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PSYCHOLOGICAL CURIOSITIES OF SPIRITUALISM.

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SINCE the publication in *Fraser* of the two Lectures on 'Mesmerism, Spiritualism, &c.,' which I delivered at the London Institution near the close of last year, I have learned much more than I had previously known, both of the extent of what I hold to be a most mischievous Epidemic Delusion, comparable to the Witchcraft Epidemic of the seventeenth century; and of the very general existence of a peculiar state of mind, which as much predisposes to attacks of Spiritualism, as did the almost universal belief in Biblical authority for the existence of witches, determine the witch-persecution in Puritan New England.

A friend residing at Boston (U.S.) has kindly sent me a number of excerpts from its Newspapers, which give very curious indications, alike in their 'advertisements' and in their 'intelligence,' of what has been lately taking place in that centre of enlightenment and progress. And another friend, who has recently visited that city, informs me that its *Trades' Directory* has whole columns of the names of Professors of the different forms of Spiritualistic 'mediumship'—rapping mediums, writing mediums, drawing mediums, materialising mediums, test mediums, photographic mediums, trance mediums, healing mediums, and the like. Many of these Professors occupy some of the best houses in Boston;

and must be carrying on a first-class business among the 'upper ten thousand.' Others practise in a humbler sphere; but, though receiving lower fees, get so many of them, as to be driving a very profitable trade in 'interviewing the spirits.' I understand the like to be true, in a greater or less degree, of many other towns, small as well as large (New York being a conspicuous example), in the United States.

A most unexpected revelation of another kind has been made by the perusal of the recently-published *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism*, by Mr. D. D. Home, reputed in the outer world as the Arch-priest of this new religion; who, professing an earnest desire to purify the system from '*the seething mass of folly and imposture which every attempt at examination discloses*,' devotes not less than 200 octavo pages to such an exposure of the 'Delusions,' the 'Absurdities,' and the 'Trickeries' of Modern Spiritualism, as, if made by any Scientific opponent, would have most assuredly subjected him to a crushing fire of the most tremendous expletives that even Spiritualistic language (choice samples of which I shall presently give) can convey. No unprejudiced reader can rise from the perusal of Mr. Home's pages, without the melancholy conviction that the honest believers, who (to use his words) 'accept nothing as

proof which leaves the tiniest loop-hole for the entrance of doubt; who try all mediums and all spirits by the strictest tests; who refuse to be carried away by enthusiasm or swayed by partisanship,' are few indeed in comparison, on the one hand, with the knavish impostors who practise on the folly and credulity of their victims, and, on the other, with the *gobe-mouches* who (as Mr. Home says) 'swallow whatever is offered them, and strain neither at camels nor at gnats.'

My knowledge has been further extended by an elaborate review of my Lectures, contributed by Mr. Wallace to the July number of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*. As Mr. Crookes is the Editor of that journal, I may fairly regard this review as representing his own ideas upon the subject, as well as those of Mr. Wallace, who continually refers to him; and I regard it as a very curious revelation of the state of mind, to which two honest men, both highly distinguished in the Scientific world, can bring themselves, by continually dwelling on their own conclusions, and discoursing of them only with sympathisers; without bringing them to the test of *calm discussion* with other men of Science, who are certainly no less competent for the investigation than themselves, and who have given a large amount of time and attention to it. According to Mr. Wallace, no one who really examines the evidence in its favour, can honestly refuse to accept the facts of Mesmerism from a distance and of *clairvoyance*; or can fail to see, with Mr. W. himself, that Mr. Hewes's 'Jack,' who was so completely detected in Manchester that his patron at once gave him up, was all the while a genuine

clairvoyant. And so, everyone who cannot see, as Mr. W. does, that the flowers, fruits, &c. 'produced' at Spiritualistic *séances*, are 'demonstrably not brought in by the mediums,' is open to the charge of wilfully shutting his eyes to the most conclusive proofs. Further, taking his cue from Mr. Crookes, who six years ago rebuked men of Science generally, for their 'refusal to institute a Scientific investigation into the existence and nature of facts asserted by so many competent and credible witnesses, and which they are so freely invited to examine when and where they please,'¹ Mr. Wallace charges the Periodical Press with being in 'a conspiracy of silence' to prevent the spread of what he regards as important and well-established truth.

Reserving for another place² my reply to the grave imputations which Mr. Wallace (endorsed by the editorial authority of Mr. Crookes) has cast upon myself personally, I shall now place before the readers of *Fraser* a series of *Psychological Curiosities* collected from the three sources just indicated; and as the names of Messrs. Crookes and Wallace will continually recur in this connection, I think it well to explain my reason for so frequently introducing them.

Appreciating most highly the beautiful discoveries recently made in Physical Science by Mr. Crookes, and the large and varied additions to Biological knowledge and doctrine made at different times by Mr. Wallace, I cannot blind myself to the fact that the very Scientific distinction they have so deservedly acquired, is doing great injury to the cause which I maintain to be that of Reason and Common Sense.

¹ It would seem that there is no longer the same disposition to admit Scientific inquirers to Spiritualistic *séances*. Things do not go so well when sceptics are present; and while Mr. Home rebukes those who would exclude all but the 'faithful,' his Reviewer says that all sitters in circle, and communicants with the spirit-world, find it necessary to restrict the company to those who are in sympathy with one another, or of one marked form of thought, or degree of moral development.

² The forthcoming new edition of my Lectures.

In the United States more particularly—where, since the death of Professor Hare, who thought he had obtained *precise experimental proof of the immortality of the soul*, not a single Scientific man of note (so far as I am aware) has joined the Spiritualistic ranks—the names of the ‘eminent British scientists’ Messrs. Crookes and Wallace are a ‘tower of strength.’ And it consequently becomes necessary for me, if I take any further part in the discussion, to *undermine* that ‘tower;’ by showing that in their investigation of this subject, they have followed methods which are thoroughly *unscientific*, and have been led by their ‘prepossession’ to accept with implicit faith a number of statements which ought to be rejected as completely untrustworthy.

My call to take such a part—which I would most gladly lay aside for the Scientific investigations which afford me the purest and most undisturbed enjoyment—seems to me the same as is made upon every member of the Profession to which I have the honour to belong, that he should do his utmost to cure or to mitigate *bodily* disease. Theoretical and experimental studies extending over forty years, have given me what I honestly believe (whether rightly or wrongly) to be a rather unusual power of dealing with this subject. Since the appearance of my Lectures, I have received a large number of public assurances that they are doing good service in preventing the spread of a noxious *mental* Epidemic in this country; and I have been privately informed of several instances, in which persons who had been ‘bitten’ by this malady, have owed their recovery to my treatment. Looking to the danger which threatens us from the United States, of an importation of a real Spiritualistic *mania*, far more injurious to our *mental* welfare, than that of the Colorado Beetle will be to our *material* interests, I should

be untrue to my own convictions of duty if I did not do what in me lies to prevent it. I know too well that I thus expose myself to severe obloquy, which (as I am not peculiarly thick-skinned) will be very unpleasant to myself, and unfortunately still more so to some who are nearly connected with me. But I am content to brave all, if I can console myself with the belief that this *exposé* will be of the least service, either to individuals or to society at large.

That I do not take an exaggerated view of the danger, will appear, I think, from the following citations from Mr. Home’s book :

In dealing with Spiritualism, it is the custom of a certain class of weak minds to break loose from all restraint. Reason being weak and enthusiasm strong, the very thought of communion with the dwellers in another world appears to intoxicate these unfortunates almost to madness. Their vagaries are often scarcely distinguishable from those beheld in mad-houses or at the wilder kind of revival meetings. The disease manifests itself in a variety of ways. Some of the men and women attacked by it, pin themselves to a particular delusion, with a fanatical tenacity which nothing can affect.

In another place Mr. Home speaks of ‘the wild dances in which “mediums” (generally females) indulge under the influence of imaginary Indian controls.’

Can anything be a stronger confirmation of the doctrine of ‘Epidemic Delusion,’ than this reproduction of the ‘Dancing Mania’ under a different form of ‘possession?’

PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRITUALISM.

As Moses & Son kept a poet, so does Spiritualism now keep a philosopher—a Master of Arts of Oxford—who, speculating profoundly on the constitution of Matter, has recently announced his conclusion that there is no logical distinction whatever between Matter and Spirit; and that there is, consequently, no-

thing at all difficult to believe, either in the 'materialisation' of departed spirits who return to earth, or in the 'dematerialisation' and 'rematerialisation' of solid fleshly bodies. Hence he considers it to be true, not only of the mind, but of the body, that

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;

a doctrine that will prove extremely convenient to the inmates of these institutions, if only they can get 'the spirits' to help them out. And the passage of Mrs. Guppy through either the walls, the closed doors, the shuttered windows, the floor beneath, or the roof and ceilings above, is to be regarded as, though somewhat unusual, a perfectly 'natural' phenomenon.³

Now this reasoning seems to me so transparently fallacious, as not to require wasting many words upon it. Even if we accept, as Faraday showed an inclination to do, the physical doctrine of Boscovich, that what we call a 'material' body is nothing else than an aggregation of 'centres of force,'—and if we psychologically refine down matter, as John S. Mill did, into 'a permanent possibility of sensation,'—I cannot see that this carries us one single step towards the M.A.'s deduction. For the very foundation of our conception of 'matter' is the *sense of resistance* which we experience when we press some part of our body against it; and as we cannot take any such cognisance of 'spirit,' we cannot conceive of it as having anything in common with matter;—the two remaining, just as they always have been, 'logically distinct entities.'

If this be a fair sample of the result of the philosophic teaching imparted by the University of Oxford, the sooner that teaching is reformed, the better for Common Sense and Rationality.

AMENITIES OF SPIRITUALISM.

It has been the boast of Spiritualists that if their New Religion does not supersede Christianity, it is at any rate to supplement it, by carrying its teachings to a higher development, and by thus leading to the earlier prevalence of that universal reign of peace and goodwill, which Christianity has as yet failed to bring about. So far, however, is the *practice* of 'professing' Spiritualists from being much better in this particular than that of 'professing' Christians, that it seems to me to be worse; instead of being 'slow to anger' and 'forsaking wrath,' there are Spiritualists who carry on their controversies, even among themselves, with most reprehensible bitterness; while even the Scientific advocates of the system, whose position should place them above personal animosity, cannot find decent language to put down a troublesome sceptic, who imputes to them nothing worse than a too easy credulity.

Thus Mr. Home's book affords an ample store of very choice samples of vituperative eloquence, directed—not against Scientific sceptics, for these he treats with a marked consideration which Mr. Wallace might well imitate—but against certain Spiritualists, whom he regards (for reasons not stated) with a very unchristian hostility. One of these is Colonel Olcott, of New York, President of the Theosophical Society, of whom I shall have more to say presently. This gentleman has lately published a book called *People from the Other World*, dedicated to Messrs. Crookes and Wallace; giving an account of the 'materialisations' of the Eddy Brothers, which Mr. Home utterly discredits. Of this book Mr. Home says that 'it is ten times more meaningless than the gospel of Mormon, or the speculations of

³ 'Is there any such thing as Matter?' By M.A. (Oxon.). *Human Nature* for May 1877.

Joanna Southcote; that 'seldom before have human minds been astonished at such utterances;' and that while 'other productions of the kind infest Spiritual literature, there are few which display such an utter lack of principle, such a happy audacity in assertion, or so complete a disregard of facts.'

Of course, Mr. Home will 'catch it' in his turn from the Spiritualistic critics of his book. The following are a few excerpts from the only review of it that I have seen:⁴

Mr. Home can have no pretence whatever to occupy that lofty and interior plane from which Spiritualism proper is capable of being apprehended. He is simply a phenomenal medium; and we have yet to learn that this class contains any of those gifted with glowing inspiration, placid wisdom, or pure disinterestedness. . . . The clay of human mortality is attached to him so firmly, that not for one moment does he soar into the higher realm of spiritual light and principles [which is, of course, inhabited by his critic]. . . . Rightly or wrongly, Mr. Home has been most cruelly attacked by a legion of opponents, who have had to invent most varied excuses for being his implacable foes. Strangely enough, these adversaries are, most of them, in the same sphere of Spiritual activity with himself. They are mediums—physical or phenomenal mediums—of one kind or another, and therefore brought into close juxtaposition with their elder brother. . . . This inflated selfishness only leads to mutual detraction and evil-speaking, which, when reproduced and carried from country to country, becomes a perfect host of devils, sufficient to goad to madness anyone who lives on the plane of their action. . . . The whole proceeding is an instructive illustration of the too extended development of physical mediumship, unsanctified by spiritual love and unselfish beneficence.

So much for Mr. Home personally; now for his book:

Take the book as a whole, from beginning to end, it is a superficial compilation without an original thought or inspired purpose, and, as all such performances are, it is charmingly illogical.

See how these Spiritualists love one another!

I now turn to Mr. Wallace, an

old friend with whom I have never had the slightest personal disagreement, except that which has arisen (on his side) out of our difference of opinion on the subjects discussed in my Lectures.

In the Review of these Lectures to which I have already referred, Mr. Wallace charges me with 'complete misrepresentations of the opinions of his opponents,' with making 'vague general assertions, without a particle of proof offered, or which can be offered;' and, what is far worse, with wilful and repeated *suppressio veri*. One passage in particular, reflecting upon what I considered Mr. Wallace's too ready acceptance of 'the slenderest evidence of the greatest marvels,' is denounced by Mr. W., *first*, as 'an utterly unjustifiable remark;' *secondly*, as not having 'even the shadow of a foundation;' and *thirdly* (when he has worked himself up to the highest pitch of virtuous indignation), as a 'reckless accusation, which he cannot adequately characterise without using language which he would not wish to use.' The terrific force of this last dreadful denunciation (equivalent to the Speaker's fearful threat of 'naming' an Honourable Member) makes me thankful that, as Spiritualism is not yet a dominant power in the State, I can at present be only *morally* 'pilloried.' Looking, however, to the case of the unfortunate minister who was hanged during the Salem epidemic, for having dared to call in question the very existence of witchcraft, I cannot contemplate without a shudder the doom that might befall me if I were put on trial for my Spiritualistic heresy, with Messrs. Crookes and Wallace for my Judges, the Oxford M.A. as Attorney-General for the prosecution, and Mrs. Guppy Volckman as the principal witness against me!

⁴ *Human Nature, a Monthly Journal of Zoistic Science, May 1877.*

Having introduced these citations merely as choice samples of the 'Amenities of Spiritualism,' which remind one of the 'brief' instructions given to the counsel for a defendant—'No case; abuse the plaintiff's attorney'—I pass on to the next 'curiosity.'

WHAT MR. WALLACE MEANS BY 'DEMONSTRATION.'

Everyone who has studied the subject of Evidence, knows perfectly well, that to 'demonstrate' a certain proposition, is, as Dr. Johnson defined it, 'to establish, so as to exclude possibility of doubt or denial;' the *type* of demonstrative reasoning being the Mathematical, in which every step in the deductive process is so completely indubitable—either the contrary, or anything else than the proposition affirmed, being 'unthinkable,'—that we have as firm an assurance of the final Q.E.D., as we have of the Axioms from which we first started.

No evidence as to either Scientific or ordinary facts, can be in the strict sense 'demonstrative;' for it is open to various sources of fallacy, such as errors of *observation*, errors of *interpretation*, and errors (intentional or unintentional) of *statement*. But what we ordinarily proceed upon in the formation of our convictions, is a concurrence of testimony given by competent and disinterested witnesses, which, if it does not *absolutely* 'exclude possibility of doubt or denial,' does so to such a degree as to establish the highest *moral probability* that the case admits of. Where, on the other hand, there is a reasonable ground for doubt, either as to the *sufficiency* of the testimony for the establishment of the *factum probandum*, or as to its *trustworthiness* (which may be questioned, not only on the ground of intentional deceit, but on many others), it would altogether confuse the meaning

of terms, to call such evidence 'demonstrative.'

This, however, is what Mr. Wallace has repeatedly done; charging me with wilfully shutting my own eyes, and endeavouring to hide from the eyes of others, what *he* considers the demonstrative evidence in favour of certain propositions; which evidence, so far from being free from 'the possibility of doubt or denial,' appears to me open to question on every one of the grounds I have just specified.

It has always appeared to me that the 'Spiritualistic' production of flowers, fruits, &c., in dark *séances*, which is now one of the commonest 'mediumistic' performances, should, even more than the moving of tables and the production of 'raps,' be regarded as so completely *ex rerum naturá*, as to justify the assumption that it is a mere piece of jugglery, which a thorough investigation *must* detect; the fact of its non-detection merely showing that the investigation has not been complete. There can be only two hypotheses about the matter: either that the fruit, flowers, &c., have been brought into the room by the 'medium,' or by some confederate; or that they have been *dematerialised*, that is, resolved into their component atoms, which, after passing through either walls, doors, or window-panes, have not only come together again in their original forms, but, in the case of living bodies, have renewed their vital activity. Of course, if we believe this possible of live eels or lobsters, we may believe it also of Mrs. Guppy. But to myself, the one is as inconceivable as the other; and even Mr. D. D. Home, who has witnessed many instances in which this 'passage of matter through matter' was said to have occurred, agrees with me in considering that they 'could one and all be explained by less far-fetched theories.' (*Op. cit.* p. 351.) Yet Mr. Wallace

complains of my not accepting the flowers and fruits 'produced' in his own drawing-room, and those which made their appearance in the house of Mr. T. A. Trollope at Florence (related in the *Dialectical Report*), as 'demonstrably not brought by the medium.'

I shall now, with Mr. Home's assistance, inquire into the probative value of each of these cases.

Let me give (says Mr. Home, *op. cit.* p. 352) an idea of how the bringing fruit, fish, &c. into a darkened room is often accomplished. The expectant circle, we will suppose, is seated round the table. The stream of harmony gushes forth as usual. Presently the 'medium' (generally a lady—ladies' dresses offer such facilities for concealment) feels and announces the presence of the 'spirits.' She commences to speculate as to what they will bring. 'Let me see! at our last *séance* the dear spirits brought in some cabbages. Suppose they were to bring lilies of the valley this time, how nice that would be! Oh, dear no! We must not ask for lilies of the valley. Let us think of something else. What would any of you like?'

Naturally a voice proceeds from some one in the circle, 'I would like to have lilies of the valley.'

The 'medium' energetically repudiates the suggestion. 'Perhaps the dear spirits could not bring them. Why *will* you ask for such out-of-the-way things?'

'If they bring lilies of the valley, I shall consider it a test.'

The next instant a scattering sound is heard. A 'spirit-voice' probably announces 'We have brought you the lilies, since you wish for them so much.' And, sure enough, on a light being struck, the table is found strewn with the flowers in question. And the next issue of some spiritual journal describes, as a 'good test,' that 'at Mrs. —'s *séance*, a few days ago, Mr. A. — wished for some lilies of the valley, which the spirits 'instantly brought.' (*Op. cit.* p. 353.)

This 'suggestive' method is well known to be employed by conjurors; who can 'force a card' upon the most unwilling victim, or compel him to select out of a dozen or two of handkerchiefs, the one suitable for his trick. The only difference is, that

the suggestion is conveyed orally in the one case, and presented visually in the other. But, beside this unconscious confederacy, there is full opportunity for the intentional complicity which Serjeant Cox has exposed in the case of the 'materialisation' imposture; and not even members of the family or the most intimate friends can be in strictness regarded as beyond the pale of suspicion. Clever as they are, however, 'mediums' are sometimes caught in their own trap.

I recall an instance (says Mr. Home) in which about half-a-pint of gooseberries were thrown on a table in the dark. 'There,' cried the 'medium,' 'is not that a beautiful manifestation? Don't you think it is perfectly astonishing?' A burst of indignation ensued when the two other persons present 'could find nothing astonishing in it.' 'What!' said the wonder, 'you think I had the berries in my pocket, do you?' And to prove the honesty of all this wrath, the said pocket was turned inside out. Alas, for the result! The 'medium' had forgotten the little withered ends [of the corolla] which adhere to the gooseberry. At least a dozen of these were disinterred from the depths of that pocket.

The 'medium,' however, was quite equal to the occasion: 'Evil spirits must have placed them there!'

Does Mr. Wallace accept this explanation? If not, why not? It is surely just as likely as the 'dematerialisation' itself.

Now it will scarcely be believed that in Mr. Wallace's own case *no precautions whatever had been employed!* The 'medium' was Miss Nichol (of whom more anon); and the production took place for the first time, and 'at a very early stage of her development.' The only shred of evidence adduced by Mr. Wallace that the flowers and ferns had *not* been brought in by the 'medium,' consists in what he asserts to have been their condition,—they being 'all absolutely fresh as if just gathered from a conservatory, and

³ Provided always (says Mr. Home) they are in season. The 'spirits' never bring flowers which are out of season, or the products of distant lands.

covered with a fine cold dew.' This, in Mr. Wallace's opinion, made it 'absolutely impossible' for Miss Nichol to have kept them concealed about her person 'in a very warm gas-lighted room four hours before the flowers appeared.' Now granting Mr. Wallace's testimony on this point—as to which I fully admit that he was specially qualified to judge—to have been entirely unbiassed, there is one little defect in his narrative, which, as will presently appear, seriously impairs its probative value. The whole thing happened more than ten years ago; and such a triviality as Miss N.'s having left the room during these four hours, or having had an opera-cloak brought-in to prevent her feeling chilly (it being mid-winter), may have escaped Mr. Wallace's attention at the time, or slipped his memory since. But even taking the case exactly as Mr. Wallace puts it, what is the proof of his 'absolute impossibility'? Everyone has seen conjurors tumble piles of bouquets out of a hat, in which it was 'absolutely impossible' that they could have been all contained. And most people who have been long in India, have seen the celebrated 'tree trick,' which, as described to me by several of our most distinguished Civilians and Scientific officers, is simply the greatest marvel I ever heard of. That a mango-tree should first shoot up to a height of six inches, from a grass-plot to which the conjurors had no previous access, beneath an inverted cylindrical basket whose emptiness has been previously 'demonstrated,' and that this tree should appear to grow in the course of half an hour from six inches to six feet, under a succession of taller and yet taller baskets, quite beats Miss Nichol. Does Mr. Wallace attribute this to 'spiritual agency,' in like manner as Mr. Benjamin Coleman insists that Messrs. Cooke and Maskelyne, in spite of their disclaimer, 'are the best of living mediums for the pro-

duction of physical effects?' Or, like the world in general, and the performers of the 'tree trick' in particular, does he regard it as a piece of clever jugglery? If the former, we are free to entertain our own opinion of the healthful condition of Mr. Wallace's mind. If the latter, what is the probative value of the 'demonstrative' performance in Mr. W.'s drawing-room?

But now for the other case specially cited by Mr. Wallace, that of Mr. T. A. Trollope. Here the 'medium's' dress had been carefully examined by Mrs. Trollope before the *séance* began, and a previous search of the room had been made by the gentlemen of the party. Now, considering how cleverly (as will be presently shown) the concealment of the 'properties' required for 'spirit materialisation' can be managed by ingenious ladies, it would have been more satisfactory if the examination of Miss Nichol's dress had been effected by an experienced female searcher; and the assistance of a clever detective might have been a useful help to the gentlemen-searchers of the room. But even if all these precautions had been adopted, a trick so simple that (as M. Robin the conjuror said) 'it makes one laugh to see how easily people can be deceived,' would have been quite sufficient to get over the little difficulty.

In the case of a 'medium' known to Mr. Home (*op. cit.* p. 353), 'in more than one instance, after the most rigid scrutiny of her dress had been made, flowers, and even small branches of shrubs with the leaves attached, were brought—in total darkness, of course.' One evening, however, a gentleman who had come too late to be admitted to the *séance*, but to whom, after its conclusion, one of the little 'spirit-branches' had been given to examine, happened to notice a leaf hanging from the lower part

of the red opera-cloak worn by the 'medium;' and, finding that it corresponded exactly with the leaves of the twig he held in his hand, he caught up the cloak, and showed to all present that the 'Spiritual' productions had been concealed in its lining. And 'it was then remembered that the "medium" had, *after* being searched, complained of feeling chilly, and had requested permission to put on the red opera-cloak which she had left (quite promiscuously, of course) in the hall.'

Thus, in addition to a very thorough search alike of the 'medium' and of the apartment, before the *séance*, it would be essential that after its commencement *nothing should be brought in*.

Even this precaution, however, would not suffice to 'demonstrate' the 'Spiritual' introduction of the articles in question. For there would remain full scope for the exercise of *confederacy*, which, says Mr. Home, 'plays a great part on these occasions.' 'I have known of cases,' he continues, 'where servants of the house were bribed into acting as accomplices.' And Serjeant Cox, speaking of the 'materialisation' performance, refers to 'people who knew it was a trick, and lent themselves to it.'

The lesson (continues Serjeant Cox) to be learned from all this [the system of cheating he has honestly exposed] is, that no phenomena should be accepted as genuine, that are not produced under strict test conditions. *Investigators should be satisfied with no evidence short of the very best that the circumstances will permit.*

I feel sure, therefore, that, as an experienced Criminal judge, Serjeant Cox will bear me out in saying, that, in the case now under discussion, the only 'test condition' that could be considered 'demonstrative,' would be a *careful search of every individual admitted to the séance*. Such a test, however, would probably be objected to

by Mr. Wallace, as showing an unreasonable degree of suspicion, which might deter the 'dear spirits' from favouring the *séance* with their gifts; and he would argue that failure under such 'rigid conditions' proved nothing against the genuineness of successes obtained under more favourable circumstances. But I believe that the Common Sense of such as have not surrendered it to the Spiritualistic 'prepossession,' will bear me out in the conclusion that Mr. Wallace's 'demonstration' is no demonstration at all; and that, until some better shall have been given, we are fully justified in deeming it more probable that there is imposture *somewhere*, than that 'matter can pass through matter.'

That there is good ground for suspecting even Ladies who are above receiving money as professional 'mediums,' of occasionally amusing themselves in this way, for the mere pleasure of deception, I pointed out in my Lectures, as a probability well known to Medical practitioners; of which Mr. Wallace has *not* had, what I *have* had, personal experience. And I shall now give the particulars of a case of this kind, referred to in my second Lecture, my account of which has been called in question by Mr. Wallace,

In his zeal to defend a 'Lady medium,' whom he considers that I have most unjustly aspersed, Mr. Wallace suggests that my informant 'manufactured the evidence;' asks for 'independent testimony that the salt was not applied to the flowers *after* they appeared at the *séance*;' and states that 'some of the flowers were sent to a medical man in the town, and that no trace of ferrocyanide of potassium could be detected.' As Mr. Wallace has no reserve about the case, I may now say that the 'medium' was Mr. Wallace's favourite performer—

Miss Nichol, afterwards Mrs. Guppy, and now Mrs. Guppy Volckman—the subject of the celebrated aerial transportation from her house in Highbury Hill Park into a securely closed room in Lamb's Conduit Street; and that the *séance* was one of several held during the Meeting of the British Association at Belfast, three years ago, in a house into which Mrs. Guppy had been received as a guest. Having myself seen one of the hollyhocks 'produced' on that occasion, and having learned that a fraud had been chemically detected by a young gentleman present at the *séance*, I put myself into communication with him; and soon received an explicit statement of what had passed, not only at this, but at a previous *séance*, with full permission to publish it. The following *verbatim* extract from this statement, which, having lain in my desk for more than *three years*, has *not* been 'manufactured' to meet Mr. Wallace's objections (as its precise 'fit' might seem to suggest), contains all that is essential to the case:

Having observed [in previous *séances*] that the flowers were soaked in wet (dew does not soak to the heart of a flower), I considered that the dew on them was artificially produced; and on August 21 I mixed a small quantity of solution of potassium ferrocyanide with the water on the washstand in Mrs. Guppy's rooms.

Séance No. 4, August 23, 1874.—Fifteen persons sat; of these five were strangers, viz. Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, and three gentlemen introduced by them, one a professed medium. The candle was put out, and the table began to oscillate violently. We were asked to wish for three kinds of flowers. The table now jolted violently, and I struck some matches. It at once stopped. Mrs. Guppy got very angry, and said it was as much as to say they were cheating. Being pacified, the candle was again extinguished, after we had found on the table some sand, a plant like an onion, &c. The table rocked violently, and scent was squirted from one of the mediums. A large quantity of flowers were thrown from their side of the table, among which were china-asters, which I took out, and, having wet a piece

of white blotting-paper with the 'dew' off them, poured some ferrous sulphate solution on it. The result was the ordinary 'Prussian blue' colour. A spike of pink hollyhock gave a very decided blue colour. Similar flowers fresh from the garden gave no reaction. The flowers were allowed to remain in my laboratory, the door of which was not locked, till the morning of August 25; when I took some in to Dr. Hodges, and he with several friends could find no trace of the salt in them. I immediately wrote to a friend who had been present at the *séance*, and who had taken an aster with him as a keepsake, to have it tested. He writes: 'I have had the plants analysed to-day by Professors Delfs of Heidelberg and Roscoe of Manchester. The asters showed unmistakable signs of ferrocyanide of potassium, and in no small quantity either.' I believe the reason Dr. Hodges could find nothing in the hollyhocks, was that the fresh flowers had been substituted for them on Monday evening (24th), when everyone was from home at Sir J. Lubbock's lecture, except the mediums.

Being able to add, from inquiries I have made, that my informant bears an unblemished character, as does also the friend to whom he refers, I ask, which is the more to be trusted—the testimony of these two gentlemen, or the honesty of Mrs. Guppy? It will be observed that we have here *no evidence whatever* that the flowers were *not* brought in by the medium; while the *immediate* detection of the salt by one of the witnesses, and the subsequent confirmatory testimony of the other, affords the strongest assurance that the flowers had been watered out of the decanter in Mrs. Guppy's room—*by whom?* I can only say, as an ex-Professor of Medical Jurisprudence, that I have not the least doubt, supposing this to have been a case of Poisoning, as to the verdict that an intelligent jury would return.

WHAT MR. WALLACE DEEMS 'RIGID CONDITIONS.'

The failure of each of the three claimants for the Burdin prize, as narrated in my second Lecture, is thus accounted-for by Mr. Wallace:

The reader might well doubt if offering a prize for *reading under rigid conditions*, was an adequate means of sifting a faculty so eminently variable, uncertain, and delicate as clairvoyance is admitted to be.' Now what were these conditions? In the *first* case, Madlle. Emélie was not permitted to acquaint herself by ordinary vision with the contents of a book which she was to read with her occiput. In the *second*, Madlle. Pigeaire, whose eyes were covered by a black velvet bandage, was required to read a book held *directly opposite her face*, and was not permitted to hold it for herself in such a position that she could see it *downwards* beneath the bandage. And in the *third*, M. Teste's *clairvoyante* was not allowed to open the box in which the test lines of print were inclosed!—From these examples it may be judged what are the tests which Mr. Wallace would consider adequate.

WHAT MESSRS. WALLACE AND CROOKES REGARD AS 'TRUSTWORTHY TESTIMONY.'

Everyone who has followed the recent history of Spiritualism, has heard of the exposure of the American 'Katie King,' to which I referred in my Lectures as a matter of public notoriety. It is well known that Robert Dale Owen had sent to a Boston periodical a narrative of the 'materialisation' manifestations, to which he pledged his credit; that when this exposure took place, he tried (in vain) to prevent the appearance of his narrative; and that its publication so distressed him, as to have had much to do with the mental and bodily illness to which he succumbed not long afterwards. Mr. Home, together with (as I am in a position to show) the most respectable American Spirit-

ualists, including the family of Robert Dale Owen, altogether disown her. But in order to support the charge which Messrs. Wallace and Crookes make against me, of a 'reprehensible eagerness to accept and retail whatever falsehoods may be circulated against mediums,' a witness is brought forward to rehabilitate 'Katie King,' by giving the results of a re-investigation of the case by 'a gentleman connected with the New York daily press.' Now who is this re-investigator, whose judgment is to be set in opposition to the verdict of the Committee—composed not of hostile sceptics, but of honest Spiritualists—by which the case was originally examined? None other than the very Colonel Olcott, whose endorsement of the Eddy imposture has drawn forth Mr. D. D. Home's severest reprobation. But as it may be said that Mr. Home's is a prejudiced judgment, I shall call Colonel Olcott himself as a witness to his own character. Among other vagaries of the Theosophical Society of which he is President, is the despatch of a newly affiliated member to Tunis and Cairo, with the charge to find and bring back an 'African sorcerer, who will, for a small fee, show you images of the dead, and enable you to converse with them in an audible voice. They will walk self-levitated in air; climb poles which rest upon nothing, until they go out of sight, and dismember themselves even to decapitation without injury. . . . 'You have the opportunity to introduce to Western Scientists, under the patronage, restrictions, and guarantees of a Scientific society, those proofs of occult powers, for lack of which they have been drifting into materialism and infidelity.'⁶

⁶ I give this extract on the authority of Mr. Home (*op. cit.* p. 247), whom I can scarcely suppose to have deliberately forged, even to blacken Colonel Olcott, what he puts forward as a public document. And I may add that it is fully borne out by information I have received direct from New York: which, without at all calling his honesty in question, makes it clear that he is the very type of those *gobe-mouches* who, as Mr. Home says, are ready to swallow anything from gnats to camels.

The inditer of this precious stuff is the *trustworthy witness*, whose assurance that he has proved 'under the most rigid test conditions' that 'Katie King' could not have been personated by Eliza White, is adduced by Messrs. Wallace and Crookes in support of the above charge!

MR. CROOKES AND HIS 'SCIENTIFIC TESTS.'

As Mr. Crookes has in more than one instance pledged his Scientific reputation to the genuineness of the performances of 'mediums,' on the strength of what he describes as 'scientific tests,' the *probative value* of these tests constitutes a most legitimate subject of inquiry; and the following history will afford some means of estimating this.

About three years ago, there came to London from Louisville, Kentucky, a good-looking young woman, who, having come out as 'a physical and mental test medium,' and having in that capacity made the tour of the principal cities and towns of the United States, gave a series of performances in the Hanover Square Rooms, at one of which I was myself present. A short preliminary lecture was given by a gentlemanly-looking man, styling himself 'Colonel' Fay, whose relation to the lady was then spoken of as paternal, though elsewhere it seems to have been marital. The 'Colonel' candidly informed his audience that he purposely abstained from saying anything about the nature of the 'manifestations;' he did not claim for them a 'Spiritualistic' character; on the other hand, he did not present them as conjuring tricks. He left everyone free to judge for himself or herself:—as the showman said to the little girl, it was 'whichever you please, my pretty dear.'

The performance consisted of two parts; the first, or 'light *séance*,'

being a new version of the 'cabinet trick' originally introduced by the Davenport Brothers; while the second was a 'dark *séance*,' for 'manifestations' of a different order. Having previously seen Maskelyne and Cooke's presentation of the cabinet trick, 'with new and startling effects,' I felt perfectly sure that they could, without the least difficulty, reproduce everything done by Eva Fay; her performances being all explicable on the very simple hypothesis, that her hands were not really tied behind her so tightly as they seemed to be. And Mr. Maskelyne states (*Modern Spiritualism*, p. 121) that whilst these 'manifestations' were running on at the Hanover Square Rooms, Mr. Cooke was actually giving an *exact reproduction of them* twice a week at the Egyptian Hall.

At the conclusion of the first part of the performance, the cabinet was moved out of the way; and Eva Fay having taken her seat on a stool in the centre of the stage, the 'Colonel' requested the occupants of the two front rows of reserved seats to come up and sit on a circle of chairs placed around her, joining their hands together, so that the 'circle' (of which the Colonel, like myself, was a component) should be complete. Eva Fay then began clapping her hands together with a steady rhythmical beat; and we were directed to keep our attention fixed upon the *continuity* of this, after the lights should be turned down, as a proof that any 'manifestation' which should require manual instrumentality *could not be her doing*. Various 'properties'—such as guitars, bells, and fans—were then laid about 'promiscuously,' some of them on the knees of the sitters; and the gas having been put-out on and near the stage, and turned 'down to the blue' elsewhere, the darkness on the stage was so complete, that nothing whatever could be discerned by anyone

not habituated to it. Immediately there was a rustling sound within the circle, as of 'spirits' moving stealthily about; guitar-strings were twanged, bells were rung, open fans were moved before our faces, our legs were struck, our arms were pinched, our whiskers were pulled, and some 'old fogies' were chucked under the chin—whilst all this time the clapping sound was continuously heard! Now granting that there was no confederacy, that the 'Colonel's' hands were held during the whole time, so that he could not give any assistance to his partner, would it not become clear to any man of average shrewdness, not 'possessed' by an idea, that whilst Eva Fay was doing all this 'business' with one hand, she could keep up the clapping sound by striking her forehead, cheek, or bared arm with the other? But if this should be openly suggested by any troublesome sceptic (which did not happen when I was myself present), the 'Colonel' was prepared with another 'manifestation.' 'To show the impossibility of such a thing, one gentleman shall now be allowed to hold the medium's hands; still, a bell shall be rung, a guitar be thrummed, and possibly the gentleman holding the medium's hands shall have his face fanned.' All this, says Mr. Maskelyne, can be very easily accomplished. 'Miss Fay will pass a bell to the Colonel's mouth, which he will shake as a terrier does a rat, while his boot operates upon the guitar-strings, and produces the thrumming; and the 'medium,' with a fan held between her teeth, will gently wave it in the face of him who holds her hand.' And he thus explained to his audience at the Egyptian Hall every one of the apparent marvels of Eva Fay's 'dark séance;' these being, as he truly says, 'too simple and absurd to bear any other treatment.'

But while not putting forth any public claim as a Spiritualistic 'medium,' Eva Fay asserted herself in private to be such; and, for good reasons of her own, sought to convince the London Spiritualists in general, and Mr. Crookes in particular, that she really was so. Accordingly, Mr. Crookes subjected her to what he considered to be 'scientific tests;' which, as I am assured on good authority, could be evaded by a 'dodge' so simple (reminding one of Edgar Poe's well-known story of *The Lost Letter*) that Mr. Crookes's highly-trained scientific acumen could not detect it!⁷ And this is confirmed by the statement of Mr. Maskelyne (*Modern Spiritualism*, p. 122), that while this 'testing' was in progress, Miss Fay's business-agent made Mr. M. an offer, at first verbally, and then confirmed by letters in his possession (dated Birmingham, May 12 and 15, 1875)—copies of which I have myself seen—that for an adequate sum of money the 'medium' should expose the whole affair, 'Scientific tests' and all; 'complicating at least six big guns, the F.R.S. people;' as she was not properly supported by the Spiritualists!

This offer having been declined by Mr. Maskelyne, and her London audiences dwindling away, Eva Fay returned to the United States, carrying with her a letter from Mr. Crookes, which set forth that since doubts had been thrown on the Spiritualistic nature of her 'manifestations,' and since he, in common with other Fellows of the Royal Society, had satisfied himself of their genuineness by 'scientific tests,' he willingly gave her the benefit of his attestation. This letter was published, in *fac-simile*, in American newspapers; and Eva Fay announced her Spiritualistic *séances* as 'endorsed by Professor

⁷ I shall give the whole explanation in the new edition of my Lectures.

Crookes and other Fellows of the Royal Society'!

Unluckily, however, for her own reputation, and for that of Mr. Crookes, it happened that a young gentleman of New York (Mr. Washington Irving Bishop) of excellent social position (his father being a very eminent lawyer, and Washington Irving having been his god-father) was moved to bestow a great deal of time and attention on the pretensions of the Spiritualistic 'mediums.'

A friend whom he loved, as did everyone else who enjoyed his acquaintance—a young man full of promise—intellectual, gifted, brilliant, became ill and was sent to a foreign country for treatment. Here he finally fell under the infernal arts of the Spiritualist mediumistic healers, who restored him to his home and friends hopelessly insane; and thus he remains to this day. Mr. Bishop covenanted with himself—those bonds are strong ones, when made in thorough earnest—that he would leave no stone unturned, until he had ferreted out the explanation of the whole mediumistic business. (*Boston Herald*, Nov. 6, 1876.)

Convinced that there was deception in the matter, he devoted many months to the investigation, and finally discovered the clue. He then trained himself to do everything done by Eva Fay,—'a woman who had successfully cheated two hemispheres; who had fairly drained money from rich and poor, high and low; who fooled men of the sharpest intellects, men of science and close students of human and every other nature;' and exhibited to his circle of private friends, which included several of the most distinguished members of the clerical and medical professions in New York, an exact counterpart of Eva Fay's performances. Two of the latter, one of them well known in this country as an eminent Physiologist as well as an able

Surgeon, and the other an ex-Surgeon General in the United States army, addressed to him the following letter:

New York, March 30, 1876.

W. Irving Bishop, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—It has given us great pleasure to witness the very satisfactory manner in which you show the fraudulent nature of the pretensions of the so-called spiritual mediums, especially those of Annie Eva Fay, who has received the endorsement of Mr. William Crookes and other Fellows of the Royal Society. We believe the performances of these people are calculated to produce evil effects upon the credulous and disordered imaginations of many persons; and, with a view to put an effectual stop to them, we earnestly request you to communicate to the public the manner in which the so-called Spiritualists conduct their deceitful practices. Such an *exposé* as we refer to, can only be productive of good results; and we trust, therefore, in view of the importance of the whole matter, that you will accede to our request. With great respect, we are your obedient servants,

WILLIAM A. HAMMOND, M.D.

ALEXANDER B. MOTT, M.D.

This having been followed, a month later, by a requisition to the same effect by twenty-four gentlemen, mostly well-known Clergymen of various denominations, and eminent M.D.'s, a public performance was arranged, which consisted (1) in the repetition of the most mysterious of the 'mediumistic' feats, including 'slate-writing,' and 'flowers from an invisible garden;' and then (2) in the exhibition and explanation of the whole *modus operandi*, in full view of the spectators. From among the various attestations to the completeness of this exposure, I select the following, because, as Dr. Bellows is a valued personal friend of my own, I can bear the strongest testimony to his intellectual ability, moral worth, and practical clear-headedness.⁸ The style in which Dr. Bellows

* It may, however, be not amiss for me to state that Dr. B. was the originator and organiser, and was then appointed by universal acclaim the Chairman, of that great Volunteer Sanitary Commission, which, throughout the war between the Northern and Southern States, supplemented the work of the Military organisation of the

delivers his testimony, will confirm my own estimate of his vigorous and thorough grasp of the subject :

New York, 232 East 15th St.

Oct. 16, 1876.

DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure and profit of attending your exposure of the acts by which the alleged proofs of Spiritualism are foisted upon a credulous public. You showed in a most effectual and convincing way, that a most intelligent audience could be entirely deceived by the testimony of its own senses, in regard to matters which were afterwards shown openly by you to be mere tricks, in which sleight of hand and a diversion of attention from the real to the artificial and chosen conditions, were the means of success. After puzzling the audience, as no juggler could puzzle them, for an hour and a half, with feats that seemed supernatural, you untied all the riddles. I felt convinced that *nothing* that Spiritualists pretend or believe is done by spirits, beyond the reach of a clever juggler, who possesses unusual suppleness of joints, strength of muscles, and agility of movements, perfected by practice, and skilfully plays upon the credulity of our common nature.

I am of the opinion that your exhibition is one of great public importance, and tends to disabuse the public mind of a very mischievous and very general delusion, which indeed is becoming a vulgar religion with thousands. No *description* of it can take the place of an actual sight of it. It might advantageously be repeated in every town, where the pretended *séances* of the modern necromancer have played upon the weaker portion of communities. Without attributing any exalted motive to the business which engages you, I deliberately think, independent of any ends you seek, that your exhibition is one of the most instructive and useful I have ever seen, as well as one of the most interesting and successful. I wish you a long succession of fortunate spectators.

Yours truly,

HENRY W. BELLOWES.

The immediate effect of Mr. Bishop's exposure upon Eva Fay's *status*, was, we are assured by the *Boston Herald*, 'to reduce her to the level of a pitiful street performer, obliging her to take out a li-

cense as a juggler, before she could carry on the nefarious business by which her ill-gotten gains could be continued.'—It is, perhaps, to be wished that a similar legal process could be applied to the like class in this country. Let them not be martyred by criminal prosecutions; but let them be 'ticketed' as 'licensed jugglers;' and then be allowed to carry on their vocation without let or hindrance, as long as they find people ready to pay for seeing them.

The fame of Mr. Bishop's performances having reached Boston, he was invited by a Committee composed—like that of New York—of some of its most distinguished members of the Medical and Clerical professions (the honoured name of Oliver Wendell Holmes standing at the head of a requisition now before me, dated October 18, 1876), to repeat them in that great intellectual centre; and the result was equally satisfactory. The newspapers were filled with the accounts of his exposures, not only of Eva Fay, but of various other 'mediums,' including the Hardy trick of the moulding of paraffin hands, and the so-called 'thought reading,'—the first of which I shall presently notice; and they also contain 'illustrations' of the manner in which all the tricks were worked. It is not a little significant of the effect produced by Mr. Bishop's most laudable exertions, that the American *Graphic*,—which had so far given-in to the 'materialisations' of the Eddy Brothers as to send a special 'Commissioner' to report upon them (the Colonel Olcott of whom I have already spoken), who was known to favour the doctrine—thus decidedly expressed itself after seeing in private Mr. Bishop's imitation of them, as well as of 'Katie King' whom

North, in every way that could contribute to the health and welfare of the Army; the extent of its operations being such, that Dr. Bellows assured me that a *million and a half of pounds sterling* passed through his hands during his four years of office.

the *Graphic's* 'Commissioner' had previously tried to rehabilitate:

Mr. Bishop unravelled the Katie King mystery, that seemed for a time to defy the most rigid scrutiny; and more recently he has been engaged in revealing the method by which the Eddy Brothers produced those sub-mundane entertainments, which long harassed the public mind and imposed upon the credulity of many thoughtful and intelligent men. (*Graphic*, April 12, 1876.)

Returning to the subject a month afterwards (May 10), the *Graphic* says:

It certainly would be a laudable thing for clergymen, physicians, and leading citizens generally, to invite Mr. Bishop to exhibit in every city and town in the country; for the exposure he gives of the mediumistic tricks is so complete, that it could not but convince even the most credulous, that 'spirits' have nothing to do with these manifestations.

MATERIALIZATION SÉANCES.

It is, I suppose, now generally known, that Spiritualists claim not only to hold intercourse with 'the spirits' by raps, slate-writing, and the like, but also to induce them to clothe themselves afresh in a 'materialised' form, possessing the substance and weight of ordinary mortals. It was Mr. Home, I believe, who first 'produced' spirit-hands; but he has been so far outdone by those who 'materialise' whole figures, that he feels it incumbent upon him, not only to denounce them as impostors, but to make a full exposure of the various modes in which the trick is played. As I have never myself been present at any of these performances, and could therefore only describe from hearsay, I borrow Mr. Home's account of them.

Nothing is offered that can in the slightest degree be considered as approaching a test; the imposture is often of the baldest and grossest character; yet the 'medium' is congratulated on the success of the *séance*, and credulous fools are happy. Perhaps the sitting is for 'materialised' forms or faces; in such case the proceedings are regulated according to the character of the

persons present. Should these be unknown, or regarded as possessing a fair share of common sense, nothing goes well. The circle is described as 'inharmonious.' The cabinet is jealously guarded. A distressingly tiny ray of light having been introduced, 'materialisation' takes place. All that the persons present can perceive is something white; shape and features there are none. Such is a faithful portraiture of perhaps the majority of sittings for 'spirit-forms.' If, however, the audience consists of known and enthusiastic dupes, the conditions are at once pronounced favourable. A larger share of light is admitted; the form appears and moves about among the believers present. Their credulity rapidly mounts to fever heat. Patched and darned shawls are discovered to be 'robes of delicate texture and surpassing gorgeousness.' A kerchief twisted round the head becomes an unmistakable turban; false whiskers and Indian ink produce 'a manly and noble face;' rouge and pearl-powder, in conjunction with a skilfully arranged head-dress, are sufficient to send the credulous into raptures over the 'vision of surpassing loveliness' presented. The familiarity of the spiritual visitors is charming; they have been known to seat themselves at the tea-table, and make a hearty meal, 'inquiring jocularly whether the muffins were well buttered.' They have mixed stiff glasses of grog for the sitters, and, not satisfied with mixing, have themselves partaken of them. In such little *réunions*, tests are never employed or mentioned. Not a dupe present, but would rather perish than take a suspicious peep into the cabinet, whilst the materialised form is out and moving about the room. Not a hand among the party but would rather be cut off at the wrist, than grasp, in detective fashion, the said form. The spirit is in every respect at home, and may walk in or out of the cabinet as he or she lists.

The darkness of the *séance* is thus proportioned to the sense of the sitters. Where scepticism is rife, the most jealous precautions are taken lest that scepticism should behold too much. If they be of an inconvenient nature, the impostor whom they are intended to unmask usually declines them. If, on the other hand, they appear such as may be eluded by jugglery or confederacy, they are at once adopted.

In the simplest form of these performances, only one 'spirit' appears; and if it should be objected that it 'is very like the medium,' the incredulous are sometimes admitted into the back-room or cabinet,

where either a 'dummy' has been prepared, or a confederate introduced, to represent the 'medium' as in a state of trance; no light being allowed but that of a bottle of phosphorised oil, or some similar glimmer; and no handling being permitted. A wicked sceptic has been known to endeavour to identify the 'spirit' and the 'medium,' by squirting ink on the arm of the former, and pointing out its presence on the arm of the latter on his (or her) return to the company; or by smearing ink on his own hand, and then, by a friendly grasp, imparting some of it to the hand of the 'spirit,' who unsuspectingly reappears as the 'medium' without washing it off. But this little incident, it appears, is referable to the 'well-known law of Spiritualism,' that any impression of this kind made on the spirit, is transferred to the medium. Such a test as the free opening of the doors, and the examination of both figures under a full light, is, of course, not to be thought of.

In another set of cases, a spirit 'dummy' is made up with a life-sized doll head and shoulders, and long flowing robes; this may be held up by the medium who is ensconced behind the curtains, and who passes his or her hand between them; or else two spirits may appear at once, performed by the medium and the dummy, the latter being made to appear to sink into the floor by a very simple contrivance.

That multitudes of men and women who claim to be sensible and well educated, should be victimised by such an obvious imposture, especially after its repeated detection and exposure, seems almost incredible; to me it is one of the most pitiable facts in the mental condition of our time. Mr. Home tells us that he does not believe that there are more than five of these

'materialising mediums' who have not been found out; and yet the thing goes on. The fact seems to be that the respectable Spiritualists who have countenanced it in the first instance, being generally ashamed of their gullibility, refrain from publishing the detection themselves, and do their best to keep others quiet. Serjeant Cox, however, who seems to have been partly taken-in at first, has since honestly and vigorously denounced the cheat; a long letter from him being published in Mr. Home's book, which contains a set of instructions given by a 'medium' to her pupil; by which we find *inter alia* that in order to evade the search for 'properties,' which is sometimes made on entrance, she brings in a veil under her drawers!

Now so far is Mr. Crookes from having been a cautious scientific investigator of these 'materialisations,' that it can be shown from his own utterances that he has 'gone in' for them most enthusiastically. One of his favourite 'spirits' is the English (not the American) 'Katie King;' of whose 'entrancing loveliness' he thus speaks:

But photography is as inadequate to depict the perfect beauty of Katey's face, as words are powerless to describe her charms of manner. Photography may, indeed, give a map of her countenance; but how can it reproduce the brilliant purity of her complexion, or the ever-varying expression of her most mobile features, now overshadowed with sadness when relating some of the bitter experiences of her past life, now smiling with all the innocence of happy girlhood when she had collected my children round her, and was amusing them by recounting anecdotes of her adventures in India?

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

Truly, as has been well said, 'the

“Scientist” who writes like this, is much too far gone for investigation.—We shall now see how Mr. Crookes, fascinated by these ‘spiritual’ charms, lent himself to Katie King’s influence, and was rewarded by her fullest confidence. This, he says,—

Gradually grew until she refused to give a *séance* unless I took charge of the arrangements. She said she always wanted me to keep close to her and near the cabinet; and I found that after this confidence was established, and she was satisfied I would not break any promise I might make to her, the phenomena increased greatly in power, and tests were freely given that would have been unobtainable had I approached the subject in another manner. She often consulted me about persons present at the *séances*, and where they should be placed; for of late she had become very nervous, in consequence of certain ill-advised suggestions that force should be employed as an adjunct to more Scientific modes of research.¹⁰

This last refers to an unpleasant circumstance which took place in an early stage of the ‘Katie King’ materialisation,—the unceremonious clasp of her spiritual waist by an incredulous ‘Dialectical,’ for whom ‘materialisation’ seems to have been a little ‘too strong,’ and who was rewarded for his impudence by a very forcible tug at his beard, which is said to have despoiled it of some of its beauty.

Further, the Rev. C. Maurice Davies, a well-known author, who was far from being unfavourably disposed to Spiritualism, and who was at the time a member of the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists, thus describes, in his *Mystic London*, the part taken by Mr. Crookes (whom he styles ‘the Professor’) at a *séance* at which he was present:

The Professor acted all the time as master of the ceremonies, retaining his place at the aperture; and, I fear, from the very first, exciting suspicion by his marked attention, not to the medium, but to the ghost.

And he afterwards speaks of Mr. Crookes’s conduct in the matter as having given the final death-blow to his belief that there might be ‘something’ in the face-manifestations!

It has been rumoured that Mr. Cooke has *privately* admitted that some of his ‘mediums,’ when they could not evoke the ‘manifestations’ by *fair* means, have done so by *foul*. Now that he knows (if he did not know before) how his name and reputation are being traded upon in the United States, and that the Royal Society is being trailed through the dirt by his instrumentality, it may be hoped (if this rumour be true) that he will honestly come forward, and by *public* admission that he has been even occasionally duped, will do all he can to repair the mischief he has done by his inconsiderate ‘endorsement’ of one of the grossest impostures ever practised,—that of Eva Fay.

‘THE LAST NEW THING’ IN SPIRITUALISTIC MATERIALISATIONS.

Everybody knows that Paris ‘sets the fashions’ in Ladies’ dress; and, in like manner, Boston (U. S.) ‘sets the fashions’ in Spiritualism. The latest ‘manifestation,’ which has not yet (so far as I am aware) been imported into England, is the production of likenesses of the *hands* of departed friends, ‘moulded’ by ‘the spirits’ in paraffin. A ‘circle,’ including the ‘medium,’ is constituted round a table, beneath which is placed a bucket of hot water, wherein some lumps of solid paraffin have been placed, so as to form when melted a floating stratum two or three inches thick. After a longer or shorter interval, the ‘spirits’ announce by raps that the process is complete; the table-cloth is lifted up, and a hand moulded in

¹⁰ *The Spiritualist*, June 5, 1874.

solid paraffin is found on the floor, or on the knees of the 'medium,' which the 'faithful' accept as their indubitable production. Of course the hand is 'demonstrably not brought in by the medium;' for how could such a brittle affair have been carried in her pocket, or hid in the folds of her dress? Suspicious half-believers may observe shreds of cotton-wool adherent to the hand; or may notice that the hand 'produced' at one *séance* has a very suspicious likeness in shape, or in some little defect or fracture, to one they have previously seen. But, of course, the cotton-wool has been brought by the 'bad spirits;' and as even 'good spirits' sometimes bungle their work, there is nothing extraordinary in the same defect being repeated, when the same spirits are the operators. Everything that can be thus readily explained away, goes for nothing with those who are predetermined to believe.

But how about the following? A set of troublesome sceptics, Mr. Home tells us, bought a proper quantity of paraffin-lumps, and had them carefully weighed, and their weight recorded, by the dealer. After the conclusion of the *séance*, when the water had cooled and the paraffin had solidified again, the whole of it was collected; and on being taken back to the same dealer, *was found to weigh exactly the same as it had weighed before.* Of course the explanation is ready: either the gentlemen who planned this test, and the dealer on whose independent verdict the result depended, were leagued together to 'manufacture evidence,' or else the 'spirits' could not only mould the hand, but could supply the paraffin. To doubt the 'medium,' in Mr. Wallace's view, is to have 'a reprehensible eagerness to accept and retail whatever falsehoods may be circulated to her disadvantage.' To doubt the honesty of the sceptics, on

the other hand, is perfectly legitimate. I cannot question that 'the spirits' could as easily have supplied paraffin, as mould it into a hand; but then what was the need of the bucket under the table?—Messrs. Crookes and Wallace, however, may say that it is Mr. Home who has put together these 'idle tales,' without either 'time, place, or circumstance;' and that his testimony, on account of its obvious *animus*, ought not to be received. I will give them, therefore, another case, the testimony in regard to which, having been given on oath by a gentleman whose high character and social position are thoroughly vouched for, my opponents are bound to admit, until they can succeed in discrediting it.

On Sunday evening, October 29, 1876, a *séance*, convened by public advertisement in the *Boston Herald*, was held, 'for moulds and the materialisation of spirit forms,' by Mrs. Hardy, residing at No. 4 Concord Street, Boston; described in the *Herald* as a 'substantial structure in one of the most fashionable neighbourhoods in Boston.' To this *séance* the *Herald* sent a reporter, who was accompanied by a 'sceptical expert'—no other than the troublesome Mr. W. Irving Bishop. The usual bucket having been brought in, and all who desired being allowed to examine the pail and its contents—'some of them, in the eagerness of their curiosity, even dipping their fingers into the oleaginous liquid in which angel-hands were soon to dabble'—the *Herald* representative followed their example; and 'while he plunged his finger into the transparent fat, he emptied from the hollow of his palm an ounce or two of that harmless substance with which the New England dairy-women are wont to give a red colour to their cheeses, and stirred it in with his finger.' Mrs. Hardy seems to have 'smelt a rat;' for at

first 'she declared that it was doubtful if there would be any manifestation of spiritual presence, for the reason that some foreign substance had been put into the pail,' the 'pure spirits with whom she dealt abhorring all chemical combinations.' Having been asked, however, whether they could favour the company, they promised that in seven minutes the materialisation of a spirit-form would be produced; and after only five minutes of breathless expectation, Mrs. Hardy announced that the spirits had done their work. The tablecloth being removed, there lay, within six inches of Mrs. Hardy's right foot, a beautiful model of a human hand, *cold as marble, and white as alabaster*. 'There were exclamations of surprise and wonder from all parts of the room; and some there were who felt themselves in the presence of the sublime realities of the unseen world. But the *Herald* observer was not of that number.' While this model was being passed round for inspection, he dipped four fingers again and again into the now cooling paraffin in the bucket, until they were encased by the material; and then, as it hardened, he peeled it off, and rolled it into a little ball of the size of a nutmeg. He then pointed out, that as the hand was admitted by all to be *cold*, it could not have been produced out of the paraffin in the pail, which could not have thus completely cooled in so short a time; and that, as it was pure *white*, it did not correspond with the material in the pail, of which the sample he had taken was distinctly *red*, as all could see. Some demur having been made to this conclusion, on the ground that the colouring-matter might have been unequally mixed, so that some of the paraffin in the pail might have remained untinged, Mrs. Hardy was offered twenty dollars to mould a white hand out of it, which challenge she declined. Mr.

W. Irving Bishop then took another sample from the pail, and broke off a piece of the hand. The next day he took both samples to Professor Horsford of Cambridge University; and the day after that he made the following affidavit:

I, W. Irving Bishop, of New York, on oath depose and say, that on Sunday evening, Oct. 29, 1876, I was present at a *séance* held by Mrs. Hardy, 4 Concord Square, for the production of moulds and materialisation of spirit-hands. A paraffin form of a hand was produced, which Mrs. Hardy alleged was made by the spirits, from the contents of a pail of melted paraffin placed under the table. And I here state that colouring matter had been placed in the said paraffin, and that I took a piece of the hand produced, and also, by dipping my finger into the heated paraffin, obtained an impression of the contents of said pail for the purposes of comparison.

That, subsequently, I submitted both pieces to Professor Horsford, of Cambridge, who placed a portion of each in test-tubes, and by the application of proper chemicals, found that the paraffin taken from the pail exhibited a slight reddish colour, while that from the mould gave no appearance of the existence of colouring matter.

W. IRVING BISHOP,
of 98 Fifth Avenue, New York.
Suffolk, S.S.

Sworn and subscribed to this 31st day of
October, 1876.

CHAS. J. BROOKS,
Justice of Peace.

May we not now affirm with Prince Hal, that 'these lies are like the father that begat them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable'? Well might the reporter of the *Herald* say of the moulded hand, that it 'symbolised the cunning and the craft of the woman who produced it, and who for years had speculated upon the credulity of the community, and made heartless traffic of the tenderest sympathies of human nature.' Well might he be convinced 'that all the much vaunted Spiritual manifestations at the Hardy mansion are the grossest impostures, and that they deserve to be ranked in the same category with those of such charlatan pretenders as Katie King, the Eddy Brothers, and Mrs. Bennett, the exposure of whose consummate

knavery was recently made in these columns.' And well might he urge that the time has surely now come, when the strong hand of the Law should be invoked to protect the public from such chicanery and fraud.

SPIRITUAL REVELATIONS.

'By their fruits ye shall know them,' is an adage as to which Experience is entirely in accord with Authority. And I shall close this survey of the present aspect of Spiritualism, by a brief notice of its teachings.

The *highest* form of these, we are assured by Mr. Wallace,¹¹ is to be found in the spoken addresses of one of the most gifted 'trance-mediums,' Mrs. Emma Hardinge, of which he gives selected samples. The idea which runs through the whole, is that the Future Life is one of progress; and that according to the elevation we attain in this life by the right use of the powers entrusted to us—'not one jot of what we learn, or think, or strive-for here, being lost'—will be the height of the platform (so to speak) from which we shall commence our ascent from the lower to the higher spheres of the next.

Now surely it 'needs no ghost to tell us that.' 'To understand that we are spirits, and that we live for immortality, to know and insure its issues,' though to Spiritualists *the last and noblest* 'bright page which God has revealed to us,' is surely a fundamental doctrine of every form of Christianity; and the particular idea of *continuity* and *progress* has been the teaching of the religious community (that of Channing and Martineau) in which I was myself brought up, as far back as I can remember.

Mrs. Hardinge's new Ten Commandments, again, if an improve-

ment on the old, are only so in as far as they engraft Christian morality upon the Judaic code. And looking to the exhibitions of 'envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness' which are to be found in the quarrels of 'mediums,' even 'advanced' Spiritualists would seem not to be at all more free from these faults than ordinary Christians.

For the following samples of the *lower* forms of Spiritualistic communications, made by 'spirits' who must be still in Mrs. Hardinge's 'Hades,' I am indebted to Mr. Home. (*Op. cit.* p. 304.)

An American 'circle' has been informed by John Wilkes Booth the assassin of President Lincoln, that 'I and Lincoln often have a cosy chat up here. We agree that it was just as well I shot him. You see it was set down in the order of things for me to do it; and I don't see why I should be blamed for accomplishing my destiny. The world was all the better for it.'

The inspirational source of this philosophy is obviously that doctrine of Human Automatism, of which it seems to me to be the legitimate outcome. Although Mr. Home elsewhere classes me with the 'materialists' because I do not accept *his* form of 'Spiritualism,' I am entirely at one with him in the conviction that were such doctrines as the foregoing generally accepted among Spiritualists, 'Spiritualism would be the greatest curse which could befall mankind;' the negation of those moral instincts which lie deepest in our nature, being (as I have elsewhere¹² endeavoured to show) the most convincing proof of their really unscientific nature.

The following is a specimen of those elevated teachings, which are brought to us by the 'spirits' from 'another and a better world,' in-

¹¹ See his *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 110.

¹² Preface to the fourth edition of *Principles of Mental Physiology*.

habited by purer and higher natures than are left in this: 'Wisdom is what is wise. Wisdom is not folly, and folly is not wisdom. Wisdom is not selfishness, and selfishness is not wisdom. Wisdom is not evil, and evil is not wisdom. All is not wisdom, all is not folly.'—I have heard of a little boy to whom Sundays were made to be days of gloom and weariness; and who, when told that heaven would be 'all Sundays,' replied that if that were the case he should not wish to go there. I quite agree with those who prefer annihilation, if the twaddle just quoted is a true sample of the conversation of the blest.

As Professor Huxley said, when invited to take part in the investigations of the Dialectical Society, —'The only good that I can see in a demonstration of the truth of Spiritualism, is to furnish an additional argument against suicide. Better live a crossing-sweeper, than die and be made to talk twaddle by a "medium" hired at a guinea a séance.'

Although the Spiritualistic genuineness of the foregoing communications is utterly discredited by Mr. Home, they will probably be regarded by Mr. Wallace, who has a much larger receptivity, as proceeding from 'spirits' who have made very little progress since they left the earth. The following, however, cited by Mr. Home from *Le Flambeau du Spiritisme*, will, I should hope, be too strong even for my *quondam* friend:

'The Spirit-authors' are represented as being no less personages than the twelve Apostles of Christianity. We are gravely assured that at various periods they dictated this incomparable production to the person who has caused a few copies to be published. The subject is the Life of Christ. *The mixture of ribaldry, insanity, and absurdity* is almost incredible. One of the Apostles favours us with particulars regarding the every-day doings of the twelve. 'We always took a small boy with us to clean our shoes. The Master liked us all to look well, and He was very parti-

cular that our shoes should be nicely blacked.' The ordinary attire of Christ consisted of a flowing robe and 'bright blue boots.' On one occasion He was reviled as an impostor. The incident is thus described: 'How can you call Me an impostor?' said the Master, turning round. 'Don't you see My yellow curly hair, and My nice blue boots? Would I have such things, do you think, if I were an impostor?' An Apostle gives various facts respecting a journey to Jerusalem: 'We were very poor, and we sold little pamphlets of the life and doings of Jesus, to bring us in money. We made great haste to get to Jerusalem, for fear that the newspapers should get hold of our coming, and announce it.' (*Op. cit.* p. 309.)

This, I should think, will be quite enough; but anyone who wishes for more of a yet worse kind (such as 'the Master, after a supper, joins in a round dance with His Apostles and Mary Magdalene') will find some of it in Mr. Home's volume, and plenty more in the three hundred pages of the 'nauseous stuff'—parts of which (says Mr. H.) 'it is simply impossible to quote'—which constitutes *Le Flambeau du Spiritisme*.

The celebrated 'John King' finds little favour with Mr. Home. For though this spirit of 'an evil and famous man' has announced that 'it is at once his duty and his pleasure to do good to his fellow men; he is the reprover of the sinful and the comforter of the sad; his is a divine mission, and in it he finds his glory, the glory of an angel;' yet he is terribly carnal in some of his proceedings—throwing a sofa-cushion at the head of a sceptic; rubbing a paper tube over an inquirer's cranium, and remarking, 'This is hair-brushing by machinery;' pouring tea out of a teapot 'in the usual way' for a party of enthusiastic old women; and expressing his own preference for 'regular baths and a bottle of Guinness's stout after dinner.' 'Such is the fashion,' says Mr. Home, 'in which John King makes his progress to higher states of purity.' (*Op. cit.* p. 312.)

Now it must be evident to every reader of Mr. Home's *Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism*, that he agrees with me in the fundamental principle of deciding upon the genuineness of a large number of the asserted 'Spiritualistic' revelations, by what seems to him their *inherent probability*; trusting rather to the evidence of his 'sense' than to that of his 'senses.' And I would commend to Mr. Wallace's attentive study the *Modern Spiritualism* of Mr. Home, as a far more complete defence of that position than anything I could myself have made—my knowledge of the wilder vagaries of the system being extremely limited.

It is not (says Mr. H.) to drink tea and play on the fiddle, to give blasphemously ludicrous communications regarding Christ and His Apostles, to strut about in skull caps and yellow boots, to beat people over the head with paper tubes, to throw cushions at sceptics, to hold up murderers as respectable objects, to tell people by what omnibuses to travel, or to describe the next world as a place where humanity deteriorates, that departed spirits return to earth. Their mission is great—their opportunities are limited. What time have they to waste in idiotisms of which a schoolboy would be ashamed? Let us refer such to their proper sources; some to insanity, some to knavery—many to this world, few to the next. Let us recognise the height and the holiness of phenomena which show how

'The beloved, the true-hearted
Revisit earth once more.'

Let us put from our path all which savours of folly and fraud, and press steadily and undeviatingly towards the truth. It is full time the errors I have been treating of should 'die among their worshippers.' (*Op. cit.* p. 323.)

I feel that the cause of Common Sense has been so greatly served by Mr. Home's fearless exposure of the knavery of 'mediums' and the credulous folly of their votaries, that I would not here call in question his own belief in the phenomena whose 'height' and 'holiness' he

regards as demonstrating the return of departed spirits to earth. But to me there seems nothing either morally or spiritually elevating in the 'elongation' of Mr. Home's already tall body; or in his moonlight sail out of one window and in at another, even at a height of sixty feet from the ground. Nor can I see anything peculiarly 'holy' in Mr. Home's putting hot coals on his own hand, or in his heaping them on the head of a bald gentleman. I should myself have thought such performances no less a waste of the limited time and opportunities of the departed spirits who revisit earth, than those which Mr. Home 'pillories' so cruelly. And I merely claim to exercise, in regard to the validity of Mr. Home's own pretensions, the independent judgment as to what is inherently probable, which he himself so freely passes upon the pretensions of others.

Writing upon this subject six years ago,¹³ I remarked upon 'the unhealthy craving which now prevails, for some "sign" that shall testify to the reality of the existence of disembodied spirits; while the legitimate influence of the noble lives and pregnant sayings of the great and good who have gone before us is proportionately ignored.' And I referred to the two great men in whose obsequies I had been not long before called upon to take part—Sir John F. W. Herschel and George Grote—as having left behind them an influence far more elevating, more widespread, as well as more enduring, than any that their 'spirits' could exert by playing tunes on accordions or rapping-out passages from their works. May I not now say the same—though I have the honour to be her brother—of the noble-hearted woman, whose recent loss has been mourned, not alone by her family and personal

¹³ *Quarterly Review*, October 1871.

friends, but by a world-embracing circle that ranges through all grades of society, from the very highest to the very lowest? The life devoted by Mary Carpenter to the rescue of the 'dangerous and perishing classes' from brutal ignorance and degrading vice, was 'controlled' in the first instance by the 'spirit' of the Great Teacher of that faith in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man, which 'possessed' her whole nature; next, by that of the earthly father who had trained her, alike by precept and example, to a life of service to mankind; and then by those of Joseph Tuckerman—the Oberlin of Boston, U.S.—and of Rammohun Roy, the great Hindoo reformer. It was under these influences that she did in the second half of a life of seventy years, a work for which the first half was the training; and which, I venture to affirm, has not been surpassed in its power, its range, or its productiveness, by that of any other single Philanthropist, male or female. And when the history of that Life, the details of that Work, shall have been fully given to the world, I cannot doubt that the 'spirit' of Mary Carpenter will animate the zeal and direct the activity of those who follow in her footsteps, far more effectively than

if her 'materialised' image were to appear among the inmates of her Reformatory, or her 'raps' or her 'slate-writing' were to signify her instructions to the Women of India.

Those who, while living, have been 'epistles known and read of all men'—who have achieved the truest greatness by labouring in the service of others ('whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister')—leave behind them an influence, which, no less than that of the great in Intellectual power and in Moral worth, diffuses and deepens in each succeeding generation. I feel sure that anyone who has tried to shape his (or her) life under the 'spirit-control' of John F. W. Herschel, of George Grote, or of Mary Carpenter, would far rather that anything he may have well done, should help to transmit that influence to those who come after, than that, if permitted to 'revisit the glimpses of the moon,' he should be placed at the disposal of the professional 'mediums' who trade in 'spiritual communications,' and should be made to pander to the vulgar curiosity of those who will delight to be assured that he is 'pretty jolly up there,' or 'very miserable down below,' according to their respective conceptions of his deserts.

