal, Zurich, whose evidence naturally made a great impression; and Dr. Langsdorf, of Freiburg, who was so enthusiastic that he wished to undertake the defence of Rothe himself. The cautious Dr. Spatzier, Professor Fassebender, and the venerable Professor Sellin, all testified to the genuineness of the phenomena. The latter quoted the great Kant* in favour of spirit-communications, and he might have quoted Hegel,† and to some extent Schopenhauer; and the younger Fichte is an avowed Spiritualist. In addition to these distinguished people, "the array of witnesses of both sexes, rich and poor, old and young, elderly spinsters and smart young men, was amazing. They included a landowner, an architect, a merchant, an author, a musician, a doctor and a lawyer."

Dr. Spatzier, says the *Telegraph*, admitted

* "Dreams of a Spirit-Seer." By Immanuel Kant.

† "Philosophie des Geistes."

that the discourses Frau Rothe pronounced in her trance “were intellectually out of her ordinary limited powers.” He was also amazed to see a table weighing over thirteen stone rising three times towards the ceiling as noiselessly as a feather. Another witness described a *séance* at his own house, where the medium was searched and watched, and every precaution taken to preclude trickery, yet most remarkable phenomena occurred. He received “an orange which had floated into Frau Rothe’s hand, and also a eucalyptus branch, fifteen inches long, which could not have been secreted in her clothing.”

Another witness said he saw the medium open her empty hand, then press her fingers together, whereupon fifty leaves and buds dropped off them, falling on the table, and fraud was out of the question, as he closely watched the lady, who was attired in a tight-fitting dress. “Moreover,” says the *Telegraph*, “when he wanted to pay money the ‘impresario’ refused it.” Events were foretold and occurred as predicted. And so the stream of testimony rolled on, of marvels taking place in full daylight, before distinguished people, after Rothe had been well searched by ladies; of flowers descending slowly through the air while the medium’s hands were on the table; of single flowers, and enormous bunches of flowers, all bedewed and perfect in form. Dark spots would be observed on the lady’s hands, “which grew in size and changed colour, until

they lay there in the form of dewy flowers! These materialisations went on everywhere, and sometimes bored the medium herself; whenever she put out her hand to take the bread, she was hindered by a sudden up-growth of roses and lilies on the table." This evidence, we must remember, was all given on oath.

The *Mail* says a physician was asked to place his hand on a blank sheet of paper. A noise of writing was heard, and the paper was then handed to the Countess von Moltke, who recognised her deceased son's writing. Another witness testified that the medium once placed her hand over his hand holding a note-book, and upon opening it a few seconds afterwards he found fourteen pages covered with strange writing. Judge Sulzers stated that, in company of Professors Fassebender and Sellin, he saw Frau Rothe cause writing to appear on a plate while two sceptics held her hands. "The judge stated on oath," says the *Express*, "that at a *séance* at Constance, Rothe put him in communication with the spirits of his wife and his father. These spirits said things to him which Rothe could not possibly have invented, their conversation dealing with subjects of which Rothe could not have obtained knowledge from any mortal being. He averred that he saw Rothe make plates of flowers of the rarest kind out of the air in a room flooded with light."

Dr. Langsdorf gave equally remarkable testimony of his deceased aunt making her presence

felt, curing his wife's rheumatism; and as a souvenir, directed them to look in a certain unknown drawer and they would find a golden chain. "Nobody," said the doctor, "knew anything of the existence of that chain," which was found in the place described. "And now I put it to every human being in this hall," cried the doctor, "if such an experience as this falls to the lot of a man, shall he withhold his belief? As for me, I had the inspiring feeling in my soul—thou art immortal!" These witnesses had to undergo a searching cross-examination, but nothing could shake their testimony or their faith in the medium. Even Professor Dessoir, a hostile expert, had to admit that Frau Rothe was really convinced of her own powers, and that she was carrying out a sublime mission.

Thus, evidence for Spiritualism from all classes, from all peoples, like streams unite, "Still gathering, as they pour along, A voice more loud, a tide more strong!" This Berlin "trial" is rendered notable by the noble army of witnesses from all stations in society, who with much to lose and nothing to gain, yet had the splendid courage to brave the sneers of the world, and speak up for a poor little woman who was being crushed under the iron heel of Prussian prejudice and intolerance. This so-called "credulity" is most certainly accompanied by some of the noblest qualities that can adorn a people. Such brave souls have always

been the first to hail a coming dawn, and oppose the glorious spirit of martyrdom to the contemptible spirit of persecution.

J. C. F. Zöllner, Professor of Astronomy, Leipsic University, who has since won his martyr's crown for being a few decades ahead of his brethren, made a long series of experiments to prove his theory of a four-dimensional space. He was assisted to some extent by Professors Fechner (famed for researches in psycho-physics), Scheibner, and W. P. Weber. His theory was that spirits live in a world conditioned by space of four dimensions, and that all their mysterious manipulations of matter—to us impossibilities—are simple enough to them, and to man's own spirit when freed, or partly freed, from his body. On this theory it should be possible to have knots tied in an endless cord. To test this Zöllner took pieces of hempen cord and sealed the two ends of each to pieces of cardboard. Taking one of these he hung it round his neck with the sealed ends in front of him, and sat with Dr. Slade as medium, who did not touch the cord and whose hands were always visible to the professor, in bright daylight. On taking the cord from his neck he found four knots had been tied in it, knots that could only have been tied by human hands with the use of the ends of the cord, which were still sealed to the cardboard. *

* See "Transcendental Physics." By Professor Zöllner, translated by C. C. Massey.

Another experiment was to place coins in cardboard boxes securely closed with strips of paper glued over them. After one or two failures, on the 5th of May, 1878, in broad daylight, these boxes were placed on the table. A slate was then held under the table, and when withdrawn the coins were found on the slate, and the boxes empty, except for two small pieces of slate-pencil.

At another sitting in broad daylight a small table mysteriously disappeared. Shortly afterwards Zöllner saw the table floating in the air, and descending, legs upwards, on to the top of a card-table. A great number of such experiments are recorded in Zöllner's work, "Transcendental Physics."

If these startling statements stood alone we should rightly disregard them, but they are only items from a mass of evidence all illustrating the same principle. While an investigator has been holding a medium's two hands with his own, a solid iron, sometimes a wooden, ring has been placed on his arm. Under like conditions a chair, firmly glued in all its joints, has been hung on their arms, so that they pass through the railings of the back of the chair. Mediums firmly tied have had their coats instantly taken off, and as instantly replaced. The absence of a sufficient number of precautions, and the possibilities of mal-observation, prevent even a goodly number of such cases carrying conviction; but when we

have such things occurring under all sorts of conditions, with all sorts of people, and in all parts of the world, then they must convince any person who has the judicial gift of rightly weighing evidence.

Before leaving the physical phenomena I must give one case that impressed even the sceptical Mr. Maskelyne. Dr. George Wyld, in his thoughtful and interesting work, "Christo-Theosophy, or Spiritual Dynamics,"* has a chapter on "Matter, its Spiritual Substances," which gives full details of some crucial experiments. Dr. Wyld says:—

"The phenomena of *the passage of matter through matter* has much interested Spiritualists. The facts are, that during dark *séances*, while the circles are seated round tables and with hands joined, wooden and other rings being previously placed on the table, these have frequently been found threaded on the arms of those present, on the understanding and belief that continuity of joined hands remained unbroken. In the presence of the medium Husk, this has, during the last twenty years, been done probably a thousand times."

But the doctor was dissatisfied because up to a certain date it had never been placed on his arm, and was told that his magnetism was of so positive a nature that the operation could not be performed either on his own arm or on any

* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Second edition, 1895.

hand that he held. A smaller man would have at once suspected trickery, but the doctor was a wise man, and persevered, knowing how delicate the conditions, and how little they are understood.

“Accordingly,” he says, “I had an iron ring made of a size which made it impossible to force it over my own or Husk’s hand, and this ring, during four years, I invariably carried in my pocket and placed on the table at the commencement of every *séance* I attended. This ring, during four years, was repeatedly found on the arms of those present at *séances*, but on no occasion, up to a certain date, was it ever placed on my arm, or on that of any hand I held. Still I persisted, because I was from time to time promised a demonstration if only I persevered. I did persevere, and the promise was fulfilled on the evening of December 18, 1884, at the house of my friend Mr. Stuart-Menteath.

“Mr. Menteath had arranged to hold a series of *séances* in his own house, with the medium Husk, and as far as possible always to have the same sitters present, and who should all be known to each other; and on the night of my ring demonstration, Mr. Menteath, Miss Menteath, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Captain James, General Maclean, the Rev. Mr. Newbold and myself were present. We sat as usual at the table, and the light being put out, a voice, apparently coming through Husk, said ‘Dr. Wyld, we think we shall be able to put your ring

on the medium's wrist to-night, so be sure to hold his hand securely.' . . . Accordingly I laid hold of Husk's left hand with my right hand, while Captain James held his right hand, and with my left hand I then cautiously examined Husk's fore-arm, but found no ring there. Then taking my ring in my left hand, and holding it, as directed, lightly with two fingers, I gave the remaining fingers of my left hand to my next sitter. The voice then said, 'I will take the ring out of your hand, ring it three times on the table, and then place it on the medium's wrist.' The ring was then immediately taken from me, rung three times on the table, and placed round Husk's wrist, while he uttered a cry as of pain, and struggled convulsively to free his hand from mine, but I held all the tighter, and with my left hand eagerly sought and found a ring on his left wrist, and called for a light, while I held the hand and wrist of Husk as in a vice. When the light was produced we all saw the ring on the wrist, and all tried to remove it, but without success; while I satisfied myself by the examination of my private marks that the ring was my own ring."

Minute measurements are then given showing that the ring was 2·7 in. smaller than the measurement of the medium's hand, as shown by a cord drawn tightly round it. This ring suddenly fell from Husk's wrist, about an hour after it had been placed there, and on examina-

tion proved to be the ring absolutely untampered with. A still smaller ring was, under similar conditions, afterwards placed on Husk's wrist by the same mysterious agency, was examined by Mr. Maskelyne and others, who could find no clue to the mystery, and Husk wore the ring for years.

Huge volumes of reliable testimony could be given to a great variety of physical manifestations, that cannot be touched upon here. A slight sketch of some of these is given by the late Frederic W. H. Myers in Vol. VII. "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," p. 146, "On alleged movements of objects, without contact, occurring not in the presence of a paid medium."

The profound significance of these phenomena we shall see later; but it is amazing that there should be these vast masses of evidence attesting the reality of such marvels, evidence daily accumulating, and yet the world wags on in its old, old way, with eyes shut and fingers in ears, complacently priding itself on being too clever to believe the truth!

PART II

MENTAL PHENOMENA

WE draw a line between the mental and physical phenomena for convenience; no such line can be drawn in reality. The simplest movements of objects are Morse-like signals of an operating intelligence, and this intelligence when questioned asserts itself to be the spirit, or spirits, of departed human beings. That otherwise sane men should presume to contradict them, and tell them they do not know who or what they are, is part of that curious topsy-turveydom which sceptics always display when dealing with this subject.

The mental, or the "higher phenomena," are those which appeal most to Spiritualists; they extend over a wider field, and open up still more profound questions, the solving of which will revolutionise our whole philosophy of existence. They demand much greater consideration than the physical side, which is only the A B C of the matter; but space only permits me a cursory glance at these phenomena and their bearing on the problem of problems. Fortunately, those who wish to follow up the

subject can do so by reading Frederic W. H. Myers' great work : "Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death,"* in which he, with the insight of genius, brings creation from the chaos of material collected by the Society for Psychical Research. A masterly summary of its main arguments was given in the *Times*.† The article was highly appreciative and worthy of the great work it dealt with so sympathetically. But grandly as Myers has handled this theme, and vast as is the ground covered, he has really been treating Hamlet without the Prince, by overlooking the works of the father of modern Spiritualism, Davis—works which Theodore Parker pronounced the literary marvel of the nineteenth century !

In treating this side of the subject I am faced by such masses of material that I feel as if called upon to condense the "Encyclopædia Britannica" to a pamphlet. Only an occasional specimen case can be given.

CLASS I. *Automatic Writing. Planchette.*—This is a heart-shaped little plank of wood supported on two castors and a pencil-point. One sitter places a right hand on it, another the left ; the elbows soon tingle as if electrified, planchette begins to move, and the pencil records its track on large sheets of white paper. Scrawling soon turns to writing, questions will be answered, and spontaneous messages to

* Longmans.

† The *Times* "Literary Supplement," February 20, 1903.

various sitters will be written. Mr. Myers gives the case of a lady and gentleman who sat opposite each other so that the writing was upside down to the lady, and each thought the other was moving the planchette. This is generally the case; and as the planchette runs so easily the movements have no significance, and the whole thing must be judged by the intelligence displayed in the messages. It responds to the sitters' moods to some extent, and may be used as an amusing toy warranted to fool those seeking the names of Derby-winners; or it may be used seriously when, if there are any sitters with mediumistic or psychic gifts, startling results may follow. The power or powers at work seem often able to read the minds of present or absent persons, giving information of things past, present and to come. Mr. Myers mentions the curious case* of a woman, in great distress, communicating with her brother hundreds of miles away. This was by means of table-turning, but the principle is the same, and shows, what *phantasms* of the *living* prove, that the human spirit in its etheric body can leave its prison-house of clay and appear or act at a distance from it.

But the majority of the messages purport to be written by the spirits of departed human beings, and they give sufficient proofs of identity to satisfy all but the wilfully blind.

* "Human Personality." Vol. II. p. 150.

Planchette recently gained uneviable notoriety through the Cavendish *v.* Strutt case, in which it was shown that poor planchette was put to very base uses. Spiritualists were much relieved when Major Strutt pronounced Spiritualism “all humbug,” as they expect and welcome such judgments from such men.

The mystic planchette,* or something like it, was known to Pythagoras, who had a table on wheels with a pointer which moved towards signs on a stone slab, and these were interpreted as revelations from the unseen world. There is a modern adaptation of the same idea known as “ouija.”

Another form of automatic writing is by the hand alone. This may be partly impressional and partly automatic; the hand may be moved by a power other than conscious volition, and yet the mind may be dimly aware of what is written. At other times the medium may be entranced; at others he may be conversing, or, as with “M.A. (Oxon.)” he may be actually reciting Virgil, for the express purpose of keeping his attention from his hand. Under these conditions he had communications from discarnate men giving minute particulars of names, dates, events, everything that could prove the spirits’ identity. They have submitted to cross-examination, and evaded traps set to involve them in contradiction, and given every test

* See *Light*, March 28, 1903.

needed to establish identity. Many of the facts given were unknown to the sitters, and yet they received full verification afterwards.

On one occasion Mr. Sainton Moses received a perfect autobiography from a spirit, who replied to searching questions. The particulars were afterwards verified. He continues :

“In addition to the long series of facts thus communicated . . . a short letter (was) written automatically by me, in a peculiar archaic handwriting, phrased in a quaint, old-fashioned way, and containing a curious piece of old-fashioned spelling. It is signed with the name of the spirit in question, who was a man of mark in the days of his life on earth. I have since obtained a letter in his handwriting, an old yellow document, preserved on account of the autograph. The handwriting in my book is a fair imitation of this, the signature is exact, and the piece of old-fashioned spelling occurs exactly as it does in my book. This, it was said, was purposely done as a point of evidence.”*

According to Mr. Myers, Mr. Moses sometimes had *direct* writing, that is, with no visible agency, and automatic writing at the same time. “The direct signatures closely resemble the automatic signatures, and the two forms of writing are intimately intermixed. Sometimes, for instance, letters were formed under the shadow of Mr. Moses’ hand, while he himself

* “Spirit Identity.” By “M. A. (Oxon).”

wrote as usual ; or the letters were even formed under his gaze (when he was alone) in the light. The authors (spirits) of the automatic script always claimed authorship of the direct script also.”* Mr. Myers, in the same appendix, gives a great variety of phenomena occurring in the presence of this remarkable medium, whose integrity was high above all question.

It should be stated that nearly all Spiritualistic phenomena are preceded, or accompanied, by a cool air playing over the sitters, unlike the “blasts from hell,” needed by the theory of diabolism !

CLAIRVOYANCE

Here we enter an enchanted region, beside which fairy poems—I refuse to call them “tales”—and the “Arabian Nights” pale their ineffectual fires. Dame Nature, in prescribing this fairy-food for childhood, compensates for later illusions when pride of intellect places men in strait-waistcoats, imprisons them in cramping conceptions, or sets them toddling like Chinese ladies—the greater the limp the higher the caste ! If, as Wordsworth thought, our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting, and we come trailing clouds of glory, shut out by our later intellectual blinkers, then these cherished half-beliefs of children, and of poets

* “Human Personality.” Vol. II. p. 536.

“whose spirits still rule us from their urns,” carry a significance deep beyond plummet’s sounding.

Years ago Schopenhauer said the man who disbelieves in clairvoyance must no longer be called sceptical, but ignorant. Even Robert Houdin, the prince of conjurers, was entirely convinced by the clairvoyant Alexis. Since that time evidence, both medical and scientific, has rapidly accumulated. Clairvoyance merges on one side into thought-transference or thought-reading, and on the other into telepathy; the latter being wireless telegraphy between mind and mind. These “Marconigrams” may come from spirits or from persons still in the flesh. This *lucidité* may rise to independent clairvoyance, the “superior condition” of A. J. Davis and Baron Swedenborg, which could be entered almost at will, and might be called transcendental vision—the perception of things on a higher plane of existence. Clairvoyance may arise in natural or induced somnambulism—or hypnosis. The clairvoyant is able to diagnose disease accurately, to prescribe remedies, and, more wonderful still, to predict important crises to the minute, and the final result.* He can see any places or persons he is directed to, describe events past, present, and, with some limitations, events to come.† Other minds

* See Cromwell Varley’s evidence, “Dialectical Society’s Report,” p. 158.

† See “Evidence for Clairvoyance.” Proceedings, S. P. R., April 1891.

seem open books to him. The lower phases, such as reading closed letters, books, &c., lend themselves to trickery, where there is money to be made, and such cases may be handed over to the watch-dogs of science to worry to their hearts' content. A great number of cases are given in Dr. Carl du Prel's fascinating "Philosophy of Mysticism," admirably translated by C. C. Massey. Du Prel deals mainly with the wonderful powers of what would now be called the "subliminal self," showing that it has a transcendental measure of time and space; past, present, and future, tending to merge into an ever-present Now; and he anticipates some of the results of Myers's great work. The higher phases of Clairvoyance I will deal with when I come to our Working Hypothesis.

The "self" evoked in hypnosis is nearly always the exact complement of the waking self. If a person is dull and stupid when awake, he will be bright and lively when hypnotised; and behind these complementary personalities there is a higher self, whose powers transcend and comprehend the others. So every person is a sort of trinity in unstable unity. It is curious and significant, that the second personality always speaks of the waking self in the third person as "he" or "she," and generally with something of contempt; and can sometimes intervene in waking affairs; while the higher self can sometimes warn or direct the other two personalities, they hearing, as did

Socrates, an inner voice. But we must not venture further into what Tennyson calls "the abysmal depths of personality." I must state that in many cases the persons speaking through the hypnotised subject claim to be spirits of the departed, and they give abundant proofs of identity.

Clairaudience is closely allied to Clairvoyance. Sometimes it is the hearing, or *sensing*, an inner voice, sometimes a strange sensation as if the world were a whispering gallery, in which the subject can hear the voices to which attention is directed. The part these audible voices have played in sacred history will occur to the reader.

TRANCE-SPEAKING

This is closely allied to Clairvoyance, and the trance may be spontaneous or induced. Trance-speaking has always played an important part, and of late years it has been the means of converting some of the most stubborn Psychological Researches to the Spiritist hypothesis, as the only one that accounts for the main facts. I have had much experience of this phase of mediumship with an unpaid Psychic, who in her normal state was truthful to a fault, and who, remembering nothing occurring in trance, was sceptical, and impatient of hearing what she had said. But to the sitters who had the high privilege of hearing her utterances it was a revelation indeed, and would have carried con-

viction to any one whose finer faculties were not atrophied. A large circle of spirit friends came to greet us, and each spoke with his or her own tone of voice, manner of speech, and displayed all those finer shades of character that a Duse or a Bernhardt could not have acted. Then, the elevation of the thought, the beauty of language, and that feeling of a spiritual presence, carried a sense of certainty outweighing ocular demonstration, or logical proof.* Cherishing these sacred memories as I do, when anybody comes to my elbow with Iago-like hints and insinuations of fraud and trickery, or of delusion, I feel that it is ten thousand times better to hug such a beautiful delusion than to make myself a medium for all this sludge of doubt, distrust, and suspicion, that turns the world into a vast penitentiary of rogues and liars. This may not be scientific, then so much the worse for "Science"; but *it is* in accordance with the comprehensive science of human nature. To the students of that science most men are open books, and they know whom to trust or distrust. They know that the man who classes all men as rogues or fools must be included in his own categories; he who regards all others as liars must be steadily disbelieved; and he who regards others as rogues must not be trusted with a penny piece. I have indulged in this

* See "Varieties of Religious Experience." By Professor W. James. Lecture III. on "The Reality of the Unseen."

digression because I regard a knowledge of human nature as the best qualification for these difficult investigations. Know thyself, and *know your man*.

The trance-utterances of Mrs. Piper have assumed an importance out of all proportion to their intrinsic value, as they rank far below those of some other sensitives; but she has been taken in hand by the S.P.R., and has been subjected to a long series of rigorous tests, and the results have profoundly impressed Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor James, Dr. Richard Hodgson, and all Psychical Researchers pervious to truth; while the more courageous Professor Hyslop has frankly adopted the Spiritistic hypothesis as the only one that meets the case.

In placing ourselves in Telephonic or Telepathic communication with the spirit-world we are dealing with conditions more delicate and complex than any known to workers in physical laboratories, and the psychical instruments are liable to be thrown out of gear in ways of which we know little. One thing is certain, that the frequent admission of strangers to the circle, each being psychically an unknown quantity, upsets the conditions and invites failure. So with trance mediums there is often much that is unsatisfactory, much "fishing" for facts, many mistakes, mixed with much that is genuine. This gives the big men pause, and makes the little men scoff.

Dr. F. van Eeden, an unusually able investi-

gator, in an account of sittings with Mrs. Thompson * (an unpaid medium), discusses the matter with keen insight, and has hit on a clue. Although a stranger whose coming was kept secret, the medium's control, "Nelly," told his name and of those belonging to him and where he came from (Bussum, Holland), although showing some difficulty with the unmanageable name. The doctor had brought a piece of the clothing of a young man who, on a second attempt, committed suicide. This was given to the medium, and Nelly, in broken, but highly dramatic fashion, gave an account of the tragedy, with particulars not known to the doctor, and Dutch names of persons and places. But Nelly on being questioned gave answers purporting to come from the suicide, which were found to be wrong.

Dr. van Eeden says :—

"Up to the sitting of June 7, all the information came through Nelly, Mrs. Thompson's so-called spirit-control. But on that date the deceased tried, as he had promised, to take the control himself, as the technical term goes. The evidence then became very striking. During a few minutes—though a few minutes only—I felt absolutely as if I were speaking to my friend himself. I spoke Dutch, and got immediate and correct answers. The expression of satisfaction and gratification in face

* "Proceedings" S.P.R., June 1902.

and gesture, when we seemed to understand each other, was too true and vivid to be acted. Quite unexpected Dutch words were pronounced, details were given which were far from my mind, some of which, as that about my friend's uncle in a former sitting, I had never heard, and found to be true only on inquiry afterwards. But being now well on my guard, I could, exactly in this most interesting few minutes, detect, as it were, where the failures crept in. I could follow the process and perceive when the genuine phenomena stopped and the unconscious play-acting began. In hardly perceptible gradations the medium takes upon herself the *rôle* of the spirit, completes the information, gives the required finish, and fills in the gaps by emendation and arrangement." In connection with a joking prediction of Nelly's which came true the doctor says:—"Nothing in all the experiments gave me so vivid an impression that the medium is simply an instrument, a tool, temporarily in the power of beings who live, and can even jest, in regions beyond space and time."

While all this little drama is going on through her organs of speech, Mrs. Thompson is sleeping and quietly dreaming of other things, which dreams she relates on awakening. This medium was to some extent instrumental in convincing Myers. Dr. van Eeden's narrative and comments should be studied, as he shows the source of those perplexities which prevent savants from

endorsing the only scientific explanation of spiritistic phenomena.

Professor Hyslop, disdaining that cautious cringing before popular ignorance and prejudice, takes the manly course of adopting the Spiritistic Hypothesis as the only tenable one.* He had several series of sittings with Mrs. Piper, with Dr. Hodgson present. The sole object of the experiments was to test the personal identity of the communicating spirit. The results are given in the S.P.R. Proceedings, vol. xvi. 1901, and together with supplemental experiments and discussion of the various hypotheses, they fill 650 pages. This should meet the wishes of our opponents, who cunningly demand that our statements shall be so over-burdened with detail as to be unreadable, so that they may disgust people with Spiritualism rather than convert them to it. The work is a monument of patient and thorough investigation, and the discussion of the rival hypotheses is masterly. The evidence for spirit identity as it unrolls itself becomes quite irresistible; and yet it is only one thread in the warp and woof of the evidence for Modern Spiritualism.

THE WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Modern Spiritualism is a Philosophical Religion resting on an experimental basis. In its

* The same may be said of Dr. Hodgson, although he still stubbornly contests every inch of the ground.

highest expression, as in the works of A. J. Davis, it postulates a vast system of Evolution in which the Darwin-Wallace-Spencer system takes its place as a sub-section. The centre of the "Univercoelum," of which our Universe is a detail, is conceived as a Vast Spiritual Sun * which has thrown off circle on circle of suns of unthinkable splendour. They in turn have thrown off, somewhat on the lines conceived by Laplace and Herschel, planets and their satellites ; and it is round one of the fifth circle of these stupendous suns that our own sun and his attendant worlds are revolving. The Central Sun is an inexhaustible Fount of all that is known to us as Matter and Motion, Love and Intelligence, and everything that makes up Existence as we know it, and still higher forms grand beyond our highest imaginings. Matter is the condensation, the grosser form, of parts of the Original Vortex of Spiritual Substance. The atoms, or particles of matter, are more like microcosms, or the Monads of Leibnitz, than the earlier scientific notions of the atom. Each particle, according to Davis, containing these potencies, undergoes a long course of evolution, passing through the mineral, vegetable and animal forms, and rising through the electric, magnetic, and etheric, up to the spiritual stages of the one substance. Thus

* The significance of this splendid conception will only be realised by those who first realise the relation of this world to our parent sun,

the "spiritual" is the developed, or "progressed" form of the "material," and the antithesis of matter and spirit is resolved in higher synthesis. The same principles of evolution and continuity are carried through the whole Cosmos with undeviating consistency; everything in being, from the atom to the "Seraph aglow with God," is a history of lower and a prophecy of higher stages of development.

The atom having done duty in this world is refined and promoted to play its part in building up the next plane of existence, which will bear the same relation to this that our ideals bear to the realities of life. So everything progresses in unbroken continuity, and so far from feeling strange in our new abode it will seem as if we, in some dim way, have known it all the time, and feel *at home* as never before. The spiritual and physical worlds are interpenetrated as the ether penetrates matter.

This ever-proceeding sublimation of matter results in building up within us of a refined counterpart of our "natural" body, the "spiritual body" of St. Paul, and the Etheric or Astral body of the Theosophists. This will seem a hard saying to the hard-headed, and he will scoff at the young Seer, but must respect Lord Kelvin, who, finding insuperable difficulties in the undulatory theory of light, to solve them is compelled to assume that two bodies can, and do, occupy the same space; that the ether atom may pass through the material atom, or

can permeate and occupy the same space, thus upsetting accepted theorems. This startling proposition goes beyond the needs of our case, as the material atoms, *ex hypothesi*, have great spaces between them in proportion to their size. So there is plenty of room for the Etheric body.

Shelley was too great a genius not to know all about these things, actually or inspirationally. Hear him sing of the soul leaving for a time its earthly tenement to view those wondrous sights that mock all human grandeur. Amid much confusion in the employment of the terms, we now generally use "soul" to denote the spiritual organisation, the etheric body, reserving "spirit" for the inner principle.

The "Fairy Queen," or the "spirit control," as I fear we should now term that beauteous being, calls upon Ianthe's soul to accompany her in her aery flight :

"Sudden arose
 Ianthe's soul ; it stood
 All beautiful in naked purity,
 The perfect semblance of its bodily frame.
 Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace,
 Each stain of earthliness
 Had passed away, it reassumed
 Its native dignity, and stood
 Immortal amid ruin.
 . . . 'twas a sight
 Of wonder to behold the body and soul.
 The self-same lineaments, the same
 Marks of identity were there :
 Yet, oh, how different ! One aspires to Heaven,

Pants for its sempiternal heritage,
And ever-changing, ever-rising still
Wantons in endless being."

All true poets are Spiritualists, nascent or pronounced, and often hold a deeper science than the Physicist, and *see* where he timidly gropes.

The etheric body residing, or imprisoned within us, has spiritual faculties already in touch with the next plane of existence, and psychologists confuse it with the "Subliminal Self." I prefer Mr. Myers's other and truer idea of a spectrum of consciousness, in strict analogy with the spectrum of light, our normal consciousness corresponding with the visible spectrum, while the subconscious would correspond with all those powerful heat and other rays or vibrations invisible to our limited range of sight; and the super-conscious would correspond with the powerful chemical and other rays, or vibrations, above our range of vision; as in hearing, "sounds" may be too deep or too high to affect our ears, which are adapted to the middle octaves only. In the subliminal region should be placed the machinery of all those automatic, unconscious, or instinctive actions which we share with animals. Dulled by familiarity, we seldom realise what a wonderful region it is, and what a consummate artificer, or miracle-worker, must reside there. The body-builder and repairer, who must order to its place every atom that builds, sustains, or

repairs our bodies. This is the region of forgotten and unnoticed impressions, a doomsday book of inexpungable records, which give an emotional accompaniment to all our thoughts.

To this *sub*-conscious self, I should oppose the *super*-conscious self, the spiritual organisation, with higher faculties, in touch with a higher and wider range of existence. This higher self is more or less active in us all; the only question is how far it can influence the conscious, work-a-day self. By living a purely animal existence it may not affect us at all. By living a purely intellectual life the higher self may be absolutely shut out. The intellect is like the sun, it reveals the physical world, and occasionally a ghostly moon; and if the sun had shone always, that would have been the extent of the Universe for us; but as the sun sinks the stars come forth, and we for a time lose one sun and gain a myriad of grander suns, and our thought is extended immeasurably. So when the glare of intellect is softened, and the mind receptive, then the higher self, always knocking at the door of our consciousness, makes its presence felt, and gleams of light enter mysteriously. These give the "intellectual intuition" of the Neoplatonists, the spiritual instincts, the inspirations of genius, and they may extend to the "open vision" of the mystics who have always been the light-bringers. Intellect alone might have sufficed to work out the mathematics of gravitation, but it needed that flash of insight

occasioned by the falling apple to enable Newton to grasp his epoch-making discovery.

Now, the purely intellectual men whose development has been arrested before attaining this deeper insight are our bitterest opponents, or are the most indifferent. Talk of these higher things seems mere vibrations of air to them; pile evidence upon evidence until it "o'er-tops old Pelion" and they remain untouched; but a theory of fraud and lies comes more readily within their range, and with the topsey-turveydom peculiar to this state of mind they pride themselves on their limitations.

The theory of this higher entity, equipped with grander faculties, that influences us to a greater or less extent according to our stage of development, gives the key to those problems of the divided self dealt with by Professor James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience"; and it also simplifies and explains many of the difficulties of double personality dealt with by psychical researchers.

The etheric body leaves the physical body, as poetically pictured by Shelley, in hypnotic trance. It also leaves the body when drowning, and it is its partly freed faculties that give that marvellously vivid panorama of the whole life, in a second or two of time, before the body finally sinks. In the lighter states of somnambulic trance the spirit may be only partly freed, its faculties may be still clouded, and the clairvoyance so partial as to lead to the mistakes that have

caused distrust. In deeper trance the spirit is free, and can move some small distance from its earthly body, to which it remains attached by a spiritual umbilical cord enabling it to return. Sir Humphrey Davy and others, who have experimented with anæsthetics, have found themselves outside and looking down on their own bodies, thus finding themselves in a new world of thought. Sir Humphrey says of one experience : “By degrees, as the pleasurable sensations increased, I lost all connection with external things ; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through my mind, and were connected with words in such a manner as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. I existed in a world of newly connected and newly modified ideas. When I was awakened from this semi-delirious trance my emotions were enthusiastic and sublime.” *

Mr. W. H. Coffin says : “I thought I had in some way, you know, got to the bottom and behind everything—saw the cause and reason of things—and understood the mystery of life and the great secret that all have sought.”

Another says : “I took nitrous oxide and chloroform for two operations, and seemed to get behind the veil that covers creation, and I seemed to see unceasing energy working out the will of God.” Again : “I experimented with chloroform according to your suggestion, and

* “Christo-Theosophy.” By Dr. George Wyld. pp. 211-212.

I seemed to receive an absolute demonstration of the spirit-world. I further saw that spirit was the substance of matter, and that which we call matter was a mere shadow."

Tennyson, too, had flashes of mystic vision, and writes in prose what he had so sweetly sung : * " I have never had any revelations through anæsthetics ; but a kind of waking trance (this for lack of a better name) I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently till, all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being ; and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, when death was an almost laughable impossibility ; the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life."

The secret of poetry is here : a man is divided from the spirit-world by just the thickness of his skull.

These " empyreal heights of thought " were reached most systematically in the higher clairvoyance of Andrew Jackson Davis, the " Poughkeepsie Seer," an intelligent youth who, missing the advantages of education, also missed its warping trammels. Mesmerised first for amusement, he revealed wonderful clair-

* " In Memoriam," xcv.

voyant powers, which were then used for treating diseases, and afterwards obtained full scope in a great work called "Nature's Divine Revelations," which soon ran through thirty editions. It was dictated throughout in hypnotic trance; Dr. S. S. Lyon was the mesmerist, and the Rev. W. Fishbough the scribe. It took thirteen months in delivery, always in the presence of witnesses. When not delivering these lectures, Davis was either diagnosing and prescribing for his patients, or taking exercise, and was *always* under observation. That the book was the unaided work of this uneducated young man of twenty-two has never been really questioned. Indeed, it has the faults of its origin, and contains slips and blunders which no educated man would have passed, and which prove that neither Dr. Lyon nor Mr. Fishbough revised it. It also contains irritating repetitions, and the fact that so many of its statements can neither be tested or verified repels men capable of appreciating its profound philosophy.

In approaching a work of this character the unenlightened will stumble at every step over their own misconceptions. Being a "revelation" from the other world, they will expect it to be errorless and infallible; whereas a little clear thinking would show them that an infallible revelation would put man into a strait-waistcoat, and prove a measureless curse. Spiritualism is really a Higher Rationalism, submitting

everything to reason; and the aim of all the works of Davis is to stimulate investigation.

Lest I should be thought singular in my estimate of "Nature's Divine Revelations," I will quote contemporary opinion. Professor George Bush wrote: "Taken as a whole, the work is a profound and elaborate discussion of the philosophy of the universe; and for grandeur of conception, soundness of principle, clearness of illustration, order of arrangement, and encyclopædical range of subjects, I know of no work of any single mind that will bear away from it the palm. To every theme the inditing mind approaches with a certain latent consciousness of mastery of all its principles, details, and technicalities, and yet without the least ostentatious display of superior mental prowess. In every one the speaker appears equally at home, and utters himself with the easy confidence of one who had made each subject the exclusive study of a whole life. The manner in the scientific department is always calm, dignified, and conciliatory, as if far more disposed to excuse than to censure errors it aims to correct, while the style, so far from 'unmeaning bombast,' is easy, flowing, chaste, appropriate, with a certain indescribable simplicity that operates like a charm upon the reader."

The New York *Sunday Dispatch* said: "Never have there been presented at one view a cosmogony so grand, a theology so sublime,

and a future destiny for man so transcendent. In science, religion, and in morality, it is a book which will be welcomed with rapture by the most enlightened, the loftiest, and the purest minds." Another magazine says: "For boldness of conception and comprehensiveness of plan, so far as we know, it is without a parallel in the history of literature, philosophy, and religion." *Truth's Telegraph* says: "To view it in whatever light we may, whether as a production of an unbounded imagination taking its flight in the universe of romance, or as the clear impressions of a mind in that condition which is analogous to angelic life, it comes to the mind as something which transcends its understanding of possibilities." The Rev. Mr. Ripley wrote: "Judged by the usual principles of criticism, as the work of an uneducated shoemaker, not two-and-twenty years of age, we may safely pronounce it the most surprising prodigy of literary history. If the young man is to be viewed only as a philosophical poet, who has given his epic of the universe, among other bards of ancient and modern times, Dante and Milton may well hide their diminished heads."

Personally, I should be more severe on its slips and irritating repetitions, but I should place it even higher than these writers as a sketch of the philosophy of the future, uniting in grander synthesis than ever before deemed possible all branches of science, philosophy, and religion.

I say this deliberately, having a fair working acquaintance with the great philosophies of the world. Davis does not stand alone; Hudson Tuttle and a host of mediums have given us glorious light on the arcana of Nature. From these grand heights the communications grade down to the trivialities of earth-bound spirits or the mad pranks of the Poltergeists.

I have dwelt on the enormous range of faculty thus displayed by the spirit of an uneducated young man, when freed artificially from the trammels of the body, to show what a transcendent genius there is in each of us, and what boundless knowledge. If this genius could intervene more effectively in our waking affairs, and this knowledge *filter more quickly* through into our consciousness, every one of us might rank with Shakespeare, Newton, Plato, or Beethoven. With such transcendental faculties more or less latent in us we are bound by all the laws of logic to assume another world or plane of existence to correspond with them; this point was clearly seen and eloquently urged by Mr. Myers. Now Davis, using these higher faculties, sees and describes the whole process of "death," and the emergence of the etheric body from the physical body of which it is a glorified likeness. This process is indescribably beautiful, and while the body seems racked with pain and gasping for breath, the spirit is really panting in nascent ecstasy. On attaining its freedom the spirit soars to

the second sphere, which is the natural outgrowth and a glorified copy of this. There is no "sitting around on damp clouds" harping and singing hallelujahs in death-dealing monotony, no stagnation; but higher occupation corresponding to enlarged faculty. All is life and activity, and the *rest* of congenial and changing occupation. Those sent hence prematurely will hover around the old earth-life for a time, as will those anchored here by money-bags; or remorse-tethered spirits may remain earth-bound by a vague desire to make reparation for their crimes. And materialists and hard-headed Sadducees will have to go through the mild purgatory of the triumphant "I told you so's" of their friends who were fortunate enough to hold the larger faith while on earth.

There will be no "Judgment Day"; the tables of the law are within, and every day is a judgment day. There will be no ushering into an awful Presence, as of an august school-master, with rod in pickle and eyes severe, to crush out all joy and spontaneity, and keep us as in a perpetual Sunday school. We shall feel a freedom, a sort of at-homeness dreamed of but never before attained. The spirit but slowly realising that any change has taken place will gravitate, as by a law of chemical affinity, to those circles of friends with whom its stage of development fits it to associate. It enters upon its second phase of an eternal progression, ever attaining a clearer perception

of the vital fact that the half-dreaded awful Presence is within, not without, that it is life of our life, joy of our joy, and that we are all incarnations of Him, and partakers in all His attributes, His powers and knowledge.

We need not follow the young seer through the higher spheres, soaring until lost in the ineffable light ; he returns panting and blinded by the unspeakable glories awaiting us.

This view of existence, when fully stated, is the most complete, the most consistent, scientific and harmonious ever formulated, and one to which the whole thought of the world, scientific, philosophic, and religious, is gradually approximating. As a working hypothesis it meets all the legitimate demands of the materialist. His (the materialist's) statement that mind is a function of the brain, goes beyond the facts ; but that mental activities are dependent on, and are *conditioned* by, the brain and the physical organisation may be accepted. We may also accept the statement that we cannot conceive mind manifesting itself except through an organisation of some form of matter ; and the materialist disbelieves in an after-life because the only body he can see dies. But this body, so far from being the whole self, as he ignorantly believed, is now proved to be only a heavy over-garment of tangible matter worn by the spirit outside its etheric or spiritual body, to enable it to function on this mundane plane. When this worn-out garment is thrown aside

at "death," the spirit is in possession of a material organisation much more perfect than the old one. This gives it a range of faculty and a readiness of response to which we normally are strangers. Some of these faculties and powers are demonstrated by Spiritualism and cognate sciences.

Thus Spiritualism reconciles all conflicting systems of thought; and it explains the vast array of complex and varied facts in the simplest and, indeed, the only rational way. It is only by mutilating the facts, and rejecting the great bulk of them, as Mr. Podmore has done in his "History," that the maimed remainder can be cramped into any of the rival hypotheses. Telepathy explains much, and falls rightly into its place as an adjunct, but to stretch it to cover all the facts is like taking the telegraph as a sufficient explanation of the multiplex activities of the city. In face of this grand and comprehensive system the hypothesis of fraud and imposture is beneath contempt. As well condemn the noble profession of medicine as all fraud and imposture because it is infested with quacks and impostors, and we are sickened at every turn by announcements of nostrums and quack remedies. Think of all the terrible things said against medicine, not by outsiders, but by some of the greatest ornaments of the profession; and the fearful charges brought against it by anti-vivisectors and anti-vaccinationists; of the sums wasted in exorbi-

tant fees, and of constitutions ruined by diplomaed bunglers; then think of all the mischief wrought by quacks and disreputable hangers-on and you will see that this most respectable of all the professions has not a stone to cast at Spiritualism. Indeed, Spiritualism has the better record and the stronger position, as it will revolutionise medicine as it is revolutionising theology, and is enlarging the bounds of science.

So the spiritistic hypothesis holds the field beyond the reach of serious challenge. The whole vast array of evidence, from all times and places, points steadily to the central fact of communication with the spirit-world. The universal belief persisting through the ages, and through the glare of scientific enlightenment, receives quite a new value and significance from the discovery of the wonders of the sublimal self, whose deeper knowledge sustains these beliefs until the lumbering intellect grows big enough to grasp their underlying realities.

The serried masses of spiritualistic phenomena are all controlled by intelligence; and this intelligence when questioned steadily asserts itself to be that of the spirits of human beings trying to open up communication with us. The sceptic cheerfully opposes his nescience to their knowledge, and, with comic impertinence, contradicts the spirits and tells them they do not know who and what they are! This is more like a Gilbertian whimsey than

rational investigation. Scientific caution is admirable, but it is too often a subterfuge for withholding assent to a new truth until it has become fashionable. The fact is that communication with the spirit-world was proved up to the hilt years ago.

The physical phenomena give the basis of the demonstration. But we are told the physical phenomena are "discredited"; so was Desdemona; so, by a parity of reasoning, is the whole science of medicine by the presence of quacks and their nostrums! The discredited are those who make the stupid statement.

The demonstrations of Sir W. Crookes, already dwelt on, were not new discoveries, as he distinctly tells us; they were only verifications of things that were discovered and verified again and again before he took them up.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace says: "My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do *not* require further confirmation. They are proved quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences. . . . This being the state of the case as regards evidence and proof, we are fully justified in taking the *facts* of modern Spiritualism (and with them the spiritual theory as the only tenable one) as being fully established."

That was written nearly thirty years ago; since then proofs have been increasing by leaps and bounds.

The various reasons why so many still withhold assent, beyond the all-sufficient reason—ignorance—are :

Spiritualism is a stupendous subject, and men will see in it just what they are big enough to see. So many lack *the eye for truth*, and for significance. They lack breadth of view ; they take each case separately, and because it will not singly bear the whole superstructure they cast them one by one away. They find individual sticks breakable, and so argue that there is no strength in a bundle. They argue that the strength of a chain is that of its weakest link. Shallow ! They might as reasonably say that the strength of an army is that of its weakest drummer-boy. Given a chain long enough, by using its sound parts you may bind a Hercules or tether a Leviathan. Some see fraud and delusion, and jump to the conclusion that it is all fraud and delusion ; an infantile deduction from which a gleam of insight into human nature would save them.

Others suffer arrest of development, they lack a faculty. Blinded by the glare of intellect, and without redeeming intuitions, they affirm this world and deny the starry hosts revealed by the night. They believe in the narrow consciousness of the normal self, and deny the vast range of the sub- and the super-conscious self. Slaves of sense, they have never explored the wondrous realms of thought.

But the crowning reason for opposition to Spiritualism is the mistaken conservatism which is always plodding in ruts, and like a snarling cur snaps at the hand that offers it a priceless boon ; which has awarded the cross and crown of thorns to all our light-bringers, and has reddened the track of progress with martyrs' blood. The waning spirit of Torquemada still lives like an anæmic ghost in some of our scientists. Dr. Martineau, in a controversy with Tyndall, said of one of the professor's arguments : "This is not science, it is a decretal adorned with a scientific nimbus" ; a felicitous exposure of the incipient popery of science. The attitude of scientific men towards heresies, and new discoveries out of the beaten paths, has been the attitude of priests. They have fulminated anathemas, *ex cathedrâ*, against every new departure. Dr. A. R. Wallace says : "I assert, without fear of contradiction, that whenever scientific men of any age have denied the facts of investigators on *a priori* grounds *they have always been wrong.*" Read the history of every discovery ; it is always the same sickening story of ridicule and abuse from the very men who should have been the first to offer a helping hand. As with scientists so with nearly all classes. Agassiz said of every new discovery : "People first say that it is not true ; then that it is contrary to religion ; and, lastly, that everybody knew it

before !” Think of the unspeakable meanness of that position ; persecute, prosecute the discoverer as long as you can, then rob him of all credit by saying everybody knew it before ; and, finally, build a monument to his memory with the stones cast at him during his life !

Are we, year after year, century after century, to go on repeating this bad old blunder ? Are we always to believe that no good thing can come out of Nazareth ? And are we always to refuse to accept a thing until it has become respectable, orthodox, and—out of date ?

My contention is that Spiritualism is in the same position as that of mesmerism fifty or sixty years ago. That was established as a scientific fact ; but then, as now, the scientific laggards withheld assent, and it was not until the name had been changed to hypnotism—thus providing a *pons asinorum* for their retreat from an untenable position—that they came into line. I could fill a page with the names of eminent men who scouted the whole thing, and who boycotted fellow practitioners for using it. Dr. Elliotson’s income was reduced to a third. Clairvoyance was denied, as was the fact that serious surgical operations could be performed on a patient in a mesmeric trance without his feeling pain. The wiseacres, as usual, shook their heads, and urged that the patients were naturally unsusceptible of pain ; that they were

paid to pretend that they did not feel it !* The fact that itinerant lecturers went like showmen round the provinces, and sometimes used confederates, proved to the satisfaction of the obscurantists that it was all humbug and imposture. Time has changed all that, and the man who should now doubt the facts of hypnotism and the wonders it has revealed would be regarded not as a sceptic, but an utter ignoramus.

Spiritualism is in like case. The march of discovery tends to strengthen its position, and to prepare minds to receive it. There are scarcely any accepted scientific hypotheses that are quite so secure. So I claim that COMMUNICATION WITH THE SPIRIT-WORLD IS ESTABLISHED AS A SCIENTIFIC FACT, and that we are only waiting for laggards to come into line.

But it will take time. The idea of an after-life has been so badly prejudiced by mediæval nightmares and the theologians' threats of a fiery hell ; and by the grisly terrors of death and the gruesome horrors of the inferno which have been brought home to us so vividly by the splendid art of Milton and Dante. So the very thought of an after-life carrying such dire possibilities causes abhorrence, and men banish the idea of the hereafter, and, like children, think that by shutting their eyes a thing has ceased to be.

* See "The Wonderful Century." By Dr. A. R. Wallace.

But when it dawns on them that an after-life is a scientific fact, *that this world is the only hell for us*, that each succeeding step is upward—the inevitable outcome of an evolution grander than we dreamed—then they will realise their transcendent destiny, and fall into line with those patient pioneers who have borne the heat and burden of the day.

When our thinkers realise the significance of the enormous extension of our faculties and powers revealed by Spiritualism, they will see how greatly man is raised in the scale of being, and how largely his dignity and responsibility are increased. This will compel a reconstruction of all our systems of philosophy, and when this work is begun our thinkers will find to their amazement that these despised spiritualists, aided by their spirit friends, have been quietly laying the foundations of a grander philosophy than was ever deemed possible, uniting opposing systems, correlating science, philosophy and religion, and embracing them in higher synthesis. All things tend towards this sublime consummation, and Spiritualism, that has “pointed to other worlds and led the way,” has two great allies, Time and Truth—resist them who can.

SPIRITUALISM—CON

BY

FRANK PODMORE

Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas, quem mihi, quem tibi,
Finem Di dederint.

SPIRITUALISM

IS COMMUNICATION WITH THE SPIRIT-WORLD AN ESTABLISHED FACT?

CON

It will help to clear the air if the exact form of belief which the following pages aim at controverting is defined from the outset. There is a doctrine of Spiritualism, expounded by Plato, and held in one form or another by the dominant school of philosophy ever since, if not before his time. Roughly, that doctrine is that the world which we can see and hear and touch and reason upon is not the sum total of existence; that it is, on the contrary, a kind of dream or illusion, and, to borrow Plato's metaphor, bears to the real world which it more or less imperfectly represents something of the relation which the shadow bears to its substance. Against the existence of such a world, or even against the continual influx from such a world into this of spiritual forces,

producing not sensible or intelligible, but spiritual effects, reason has nothing to say. The better opinion in the physical sciences* here finds itself in agreement with the central philosophical tradition ; the world of phenomena, the world presented to our senses, is in itself purposeless, without beginning or end, inexplicable, and will not help us to explain anything beyond itself. In the words of Professor Ray Lankester :

“It appears to me that science proceeds on its path without any contact with religion, and that religion has not, in its essential qualities, anything to hope for, or to fear from, science.

“The whole order of nature, including living and lifeless matter—man, animal, and gas—is a network of mechanism, the main features and many details of which have been made more or less obvious to the wondering intelligence of mankind by the labour and ingenuity of scientific investigators. But no sane man has ever pretended, since science became a definite body of doctrine, that we know, or ever can hope to know, or conceive of the possibility of knowing, whence this mechanism has come, why it is there, whither it is going, and what there may or may not be beyond and beside it

* A recent controversy (“Lord Kelvin and Creative Purpose”) in the *Times* for May 1903 showed a sharp division of opinion on this question between the physicists and the biologists. But the biologists, from the standpoint of metaphysics, had the best of the argument. Professor Lankester's letter, from which the quotation in the text is made, was published in the *Times* for May 19, 1903.

which our senses are incapable of appreciating. These things are not 'explained' by science, and never can be."

But when it is claimed that the other world, presumed to lie behind the mountain walls which shut us in, acts upon the world here and now, no longer merely by spiritual influx, but by interference with the phenomenal order, by the production of sensible and intelligible effects—say the movement of a table, or a message from the dead—then science is entitled to have her say. For with such matters science is competent to deal.

PRIMITIVE SPIRITUALISM

This last, then, is the kind of Spiritualism with which we are here concerned. Now the first thing to be remarked of it is that the belief in Spiritualism of this kind is practically coeval with the beginnings of human history. It is almost universal at the present time amongst savage races, and can be traced in unbroken continuity through all the stages of civilisation down to twentieth-century Christendom. The universality and persistence of the belief are not, of course, without bearing on the question of its justification. But there need be no question here of innate ideas. The primitive belief in souls of the dead is, like modern Spiritualism, an induction from observed facts, roughly from facts of the same order in ancient

as in modern times. Arguing on the analogy of sleep and death, the savage naturally reaches—such is the generally accepted view—the conception that there is something which goes out of the body in the first state and returns to it again, and which goes out finally at death. This something is soon compared or identified with the breath or the shadow (hence *spiritus*, *umbra*, and other names for spirits in all languages). The processes of reasoning are much the same in children and savages. Two child friends of my own, not many years ago, were overheard discussing the feeding of their “babas” at breakfast time. The subsequent discovery of certain fragments of porridge adherent to the nursery wall led to the revelation that the “babas” were the children’s shadows. The savage induction of the soul from the phenomena of sleep and death and shadows is confirmed by dreams and daylight visions, in which the actual soul of the departed seems to make itself visible and hold communication with its friends on earth. The belief in the existence of an after-life, peopled by these airy souls, is continually fostered by other causes. In most primitive races we find a class of medicine-men, witch-doctors, shamans. The chief functions of these sorcerer-priests are to inflict and heal diseases, to control rain, and to work other minor miracles. Very generally they perform their mighty works in a state of trance or ecstasy; spontaneous sometimes (there is evidence that

these ecstasies are often hysteric or epileptic), sometimes induced by drugs or violent dancing, sometimes probably feigned. These convulsive attacks are explained—an explanation which in most cases, perhaps, finds equal credence with the medicine-man and his audience—as possession by demons or the souls of the departed. Again, the effect of these trances and possessions is constantly heightened by physical adjuncts of various kinds—ventriloquism, and little conjuring tricks with strings and musical instruments, and so on. Sometimes not the medicine-men only but the whole adult manhood of the tribe seem to join in imposing spiritualist ceremonies on the women and children. They retire into the bush and whirl bull-roarers (small leaf-shaped pieces of wood) round their heads: the women and children (who are never allowed to see a bull-roarer) believe that the noise produced emanates from the spirits with whom their lords are holding converse. Again, some of the men may dress up, with masks on their faces, and perform demon dances, and the women and children half or altogether believe that the demons are present in the flesh.

From some such reasoning, then, does the belief in a spirit-world arise in the savage mind; by such arts, consciously or subconsciously exercised, is the belief continually maintained and augmented. And at the present day the belief depends primarily on spontaneous manifesta-

tions of the same order, the manifestations of trance and automatism; and is intensified by adventitious devices of the same ambiguous kind.

We have not the opportunity of making an exhaustive study of savage magic, with a view to ascertaining whether all the performances of the shamans and medicine-men are of the same order as the ventriloquism and the bull-roarer; or whether all the spontaneous phenomena are as baseless as the ordinary dreams that come through the gate of ivory. But it will probably be admitted that we shall do no injustice to the evidence for either class of phenomena if we base our conclusions on the study of the manifestations occurring in modern times and in civilised countries.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM

The science of modern Spiritualism is based, then, upon facts of two kinds—physical and mental respectively. In the historical order, alike in primitive and in civilised communities, the physical phenomena take the second place. They are second also in order of importance, for it would not be difficult to demonstrate that, except for the pre-existing interest excited by the psychological facts hereafter to be discussed, the physical manifestations would have had little chance of gaining wide acceptance. Nevertheless, as a matter of practical convenience, it will be well to clear the ground by dealing in the first

instance with these physical phenomena before passing on to consider the more obscure and intricate problems presented by trance, automatism, and other sub-conscious mental states.

THE WITCHES' VICTIMS

Though physical phenomena had not bulked largely in the movement until after the Rochester rappings of 1848, from which year Spiritualism or Spiritism in its modern phase may be said to date, they have nevertheless formed a sporadic accompaniment to the psychological manifestations, as we have already seen, from almost the earliest times. For our present purpose, however, it will suffice to travel up the stream of time no further than the witchcraft epidemic as persisting in European countries down to the close of the seventeenth century. The later records of witchcraft show that, if we exclude cases originating in royal or priestly persecution, or manufactured by professional witchfinders, the chief evidence against the supposed witches was furnished by children and young women. It was they who professed to suffer most severely from the witch's malevolence, and who furnished in their own persons the most convincing proofs of her supernatural powers. The symptoms relied on as testifying to these diabolic arts consisted of convulsions and excruciating pains, redoubled in intensity at the approach of the reputed witch, and grievous but indefinite ailments of such nature

that they were speedily alleviated when the witch was put in prison, and ceased altogether on her execution. But lest these mysterious pangs should not suffice in themselves to carry conviction, many of the "victims" enhanced their effect by marvels of a more tangible kind. They would conceal black-lead and other substances in their mouths for use when foaming in sham epileptic fits; they would stick thorns and pins into various parts of their bodies, to be extracted by the sympathetic spectators; they would—a very common device—pretend to vomit needles, nails, ends of straw, wool, and similar substances. Sometimes they would throw stones when no one was looking, scratch the bedstead with their toes, or work other small miracles of this kind.

It would be a grave mistake to condemn these performances as the outcome of deliberate malevolence, or even mere unthinking childish mischief. There can be little doubt that the "victims" were victims indeed—of their own morbid imaginings; that they were not fully responsible either for the sham fits or for their physical accompaniments; and that, at the present day, the wise physician would have treated them for hysteria.

POLTERGEISTS

The belief in witchcraft has practically died out in European countries, but the nature of

children and young women remains unchanged. Any country village will even now form a suitable theatre for a performance which has altered little since the days of Hutchinson and Glanvil. Pseudo-epileptic fits and vomiting of pins have gone out of fashion, but "levitations," throwing of stones, and rapping on wooden bedsteads are still stock features. In these latter days the "phenomena" are generally attributed to occult forces, or spirit agency, and the child or young person is styled a medium. But in a suitable environment he will still be regarded as the victim of witchcraft. A case which was so interpreted occurred in Normandy just half a century ago, or, to be precise, in the winter of 1850-51.

THE CIDEVILLE CASE

M. Tinel, *curé* of Cideville, had two pupils residing with him—Gustave Lemonnier, aged 12, and Clement Bunel, aged 14. In the middle of November, 1850, these young people reported to their teacher and pastor that they were much persecuted by strange noises and movements; knocks followed them all about the house, and would even rap out "*Maître Corbeau*" and other popular tunes by request; hair brushes and breviaries would hurtle through the air, tables and desks would move from their places, and the fire-irons dance a jig on the floor. Gustave was struck on the face by a

hand not attached to any visible body, and was haunted for the space of a fortnight by a sort of spectre in human form, and wearing a blouse. Later, he professed to recognise a neighbouring peasant—one Chorel—as the original of his ghostly persecutor. The *curé* thereupon accused Chorel of having disturbed his peaceful presbytery by the exercise of diabolical arts, and forced him on his knees to beg pardon of the persecuted children. Not content with this, M. Tinel bruited all about the neighbourhood the wrong which had been done to him and his innocent pupils, and persuaded Chorel's master, a neighbouring farmer, to dismiss the man, after ten years' faithful service. Chorel thereupon brought an action against the *curé* for defamation of character and loss of employment. The two boys and a large number of other persons, including the mayor of the commune, several priests and country gentlemen, testified to the inexplicable things which they had seen and heard at the priest's house; the *juge de paix* who tried the case was apparently convinced by their evidence, and Chorel lost his suit.

Most of the witnesses testified merely to having heard knocks and other noises, and sometimes to hearing tunes rapped out at command. A *gendarme* had counted twenty-three broken panes of glass. The mayor had seen the tongs and shovel move out from the fireplace of themselves, Gustave being present;

also the candles went out of their own accord ; also a sock was projected like lightning from beside the bed where the two boys were sleeping. The mayor on one occasion shared the children's bed, and passed an unquiet night ; the pillow was dragged from under his head, and the coverlet finally torn from the bed. When he slept alone there was no disturbance. M. Leroux, a neighbouring *curé*, saw a hammer and a piece of bread fly through the air, propelled by an invisible force. Again, in the morning, after he had finished shaving and left the bedroom, Gustave (who had apparently remained behind) cried out that the shaving implements had been placed on the floor. M. Leroux and M. Tinel returned to the room, and found that it was so. After they had again left the room and gone a few steps downstairs, Gustave called them back to see that all the things had been replaced.

Madame Deschamps felt an invisible force seize her by the cloak. She also saw one of the boys thrown out of a chair on which he was sitting, and saw their desks and table upset. On another occasion a candlestick flew off the mantelpiece and hit her servant on the back ; and a key which had been lying on the table hit Gustave on the ear.

M. St. Victor saw a desk moving towards him ; he had not, however, seen it start on its career.

M. Bouffay, a *vicaire* from Rouen, saw a table move without visible cause ; and a

shadowy phantom, which came through the kitchen door and followed the boys to their room.

A postman saw a table move of its own accord, and a window broken.

M. Leseigneur saw Gustave's chair upset, and felt sure that Gustave was not responsible for the accident. He also saw a hammer get up from the table and smash two panes of glass; also a slipper left Gustave's foot and smashed another pane. A knife, a brush and a piece of wood voyaged through the air on similar errands. This witness also saw stones thrown when he was walking with the two boys on the road near Cideville.

Such is the evidence which convinced the *juge de paix* that witchcraft had been practised, and caused poor Chorel to lose his case. It is probably the best attested case of the kind in the whole history of Spiritualistic manifestations.*

* An account of the Cideville case was originally published by the Marquis de Mirville in a separate pamphlet and afterwards embodied, in a briefer form, in his book, "Des Esprits" (Paris 1854).

The account given in the text is derived from a verbatim copy of the *procès verbal* of the trial, recently procured by the Marquis d'Eguilles and Mr. Andrew Lang, and presented to the Society for Psychical Research.

The Marquis de Mirville was himself one of the witnesses at the trial, but does not seem to have witnessed anything inexplicable. The Cideville case is of importance because, as stated in the text, it is probably the best attested case of the kind; and because it has been cited by Mr. Alfred R.

But it is perhaps hardly necessary to point out why the evidence should not convince us. Gustave and his fellow sinner appear to have been present on every occasion; and, though the miracles were no doubt helped by faith on the part of the spectators, there is no reason to suspect metaphysical aid of any other kind. That the children should have so completely mystified their audience—even an audience of country clergy and others, predisposed to belief in the marvellous—is certainly remarkable; and would perhaps be almost incredible if we had not positive proof, from the investigation of other cases of the same type, that mystification of this kind is not the exclusive prerogative of the platform conjurer armed with his professional apparatus. The Cideville case is only a sample of what is occurring monthly, weekly, almost daily in one part of the world or another.

Some cases of the kind—the disturbances at the Wesley Parsonage at Epworth, the Cock Lane ghost, the Stockwell ghost, Bealings bells—have passed into history. Others are probably taking place at this moment. The central figure—victim of witchcraft, medium or trickster—is nearly always a child or a young woman. The exact nature and operation of the fraud, or bewitchment, or mediumship,

Wallace and other spiritualists as presenting convincing testimony to the reality of these manifestations.

nearly always remains unexplained. Circumstantial evidence may point strongly to trickery; but the final proof is rarely forthcoming. There have been two or three cases, however, especially amongst those investigated in recent years by the Society for Psychical Research, in which the guilty parties have confessed to trickery.* And in one case the performance, which had already baffled not only the local policeman but an educated witness who had come down from Oxford on purpose to investigate it, was actually followed throughout by a patient and experienced observer.

THE POLTERGEIST AT HAM

Early in February, 1895, the Society for Psychical Research received intelligence of a poltergeist at Ham, a little village near Hungerford, in Berkshire. The following extract from a letter written by a local clergyman will give some idea of how the matter was regarded in the neighbourhood :

“Froxfield Vicarage, Hungerford, Berks.

“January 31st, 1895.

“There is a veritable ghost at Ham; it has overturned boots and shoes from the slab of an

* Confessions in such a case are not, it should be said, in themselves conclusive evidence of fraud. For “witches” frequently confessed witchcraft, and that not always under torture.

oven on to the hob, overturned a stool and pitched the cat on to the fire, upset tables and all sorts of things. The tenant's name is Turner, and he works for Mr. W——. W—— has put the man into an adjacent but not adjoining house, and has had the floor of the house taken up, but has not discovered the cause, and now the same pranks are going on in the house into which the people have removed. It is no delusion; it takes place in broad daylight before people's eyes, and Edith W—— saw a table overturned on Tuesday. No one can explain it; it is quite a mystery, and is causing great excitement throughout the country-side; people from Marlborough, Hungerford, and Froxfield visit the scene of these operations. They say the people have a daughter who is eccentric and deformed."

From several witnesses, including a police constable, the Society received accounts of the disturbances. The lid of an oven was frequently seen to fall; chairs, stools, and other articles of furniture were upset in the presence of numerous witnesses, and frequently in broad daylight. Polly T——, the little girl, was always present during these performances, but the witnesses seem, as a rule, to have been completely satisfied that the movements were beyond her power to execute, and many sent a plan of the room and the position of the people in it to demonstrate the impossibility of the movements being due to ordinary human

agency. Mr. E. N. Bennett, of Hertford College, Oxford, spent nearly five hours in the cottage, and witnessed several movements of furniture. But though he strongly suspected the child of trickery, and watched her very closely, he was not able actually to detect any fraudulent movement on her part.

Early in February Mr. Ernest Westlake went to Ham, and gave the following account of what he saw :

“Polly, a little, dwarfed, black-haired girl, turning twelve, sits in the chimney corner and nurses the cats Topsy and Titit. . . . I made friends with the cats, and their mistress, poor child, gave me a private sitting of some two or three hours. . . . No one else was present besides the child. She sat on a low stool in the chimney on the right of the fire. On the other side of the hearth there was a brick oven, in which, much to Polly’s interest, I placed a dish of flour, arguing that a power capable of discharging the contents of the oven (one of the first disturbances) might be able to impress the flour. After a time I went to the oven to see how the flour was getting on, stooping slightly to look in, but kept my eyes on the child’s hands, looking at them under my right arm. I saw her hand stealing down towards a stick that was projecting from the fire ; I moved slightly and the hand was withdrawn. Next time I was careful to make no movement, and saw her hand jerk

the brand out on to the floor. She cried out. I expressed interest and astonishment, and her mother came in and cleared up the *débris*. This was repeated several times; and one or two large sticks ready for burning, which stood near the child, were thrown down. Then a kettle, which was hanging on a hook and chain, was jerked off the hook on to the fire. This was repeated. As the kettle refused to stay on its hook the mother placed it on the hearth, but it was soon overturned on to the floor and upset. After this I was sitting on the bench which stood facing the fire in front of the table. I had placed my hat on the table behind me. The little girl was standing near on my right hand. Presently the hat was thrown down on the ground. I did not on the first occasion see the girl's movements, but later, by seeming to look in another direction, I saw her hand sweep the hat off on to the floor. This I saw at least twice. A Windsor chair near the girl was then upset more than once, falling away from her. On one occasion I saw her push the chair over with both hands. As she was looking away from me, I got nearly a complete view. After one of these performances the mother came in and asked the girl if she had done it, but she denied it." *

* "Proc. S.P.R.," vol. xii. pp. 95-100.

THE SEERESS OF PREVORST

Physical marvels of this kind were sometimes associated with the revelations of "magnetic" clairvoyants. In the presence of the Seeress of Prevorst—the hysterical somnambulist whose utterances were recorded with religious care by Justinus Kerner—cinders, gravel, a stool, a knitting-needle and other objects were thrown about the house; even the seeress's boots on one occasion parted violently from her feet and flew across the room, before the eyes of the bewildered Kerner. Again, in 1820, Dr. Billot sent to the celebrated animal magnetist, Deleuze, an account of a somnambulist through whose agency sacred relics and flowers were miraculously introduced into the room.*

THE ROCHESTER RAPPINGS

Trivial as such phenomena must seem, it is nevertheless on this flimsy foundation that much of the superstructure of modern Spiritualism is based. The morbid egotism of mischievous children and hysterical clairvoyants has led them, generation after generation, to play puerile tricks with the kitchen furniture and other moveables in order to enhance their own importance in the eyes of the credulous by-

* "Recherches psychologiques, ou Correspondance. . . . entre un Solitaire et M. Deleuze." Paris 1839.

standers. Fortune favoured two such children by giving them a whole continent as a stage, already prepared, swept and garnished for their performance, and the Rochester rappings resounded through the civilised world.

There were living in 1848, in the little village of Hydesville, near Rochester, New York State, a farmer named Fox, with his wife and two daughters, Margaret and Katie, aged 15 and 12 respectively. On the evening of March 31, 1848, Mrs. Fox called in the neighbours to listen to some mysterious knockings, which had broken out when the two girls were in bed and their parents were about to follow them. These knockings—which apparently proceeded from the neighbourhood of the bed, for the bedstead could be felt to jar as they were produced—were found sufficiently intelligent to enter into conversation. In response to eager questionings the knocks rapped out the ages of each of those present in the room, the number of their children, and other particulars, and finally intimated that the directing intelligence was the spirit of a pedlar, who had been murdered by a former tenant of the house and whose bones would be found in the cellar. The “spirit’s” statements do not appear to have been verified.

But the example of the Fox girls—for it was admitted from the first that they were the “mediums” in the matter—proved contagious.

Rapping mediums sprang up on every side, and consultation of the spirits by such means became a fashionable amusement. A committee of medical men who examined the Fox girls in Buffalo showed that the raps could be produced by cracking the knee-joints or toe-joints, and that if the lower limbs of the two mediums were so held as to prevent any motion of this kind the raps ceased. But the demonstration had little effect on the believers. Nor was the confession, a few weeks later, of an accomplice more effectual in stopping the craze.

THE STRATFORD POLTERGEIST

Further examples of spirit power were furnished by a poltergeist disturbance of the ordinary type which broke out in the spring of 1850 in the house of one Dr. Phelps, a Presbyterian minister, at Stratford, Conn. The manifestations here were more varied and more striking. Windows were smashed; coals, apples, brickbats, and all manner of small objects were thrown about; spiritual hieroglyphics appeared on turnips, on the walls of the house, and on the breeches of a small boy who was one of the reputed mediums. Towards these two mediums—a girl of 16 and a boy of 11—the spirits showed special malevolence. On one occasion the boy was carried forcibly across the room; on another,

his clothing was torn to shreds and he himself hung on a tree ; the girl was half suffocated by a pillow and nearly strangled by a tape tied round her neck. All these marvels found ready credence, and helped to swell the growing torrent. Spiritualism in America, in the course of a few years, had overflowed the whole country.

EARLY SPIRITUALISM IN ENGLAND

In the winter of 1852-3 the new movement made its appearance in Paris and elsewhere on the Continent and thence spread to London. Its first apostle in this country was an American, Mrs. Hayden, wife of the editor of the *Star-spangled Banner*. Mrs. Hayden was a rapping medium, and appears to have convinced most of her clients, including some persons of intellectual distinction, that her raps were due to some occult force, and that she was actually in communication with the spirit world. The raps in themselves would scarcely have carried conviction ; there were probably a dozen different mechanical methods by which, in the circumstances, similar sounds could have been produced. But the raps furnished correct answers to questions asked, sometimes even asked in silence, by the interlocutors. This was the marvel which overbore the scepticism of most. The secret was in reality an extremely simple one. The interro-

gator of the spirits was made to answer his own questions. The procedure was as follows: The sitter would be presented with an alphabet printed on a card, and a pencil. Sitting within full view of Mrs. Hayden, he would be instructed, having asked his question, to carry his pencil slowly along the alphabet, and the raps would indicate when the first letter of the answer was reached, and so on, letter by letter, until the whole word or sentence was formed. If the hands of the sitter were concealed from the medium the spirits were dumb. Similarly, if the sitter deliberately emphasised the pause at particular letters, he could dictate what answer he chose. Thus the dread Eumenides were made to appear in Mrs. Hayden's parlour, and to disclose, under the malicious cross-examination of G. H. Lewes, scandalous episodes in their domestic relations, whilst the ghost of Hamlet's father confessed to no fewer than seventeen noses.* But the new belief was proof against ridicule.

TABLE-TURNING

Its spread was further hastened in this same year—1853—by the discovery that tables could be made to tilt out the letters of the alphabet. All England betook themselves to conversing with the spirits by means of these talking

* See the *Leader* (London) 12th March, 1853.

tables. Some evangelical clergymen even found in the new movement signs of the predicted coming of Antichrist, and made the spirits who animated the tables confess to their own damnation. It was in vain for Braid and Faraday to prove that the answers spelt out by such means were dictated by the expectations of the sitters, and that the movement of the table was due to the unconscious muscular action of the performers. The new belief was proof against reason, as it had already shown itself proof against ridicule.

Such were the beginnings of modern Spiritualism in America and in this country. There is no reason in either case to suspect the agency of spirits, or of any new force whatever. Whether we look to their history or to their intrinsic value, these paltry manifestations find their readiest explanation in fraud—not always or altogether deliberate—on the one hand, and in self-deception on the other. Except, indeed, for the special conditions of the time, to be referred to later, it is scarcely credible that even the imperfectly educated farmers and others amongst whom the movement had its rise in newly settled districts of America would have looked for any other explanation. As the years went on, however, and the movement gathered strength, the self-deception of the believer became more profound, and the fraud more deliberate and systematic. In both respects America led the way. Never, probably,

in the history of civilised nations has such daring trickery been matched with so voracious an appetite for the marvellous. For many years the movement in this country was fed from across the Atlantic. It was there that the new miracles were manufactured ; it was there that the new gospel was formulated ; it was from thence that the prophets came to enlighten the old world.

LATER MANIFESTATIONS

It would be impossible, and, happily, superfluous, to discuss in detail all the physical manifestations of later Spiritualism. It will suffice if we take samples of the most striking and best-evidenced marvels, and show how little residuum is left, when they are carefully analysed, for suspecting the action either of spirits or psychic force.

In the first place, let us examine certain types of manifestations in which, as they most obviously resemble mere feats of legerdemain, the exposure of fraudulent methods has been most complete. Such are "apports," materialisation, and spirit photography. With these may also be classed Slade's performances (passage of matter through matter, tying knots in an endless cord, &c.) at the *séances* recorded by Zöllner. For though the fraud in the last case was not actually exposed at the time, it is quite clear to us now in reading the record how the results could have been accomplished.

APPORTS

Next to raps and slight movements of the furniture, the simplest, and perhaps the commonest, of all the so-called physical manifestations is the “apport”—that is, the introduction into the midst of the circle of an object which before the commencement of the *séance* is presumed to have been situated at a distance—in another part of the house, or even outside the house altogether. It will be seen that, on the hypothesis of fraud, a demonstration of this kind offers several advantages. It requires no expenditure and no elaborate preparation: the medium has merely to secrete the object about his person before the commencement of the *séance*. Its production at the appropriate time involves, especially in a dark *séance*, little skill and the minimum risk of detection, so long as the good faith of the medium is taken for granted. The trick has always been a favourite one with tiros and with private mediums generally. Thus Billot’s somnambulist, as already mentioned, in 1819 and 1820, surreptitiously introduced into Billot’s consulting-room fragments of martyrs’ bones and a piece of Cretan thyme, and Billot and Deleuze gravely discussed whether or not animal magnetism could account for their introduction. Flournoy’s medium, “Hélène Smith,” ventured, at her earlier *séances*, on some apports of sea-shells and flowers*. Mr. Stainton Moses, who would seem

* “Des Indes à la planète Mars,” pp. 354–362.

to have had but little skill in feats of legerdemain, dealt largely in apports of a most varied character—books, parian statuettes, candlesticks, cameos, seed-pearls, and so on. These were nearly always put on the table in the dark. I know of another private medium at whose dark *séances* apports of books and trinkets from the bedrooms and other parts of the house formed the *pièce de resistance*. We find a rudimentary form of the same manifestation in the introduction, by the poltergeist child, of gravel and potatoes from outside the house. Amongst English mediums Mrs. Guppy has given the fullest and most bountiful demonstration of this particular art. Mrs. Guppy has commonly employed flowers, but has on occasion, and when sitting with intimate friends, gone so far as to introduce by way of apports a musical-box, candles, grapes, oranges, live eels, lobsters, and other materials for the supper which appropriately followed. But Mrs. Guppy was a private medium; the members of her circle were always in the position of invited guests; she had little cause to fear a forcible attempt to search her person or her clothes, and would have had no difficulty in evading any inopportune request for permission to conduct such a search. In a word, Mrs. Guppy was complete mistress of the situation; her *séances* were conducted under such conditions as she dictated, or permitted. Even when, as in the case described by T. A. Trollope before the Dialec-

tical Society's Committee, it is on record that her person was searched before the *séance*, we can feel assured, since she permitted the search to be made, that she had foreseen the possibility of such a request, and made her preparations accordingly.*

But, owing no doubt to the risk of detection, the performance has never been a favourite in the repertory of the professional medium, who would, as a rule, find difficulty in evading a request from his audience for the exercise of the right of search. The earliest exposure of fraud in America, accepted as such by Spiritualists themselves, was concerned with the supposed apport of a knife and a ribbon from across the Atlantic into a circle of Spiritualists.† The only professional medium in Europe, at any rate in recent years, who has made extensive use of apports has just been convicted in a court of law under circumstances which will still be fresh in the public recollection.

* "Report," pp. 177 and 372. Mr. Trollope's bare statement that Mrs. Guppy's person had been searched by his wife before the *séance* is, in any case, of little value as a guarantee against fraud, unless we have full details of the time and manner of the searching, and of Mrs. Guppy's whereabouts in the interval between the searching and the actual *séance*. Presumably Mrs. Guppy was not undressed in the room in which the *séance* took place. If not, where? and who were responsible for watching her progress from the scene of the search to that of the *séance*? See also Wallace's "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," p. 170, &c. Edition of 1896.

† "Telegraph Papers" (New York), vol. vi. p. 131.

Frau Rothe, the German flower medium, had for years exhibited at her *séances* profuse apports of flowers; the regular frequenters of her circle—sympathetic ladies, including princesses, countesses and baronesses; and many men of distinction, professors, a judge, a general, a Court chaplain, a baron and a doctor or two—were convinced that the flowers and fruit so exhibited were introduced into the room by supernormal means; many of them, indeed, testified to having seen the flowers grow out of nothing before their eyes, or gradually consolidate into colour and beauty from a nebulous vapour. But when the police entered on the scene they did not wait for the “materialisation” of the flowers: they seized Frau Rothe before the *séance* began, and found flowers and fruit concealed in sufficient quantities under her dress. Moreover, it was abundantly proved that Frau Rothe had been in the habit of making extensive purchases at the florist’s of just such flowers as were wont to appear at her *séances*. The most that Spiritualists could find to say in defence or extenuation was that the whole case was probably got up by the police to please the German Emperor, and that if Frau Rothe did purchase the flowers it showed at any rate that she was an honest woman and did not expect the spirits to steal them for her.*

* See an article on Frau Rothe by Mr. E. Wake Cook in *Light*, April 18, 1903.

MATERIALISATION

The presentation at dark *séances* of material forms, purporting to be those of spirits, like most other manifestations had its origin in America. Amongst the earliest exponents of the marvel in this country were Mrs. Guppy, Miss Florence Cook, and Miss Showers. These ladies were in the position of private mediums. They took no money for their performances. The sitters were their invited guests, and an invitation to a *séance* was a privilege highly prized, and conferred only on the chosen few. Apart from these safeguards, the *séances* were conducted, as a rule, in the medium's own house, under conditions prescribed by herself—one of which was darkness, more or less complete. Again, lest any of those present should so far forget the courtesy due to a woman, and the restrictions imposed upon a guest, as to attempt to leave his seat without permission, the circle was requested to join hands. The medium would be placed, generally, behind a curtain. After an interval, filled up by the singing of hymns on the part of the company, or the strains of a musical-box, a white-robed figure would appear before the curtain which concealed, or was supposed to conceal, the entranced medium, and would, if conditions were favourable, walk about and salute the company. Practically, no adequate precautions were or

could be taken against trickery. Even professed Spiritualists found the conditions at these private *séances* unsatisfactory;* and it would scarcely be fair to choose them as examples.

But the manifestation was soon added to the repertory of the professional medium, and the investigators could then take such precautions against fraud as seemed good to them and the medium. The room would be searched, and sometimes the person of the medium also. The medium would occasionally be tied to his chair behind the curtain; the doors of the room would be locked and sealed. Still the spirit-forms continued to appear. The first complete exposure of the trickery practised at these materialisation *séances* came from Spiritualists themselves, and fell like a bolt from the blue.

In September, 1878, a group of Dutch Spiritualists detected the mediums, Williams and Rita, in personating spirits at a dark *séance* at Amsterdam. The mediums had been placed behind a screen, but do not appear to have been bound or searched. After the usual interval for singing and the musical-box, a figure, purporting to be a materialised spirit-form named "Charlie," showed his face by the light of a spirit-lamp. One of the circle, whose

* See especially the remarks of W. H. Harrison and J. Enmore Jones on the conditions at Mr. Crookes' *séances* with Florence Cook: *Spiritualist*, July 10, 1874, and *Medium*, May 22, 1874.

suspensions had been aroused at a previous sitting, grasped "Charlie," and found himself holding Rita by the coat collar. After a sharp struggle a light was obtained, the two mediums were baffled in an attempt to escape from the house, and their persons were searched. Upon Rita were found a false beard, several large handkerchiefs, and a small circular bottle of phosphorised oil—the raw materials of "Charlie" and his spirit-lamp. On Williams were found, also, a beard, much used, several yards of dirty muslin, handkerchiefs, a bottle of phosphorised oil, and a bottle of scent—objects familiar, in happier circumstances, to the eye of faith as the bearded mariner, "John King," with turban, lamp, and spirit-perfume. In Williams' hand-bag were found a small tube filled with minute pieces of slate-pencil, and a piece of notched whalebone—the instruments employed for writing on closed slates. The exposure, in any case, would seem to the outsider pretty complete, and the fact that the beards and muslin showed traces of frequent use gave a sinister emphasis to the proof of fraud. But the great body of Spiritualists remained unaffected. The editor of the *Spiritualist* newspaper, in commenting on the exposure, suggests that "the spirits who produce physical manifestations are sometimes far from being saints, and in some cases are not averse to aiding and abetting their mediums in imposture." Later, he surmised that the mediums were probably "under some strong

control," and were not responsible for their actions on the night of the exposure.* A Spiritualist of much experience, writing on the fiasco,† suggested, as alternatives to the supposition of trickery on the part of the mediums, either that the materialised spirits had brought in the muslin and other articles to clothe their nakedness withal, or that some member of the circle had secretly introduced them in order to injure the mediums.

A more ingenious theory found many supporters at a later date, viz., that the materialised body of the spirit always derived its substance from that of the medium, which thus almost realised the condition of being in two places at once. When, however, the equilibrium was forcibly upset by the seizure of the "spirit," the theory supposed that the two separated halves of the one material body necessarily coalesced. That they invariably on such occasions coalesced on the spot ostensibly occupied by the spirit-form, and not on that presumably occupied by the medium, was merely, *ex hypothesi*, a regrettable accident.

It is not needful to prolong the investigation of this particular marvel. The later history of Spiritualism is little else than a succession of similar episodes, followed, on the part of the believers, by similar evasions and palliations. No successful materialisation *séance* has ever

* *Spiritualist*, Sept. 20 and 27, 1878.

† *Ibid.* Nov. 1, 1878.

been recorded under conditions which would exclude fraud. Whenever, as in a series of *séances* recorded by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, such conditions have been imposed, no materialisation has been forthcoming.*

But the believer may urge that the spirit-forms appearing at such *séances* have been repeatedly recognised as those of deceased relatives. That is perfectly true. What such recognition is worth will appear more fully when we consider the evidence for spirit photography. For the present it will suffice to quote a comment by the editor of the *Spiritualist*: "Enthusiastic Spiritualists who have seen (doubles of the medium) in a bad light, recognise them as their uncles, aunts, and cousins with surprising facility." †

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

From 1872 onwards the photographing of spirits, despite certain early suspicions, became a recognised manifestation. The genuineness of the spirit-picture was attested not merely by the precautions taken against fraudulent manipulation of the plate, but by the frequent recognition of the spirit-form. The procedure was generally as follows: The sitter would

* "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," vol. iv., p. 45 *et seq.*

† *Spiritualist*, Sept. 20, 1878.

betake himself to the studio of a photographer who made a specialty of this particular business, and would pose in the ordinary way in front of the camera, taking such precautions, by marking the plate, or superintending the process of development, as his own ingenuity would suggest, or the photographer permit. If the sitting was successful, there would appear on the plate, together with the portrait of the sitter, and often partly obscuring it, a shadowy figure, the body generally, and the head frequently, enswathed in folds of white drapery, the whole figure being usually ill-defined and somewhat out of focus. This figure would, very frequently, be recognised by the sitter as the authentic likeness of a deceased relative or friend. So strong was the belief, by reason alike of the precautions taken against fraudulent manipulation of the plate and of the enthusiastic recognitions, in the genuineness of these spirit-pictures, that the leading Spiritualist of the day, the late Rev. W. Stainton Moses, in 1874 and 1875 published a series of articles setting forth the evidence and claiming the results as a powerful testimony to the truth of the Spiritualist doctrines. Chief among these spirit-photographers was a Parisian, one Buguet, whose productions showed a very considerable proportion of recognised portraits. In June 1875, Buguet was arrested at the instance of the French Government and charged with the fraudulent manufacture of spirit-

photographs. He made a full confession. The whole of his spirit-photographs were obtained by "double exposure"—the method commonly employed for all photographic fakes of the kind. Sometimes his assistants played the part of the ghost; later he accumulated a large stock of puppets and cardboard heads to serve the same purpose. The assistants gave evidence at the trial; Buguet described his methods in full, and the whole box of properties was on view; yet witness after witness—general, artist, professor, man of letters, merchant, even a photographic expert—came forward, and protested that, however Buguet might have cheated others, he had not succeeded in cheating them. The picture which each witness had obtained in his own case was, he would assert, the authentic portrait of his father, uncle, wife, or sister. It was in vain for the judge to point to the open box of properties; it was in vain for Buguet to declare that he had cheated all alike; it was in vain for the police expert to prove that the same counterfeit head had repeatedly done duty several times over, and that in one case the portrait of the supposed "spirit" was actually the likeness of a living man, much annoyed at being introduced to the spirit-world before his time. Nothing could shake the conviction of the too-willing dupes of Buguet's imposture.* And the

* A verbatim report of the trial is given in "Procès des

English Spiritualists, William Howitt and Stainton Moses, were agreed that the whole affair was a clerical conspiracy, a devilish device on the part of the Jesuits to thwart the glorious mission of Spiritualism.

Buguet, at any rate, was an artist. But many of his imitators are too clumsy even to conceal the tell-tale marks of their fraud. In quite recent "spirit-photographs" I have seen the shadowy pattern of the studio carpet revealing itself through the sitter's legs, and even the form of a spirit-chair standing where it ought not—the clear marks of double exposure. There are, of course, other methods by which fraudulent spirit-photographs can be produced; the whole process of photography is full of traps for the ignorant and unwary. The record has yet to be published of any spirit-photograph having been produced under conditions which would exclude fraud. And the experience of Buguet's dupes should warn us against putting too high a value on alleged "recognition." When the emotions are in a high state of tension the imagination is likely to shape after its own likeness the figure seen in the dim light of a *séance* or the faint and ambiguous outlines presented in a spirit-picture.

"Spirites" (Paris, 1875), edited by Madame Leymarie, wife of one of the accused.

ZOLLNER AND SLADE

One set of experiments must be noticed, not from their intrinsic importance as evidence, but from the scientific distinction of those who took part in the investigation. Professor Zöllner of Leipsic in 1877-8 held a series of *séances* with the medium "Dr." Slade. Zöllner had the occasional assistance of his colleagues, Professors Scheibner, Fechner and Wilhelm P. Weber. But Zöllner himself appears to have been solely or mainly responsible for the direction of the *séances*, the propounding of tests and the taking of precautions against fraud. The competence of Zöllner and his colleagues for the task which they had set themselves—to match their untrained senses against the cunning and skill of a practised conjurer—has been fully and dispassionately dealt with by Professor Fullerton, in the report of the Seybert Commission on Spiritualism, and need not be discussed here. It will suffice to examine briefly the evidence for the two most novel and, in Zöllner's view, most important of the demonstrations. Zöllner was at this time much occupied with the conception of space of four dimensions, and believed that he had obtained experimental proof of such quadri-dimensional space in two of his experiments—the production of knots in a cord whose free ends were sealed, and the abstraction of coins from a closed box.

As a matter of fact, it can readily be demonstrated, from Zöllner's own account of the experiments, that in each case Slade could have produced the result described by the simple process of substituting a cord with the knots already tied and an empty box for the cord and the box originally prepared by Zöllner. Neither of these crucial experiments succeeded until after several trials had been made, so that Slade had ample opportunities for making his preparations to circumvent the supposed tests. Moreover, Zöllner's tests were so loosely prepared that he omitted to note down the dates and other particulars of the coins which he enclosed in the sealed boxes, and the experiment did not actually succeed until some months after the boxes had been sealed up.

It would be an injustice to the Spiritualist case to present Zöllner's records as amongst the strongest evidences for Spiritualism; it has been thought necessary to notice them here because of the scientific reputation of their author and the wide vogue which his experiences have won.*

* See "Transcendental Physics" (an English translation and abridgment of Zöllner's book), by C. C. Massey, London, 1880; and the "Report of the Seybert Commission," Philadelphia, 1887.

SLATE-WRITING

The manifestations so far considered are such as, under the given conditions, the veriest tiro in conjuring could have found little difficulty in performing; the effect produced is, in fact, generally to be measured by the proneness to belief on the part of the spectators rather than by any special skill in the exhibitor. We pass now to a performance of a different kind, in which common trickery seems at first sight to be altogether excluded, and in which the skill employed was unquestionably of a higher order, since even professional conjurers were in some cases deceived. In 1876 there came to this country from America one Dr. Slade, a medium through whose agency the spirits professed to give messages in writing. The procedure was as follows: The sittings were held in broad daylight, generally in Slade's own room. One or two persons only were admitted at a time. The sitter was allowed to select a slate from a pile on the table, and he and Slade would then place a crumb of slate-pencil on the top and hold the slate under the table (which was uncovered) pressing it close against the under surface. After a short time a sound as of writing would be heard, then a sharp tap, upon which Slade would place the slate upon the table and a message would be found written on the upper surface, the crumb of pencil, with

a facet worn by use, resting at the end of the last stroke. That, at any rate, is the account of the proceedings generally given by the sitter. Sometimes the writing would be obtained on slates placed on the surface of the table, sometimes inside a double slate, which would occasionally be locked and sealed. Sometimes the sitter would be allowed to bring his own slates and receive messages on them. The Spiritualist naturally accepted the manifestation as a further proof of spirit-communion; and the thing puzzled a good many persons who were not Spiritualists. Unlike most mediumistic phenomena, the performance took place in full light, and the results were fairly certain—few persons having paid their guinea came away without their money's worth. It happened that this same year (1876) a paper touching on Spiritualistic phenomena was read before the British Association at Glasgow by Prof. W. F. Barrett; and in the discussion which followed several speakers, including Colonel Lane Fox and Lord Rayleigh, referred to Slade's exhibition as worthy of investigation. Lord Rayleigh mentioned that a professional conjurer who had accompanied him on a visit to the American medium had been completely baffled by what he witnessed. A few days later Dr. Ray Lankester, at a visit to Slade, seized the slate and found a message written on it, when no message purported yet to have been written by the spirits. The exposure was

by no means complete or convincing; but further inquiry was stopped for the time, because Slade, after an abortive trial, fled the country, and was prevented by threats of prosecution from returning. Ten years later another medium came forward in the person of William Eglinton, and presented phenomena similar to those vouched for with Slade. Eglinton went even further. According to the testimony of some witnesses, they were allowed to choose a book at random from Eglinton's shelves, and straightway an extract from a page of the book selected by them would appear on the slate. These and other marvellous feats were vouched for by numerous witnesses of good repute, and by some persons of intellectual distinction. Even to the most critical and best informed of the Spiritualists the fact of "auto-graphy," or spirit-writing, appeared to be conclusively proved by Eglinton's *séances*. The conditions, indeed, seemed to preclude fraud: the manifestations took place in full light; there was no room for elaborate apparatus, nor any apparent cover for working it—a bare table and a slate or two was all the furniture required, and the latter were in many cases supplied by the sitter himself. Moreover, the results were fairly uniform, a blank *séance* was, as with Slade, of rare occurrence. The Society for Psychical Research resolved to investigate the matter. They sent a number of persons to observe the performance and report. Most of

these emissaries were completely baffled; one or two conjurers even professed themselves unable to explain the results by trickery. But by a careful analysis and comparison of different reports of the same *séance* Mrs. Sidgwick and Dr. Hodgson showed conclusively that the average intelligent person was by no means competent to give a full and accurate account of what took place; and it was not difficult to discover that the incidents which the average witness passed over as of no importance were precisely those which would give the conjurer his opportunity. Moreover, one or two witnesses succeeded in actually observing the process by which the writing was accomplished. In short, it became tolerably clear, as the investigation proceeded, that the whole thing was trickery—though trickery of a much more ingenious kind than any hitherto demonstrated. The shorter “spirit-messages” were commonly written by one finger of the hand which held the slate under the table; the writing was of course produced on the under surface, and the medium subsequently found an opportunity, unobserved, to reverse the slate. Other messages were written before the *séance* on a slate which would be substituted in the course of the proceedings for that held by the sitter. The sound of the “spirit” writing, to which the sitter’s attention would be specially invited, was a mere blind, and was never heard until after the actual trick-writing was completed.

The opportunities for working the trick were afforded by various movements on the part of the medium which the sitters, failing to realise their significance, for the most part omitted to record, or even to remember. Thus Eglinton, it was found on close observation, constantly coughed or sneezed; frequently shifted his position, changed the hand which held the slate, or even let the slate drop on the floor through alleged fatigue; went to the door to answer a summons from the servant, and so on. The cough or the sneeze served to drown the noise of any suspicious movement—*e.g.*, the writing on the slate, the opening of a paper pellet, or the snapping of a spring lock; the changes of position enabled him to reverse the slate, or to substitute one slate for another. But the demonstration was made still more complete. Amongst the members of the S.P.R. at this time (1886-7) was a young man, S. J. Davey, who had himself fallen a victim in the first instance to Eglinton's chicanery, but whose eyes had ultimately been opened to the nature of the deception. On being undeceived, Davey practised on his own account, and finally succeeded in bettering his example. Ultimately, under the guidance of the Society for Psychical Research, he assumed a professional name, and set up as a kind of rival to Eglinton.* He gave

* His *séances*, it should be explained, were given gratuitously. The professional name and professional manner were assumed in order not to put his sitters on

sittings to a number of persons, certainly not less intelligent than those who had been fooled by Eglinton, and with even more striking results. Here is one account of a *séance* :

STATEMENT OF MISS STIDOLPH

“I have much pleasure in recording my recollections of a *séance* with Mr. S. J. Davey. His powers are certainly marvellous, and while I have not the very smallest belief in ‘Spiritualism’ or ‘mediums’ of any kind, believing the things so called to be gross deceptions, I was amazed at my friend’s scientific skill. Apparently he has no appliances. I was seated with him at a small table when he gave me the following astounding evidence of his powers. He gave into my hands a slate which, when locked, looks like any ordinary box. This box I opened, washed the slate, locked it, and took the key ; for some minutes we sat, he with one hand on mine, his other hand on the table. Presently a faint scratching was heard, and continued some little time ; when it ceased Mr. Davey unlocked the slate, and lo ! it was covered with clear, distinct writing—a letter addressed to myself, and stating if I would wait a little while the writer would go to the Cape and bring me news of my brother. Then their guard by revealing prematurely the nature of the programme.

I again washed the slate ; again it was locked, and again I kept the key. Mr. Davey then asked me to take any volume I liked from the library, to look at a page and remember the number of it. This I did, and again we sat as before. In a few moments the slate was unlocked, when on it was written, not only the number of the page I had thought of, but some of the words which were on the self-same page, and these not ordinary words, but abstruse words, as the book I had selected was a learned one. This I consider a most marvellous feat, and utterly incomprehensible. That the scientific researches of my friend will lead to most important results I have no doubt. His aim is to expose deception, and if this object be attained he will benefit society and throw light on a subject which has hitherto been considered to belong exclusively to the powers of darkness.

“E. STIDOLPH.”

“I would mention that the shelves from which I took the book contained hundreds of volumes, and Mr. Davey had no idea which I had selected, as he closed his eyes and went to the extreme end of the room.

“*November 25, 1886.* *

E. S.”

The writing in this case had, of course, been prepared beforehand on another locked slate,

* “*Proceedings, S.P.R.,*” vol. iv., p. 418.

the exact duplicate of that held by the sitter, and the choice of the book had been "forced" on her. I have seen Mr. Davey arrange a shelf of books in order to "force" the choice of one particular volume ; and on one occasion he allowed me to be present at a *séance* at which my brother was the sitter, and to watch him effect the substitution of the slate. It seemed almost incredible to me at the time, and not less incredible to my brother when the trick was explained to him subsequently, that the one slate could have been removed and the other, after an appreciable interval, put in its place, without the victim being aware of the process at the time, or being able in the smallest degree to recall it afterwards. But it is precisely on such diversion of the attention that the conjurer relies for his best effects. Probably no person who has not made a special study of the subject is aware of the extent to which we are all liable to such lapses of memory in ordinary life, and the exceeding ease with which a conjurer or a medium can turn them to account. In Dr. Hodgson's words : "The source of error which I desire in particular to press upon the reader's notice is the perishability, the exceeding transience, the fading feebleness, the evanescence beyond recall, of certain impressions which nevertheless did enter the domain of consciousness, and did in their due place form part of the stream of impetuous waking thought." The resulting

blank, as Dr. Hodgson proceeds to point out, "will often be filled with some conjectured events which rapidly become attached to the adjacent parts, and form, in conjunction with them, a consolidated but fallacious fragment in memory. On the other hand, the consequence may be that the edges of the lacunæ close up—events originally separated by a considerable interval are now *remembered* vividly in immediate juxtaposition, and there is no trace of the piecing."*

The slate-writing medium, in fact, enjoys the same opportunities and employs similar devices to those of the poltergeist child. The art in the case of the professional trickster is no doubt more developed and more nicely adjusted to the circumstances, but the effect is not conspicuously more successful. For in both cases it is the imagination of the spectator which makes the miracle out of the meagre data supplied by the artist. How complete and permanent was the illusion in the case just considered may be inferred from the fact that to this day many Spiritualists, following the lead of Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, believe that Mr. Davey was a renegade medium, who prostituted his marvellous gifts in the service of the Society for Psychical Research.†

* "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. iv., pp. 386-7.

† See the letter from Dr. Wallace printed in the *Journal, S.P.R.*, of March, 1891.

DARK SÉANCES

In exposing slate-writing we may be said to be assailing the chief bulwark of the Spiritualist position. No other marvel of the *séance* room has been performed in circumstances so little suggestive of fraud, or has been accredited by so large a volume of intelligent testimony. And the discovery of hitherto unsuspected sources of error in circumstances so apparently favourable to accurate observation establishes a very strong presumption against all other evidence for Spiritualist marvels. Nevertheless there are certain other manifestations which must be included in any survey pretending to completeness; if only because of the scientific eminence of the men who have attested them. From a very early date in the history of the movement, mediums have found that darkness, or a very subdued light, was favourable to the production of the phenomena, and have insisted upon this condition being generally observed at their *séances*. To take exception to such a condition from the outset would no doubt be unreasonable. On the assumption that a new and delicate physical agency is involved, there is nothing antecedently improbable in the supposition that light should interfere with its operations. Light, as is well known, exercises a marked interference in many chemical reactions—*e.g.*, in the cases of bleaching and photography, and

in many vital processes. But there can be no question that darkness facilitates fraud, and renders it extremely difficult to devise effective safeguards. The means commonly employed at a dark *séance* to prevent any active participation of the medium have been either the tying of his person in a chair or the holding of his hands. The first method, as usually adopted, is practically worthless. Maskelyne and Cooke, the Davenport Brothers, and many others have shown that without special experience no man may hope to devise knots which will baffle a conjurer. Nor is sealing more effective. Practically Spiritualists themselves have admitted the unsatisfactory nature of all tests which depend upon rope-tying and sealing. But the holding of hands, though Spiritualists are loth to recognise it, is an even more delusive precaution. For this is what takes place at the typical dark *séance*. Let it be granted that, when the gas is turned down, the medium's hands are seen to be firmly held by the sitter on either side. Presently the medium's passage into a trance, real or feigned, is heralded by convulsive shudderings which shake his whole person, and cause violent movements of the hands. In the course of these convulsions one hand will be for a moment twisted away from the sitter's control. The loss of control is but momentary, and the sitter is satisfied, when contact is restored, that it is the same hand which he holds. Two minutes later he will

have forgotten the whole incident, and after the *séance* will, with a clear conscience, sign a statement that he never let go the hand entrusted to him. Actually the medium, in the course of those timely convulsions, has brought his hands close together on the table. The apparently momentary release of one hand is really a permanent release ; for the defaulting sitter resumes control of a part of the other hand, which is thus held by both sitters, whilst the medium has one hand free to perform as many miracles as he can or dare. This is the explanation of most manifestations of the dark *séance*. It is not easy even for those who suspect the danger to maintain, for an hour or two, continuous and effective control over the medium's hand, especially when the superior cunning, and probably strength, of the owner are devoted to thwarting the sitter's intention. For there is no other sense to check the sense of touch ; and the sense of touch is a clumsy and ineffective instrument, little used to exact observation, rarely called upon in civilised life to act on its own account at all, and peculiarly liable, as the text-books of psychology show us, to be deceived in its judgments.

EUSAPIA PALLADINO

For these reasons performances at dark *séances* have been very generally discredited, even

amongst Spiritualists themselves. Nevertheless, of recent years considerable attention has been given, by men of distinction in various branches of physical science, to the phenomena produced in the dark through the agency of an Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino. In the autumn of 1892 a small committee of scientific men—Professors Schiaparelli, Gerosa, Brofferio, and others—held a series of sittings with Eusapia at Milan. Charles Richet and Lombroso attended one or two of the meetings. Various phenomena were observed in the light—the lifting of a heavy table without the apparent exercise of mechanical force, and marked oscillation in the weight indicated by the balance when Eusapia was placed on the platform of a weighing machine. The things done, though the committee felt unable to explain them, in every case fell just short of producing conviction, and, in Professor Richet's words, "the results degenerated as the conditions became more stringent."*

When, however, the room was darkened, or partially darkened, more varied and more striking phenomena were witnessed. There were movements of the table and other pieces of furniture; hands were seen, larger than those of the medium; the experimenters felt touches in different parts of the body; bluish lights made their appearance; the impression of a

* See the reports in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, January and February 1893.

hand was found in some wet clay which had been placed for the purpose at some distance from the medium. The committee were profoundly impressed. But Richet, a more critical observer, pointed out that the method of securing Eusapia's hands was not perfectly satisfactory. In effect, he explained, only one hand was permitted to be held, the other merely rested lightly on the hand of the experimenter. And just before the manifestations began, this hand would become very unsteady, would shift rapidly about, and for a moment cease to be felt at all, and then instantly be replaced. Here we have the same old device, but in a more clumsy form. Eusapia was not willing even to submit to the hollow form of having both hands held.

Nevertheless, Professor Richet thought it worth while to pursue the investigation, and in 1894 invited the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Sir O. Lodge, Dr. Ochorowicz and others to join him in a series of *séances*. This later committee took special precautions to secure the feet as well as the hands of the medium. Nevertheless, under these stricter conditions, movements of furniture and other similar manifestations occurred. None of the things done appeared to be demonstrably beyond the power of the medium—a remarkably strong woman—if in the dark she could have contrived to free a hand or a foot from the vigilance of the experimenters. That no opportunity of the

kind was afforded to her the experimenters themselves were confident. But that confidence, as Dr. Hodgson subsequently pointed out, was not justified by the contemporary notes—for notes were taken, from minute to minute, by an observer seated in a verandah outside the room. These contemporary notes merely record in bare terms, from time to time, that Eusapia's feet and hands were duly held. It was not clear, then, that the investigators fully realised the exact nature of the devices which they had to guard against, and Dr. Hodgson concluded that all the things described could have been, and probably were, produced fraudulently. In the following year Eusapia gave a series of sittings in Mr. Myers' house at Cambridge, and Dr. Hodgson's suspicions received prompt confirmation. Similar phenomena, though, it is to be admitted, on a less striking scale, were produced; and their production was clearly traced to the medium. She had, of course, ample resources of trickery; when she could not free a foot or a hand she could make her mouth or the movements of her head serve the purpose. It was admitted on all hands that there was overwhelming proof of fraud at Cambridge.

Eusapia has given many sittings since, and has produced many and diverse manifestations. Professor Richet himself, and other members of the committee who shared his investigations in 1894, remain convinced that what they witnessed then, or have witnessed since, could not

be accounted for by the muscular powers of the medium, or by any recognised mode of physical energy, and that Eusapia is gifted with super-normal powers of some kind—powers whose occasional failure she seeks to conceal by recourse to clumsy trickery.

Any conviction held by men of such high scientific standing is deserving of respect, but they themselves would hardly claim that others should share it until the phenomena on which it is based can be submitted to some less equivocal test.

D. D. HOME

It remains to consider the phenomena presented through the mediumship of Daniel Dunglas Home. An American by upbringing, if not by birth, Home paid his first visit to England as a young man in 1855, and for the next twenty-five years a large part of his time was spent in this country. The marvels witnessed at his *séances* were probably responsible, more than any other single cause, for the interest excited by Spiritualism during that period, and for its rapid spread through the country. Though he had been associated in America with professional mediums, whose performances were undoubtedly fraudulent, and though his *séances* generally in Europe strongly suggested fraud, Home was never actually detected in trickery. But as, in this country at least, he

invariably posed as a private medium—and is said never to have taken any direct payment for his services—it is obvious that he placed himself at considerable advantage compared with the ordinary professional medium. Admission to his *séances* was a favour; he could choose with whom, when and under what conditions he would consent to sit; and could afford to resent the suggestion of precautions which would seem to imply a doubt of his good faith. It is only on a few rare occasions, therefore, that it can be said that his alleged powers were put to an experimental test. From 1870 onwards, however, Home allowed Mr. (now Sir William) Crookes to have a prolonged series of sittings with him for the purpose of observing the manifestations; and occasionally permitted the use of some apparatus devised by Sir William in order to test the psychic force which was supposed to act through his organism.

THE BALANCE EXPERIMENTS

Of the experiments thus conducted, the best and most striking were those connected with a board suspended by a spring balance. The board—three feet in length, having strips of mahogany screwed on at each extremity to form feet—rested on a table at one end, and was supported by a spring balance at the other. The fixed point of support, it will be seen, was

the foot which rested on the table, and it is obvious that no amount of pressure on that foot could possibly affect the weight registered by the spring balance. Nevertheless, on several occasions, when Home rested his fingers lightly on the extreme end of the board, the pointer of the balance moved, indicating on one occasion a pull of as much as 6 lbs. The experiments took place in Sir William's own laboratory; and amongst the few other persons present were Sir W. Huggins and the late Mr. Sergeant Cox. The result was regarded by the experimenters as conclusive proof of the exercise of a new mode of physical energy; and, indeed, the proof seemed so complete, even to disinterested outsiders, that the suggestion was seriously put forward by such men as Mr. E. B. Tylor, Dr. A. R. Wallace, and the late Professor Balfour Stewart, that the observers may have been hallucinated. But probably no such extreme hypothesis is necessary. It is not, indeed, easily conceivable that men of such intelligence and acuteness should have been deceived in what they saw; but the lesson of slate-writing should warn us against making our conceptions the measure of the possible in such matters. It is fair to assume that Home as a juggler was at least as skilful as Slade or Eglinton; he probably came to the ordeal knowing beforehand exactly what was expected of him; for the American professor, Hare, had experimented with a similar apparatus some years before,

and Sir William tells us that he only achieved success in these experiments after repeated trials; further, the conditions under which the experiments were made were those which proved satisfactory after those repeated trials—that is, in effect, they were conditions dictated by Home. Moreover, Home was a guest, and his performance gratuitous; and it is not easy, even in the cause of science, to look a gift-horse in the mouth. As regards the precautions actually taken against possible trickery, we are told only that all present watched Home's feet and hands; to discharge that duty a good light was needed in the first place—but we are not told the amount of light;* and, in the second place, freedom from other preoccupation, that the observation might be close and continuous—but the index of the balance also needed watching, and notes had to be taken. On the whole, with the example of slate-writing before us, it is impossible not to recognise that there were opportunities for trickery, though it might be of little profit now to speculate on the precise methods employed. Probably a conjurer in such circumstances would make use of a dark thread or fine blackened wire, which, in a suitable light and against a

* The exact date of this *séance* is not stated; but we know that at other *séances* held at about this time it was Home's practice to request that the light might be reduced immediately before important manifestations. See "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vi., pp. 99-122.

dark background, would be practically invisible, except to eyes which knew what to look for. At any rate it is impossible to lay much stress upon a single set of experiments, which stood alone at the time, and which, in the thirty years and more that have elapsed since their publication, have never been repeated.

But many other marvels were witnessed in the presence of Home. Space will not permit of a full analysis of all of them, and I will choose, therefore, two of the most characteristic and best-attested of his manifestations—Levitation and the Fire Ordeal.

LEVITATION

Levitation—or the raising of the human body in the air—is a miracle with a long pedigree. It was a marvel commonly recorded of the early Christian saints, and more rarely of “bewitched” children. It has always been a stock item in the poltergeist performances. It made its appearance very early in the history of Spiritualism in America. The manifestation in America always occurred after the lights had been turned out; and the evidence for its occurrence consisted generally in the medium’s statement to that effect, coupled with the obvious fact that his body had been moved from one part of the room to the other. Frequently, also, some privileged witnesses were

allowed, in complete darkness, to feel the soles of his boots during his aerial passage. Literally this, and no more, was the evidence that satisfied such good easy souls as Judge Edmonds and Professor Hare in the days before public confidence was disturbed by the repeated exposures of materialisation frauds. Home's early levitations in this country generally took place in a room illuminated only by such light as could penetrate from outside through a window covered with a blind or with curtains. To the proofs of levitation already enumerated there would then occasionally be added ocular demonstration—a dim silhouette of the medium's legs, or of what passed for such, would be seen projected against the faint grey square of light which represented the covered window.* Sir William Crookes, in his published notes, gives two cases of alleged levitation. In each case the manifestation was spontaneous on Home's part, and occurred shortly after the light in the room had, by direction of the spirits, been reduced. In neither case was Sir William himself in a position to see clearly the position of Home's body; the spectators were seated round a table, and kept their seats during the performance; a close examination of the phenomenon was not attempted, and, presumably, would not have

* See the account (by Robert Bell) of a *séance* with Home, published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, August, 1860.

been permitted. It cannot be said that the record is calculated to convince.*

The most famous "levitation" is that witnessed by the Master of Lindsay (now Earl of Crawford and Balcarres), Lord Adare (now Earl of Dunraven), and Captain Wynne, in December 1868. The *séance* took place on an upper floor at 5 Buckingham Gate, London. The only light in the room came through the window from a moon two days old. The three witnesses believed that, while they remained sitting in the one room, Home went into that adjoining (both rooms giving on the street seventy or eighty feet below), opened the window there, and floated out of that window and into the window of the room where the three sat. What actually happened is obscure. But certainly the accounts given by the three witnesses fall far short of the evidence needed to substantiate a portent of this nature. Lord Adare's account is brief, and gives no details: "We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window; he opened the window and walked in quite coolly." Captain Wynne corroborates in even briefer terms. Neither witness says what it was that he himself actually saw. Lord Lindsay, whose account is much fuller, does say what he heard and saw :

* See "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. vi., pp. 118 and 126.

“We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in the air outside our window. The moon was shining full into the room; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window-sill, and Home’s feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window, and glided into the room feet foremost and sat down.”*

On that slender basis of actual sense-perception—the shadow of a man’s feet thrown on the wall by the light of a young moon—the whole story is made to depend. The evidence is about on a level with the tales of black dogs and fiery-eyed monsters told by bewildered rustics at a mediæval witch trial.

THE FIRE ORDEAL

The evidence for Home’s power to resist the action of fire is more abundant and more precise. Here is an account by Sir William Crookes of one of two such incidents which he witnessed. At a *séance* held on May 9, 1871, soon after various other manifestations,

* The letter from which this account is taken originally appeared in the *Spiritualist* newspaper, and was afterwards republished in a pamphlet entitled “*Psychic Power—Spirit Power: Experimental Investigation*” (London, 1871.)

Home went to the wood fire, somewhat dull, which was burning in the grate, and "after stirring the hot coal about with his hand, took out a red-hot piece nearly as big as an orange, and putting it on his right hand, covered it over with his left hand, so as to almost completely enclose it, and then blew into the small furnace thus extemporised until the lump of charcoal was nearly white-hot, and then drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal, and licking round his fingers; he fell on his knees, looked up in a reverent manner, held up the coal in front and said, 'Is not God good? Are not His laws wonderful.' "* Many other witnesses have described similar feats. Home is said frequently to have carried a glowing coal in his hand about the room, and to have given it to others to hold; on one occasion even placing the live coal on the head of Mr. S. C. Hall, and gathering the old man's silver hair round it.

Now these performances of Home are closely paralleled by savage rites in various parts of the world. In the South Sea Islands, in India, in Japan and elsewhere priests and their votaries pass through the fire even at the present day. The performance has been witnessed and described by several Europeans, and amongst others by Professor Langley of the Smithsonian Institution, who witnessed the

* "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. vi., p. 103.

ceremony in Tahiti so recently as 1901. The natives—and after them a few Europeans—walked over a trench filled with stones which had been heated in a fierce fire and were still red and glowing. But from Professor Langley's description it seems clear that, in this case at any rate, the performance, though decidedly impressive to the uncritical onlooker, did not in any way verge on the miraculous. The stones—a porous volcanic rock—had obviously been chosen for their non-conducting quality. Only the lower layers of the stones appear to have been actually red-hot; the upper layers, and especially the stones which projected slightly above the general surface, having been cooled by contact with the air; the performers picked their steps carefully; and though the Europeans found it too hot to walk over barefoot, the skin of the natives was hardened by exposure, and perhaps by special training, to brave a considerable degree of heat without injury. The fire walk was, in other words, a display of skill and endurance, but not of magic.*

There can be little reason to doubt that Home's performance was, in essence, of the same kind, probably eked out by sleight of hand. Coal, cinders, and wood-charcoal are extremely bad conductors of heat. It is quite

* See Professor Langley's letter in *Nature*, August 22, 1901. See also Mr. Lang's "Modern Mythology" (1897), chapter xii., and "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. xv., p. 2, article on "The Fire Walk."

easy for the ordinary person, with hands of the average sensitiveness, to practise on a common coal fire, and hold in his hand without serious inconvenience pieces of coal or wood which are red-hot and blazing at one end. Negroes, as Uncle Remus tells us, will pick up in their hands a live coal to light their pipes withal.

It would be unprofitable to pursue the analysis further. No stronger evidence, no more striking manifestations can be adduced than those which have just been considered. The marvels vouched for in the presence of Home, and especially the observations of Sir W. Crookes, represent the case for psychic force at its best. I have used the word "observation" advisedly; for the critical reader will recognise that the word "experiment," even in connection with the trials with the balance, would be misapplied. No one has formulated more clearly than Sir W. Crookes the requirements of any scientific experiment in this region. The physical results purporting to be due to the action of a new force, he has pointed out, should be capable of precise measurement, and should not be dependent for their establishment merely on the testimony of the fallible senses.

The trials with the balance come nearest to meeting these requirements, but, as already shown, the results even here depend, in the last analysis, on the vigilance of the experimenters in preventing possible fraud. It would have

been much more satisfactory if, instead of depressing the indicator, under the stated conditions, by 6 lbs., Home could have produced a much smaller effect, say, to the extent of a grain or two, on a chemical balance in a locked glass case, with an automatically recording scale.

Consider again the case of the burning coal (or rather wood). In a laboratory experiment any such substance as a burning fragment of wood would have been ruled out altogether on the ground that it would be impossible to secure a uniform temperature, or to ensure that the part actually in contact with the skin was really hot; probably a metal sphere, heated to a known temperature in a bath of hot oil, would have been employed; and Home's hands would have been carefully examined beforehand. So in the alleged levitations: Sir William, if he had had his way, would have turned up the gas, measured the distance between Home's body and the ground, and satisfied himself of the absence of all mechanical means of support.

Again, Sir W. Crookes has stated that he has experienced intense cold at a *séance* comparable to that felt in approaching the hand to frozen mercury—why is there no thermometric record?—that he has seen semi-materialised hands fading into a cloud at the wrist, and solid self-luminous bodies which floated about the room. Why have we no chemical or spectroscopic analysis of these marvels? The answer

is obvious ; no such opportunities for investigation were allowed. Again, Eglinton has been asked to produce slate-writing on small fragments of slate enclosed in hermetically sealed glass tubes, and has failed. Zöllner prepared for Slade, who boasted that the spirits could make matter pass through matter, solid rings cut out of different kinds of wood, and rings of bladder. If these had been interlaced, the proof of the passing of matter through matter would have stood on record for all time. But Slade's "spirits" gave instead the tests which we have already discussed.

Spiritualism in its present form has been in the world for more than half a century. The physical phenomena have been investigated by many persons of keen intelligence, well versed in the physical sciences, and not ignorant of the laws of evidence. It is recognised by all who are in any degree competent for such an investigation that the dangers to be guarded against are fraud and self-deception ; and that, in the last resort, these sources of error can only be effectively excluded by eliminating as far as possible the witness of the senses. The chemist does not weigh a substance in his hand when he can use the balance ; nor the metallurgist test temperature by his own skin when he has a thermometer which will serve the purpose ; nor the astronomer trust to his eyes to record what he sees if it is possible to employ photography. If physicists and chemists and

astronomers in investigating this subject have not availed themselves of such mechanical aids to sense-perception, it is because the opportunity has been denied them. Are the spirits, then, so impotent that in upwards of half a century they have not yet succeeded in producing one miracle which will stand the test of science? or so ignorant that they have not yet learnt to understand what is required? It is more than thirty years since Home sat before the balance in Sir W. Crookes' laboratory; and the best which the spirits have been able to offer us since is a dark *séance* with Eusapia Palladino.

Is not the bare statement of the case a sufficient refutation of the Spiritualist pretensions? Is it credible that there is anything of value behind this fifty years' record of quibbling and chicanery?

Again, to turn to another aspect of the case which is well worth considering. If the physical phenomena called spiritualistic could be substantiated, they would not prove spirit intervention. For if we leave on one side the most hopelessly discredited of them all—materialisation and spirit photography—the phenomena recorded do not directly suggest or require the action of any intelligence beyond that of the medium. Movements of objects, even the production of writing at a distance, the materialisation of luminous bodies, the production of musical sounds, levitation, elongation of the body, resistance to the action of fire—all these

are matters which if they could be substantiated would in themselves testify only to the action of new material forces. And it is easier to conceive that such "psychic" forces operate through the bodily organism of the medium and are directed by his intelligence than to introduce the purely gratuitous hypothesis of a spiritual entity wielding physical forces and interfering with the physical universe. This is not merely the view of the hardened sceptic, ready to use against an unwelcome belief any weapon that will serve. It is a view that has been consistently held throughout the history of the movement by some of the ablest and most critical of those who have accepted the physical manifestations as genuine in the main. It has found favour with no less a philosopher than von Hartmann. Even materialisation and the like have been interpreted as manifestations of the plastic power of the medium's spirit, endowed in the trance with enlarged control over the bodily organism. In fine, the so-called physical phenomena of Spiritualism are unproven; and if they could be proved they would still afford little justification for the doctrines of Spiritualism.

PART II.—THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIFESTATIONS

DREAMS AND GHOSTS

WE turn now to evidence of another order. As we have already seen, the earliest belief in the existence of spiritual beings, and of their intervention in terrestrial matters, was apparently based on primitive experience of dreams and daylight visions; and until little more than a century ago these manifestations still remained the chief prop of Spiritualistic belief. But popular belief in recent times draws a sharp line between dreams and daylight apparitions. Manifestations of the first order were clearly, to the vulgar belief, of the nature of thought—reflections, it may be, of a more permanent reality, but themselves insubstantial. Apparitions, however, which took their place in the solid waking world, and were often mistaken for living human beings, were supposed to be actually spirits clothed in some kind of more tenuous material substance. Modern science, like primitive savagery, refuses to recognise any essential distinction between the two classes of phenomena; the ghost which walks and talks,

equally with the vision of the night, is of the nature of thought, the airy creation of the seer's own imagination. But the most recent inquiries into the subject suggest that modern science may have been a little over hasty in drawing the inference that such phenomena have no kinship with reality. Ghosts and dreams may be but creatures of the imagination; but they seem sometimes to have some link with things outside, at any rate, any possible reach of the dreamer's senses. The apparition of the dying man which salutes his friend may be no spirit from beyond the bourne, but it seems occasionally to be a true herald of death—a bearer of news which no familiar sense organ could apprehend. Let us consider a few recent examples of dreams and visions which have some correspondence with reality. Here is an experience reported by a Cambridge undergraduate. The account is dated October 6, 1901.

“I am attached to a certain young lady. At the time I refer to I was staying near Peterboro’ and the lady in question was at her home, a seaside town in Yorkshire. One very close and thundery night I found some difficulty in getting to sleep. When finally I fell asleep, or rather dozed, the face of Miss D. rose up before me, and to my surprise one side of her face was very much swollen, and she looked very unhappy. I sat up in bed and spoke to her, only to find that I had been dreaming.

Again I fell asleep, and dreamt that I was walking along a street, when I heard a cry above me, and looking up saw Miss D.'s face at a window from which smoke and flames were issuing. I rushed upstairs, only to see her face floating in the smoke, very much swollen. I tried to grasp her, and woke up with a cry. Somehow the dream depressed me, and the next day, in writing to Miss D., I told her the whole thing, much as I have told you. Imagine my surprise a day after, when I heard from her that on the night in question she had gone out to see a house on fire—Mrs. K.'s seaside residence—had contracted a chill, and gone to bed with her face enormously swollen up, and had suffered severe toothache all night. Our letters on the subject will confirm dates, &c.

“H. B.” *

Letters from Miss D. confirm Mr. H. B.'s account. She had gone out on that Sunday night to see a fire, and had contracted a bad toothache; the pain was so severe that she was forced to take an opiate.

It is difficult to doubt in a case of this kind—and similar incidents could be multiplied by scores and hundreds—that, if soul did not go out to meet with soul, as our forefathers believed,

* Mr. H. B. was mistaken in supposing that he had written an account of his dream to Miss D. at once. The letter was apparently written, but torn up before being posted. A full account of the incident will be found in the *Journal, S.P.R.*, for July, 1902, p. 263.

at least a message of some kind passed, without intermediation of the senses, between one mind and another. More rarely the message is flashed on to the waking mind, and the thought is then projected from the seer's brain, and fits into the panorama of the solid world, as in the following case.

“ From Miss BERTA HURLY,
“ WATERBEACH VICARAGE, CAMBRIDGE,
“ *February, 1890.*

“ In the spring and summer of 1886 I often visited a poor woman called Evans, who lived in our parish, Caynham. She was very ill with a painful disease, and it was, as she said, a great pleasure when I went to see her; and I frequently sat with her and read to her. Towards the middle of October she was evidently growing weaker, but there seemed no immediate danger. I had not called on her for several days, and one evening I was standing in the dining-room after dinner with the rest of the family, when I saw the figure of a woman dressed like Mrs. Evans, in large apron and muslin cap, pass across the room from one door to the other, where she disappeared. I said, ‘ Who is that ? ’ My mother said, ‘ What do you mean ? ’ and I said, ‘ That woman who has just come in and walked over to the other door.’ They all laughed at me, and said I was dreaming, but I felt sure it was Mrs. Evans, and next morning we heard she was dead.

“ BERTA HURLY.”

Miss Hurly's mother writes :

" On referring to my diary for the month of October 1886, I find the following entry : ' 19th. Berta startled us all after dinner, about 8.30 last evening, by saying she saw the figure of a woman pass across the dining-room, and that it was Mrs. Evans. This morning we heard the poor woman is dead.' On inquiring at the cottage we found she had become wandering in her mind, and at times unconscious, about the time she appeared to Berta, and died towards morning.

" ANNIE ROSS." *

" *February 25, 1890.*"

Here, again, what was seen was not the spirit of the dying woman, clothed in an ethereal body and ethereal garments, but a hallucination, or waking dream. Its occurrence, however, within a few hours of the death may reasonably suggest some unrecognised mode of communication. Further evidence of such communication—provisionally called telepathy or thought-transference—has been furnished in recent years by a large number of carefully conducted experiments. It is difficult, in the face of accumulating testimonies, to resist the conclusion that some kind of communication at a distance does really take place through some channel which is not that of any known sense. But the value of this conclusion, if admitted, as

* " *Studies in Psychical Research,*" pp. 254-5.

an argument for Spiritualism is doubtful. Telepathy is claimed by some as a proof that soul, by some transcendental sympathy, can react upon soul. But in the present state of our ignorance such an inference is, in the mildest terms, premature. The record at most warrants the conjecture that telepathy may be a new manifestation of brain acting upon brain. We know no reason why the molecular disturbances which are presumed to be the physical accompaniment of thought should not be transmitted by ethereal undulations to some kindred nervous system, and there awake a response. On this view we should see in the hypothetic power of telepathy the remnant of a once serviceable faculty which may have taught to our ancestors the rudiments of social commerce, before the dawn of speech, and may still serve a like purpose for those below us in the scale of being. At any rate, when the facts themselves still hang in the balance, and the interpretation is still so obscure, death wraiths and visions can give but little support to the doctrine of spirit intervention.

But it may be urged that we have to deal not merely with apparitions of the dying, but with ghosts of those long dead. If telepathy is invoked to explain such ghosts, it must be telepathy from minds no longer embodied in the flesh. The argument need not detain us long. When authentic evidence is adduced of apparitions of the dead which convey some news from

that other world, or bear in themselves some credentials that they are not mere creations of the percipient's imagination, it will be time to consider what weight to assign to the argument. At present the supposed existence of such ghosts rests almost exclusively on traditional stories, or highly coloured recitals of recent experiences, mostly second-hand. I will quote one typical narrative, which, if deficient in the dramatic features of the popular ghost-story, has at least the merit of being recent and told at first hand by witnesses of sobriety and veracity. I received the following account, about eighteen months since, from the lips of the persons concerned. The house in which the events took place is known to me. It is now used as a boys' school.

Miss W., the daughter of the headmaster, writes :

"It was in July 1894 that I saw the figure. I was then about fourteen. I was getting ready for school at nine o'clock in the morning, and was about to walk through the box-room, when I saw, as I thought, my brother coming through it towards me. He had remained in bed that morning, not being well, and I thought he must have dressed and be coming down after all. I spoke to him when I was still several yards from him, asking what was the matter, as I thought he looked very miserable, and as if he had been crying. Without answering, the figure turned off through a door leading to a

bedroom. I followed, still thinking it was my brother, and saw no one in the room. There is another door in this room by which my brother could have got back to his room, so I went there and found him still in bed. He told me he had not left his room. I had not then been told anything about the house being haunted. When I went downstairs I told my parents what I had seen. I have never since seen anything of the kind in the house. The figure looked about my brother's height, and he was then about thirteen. It had dark clothes and hair, and looked very pale. As far as I remember, it wore knickerbockers. . . .

“E. W.”

One of the servants wrote :

“One afternoon in March 1898 I went upstairs about six o'clock. On opening the door of one of the bedrooms I saw, as I thought, a boy standing by the bed, in light clothing. Thinking it was the boy who slept in that room, changing his clothes, I drew back and closed the door. Hearing nothing, however, I looked in again, and thought I saw a figure pass from the bedside to the cupboard door in the room. On going into the room to make certain, I found the cupboard door shut and fastened, and no one in the room. I had heard the story about the house being haunted, but, though a

little startled, did not till afterwards connect it with what I had seen. I have never since seen anything of the kind.

“M. A.”

Miss L., a dressmaker, gave me the following account :

“It was one day in August last (1901) after tea, about 5.30 p.m., a very bright sunny day, I had just reached the angle of the back stairs between the first and second floors when I saw a figure dart out from the passage to my left hand and leap across the stairs, just in front of me, and run to the top of the flight. The figure seemed to be that of a fairly tall boy of about fourteen, in grey trousers, black jacket, black shoes. His hair was dark. He seemed to turn away his face from me, so that I could not see it. I followed the figure immediately—he was only a few feet in front of me—but it had vanished. I searched the upper part of the house, but could find no one. Some people had told me, a few years before, that the house was supposed to be haunted ; and I said then that it was most likely rats. I had never heard that the ghost of a boy was supposed to be seen in the house. . . .

(Signed in full) “M. L.” *

The authentic ghost, it will be seen, is not a convincing apparition. A vague, shadowy figure,

* *Journal, S.P.R.*, July 1902, pp. 265-7.

without life, meaning, or purpose, which flits across the stage as if projected from a magic lantern. Hardly on such transient and ambiguous phantoms as these, the mere vague recrudescence it would seem of uneasy dreams, can we base our hopes of immortality.

ECSTASY AND CLAIRVOYANCE

If the first conception of a world of spiritual beings had its origin in primitive reasoning on the phenomena of sleep and dreams, facts of an allied kind have constituted the main support of the belief at all subsequent stages of the world's history. It is by the manifestations associated with certain abnormal mental states—reverie, somnambulism, trance, ecstasy, possession—that Spiritualists have always illustrated and justified their belief. Some form of ecstasy or delirium was no doubt responsible for the Delphic oracles ; and similar states appear constantly to have been associated with religious mysteries. Ecstasy was a frequent feature in the lives of Christian saints. Spontaneous accesses of trance and catalepsy formed the foundation of most mediæval episodes of demoniac or divine possession—the Nuns of Loudun, the Tremblers of the Cevennes, the Convulsionaries at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, and so on. Similar psychological states are responsible for many of the

marvellous narratives of the witchcraft trials. But these occurrences were sporadic, and for the most part spontaneous. Crystals and similar substances have indeed been used in all ages for producing states favourable to visions and revelations, but it is not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that we meet with systematic exploration of spiritual mysteries through the trance. Nor, indeed, until the time of Swedenborg does the idea of the possibility of intercourse with distinctively human spirits appear to have been entertained in Christian communities. The spirits of the alchemists were creatures of the elements—sylphs, gnomes, and salamanders; the spiritual entities who revealed to Dr. Dee their mystic language never admitted a human origin. But Emanuel Swedenborg, in his trance, professed to commune habitually with the mighty dead, and claimed to have explored the furthest recesses of heaven and hell. After him, sprites and sylphs yielded place to Moses, John the Baptist, Charlemagne, Shakespeare, Franklin, and the innumerable host of the unknown dead. Swedenborg's teachings were still echoing through Europe when Mesmer discovered the possibility of inducing by artificial means a state of trance or somnambulism. In rationalistic Paris his disciples exploited the new state in the interests of a curious pseudo-science, and recognised in the varied manifestations of the "magnetic" trance no entity higher than the

cosmic vital fluid. But in Germany and elsewhere this science of animal magnetism was welcomed as throwing open to its votaries the gates of the spiritual world; and in the early years of the last century seeress after seeress claimed to reveal in the trance the soul's transcendent powers and immortal destiny.

The Rochester rappings of 1848 were preluded in America by "Nature's Divine Revelation"—a system of cosmic philosophy dictated in the trance by a clairvoyant youth named Andrew Jackson Davis. Both in America and this country, in the early years of the movement trance discourses and spirit teachings through the lips and hands of inspirational mediums prepared the way for the more material marvels of the *séance* room. And, finally, in the past decade the most remarkable evidence yet adduced for Spiritualism has been furnished by the trance utterances of an American medium, Mrs. Piper.

The manifestations of trance and automatism are extremely varied and complex, but they may roughly be divided into two main categories, forming the foundation for two distinct lines of argument tending to prove the survival of the soul after the death of the body. We have, in the first place, various testimonies indicating that the soul in trance possesses intellectual capacities and modes of perception beyond those of ordinary life, and regarded as demonstrating its superiority to the limits of

physical existence. We find, in the second place, facts which seem to point to actual communication with the spirits of the departed.

INSPIRATION—A. J. DAVIS

It is the case that in the trance, and allied conditions, the subject frequently exhibits intellectual powers very much beyond those displayed in his waking life. In particular, the memory is frequently enlarged, so that the entranced patient will recall events of his own past history which have lapsed from his waking mind. Further, both memory and imagination are occasionally stimulated to an extraordinary degree of activity. The most striking proof of this is to be found in the greatly enhanced powers of expression possessed by many persons in trance. One of the most conspicuous examples of this trance rhetoric is Andrew Jackson Davis, already referred to. As a youth of nineteen, having had but little opportunity for private study, and still less for formal instruction of any kind, he dictated in the course of some fifteen months a huge octavo volume, "The Principles of Nature : Her Divine Revelation, and a Voice to Mankind," expounding a new system of cosmic philosophy, with practical applications to existing society. The book, which was regarded by so good a critic as the late John Chapman as not unworthy to be

classed with the works of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, is certainly a very remarkable production for an uneducated shoemaker's apprentice. It propounds a religious philosophy not unlike that of Swedenborg; and a new social system which strongly resembles Fourier's doctrines. It is permeated throughout with the conception of evolution—a conception at the time of its publication (1847) sufficiently novel to account for the impression produced upon Chapman. But though some striking and valuable ideas are to be found in the book, the argument is far from being consecutive; the science is frequently misapplied and the philosophy misunderstood. Many passages are absolutely incoherent; and the language, passably eloquent, or, perhaps, rather grandiloquent, at its best, degenerates at its lowest into a mere barbaric jargon. The conclusion to which most persons will come who have patience to read the work dispassionately, and who acquit its author of conscious fraud, is that the youth had ideas and some share of imagination, and that his memory, stimulated by the conditions of the trance to prodigious activity, enabled him to retain and pour forth an undigested mass of all that he had read and heard of the writings of Swedenborg, Fourier, Brisbane, and the popular geologists and evolutionists of his time. A contemporary and sometime associate of Davis, under like conditions, reeled off inspirational poetry at the rate of 300 or 400

lines a day. Others would deliver extempore discourses or compose long dissertations on such high themes as human immortality and the nature of the spirit-world. Yet others would speak with tongues, which were occasionally identified, by persons having an imperfect acquaintance with those languages, as Italian, Chinese, or an Indian dialect. The physiological explanation of these curious, and, as yet, very inadequately studied manifestations, is probably that in certain persons the trance state acts like the intoxication of alcohol or opium. It can give us no new ideas—it would be difficult to find in all the voluminous records of “inspirational” writing and speaking any indication of inspiration other than that of the *Zeitgeist*—but it serves to quicken the processes of verbal association and to remove certain restrictions—in the language of the laboratory, inhibitions—which in normal life hinder us from letting ourselves go: the floodgates of speech are opened, and an unending river of more or less turbid rhetoric issues forth.

CLAIRVOYANCE AND PREVISION

But the trance state furnishes indications of other powers than these: and in particular of various modes of supersensuous perception whereby knowledge of the distant, the past and the future, seems to be gained. The chief

amongst these presumed transcendent faculties have been provisionally named clairvoyance, retrocognition and prevision. The late Frederic Myers has accumulated a large mass of testimony for the occasional operation of these faculties ; and has eloquently argued that they are such as "this material or planetary life could not have called into being, and whose exercise even here and now involves and necessitates the existence of a spiritual world." This, then, is the argument which we have to consider. Clairvoyance and prevision are not faculties which have a distinct field of utility here, or could conceivably have been acquired by the human race in the ordinary process of evolution ; they stand, therefore, as promises of a wider sphere of spiritual life hereafter, possibly also as reminders of a life in which the soul has already exercised those powers.*

That there is much testimony which points to the possession by certain favoured persons of faculties of this kind is apparent to any student of history. In modern times Swedenborg enforced his claims as a prophet by giving proofs of clairvoyance which impressed his contemporary, Kant, as being unquestionably authentic. From a distance of 300 miles he is said to have watched the progress of a serious fire at Stockholm, and to have told the people in whose company he was spending the evening when and where its course was stayed. On

* "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 267.

another occasion it is reported that he revealed to the widow of the Dutch Ambassador, De Marteville, the hiding-place of a missing document of considerable value. Frederika Hauffe, the seeress of Prevorst, gave many indications of her supernormal knowledge of events taking place at a distance, and sometimes of events still to come. The records of mesmerism and animal magnetism in every country in Europe are full of similar testimonies. And in our own day instances of the kind are occasionally reported on authority which seems unimpeachable. Gazing into a crystal or ball of glass is found with some persons to be peculiarly effective in inducing the condition favourable to "clairvoyance." Here, for instance, is a case—one of many—put on record by Mr. Andrew Lang. The seer, "Miss Angus," is known personally to Mr. Lang. Mr. ——— writes, on December 2, 1897 :

"On Thursday, March —, 1897, I was lunching with my friends, the Anguses, and during luncheon the conversation turned upon crystal balls and the visions that, by some people, can be seen in them. The subject arose owing to Miss Angus having just been presented with a crystal ball by Mr. Andrew Lang. I asked her to let me see it, and then to try and see if she could conjure up a vision of any person of whom I might think. . . . I fixed my mind upon a friend, a young trooper in the ——— (regiment named), as I thought his would be a striking and peculiar

personality, owing to his uniform, and because I felt sure that Miss Angus could not possibly know of his existence. I fixed my mind steadily upon my friend, and presently Miss Angus, who had already seen two cloudy visions of faces and people, called out, 'Now I see a man on a horse most distinctly; he is dressed most queerly, and glitters all over—why, it's a soldier! a soldier in uniform, but it's not an *officer*.' My excitement on hearing this was so great that I ceased to concentrate my attention upon the thought of my friend, and the vision faded away and could not afterwards be recalled."

The seeress's own account is as follows:

"I had only met Mr. —— the day before, and knew nothing about him or his personal friends. I took up the ball, which immediately became misty, and out of this mist gradually a crowd of people appeared, but too indistinctly for me to recognise any one, until suddenly a man on horseback came galloping along. I remember saying, 'I can't describe what he is like, but he is dressed in a very queer way—in something so bright that the sun shining on him quite dazzles me, and I cannot make him out!' As he came nearer I exclaimed, 'Why, it's a *soldier* in shining armour, but it's not an *officer*, only a soldier.' Two friends who were in the room said Mr. ——'s excitement was intense. . . ."

If we admit that the vision seen in this and similar cases represents something more

than a mere chance resemblance, we have the choice of two alternative lines of explanation. Either the seeress actually received, through some unimaginable mode of perception, the picture of an event then taking place in London, or she saw "in the glass" a mental image, *i.e.*, a quasi-hallucination suggested by Mr. ——'s thoughts. As we have abundant evidence that thought transmission occasionally takes place, and as a process of the kind suggested is not altogether remote from familiar physical analogies, the telepathic explanation is, *ceteris paribus*, to be preferred. Now, if we examine critically the records of "clairvoyance," at a distance or at close quarters, we shall find that while some of the alleged examples were probably due to deliberate fraud—as in the case of Major Buckley's clairvoyants, who professed to read the mottoes enclosed in sealed nuts—many more rest on such inadequate evidence that, bearing in mind the continual tendency to exaggerate in such matters, we are probably justified in regarding them as due to unconscious perversion of testimony. Of the comparatively small residue of instances carefully recorded and investigated at the time of their occurrence by competent observers, most fall readily within the explanation above suggested; and until more evidence is adduced, and, it may be added, evidence of a much higher quality, we are scarcely justified, even provisionally, in entertaining any other explanation.

What has been said of clairvoyance applies with even greater force to prevision, and to the rest of the hypothetical group of transcendental faculties. The evidence for them when critically examined shrinks almost to nothing. It is as much inferior in bulk and in quality to the evidence for telepathy as the supposed faculties themselves are more remote from mundane analogies. And the evidence even for telepathy must be judged to be as yet insufficient.

The indirect argument, then, for the soul's immortality, based upon the enlarged psychic faculties displayed in trance and allied states, is not strong enough to bear its own weight. The evidence for those psychic faculties, if dispassionately examined, will at most warrant a presumption in favour of some extra-sensory mode of communication between mortal mind and mind, and it has yet to be shown that such presumed communication cannot be effected by purely terrestrial agencies.

SPIRIT COMMUNION

The supposed communion with spirits through an entranced subject may be carried on in two ways. Either, as in the case of Swedenborg and the seeress of Prevorst, and Cahagnet's subject, Adèle Maginot, the entranced person professes himself able to see and converse with the spirits ; or the body of the entranced person

may purport to be taken possession of by a spirit, who uses the bodily organs through which to communicate with those around. In the first case, the proof of the alleged communication consists, of course, entirely in the content of the messages delivered from the "other side." In the second case, in addition to the messages themselves, we have the subsidiary evidence derived from the presentation, often exceedingly dramatic and lifelike, of the personality of the deceased through the organism of the medium. It will be convenient to deal with this latter item first, and to defer the consideration of the content until later.

"Possession" is a phenomenon which has occurred from very early times, and is even now very widespread amongst living races. It is impossible, therefore, to dismiss it as merely accidental or unimportant, still less as fraudulent. But it is only within the last generation or two that science has been able to give an adequate explanation of the manifestation. At the present day "possession" is probably the result of suggestion, partly a suggestion conveyed to the patient from the spectator, partly a suggestion made to the patient by himself. And the ultimate origin of this latter suggestion is no doubt to be found in a real change in the patient's feelings of personality. The complex of organic sensations, on which the feeling of identity may be presumed to depend, undergoes some change in the trance; the patient

feels that he is no longer himself, and it is an easy inference that he must, therefore, be somebody else. The Nuns of Loudun, like a recent patient of Professor Janet, identified that somebody else with the devil; the modern medium recognises a controlling spirit of a more affable kind. Of late years these changes of organic sensation, and their connection with the changes of consciousness and personality, have been demonstrated repeatedly—chiefly in neurotic patients in France and America. There was, a few years ago, in the Paris hospitals a man, Louis Vivé, who went through six different phases of personality, each endowed with a different range of memory and consciousness, and corresponding to as many different forms of partial paralysis and anæsthesia. Professor Janet has demonstrated that like enlargements and contractions of the sensory basis accompany the bewildering manifestation of alternating memories and identities in his Lucies and Leonies. Professor Flournoy has found signs of physical disturbance on a smaller scale (local anæsthetic patches and failures of muscular co-ordination) in his entranced subject Hélène Smith, when she is enacting the *rôle* of Simandini or Marie Antoinette. Even with the planchette writer it will often be found that the right hand has become anæsthetic in the act of writing.

The mere fact, then, of the entranced subject assuming an alien personality is in itself nothing to the purpose; there is a sufficient physio-

logical reason for it. Nor, when we remember the extraordinary minuteness and verisimilitude with which the hypnotic subject will act out the conception of any *rôle* which may be suggested to him—Napoleon, the Queen of Sheba, or a costermonger—can we lay much stress upon the life-like character of the impersonation. Evidentially such an impersonation is valuable only in so far as the medium reproduces characteristic movements, gestures, and turns of phrase of a person demonstrably unknown to him; and obviously matters of this kind, making as they do so strong an appeal to the emotions of the spectators, are peculiarly difficult to appraise dispassionately.

THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGES

The only evidence that can fairly be weighed in the balance, then, is that afforded by the nature of the messages delivered by the supposed spirits. There is an immense mass of records of messages delivered by entranced persons purporting to emanate from spirits of the dead, and conveying information accepted by the recipients as proof of identity. In the great majority of such cases, however, the proof is vitiated by the incompetency or the bias of the reporter, the meagreness of the record, or, as is most frequently the case, by its having been made months or years after the event.

Two sets of documents stand out as conspicuous exceptions : Cahagnet's reports of the *séances* with Adèle Maginot, and the records by Dr. Hodgson and others of Mrs. Piper's trance utterances. Cahagnet, a Parisian cabinet-maker who had experimented for some years in mesmerism, published in 1849 a book * containing an account of *séances* held with his subject Adèle, in which she professed in the trance to converse with the spirits of certain persons invoked by those who came to consult her. The report of each interview was drawn up by Cahagnet immediately after it had taken place, and was duly attested by the consultant.

Here is one example :

M. Petiet asks for M. Jérôme Petiet. Adèle sees a young man, about twenty-four or twenty-six years of age (he was thirty), not so tall as his brother now present ; auburn hair, rather long ; open forehead, arched and very pronounced eyebrows, brown and rather sunken eyes, nose rather long, pretty well formed ; complexion fresh, skin very white and delicate, medium-sized mouth, round dimpled chin. "He was weak in the chest ; he would have been very strong had it not been for this. He wears a rough grey vest, buttons with a shank, the eyes such as are no longer worn. I do not

* "Arcanes de la vie future dévoilés," vol. ii. The first volume, published in 1848, contains little which is evidential.

think they are brass, nor of the same stuff as the vest. They don't look to me very bright. His pantaloons are of a dark colour, and he wears low quartered shoes without any instep.

"This man was of a stubborn disposition, selfish, without any fine feelings, had a sinister look, was not very communicative, devoid of candour, and had but little affection for any one. He had suffered with his heart. His death was natural, but sudden. He died of suffocation." Adèle chokes as this man choked, and coughed as he did. She says that "he must have had moxas or a plaster applied to his back, and this accounts for the sore I see there. He had no disease, however, in that part. The spine was sound. Those who applied this remedy did not know the seat of the disease. He holds himself badly. His back is round without being humped."

M. Petiet finds nothing to alter in these details, which are very exact, and confirm him in his belief that the application of this plaster, advised by a man who was not a doctor, brought on his brother's death, which was almost sudden.

"Signed the present report as very exact.

"PETIET,

"19, RUE NEUVE-COQUENARD."

Note by Cahagnet.—The buttons that Adèle was unable to describe were of metal, a dirty white ground, and surrounded by a blue circle.

In this apparition there is a remarkable fact to be noted, viz., that Adèle experienced the same kind of illness as this man. I was obliged to release her by passes ; she suffered terribly.

The persons who came to consult Adèle were generally strangers, sometimes foreigners, of whose family and personal history she could have known nothing. When, as in the case just quoted, she was able to give a detailed and life-like description of some deceased relative, it is difficult to doubt that she did, in her trance, have access to knowledge which she could not have acquired by any ordinary means. Before we discuss the question whether or not that knowledge came to her from the spirits of the dead men and women whom she described so accurately, it will be well to consider the parallel revelations of Mrs. Piper. Mrs. Piper is an American lady who since 1887—that is throughout almost her whole career as a medium—has been under the close observation of members of the Society for Psychical Research. Dr. Hodgson has throughout this period up to the present time taken the main part in directing her sittings and recording the results. But his labours have been shared for short periods by Professor W. James, of Harvard, the late F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge and Dr. Walter Leaf. For many years past all those who have consulted Mrs. Piper have been introduced under an assumed name. She is, as a rule, entranced

throughout the interview. In her earlier sittings the revelations were made by word of mouth. Of late years she has communicated mainly by writing, thus furnishing an automatic record of her utterances, and leaving to the chronicler merely the task of recording the remarks made by those present, and—no light matter—of interpreting the writing. The following account by Professor W. James will give a fair idea of the impression produced by her earlier *séances*.

“The most convincing things said about my own immediate household were either very intimate or very trivial. Unfortunately, the former things cannot well be published. Of the trivial things I have forgotten the greater number, but the following, *rarae nantes*, may serve as samples of their class: She said that we had lost recently a rug, and I a waistcoat. (She wrongly accused a person of stealing the rug, which was afterwards found in the house.) She told of my killing a grey and white cat with ether, and described how it had ‘spun round and round’ before dying. She told how my New York aunt had written a letter to my wife, warning her against all mediums, and then went off on a most amusing criticism, full of *traits vifs*, of the excellent woman’s character. (Of course, no one but my wife and I knew the existence of the letter in question.) She was strong on the events in our nursery, and gave striking advice during our first visit to her about

the way to deal with certain 'tantrums' of our second child, 'little Billy-boy,' as she called him, reproducing his nursery name. She told how the crib creaked at night, how a certain rocking-chair creaked mysteriously, how my wife had heard footsteps on a stair, &c. &c. Insignificant as these things sound when read, the accumulation of them has an irresistible effect; and I repeat again what I said before, that, taking everything that I know of Mrs. Piper into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state, and that the definitive philosophy of her trances is yet to be found. The limitations of her trance information, its discontinuity and fitfulness, and its apparent inability to develop beyond a certain point, although they end by arousing one's moral and human impatience with the phenomenon, yet are, from a scientific point of view, amongst its most interesting peculiarities, since where there are limits there are conditions, and the discovery of them is always the beginning of an explanation.

"This is all I can tell you of Mrs. Piper. I wish it were more 'scientific.' But *valeat quantum!* it is the best I can do."*

The above account was written in 1890; and it will be seen that it contains no reference to any statement of facts unknown to the sitter.

* "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. vi., pp. 438-9.

But even at this time many facts had been communicated which were not within the conscious knowledge of the sitter, and could only be verified by subsequent inquiry. Thus Sir Oliver Lodge has put on record that he handed to the entranced Mrs. Piper a gold watch which had belonged to a deceased uncle; that Mrs. Piper, after one or two failures, gave the name of the uncle correctly as "Jerry;" that she purported to recognise the watch, and indicated correctly the existence of some nicks in the handle which could apparently be seen only when the outer case was removed. Further, "Uncle Jerry," pressed to give details of his boyhood as a test of his identity, mentioned many particulars of his past life which were known to his interlocutor, and some which were unknown. In the latter category he "recalled episodes, such as swimming the creek when they were boys together, and running some risk of getting drowned; killing a cat in Smith's field; the possession of a small rifle, and of a long, peculiar skin, like a snake-skin, which he thought was now in the possession of Uncle Robert." All these facts, writes Sir Oliver, belonging to a boyhood two-thirds of a century ago, have been more or less completely verified, though not without persistent research and much ransacking of ancient memories.

From 1892 onwards indications of knowledge of this kind—knowledge not in the conscious possession of any person present—have been

multiplied. In the early part of that year Mrs. Piper professed to be controlled in the trance by the spirit of one "George Pelham" (the name is substituted for the real one), a young New York journalist who had died some weeks previously. In the course of that year many of Pelham's friends, mostly unknown to Mrs. Piper, and introduced under assumed names, had interviews, and many communications were received, Pelham himself professing both to speak and write through Mrs. Piper's organism. Some of these communications were of so personal a nature that they cannot be published, referring as they did to the private concerns of the sitters. But those who received these private communications appear to have been satisfied that they were such as would naturally have proceeded from Pelham himself; and that in many cases the nature of the facts referred to rendered it difficult to conceive of any other source. But apart from these private utterances, the trance personality has afforded many more public proofs of its identity. Thus, the studs worn by one of the sitters, J. S., were identified by Pelham as having belonged to himself, and the statement made—unknown to J. S., but afterwards ascertained to be correct—that the studs had been taken from the dead body by Pelham's step-mother. At another sitting the information was given that Pelham's father in New York—the sittings being held in Boston—had recently broken the negative of his son's photograph, an

accident which the father had not even mentioned to his wife. On more than one occasion incidents taking place at a distance, and unknown to any one in the room, were described with approximate correctness. References were constantly made to Pelham's affairs, his manuscripts and personal effects, which betrayed an intimate acquaintance with his own concerns and those of his friends. Many long conversations, partly in writing and partly by voice, have been held with Dr. Hodgson and other persons known to the living Pelham; and throughout the trance intelligence has shown an individual personality—a personality, moreover, which is regarded by his friends as resembling that of the deceased Pelham. Finally, of all the numerous persons who were introduced at Mrs. Piper's *séances* under feigned names, it does not appear that the spirit Pelham has ever failed to recognise and name any person whom Pelham had known in the flesh, or ever pretended to recognise persons whom Pelham had not known.

Within recent years many other spirits of the dead have purported to speak or write through Mrs. Piper's organism, and have given such proofs of their presence as have sufficed to convince the witnesses.

Such, in bald outline—for I have merely made a brief selection from records covering many hundreds of closely printed pages—is the evidence upon which it is claimed that through the organism of certain entranced persons we

can hold communion with the spirits of the dead. What is to be said of this evidence? The first thing to be noticed is that the more critical witnesses, alike of Adèle's revelations and of Mrs. Piper's, especially in the earlier trances, have noticed that the limitations of the medium's supernormal knowledge were generally coincident with the limitations in the knowledge of her interlocutor; that with both mediums, in fact, the revelation reflected pretty accurately the thoughts and expectations of the inquirer, and that when the latter sought for information on points beyond his own ken, the medium guessed, and, pretty generally, guessed wrong. The majority, at any rate, of the earlier sittings suggest, indeed, some supernormal power of filching facts from living minds; but they suggest, as a rule, nothing more. As regards such information as that given to Sir Oliver Lodge, it is, of course, practically impossible to make sure that stories of the kind reproduced had not been heard in childhood and subsequently forgotten by the man who interrogated Mrs. Piper. If telepathy is an actual process, we know of no reason why it should not operate to transfer latent equally with conscious thought from one mind to another.

Moreover, at Mrs. Piper's earlier *séances*, at any rate, there was a good deal of shuffling, equivocation, and fishing for information, such as is common at *séances* with professional mediums. And these suspicious characteristics seem to

have re-emerged in the latest series of *séances* of which any record has been published. It may be added that the conditions under which the *séances* have been held, though as stringent as practicable, fail, nevertheless, to exclude altogether the possibility of extracting information from the sitter. The information volunteered by the trance intelligence is given in a curiously indirect, ambiguous, tentative and piece-meal fashion, which permits of it being supplemented and corrected in the very process of utterance, and in accordance with hints undesignedly let slip by the sitters. Thus, to take a single example: In the earlier sittings proper names were frequently pronounced in an ambiguous form, which forced the sitter to guess what names were actually intended. In the later sittings the writing presents similar ambiguities—the sitter has to ask, “is the word ‘mother’ or ‘brother,’ ‘Alice’ or ‘Annie,’” &c. &c.*

As regards the dramatic personations, Mrs.

* It is impossible within the limits of my present space to give an adequate idea of the curious complexity and indirectness of the communications, and the openings thus afforded for “fishing.” The reader is recommended to consult Professor Hyslop’s Report (“Proceedings, S.P.R.,” xvi.) and my own criticism thereon (“Proceedings, S.P.R.,” xvii. p. 374.) It should perhaps be added that I have no intention of accusing Mrs. Piper, as we know her in her waking state, of disingenuousness. In a case of this kind, whatever the true explanation of the trance, it seems permissible to distinguish sharply between the waking and the trance intelligence, and not visit the moral obliquities of the second on the first,

Piper's earliest control, an impersonation of extremely lifelike quality, has entirely failed to prove his identity. Dr. Phinuit's own account of himself was that he was a French physician, who was born at Marseilles about 1790, and died about 1860. He has given various particulars about his birth, education, and life in Paris, but the inquiries which have been made have failed to reveal any trace of such a person as having lived and died as stated. Moreover, it appears that, though Phinuit was sometimes very felicitous in diagnosing the ailments of those who consulted him, his actual medical knowledge was extremely limited; he did not know the Latin names of the various drugs which he prescribed, and could not recognise common medicinal herbs when shown to him. In other words, he has given no indications of possessing any scientific knowledge of medicine. Moreover, though professing to be the spirit of a French doctor, his knowledge of French appeared to extend only to a few simple phrases, and a slight accent, which occasionally proved serviceable in disguising a bad shot at a proper name. When challenged on this ignorance of his native language, he explained that it was due to his having lived for some years in Metz, where there were many English residents!

Examples of similar disingenuousness are to be found even in the later trance personalities. Thus "George Pelham," the most lifelike of them all, when asked on one occasion to

name two fellow members of a small society, refused on the ground that, as the names were known to his questioner, the test would be valueless. Later it appeared that he was unable to give the names.* The spirit of the Rev. W. S. Moses failed to meet a similar test, when the names asked for were unknown to his questioner. He gave names, but incorrect ones.†

But there is one test, success in which, seeing that it could not be explained by any conceivable extension of telepathy, would go far to substantiate the claim of the Spiritualists. Let these trance personalities state facts known only to the spirits which they purport to be. That test—though it has, I understand, been tried on several occasions—has never yet succeeded. Thus, to take an instance, an American lady, one Hannah Wild, being interested in Mrs. Piper's revelations, wrote shortly before her death a letter which she sealed and entrusted to the custody of Professor James for the express purpose of the test. After Hannah Wild's death, her spirit professed to speak through Mrs. Piper, and has dictated several versions of that sealed letter, all of them, as it appeared when the letter was opened, entirely wide of the mark.‡

In fine, we know already, from other sources, much of the subconscious intelligence which

* "Proceedings, S.P.R.," xiii., pp. 302-3.

† *Ibid.* xv., p. 23.

‡ "Proceedings, S.P.R." viii., pp. 10-15.

functions in the trance—its extraordinary cunning, its suggestibility, its aptitude for interpreting a gesture, a shrug, a look, a change of tone or breathing, or any other slight indication of the sitter's thought.

We believe, too, that when all normal avenues for acquiring knowledge seem to be effectually closed, there remains, before we can provisionally entertain the hypothesis of communication with discarnate spirits, the possibility that the information given in these trances may have been acquired by telepathy from the minds of the living. We remember that Polynesian witch doctors, mediæval nuns, magnetic clairvoyants and hystero-epileptic patients at the Salpêtrière and elsewhere have each in turn played many parts with no less skill and verisimilitude; and that the impersonations presented by Mrs. Piper and other latter-day mediums certainly appeal not less than those to the affections and emotions of the witnesses. Let these modern spirits meet the one test in which the medium's arts are of no avail: the one test which appeals to reason and to reason only. Let them reveal the contents of those sealed letters. Until then all past experience, and every reasonable estimate of probabilities, point to the conclusion that Dr. Phinuit and George Pelham and Imperator are even as the Lucie and Adrienne, the Léonie and Léonore of the Salpêtrière, the three Misses Beauchamp described by Dr. Morton Prince,* or the

* "Proceedings, S.P.R.," vol. xv., p. 466.

Cagliostro and Marie Antoinette of Hélène Smith.

CONCLUSION

I have endeavoured to show, then, that in modern as in primitive times the belief in spiritual agency is founded on facts of two kinds, physical and psychological: of which the first are wholly due to fraud and self-deception, and the others, though genuine in the main, have been grievously misinterpreted, and are at the best quite inadequate to bear the weight of the theory which has been based upon them.

But if the Spiritualistic interpretation of these facts could be justified, if it could be conclusively shown that spirits do take on material bodies, produce material results, and commune with us through the mouth of entranced mediums, the conclusions drawn from such facts would still have no claim to the title of Spiritualism. For what, after all, is the creed of the modern so-called Spiritualists. From Swedenborg onwards their prophets claim to have brought heaven and hell down to the level of earth; to have revealed another world constantly reacting on and interfering with the present state of existence: a world governed by laws that we cannot call other than physical, peopled by intelligences having some likeness to ourselves, and embodied in forms which, though *ex hypothesi* gifted with higher powers and

more far-reaching faculties than our own, have yet parts and dimensions and limitations. The next world—the Spiritualists proclaim—is a world of endless progress; it is, therefore, a world of conditions, imperfections, mutabilities.

How completely material the conception is may be gauged from a few quotations. Thus, a writer in A. J. Davis' organ, the *Univercælum*, explains elaborately that "the only difference between matter and spirit is of fine and coarse"; as if, he proceeds, one should fill a hogshead with cannon balls, and fill the interstices with musket balls, and again with small shot, and with sand, and with water, and so on, until, at some stage in the process, he holds out the promise that we should reach pure spirit. So, a little later, another Spiritualist, Dr. Ashburner, defined a train of thought as "a current of globules of highly refined matter." Others, again, in their evidence before the Dialectical Society, spoke of "thought" as being solid and having spatial dimensions. The conception of the soul held by the ordinary Spiritualist is that of a body of finer particles—"vastly more refined than the thinnest gas with which we are acquainted," finer probably even than the matter of a comet's tail *—growing with the growth of the visible material body, and answer-

* The simile is borrowed from Sergeant Cox's "Mechanism of Man," in which work a very full account of this theory is to be found. But the conception underlies all Swedenborgian and Spiritualist speculations.

ing to it, point for point and limb for limb. At the dissolution of the material body this cometary, or ethereal, or astral, or metaphysical body is supposed to survive. Thus is man's claim to an immortal soul vindicated, and thus is the materialist confuted.

Spiritualists have even called on men of science to invent for them a physical theory of that future state. One has suggested that our spiritual bodies are made of fixed ether; another, following the teachings of Democritus, that they are composed of finer atoms, moving in the interstices of the grosser particles which form the material of the visible universe; a third, that a soul is an organism which has its being in space of four dimensions. But ethereal substances, and intercalary vortex atoms, and bodies of four dimensions are not spiritual things, but physical. Unto science the Spiritualist has appealed, and by science he must be judged. Every new discovery in the physical sciences only serves to emphasise the inevitable conclusion, which Plato and Leibnitz and Kant reached without such aid, that the world which we can see and touch and reason upon is one world—an absolutely homogeneous order, a succession of unbroken and invariable sequences. It follows that if but the least of these seemingly mechanical sequences can, as we say, go on of itself, then the whole universe can go on of itself until the final catastrophe. There is no stage in the cosmic procession from the primæval

fire maelstrom at which we can say, Up to this point matter and the potencies of matter have been all-sufficient, but beyond this we need the finger of God. If the crystal can grow by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, we need seek no other cause for the manifestations of life and mind ; if by mechanical necessity the mercury can rise or fall in the barometer, by a like mechanical necessity we can explain a *Novum Organon*, or a Sistine Madonna. Nerve reaction and atmospheric pressure belong to the same order of things, and follow, as far as our senses and our reason can guide us, the same inexorable sequence. In that sequence the student of the physical sciences can find no room for will and consciousness, whether human or divine. He is not, therefore, to be called a materialist, unless he takes the further step, and proceeds to deny the reality of such things because they do not fit into the physical scheme. It is open to him, as Professor Lankester has shown, to recognise a mystery and his own inability to solve it, and to go on with his work. The true materialist is the man who fails to recognise the difficulty, who has not grasped the real nature of the problem ; who boasts that by extending our knowledge of things which we can handle and see, even if only with ethereal senses, we can compass the secret of the universe ; who looks to some discovery of the laboratory or the *séance* room to explain the mystery of will and consciousness,

and of existence itself; or who, blinder still, does not so much as realise that there are things which cannot be explained.

The modern Spiritualist, with his cometary souls and interstitial vortex atoms, can then, at best, hope to extend the domain of the physical sciences. If all its claims were fully substantiated, this pseudo-philosophy would have thrown no new light on the ultimate mysteries, would have done nothing to advance our knowledge of spiritual things. At most it would have propounded a materialism extending beyond the grave, and have placed the conception of a future life on a common-sense basis. It would seem, then, that modern Spiritualism cannot justify its pretensions to be either a philosophy or a religion; and that, until it has established its ethereo-material heaven, it cannot even claim to be common sense.

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