

Henry A. Morrow
Camp Douglas, U. S.
REPORT
April 22, 1874

SPIRITUALISM,

OF

THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

London Dialectical Society,

TOGETHER WITH

THE EVIDENCE,

ORAL AND WRITTEN,

AND

A SELECTION FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE.

Fourth Thousand.

LONDON:

J. BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, HOLBORN, W.C.

1873.

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S. G.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS CHEAP EDITION (which is printed, by permission, from the original plates) is published to bring into more general notice the nature and result of the test experiments of the Committee, and to enable the public to estimate at their true value the criticisms upon the first edition of the work which from time to time have appeared in the newspaper press.

In these criticisms the *actual experiments* have been, as a rule, either wilfully suppressed or grossly misrepresented. But, as the tests in question formed the most significant portion of the work, and have since been corroborated in all essential particulars by many independent investigators—some, too, of recognised scientific attainments,— it is hoped that an edition so inexpensive as the present will enable the public to read and judge for themselves.

THE Report and Evidence, now made public, were presented to the Council of the LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY, on the 20th day of July, 1870, and were accepted in accordance with the following Resolutions passed by the Council on that occasion:—

- (1.) That the Report be received and entered upon the Minutes.
- (2.) That the thanks of the Council be given to the Committee for the indefatigable way in which they have discharged their duties.
- (3.) That the request of the Committee that the Report be printed under the authority of the Society, be not acceded to.

In consequence of the above decision, the Committee unanimously determined to publish the Report on their own responsibility, and it is now accordingly submitted to the public.

APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE.

—o—

At a Meeting of the LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY, held on Wednesday, the 6th of January, 1869, Mr. J. H. LEVY in the Chair, it was resolved:—

“That the Council be requested to appoint a Committee in conformity with Bye-law VII., to investigate the Phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations, and to report thereon.”

(Copy of the Minute of the Council.)

“At a Meeting of the COUNCIL of the LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY, held on the 26th January, 1869, on the Motion of Dr. EDMUNDS, a Committee was appointed in conformity with Bye-law VII., ‘to investigate the Phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations, and to report thereon.’ The Committee to consist of the following Members:—

<p>H. G. Atkinson, Esq., F.G.S. G. Wheatley Bennett, Esq. J. S. Bergheim, Esq., C.E. H. R. Fox Bourne, Esq. Charles Bradlaugh, Esq. G. Fenton Cameron, Esq., M.D. John Chapman, Esq., M.D. Rev. C. Maurice Davies, D.D. Charles R. Drysdale, Esq., M.D. D. H. Dyte, Esq., M.R.C.S. Mrs. D. H. Dyte James Edmunds, Esq., M.D. Mrs. Edmunds James Gannon, Esq.</p>	<p>Grattan Geary, Esq. Robert Hannah, Esq. Jenner Gale Hillier, Esq. Mrs. J. G. Hillier Henry Jeffery, Esq. Albert Kisch, Esq., M.R.C.S. Joseph Maurice, Esq. Isaac L. Meyers, Esq. B. M. Moss, Esq. Robert Quelch, Esq., C.E. Thomas Reed, Esq. C. Russell Roberts, Esq., Ph. D. William Volckman, Esq. Horace S. Yeomans, Esq.</p>
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Professor Huxley and Mr. George Henry Lewes to be invited to co-operate.”

Drs. Chapman and Drysdale and Mr. Fox Bourne declined to sit, and the following names were subsequently added to the Committee.

<p>George Cary, Esq., B.A. E. W. Cox, Esq., Serjeant-at-Law William B. Gower, Esq. H. D. Jencken, Esq., Barrister-at-Law</p>	<p>J. H. Levy, Esq. W. H. Swepstone, Esq., Solicitor Alfred R. Wallace, Esq., F.R.G.S. Josiah Webber, Esq.</p>
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TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 1869.

Chairman, Dr. Edmunds.

The letters received since the last meeting, having been read by the Hon. Secretary, the Chairman at the suggestion of Dr. Cameron, requested Mrs. Hardinge, who was present, to make a short statement to the Committee. Mrs. Hardinge, complied with this request as follows:—She commenced by warning the Committee that the statement she was about to make would be a somewhat long one; she would however promise, at least, to be very candid. She understood that the Committee fully intended to investigate the subject publicly, and would be prepared to make a public report of the results of their investigation. She was of opinion that if the inquiry were properly conducted, they could come to but one conclusion, namely, a conviction of the reality and spirituality of the phenomena in question. There were, however, some serious difficulties in their way, not the least of which was the comparative scarceness in England of well-developed mediums. In the United States, where she had lived for many years, there was scarcely a single

believers in Spiritualism will recognise the advantages to be derived from a careful and honest investigation of the subject; and will be willing, either by personal attendance at the *séances*, or by forwarding any experiences or suggestions of their own, to assist the Committee in arriving at a sound and just conclusion.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“G. WHEATLEY BENNETT, Hon. Sec.

“32A, George Street, Hanover Square, W.”

TUESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 1869.

Chairman, Dr. Edmunds.

This evening was devoted to the reading of correspondence, and to the appointment of Sub-committees for the purpose of practical investigation. The correspondence and the reports of the Sub-committees are given elsewhere.

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town where spiritual circles had not been formed ; and the mediums might be reckoned by thousands. In London, though she knew several non-professional, she knew but two professional mediums. The services of these, however, might perhaps be enlisted on behalf of the Committee.

Her knowledge of the phenomena and character of Spiritualism had been derived partly from the statements of mediums and spirits, and partly from her own personal observation. The facts were simply these : For the last 21* years spirits—disembodied men and women—had been endeavouring to communicate with their friends on earth, through the agency of what she might call “vital magnetism.” The spirits state that the principal difficulties they have had to encounter have arisen mainly from two causes. 1. The subtle and ill-understood nature of the magnetic fluid used to produce the phenomena. 2. The materialistic tendencies of the age, which operated to retard investigation and neutralize the demonstrations. As in every other science, it was absolutely necessary that the conditions requisite for the production of spiritual phenomena should be carefully studied and implicitly complied with : and until we were better acquainted with these conditions, we must be prepared for many disappointments. But it had sometimes been asked, “Why do not the spirits themselves state the conditions ?” The reason was that there was so little analogy between material and spiritual laws, that it was extremely difficult to establish a scientific system of communion ; and it was almost impossible to explain the many and various conditions under which the phenomena occurred. It appeared, however, that the communication was established somewhat on the principle of a galvanic battery, requiring for its operation *three* elements, namely :—(1). A person called a medium. (2). A spirit in magnetic *rapport* with the medium. (3). A certain condition of the atmosphere in which to produce the manifestations. It was believed that there were two kinds or qualities of vital mag-

* The 31st March, 1869, was the 21st anniversary of the Rochester rappings, which first, in modern times, drew attention to the subject of Spiritualism.

netism which might be termed positive and negative. The medium must be possessed of an excess of the vital fluid of a negative quality; the medium spirits (for there were medium and non-medium spirits as well as men) must give off an excess of vital magnetism of a positive quality; so that the medium and the spirit always stand related to each other as negative and positive; the spirit being always positive in order to be able to produce phenomena. Thus the two stand in relation to each other as the copper and zinc in a galvanic battery, whilst the atmosphere represents the solution.

The varieties of mediumship were very numerous, and even in the same mediums the power was liable to constant change. (1). Changes of the atmosphere and of climate, for instance, produced corresponding fluctuations in the medium power. Extremes of heat and cold were favourable to the manifestations; thus the inhabitants of arctic and tropic regions, as well as those who dwell in mountainous districts, were frequently observed to manifest medium power in a remarkable degree. Mrs. Hardinge herself had found her own medium powers considerably diminished in force since quitting America, and so liable to influence from change of scene and climate, that a visit to Scotland would have the effect of increasing them again. Snowy weather or thunder and lightning afforded favourable conditions; moist and damp weather invariably the contrary.

(2). The human magnetisms composing the spirit circle, above all other elements, exert the most considerable influence on the character of the manifestations; thus, a strongly antagonistic state of mind in any one of those forming the circle would probably, by developing a positive influence towards the spirit, neutralize the manifestation.

Mrs. Hardinge then proceeded to state some of her own personal experience. She said that for a long time she was sceptical of, and even hostile to the spiritual faith, notwithstanding that she had always possessed certain occult powers herself. She was induced to attend one of the *séances* of Miss Kate Fox; the raps occurred, but the questions put by the believers present were framed accord-

ing to so unscientific a method, and characterized by so great a want of precision and exactness that she could not help exclaiming, "Surely, this is all humbug and absurdity;" when, in this disposition of mind, she sat down to the table herself, the raps instantly ceased, and she retired from the *séance* even more persuaded of the imposture than before.

Her next *séance* was with Mr. Conklin, of New York; the result was exactly the same. At last she attended a *séance* with a medium who appeared to be entirely unaffected by the disposition of those present. The manifestations were very remarkable, and evidently denoted the presence of a conscious intelligence; in two hours she was thoroughly persuaded of the existence of some occult, invisible and intelligent agency, and though it was only after many months of persevering research that she became convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, her scepticism was shaken from that *séance*.

Professor Hare's experiences were somewhat similar; he had a strong opinion that the raps were produced by muscular action, and this impression served to neutralize the spirit power; for as soon as he sat down in a spirit circle, the raps, hitherto very loud, would immediately cease. He at last succeeded in divesting himself of this spirit of prejudice, after which the manifestations were in no degree interrupted by his presence.

Any strong emotion, Mrs. Hardinge considered, was also detrimental to the exercise of spiritual power. Mr. Conklin, of whom she had previously spoken, was invited to attend a number of *séances* at Washington with some five or six gentlemen, who were evidently desirous not to be known. The manifestations were very marked and decisive, until Mr. Conklin discovered that one of the gentlemen present was no other than President Lincoln; when his anxiety and surprise became so great as entirely to stop the manifestations, which were not again renewed till a mutual explanation had restored him to his normal state of mind. Thus, it would seem, that any very strong emotion had also the effect of rendering the magnetism positive, and neutralising the action of the spirits.

Doubtless, there were many other conditions which had not yet been discovered ; thus Judge Parker, of Massachusetts, though an enthusiastic believer in Spiritualism, brought to the spirit circle such a peculiar quality of magnetism as invariably to suspend the manifestations wherever he appeared. This continued until a short time before his death, when some change took place in his physical system, and the phenomena were produced in his presence with perfect freedom.

There was another difficulty in the way of such an investigation as was proposed by the Committee ; viz., the very fact of their being a Committee. Associated bodies who had entered upon this inquiry had almost invariably failed ; in fact, she knew of but one society, the New York Young Men's Christian Association, that had been successful. The reasons of their failure, she considered, were two : (1.) Their sense of responsibility, which, by producing positive magnetism, neutralised spiritual influence. (2.) The materialistic training of scientists ; the effect of a long-continued course of scientific study being to impel the belief that nothing can be true which may not be subjected to material tests, and measured by material gauges. These, Mrs. Hardinge proceeded to say, were not always applicable to spiritual phenomena ; she instanced the phenomena of clairvoyance and clairaudience, in which the material notions of time and space appeared to be entirely set at naught. The laws of optics and acoustics offered no explanation for the phenomena of Spiritualism ; the formulæ of science, valuable as they were in the investigation of the laws of matter, were generally unavailable for an inquiry into the character of Spiritualism. The Committee must carefully guard itself against attempting to dictate to Nature, and should rather accept the conditions as dictated by Nature.

Mrs. Hardinge, in conclusion, advised the Committee to appoint a Sub-committee of about twelve members, who should be of receptive inquiring dispositions. She herself would be glad to indicate those who would be most suitable. (1.) Let them hold a series of *séances* with the various mediums obtainable, through a period of not less

than three months, each member preparing a separate report, and not comparing notes with the rest, until the end of the whole series. (2.) Let them also adopt the still better plan of forming private circles at home with their own friends, and holding *séances* independently of each other; if they will carry out these two suggestions, they cannot fail to be convinced that the phenomena are genuine, and the results of spiritual influence.

She would undertake to say that no seven persons would hold meetings regularly together without getting some decided manifestations. She considered that about one in every seven persons was possessed of medium power, and that the rest might develop it.

TUESDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1869.

Chairman, Dr. Edmunds.

The correspondence having been disposed of, Mrs. Hardinge made some further remarks in continuation of her statement of the preceding week, and concluded by expressing her willingness to reply to any questions that might be put to her by members of the Committee. The following questions were then asked and answered:—

I. *By* Mr. DYTE. "Can Mrs. Hardinge give us any suggestions as to the best means of detecting imposture on the part of the mediums?"

Mrs. Hardinge was unable to give any specific information on that point.

II. "Would manifestations probably appear at a *séance* of practical spiritualists, conducted before twenty or thirty spectators sitting apart from them, and, if necessary, in silence?"

Ans. "I think not."

III. *By* Mr. BENNETT. "Does the experience of Mrs. Hardinge tend to confirm the statement of Lord Lytton that "spiritual manifestations" are more remarkable in proportion to the amount of electricity in the atmosphere?"

Ans. "Invariably."

IV. "Can Mrs. Hardinge refer the Committee to any well-

authenticated instances of spirit communications having been made, which neither the medium herself, nor any other person present, could possibly know, independently of spiritual influence?

Ans. "There are a large number of such cases given in Allan Putnam's 'Magic and Witchcraft,' and Professor Hare's 'Spiritualism scientifically demonstrated?'"

V. *By* Mr. MEYERS. "Is it a fact that spirit arms and hands have been seen and felt?"

Mrs. Hardinge had herself seen a spirit hand and had felt it laid within her own. Spirits became visible by crystallising, as it were, the magnetic and other emanations from those present, around their own invisible spirit forms.

VI. *By* Mr. GANNON. "What is vital magnetism, and by what scientific tests has it been proved that human beings generated such a force?"

Mrs. Hardinge considered that science was scarcely sufficiently advanced to enable her to answer that question fully.

VII. *By* Mr. H. G. ATKINSON. "Why do you conclude that clairvoyance is essentially of a different character from every other phenomenon in nature—for instance, from the ordinary formative principle and the ordinary facts of mind and instinct?"

Ans. "Because it seems to annihilate what in other branches of knowledge are absolutely necessary conditions of thought, the notions of time and space."

A vote of thanks to Mrs. Hardinge closed the proceedings for the evening.

TUESDAY, 13TH APRIL, 1869.

Chairman, Dr. Edmunds.

Mr. H. D. Jencken, Barrister-at-law, M.R.I., read the following paper on "Spiritualism, its Phenomena, and the Laws that Regulate its Origin":—

"In dealing with the question of Spiritualism we have to combat several most difficult objections raised by those who oppose our views. Firstly, the facts are denied, and the dreadfully tedious pro-