

A DEFENCE OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.¹

It is with great diffidence, but under an imperative sense of duty, that the present writer accepts the opportunity afforded him of submitting to the readers of the Fortnightly Review some general account of a widespread movement, which, though for the most part treated with ridicule or contempt, he believes to embody truths of the most vital importance to human progress. The subject to be treated is of such vast extent, the evidence concerning it is so varied and so extraordinary, the prejudices that surround it are so inveterate, that it is not possible to do it justice without entering into considerable detail. The reader who ventures on the perusal of the succeeding pages may, therefore, have his patience tried; but if he is able to throw aside his preconceived ideas of what is possible and what is impossible, and in the acceptance or rejection of the evidence submitted to him will carefully weigh and be solely guided by the nature of the concurrent testimony, the writer ventures to believe that he will not find his time and patience ill-bestowed.

Few men, in this busy age, have leisure to read massive volumes devoted to special subjects. They gain much of their general knowledge, outside the limits of their profession or of any peculiar study, by means of periodical literature; and, as a rule, they are supplied with copious and accurate, though general, information. Some of our best thinkers and workers make known the results of their researches to the readers of magazines and reviews; and it is seldom that a writer whose information is meagre, or obtained at second-hand, is permitted to come before the public in their pages as an authoritative teacher. But as regards the subject we are now about to consider, this rule has not hitherto been followed. Those who have devoted many years to an examination of its phenomena have been, in most cases, refused a hearing; while men who have bestowed on it no adequate attention, and are almost wholly ignorant of the researches of others, have alone supplied the information to which a large proportion of the public have had access. In support of

(1) The following are the more important works which have been used in the preparation of this article:—Judge Edmond's "Spiritual Tracts," New York, 1858—1860. Robert Dale Owen's "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World," Trübner and Co., 1861. E. Hardinge's "Modern American Spiritualism," New York, 1870. Robert Dale Owen's "Debateable Land between this World and the Next," Trübner and Co., 1871. "Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society," Longmans and Co., 1871. "Year Book of Spiritualism," Boston and London, 1871. Hudson Tuttle's "Arcana of Spiritualism," Boston, 1871. *The Spiritual Magazine*, 1861—1874. *The Spiritualist Newspaper*, 1872—1874. *The Medium and Daybreak*, 1869—1874.

this statement it is necessary to refer, with brief comments, to some of the more prominent articles in which the phenomena and pretensions of Spiritualism have been recently discussed.

At the beginning of the present year the readers of this Review were treated to "Experiences of Spiritualism," by a writer of no mean ability, and of thoroughly advanced views. He assures his readers that he "conscientiously endeavoured to qualify himself for speaking on this subject" by attending five séances, the details of several of which he narrates; and he comes to the conclusion that mediums are by no means ingenious deceivers, but "jugglers of the most vulgar order;" that the "spiritualistic mind falls a victim to the most patent frauds," and greedily "accepts jugglery as manifestations of spirits"; and, lastly, that the mediums are as credulous as their dupes, and fall straightway into any trap that is laid for them. Now, on the evidence before him, and on the assumption that no more or better evidence would have been forthcoming had he devoted fifty instead of five evenings to the inquiry, the conclusions of Lord Amberley are perfectly logical; but, so far from what he witnessed being a "specimen of the kind of manifestations by which spiritualists are convinced," a very little acquaintance with the literature of the subject would have shown him that no spiritualist of any mark was ever convinced by any quantity of such evidence. In an article published since Lord Amberley's—in *London Society* for February—the author, a barrister and well-known literary man, says:—

"It was difficult for me to give in to the idea that solid objects could be conveyed, invisibly, through closed doors, or that heavy furniture could be moved without the interposition of hands. Philosophers will say these things are absolutely impossible; nevertheless, it is absolutely certain that they do occur. I have met in the houses of private friends, as witnesses of these phenomena, persons whose testimony would go for a good deal in a court of justice. They have included peers, members of parliament, diplomatists of the highest rank, judges, barristers, physicians, clergymen, members of learned societies, chemists, engineers, journalists, and thinkers of all sorts and degrees. They have suggested and carried into effect tests of the most rigid and satisfactory character. The media (all non-professional) have been searched before and after séances. The precaution has even been taken of providing them unexpectedly with other apparel. They have been tied; they have been sealed; they have been secured in every cunning and dexterous manner that ingenuity could devise, but no deception has been discovered and no imposture brought to light. Neither was there any motive for imposture. No fee or reward of any kind depended upon the success or non-success of the manifestations."

Now here we have a nice question of probabilities. We must either believe that Lord Amberley is almost infinitely more acute than Mr. Dunphy and his host of eminent friends—so that after five séances (most of them failures) he has got to the bottom of a mystery in which they, notwithstanding their utmost endeavours,

still hopelessly flounder—or, that the noble lord's acuteness does not surpass the combined acuteness of all these persons; in which case their much larger experience, and their having witnessed many things Lord Amberley has not witnessed, must be held to have the greater weight, and to show, at all events, that all mediums are not "jugglers of the most vulgar order."

In October last the *New Quarterly Magazine*, in its opening number, had an article entitled "A Spiritualistic Séance;" but which proved to be an account of certain ingenious contrivances by which some of the phenomena usual at séances were imitated, and both spiritualists and sceptics deceived and confounded. This appears at first sight to be an exposure of Spiritualism, but it is really very favourable to its pretensions; for it goes on the assumption that the marvellous phenomena witnessed do really occur, but are produced by various mechanical contrivances. In this case the rooms above, below, and at the side of that in which the séance was held had to be prepared with specially constructed machinery, with assistants to work it. The apparatus, as described, would cost at least £100, and would then only serve to produce a few fixed phenomena, such as happen frequently in private houses and at the lodgings of mediums who have not exclusive possession of any of the adjoining rooms, or the means of obtaining expensive machinery and hired assistants. The article bears internal evidence of being altogether a fictitious narrative; but it helps to demonstrate, if any demonstration is required, that the phenomena which occur under such protean forms and varied conditions, and in private houses quite as often as at the apartments of the mediums, are in no way produced by machinery.

Perhaps the most prominent recent attack on Spiritualism was that in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1871, which is known to have been written by an eminent physiologist, and did much to blind the public to the real nature of the movement. This article, after giving a light sketch of the reported phenomena, entered into some details as to planchette-writing and table-lifting—facts on which no spiritualist depends as evidence to a third party—and then proceeded to define its standpoint as follows:—

"Our position, then, is that the so-called spiritual communications come from *within*, not from without, the individuals who suppose themselves to be the recipients of them; that they belong to the class termed 'subjective' by physiologists and psychologists, and that the movements by which they are expressed, whether the tilting of tables or the writing of planchettes, are really produced by their own muscular action exerted independently of their own wills and quite unconsciously to themselves."

Several pages are then devoted to accounts of séances which, like Lord Amberley's, were mostly failures; and to the experiences of a

Bath clergyman who believed that the communications came from devils; and, generally, such weak and inconclusive phenomena only are adduced as can be easily explained by the well-worn formulæ of "unconscious cerebration," "expectant attention," and "unconscious muscular action." A few of the more startling physical phenomena are mentioned merely to be discredited and the judgment of the witnesses impugned; but no attempt is made to place before the reader any information as to the amount or the weight of the testimony to such phenomena, or to the long series of diverse phenomena which lead up to and confirm them. Some of the experiments of Professor Hare and Mr. Crookes are quoted, and criticised in the spirit of assuming that these experienced physicists were ignorant of the simplest principles of mechanics, and failed to use the most ordinary precautions. Of the numerous and varied cases on record of heavy bodies being moved without direct or indirect contact by any human being, no notice is taken, except so far as quoting Mr. C. F. Varley's statement, that he had seen, in broad daylight, a small table moved ten feet, with no one near it but himself, and not touched by him—"as an example of the manner in which minds of this limited order are apt to become the dupes of their own imaginings."

This article, like the others here referred to, shows in the writer an utter forgetfulness of the maxim, that an argument is not answered till it is answered at its best. Amid the vast mass of recorded facts now accumulated by spiritualists there is, of course, much that is weak and inconclusive, much that is of no value as evidence, except to those who have independent reasons for faith in them. From this undigested mass it is the easiest thing in the world to pick out arguments that can be refuted, and facts that can be explained away; but what is that to the purpose? It is not these that have convinced any one; but those weightier, oft-repeated and oft-tested facts which the writers referred to invariably ignore.

Professor Tyndall has also given the world (in his "Fragments of Science," published in 1871) some account of his attempt to investigate these phenomena. Again we have a minute record of a séance which was a failure; and in which the Professor, like Lord Amberley, easily imposed on some too credulous spiritualists by improvising a few manifestations of his own. The article in question is dated as far back as 1864. We may therefore conclude that the Professor has not seen much of the subject; nor can he have made himself acquainted with what others have seen and carefully verified, or he would hardly have thought his communication worthy of the place it occupies among original researches and positive additions to human knowledge. Both its facts and its reasonings have been well replied to by Mr. Patrick Fraser Alexander, in his little work

entitled, "Spiritualism ; a Narrative and a Discussion," which we recommend to those who care to see how a very acute yet unprejudiced mind looks at the phenomena, and how inconclusive, even from a scientific standpoint, are the experiences adduced by Professor Tyndall.

The discussion in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1868, and a considerable private correspondence, indicates that scientific men almost invariably assume, that in this inquiry they should be permitted, at the very outset, to impose conditions ; and if, under such conditions, nothing happens, they consider it a proof of imposture or delusion. But they well know that, in all other branches of research, nature, not they, determines the essential conditions without a compliance with which no experiment will succeed. These conditions have to be learnt by a patient questioning of nature, and they are different for each branch of science. How much more may they be expected to differ in an inquiry which deals with subtle forces of the nature of which the physicist is wholly and absolutely ignorant ! To ask to be allowed to deal with these unknown phenomena as he has hitherto dealt with known phenomena, is practically to prejudge the question, since it assumes that both are governed by the same laws.

From the sketch which has now been given of the recent treatment of the subject by popular and scientific writers, we can summarise pretty accurately their mental attitude in regard to it. They have seen very little of the phenomena themselves, and they cannot believe that others have seen much more. They have encountered people who are easily deceived by a little unexpected trickery, and they conclude that the convictions of spiritualists generally are founded on phenomena produced, either consciously or unconsciously, in a similar way. They are so firmly convinced on *à priori* grounds that the more remarkable phenomena said to happen do not really happen, that they will back their conviction against the direct testimony of any body of men ; preferring to believe that they are all the victims of some mysterious delusion whenever imposture is out of the question. To influence persons in this frame of mind, it is evident that *more* personal testimony to isolated facts is utterly useless. They have, to use the admirable expression of Dr. Carpenter, "no place in the existing fabric of their thought into which such facts can be fitted." It is necessary therefore to modify the "fabric of thought" itself ; and it appears to the present writer that this can best be done by a general historic sketch of the subject ; and by showing, by separate lines of inquiry, how wide and varied is the evidence, and how remarkably these lines converge towards one uniform conclusion. The endeavour will be made to indicate, by typical examples of each class of evidence and without unnecessary detail, the cumulative force of the argument.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

Modern Spiritualism dates from March, 1848; it being then that, for the first time, intelligent communications were held with the unknown cause of the mysterious knockings and other sounds, similar to those which had disturbed the Mompesson and Wesley families in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This discovery was made by Miss Kate Fox, a girl of nine years old, and the first recognised example of an extensive class now known as mediums. It is worthy of remark, that this very first "modern spiritual manifestation" was subjected to the test of unlimited examination by all the inhabitants of the village of Hydesville, New York. Though all were utter sceptics, no one could discover any cause for the noises, which continued, though with less violence, when all the children had left the house. Nothing is more common than the remark, that it is absurd and illogical to impute noises, of which we cannot discover the cause, to the agency of spirits. So it undoubtedly is when the noises are merely noises; but is it so illogical when these noises turn out to be signals, and signals which spell out a fact, which fact, though wholly unknown to all present, turns out to be true? Yet, on this very first occasion, twenty-six years ago, the signals declared that a murdered man was buried in the cellar of the house; it indicated the exact spot in the cellar under which the body lay; and upon digging there, at a depth of six or seven feet, considerable portions of a human skeleton were found. Yet more; the name of the murdered man was given, and it was ascertained that such a person had visited that very house and had disappeared five years before, and had never been heard of since. The signals further declared that he, the murdered man, was the signaller; and as all the witnesses had satisfied themselves that the signals were not made by any living person or by any assignable cause, the logical conclusion from the facts was, that it *was* the spirit¹ of the murdered man; although such a conclusion might be to some in the highest degree improbable, and to others in the highest degree absurd.

The Misses Fox now became involuntary mediums, and the family (which had removed to the city of Rochester) were accused of imposture, and offered to submit the children to examination by a committee of townsmen appointed in public meeting. Three committees were successively appointed; the last, composed of violent sceptics who had accused the previous committees of stupidity

(1) It may be as well here to explain that the word "spirit," which is often considered to be so objectionable by scientific men, is used throughout this article (or at all events in the earlier portions of it) merely to avoid circumlocution, in the sense of the "intelligent cause of the phenomena," and not as implying "the spirits of the dead," unless so expressly stated.

or connivance. But all three, after unlimited investigation, were forced to declare that the cause of the phenomena was undiscoverable. The sounds occurred on the wall and floor while the mediums, after being thoroughly searched by ladies, "stood on pillows, barefooted, and with their clothes tied round their ankles." The last and most sceptical committee reported that, "They had heard sounds, and failed utterly to discover their origin. They had proved that neither machinery nor imposture had been used; and their questions, *many of them being mental*, were answered correctly." When we consider that the mediums were two children under twelve years of age, and the examiners utterly sceptical American citizens, thoroughly resolved to detect imposture, and urged on by excited public meetings, it may perhaps be considered that even at this early stage the question of imposture or delusion was pretty well settled in the negative.

In a short time persons who sat with the Misses Fox found themselves to have similar powers in a greater or less degree; and in two or three years the movement had spread over a large part of the United States, developing into a variety of strange forms, encountering the most violent scepticism and the most rancorous hostility, yet always progressing, and making converts even among the most enlightened and best educated classes. In 1851, some of the most intelligent men in New York—judges, senators, doctors, lawyers, merchants, clergymen, and authors—formed themselves into a society for investigation. Judge Edmunds was one of these; and a sketch of the kind and amount of evidence that was required to convince him will be given further on. In 1854 a second spiritual society was formed in New York. It had the names of four judges and two physicians among its vice-presidents, showing that the movement had by this time become respectable, and that men in high social positions were not afraid of identifying themselves with it. A little later Professor Mapes, an eminent agricultural chemist, was led to undertake the investigation of Spiritualism. He formed a circle of twelve friends, most of them men of talent and sceptics, who bound themselves to sit together weekly, with a medium, twenty times. For the first eighteen evenings the phenomena were so trivial and unsatisfactory, that most of the party felt disgusted at the loss of time; but the last two sittings produced phenomena of so startling a character, that the investigation was continued by the same circle *for four years, and all became spiritualists*.

By this time the movement had spread into every part of the Union, and, notwithstanding that its adherents were abused as impostors or dupes, that they were in several cases expelled from colleges and churches, and were confined as lunatics, and that the whole thing was "explained" over and over again, it has continued

to spread up to the present hour. The secret of this appears to have been, that the explanations given never applied to the phenomena continually occurring, and of which there were numerous witnesses. A medium was raised in the air in a crowded room in full daylight. ("Modern American Spiritualism," p. 279.) A scientific sceptic prepared a small portable apparatus by which he could produce an instantaneous illumination; and, taking it to a dark séance at which numerous musical instruments were played, suddenly lighted up the room while a large drum was being violently beaten, in the certain expectation of revealing the impostor to the whole company. But what they all saw was the drumstick itself beating the drum, with no human being near it. It struck a few more blows, then rose into the air and descended gently on to the shoulder of a lady. (Same work, p. 337.) At Toronto, Canada, in a well-lighted room, an accompaniment to a song was played on a closed and locked piano. (Same work, p. 463.) Communications were given in raised letters on the arm of an ignorant servant girl who often could not read them. They sometimes appeared while she was at her household work, and after being read by her master or mistress would disappear. (Same work, p. 196.) Letters closed in any number of envelopes, sealed up or even pasted together over the whole of the written surface, were read and answered by certain mediums in whom this special power was developed. It mattered not what language the letters were written in; and it is upon record that letters in German, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, French, Welsh, and Mexican, have been correctly answered in the corresponding languages by a medium who knew none of them. (Judge Edmunds's "Letters on Spiritualism," pp. 59—103, Appendix.) Other mediums drew portraits of deceased persons whom they had never known or heard of. Others healed diseases. But those who helped most to spread the belief were, perhaps, the trance speakers, who, in eloquent and powerful language, developed the principles and the uses of Spiritualism, answered objections, spread abroad a knowledge of the phenomena, and thus induced sceptics to inquire into the facts; and inquiry was almost invariably followed by conversion. Having repeatedly listened to three of these speakers who have visited this country, I can bear witness that they fully equal, and not unfrequently surpass, our best orators and preachers; whether in finished eloquence, in close and logical argument, or in the readiness with which appropriate and convincing replies are made to all objectors. They are also remarkable for the perfect courtesy and suavity of their manner, and for the extreme patience and gentleness with which they meet the most violent opposition and the most unjust accusations.

Men of the highest rank and greatest ability became convinced

by these varied phenomena. No amount of education, of legal, medical, or scientific training, was proof against the overwhelming force of the facts, whenever these facts were systematically and perseveringly inquired into. The number of spiritualists in the Union is, according to those who have the best means of judging, from eight to eleven millions. This is the estimate of Judge Edmonds, who has had extensive correspondence on the subject with every part of the United States. The Hon. R. D. Owen, who has also had great opportunities of knowing the facts, considers it to be approximately correct; and it is affirmed by the editors of the "Year Book of Spiritualism" for 1871. These numbers have been held to be absurdly exaggerated by persons having less information, especially by strangers who have made superficial inquiries in America; but it must be remembered that the spiritualists are to a very limited extent an organized body, and that the mass of them make no public profession of their belief, but still remain members of some denominational church—circumstances that would greatly deceive an outsider. Nevertheless, the organization is of considerable extent. There were in America, in 1870, 20 State associations and 105 societies of spiritualists, 207 lecturers, and about the same number of public mediums.

In other parts of the world the movement has progressed more or less rapidly. Several of the more celebrated American mediums have visited this country, and not only made converts in all classes of society, but led to the formation of private circles and the discovery of mediumistic power in hundreds of families. There is scarcely a city or a considerable town in continental Europe at the present moment where spiritualists are not reckoned by hundreds, if not by thousands. There are said, on good authority, to be fifty thousand avowed spiritualists in Paris and ten thousand in Lyons; and the numbers in this country may be roughly estimated by the fact that there are four exclusively spiritual periodicals, one of which has a circulation of five thousand weekly.

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE PRECEDING SKETCH.

Before proceeding to a statement of the evidence which has convinced the more educated and more sceptical converts, let us consider briefly the bearing of the undoubted fact, that (to keep within bounds) many thousands of well-informed men, belonging to all classes of society and all professions, have, in each of the great civilised nations of the world, acknowledged the objective reality of these phenomena; although, almost without exception, they at first viewed them with dislike or contempt, as impostures or delusions. There is nothing parallel to it in the history of human thought; because there never before existed so strong and appa-

rently so well-founded a conviction that phenomena of this kind never have happened and never can happen. It is often said, that the number of adherents to a belief is no proof of its truth. This remark justly applies to most religions whose arguments appeal to the emotions and the intellect but not to the evidence of the senses. It is equally just as applied to a great part of modern science. The almost universal belief in gravitation, and in the undulatory theory of light, does not render them in any degree more probable; because very few indeed of the believers have tested the facts which most convincingly demonstrate those theories, or are able to follow out the reasoning by which they are demonstrated. It is for the most part a blind belief accepted upon authority. But with these spiritual phenomena the case is very different. They are to most men so new, so strange, so incredible, so opposed to their whole habit of thought, so apparently opposed to the pervading scientific spirit of the age, that they cannot and do not accept them on second-hand evidence, as they do almost every other kind of knowledge. The thousands or millions of spiritualists, therefore, represent to a very large extent men who have witnessed, examined, and tested the evidence for themselves, over and over and over again, till that which they had at first been unable to admit *could* be true, they have at last been compelled to acknowledge *is* true. This accounts for the utter failure of all the attempted "exposures" and "explanations" to convince one solitary believer of his error. The exposers and explainers have never got beyond those first difficulties which constitute the *pons asinorum* of Spiritualism, which every believer has to get over, but at which early stage of investigation no converts are ever made. By explaining table-turning, or table-tilting, or raps, you do not influence a man who was never convinced by these, but who, in broad daylight, sees objects move without contact, and behave as if guided by intelligent beings; and who sees this in a variety of forms, in a variety of places, and under such varied and stringent conditions, as to make the fact to him just as real as the movement of iron to the magnet. By explaining automatic writing (which itself convinces no one but the writer, and not always even him), you do not affect the belief of the man who has obtained writing when neither pencil nor paper were touched by any one; or has seen a hand not attached to any human body take up a pencil and write; or, as Mr. Andrew Leighton, of Liverpool, testifies, has seen a pencil rise of itself on a table and write the words—"*And is this world of strife to end in dust at last?*" Thus it is that there are so few recantations or perverts in Spiritualism; so few, that it may be truly said there are none. After much inquiry and reading I can find no example of a man who, having acquired a good personal knowledge of all the chief phases of the

phenomena, has subsequently come to disbelieve in their reality. If the "explanations" and "exposures" were good for anything, or if it were an imposture to expose or a delusion to explain, this could not be the case, because there are numbers of men who have become convinced of the facts, but who have not accepted the spiritual theory. These are, for the most part, in an uncomfortable and unsettled frame of mind, and would gladly welcome an explanation which really explained anything—but they find it not. As an eminent example of this class, I may mention Dr. J. Lockhart Robertson, long one of the editors of the *Journal of Mental Science*—a physician who, having made mental disease his special study, would not be easily taken in by any psychological delusions. The phenomena he witnessed fourteen years ago were of a violent character; a very strong table being, at his own request and in his own house, broken to pieces while he held the medium's hands. He afterwards himself tried to break a remaining leg of the table, but failed to do so after exerting all his strength. Another table was tilted over while all the party sat on it. He subsequently had a sitting with Mr. Home, and witnessed the usual phenomena occurring with that extraordinary medium—such as the accordion playing "most wonderful music without any human agency," "a shadow hand, not that of any one present, which lifts a pencil and writes with it," &c., &c.; and he says that he can "no more doubt the physical manifestations of (so called) Spiritualism than he would any other fact—as, for example, the fall of an apple to the ground of which his senses informed him." His record of these phenomena, with the confirmation by a friend who was present, is published in the "Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism," p. 247; and, at a meeting of Spiritualists in 1870, he reasserted the facts, but denied their spiritual origin. To such a man the Quarterly Reviewer's explanations are worthless; yet it may be safely said, that every advanced Spiritualist has seen more remarkable, more varied, and even more inexplicable phenomena than those recorded by Dr. Robertson, and are therefore still further out of reach of the arguments referred to, which are indeed only calculated to convince those who know little or nothing of the matter.

EVIDENCE OF THE FACTS.

The subject of the evidences of the objective phenomena of Spiritualism is such a large one that it will be only possible here to give a few typical examples, calculated to show how wide is their range, and how conclusively they reach every objection that the most sceptical have brought against them. This may perhaps be best done by giving, in the first place, an outline of the career of two or three well-known mediums; and, in the second, a sketch of the experiences

and investigations of a few of the more remarkable converts to Spiritualism.

Career of Remarkable Mediums.—Miss Kate Fox, the little girl of nine years old, who, as already stated, was the first “medium” in the modern sense of the term, has continued to possess the same power for twenty-six years. At the very earliest stages of the movement, sceptic after sceptic, committee after committee, endeavoured to discover “the trick;” but if it was a trick this little girl baffled them all, and the proverbial acuteness of the Yankee was of no avail. In 1860, when Dr. Robert Chambers visited America, he suggested to his friend, Robert Dale Owen, the use of a balance to test the lifting power. They accordingly, without pre-arrangement with the medium, took with them a powerful steelyard, and suspended from it a dining-table weighing 121 pounds. Then, under a bright gas-light, the feet of the two mediums (Miss Fox and her sister) being both touched by the feet of the gentlemen, and the hands of all present being held over but not touching the table, it was made lighter or heavier at request, so as to weigh at one time only 60. at another 134 pounds. This experiment, be it remembered, was identical with one proposed by Faraday himself as being conclusive. Mr. Owen had many sittings with Miss Fox for the purpose of test; and the precautions he took were extraordinary. He sat with her alone; he frequently changed the room without notice; he examined every article of furniture; he locked the doors and fastened them with strips of paper privately sealed; he held both the hands of the medium. Under these conditions various phenomena occurred, the most remarkable being the illumination of a piece of paper (which he had brought himself, cut of a peculiar size, and privately marked), showing a dark hand writing on the floor. The paper afterwards rose up on to the table with legible writing upon it, containing a promise which was subsequently verified. (“Debateable Land,” p. 293.)

But Miss Fox’s powers were most remarkably shown in the séances with Mr. Livermore, a well-known New York banker, and an entire sceptic before commencing these experiments. These sittings were more than three hundred in number, extending over five years. They took place in four different houses (Mr. Livermore’s and the medium’s being both changed during this period), under tests of the most rigid description. The chief phenomenon was the appearance of a tangible, visible, and audible figure of Mr. Livermore’s deceased wife, sometimes accompanied by a male figure, purporting to be Dr. Franklin. The former figure was often most distinct and absolutely life-like. It moved various objects in the room. It wrote messages on cards. It was sometimes formed out of a luminous cloud, and again vanished before the eyes of the witnesses. It allowed a portion of its dress to be cut off, which though at first of strong

and apparently material gauzy texture, yet in a short time melted away and became invisible. Flowers which melted away were also given. These phenomena occurred best when Mr. L. and the medium were alone; but two witnesses were occasionally admitted, who tested everything and confirmed Mr. L.'s testimony. One of these was Mr. Livermore's physician, the other his brother-in-law; the latter previously a sceptic. The details of these wonderful séances were published in the *Spiritual Magazine* in 1862 and 1863; and the more remarkable are given in Owen's "Debateable Land," from which work a good idea may be formed of the great variety of the phenomena that occurred and the stringent character of the tests employed.

Miss Fox recently came to England, and here also her powers have been tested by a competent man of science, and found to be all that has been stated. She is now married to an English barrister, and some of the strange phenomena which have so long accompanied her, attach themselves to her infant child, even when its mother is away, to the great alarm of the nurse. We have here, therefore, a career of twenty-six years of mediumship of the most varied and remarkable character; mediumship which has been scrutinized and tested from the first hour of its manifestation down to this day, and with one invariable result—that no imposture or attempt at imposture has ever been discovered, and no cause ever been suggested that will account for the phenomena except that advanced by Spiritualists.

Mr. Daniel D. Home is perhaps the best known medium in the world; and his powers have been open to examination for at least twenty years. Nineteen years ago Sir David Brewster and Lord Brougham had a sitting with him—sufficiently acute and eminent observers, and both, of course, thorough sceptics. In the "Home Life of Sir David Brewster," we have, fortunately, his own record of this sitting made *at the time*, although six months later, in a letter to the *Morning Advertiser*, he made the contradictory statement, "I saw enough to satisfy myself they could all be produced by human hands and feet." He says: "The table actually rose from the ground when no hand was upon it;" and "a small hand-bell was laid down with its mouth on the carpet, and it actually rang when nothing could have touched it. The bell was then placed on the other side, still upon the carpet, and it came over to me and placed itself in my hand. It did the same to Lord Brougham." And he adds, speaking for both, "We could give no explanation of them, and could not conjecture how they could be produced by any kind of mechanism." Coming from the author of "Letters on Natural Magic," this is pretty good testimony.

These and far more marvellous phenomena have been repeated from that day to this, many thousands of times, and almost always in private houses at which Mr. Home visits. Everybody testifies to the fact that he offers the most ample facilities for investigation; and to this I can myself bear witness, having been invited by him to examine as closely as I pleased an accordion, held by his one hand, keys downward, and in that position playing very sweetly. But, perhaps, the best attested and most extraordinary phenomenon connected with Mr. Home's mediumship is what is called the fire test. In a state of trance he takes a glowing coal from the hottest part of a bright fire, and carries it round the room, so that every one may see and feel that it is a real one. This is testified by Mr. H. D. Jencken, Lord Lindsay, Lord Adare, Miss Douglas, Mr. S. C. Hall, and many others. But, more strange still, when in this state he can detect the same power in other persons, or convey it to them. A lump of red-hot coal was once placed on Mr. S. C. Hall's head in the presence of Lord Lindsay and four other persons. Mrs. Hall, in a communication to the Earl of Dunraven (given in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1870, p. 178), says:—

“Mr. Hall was seated nearly opposite to where I sat; and I saw Mr. Home, after standing about half a minute at the back of Mr. Hall's chair, deliberately place the lump of burning coal on his head! I have often wondered that I was not frightened, but I was not; I had perfect faith that he would not be injured. Some one said, ‘Is it not hot?’ Mr. Hall answered, ‘Warm, but not hot.’ Mr. Home had moved a little way, but returned, still in a trance; he smiled, and seemed quite pleased, and then proceeded to draw up Mr. Hall's white hair over the red coal. The white hair had the appearance of silver thread over the red coal. Mr. Home drew the hair into a sort of pyramid, the coal, still red, showing beneath the hair.”

When taken off the head, which it had not in the slightest degree injured or singed the hair, others attempted to touch it and were burnt. Lord Lindsay and Miss Douglas have also had hot coals placed in their hands, and they describe them as feeling rather cold than hot; though at the same time they burn any one else, and even scorch the face of the holder if approached too closely. The same witnesses also testify that Mr. Home has placed red-hot coals inside his waist-coat without scorching his clothes, and has put his face into the middle of the fire, his hair falling into the flames, yet not being the least singed. The same power of resisting fire can be temporarily given to inanimate objects. Mr. H. Nisbet of Glasgow states (*Human Nature*, Feb., 1870), that in his own house, in January, 1870, Mr. Home placed a red-hot coal in the hands of a lady and gentleman, which they only felt warm; and then placed the same piece on a folded newspaper, burning a hole through eight layers of paper. He then took a fresh and blazing coal and laid it on the same newspaper, carrying it about the room for three minutes,

when the paper was found, this time, not to have been the least burnt. Lord Lindsay further declares—and as one of the few noblemen who do real scientific work his evidence must be of some value—that on eight occasions he has had red-hot coals placed on his own hand by Home without injury. Mr. W. H. Harrison (*Spiritualist*, March 15th, 1870), saw him take a large coal, which covered the palm of his hand, and stood six or seven inches high. As he walked about the room it threw a ruddy glow on the walls, and when he came to the table with it, the heat was felt in the faces of all present. The coal was thus held for five minutes. These phenomena have now happened scores of times in the presence of scores of witnesses. They are facts of the reality of which there can be no doubt; and they are altogether inexplicable by the known laws of physiology and heat.

The powers of Mr. Home have lately been independently tested by Serjeant Cox and Mr. Crookes, and both these gentlemen emphatically proclaim that he invites tests and courts examination. Serjeant Cox, in his own house, has had a new accordion (purchased by himself that very day) play by itself, in his own hand, while Mr. Home was playing the piano. Mr. Home then took the accordion in his left hand, holding it with the keys downwards while playing the piano with his right hand, “and it played beautifully in accompaniment to the piano, for at least a quarter of an hour.” (“What Am I?” vol. ii. p. 388.)

As to the possibility of these things being produced by trick, if further evidence than their mere statement be required, we have the following by Mr. T. Adolphus Trollope, who says, “I may also mention that Bosco, one of the greatest professors of legerdemain ever known, in a conversation with me upon the subject, utterly scouted the idea of the possibility of such phenomena as I saw produced by Mr. Home being performed by any of the resources of his art.”

Mr. Home's life has been to a great extent a public one. He has spent much of his time as a guest in the houses of people of rank and talent. He numbers among his friends many who are eminent in science, art, and literature—men certainly not inferior in perceptive or reasoning power to those who, not having witnessed the phenomena, disbelieve in their occurrence. For twenty years he has been exposed to the keen scrutiny and never-ceasing suspicion of innumerable inquirers; yet no proof has ever been given of trickery, no particle of machinery or apparatus ever been detected. But the phenomena are so stupendous that, if impostures, they could only be performed by machinery of the most elaborate, varied, and cumbrous nature, requiring the aid of several assistants and confederates. The theory that they are delusions is equally untenable,

unless it is admitted that there is no possible means of distinguishing delusion from reality.

The last medium to whose career I shall call attention is Mrs. Guppy (formerly Miss Nichol), and in this case I can give some personal testimony. I knew Miss Nichol before she had ever heard of spiritualism, table-rapping, or anything of the kind, and we first discovered her powers on asking her to sit for experiment in my house. This was in November, 1866, and for some months we had constant sittings, and I was able to watch and test the progress of her development. I first satisfied myself of the rising of a small table completely off the floor, when three or four persons (including Miss N.) placed their hands on it. I tested this by secretly attaching threads or thin strips of paper underneath the claws, so that they must be broken if any one attempted to raise the table with their feet—the only available means of doing so. The table still rose a full foot off the floor in broad daylight. In order to show this to friends with less trouble, I made a cylinder of hoops and brown paper, in which I placed the table so as to keep feet and dresses away from it while it rose, which it did as freely as before. Perhaps more marvellous was the placing of Miss N. herself on the table; for although this always happened in the dark, yet, under the conditions to be named, deception was impossible. I will relate one sitting of which I have notes. 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 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 is gone from me." A light was at once struck, and we found Miss N. quietly seated in 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, noiselessly, and almost instantaneously, with five or six persons close around her, appeared, and still appears to me, knowing her intimately, to be physically impossible.

Another very curious and beautiful phenomenon was the production of delicate musical sounds, without any object calculated to produce them being in the room. On one occasion a German lady,

who was a perfect stranger to Miss Nichol, and had never been at a séance before, was present. She sang several German songs, and most delicate music, like a fairy musical-box, accompanied her throughout. She sang four or five different songs of her own choice, and all were so accompanied. This was in the dark, but hands were joined all the time.

The most remarkable feature of this lady's mediumship is the production of flowers and fruits in closed rooms. The first time this occurred was at my own house, at a very early stage of her development. All present were my own friends. Miss Nichol had come early to tea, it being mid-winter, and she had been with us in a very warm gas-lighted room four hours before the flowers appeared. The essential fact is, that upon a bare table in a small room closed and dark (the adjoining room and passage being well lighted), a quantity of flowers appeared, which were not there when we put out the gas a few minutes before. They consisted of anemones, tulips, chrysanthemums, Chinese primroses, and several ferns. All were absolutely fresh, as if just gathered from a conservatory. They were covered with a fine cold dew. Not a petal was crumpled or broken, not the most delicate point or pinnule of the ferns was out of place. I dried and preserved the whole, and have, attached to them, the attestation of all present that they had no share, as far as they knew, in bringing the flowers into the room. I believed at the time, and still believe, that it was absolutely impossible for Miss N. to have concealed them so long, to have kept them so perfect, and, above all, to produce them covered throughout with a most beautiful coating of dew, just like that which collects on the outside of a tumbler when filled with very cold water on a hot day.

Similar phenomena have occurred hundreds of times since, in many houses and under various conditions. Sometimes the flowers have been in vast quantities, heaped upon the table. Often flowers or fruits asked for are brought. A friend of mine asked for a sunflower, and one six feet high fell upon the table, having a large mass of earth about its roots. One of the most striking tests was at Florence, with Mr. T. Adolphus Trollope, Mrs. Trollope, Miss Blagden, and Colonel Harvey. The room was searched by the gentlemen; Mrs. Guppy was undressed and redressed by Mrs. Trollope, every article of her clothing being examined. Mr. and Mrs. Guppy were both firmly held while at the table. In about ten minutes all the party exclaimed that they smelt flowers, and, on lighting a candle, both Mrs. Guppy's and Mr. Trollope's arms were found covered with jonquils, which filled the room with their odour. Mr. Guppy and Mr. Trollope both relate this in substantially the same terms. ("Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism," pp. 277 and 372.)

Surely these are phenomena about which there can be no mistake. What theories have ever been proposed by our scientific teachers which even attempt to account for them? Delusion it cannot be, for the flowers are real, and can be preserved, and imposture under the conditions described is even less credible. If the gentlemen who came forward to enlighten the public on the subject of "so-called spiritual manifestations" do not know of the various classes of phenomena that have now been indicated, and the weight of the testimony in support of them, they are palpably unqualified for the task they have undertaken. That they do know of them, but keep back their knowledge, while putting forward trivialities easy to laugh at or expose, is a supposition I cannot for a moment entertain. Before leaving this part of the subject, it is well to note the fact of the marked individuality of each medium. They are not copies of each other, but each one develops a characteristic set of phenomena—a fact highly suggestive of some unconscious occult power in the individual, and wholly opposed to the idea of either imposture or delusion, both of which almost invariably copy pre-existing models.

Investigations by some Notable Sceptics.—In giving some account of how a few of the more important converts to Spiritualism became convinced, we are of course limited to those who have given their experiences to the public. I will first take the case of the eminent American lawyer, the Honourable J. W. Edmunds, commonly called Judge Edmunds; and it may be as well to let English sceptics know what he is thought of by his countrymen. When he first became a spiritualist he was greatly abused; and it was even declared that he consulted the spirits on his judicial decisions. To defend himself, he published an "Appeal to the Public," giving a full account of the inquiries which resulted in his conversion. In noticing this, the *New York Evening Mirror* said: "John W. Edmunds, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of this District, is an able lawyer, an industrious judge, and a good citizen. For the last eight years occupying without interruption the highest judicial stations, whatever may be his faults, no one can justly accuse him of a lack of ability, industry, honesty, or fearlessness. No one can doubt his general saneness, or can believe for a moment that the ordinary operations of his mind are not as rapid, accurate, and reliable as ever. Both by the practitioners and suitors at his bar, he is recognised as the head, in fact and in merit, of the Supreme Court for this District." A few years later he published a series of letters on Spiritualism in the *New York Tribune*; and in the first of these he gives a compact summary of his mode of investigation, from which the following passages are extracted. It must be remembered that at the time he commenced the inquiry he was in the prime and vigour of intellectual life, being fifty-two years of age.

“It was in January, 1851, that I first began my investigations, and it was not until April, 1853, that I became a firm believer in the reality of spiritual intercourse. During twenty-three months of those twenty-seven, I witnessed several hundred manifestations in various forms. I kept very minute and careful records of many of them. My practice was, whenever I attended a circle, to keep in pencil a memorandum of all that took place, so far as I could, and, as soon as I returned home, to write out a full account of what I had witnessed. I did all this with as much minuteness and particularity as I had ever kept any record of a trial before me in court. In this way, during that period, I preserved the record of nearly two hundred interviews, running through some one thousand six hundred pages of manuscript. I had these interviews with many different mediums, and under an infinite variety of circumstances. No two interviews were alike. There was always something new, or something different from what had previously occurred; and it very seldom happened that only the same persons were present. The manifestations were of almost every known form, physical or mental; sometimes only one, and sometimes both combined.

“I resorted to every expedient I could devise to detect imposture and to guard against delusion. I felt in myself, and saw in others, how exciting was the idea that we were actually communing with the dead; and I laboured to prevent any undue bias of my judgment. I was at times critical and captious to an unreasonable extreme; and when my belief was challenged, as it was over and over again, I refused to yield, except to evidence that would leave no possible room for cavil.

“I was severely exacting in my demands, and this would frequently happen. I would go to a circle with some doubt on my mind as to the manifestations at the previous circle, and something would happen aimed directly at that doubt, and completely overthrowing it as it then seemed, so that I had no longer any reason to doubt. But I would go home and write out carefully my minutes of the evening, cogitate over them for several days, compare them with previous records, and finally find some loophole—some possibility that it might have been something else than spiritual influence, and I would go to the next circle with a new doubt, and a new set of queries.”

“I look back sometimes now, with a smile, at the ingenuity I wasted in devising ways and means to avoid the possibility of deception.”

“It was a remarkable feature of my investigations, that every conceivable objection I could raise was, first or last, met and answered.”

The following extracts are from the “Appeal” :—

“I have seen a mahogany table, having a centre leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place, though its glass pendants rang again.”

“I have known a mahogany chair thrown on its side and moved swiftly back and forth on the floor, no one touching it, through a room where there were at least a dozen people sitting, yet no one was touched; and it was repeatedly stopped within a few inches of me, when it was coming with a violence which, if not arrested, must have broken my legs.”

Having satisfied himself of the reality of the physical phenomena, he came to the question of whence comes the intelligence that was so remarkably connected with them. He says:—

“Preparatory to meeting a circle, I have sat down alone in my room, and carefully prepared a series of questions to be propounded, and I have been surprised to find my questions answered, and in the precise order in which I

wrote them, without my even taking my memorandum out of my pocket, and when not a person present knew that I had prepared questions, much less what they were. My most secret thoughts, those which I have never uttered to mortal man or woman, have been freely spoken to as if I had uttered them; and I have been admonished that my every thought was known to, and could be disclosed by, the intelligence which was thus manifesting itself."

"Still the question occurred, 'May not all this have been, by some mysterious operation, the mere reflex of the mind of some one present?' The answer was, that facts were communicated which were unknown then, but afterwards found to be true; like this, for instance: when I was absent last winter in Central America, my friends in town heard of my whereabouts and of the state of my health several times; and on my return, by comparing their information with the entries in my journal, it was found to be invariably correct. So thoughts have been uttered on subjects not then in my mind and utterly at variance with my own notions. This has often happened to me and to others, so as fully to establish the fact that it was not our minds that gave forth or affected the communication."

These few extracts sufficiently show that the writer was aware of the possible sources of error in such an inquiry; and the details given in the letters prove that he was constantly on his guard against them. He himself and his daughter became mediums; so that he afterwards obtained personal confirmation of many of the phenomena by himself alone. But all the phenomena referred to in the letters and "Appeal" occurred to him in the presence of others, who testified to them as well, and thus removed the possibility that the phenomena were subjective.

We have yet to add a notice of what will be perhaps, to many persons, the most startling and convincing of all the Judge's experiences. His own daughter became a medium for speaking foreign languages of which she was totally ignorant. He says: "She knows no language but her own, and a little smattering of boarding-school French; yet she has spoken in nine or ten different tongues, often for an hour at a time, with the ease and fluency of a native. It is not unfrequent that foreigners converse with their spirit-friends through her, in their own language." One of these cases must be given.

"One evening, when some twelve or fifteen persons were in my parlour, Mr. E. D. Green, an artist of this city, was shown in accompanied by a gentleman whom he introduced as Mr. Evangelides, of Greece. Ere long a spirit spoke to him through Laura, in English, and said so many things to him that he identified him as a friend who had died at his house a few years before, but of whom none of us had ever heard. Occasionally, through Laura, the spirit would speak a word or a sentence in Greek, until Mr. E. inquired if he could be understood if he spoke Greek? The residue of the conversation for more than an hour was, on his part, entirely in Greek, and on hers sometimes in Greek and sometimes in English. At times Laura would not understand what was the idea conveyed either by her or him. At other times she would understand him, though he spoke in Greek, and herself, while uttering Greek words."

Several other cases are mentioned, and it is stated that this lady has spoken Spanish, French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Latin,

Hungarian and Indian; and other languages which were unknown to any person present.

This is by no means an isolated case, but it is given as being on most unexceptionable authority. A man must know whether his own daughter has learnt, so as to speak fluently, eight languages besides her own, or not. Those who carry on the conversation must know whether the language is spoken, or not; and in several cases—as the Latin, Spanish, and Indian—the judge himself understood the language. And the phenomenon is connected with Spiritualism by the speaking being in the name of, and purporting to come from, some deceased person, and the subject matter being characteristic of that person. Such a case as this, which has been published sixteen years, ought to have been noticed and explained by those who profess to enlighten the public on the subject of Spiritualism.

Our next example is one of the most recent, but at the same time one of the most useful, converts to the truths of Spiritualism. Dr. George Sexton, M.D., M.A., L.L.D., was for many years the coadjutor of Mr. Bradlaugh, and one of the most earnest and energetic of the secularist teachers. The celebrated Robert Owen first called his attention to the subject of Spiritualism about twenty years ago. He read books, he saw a good deal of the ordinary physical manifestations, but he always “suspected that the mediums played tricks, and that the whole affair was nothing but clever conjuring by means of concealed machinery.” He gave several lectures against Spiritualism in the usual style of non-believers, dwelling much on the absurdity and triviality of the phenomena, and ridiculing the idea that they were the work of spirits. Then came another old friend and fellow-secularist, Mr. Turley, who, after investigating the subject for the purpose of exposing it, became a firm believer. Dr. Sexton laughed at this conversion, yet it made a deep impression on his mind. Ten years passed away, and his next important investigation was with the Davenport brothers; and it will be well for those who sneer at these much-abused young men to take note of the following account of Dr. Sexton’s proceedings with them, and especially of the fact that they cheerfully submitted to every test the doctor suggested. He tells us (in his lecture, “How I became a Spiritualist”) that he visited them again and again, trying in vain to find out the trick. Then, he says—

“My partner—Dr. Barker—and I invited the Brothers to our houses, and, in order to guard against anything like trickery, we requested them not to bring any ropes, instruments, or other apparatus; all these we ourselves had determined to supply. Moreover, as there were four of them, viz., the two Brothers Davenport, Mr. Fay, and Dr. Fergusson, we suspected that the two who were not tied might really do all that was done. We therefore requested only two to come. They unhesitatingly complied with all these requests. We

formed a circle, consisting entirely of members of our own families and a few private friends, with the one bare exception of Mrs. Fay. In the circle we all joined hands, and as Mrs. Fay sat at one end she had one of her hands free, while I had hold of the other. Thinking that she might be able to assist with the hand that was thus free, I asked as a favour that I might be allowed to hold both her hands—a proposition which she at once agreed to. Now, without entering here at all into what took place, suffice it to say that we bound the mediums with our own ropes, placed their feet upon sheets of writing paper and drew lines around their boots, so that if they moved their feet it should be impossible for them to place them again in the same position; we laid pence on their toes, sealed the ropes, and in every way took precautions against their moving. On the occasion to which I now refer, Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Charles Watts were present; and when Mr. Fay's coat had been taken off, the ropes still remaining on his hands, Mr. Bradlaugh requested that his coat might be placed on Mr. Fay, which was immediately done, the ropes still remaining fastened. We got on this occasion all the phenomena that usually occurred in the presence of these extraordinary men, particulars of which I shall probably give on another occasion. Dr. Barker became a believer in Spiritualism from the time that the Brothers visited at his house. I did not see that any proof had been given that disembodied spirits had any hand in producing the phenomena; but I was convinced that no tricks had been played, and that therefore these extraordinary physical manifestations were the result of some occult force in nature which I had no means of explaining in the present state of my knowledge. All the physical phenomena that I had seen now became clear to me; they were not accomplished by trickery, as I had formerly supposed, but were the result of some undiscovered law of nature which it was the business of the man of science to use his utmost endeavours to discover."

While he was maintaining this ground, spiritualists often asked him how he explained the intelligence that was manifested; and he invariably replied that he had not yet seen proofs of any intelligence other than what might be that of the medium or of some other persons present in the circle, adding, that as soon as he did see proofs of such intelligence he should become a spiritualist. In this position he stood for many years, till he naturally believed he should never see cause to change his opinion. He continued the inquiry, however, and in 1865 began to hold séances at home; but it was years before any mental phenomena occurred which were absolutely conclusive, although they were often of so startling a nature as would have satisfied any one less sceptical. At length, after fifteen years of enlightened scepticism—a scepticism not founded upon ignorance, but which refused to go one step beyond what the facts so diligently pursued absolutely demonstrated—the needful evidence came:—

"The proofs that I did ultimately receive are, many of them, of a character that I cannot describe minutely to a public audience, nor indeed have I time to do so. Suffice it to say, that I got in my own house, in the absence of all mediums other than those members of my own family and intimate private friends in whom mediumistic powers became developed, evidence of an irresistible character that the communications came from deceased friends and relatives. Intelligence was again and again displayed which could not possibly have had any other origin than that which it professed to have. Facts were named known to no one in the circle, and left to be verified afterwards.

The identity of the spirits communicating was proved in a hundred different ways. Our dear departed ones made themselves palpable both to feeling and to sight; and the doctrine of spirit-communion was proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. I soon found myself in the position of Dr. Fenwick in Lord Lytton's 'Strange Story.' 'Do you believe,' asked the female attendant of Margrave, 'in that which you seek?' 'I have no belief,' was the answer. 'True science has none; true science questions all things, and takes nothing on credit. It knows but three states of mind—denial, conviction, and the vast interval between the two, which is not belief, but the suspension of judgment.' This describes exactly the phases through which my mind has passed."

Since Dr. Sexton has become a spiritualist he has been as energetic an advocate for its truths as he had been before for the negations of secularism. His experience and ability as a lecturer, with his long schooling in every form of manifestation, render him one of the most valuable promulgators of its teachings. He has also done excellent service in exposing the pretensions of those conjurors who profess to expose Spiritualism. This he does in the most practical way, not only by explaining how the professed imitations of spiritual manifestations are performed, but by actually performing them before his audience; and at the same time pointing out the important differences between what these people do and what occurs at good séances. Any one who wishes to comprehend how Dr. Lynn, Messrs. Maskeleyne and Cook, and Herr Dobler perform some of their most curious feats have only to read his lecture, entitled, "Spirit Mediums and Conjurors," before going to witness their entertainments. We can hardly believe that the man who does this, and who during fifteen years of observation and experiment held out against the spiritual theory, is one of those who, as Lord Amberley tells us, "fall a victim to the most patent frauds, and are imposed upon by jugglery of the most vulgar order;" or who, as viewed from Professor Tyn-dall's high scientific standpoint, are in a frame of mind before which science is utterly powerless—"dupes beyond the reach of proof, who like to believe and do not like to be undeceived." These be brave words; but we leave our readers to judge whether they come with a very good grace from men who have the most slender and inadequate knowledge of the subject they are criticising, and no knowledge at all of the long-continued and conscientious investigations of many who are included in their wholesale animadversions.

Yet one more witness to these marvellous phenomena we must bring before our readers—a trained and experienced physicist, who has experimented in his own laboratory, and has applied tests and measurements of the most rigid and conclusive character. When Mr. Crookes—the discoverer of the metal thallium, and a Fellow of the Royal Society—first announced that he was going to investigate so-called spiritual phenomena, many public writers were

all approval ; for the complaint had long been that men of science were not permitted by mediums to inquire too scrupulously into the facts. One expressed "profound satisfaction that the subject was about to be investigated by a man so well qualified ;" another was "gratified to learn that the matter is now receiving the attention of cool and clear-headed men of recognised position in science ;" while a third declared that "no one could doubt Mr. Crookes's ability to conduct the investigation with rigid philosophical impartiality." But these expressions were evidently insincere, and were only meant to apply, in case the result was in accordance with the writers' notions of what it ought to be. Of course, a "scientific investigation" would explode the whole thing. Had not Faraday exploded table-turning? They hailed Mr. Crookes as the Daniel come to judgment—as the prophet who would curse their enemy, Spiritualism, by detecting imposture and illusion. But when the judge, after a patient trial lasting several years, decided against them, and their accepted prophet blessed the hated thing as an undoubted truth, their tone changed ; and they began to suspect the judge's ability, and to pick holes in the evidence on which he founded his judgment.

In Mr. Crookes's latest paper, published in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* for January last, we are informed that he has pursued the inquiry for four years ; and besides attending séances elsewhere, has had the opportunity of making numerous experiments in his own house with the two remarkable mediums already referred to, Mr. D. D. Home and Miss Kate Fox. These experiments were almost exclusively made in the light, under conditions of his own arranging, and with his own friends as witnesses. Such phenomena as percussive sounds ; alteration of the weight of bodies ; the rising of heavy bodies in the air without contact by any one ; the levitation of human beings ; luminous appearances of various kinds ; the appearance of hands which lift small objects, yet are not the hands of any one present ; direct writing by a luminous detached hand or by the pencil alone ; phantom forms and faces ; and various mental phenomena—have all been tested so variously and so repeatedly that Mr. Crookes is thoroughly satisfied of their objective reality. These phenomena are given in outline in the paper above referred to, and they will be detailed in full in a volume now preparing. I will not, therefore, weary my readers by repeating them here, but will remark, that these experiments have a weight as evidence vastly greater than would be due to them as resting on the testimony of any man of science, however distinguished, because they are, in almost every case, confirmations of what previous witnesses in immense numbers have testified to, in various places, and under various conditions, during the last twenty years. In

every other experimental inquiry, without exception, confirmation of the facts of an earlier observer is held to add so greatly to their value, that no one treats them with the same incredulity with which he might have received them the first time they were announced. And when the confirmation has been repeated by three or four independent observers under favourable conditions, and there is nothing but theory or negative evidence against them, the facts are admitted—at least provisionally, and until disproved by a greater weight of evidence or by discovering the exact source of the fallacy of preceding observers.

But here, a totally different—a most unreasonable and a most unphilosophical—course is pursued. Each fresh observation, confirming previous evidence, is treated as though it were now put forth for the *first* time; and fresh confirmation is asked of it. And when this fresh and independent confirmation comes, yet more confirmation is asked for, and so on without end. This is a very clever way to ignore and stifle a new truth; but the facts of Spiritualism are ubiquitous in their occurrence and of so indisputable a nature, as to compel conviction in every earnest inquirer. It thus happens that although every fresh convert requires a large proportion of the series of demonstrative facts to be reproduced before he will give his assent to them, the number of such converts has gone on steadily increasing for a quarter of a century. Clergymen of all sects, literary men and lawyers, physicians in large numbers, men of science not a few, secularists, philosophical sceptics, pure materialists, all have become converts through the overwhelming logic of the phenomena which Spiritualism has brought before them. And what have we *per contra*? Neither science nor philosophy, neither scepticism nor religion, has ever yet in this quarter of a century made one single convert from the ranks of Spiritualism! This being the case, and fully appreciating the amount of candour and fairness, and knowledge of the subject, that has been exhibited by their opponents, is it to be wondered at that a large proportion of spiritualists are now profoundly indifferent to the opinion of men of science, and would not go one step out of their way to convince them? They say, that the movement is going on quite fast enough. That it is spreading by its own inherent force of truth, and slowly permeating all classes of society. It has thriven in spite of abuse and persecution, ridicule and argument, and will continue to thrive whether endorsed by great names or not. Men of science, like all others, are welcome to enter its ranks; but they must satisfy themselves by their own persevering researches, not expect to have its proofs laid before them. Their rejection of its truths is their own loss, but cannot in the slightest degree affect the progress of Spiritualism. The attacks and criticisms of the press are borne good-humouredly, and seldom excite

other feelings than pity for the wilful ignorance and contempt for the overwhelming presumption of their writers. Such are the sentiments that are continually expressed by spiritualists; and it is as well, perhaps, that the outer world, to whom the literature of the movement is as much unknown as the Vedas, should be made acquainted with them.

Investigation by the Dialectical Committee.—There are many other investigators who ought to be noticed in any complete sketch of the subject, but we have now only space to allude briefly to the "Report of the Committee of the Dialectical Society." Of this committee, consisting of thirty-three acting members, only eight were, at the commencement, believers in the reality of the phenomena, while not more than four accepted the spiritual theory. During the course of the inquiry at least twelve of the complete sceptics became convinced of the reality of many of the physical phenomena through attending the experimental sub-committees, and almost wholly by means of the mediumship of members of the committee. At least three members who were previously sceptics pursued their investigations outside the committee meetings, and in consequence have become thorough spiritualists. My own observation, as a member of the committee and of the largest and most active sub-committee, enables me to state that the degree of conviction produced in the minds of the various members was, allowing for marked differences of character, approximately proportionate to the amount of time and care bestowed on the investigation. This fact, which is what occurs in all investigation into these phenomena, is a characteristic result of the examination into any natural phenomena. The examination into an imposture or delusion has, invariably, exactly opposite results; those who have slender experience being deceived, while those who perseveringly continue the inquiry inevitably find out the source of the deception or the delusion. If this were not so, the discovery of truth and the detection of error would be alike impossible. The result of this inquiry on the members of the committee themselves is, therefore, of more importance than the actual phenomena they witnessed, since these were far less striking than many of the facts already mentioned. But they are also of importance as confirming, by a body of intelligent and unprejudiced men, the results obtained by previous individual inquirers.

Before leaving this report, I must call attention to the evidence it furnishes of the state of opinion among men of education in France. M. Camille Flammarion, the well-known astronomer, sent a communication to the committee which deserves special consideration. Besides declaring his own acceptance of the objective reality of the phenomena after ten years of investigation, he makes the following statement:—

"My learned teacher and friend, M. Babinet, of the Institute, who has endeavoured, with M. E. Liais (now Director of the Observatory of Brazil), and several others of my colleagues of the Observatory of Paris, to ascertain their nature and cause, is not fully convinced of the intervention of spirits in their production; though this hypothesis, by which alone certain categories of these phenomena would seem to be explicable, has been adopted by many of our most esteemed *savants*, among others by Dr. Hœffle, the learned author of the 'History of Chemistry' and the 'General Encyclopædia;' and by the diligent labourer in the field of astronomic discovery whose death we have recently had to deplore, M. Hermann Goldschmidt, the discoverer of fourteen planets."

It thus appears that in France, as well as in America and in this country, men of science of no mean rank have investigated these phenomena and have found them to be realities; while some of the most eminent hold the spiritual theory to be the only one that will explain them.

This seems the proper place to notice the astounding assertion of certain writers, that there is not "a particle of evidence" to support the spiritual theory; that those who accept it betray "hopeless inability to discriminate between adequate and inadequate proof of facts;" that the theory is "formed apart from facts;" and, that those who accept it are so unable to reason, as to "jump to the conclusion" that it must be spirits that move tables, merely because they do not know how else they can be moved. The preceding account of how converts to Spiritualism have been made is a sufficient answer to all this ignorant assertion. The spiritual theory, as a rule, has only been adopted as a last resource, when all other theories have hopelessly broken down; and when fact after fact, phenomenon after phenomenon, has presented itself, giving direct proof that the so-called dead are still alive. The spiritual theory is the logical outcome of the whole of the facts. Those who deny it, in every instance with which I am acquainted, either from ignorance or disbelief leave half the facts out of view. Take the one case (out of many almost equally conclusive) of Mr. Livermore, who during five years, on hundreds of occasions, saw, felt, and heard the movements of the figure of his dead wife in absolute, unmistakable, living form. A form which could move objects, and which repeatedly wrote to him in her own handwriting and her own language, on cards which remained after the figure had disappeared. A form which was equally visible and tangible to two friends; which appeared in his own house, in a room absolutely secured, with the presence of only a young girl, the medium. Had these three men "not a particle of evidence" for the spiritual theory? Is it, in fact, possible to conceive or suggest any more complete proof? The facts must be got rid of before you can abolish the theory; and simple denial or disbelief does not get rid of facts testified during a space of five years by three witnesses, all men in responsible positions, and carrying on their affairs during the whole period

in a manner to win the respect and confidence of their fellow-citizens.¹

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

(1) The objection will here inevitably be made: "These wonderful things always happen in America. When they occur in England it will be time enough to inquire into them." Singularly enough, after this article was in the press the final test was obtained, which demonstrated the occurrence of similar phenomena in London. A short statement may, therefore, be interesting for those who cannot digest American evidence. For some years a young lady, Miss Florence Cook, has exhibited remarkable mediumship, which latterly culminated in the production of an entire female form purporting to be spiritual, and which appeared barefooted and in white flowing robes while she lay entranced, in dark clothing and securely bound, in a cabinet or adjacent room. Notwithstanding that tests of an apparently conclusive character were employed, many visitors, spiritualists as well as sceptics, got the impression that all was not as it should be; owing in part to the resemblance of the supposed spirit to Miss Cook, and also to the fact that the two could not be seen at the same time. Some supposed that Miss C. was an impostor who managed to conceal a white robe about her (although she was often searched), and who, although she was securely tied with tapes and sealed, was able to get out of her bonds, dress and undress herself, and get into them again, all in the dark, and in so complete and skilful a manner as to defy detection. Others thought that the spirit released her, provided her with a white dress, and sent her forth to personate a ghost. The belief that there was something wrong led one gentleman—an ardent spiritualist—to seize the supposed spirit and endeavour to hold it, in the hope that some other person would open the cabinet-door and see if Miss Cook was really there. This was, unfortunately, not done; but the great resemblance of the being he seized to Miss Cook, its perfect solidity, and the vigorous struggles it made to escape from him, convinced this gentleman that it was Miss Cook herself, although the rest of the company, a few minutes afterwards, found her bound and sealed just as she had been left an hour before. To determine the question conclusively, experiments have been made within the last few weeks by two scientific men. Mr. C. F. Varley, F.R.S., the eminent electrician, made use of a galvanic battery and cable-testing apparatus, and passed a current through Miss Cook's body (by fastening sovereigns soldered to wires to her arms). The apparatus was so delicate that any movement whatever was instantly indicated, while it was impossible for the young lady to dress and act as a ghost without breaking the circuit. Yet under these conditions the spirit-form did appear, exhibited its arms, spoke, wrote, and touched several persons; and this happened, be it remembered, not in the medium's own house, but in that of a private gentleman in the West End of London. For nearly an hour the circuit was never broken, and at the conclusion Miss Cook was found in a deep trance. Since this remarkable experiment Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., has obtained, if possible, still more satisfactory evidence. He contrived a phosphorus lamp, and armed with this was allowed to go into the dark room accompanied by the spirit, and there saw and felt Miss Cook, dressed in black velvet, lying in a trance on the floor, while the spirit-form, in white robes, stood close beside her. During the evening this spirit-form had been, for nearly an hour, walking and talking with the company; and Mr. Crookes, by permission, clasped the figure in his arms, and found it to be, apparently, a real living woman, just as the sceptical gentleman had done. Yet this figure is not that of Miss Cook, nor of any other human being, since it appeared and disappeared in Mr. Crookes's own house as completely as in that of the medium herself. The full statements of Messrs. Varley and Crookes, with a mass of interesting detail on the subject, appeared in the *Spiritualist* newspaper in March and April last; and they serve to show that whatever marvels occur in America can be reproduced here, and that men of science are not precluded from investigating these phenomena with scientific instruments and by scientific methods. In the concluding part of this paper we shall be able to show that another class of manifestation which originated in America—that of the so-called spirit-photographs—has been first critically examined and completely demonstrated in our own country.

(To be concluded in the next Number.)