

SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA.

SEANCES AT HOME.

My knowledge of Spiritualism, has, for the most part, been gained by experiences in my own house. I have devoted years to the investigation of the subject, and have spared no expense in securing the aid of the most powerful mediums. Having satisfied myself of its reality, I have done all in my power to convince others. Whenever I had a séance with a good medium, and that was at intervals of only a few days, I made a point of inviting my friends to participate in it, and also received enquirers who were introduced to me. The sitters at my séances have been neither few nor unimportant, so that my experiments have been in reality conducted in public. By carefully selecting my sitters I have ensured the best manifestations. Sometimes when the conditions were particularly favourable, the spirits were able to do almost everything desired of them, and the power exercised by them has astounded all who witnessed

it. Some of these séances were of such a marvellous character that I think reports of them could not be otherwise than interesting to the reader, and in presenting them in the following pages I may first observe that the reports originally appeared in the *Medium*. As a reliable record of facts these communications addressed to the editor of that paper, assume an importance which I think it well to point out. They were written immediately after the incidents occurred, and while all the particulars were fresh in the memory. The greater number are from my own pen, but those letters which are written by others are, with a very few exceptions, certified by the name of the writer. It may be truly said that these narratives have been written and published within a week of the time at which the incidents therein reported occurred. This ensures a freshness, accuracy, and reliability which could not have been otherwise possible. The reports have not, in any case, been made up from faulty notes, aided by memory and influenced by subsequent considerations, nor have the records been retained for years after the occurrence of the facts, and just given to the world after all

the witnesses thereto were either dead or scattered abroad, so that all wholesome scrutiny was lost. On the contrary, these accounts were drawn up often within a few hours or minutes of the occurrence, and given to the world in a public journal within a few days at the utmost. This course has placed the letters under the criticism of all who attended the séances, and given them the opportunity of correcting inaccuracies if any were observed.

The following accounts are given in the order in which the séances were held, extending from July, 1870, to the end of the year—1873.

INSPIRATIONAL WHISTLING.

To the Editor of The Medium and Daybreak.

SIR,—After sitting for a short time in darkness, we heard raps on the table and on our chairs, after which the whole room vibrated powerfully. The medium, Mr. Herne, was entranced, but was unable to speak. Mr. Kent then described a female spirit as standing behind Mrs. Berry, with arms extended over her head. Mr. Kent took a concertina from the table, and after playing a few airs, Mrs. Berry requested our invisible friends to whistle an accompaniment, which they immediately did through Mr. Kent in the most magnificent manner I ever heard. Every air which was asked for was at once played, and cadences and shakes were whistled in the most finished style. "Home, sweet home!" was the last air played, and a lovely accompaniment

like the singing of birds was given by the invisibles. This terminated a most interesting séance.

July 5, 1870.

M. PEARSON.

The following letter is from the pen of Dr. Dixon, as also are all the letters signed with the initials "J. D." :—

AN EVENING WITH MR. JESSE H. B. SHEPARD, AND MR.
FRANK HERNE.

To the Editor of The Medium and Daybreak.

July the thirteenth, Mr. and Mrs. C. Pearson and myself met at the kind invitation of Mrs. Berry to be present at a séance with the above gentlemen as mediums. On assembling, Mrs. Berry led the way to an inner room, which she is happily able to appropriate to such meetings, furnished simply with chairs, a circular table, and a piano. From the room light can be excluded by well-arranged curtains. Absence of light having on the present occasion been thus secured, after sitting a few moments we had ordinary table sounds, then tiltings and levitations of the table, then detonations in the air, and finally the phenomena which we had been informed have recently been produced in the presence of Mrs. Berry. These were warblings as of birds, one, two, and sometimes three together, with gradually-increasing fervour and intensity. Some present saw birds from whom warbling, singing, and whistling proceeded. The warbling of one, Mr. Shepard said, came from its being perched on his shoulder, and another in like manner from Mr. Herne's shoulder. While this bird-singing was going on we all perceived waftings of cool air over our hands and faces, accompanied by delightful odours. These were repeated at various times during the séance.

Then some attempt was made to sing in a female voice through Mr. Herne. Mrs. Berry said she thought she recognised the voice as one she heard through the same medium more than a year previously, the spirit-singer then giving the name of Mrs. Honey. The voice said, or rather chanted, "Yes, I am Laura Honey, and, Doctor, my mother is also here and greets you." Only known to myself in the party was the fact that the mother of Mrs. Honey, the charming singer of more than thirty years ago, was a patient of mine. I used sometimes to see Mrs. Honey when I visited her mother, Mrs. Young, at her residence in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square.

Mr. Shepard seemed now to be entranced, and began speaking in some wild tongue with much volubility and with many curious guttural sounds. On our asking for an interpretation, in another voice, with measured accents and quaint phraseology, it was said, through the same medium, that the speech was from an Indian developing spirit, who said that very many spirits had brought their power to bear, through the present harmonious circle, upon the medium—not the medium through whom speech was then being made, but the other, who could be developed to be a great one. Mr. Herne's breathing sounded as if he were in deep sleep, and to or at him the Indian, through Mr. Shepard, again spoke with great vivacity and energy. There was some wonderful play of vocal sounds, articulate and inarticulate, between the two mediums, both entranced, and we heard other spirit-voices also, not through the mediums. When Mr. Shepard came out of the trance, he said he felt he had to go to the piano, and then through him was executed dance music. The door had been opened for the sake of fresh air, and the half-light of the adjoining apartment enabled us to see that the other medium had glided into the open part of the room, and was

there going through intricate, agile, and graceful dancing. On the musical medium ceasing, the dancing one seated himself on the floor and made guttural sounds of satisfaction, as the Indians are described to do.

Mr. Shepard, having taken a turn in the fresher air of the adjoining rooms, seated himself again at the piano, and then through him was executed as brilliant music as I ever heard come from his mediumistic hands, and then rushed from his wonderful throat contralto and bass singing in alternating passages. He said he was told that the influences were those of Madame Grobelle and Signor Lablache. I have heard the singing and playing through Mr. Shepard a dozen times, but none excelled this in power, variation, and finish, before an appreciating audience of four in the body, for I do not reckon the other medium as one, seeing that he was in trance all the time. As soon as our exclamations of wonder and delight were over, Mr. Herne rose to his feet, and through him was dramatically executed a *scène* in English verse, expressing much emotion: this was also a duet, but the man's part was rendered so vociferously that we were glad when he returned to the normal state.

We then composed ourselves for some manifestation of the direct voice. After one or two indistinct spirit-voices through the cardboard tube placed upon the table, we heard, in loud, distinct whispering, but in French, perfect in accent and intonation, spoken in the name of "Le Premier Napoleon," comments and answers to our questions upon the present political crisis of Europe. The voice said that war was inevitable—that in the coming events the Bourbon family were interested—that if the present circle would sit daily, he would be able, through it, to send messages to the Comtesse de G ——— at Paris for Isabella—that he could *influence* thousands of spirits, and should do so in the

interest of progress and equality. "Le Premier Napoleon," upon our assuring him of our regret that we could only meet occasionally, gave us all an impressive adieu.

After this, we obtained only strong manifestations, such as playful blows with the speaking tube, liftings and drivings of the table, detonations as by cracks of whips and shots of pistols, and so we adjourned.

While at supper we had strong vibrations and liftings of the table. At the close of the supper, the table was raised off the ground and dropped with a jar that made all jump in their chairs, but it made no impression upon Mr. Herne, for he had passed into trance, in which he was made to go through two of those personations which a year ago used to be regarded by so many with interest. One was that of "Catherine of Arragon," whose voice confirmed the view of "Le Premier Napoleon," as to coming events bringing the Bourbon family again into prominence. The other was "Mary Queen of Scots," who quoted lines which she alluded to as having been inscribed by her on the wall of her prison chamber the night before her execution, beginning, "Mortal! this day is thine. To-morrow, immortality is mine!"

8 Great Ormond Street, W.C.

J. D.

A REMARKABLE MANIFESTATION—SPIRITS DRINK ALE.

To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.

SIR,—Some of the facts of Spiritualism are so astounding that those who are favoured with them are somewhat loth to give them publicity. But, Sir, if that timid example had been followed from the first, no person would ever have heard of Spiritualism at all, for the simplest of the phenomena are equally wonderful, unaccountable, and improbable to the inexperienced mind, as are the most extraordinary.