

A GUIDE TO MEDIUMSHIP AND PSYCHICAL UNFOLDMENT

BY

E. W. AND M. H. WALLIS

In Three Parts

PART II.

HOW TO DEVELOP MEDIUMSHIP

Descend, and touch and enter, hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

* * * * *

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine.

—TENNYSON.

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INTRODUCTION.

Having already explained the general aspects of mediumship in the first part of this 'Guide,' we deal in the following pages specifically and in detail with the more immediate and personal considerations involved in the development and exercise of mediumship, and give such advise to inquirers regarding circle holding, and the treatment of sensitives, as we, from our experience, deem necessary and helpful. In like manner, we seek to assist those who have had indications that they are mediumistic and that spirits are in sympathy with and influencing them; as also to counsel those who desire to become mediums regarding the conditions for the development and the wise exercise of mediumistic powers.

In part three of this 'Guide' we shall present the methods to be followed by sensitives to intensify their impressibility and cultivate their psychic powers, but we now devote our attention almost exclusively to the exercise of the faculties of the inner self under the stimulation and guiding control of spirits.

Many mediums, when influenced by their spirit friends, display marked abilities as clairvoyants, character, readers and psychometrists. They diagnose the conditions of those who suffer, and are frequently used by healing spirits to magnetize the sick and cure the afflicted; to give counsel, warning or encouragement to those who are worried and distressed in mind, body or estate.

As a reactive result of the influence of and continued association with such intelligent spirits, sensitives frequently find that they can normally exercise their own psychic faculties, and after a time can do so successfully as when under spirit control.

Because self-respecting mediums may thus acquire the ability to consciously enter the 'superior condition,' that is no proof that they 'do it all themselves,' or that they 'never were assisted or controlled by spirit operators,' as some people have imagined. It merely shows how beneficial

spirit guidance and influence have been. By their aid mediums have acquired the power to reach up to the psychic or spiritual realm and become consciously associated with and intelligently responsive to the thoughts of spirit people and to co-operate with them in demonstrating immortality and proclaiming the spiritual philosophy.

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PART II.

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PART II.

HOW TO DEVELOP MEDIUMSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

THE BASIS AND CULTIVATION OF MEDIUMSHIP.

Any form of mediumship which does not contribute to our own personal unfoldment or growth is something which we neither need nor want, and should therefore be most determinedly rejected. —LOVELAND.

A knowledge of the laws and conditions of mediumship is a primary requisite for the successful investigation of Spiritualism; and to the neglect of this important preliminary may be traced most of the difficulties, contradictions, and disappointments which beset the road of even the most earnest and painstaking who enter the path of practical investigation. —W. H. TERRY.

Many persons are natural sensitives, and are more or less easily swayed by the personal magnetism and positive mental influence of those with whom they associate. They 'take on' and reflect the conditions that surround them, although they may be unaware that such is the fact; and the study of the laws of psychic relationships would enable them to gain strength of character and of will. Such people are not infrequently stigmatized as 'changeable, weak-minded,' 'erratic,' and 'unreliable,' because of their liability to be affected by their surroundings; and they would profit by self-study and by watchful attention to their varying moods, so as to cultivate a more positive and self-possessed state of mind, and obtain self-control.

THREE GROUPS.

Speaking somewhat roughly, the majority of people can be classified into one or other of three groups: viz., Positives, or actors, those who exert a dominating influence over others; Negatives, or those who are liable to be dominated and manipulated by others; and an intermediate class, consisting of those who are positive at times and to some people, but negative at other times and to other people, or varying between positive and negative as they themselves change in physical conditions and mental moods.

It should, however, be borne in mind that an individual who is ordinarily a Positive may not always be so. He may occasionally meet with others even more positive than himself. His own conditions may alter owing to illness and other causes; or by his sympathy and confidence being aroused and won, he may be 'off guard.' so to speak, and become negative to those who usually would have no power over him.

SENSITIVENESS INDISPENSABLE TO MEDIUMSHIP.

'It is a fundamental proposition,' says Hudson Tuttle, 'that sensitiveness, or the capability of mediumship, is a faculty common to mankind, differing in degree—as hearing and sight are common heritage, but keener in some individuals than in others; or under certain conditions it may disappear.' *

The mediumistic temperament is often characterized by self-consciousness and diffidence, or by nervous self-assertiveness on the part of its possessor. People of this class are almost invariably emotional, enthusiastic, spontaneous, and ardent. Strong in their predilections, they are decided in their 'likes' and 'dislikes,' but are sometimes variable, volatile, and versatile. Zealous workers in what they feel is a good cause, they are generally stern and forcible in condemnation of what they deem to be wrong, but are seldom intractable. They are wounded to the quick by sneers and slights; but, while they may be resentful,

* Mediumship and Its Laws: Its Conditions and Cultivation.

they seldom sulk and are generally forgiving and ready to help others who appeal to their sympathies. 'Generous and impulsive, hot-headed too and independent, a close friend and a merry heart; too sensitive to criticism of an unkind nature; too easily pleased by praise; without malice, without revengeful thoughts; a warm-blooded man, with an ever present humor that gilds his conversation and makes his company well liked.' Such is the description given by an American writer of one through whose mediumship remarkable materialization phenomena have been witnessed.

WHAT A MEDIUM IS.

A medium may be defined as a person who is constitutionally sensitive or susceptible to 'influence,' and responds more or less readily to the dominant thoughts, 'suggestions,' or impulses that impinge upon his psychic, or magnetic sphere; or one who freely generates nerve aura, magnetism, psychoplasm, or psychic force (whichever term may be preferred), which can be utilized by the operating spirits to produce the outward and visible evidences of their power and presence that are usually designated 'physical phenomena.' Spirits cannot manufacture the energy employed in the production of these demonstrations, and therefore they must draw upon the store possessed by the medium, who, where possible, unconsciously attracts to himself some of the psychic force of others.

'DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS.'

The assertion that is sometimes made that 'everyone is a medium' is somewhat misleading. It would be nearer the truth to say, 'Everyone one is a spirit,' and is therefore endowed with the qualifications which may be cultivated and exercised with more or less success in one or other of the several phases of mediumship. This of course implies that there are not only 'diversities of gifts,' but different degrees of susceptibility; and the aspirant for mediumship will do well to remember that, to use a familiar and an expressive phrase, 'Many are called but few are chosen'; or, in other words, many are sensitives but few

possess the physico-psychical, mental and spiritual qualifications for special excellence in any given direction.

While, it is undoubtedly true that, broadly speaking, every one has some latent mediumistic power, the question is, as Mr. W. H. Terry says: 'Does the prospective result justify the labor involved to bring these powers into efflorescence? My impression is, that in at least three cases out of four, the time and labor it would take to develop this latent quality to its greatest efficiency would be far in excess of its value when so developed.'

Just as a drum, or a tambourine, is incapable of being made to emit a tithe of what can be produced by means of a piano or a violin in the way of music, so the differences in quality and conditions of the physical organisms, and in the degrees of nervous and psychical sensibility of those who desire mediumship, render it improbable that any but a small proportion will develop such extreme susceptibility to spirit influence as will repay them for the time and self-sacrifice involved in the cultivation of their powers. Further, it should be borne in mind that while wise spirits are ever ready to respond to the call of the earnest aspirant for spiritual truth, *as wise spirits* they are not likely to devote themselves to the preparation of an instrument that would be inefficient for their purpose.

The nervous system of the medium, what ever his phase may be, has to be trained to respond to the will and psychic force of the controlling spirit, just as much as the muscles of the musician or artist, and 'practice makes perfect' in the one as well as the other. Since mediumship is a strictly natural qualification, depending upon organic fitness and susceptibility, it is not a supernatural power or a special 'gift,' neither does it insure the moral purity nor the intellectual ability of the medium, any more than musical or artistic capabilities are evidences of the special intelligence or the high moral tones of their possessors.

MEDIUMSHIP A FORM OF GENIUS.

The spirits who employed the hand of 'M. A. (Oxon),' once caused him to write a message in which they claimed that 'Mediumship is a development of that which is, in

another sort, genius. Genius, the opened and attentive ear to spirit guidance and inspiration, shades away into mediumship, the facile instrument of spirit manifestation. In proportion as the medium becomes open to influence, directly exercised, is he valuable as a means whereby direct messages are conveyed; and in proportion as the individual spirit is lost and merged in the great ocean of spirit, is the result most direct and serviceable. It is when the passive spirit is content to allow us to use the corporeal instrument, as it does when itself operates, that we gain satisfactory results. That can only be when a condition of perfect passivity, as far removed from scepticism as from credulity, has been secured. This opening of the spiritual being to spiritual influences is what you call mediumship. It is rare yet, but not so rare as you imagine.... The true and valuable gift is purely spiritual and must be used for spiritual purposes; not for gain, or for satisfying curiosity, or for base or unworthy ends.'

NATURAL MEDIUMS.

Some people are more or less fully conscious of the companionship of spirit people. They frequently catch glimpses of those they have known and loved, or, under exceptionally favorable circumstances, are the recipients of clear impressions and striking phenomenal manifestations of spirit power. But these experiences are often annoying and troublesome, because their friends are distressed by their 'peculiarities,' and imagine that they are not sane, or are doomed to an early death. If we may form an opinion by the testimony of many of our friends, the number of those whose spiritual experiences were inexplicable until they heard of and understood something of Spiritualism, is by no means small, and we have no doubt that there are a great many persons who are perplexed and often distressed, both in mind and body, to whom a knowledge of mediumship and the laws of spirit control would prove a great blessing.

SPONTANEOUS EXPERIENCES.

Those persons who are naturally sensitive sometimes experience strange and sudden impulses. Thoughts come

to them 'in a flash,' so to speak. They say things spontaneously which they had not intended to say—the words seem to burst from them and to 'say themselves.' Others have equally sudden and fugitive clairvoyant experiences; they see spirits when they least expect it, and when they are absorbed in something else; but when they strongly desire to 'see' or to receive guidance, they get nothing. This state of things, in all probability, is due to the fact that their susceptibility is not sufficiently developed; their psychical impressibility can only be reached and acted upon under specially favorable conditions, which are disturbed and dissipated when the ordinary intellectual self is aroused. The remedy will be found in the systematic cultivation of interior repose and confidence. The psychic must learn to regard it as a perfectly natural experience that the spiritual states and positive thoughts of incarnate people should impinge upon his spiritual sphere, and while 'attentive to the holy vision,' should calmly accept the fact and maintain the attitude or response; not anxiously nor demandingly, but thankfully enjoying the spiritual communion and illumination thus afforded to him.

It is only natural that many people should desire to become mediums, and that they should wish to ascertain what constitutes mediumship and what is requisite to secure its development. We often hear some such exclamations as the following: 'I *should* like to be a medium and to speak like ——,' or 'give tests like ——,' or 'have phenomena presented like those that occur with ——'; but those who express these desires should remember that in all probability months, if not years, of patient development have been necessary to ensure the ability and success they admire and probably envy.

THE SPIRIT CIRCLE.

The 'spirit circle' is the assembling together of a number of thoughtful and sincere people for the purpose of establishing the means of intercommunion between the two worlds, and it has been found to be the simplest, readiest, and most effective method for the discovery and

development of latent psychic kind mediumistic powers. It is called by Hudson Tuttle 'the primary school for the study of spiritual facts,' and, we might add, the training of mediums.

Sensitives are sometimes too ready to respond to any and every passing influence, and to attribute their own moods and feelings, or purely natural sensations, to spirit influence. They are so eager to believe, and become so absorbed in the subject, that the veriest commonplaces assume exaggerated importance in their eyes, and they mistake for spirit action the indefinite and seemingly inexplicable impulses and sensations which they regard as promptings or impressions from the other side, whereas there may be perfectly natural physiological causes for them.

A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW.

It is a fairly safe rule, all things considered, not to attribute anything to the action or influence of spirits until the ordinary and more immediate and probable causes have been exhausted, or until the influence, or impression, becomes so clear and unmistakable that there can no longer be any doubt as to the spirits source. But even then it does not follow that the spirit is one that the medium should trust and obey. He may be attracted, and even fascinated, but he must proceed cautiously and patiently, and by no means invite any and every spirit to influence him, in season or out of season. Neither should he implicitly rely upon the ideas, advice, or messages he receives. The spirits are of all sorts and conditions, and there are so many attendant circumstances and influences which limit the intercourse that great care and patience are needed, and every step on the road needs to be circumspectly taken. It is better to make haste slowly and be sure of the facts, than it is to believe credulously and afterwards find that mistakes have been made, or that misleading spirits have seen their opportunity—and have taken it—to practise upon the too eager faith and unquestioning acquiescence in their sportive plans.

There are medium who have secured a certain degree of unfoldment and lucidity, and can give a fair amount of

satisfaction to inquirers, but who are not strong enough to withstand adverse, critical, and chilling influences. They droop and fail in the presence of sceptical or cynical people, and ought not to venture before the public until their powers are more fully developed. In the happy private circle they are, useful and render very acceptable service, and, possibly, after prolonged experience might become more positive, through the greater activity of their own spiritual nature, so that a larger work could then be successfully performed: but patience and persistent endeavor are requisite in this realm as in all others, so as to secure steady and orderly unfoldment rather than rapid but imperfect growth.

CONSIDERATION FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BECOME MEDIUMS.

'What has already been said will naturally suggest to aspirants for the possession of mediumship inquiry as to the nature and extent of the application requisite in their case to evolve the essential condition for its successful exercise, and the result of which would test the strength of their aspirations and probably deter a large proportion of those who desire to become mediums, but are unwilling to devote time and energy to the necessary study, from attempting the task. This would be no disadvantage to them; it would save them much unprofitable work.

The editor of the 'Harbinger of Light' of Melbourne, Australia, very forcibly and truly says: 'All mediums are liable to be affected by all sorts of subtle influences, such as a loss of magnetism on their own part: a lowered vitality; mental trouble; ill-health; excessive heat or excessive cold: an unsympathetic, hostile, or inharmonious circle; self-distrust, and a multitude of other disturbing circumstances. The more delicate the organization, the more susceptible the medium to suffering from these adverse conditions; and the greater and the more considerate should be the care and watchfulness exercised over him by his friends. And again, the non-production of the results desired by the sitters does not depend primarily upon the medium, who is simply a plastic instrument in the hands of the controls, who may see many good reasons for not

using his brain or voice. For they can perceive what the sitters cannot: and while the latter would go on working the powers of the medium to excess, the higher intelligences, with their finer appreciation of the delicacy of their instrument, and of the duty of carefully preserving it, will often put an abrupt and decisive stop to manifestations, which are always liable to become exhaustive. The simple truth is, that even those who have had the greatest experience in Spiritualism possess but a limited knowledge of the laws and phenomena of mediumship; but what they do know suffices to convince them that the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans acted very wisely in surrounding their mediums—priestesses, keepers of the oracles, and vestals, as they were variously called—with the best possible safeguards for the preservation and protection of their beautiful gifts.'

EARNESTNESS AND DEVOTION REQUIRED.

The crucial point of the whole matter is whether, granting that they possess the requisite natural capabilities, those who seek development as mediums will be prepared to devote themselves thoroughly and faithfully to the task of securing the coveted results.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox points out in a forcible manner the great need there is for earnestness and steady devotion to secure success. 'So many of us are shilly-shallying along life in these days. We do nothing seriously. We are in earnest about nothing. We all want to be multi-millionaires, and we are looking for sudden and quick methods of success. By success we mean accumulating a large fortune. Our eye is out for the sign, "A millionaire while you wait," as we pursue our daily avocations. Just as sure as the continual leaking of a faucet wastes water in a reservoir, so this continual frittering of our mental forces in frivolous and non-focussed thought wastes our moral and mental strength.

'The man who is in earnest not only brings the full powers of his own mind and soul to bear upon his project, but he draws about him the influences of invisible intelligences who people space and come to the aid of the deserving. Whatever your aim is at this moment, be in earnest.'

HOW TO DEVELOP MEDIUMSHIP.

The question, 'How can we develop mediumship?' may sound rather heretical to some Spiritualists, who would in all probability reply, 'What have we to do with development? That is the affair of the spirits. If they want us to become their mediums let them do the work, and not expect us to do it for them.' This attitude of mind was a perfectly natural one when it was supposed that spirits were exalted beings, possessing supernatural attributes; but, as our knowledge of the psychical nature of man has increased, we have come to realize that the powers which are possessed and employed by spirits already exist in us—dormant it may be, but inherent in our spiritual nature. This question then, 'Can mediums assist in the development of their powers, or must they blindly surrender themselves to be manipulated by people on "the other side" of whom they know little or nothing?' is one that requires careful consideration.

Admitting that the spirits are the prime movers in producing the phenomena which demonstrate their presence, there can surely be no objection to the desire on the part of sensitives to know how they can provide the conditions which will render them fit and proper instruments for the spirits to use; how best to supply them with the 'power'—physical, psychical, mental, or moral—which they require.

NOT MERE CONDUITS.

We unhesitatingly affirm that it is not necessary that mediums should regard themselves as mere 'conduits' through which the spirits are to pour just whatever they choose. Nay, we go further, and claim that if mediumship is to be lifted above the plane of mere sensationalism, mediums must study their own powers, and learn how to provide the conditions requisite for their own unfoldment, so as to exercise a determining influence over the results and share the responsibility as well as the pleasures and spiritual benefits accruing from the co-operative association. It is true that no one can become a medium solely by his own act, or by his own will; but surely it must be manifest that

those whose attention and anticipation are directed towards the reception of intimations from the spirit side of life are much more likely to be affected thereby than those persons who are hostile—or, if not actively antagonistic, heedless and indifferent.

Although there are certain general rules which apply to mediumistic development each medium will require some special condition, or conditions, which will facilitate the best manifestation of his particular powers. Hence the urgent necessity that he should intelligently co-operate with, rather than render blind obedience to' the spirits who seek to control him.

EVERY PHASE OF MEDIUMSHIP VALUABLE.

Every phase of mediumship is valuable, and should be used to the fullest extent for the demonstration of the truth, and where that work is carried out in the spirit of devotion and service the medium will assuredly receive direct and reactive benefits. There is really no 'high' or 'low' in mediumship. No one can exceed his natural capabilities; therefore, he who does his best in his own sphere merits appreciation, and the highest mediumship is in reality, so far as the individual is concerned, just that for which he is qualified. We have heard of 'low' mediumship, and physical manifestations have' been stigmatized as 'degrading,' etc., but the production of a 'rap' requires the exercise of positive spirit power quite as much as an inspirational address; and if by the agency of the raps, or the table movements, messages of a convincing and consolatory character are transmitted to the sitter, they are of greater value—*as evidence* of the personal presence and the identity of incarnate spirit friends—than the most eloquent oration. Mediums do not make their own physical organizations. It is not to the credit of one that he has clairvoyant or inspirational powers, or to the discredit of another that he has purely 'physical' capabilities; but it is to the credit of each one who does his best to keep himself in tune and fit for use, so that his powers may be

exercised at their best and highest, whatever his phase may be. Remember—

'Nothing useless is or low.
Each thing—in its place—is best;
And that which seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.'

MEDIUMSHIP STIMULATES LATENT POWERS.

Dr. Dean Clarke truly says: 'Physical phenomena are very pleasing to some persons, but actually repulsive in the eyes of others. Temperament largely accounts for preferences and antipathies, and temperament also has a great deal to do with the special bent of one's qualifications, no matter in what direction. It may be safely affirmed that individual taste largely reveals particular ability, and it rarely if ever happens that anyone develops to a large extent and successfully any phase of mediumship that does not closely accord with the general trend of nature and disposition.

'The musical medium may never have learned notes, but has a native ear for melody, and loves to listen to sweet sounds. The inspired scribe, orator, or poet may have had no training whatever to fit him for the profession of literature or for the platform, yet there dwells within, both the love of the art and an innate tendency to practise it. Mediumship stimulates latent powers, and calls into action dormant capabilities; but its possession does not alter the special type of character or trend of ability which naturally characterizes the mediumistic person.'

WHAT THE MEDIUM CAN DO.

The aspirant for development should recognize the advisability, in order to facilitate the work of the spirits, before attending a seance, of making some personal preparation; such as seeking to eliminate from his mind all disturbing or irritating thoughts, and by striving to consciously realize unison of purpose with those who may have previously made their presence known or indicated their

intention to help in the work of his development, by mentally requesting that the spiritual ties may be, strengthened. Even where there has not been any clear indication of the presence of spirit helpers, a generally aspirational and receptive attitude of mind will do much towards providing favorable conditions.

It is unwise to persistently endeavor to force mediumship into activity: but when it expresses itself spontaneously, or when development follows upon temperate exercise, there can be no question that, rightly used, and within proper rational limits, it will prove helpful and educational to the medium and of service to others; but should the exercise of mediumship occasion continued ill-health in its possessor, it is wisest and safest to abandon it temporarily if not entirely.

Too many people, instead of waiting until the spirits were ready to communicate with them, pressed for 'tests' before the connections were properly made; they complicated matters by their eager questionings, and worried the operators till everything went wrong, and then, because the answers were incorrect, inconsequent, misleading, or persistently negative, they declared that the spirit was a deceiver, evil or foolish, and, while having only themselves to blame, gave up the sittings in disgust, whereas, had they been less impetuous, less opinionated, less prejudiced they would in all probability have eventually obtained satisfactory proofs of the presence of their spirit loved ones.

PATIENCE REWARDED.

We wonder sometimes what those people would say who are disappointed because, after a few sittings, they have not blossomed out into developed mediums, if they had to sit night after night for six months without missing a sitting and without being rewarded by any sign or movement or external evidence, as Mr. and Mrs. Riley, of America, are reported to have done.

Although there was no outward or visible sign of the spiritual agency that was at work, this persevering couple, after waiting for six months, got their first fact—the table

moved, and they knew that they had not moved it themselves. Evidently the spirits had not tried their patience for nothing, they had been busy forming the connections, for, from that time onwards, movements, messages, raps, writing, and finally marvelous materializations followed in fairly quick succession.

THE LESSONS OF FAILURES.

It is unwise to expect that every seance will be successful, and sitters should not be disappointed if little or nothing occurs. Sometimes a 'good failure' is as helpful and as educational as a 'grand success,' if the members of the circle are thoughtful and observant and endeavor to ascertain the causes of the non-success. The varying conditions of body and mind of the medium and sitters alike have much to do with the results, affecting as they do the health and moods of all concerned. Sometimes the sensitive feels buoyant and free. He realizes that a strong influence is at work, and that he is open and responsive, and readily answers to the suggestions that are given to him from the other side; but on another occasion there may be a strange lack of life, and a heavy depressing feeling, a sense of isolation and of being empty and 'shut in' may overcloud him, and little or nothing of a spiritual or satisfactory nature occur. Most mediums experience periods when they are 'out of power,' and seem to have lost touch with the other side. It may be that they have exhausted themselves by overstrain, their spirit friends may have withdrawn for a time, the sitters may be tired, unhappy, or angular, or some uncongenial spirits may be at work trying to affect the sensitive, or to obtain power to move the table. In any case sitters must be prepared to experience such variations and to accept them with philosophic cheerfulness. It is sometimes difficult to discriminate between results arising from the stimulated activity of the spirit self of the sensitive and those which are due to the operations of the incarnate operator; even the sensitive cannot at first tell how to distinguish between them, and only patience and experience will enable him to attain the ability to do so. In the meantime he must do his best.

HOW LONG WILL DEVELOPMENT TAKE?

It is impossible to estimate how long it will take to develop the sensitiveness of any given person to that degree of responsiveness to spirit influence that it may be regarded as 'reliable.' since so much depends upon the individual—upon his natural qualifications, so far as his susceptibility is concerned, and his spiritual preparedness, as well as his willingness and perseverance. Then, too, a good circle of harmonious and intelligent sitters will materially assist in the process of his unfoldment, whereas a circle of impatient and selfish people will provide conditions which will retard the progress, if they do not injure the psychical conditions, of the unfortunate sensitive. The knowledge and power of the spirits who communicate and direct the circle will also have a strong determining influence upon the results, so that the novice who desires to succeed should decide to give time and attention to the study of the subject, and to experiment patiently and perseveringly—without baste and without anxiety or fear.

AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE.

One of the most important prerequisites for success in the development of mediumship along spiritual lines is the cultivation of the power of concentration, In the early days of the movement the would-be medium was advised to be 'passive,' and passivity was often construed into self-effacement. We are learning to distinguish between receptivity and docility, between apathy and aspiration. A medium is not, and should not be willing to become, a mere irresponsible tool. For intelligent and beneficial association with and inspiration from the people of the higher life, a certain degree of abstraction from one's outer surroundings is necessary. To cut one's self off from ordinary conditions, to retire into the sanctuary of one's own inner consciousness, to 'enter into the silence.' as it is sometimes called, is helpful training for the preparation of conditions favorable for the manifestation of spirit power. Quakers were true Spiritualists in this sense, and evidently realized the need for the concentration of the soul's

forces and their withdrawal from the outer plane, preparatory to the descent of the spiritual influence that moved them to speak. The sincere supplication for illumination and guidance is never in vain. The spirit breathes a serener air, and is calmed, strengthened, and comforted by the consequent reaction. It is harmonized thereby, and thus becomes accordant to the psychic forces which, like the ocean's tides, ebb and flow throughout the universe, and bathe every soul that lies open to their vivifying, and quickening influence. Still more, there are those who dwell in the Light, whose thoughts and love go out to all such as truly call upon God; and these, the ministering messenger spirits, often pour their libations of sympathy into the sad hearts of the sorrowful ones on earth, even though they remain unknown and their interposition is unrecognized by those to whom they have given their loving and helpful thoughts.

MEET THE SPIRITS HALF WAY.

By the earnest study of the conditions requisite for development of body, mind, and psychic sense, the intelligent medium will endeavor to meet the friends who inspire him at least half way on the Jacob's ladder of communion, and to enter into reciprocal and conscious fellowship with them on the thought plane, so that their inspirations may freely flow through his instrumentality to others, unobstructed by his personality. Classes for the development of mediumship along these lines are very much needed; classes in which the members are expected to take an active part, not merely to sit and sit, and let the spirits do all the work, but by systematic preparation and spiritual aspiration and cultivated receptivity prepare themselves to become lucid and capable instruments for the transmission of information and helpful influences from the other side.

There is but one course of procedure for the successful attainment of excellence in any field of labor or thought, and that is by study and training, by observation, by persevering application and determined effort, by readiness to learn and responsiveness to every influence which will help

to smooth the pathway to the desired success. The intelligent medium who follows this course will not go blindly on groping in the obscurity of the psychic realm and becoming the tool for unseen and unknown agents, but he will unfold his powers, and by co-operating with them will learn to know and trust his spirit preceptors, until he may possibly become as a spirit among spirits, the conscious possessor of such knowledge regarding his own spiritual nature and powers that he will be a ready instrument in the bands of enlightened spirit people, With whom he can knowingly work for human good.

CHAPTER II.

SPIRIT CIRCLES: HOW TO FORM AND CONDUCT THEM.

The spirit circle is a gathering of persons who desire to establish relations with the world of spirits, and receive communications therefrom. As such intercourse is a matter of fact-proved by oft-repeated experiment—it follows that the observance of those conditions which experience suggests will be the surest way of obtaining the desired results.

—J. J. MORSE.

The mediumistic faculty in all its forms can be cultivated by sitting in the spirit-circle, which tends to perfect and spiritualize the magnetism of the sitters by their mutual action on each other and by the influence of the spirits.—Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten.

The purpose for which the 'Spirit Circle' is held is that by the blending of the aura, psychic force, or magnetic emanations of the sitters, the attention of disembodied spirits may be attracted and a battery be formed by means of which they can communicate with the circle. The focalization of this force rests with the unseen operator, and if they are skilled in the *modus operandi*, they know where, how, and in what way to use it to the best advantage.

Let us suppose that a number of persons determine to experiment and seat themselves around a table, place their hands on its surface, and engage in agreeable conversation. After a time, if the sitters provide the right conditions, it will be found that the table will begin to move. When the movements occur readily, one of the circle, acting as chairman, should ask that answers to questions may be given by the table signaling replies, tilting three times for affirmative,

once for negative, twice for 'doubtful,' four for 'don't know,' five times for the 'alphabet' to be called over. This code of signals is the one most frequently used, but any other will do as well. Answers to questions can generally be obtained, and messages, regarding matters of fact entirely unknown to the sitters, respecting deceased persons (who claim to be causing the tilts or rapping), are spelt out by this means, to be afterwards verified, so as to prove the identity of the person communicating.

HOW TO FORM THE CIRCLE.—The number in the circle should not be less than four nor more than twelve. An equal number of both sexes is preferable to a preponderance of either. The date of meeting should be fixed and unchanged, and every member should attend regularly. It is best, when practicable, to have a room set apart for the circle, and it should be comfortably warmed and seated and cheerfully lighted. The members should always occupy the same places round the table, except when requested by the spirits to make a change. The sensitive, or known medium, if one is present, should form part of this circle.

At the commencement joining hands (the right over the left) has advantages, but afterwards the hands can be placed on the table, palms downward. No one should be allowed in the room who does not sit in the circle. It should be constantly borne in mind that pure air and convenient seats, insuring ease and physical comfort, are helpful to success. Even more necessary is freedom from mental excitement and self-assertion. Innocent fun and sociability are good. The spirits are our friends—are human beings; they do not desire conventional solemnity, nor an artificial assumption of reverence and stained-glass attitudes of piety. But frivolity, curiosity, wonder, self-seeking, disputation, mercenariness, and pride are still more injurious. The great aim should be to be natural, kindly, appreciative, strong and sensible.

How pure in heart and sound in head,
With what divine affection bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with
the dead.'

WHEN TO SIT.—The best time to sit is at that hour which is most convenient to all the sitters, when they are least likely to be disturbed, and when they can best give themselves up to the investigation.

HOW OFTEN AND HOW LONG.—As a rule twice, or at the outside three times, a week is often enough to sit. Seances should not last much over an hour, certainly not longer than two hours.

THE REQUISITE CONDITIONS.—A round, three-legged, plain deal kitchen table is considered the best adapted for tilting or rapping, but almost any ordinary table will answer the purpose. Pleasant conversation will relieve the tedium and prevent strain while waiting for manifestations. Avoid controversial subjects and the extremes of seriousness and levity. Kindly thoughts and an aspirational frame of mind are conducive to good results. Stiffness, formality, and conventional exclusiveness are likely to prove fatal to success. Sincerity, sympathy and cheerfulness will go a long way towards making good conditions, and if mediumistic powers exist and spirits are present who desire to manifest, phenomena of some sort are likely to occur. We have known manifestations to take place at the first meeting of the circle, but sometimes the sitters have to wait for weeks or even months. Inharmonious feelings and discordant conditions will either prevent phenomena and react painfully upon any members of the circle who are sensitive, or they may attract spirits of an undesirable class. It is therefore better to suspend proceedings, or break up the circle, than to continue to hold the sittings if the feelings of mutual confidence and good will are absent. When once the circle has been formed or phenomena have been obtained, no new sitters should be introduced unless permission is obtained from the spirits.

It is a good plan to sit in the same room, and wear the same garments as far as is convenient. Not that any special robe is necessary, but that, as the room and dress become impregnated with the psychic auras of the sitters, you may have as nearly as possible the same conditions from time to time. For this reason a special room is often set apart as a 'seance room,' and used for no other purpose;

there is less likelihood of mixed influences or turbulent manifestations under such conditions.

PUNCTUALITY.—Members of the circle should be punctual and keep their appointments with their spirit friends. Fancy keeping an angel waiting half an hour when he comes to serve and bless you! Angels are 'messenger spirits.'

REGULARITY IN ATTENDANCE is very important, so that, as far as is possible, the same conditions may be provided on each occasion. The seance should be opened promptly to time, and late comers—if admitted at all—should take their seats as quietly as possible.

PRAYER AND SONG.—A few minutes of silent aspiration, of earnest soul-felt desire, should follow the singing of a hymn. If anyone is prompted, or feels the impulse from the other side, to utter a prayer, it should be done reverently, quietly, and briefly.

PASSIVITY IS ESSENTIAL, not the passivity of an unconscious log of wood, but the serene and calm passivity of one who is expectant without being anxious; who aspires without being demonstrative; who is receptive without being exacting or personally active. Not passive in the sense of yielding implicit and unquestioning obedience, but responsive to impulses, impressions, thoughts or suggestions that come to him in a reasonable and intelligible manner.

PATIENCE IS NECESSARY.—Time is required for growth; for the attuning of the two spheres and the blending of the thought-life of the spirit with that of the medium. Do not be impatient nor over zealous. Steady unfolding and ripening are best.

PERSEVERANCE IS INDISPENSABLE.—There will of necessity be difficulties to be overcome. Experiments will fail. Misconceptions will arise. Imperfect manifestations will occur. Conditions will vary. A variety of contingencies which cannot be foreseen will have to be dealt with as they crop up. Do not be deterred nor downcast, but maintain a cheerful and expectant attitude. Do not demand. Spirits do not like to be commanded, neither should mediums or sitters submit to dictation. Persist, go cautiously, but

do not falter. Avoid extremes; be neither despondent nor over-sanguine, but if confident of ultimate success and patiently determined to deserve it, the faith that is exercised will most certainly be rewarded. Not, perhaps, in the way the sitters or sensitive would most like or expect, but in some way good will be derived from the sincere search for truth and the desire for knowledge.

ONE CIRCLE ONE MEDIUM.—Judging from our observation and experience it is best that there should be a separate circle for each medium. It is very seldom indeed that the conditions of one circle meet the requirements of more than one sensitive for any great length of time; therefore it is best that a few friends should gather round a young medium and devote themselves to sitting with him for his development.

HOW LONG WILL DEVELOPMENT TAKE?—It is impossible to foretell how long it will take to unfold the powers of a medium so that he may be regarded as fairly well developed. Experience is needed both by spirit and medium to secure such results. But we may safely say that no medium is fully developed so long as his brain, body, and mind are capable of improvement. Development is therefore a life-long process to those who are progressive and teachable, but the first essential is a true purpose and sincere desire for spiritual good. Sympathy and harmony in the mental and psychical conditions of the sitters are also needed.

DIET AND DRINK.—Considerable importance is attached to diet by some people, and fasting is often recommended; but we find that if people live a rational, temperate, and cleanly life there is no need for fasting or special dieting, save under exceptional circumstances and for definite purposes—such as the production of strong physical, or materialization, or test phenomena, under rigid scientific conditions.

TRY THE SPIRITS.—All communications that purport to come from the other side should be received with reserve, and be tested by the ordinary rules and standards that we employ in our dealings with each other. We have to exercise our judgment and reason in daily life, and even then

are not infrequently misled, and as there are so many difficulties attending de intercourse with exarnate human beings, caution should be exercised in regard to accepting their statements or promises. There are many kindly, trustworthy, and wise spirits who communicate, but they cannot be known to be good and true until they have been tried and proved: therefore it is necessary to carefully and shrewdly 'try the spirits,' and not accept them as oracles or infallible authorities.

TRY THE SITTERS.—It is quite as necessary to try the sitters as it is to 'try the spirits,' but the trying in both cases should be accomplished with as much tact and discretion as possible, so as not to give pain or cause needless friction. There are some people who are so sensitive that they should not sit in circles, because they are liable to become charged with the psychic emanations from, and dominated by the expectancy of the sitters, and are not influenced by spirits to any appreciable degree. Or probably, there are 'cross magnetisms'; members of the circle may be antagonistic to each other. Some sitters may be sarcastic, merely curious, or selfish, or mercenary, or not over clean, sober, or scrupulous, and all such surroundings act and re-act upon the highly sensitive organization of the undeveloped medium, and, above all, provide conditions favorable for the manifestations of mischievous or malicious spirits, unless the medium is sufficiently developed, or is protected by wise spirits powerful enough to resist or control such influences. Like attracts like, as a general rule; but there are exceptions to this, as to most rules, as, for instance, where unfortunate or unhappy spirits are permitted to manifest, and are even brought to the seance by other and more experienced spirit people so that they may be helped.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SITTERS in moulding the conditions is too little realized. If they introduce an atmosphere of suspicion, doubt, distrust or detraction, they break the continuity of the flow of the psychic energy that has to be employed. By thus severing the current and dissipating the power, they mar the conditions essential to success; and, as all such disturbances of necessity centre upon

and injuriously affect the sensitive medium, they render soul-satisfying and uplifting communion impossible. To all sitters we would say 'You got to a very great extent, what you make conditions for,' therefore open the doors of the heavens by love and purity.

CHANGES SOMETIMES BENEFICIAL.—A 'circle' may meet night after night without results, but if an additional sitter is added who possesses the right temperament, phenomena may occur almost immediately. If the general psychic conditions of a circle of sitters are harmonious, although there may not be any specially mediumistic person present, interesting phenomena and successful communion may be enjoyed up to a certain stage. For instance, table tilting, or rappings, or both may occur; but the spirits may not be able to produce other or more striking evidences of their ability to manipulate physical objects, not because they are unwilling, but because the energy that they require is not possessed by any one member, or by the circle as a whole. If a person of the right type of physical sensitiveness can be discovered and induced to join the circle, the more definite and striking phenomena may soon be forthcoming. The introduction of a new sitter may possibly have the effect of disturbing conditions and putting an end to the manifestations, or of affording conditions that will lead to new developments along other lines, such as entrancement, clairvoyance, and speaking mediumship.

When a good physical medium has been discovered, it is well for him if a few friends will devote themselves systematically to assist the spirits in his development.

'TEST' QUESTIONS CAN WAIT.—Should table movements occur, or raps be heard, let them go on for a little. Do not ask *test* questions. Request repetitions, ask for them to be clearer or louder, so that they shall be sharp and decisive. Ask for a certain number of movements or raps. Then you can proceed to ask questions as to whether the circle is sitting in the best arrangement for success. If changes are desired these should be made as suggested. It may happen that one or more of the sitters may be requested to change places or to withdraw from the table altogether. In the latter case the sitter should not take

umbrage, or regard such rejection as a reflection upon them personally. It merely indicates that their psychical conditions do not blend with those of the rest of the circle. AV. H. Bach says: 'If you are requested, either by the controlling intelligence or by the manager of the circle, to take another place, or even if your room is desired for some unknown cause, do not get angry and create a disturbance, but get with those, with whom you are in spiritual harmony and try it again. All who have succeeded have passed through 'great trials and failures, and when success is attained, think of what you have gained' A knowledge of immortality, possibly, or you have assisted in producing an instrument through whom the proofs of immortality may be given.' *

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS.—When communication has been established by raps or table tilts, and some evidence has been afforded that the spirit possesses both the knowledge and the power to give effect to his wishes, definite instructions should be asked for as to who is the medium and the frequency of the 'Sittings' necessary for development, and for the appointment of one among the sitters to act as 'conductor.' Confusion often results from several of the sitters asking conflicting questions at almost the same time, or, what is worse, making guesses or positive statements as to the identity or the wishes of the communicating intelligence.

THE FIRST REQUISITE IS TO SECURE FREE COMMUNICATION.—Instead of raps or table movements, the bands or heads of those sitters who can be influenced may be made to move a certain number of times in response to questions. Remember, the first requisite is to *establish the channel of communication*; and all personal questions as to who and what the spirit is should be reserved until the initial difficulties are overcome. It is most probable that at first the spirit operators will not be fully aware what effect is being produced by them, and the mind of the medium may be in a state of protest against being acted upon, and it is therefore extremely unwise to attempt to obtain responses to test

* 'Mediumship and its Development.', Page 24.

questions or to secure evidences of the identity of the spirit under these imperfect conditions. Many mediums and inquirers have been deterred from further development or investigation because such questions have been prematurely put and the answers pressed for, with the result that confusing and contradictory responses were given, and the conclusion was hastily drawn that it was all fraud, delusion, or of the devil.

Writing in 'Light,' a correspondent who related some striking experiences observed: 'I now, in my anxiety, made a mistake which anxious inquirers sometimes make. I wanted more—I pressed for another test, forgetting the difficulties of mediumship, and the supreme effort which must have been made to give me what I had obtained. And this resulted in failure after remarkable tests had been given.'

Commenting upon this, another writer said: 'This is exactly how mediums are used; they give test after test, not to satisfy, but only to produce the desire for more. Then when the power is weakened comes the inability—or *fraud*, as imperfection in mediumship is too often called. This will be the case until they can have the only condition which is suitable for spiritual communion—passive trust and confidence. Real tests cannot come when sought with materialistic conditions. The tests come unsought, unlooked for.'

A NECESSARY WARNING.—We cannot too often reiterate the necessity of *observing the manifestations first* and drawing conclusions afterwards. A practice to be strongly deplored, and one that arises from the laudable desire to aid the spirit before the medium is under full control, is the common one of putting words into the mouth of the medium, or 'reading' into the message what the *sitter* thinks was intended. It is extremely difficult for the spirit to alter the impression thus made should he be desirous of so doing, as it is naturally easier to make the first impression upon the mind of the sensitive than it is to remove an erroneous one and put another in its place. Do not pester the medium who is being influenced with questions

and suggestions; but quietly and sympathetically await results.

Even though the process be slow and tedious, and the waiting long—until the full message can be given (with the then means at command), yet, if it is at last *clearly* given from the spirit side, a decided step forward will have been taken, and in all probability subsequent messages will come much more easily, the channel of communication being so far opened. So many difficulties are encountered both on this side and the other (and even when the channel is cleared it needs to be *kept* open), that unless the spirit possesses positive knowledge and power, one need not be surprised if there are frequent 'breakdowns' and many disappointments and perplexities to be encountered and overcome in making the preliminary experiments. But having reached the stage of clear communication, and having received definite instructions as to conditions to be observed, the sitters and the medium alike should endeavor to faithfully co-operate with the spirit workers.

SPIRITS THE OPERATORS.—As the spirits are to be the operators, if the sitters and the medium can obtain from them intimations of what they wish to try to do, and instructions as to what can be done by the circle to assist them to achieve the desired end, it is manifest that it will be wise to consult their wishes, and, as far as possible, within reasonable limits, conform to their suggestions. It should, however, be borne in mind that they should be consulted, not 'with bated breath and whispering humbleness,' but in a rational and friendly way, for the purpose of securing their intelligent co-operation and obtaining their advice.

LET REASON RULE REASONABLY.—It may happen that the 'conditions' asked for by the communicating intelligences may seem to be ludicrous or impracticable; should this be so, representations to that effect should be made to the spirit, and if such instructions are persisted in, except where, through long association, confidence is felt in the spirit, or very clear evidence of knowledge has been manifested, the medium and sitters, exercising their own reasoning powers, should quietly and firmly decline to do what

is asked of them, and some other course should be suggested. We do *not* advise either medium or sitters to blindly accept or follow what is given to or through them; reason should ever reign; but even reason will show that in experimental work it is sometimes advisable to tentatively adopt and follow some course that may not, at first sight, appear quite reasonable.

PERSONAL MESSAGES.—We will suppose that a satisfactory arrangement of the sitters has been secured, and that table movements or raps of a clear and decisive character have been obtained. Questions may now be put to ascertain whether the spirit is related to any person present, and if so, to whom, and the nature of the relationship; or with whom the spirit wishes to be in communication. The person indicated should then question his friend for himself; and should secrecy be desired, and the spirit express readiness to answer mental questions, the questions can be put mentally, and they will be answered as if they had been spoken aloud. Each question should be put clearly, so that a simple answer can be given. But if the spirit agrees to move the table as the alphabet is called over, more detailed information can be obtained, and it may be left to spell out its name, its relationship to one or more of the sitters, and its message. The spirit should be addressed courteously; a kindly visitant from the other world is no ordinary guest, especially if he is a loving friend who desires to give you comfort.

CLEAR THINKING NEEDED.—While answers to mental questions are frequently given with startling accuracy and success, spirit people usually require that questions or wishes should be orally expressed; and the objection is urged by some people that if the spirits can see our thoughts they ought to know what we require. The fact is, however, that many people do not have clear thoughts or hold them definitely in mind long enough to be read, and many sitters actually require to express themselves in words before others, whether in the body or out of it, can understand what they mean or wish to know.

Alluding to the expression which is frequently heard, 'If I could only speak as well as I can think, I should have

little difficulty in saying what I want, I a thoughtful writer has pointed out that this is largely a mistake, for if the thought was definite and clear, in words, there would be no difficulty in giving it utterance, and he claims that many people speak incoherently because they think inconsequentially.

CAUSES OF CONFUSION.—It is possible that a sensitive who is easily impressed and who readily perceives what the spirit people wish to accomplish, may forestall them by prematurely expressing part of their thought himself, or even performing a similar action to that which they intend to produce, carried away, as it were, by his anxious desire for success; and yet the sensitive, being hypnotized by their dominant wish or purpose, will be unconscious that he has unwittingly helped on the manifestations instead of letting the spirits do their own work. For instance, a table may be tilted somewhat unevenly and with difficulty in response to questions; one of the sitters, who is sensitive to the wishes of others, 'senses' the desire of the spirits who are seeking to communicate, and in response to that psychic 'suggestion'—unintentionally transferred by them—unconsciously to himself exerts pressure to help the table to move in unison with what *he* thinks or feels that the spirit people want to say, yet such a sensitive would be naturally indignant should he be charged with causing the tilts.

Persons who are easily affected sometimes act in this way in response to the dominant idea of the sitters, and considerable confusion ensues. Unless care is exercised to watch oneself such a tendency may be unconsciously yielded to; hence there has been some basis for the theory of unconscious muscular action due to expectancy—or a dominant idea. It is wise, therefore, when the communication purports to be for any particular member of the circle, for that sitter to let his hands slide over the surface of the table as it moves, and to note that he does not in any way accelerate or retard the movements.

THE REAL POINT TO BE OBSERVED.—It is, however, not so much the fact that the table moves, with or without contact, that is of paramount importance, but that by its

means intercourse can be obtained and maintained with so-called dead people; and evidences of spirit identity, as well as loving and cheering messages, can be obtained in that way from loved ones who were supposed to be gone for ever. This is the important point to be established beyond all peradventure.

CHAPTER III.

HOW 'CONDITIONS' AFFECT RESULTS.

There are three factors concerned in mediumship: the spirit controlling, the mental atmosphere of the medium controlled, and the mental atmosphere of the people constituting the company surrounding the medium.—J. J. MORSE.

The requirements for honesty on the part of mediums are equally binding upon investigators; they must have honesty of purpose if they expect to attract honest spirits.—A. MORTON.

FAILURE MAY BE CAUSED BY THE SITTERS.—Although the spirits may be intensely anxious to demonstrate their power, they are sometimes repelled from those whom they seek to approach by the 'bristling' and discordant conditions of mind that prevail among the sitters, who disperse with a feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment. If the sitters only knew it, the 'failure' was directly traceable to the destructive thought-atmosphere with which they surrounded themselves and the medium. Too frequently they do not prepare themselves for the 'hour's communion with the dead,' and their mental attitude is anything but conducive to success. They do not put away the thronging thoughts, anxieties, and worries of their busy lives, but carry them right into the seance chamber, yet expect good spiritual results. Both sifter and medium may very easily destroy the indispensable conditions of spirit-manifestation, and the medium's honesty, not his want of growth, or of knowledge, is called in question by the investigator

who knows, and perhaps cares, nothing for the occult laws he has violated, not obeyed.

MEDIUMS OFTEN MAR THE MANIFESTATIONS.—Great difficulties are, frequently encountered by sitters and spirits because of the mental barriers which the mediums erect by their objections, hesitations, and oppositions. As one is removed or overthrown, another speedily fills the place. For instance, a spirit may seek to communicate by impressing certain words on the brain of the medium and by striving to manipulate his vocal organs, so that clear expression shall be given to them. Two or three words may be uttered, but the mind of the medium, which had been passive, becomes active and takes fright, especially if what is said appears to be of a 'test' or evidential nature. He wonders if it is trite. He *fears* that a mistake may be made, and hesitates; and thus, by interfering with the free course of the utterances, causes the very results which he dreads. It is one thing to cause thoughts to flow through a clear channel or over a calm surface, and quite another to overcome resistance and produce the same effect.

SPIRITS HAVE MANY DIFFICULTIES TO OVERCOME.—On one occasion, a medium felt the influence of an arisen friend very strongly. It was accompanied by an intense *desire* to speak, and yet the medium was unable to give utterance to that which the spirit wished to have said. In answer to an inquiry that was subsequently made as to why the spirit had been unable to communicate with his dear ones, one of the familiar controls of the medium explained that he thought he *had* spoken. His feeling of nearness to them was so vivid, and his wish to express himself through the lips of the medium had been so intense, that it was only after he had ceased his efforts to control that he realized he had only *thought* and *intended*, but had not succeeded in compelling the sensitive to utter his message. This will perhaps explain why mediums sometimes rise to their feet and act as if they were about to speak, but get no further—they do not receive the impression, or the right mental impulse; they feel as if they could speak and yet they have nothing to say. At such times a few words of sympathy and inquiry from the conductor of the circle may assist

the control to realize the situation and succeed in his endeavors to communicate. Even on this side, when we send telegraphic messages or use the telephone, mistakes and misunderstandings are by no means uncommon occurrences, and our letters sometimes create an impression in the mind of the reader which we did not intend to convey. Is it any wonder, then, that messages from the other side are imperfectly impressed upon, and incorrectly rendered by, the medium? Most persons who have attempted to transfer thoughts to mesmerized sensitives have realized that general ideas can be transmitted much more easily than names, dates, or specific words can be impressed upon or expressed by the subject. The wonder is, not that so *few* names, ages, and special details are given by spirits to and through mediums, but that, considering all the attendant circumstances, so *many* 'test' messages are continually being given, both privately and in public.

THE 'SAVING SENSE OF HUMOR.'—We have heard people denounce the triviality, the fun and frivolity of the seance-room, and to a certain extent we agree with them; but there is danger, too, in the other extreme of deadly dullness, of decorous propriety, and of philosophic 'superiority.' Spirits are 'hum still,' and a good breezy laugh, a hearty, joyous, kindly, sympathetic disposition, goes a long way to open the avenues by which they can approach us. Mr. Henry Forbes well and truly says: 'Experience has taught that the spiritual circle should be presided over by a "pure heart" and a "strong head"—to which qualities might be added a well-ordered development of the sense of humor, for the absence of humor often tends to make philosophy grotesquely ill-proportioned.'

BE NATURAL, CALM, AND CHEERFUL.—Mr. T. Everitt suggests that the sitters should be natural and easy; that pleasant sociability, agreeable, even humorous conversation will be helpful; that the sitters should breathe in unison, and take good deep breaths for the purpose of setting up rhythmic vibrations and liberating the forces which are requisite for the production of physical phenomena. Singing is often useful for this purpose, but it should be melodious. 'It isn't *noise* I want,' said a spirit once, 'it's harmony.'

If you cannot sing you can count out loud, and count altogether; *that* may give us the right vibrations.'

It should be borne in mind that feelings of demand, of selfish, personal claim to the exclusion of others, will exert a detrimental influence upon the conditions of the circle and the medium. Such a mental sphere will necessarily affect the sensitive and rub him the wrong way.

IMPATIENCE AND ANXIETY are disintegrating mental conditions. People who are all the time looking at their watches and thinking, 'Oh! I wish they would hurry up.' 'Oh! do be quick, don't keep us here all night, we shall surely miss our train,' etc., are 'disturbers of the peace,' and break the conditions which require harmony and repose. 'We have found out that we cannot hurry them,' said a lady who had enjoyed much experience in circles; and consequently, when you are sitting for difficult phenomena, you need to have plenty of time and be prepared to sit good humoredly for hours, if need be, to see it through, and then results are likely to speedily ensue; whereas the more you try to hurry, the more anxious you become, the less likelihood is there that you will secure results at all. You can surely realize that hurry, impatience, anxiety, intense expectancy, fear and suspicion, must of necessity disturb the conditions and prove inimical to the efforts of the spirit operators to present clear and convincing phenomenal demonstrations of their power and identity.

HARMONY ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS.—When sitting in circle for phenomenal manifestations, harmony should be the primary consideration. To secure this result, the sitters must be willing to cooperate in a friendly spirit, and abandon, for the time being at least, all exclusiveness, and break down the attitude of reserve which is so frequently assumed between strangers. On one occasion in particular we had a remarkable illustration of the detrimental influence of one or two sitters. It occurred in a seance at which a number of mediums were I) present, and, under ordinary circumstances, successful results would have been practically certain; but this was *not* an ordinary seance—at least, not in the opinion of one lady who apparently

imagined that she had been invited to discover fraud, and that the rest of us were suspicious characters. Up to the moment of her appearance in the circle we were a happy family of sociable folk, and enjoyed a very pleasant season of conversational interchange. When, however, the said lady, accompanied by a friend, joined the company, there was a silence that could be felt. The social temperature fell rapidly—people visibly stiffened and became constrained. The two ladies appeared to feel afraid to speak lest they should say anything that might be used by the mediums, and spoke in monosyllables. Sitting bolt upright, grim and silent, they drew up to the table, and when the phenomena began displayed no signs of interest. Their 'detective' attitude was so objectionable that even those who had endeavored to thaw these self-constituted Sherlock Holmeses, gave up the attempt, and, in consequence, what had promised to be a really enjoyable evening, proved one of the most uncomfortable it has been our lot to experience.

HOW NOT TO DO IT.—On another occasion, when some experiments were being made by a medium,' under control, in the direction of psychometry and clairvoyance, a lady expressed a desire to be the 'subject' for delineation. After one or two efforts the medium exclaimed, 'I am very sorry, but for some reason I am quite unable to get anything from you, or for you.' Shortly afterwards the lady in question remarked to one of the sitters, 'I knew he would not be able to give me anything. That is the third medium I have "knocked out."' The failure to obtain results under such impossible conditions is a proof of the genuine psychic nature of the powers of the mediums. If they were pretenders they would succeed in doing something under any circumstances and in spite of such adverse psychic conditions.

A VARIETY OF CONSIDERATIONS.—It would be unwise for us to attempt to give cut and dried instructions regarding the development of mediumship, because, beyond trying to offer harmonious conditions, the would-be medium can at first do so little. He is not usually an active agent, but is an intermediary between earth and the spirit world. The spirits who seek to use him as their instrument may

or may not be fit for that work. It is not every spirit who can develop a medium. Some of them lack both knowledge and aptitude. Others may have the knowledge and yet fail from want of the power to control. They may be able to affect one sitter and not another; to use a sensitive for one phase of mediumship, and yet be unable to succeed in any other direction. A spirit may be in such conditions that he can produce good physical phenomena; he may, however, try to do so through a 'subject' who is fitted for trance or clairvoyant mediumship and does not possess the quality or psychic force for sensuous manifestations. A medium who is naturally qualified for physical demonstrations may persist in desiring trance or inspirational mediumship, and be determined to become a speaker or nothing. Frequently at the outset both spirits and sitters are ignorant of their powers, of the conditions necessary for success, and the association that exists between them being affectional rather than intellectual or spiritual, they have to grope their way towards each other. It follows, therefore, that experiments have to be made on *both* sides. Sitters and young mediums often spoil the seances by over-anxiety. There would not be half so much heard about 'evil spirits' (so-called) if more regard were paid to the necessity of maintaining a calm, patient, and serene frame of mind. Some people become excited as soon as phenomena commence; mediums not infrequently get nervous or timid when they feel that they are being affected, and, although they desire to be controlled, are *afraid* to submit to the influence when they are likely to lose consciousness. All these are disturbing elements, and naturally interfere with the flow of the forces that are to be utilized and prevent the success that is desired.

A spirit without any very definite purpose, finding himself in the presence of a mediumistic person, may seek to influence him, and spasmodic actions may result. Unless the 'control' should soon give evidence of clear thought and definite purpose he should be requested, in a kindly and courteous manner, to seek the assistance of some spirit who understands the methods to be employed, and induce

him to exert his power for the benefit of the medium and the circle.

AN OPEN MIND NECESSARY.—One of the first and most elementary conditions for spirit intercourse is this: Sitters and mediums alike should endeavor to avoid prejudging the case, and be as responsive and open-minded as possible. Positive expectations should not be entertained, or strong claims made. But in the careful scientific spirit the sitters should await results and be determined to hold their judgment in suspense—to watch and wait; and after careful observation and a number of experiments, conducted in a sympathetic but unbiased, non-committal frame of mind, let the facts themselves speak.

AVOID THEORIES BUT GATHER FACTS.—If an inquirer has formed, or adopted, the theory that it is all the mind of the medium, or the dominating thought of the sitter (that the table or the medium only gives back the thoughts of the most positive mind in the circle), it will be better for him as far as possible to hold back that thought, and watch, because if he tries to control the table movements by the exercise of his will upon it, he merely interferes with the efforts which the spirits may be making. If he actually succeeds in causing the movements to occur as he wills that they shall, he does not prove that spirits cannot do the same thing. He may possibly switch them off and himself on, but in that case the machine will simply respond to his thought and not theirs. That is all.

THE CRUCIAL QUESTION.—What sincere truth-seekers, whether mediumistic or not, need to know is this: 'Can spirits gain power to move the table, to make raps, to give us messages which will prove their existence and identity!' If they set out to obtain proof of the presence and power of spirits, they must give the spirits opportunities to satisfy them with evidence.

Instead of interfering with the conditions and destroying the connections, and then triumphantly asserting, 'there are no spirits in it, I moved the table by my will, it only moved in harmony with my thoughts,' the inquirer should preserve a calm, observant mood. He should have, as Sir William Crookes said, 'a mind to let,' and render

assistance as far as possible by observing the conditions and seeking for proofs of spirit action; then, when the operators are ready to give them, ask for tests of identity.

IMPRESSIONS.—Mrs. Britton says: "Impressions" are the voices of spirits or the monitions of the spirit within us, and should always be followed out, unless suggestive of 'wrong in act or word,' and she advises that 'if a strong impression to write, speak, sing, dance or gesticulate possesses any person present in circle, it should be faithfully obeyed. It has a meaning even if it cannot at first be realized.' Of course, care and discretion must be exercised; but in the private or home circle greater freedom is possible than would be judicious in a public gathering.

IMPERSONATIONS.—One of the most interesting and individually satisfactory mode of spirit manifestations is that known as 'impersonating test mediumship.' Most mediums at some stage of their career are employed in this direction, and some of them devote their whole time to it and place themselves at the service of inquirers who desire to get into communication with their departed relatives and friends. Mr. F. W. H. Myers was compelled to concede the fact of the inadequacy of his 'telepathic' and 'subliminal consciousness' theories to account for the evidences of the identity and independent consciousness of his spirit friends who controlled Mrs. Thompson and spoke to him through her instrumentality, recalling to his recollection incidents in their mutual past experiences in such a conclusive fashion that he thankfully acknowledged his indebtedness to the medium and his gratitude to the spirits.

WHY A 'MEDIUM' IS NEEDED.—Because an individual has passed through the death-change he is not instantly endowed with the knowledge and power to use the aura given off by a sensitive for the purpose of communicating with his earth friends. It is often a source of perplexity and pain to the spirit who has just left the body that, although he speaks to those who are mourning because of his 'death,' they do not hear; though he touches them, they do not respond; though he would convey to them the truth that he is 'living,' they only weep and grieve, and he is compelled to turn sadly away as the conviction is forced

upon him that a barrier which he cannot overcome intervenes between them. But although direct communication could not be established, they may feel strangely comforted as the effect of this influence, and leave his mortal form with the thought 'he is not there, he is relieved from pain,' or the more familiar one, 'he is better off.'

Inquirers sometimes ask, 'Why must my dearest and most intimate friend approach me through the mediumship of a stranger, instead of coming directly to me?' Suppose that friend does endeavor to reach the inquirer, but is unable to impress him: suppose the spirit tries to 'suggest' telepathically to his friend that he is near to him, and fails; what can he do but seek out some one through whom he is able to manifest because he is more psychically 'open' and responsive, or else leave him altogether without evidence? 'The medium,' says Mr. W. J. Colville, 'is *par excellence* a sensitive individual, whose sensitiveness makes him aware of presences undetectable by those of less highly strung organization. Your friend comes to you, but if you cannot discern his presence, and one more sensitive than yourself is able to do so, it clearly follows that that other's mediumship has served simply as a means of revealing to you what your own blunter perceptions failed to discern.'

LIFE AFTER DEATH REAL AND HUMAN.—The fact that the life beyond death is one where law reigns supreme, and where ignorance and wrong-doing affect the status of the departed, holding them in the conditions of spiritual darkness and limiting their liberties—while knowledge, purity, and loving-kindness are necessary to the spirit's progress and well-being—is constantly enforced from the other side, and Spiritualism has shown us the real life beyond the tomb, not the stained glass personalities nor the mythical conditions of the orthodox sectarian, but the natural and human beings who have persisted. It has banished misconception and miracle by giving us glimpses of the facts and the reign of law in the spiritual world. The law of continuity, of consequences, is as inexorable on the spiritual as upon the physical plane, and that which is written is written and cannot be effaced. No magic or incantation

can suddenly transform the dying John Jones into the saintly soul who is fit for the celestial heights and the companionship of the wisest angels.

The revelation of the simply human life of the departed, of the persistence of character, of the maintenance of individuality—with its shortcomings, prejudices, limitations, and personal characteristics, as well as the preservation of all the wealth of intellect and the treasures of soul resulting from life's toil, study, and unfolding—this revelation is, to our thinking, the greatest blessing which Spiritualism has conferred upon humanity. If it did no more than awaken within us a divine discontent with the pettiness of the majority of our thoughts, feelings, and troubles, it would be of great service to the world; and those who deplore the trivialities are unconsciously condemning the small and narrow conditions of the daily life of the average mortal—because, such as we are here so shall we be over there until we can grow to appreciate the fuller spiritual life, to realize our ideals by application to the task of development, and to recognize that beauty comes by use. But Spiritualism does infinitely more than this; it demonstrates the 'going on' of human beings, the preservation of identity, and the orderly continuance—the sequential character—of life. It dignifies this present stage of expression. It gives an added incentive to effort, a new grace to affection, and an increased lustre to goodness and worth.

MANY METHODS, BUT ONE OBJECT.—The modes of spirit manifestation are many, the phases wonderfully varied, but, like a golden cord running through them all, there is the distinct purpose of bringing to those on earth the glad tidings and proof positive of continued conscious personal existence in the life after death. The process of psychic development is usually slow, and the medium will be likely to grow disheartened; but by looking back over the ground already traversed, and by comparing the faint efforts made at the commencement with the later and fuller indications of spirit power, he should feel encouraged, and proceed with renewed vigor.

MEDIUMS MUST PARTICIPATE IN THEIR OWN UNFOLDMENT.—Some mediums take little or no interest in their own mediumship, they are often reckless as to conditions and disregardful of the lesson that their experience should teach them as to the influence that their sitters exert upon them; they will sit, when pressed, to oblige so-called friends, even when to do so is injurious because they are already exhausted. Importunate acquaintances, mere sightseers and wonder-mongers, prevail over them because they have cultivated the 'negative' frame of mind and 'leave it all to the spirits,' and they suffer in consequence of their folly, indifference, apathy, and want of personal cultivation of will ability to govern themselves. If mediums do not exercise self-respect they cannot expect to win the respect of intelligent people in or out of the body. It largely rests with themselves—whether their gifts shall lead to spiritual graces and an unfolded selfhood.

As Dr. Dean Clarke very truly says: 'Novices in mediumship have no business to assume obligations they are not fully qualified to fulfil. Let them take the counsel given metaphorically to the disciples of Jesus, to "tarry in Jerusalem till their beards are grown." They, surely, should wait till the spirits are strong enough to control and shield them from the meddlesome interference of ignorant people, both in the flesh and out.'

We strongly urge all medium to wait and serve their apprenticeship thoroughly before they undertake to sit for sceptics or perform public work, either as 'test,' 'impersonating,' 'speaking,' 'seeing,' or 'healing' mediums, and the best place to secure the necessary experience, training, and unfolding is in the private home circle. After a certain stage has been reached, however, the medium who has been used for impersonations will in all probability begin to display the powers of clairvoyance and to receive vivid impressions. Then will come, or they will be accompanied by, the efforts of the spirits to pass beyond the purely personal and limited forms of expression associated with the affectionate messages and greetings, to the consideration and explanation of the conditions and experiences of life on the other side. Spirits who can teach and give more

sequential and sustained addresses will in all likelihood assume control, and under such conditions it will be found necessary to enlarge the circle and introduce fresh sitters. The clairvoyant, or psychometrist, needs new subjects with whom to experiment, and the speaking medium requires an audience to listen to his discourses, so that the next step beyond the small private circle may well be a semipublic one, or an 'after-circle' such as is frequently held at the close of the public Sunday services in many towns, at which mediums who have reached this stage are afforded the opportunities they need.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES OF SPIRITUALISM.—Around the family table, where those who are united in affection meet to bold joyous communion with their spirit friends, where the blended desire ascends to the spiritual plane and becomes the potent magnetic attraction by which those friends can establish harmonious relations with the sitters—in such a circle and under such conditions even a weak degree of mediumistic responsiveness to the outpouring from the spirit side will become intensified and exalted, until rhythmic vibrations are established and thought and emotion will readily pass from one to the other, and all will be attuned. The best method of cultivation is to regard the mediumistic sensitiveness as a natural and desirable quality, to be evolved by training and experiment, under the direction of the reason and the conscience, In this manner the tribunal which decides the conduct of life is ever present, and no matter what influences are brought to bear upon the sensitive he remains steadfast, realizing that the responsibility for use or abuse rests with himself.

CHAPTER IV.

PRACTICAL ADVICE TO SENSITIVES.

No spirit can control a medium against his wilt and inclination, if he understands the supreme Power of his own selfhood. —HUDSON TUTTLE.

We consider the highest degree of physical health perfectly compatible with the very best manifestation of mediumship. —J. J. MORSE.

The law of sympathy governs all spiritual relationships, and, as we are all spirits here and now, although encased in earthly habiliments, we may come into sympathetic rapport with others and be affected by, or influence them, for good or ill. —B. G. E.

When an inquirer says, 'I have been frequently assured by mediums that I am mediumistic and should become a successful medium, but I am at a loss to know how to proceed; will you advise me what to do to become developed?' we feel inclined to reply: If you are animated by a sincere desire to be of service to others, and not by personal ambition or mercenary motives, you are in the right mood to enter upon the work. If you are endowed with the requisite temperamental and organic conditions, the discipline of experience will teach you many things, and the spirits will help you if you are aspiring. Do not, however, expect immediate results. Mediumship, unlike mushrooms, cannot be *forced*, and any attempt in that direction is likely to be followed by injurious results.

NO 'SECRET' FOR SALE.

There is no great 'occult secret' that we can impart to you. No one can sell you the knowledge of how to become a medium within a specified and limited time, or develop

you by a set of 'lessons.' It is, in all cases, a matter of time, and frequently of painstaking and long-continued investigation, of experimental research, of steady training; and therefore time and patience are absolutely necessary. You will require to be observant, cool, rational, persistent, and affirmative, remembering that 'it is dogged perseverance that does it.'

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MEDIUMSHIP.

Before you undertake to sit for development we should advise you to read the best books you can procure, so that you may have a good general knowledge of, and profit by, the experience and advice of others, and be prepared for the trials and disappointments that you will in all probability have to meet. Further, we would remind you that while mediumship has its privileges and delights, it also has its duties and responsibilities; its 'cross' as well as its 'crown.' You should consider whether you are prepared to face the difficulties; to work and wait; to persevere in spite of odium and ostracism on this side and the possible attacks of the 'dwellers on the threshold' on the other; whether you will suffer and be strong, and consecrate your energies in an altruistic spirit to the Cause of Truth and Progress in the service of enlightened spirits for the good of Humanity. If you are ready to do this and endure, we wish you God-speed and the wise guidance of true and kindly spirit teachers, and we trust that you will find our advice of service to you in your studies.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

If you have had any reason to suppose that you are mediumistic and can devote sufficient time and thought to the subject without unduly interfering with your present occupation, and decide to try to develop your powers, you will do well to study carefully the preceding chapter on 'Circle holding,' and then, if possible, obtain the assistance of several good and sympathetic friends and form a circle as nearly as possible on the lines mentioned there. If you can secure the help of someone who has had experience,

especially if he is 'impressional' and can realize what the spirits desire to accomplish, you will be fortunate, as he, by his sympathy and advice, will be able to guide you and facilitate the work.

Cultivate and give expression to an aspirational frame of mind. If you really want anything you generally ask for it and try to get it. Why not pray, then? Or, in other words, petition your spirit friends to help you! Why not send out longing desires to the Source of all Power, so that you may relate yourself harmoniously to the great stream of psychic potency which flows all around and through you, and, by becoming attuned, realize its existence and strength?

CAUTION AND RESTRAINT NEEDED.

On some occasions you will probably feel stimulated and so 'stirred up' that you will be inclined to continue the sitting beyond the limits which are healthful and wise. After a time, in a prolonged seance, most mediums experience a perceptible change, and weakening, in the tone or quality of the conditions, frequently accompanied by a feeling of chilliness and weariness. If such sensations affect you; regard them as a warning that the seance has lasted as long as is good for you, and close it as soon as you are able. The spirits are generally good-natured and willing to do all they can, and unless you protect your self they may unduly prolong the sitting without realizing the injury they are inflicting upon you. Experienced spirits protect their mediums by taking control of this matter and ordering a cessation when *they* consider it wise and necessary, but until you have friends who will guard you in this way you must protect yourself.

ABUSE, NOT USE, DANGEROUS.

Never forget that your nerve-vital energy is used and expended in the exercise of your mediumship, and that the supply is limited, hence the necessity for care and moderation. Too frequent, prolonged, or discordant seances; inharmonious conditions and sittings, when you are already jaded and exhausted, are therefore to be avoided. If you

make excessive demands upon your energies, nervous prostration and derangements are an almost inevitable consequence. It is not the use of mediumship but its abuse that is dangerous—perversion and excess are as injurious in this direction as they are in others, whereas temperate, and healthful exercises are strengthening and exhilarating. If you feel 'run down,' decline to sit. If you feel that the circle is inharmomous, or that the sitters are depleted and exacting, refuse to sit.

If you find that you are tired, and feel weary and debilitated on the day following your seances, you may sure that you are sitting too long be or that you require the help of a larger circle of congenial friends to supply the requisite psychic force for your further development. 'Mediumship,' says Mr. J. J. Morse in his 'Practical Occultism,' 'occasionally acts in such a manner that it becomes a stimulant to every organ and function of the system, and the individual becomes excited, nervous, and irritable; hence, the greater the acceleration of physiological functions as the result of psychical influences upon the human body, the more need of caution and restraint in every department of physiological life.'

Be very chary about allowing anyone to "magnetize" you 'to aid your development,' or 'to give you strength,' as they sometimes put it. Because you are a medium you are naturally susceptible and negative, especially so while you are in the circle, and you absorb a great deal of what is thrown upon you. If you permit people of whom you know little or nothing to exert their influence over you, it is possible that very painful results will ensue. You may become involved in all sorts of mental and passional spheres, and be liable to the intrusion of spirits who will produce discord and perhaps cause you a great deal of trouble. If you desire the best results you must institute the highest and most harmonious conditions. Let your seances be held in the light, in well-ventilated rooms. Only under the very best and happiest conditions, with personal friends and in private seances, should you be prevailed upon to sit in darkness. There is, however, no need to sit in the full glare of day, or the blaze of strong lights—the

'dim religious light' (or a red shaded light) will be sufficient, and it is conducive to restfulness and receptivity.

AVOID EXTREMES.

Do not get excited or carried away by enthusiasm. Do not 'give yourself away,' but maintain rational self-control. Remember that manhood and character are of greater value than mediumship. Do not entertain the idea that you are so extremely sensitive that you are justified in being brusque, peculiar, odd, or rude. There is not the slightest reason why you should be angular, inconsiderate for others, or easily offended—neither should you cultivate singularity in your personal appearance or render yourself conspicuous in your dress or adornments. Do not urge that you 'take on the conditions of people,' and therefore cannot shake hands with them, or that some people 'rob you of your psychic force like vampires, and irritate and weaken you.' The cultivation of your psychical nature should include the knowledge of how to resist all such influences and how to throw off the conditions that you absorb from your sitters. It is not necessary that you should be spasmodic, effeminate or incoherent; all such affectations are unworthy and bring mediumship into contempt. It may be, and doubtless is true, that to a certain extent medium do reflect their surroundings and are liable to be dominated by people both in and out of the body; but that fact should be a warning to you to be on your guard and to protect yourself, when not actually sitting in the seance, from becoming an echo of others, or a mere weather-vane to show which way the psychic winds are blowing. If you are not robust enough, if you have not sufficient knowledge and self-mastery to use your will and maintain control over your psychic self; if you are unable to guard against the adverse emanations or the 'drawing' powers of others, you had better take lessons in concentration and psychic self-protection; and until you understand the art of self-possession, refrain from attempting to cultivate your sensitiveness. It will never do for you to be 'too sensitive,' be natural, sensible, and strong.

FITNESS THE TRUE TEST.

It is a mistake for a young medium to wish to be something of everything and become envious because others succeed in obtaining manifestations that will not occur in his presence or through his instrumentality. We advise you, therefore, to be ambitious in a rightful way, and strive to give the conditions necessary to get the best and the highest results within the scope of your powers; but you will dissipate your forces and weaken your influence for good if you are discontented, jealous of others, and try to outdo them, or to obtain phenomena in phases of mediumship which are not natural to you. There are certain phases of mediumship which interblend and can be combined with good results, but we wish you to guard against the disposition to be something of everything—and end by being nothing in particular. Find out what your natural capabilities are, and seek to unfold them—other powers may afterwards develop as the result of the sensitiveness that has been thus evolved.

SPIRITS NOT INFALLIBLE.

The instructions that your spirit friends will give you, when they get you well in hand, as a general rule may safely be followed, but at first you will probably find it difficult to get clear guidance from them. You must therefore keep a level head and go along very cautiously. Never let any spirit, in or out of the body, usurp your right of private judgment or exercise undue authority over you. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty: you must use your own discretion and try the spirits before you trust to them

The prevailing idea that a spirit will know everything and be able to work miracles, merely because he is a spirit, has been a fruitful cause of mistakes, and has frequently led to much trouble. You should always bear in mind that a spirit is a human being; not of necessity better nor worse than yourself.

When you remember that all sorts and conditions of people pass into spirit life, who are not transformed by

death but continue, for a time at least, to be much the same sort of people that they were here, you will realize the unwisdom of indiscriminate self-surrender and the danger of implicit reliance upon, and unquestioning obedience to, the spirits who may seek to use you as their agent. It is advisable to talk to and reason with the spirits as you would with people here.

In a 'developing circle' many things can be tolerated, because both sides are experimenting and 'feeling their way towards each other,' and it is difficult at first to know just what is necessary or possible. But it is a safe rule to follow to refuse to be dictated to by the spirits and decline to go on blindly.

THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO.

Further, do not be always ready to be controlled, or to 'drop into a trance' just because you 'feel the influence.' and 'a spirit wants to say something,' or to oblige injudicious friends who 'wish you would let him come.' Many people are very inconsiderate, and although they do not say so, they think (and the sensitive *feels* their thought) 'I do wish he would go under control and tell me something.' You should decline to be controlled *except* at the times when *you* voluntarily and with set purpose lay yourself open to the influence of the spirits, in a properly constituted circle, or when you are prepared for it. If the spirits cause you to do foolish or ridiculous things, gently but firmly refuse to again submit. Do not be induced to yield by promise of future greatness and success. Not a few people have had their vanity tickled and their ambitions aroused by the flattery of crafty and domineering spirits, and in consequence they have been misled into doing and saying very absurd and foolish things.

Your relations with the spirits should be upon the commonsense basis of fraternal co-operation; of mutual respect and confidence; of unity of spirit and harmony of purpose. If you respect yourself and respect the office of mediumship, you will almost certainly attract spirits who will respect you and co-operate with you in a wise fashion.

PROBABLE EXPERIENCES.

When sensitive people sit in the 'circle' the first evidence of spirit influence which they generally receive, and which you will be likely to experience, is a sense of heaviness in the hands, as though they were glued to the table; pricking sensations, as of 'needles and pins' or as of a mild electric current, in the hands and along the arms, may follow, accompanied by a feeling as of a cold breeze blowing over the backs of the hands; numbness and loss of sensation, or sudden jerks or vibratory shakings of the hands and arms may ensue. These involuntary and spasmodic actions may become more continuous, until your hands revolve rapidly and commence to make 'passes' over your own head and face, as if you were mesmerising yourself. You should not be afraid, nor should the sitters become alarmed. Harmonious singing by the rest of the members of the circle will prove helpful, and you will probably find that, as the movements become more definite, motions will be made as if you were writing. In that case, paper and pencil being provided, the conductor of the circle should request that an attempt to write may be made. Very probably strokes, circles, or other illegible marks will ensue. At first the operators do not know how to direct the force in just the right way for successful results, and they have to learn by experience.

Perhaps table movements or raps may occur, and communication be established by those methods. Remarkable results are sometimes secured at the initial seance, but at subsequent meetings, failures, confusion, unreliable messages, and unsatisfactory phenomena may alone transpire. Do not jump to the conclusion that you are dealing with evil spirits—be cool and hopeful. Remember you are merely experimenting, and that the spirit people are also, perhaps for the first time, trying to penetrate the veil and utilize powers and agencies of which, in all probability, they know as little as you. So many possible disturbing factors exist—weather, varying psychical conditions of the sitters, agitated mental states, too great expectancy, or anxiety for successful demonstrations—that

the true disposition to be maintained by the inquirer is that of the scientific student, who carefully watches what, transpires and endeavors to discover the causes of failure as well as the conditions which favor success.

By conforming to the advice which we have already given your innate powers will in all probability soon be revealed, but the spirit operators may have to experiment with you in different ways in order to ascertain what they can do best under the conditions that are afforded to them. When they have succeeded in establishing communication with you and your friends, you should request them to exercise their power in the production of phenomena which will demonstrate the presence and operation of incarnate Intelligences.

WHAT KIND OF MEDIUM SHALL I BE?

As a general principle the best results are secured by special development along the line of natural aptitude. A 'Jack of all phases and master of none' is a failure in mediumship as well as elsewhere. You may find it helpful to visit a public medium who is already developed and can examine you and give you an insight into your natural psychic powers, and counsel you regarding your qualifications and aptitudes, and tell you what to do; but do not attach too much importance to directions received in that way, because so much depends on the knowledge and power of the operator. One spirit might use you with success in one direction and another in some other phase; just as one mesmerist may make a subject clairvoyant when another has previously attempted to do so and failed. Nothing but actual experience will settle the point. If, however, after a reasonable amount of patient devotion to the experiment you do not succeed, or are disappointed with what has been done, it will be advisable to effect a change in the conditions. A dissatisfied state of mind is a dangerous one.

You may, if you choose, *sit by yourself*, and try to obtain table movements, or to get 'automatic' or passive writing. You can make experiments in psychometry or try crystal gazing, or endeavor to 'visualize' and to become clairaudient, but we should *not advise you to sit alone* and,

invite spirits to put you into the trance, as it would be awkward if some boisterous or foreign spirit were to take control of you and decline to withdraw his influence, or did not know how to release you and restore you to your normal state; it might prove injurious to yourself, and your friends would be frightened and not know what to do unless they were experienced Spiritualists. It is better to join a good private circle.

WHY SOME PEOPLE DO NOT DEVELOP.

You may have been informed already that you are a medium, and that if you sit you will develop certain gifts; but you may say: 'I *have* sat and have not developed as I was assured I should!' That is quite probable. The medium whom you consulted may have misjudged your capabilities; the spirit may have estimated what *he* could have done with or through you, and, from his point of view, may have been perfectly accurate; but possibly the spirits who have endeavored to develop you were unable to succeed. People often say: 'I have been told many times that I should make a good medium, but I have not yet had satisfactory results.' When we hear such statements we are prompted to ask: 'Have you sat for development for any length of time in a harmonious and congenial circle?' You cannot expect growth unless you give the requisite conditions. You might as well anticipate a harvest without sowing the seed—just because you bought a sack of wheat! The marvellous results achieved by expert acrobats and athletes are due to their indomitable determination to succeed, and their steady and continuous training of eye, and muscle, and nerve. They concentrate their attention and focus all their powers, and are at once temperate, patient, and persevering in their experiments. The same spirit of devotion; the same firm attitude and watchful attention to all the details; and the same observance of the conditions, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual, are needed if you would educate yourself and become a fit and serviceable instrument for exalted spirit intelligences to afford' humanity the benefit of their experiences 'over there.'

REGARDING MESMERIC 'DEVELOPERS.'

Mesmeric influence from an experienced operator, for the purpose of inducing susceptibility, is sometimes helpful to a sensitive. If the mesmerist can put you into the trance condition and then hand you over to trustworthy spirits to Control you, well and good. In the same way, mesmeric 'passes' may be helpful in the liberation of your clairvoyant powers. The operator may succeed in throwing you into the deep trance state, in which you may travel or become clairvoyant, but we should not recommend you to submit to mesmeric influence or hypnotic suggestions from anyone, unless you know that he is an experienced and a thoroughly honorable and trustworthy individual.

In circles for development one member is frequently impressed, or controlled, to make magnetic passes over another to aid in his unfoldment; and if such a thing should happen to you, and the influence is congenial, there need be no objection raised by you; but beware of those people who claim to be able, by mesmerism, to develop you into a medium in a given period of time. Professor Loveland says: 'The conscious self must first consent before any control can be acquired over the sub-conscious or automatic self-hood.... In too many cases, only the power of auto-hypnotism is manifested, and we have obsession, fraud and folly as the result. There is one sure method of detecting the auto-hypnotic trance, and showing the difference between that and the genuine spirit trance. Any competent magnetist or hypnotiser can throw off the spell in all cases of self-induced trance, unless it has reached the condition of complete catalepsy. But, if a spirit has induced the trance and controls the medium, it will laugh at your efforts to restore him to the ordinary condition. The most unfortunate feature of this sorry business is that the poor subject is self-deceived and imagines that he or she is a full-fledged medium; and when he has made some terrible break on the platform or elsewhere he shields himself by laying all the responsibility upon some supposed spirit guide.'

No sensible person would surrender himself to the magnetic influence of a human being of whom he knew

nothing; he would need to know and have confidence in him before doing so; yet we find many who, impelled by a desire to be a medium, without understanding how much the word implies, sit down and invite any spirit that comes along to experiment upon them! Under such circumstances nothing but a high motive and a pure purpose will protect them from the operations of unwise or mischievous intelligences. As well might they go and sit in a public place with their eyes blindfolded and with an inscription on their breasts, 'Who will come and magnetize me?'

It has been frequently asserted, and we believe with truth, that no one who is averse to it can be hypnotised unless he yields to persuasion without realizing the need for resistance. No one who is watchful over himself can be drawn away to paths of vice or crime who has not the inclination in that direction, unless he is ignorant and too confiding. The man who has gained control over his desires and is morally self-centered cannot be hypnotised or suggestionised into wrong-doing, because the very suggestion is repugnant to him, and therefore there is little or no danger so long as the sensitive is alive to the need (which always exists for everyone) to maintain a level head and a pure purpose; a strong 'will' to do the right and a strong 'won't' towards the wrong.

PSYCHIC SPONGES.

There are some people who, when they sit in a circle, are extremely helpful, and give off the right kind of force that readily blends with that of the sensitive; but there are others who draw upon and appropriate the psychic forces which are needed by the medium, or by the spirits through the medium. While they mean well, enjoy the seances, and feel 'so much better' after them, the success of the circle is endangered so far as the object for which it was formed is concerned. Such persons should be requested to sit outside the circle or be asked kindly to refrain from attending.

FALLING ASLEEP.

If you should fall into a quiescent state resembling sleep when in the circle, and neither feel inclination nor

ability to move or speak, do not be alarmed, but if you are sufficiently conscious, request that a good spirit friend will come and use you. If, however, you are mentally in active as well as physically quiescent, your friends must intervene after a time and audibly solicit spirit aid. If you get no further, and at subsequent sittings continue to fall into this inert and unsatisfactory comatose condition, you must make up you mind before you sit that you will awake out of the lethargy after about ten minutes unless some spirit influences you in some way. You must give yourself the 'suggestion' to awake, and after that you may try what you can do in the way of psychometry or conscious automatic writing.*

TRANCE: AND INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKING.

The mental phases of mediumship involve the development of a degree of impressibility which may range from the conscious reception of suggestion, or impulses, or thoughts from other intelligences to the lucidity on the spiritual plane which is displayed by conscious clear-seeing, or spirit-sight. The phenomena of super-sensuous reception due to spirit influence are elicited in much the same way as the mesmerist arouses the clairvoyant powers of his subject. The somnambular sleep, or trance, is induced in the subject whose voluntary powers are no longer under his control, and the involuntary processes are well-nigh suspended. In this state his spirit sometimes gains a large degree of freedom, and is able to perceive on the inner or spiritual plane.

If you are likely to become a trance-speaking medium you will probably experience a sensation as a falling or dizziness, as if you are going to faint; this may continue until you become entirely unconscious on the external plane, and you will know no more until you regain your normal condition, although, while under the influence of the operator, you may have been speaking more or less coherently. He may not, at first, be able to convey the

* See Part III. of this 'Guide' for instructions regarding psychical self-culture.

exact impression he wishes to produce. His 'suggestion' is not strong enough to set your involuntary nerves vibrating in just the way he desires; consequently his thought is not transferred to you in a manner which ensures faithful reproduction, and you should not be disappointed because of such imperfect results at the outset. If your mind is filled with the desire to succeed you will become too self-conscious, and thus destroy the very conditions upon which success depends. You need to lose sight of yourself and become calm and receptive, so that the message may be transmitted without hindrance.

It is very probable that you will be semi-conscious. The influence will stimulate your breathing, which will become rapid and irregular; your eyes will close and you will be unable to open them, and your hands and body may twitch and jerk as if you were being subjected to a series of galvanic shocks. The sitters should keep calm and sympathetic, but they should check any tendency on your part to undue noise, or violence, or absurdity. You will be aware of what you are doing, but unable to exercise the will to interfere or try to stop. You will most likely become conscious of an impulse to do something, or to 'blurt out' certain words. If you resist you will only make the task more difficult and hinder the attainment of the end you have in view. Your best course is to hold your judgment in suspense; do not be hostile or critical, but act out your impressions. Let the influence have its course—say what you feel you must say, and never mind about your own state of consciousness. You will be much more likely to pass into the unconsciousness trance (if you desire to do so) if you can say: 'Now, spirit friend, I trust myself to you and will yield my body and brain to your control, for you to do the best you can with and through me. I am willing to co-operate with you for the time being, and trust you to do your utmost for the good of others.' It is not necessary that you should be entirely unconscious, although you may think it is, to prove that another Intelligence is operating upon and through you. The evidence of that fact will be displayed in the nature of the message

and the unusual ability exhibited by you when under the stimulating influence of the operator.

There is only one way to develop as an inspirational speaker, and that is to try. Take every opportunity to *express* the thoughts that come to you. Speak, and fear not. Facility of expression will come. You cannot expect that ideas will be poured through you unless you let them flow. Study elocution, if you like; the way in which things are said is very important, seeing that it has great influence upon the hearers. Do not be troubled about who the inspirers are if you receive and express bright, true, rational, and helpful thoughts. If you utter the thoughts that come to you others will follow, but if you do not speak out your first thoughts you cannot expect that others will be given. You may know before you speak what is going to be said—even so, out with it, and let the sitters judge as to its value.

Most mediums find that their powers vary. Sometimes there seems to be a high degree of lucidity. The impressions which they receive are clear and strong; the ideas seem to flow through them freely, and the quality of the inspirations is exhilarating, and they feel strengthened and uplifted. But there are other days when they feel very much alone. The influence that effects them is weak; they get only hazy impressions, and there is a woeful lack of ideas. It seems as though the heavens were brass, or they themselves were unresponsive. They know not why, but whatever they can 'lay hold of,' so to speak, or whatever the spirit people can project into their sphere seems forced and incomplete. If you should have these experiences, turn your attention to something else. Do not 'harp on one string' too much. Physical exercise, change of scene, social company, and rest will soon restore your tone and renew your powers.

Should you be controlled to give public 'addresses' it will be best to withhold the name of the spirit who prompts or compels your utterances. Most intelligent spirits prefer to be known by their teachings rather than by the names they bore when on earth. If the addresses are eloquent and beautiful and the thoughts presented are good

and true, they will be acceptable on their own merits, and would not be one bit more valuable because they were inspired by some well-known historical person. Whereas, if you announce the name of the spirit, your hearers may consider that the address does not come up to the standard of the ability displayed by that individual before he died, and may discredit and discard the good that they might otherwise have found in your utterances.

If spirits voluntarily tender you their advice upon business matters, especially if they are friends or relatives whom you know and trust, and who, when here, were capable and experienced business people, you may well give heed to their counsel, even though you may not feel it wise to follow it; but do not make a practice of going to the spirits for information regarding matters of trade or finance. Why should you expect that wise and enlightened spirits should concern themselves about stocks and shares, commerce, or manufacturing? Probably they knew but little about those things when they were here, and have no need for such knowledge—over there; and it will be well for you to learn to live your own life, do your own business, and accept the ordinary duties and responsibilities which naturally devolve upon you. Let mediumship be a part of your education and development, not the *whole*.

A FEW WORDS OF WARNING.

Do not go into public promiscuous 'developing circles.' There is always a danger of 'cross magnetism' and disorderly manifestations in such gatherings. Owing to the mixed and inharmonious mental, moral, and psychical conditions which necessarily exist where a number of strangers and curiosity-seekers are attracted, you run the risk of being affected by undeveloped, unprincipled, frivolous, mercenary, self-assertive, or even immoral spirits, who being attracted to such assemblies seek to influence incautious and susceptible people who ignorantly render themselves liable to their control. The people 'on the other side' are human beings of all grades; they are not morally purified by passing through the death-change; and as we

are constantly sending the other state 'all sort and conditions of people,' you need not be at all surprised if you get into intercourse with the vain and foolish, the unreliable and pretentious, or the selfish and sinful, if you indiscriminately open the doors of your psychic self and give a free invitation to any spirit 'passer by.'

'You can waste your time, you can sit in circles, absorb all kinds of psychological influences, exhaust your own, and in many cases become so filled up with contending influences that you are in a state of psychological fever all the time, or so exhaust yourself that you will become as limp and useless as a rag. This is not the way to use the opportunities you have; and you should avoid the injudicious, promiscuous, and insane methods of development of many who are extremely anxious to develop you as medium, and who often bring discredit upon the subject of mediumship, and do no one the slightest practical good—not even themselves.*

We admit that the motives of those who conduct public promiscuous developing circles are good in most cases, but their methods are frequently 'injudicious'—to put it mildly.

Under ordinary circumstances, your own pure purpose and the spirits who are in sympathy with your exalted desires and intentions, are sufficient safeguards against the intrusion of low, mischievous or malicious spirits, but you should not venture into conditions which require the trained and disciplined will, and the influence of wise and powerful spirits to protect you against danger, until you have acquired the ability to render yourself positive to the psychic spheres, of undesirable people, both in and out of the form, and can voluntarily become negative and responsive to the true and trustworthy friends whom you know and love.

* 'Practical Occultism,' by J.J. Morse

CHAPTER V.

PRACTICAL ADVICE TO SENSITIVES.—CONTINUED.

The importance of mediumship can hardly be exaggerated, for, without it, there could be no evidence of the survival, identity, and progressive evolution of those who have shuffled off the 'muddy vesture of decay,' their physical bodies. —B. G. E.

The action of the controlling spirit is exactly analogous to what is known among you as mesmeric control. The spirit, whether in or out of the body, operates on another spirit in the same way. The controlling spirit affects the controlled by mesmeric power, and the shiverings are caused by the passage of the influence from the controlling to the controlled. When you know more of the action of all the forces which are operating round and in you, you will see that they are far simpler than you fancy; and that what we describe as will power is at the root of everything. —'Imperator,' *through* 'M. A. (Oxon.)'

THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE CONTROL.

It is not necessary that the spirit operator, geographically speaking, should be near you when you experience his power, although clairvoyants frequently see the spirits at work upon their subjects, making 'passes' over, and pouring out their influence upon them. This force, or 'aura,' is luminous; it varies in density and color according to the conditions, and is often thrown upon the sensitive from behind, the spirit mesmerist standing a few feet from, and a little above, the medium. The operators who do this preliminary work of entrancement and training are almost invariably those who are not very far removed

from the earth grade of psychical environment—spirits whose aura is both physical and psychical, and who are therefore able to relate themselves readily to, and affect, the psychic sphere of the neophyte, whose conditions are not responsive to the higher and more subtle vibrations of exalted spirits, and therefore cannot yet be influenced by their advanced thoughts.

As the work of unfoldment proceeds and your psychic nature is tuned to a higher key, the spirits who have been engaged in the preparatory work are able, after they have entranced you, to stand aside and hand you over to the more advanced and powerful controls, who ensphere your brain and act upon it. These enlightened 'teaching spirits' are seldom able to draw near to the earth; distance is no barrier to them, save only the distance of grade and quality and thought and spirit, or the difference of plane, or spiritual state. It follows from what we have said that you can contribute largely to the development of your own powers by the cultivation of harmony; by sincerity of purpose and purity of motive as well as by spiritual concentration and aspiration.

In the developing circle and upon the public platform, should you undertake public work, it will be of great service to you to have kindly and sympathetic sitters by your side. A cold, self-contained, absorbing, critical, or hostile sitter, or chairman, will frequently, although unintentionally, derange the conditions or prevent success by his uncongenial sphere and hard mental attitude, which inevitably affects his psychic emanations, and in tam detrimentally operates upon your psychic sphere and sensitive mind.

SOME NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS.

Precautions should be taken on all occasions against sudden movements on the part of the sitters. In those seances where physical phenomena occur it has frequently been noticed that the breaking of the circle has led to the cessation of the manifestations, and similar results ensue in seances where mental mediumship is being evolved. Abrupt and unexpected movements disturb the conditions,

and as these are centred in the medium all such disturbances react upon him. On the public platform, if you would have the best results, you should, if possible, be accompanied by a kindly and appreciative chairman, who should, on no account allow other persons to move about near to or pass behind you. Spiritualists talk freely to inquirers about the necessity for observing conditions, but frequently fail to regard them themselves. We have known trance speakers experience considerable pains as the result of the thoughtlessness of individuals who have passed close behind them just as the address was about to commence or during its delivery.

As an illustration of the effect upon sensitives of unexpected disturbances, we may mention a recent experience at the usual weekly seance of a medium who is under development. While she was being controlled the fire had burnt hollow, and the coals fell together, causing a sudden illumination. The medium was very much affected, but with an effort the spirit was able to maintain its hold upon her. The husband of the medium placed a newspaper in front of the fire to shut off the light, but put it a little too near, so that in a few minutes the paper caught fire and burst into a big blaze. This second disturbance so affected the medium that the control was broken; she sank back in her chair in a fainting condition, and it was some time before her consciousness was restored. The medium was laid upon a sofa and restoratives were applied. After some four or five minutes the spirit spoke through her a few words to the effect that the medium would recover soon, and that the spirit people were assisting to restore her. In about another five minutes the medium recovered consciousness, and felt little the worse except for some headache.

'CALLING UP' THE SPIRITS.

'I can call spirits from the vasty deep, but will they come?—aye, there's the rub.' Some very curious notions have got abroad in regard to spirits which it is necessary we should consider lest you should have adopted them, and the difficulty of your investigation and development be

increased in consequence. One of the principal and most curious of these misconceptions is the prevailing idea that mediums 'call up' or 'bring' the spirits—as though the people of the other world were at their 'beck and call,' and were compelled to do their best.

This is not only an absurd but a dangerous idea, as it may lead to a variety of unpleasant experiences. Occultists sometimes assure us that the 'adept' occupies a superior position to that of the medium, for, they affirm, he can control the spirits; he can 'summon' them and compel them to do his bidding instead of being controlled by them. Let us suppose that this claim is not a mere empty assertion, but is based upon knowledge, what kind of spirits will serve, and consent to be enslaved by, the man thus despotically imposes his will upon them? We have been assured by one who claimed to know from personal experience, that only very undeveloped beings can be reached and *employed* by the occultist, and he is even then in constant danger, for, should he lose his power to subjugate them, they will inevitably turn upon him and exact a terrible retribution. Their influence, even when he is successful, is likely to be demoralizing in its effect upon him, said our informant, and it is far better, therefore, to follow a healthy, rational, and spiritual course. You will be spared many trials and avoid many pitfalls if you recognize the *humanity* of the people of the other life. This implies that they have wills and ways of their own; that they can think, and plan, and perform along independent and original lines; and that no self-respecting spirit will consent to be a tool of, or an appendage to, a medium any more than the latter should submit to dictation from, or coercion by, the spirit who uses him,

When mediums talk about 'my spirits,' or 'my guides,' with an air of proprietorship, one is inclined to ask what manner of people their 'guides' are; just as the statement, 'My guides won't let me do so-and-so,' awakens one's scepticism or pity, or the fear that the sensitive, by overmuch confidence and credulity, has fallen into the hands of unscrupulous pretenders on the other side, or is self-deluded

by his own egotistic desires for communion with some exalted 'authority.'

The spirit people act of their own volition. They are prompted by similar motives to those which actuated them while they were here. They cannot be 'commandeered' and 'brought' by you, or by those who sit with you. They will visit you if they love you, or if they can help you; but do not try to *compel* them.

You may send out your thoughts and offer a kindly invitation, but if the spirits are otherwise engaged, if they have no desire to return, if they do not believe it possible, or lawful, or desirable to re-visit these 'glimpses of the moon,' they will not come. You may 'call spirits' from 'vasty deeps' or heavenly plains, but depend upon it they will exercise their own judgment whether they will respond; and you will need to be on your guard, doubly on your guard, if you indiscriminately open your psychic nature to visitants from the other side in promiscuous conditions, lest some impersonating practical joker, or even worse, should seize the opportunity to amuse himself and strut in borrowed plumes at your expense.

' GUIDES.'

Another erroneous idea needs to be considered. Somehow, we cannot quite discover when or how it originated, a notion who have been 'appointed' to act as his 'guides,' and that these spirits are in constant attendance, keeping watch and ward over him. Another version of this idea is presented by those who claim that we are each one attended by good *and* evil spirits who continually contend for mastery, and make us the battle-ground of their conflict, tempting us with every art and wile of evil, and alluring us with every power and stimulus of love to our injury or our happiness, and that, therefore, as we by our actions or desires give countenance or favor, leaning this way or that, one or the other triumphs in this conflict. Regarded as a poetic impersonation of the internal struggle which transpires in our consciousness, there is something suggestive in this pretty way of representing the fact that we

are not left entirely unaided to fight the battle of the spirit, and that in our hour of need, when we truly desire them, there are loving hearts and willing helpers on the other side who will respond to the soul's cry for help. But when it is literalized and localized, and the figure of speech is mistaken for fact; when certain spirits are supposed to be *appointed* to the life-long task of being our second selves on the spiritual plane and following us like spiritual Paul Pry's, then the poetry loses its prettiness, and the misconstrued 'figure' becomes a falsehood.

Because in specific cases and for a special work certain spirits may have co-operated, and selected a sensitive through whose agency they have endeavored to carry out their plans, and teach definite truths, or produce striking phenomena, that fact does not justify the supposition that *every* person who is mediumistic is chosen by a 'band of guides' who have no other occupation in life but to be in constant attendance upon him, as some people imagine; and not until you have received clear demonstrations of the fact should you admit, even to yourself, that you have 'guides' who desirable to use you for a particular end.

So many people with a 'mission,' so many modern 'Messiahs' have sprung up, that you should be chary of giving credence to statements that you are to become a 'great medium,' that you will have a 'remarkable career,' that through you a 'new reformation' will be effected, etc., and so forth. Be content to take short views and keep a level head. Hold your judgment in suspense if necessary; modestly go your way and do the work of the hour, for, as the old adage has it, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating,' and the proof of the accuracy of these and similar assertions will be (can only be) ascertained by the course of events; and it behooves you to walk circumspectly and maintain a rational attitude, remembering that 'Rome was not built in a day.'

'Heaven is not reached at a single bound;
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.'

IMPERSONATING MEDIUMSHIP

It is, however, very probable that some spirit will control you who wishes to communicate with a friend, and for that purpose he may find it necessary to cause you to impersonate himself. It seems to be a general law governing these manifestations, that when a spirit relates himself to the psychic conditions of the earth and takes control of a sensitive for the first time, he is compelled to re-enact his dying experiences, and mediums present a pantomimic reproduction of the causes of death and the accompanying symptoms which vividly recall to the observers the last sad and solemn incidents connected with the 'passing' of their dear ones. Not infrequently the medium reproduces in a most characteristic way, movements, modes of breathing or coughing, gestures, ejaculations, and even utters the few 'last words' that were breathed by the dying one. You may (and most probably will) be compelled to do this sort of thing. You may be partially, or even acutely, conscious of what you are doing or saying, and may feel afraid to yield to the impulse, or shrink from conforming to the desire that urges you on to speak—perhaps to cry, to pour out endearing words, to say or do things the significance of which you do not comprehend. Our advice under such circumstances can only be this: Keep as calm and as collected as you can; trust to the sincerity of the spirit and the good sense of the sitters, and throw off your fear; yield obedience to the control; neither help nor hinder; just do and say what you feel you *have* to do or say, and leave the results. You cannot, or should not, be held responsible for failure by the sitters, if there is no recognition; and by responding and giving free course to the 'suggestion,' which reaches you as an impulse or mental impression, greater success will follow, and the development you seek will be promoted. If, however, you find that the impersonations are untrue, and the sitters are unable to interpret or recognize what you do or say after you have followed out your impressions a number of times, then resist them with all your strength of will and require from the spirit the proof of his identity in some other way.

Spirits often desire to communicate some special information or confess some wrong, and are relieved by successfully performing the task. In such cases, says Hudson Tattle, they take on the conditions of the medium, and by the association, the last experiences of their earth life. 'It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for a spirit passing from earth life by a violent and painful death not to have the sensations of its last earthly experience revived in itself and reflected upon the medium when it thus comes in direct relation with the earth sphere. This is, however, quite distinct from that form of impersonation in which the medium is caused to imitate the death scene as a test of identity. One is under the direct control of the spirit, and in the other case the spirit is controlled by the preceding conditions.' Addressing a class of students in San Francisco, Mr. J. J. Morse, in the trance condition, said: 'This form of mediumship (impersonation) is the most valuable that the world can possibly have today.' ...'When by the aid of the impersonating medium (the inquirer) is enabled to see his beloved friends, and they make themselves actual and visible in the personality of the medium, plain to consciousness and understanding, and tell him specifically points and facts of identity and experience that were utterly beyond the power of any other intelligence to tell, then he has something borne in upon him through the senses of sight, of hearing and understanding that appeals to him,...therefore the personating medium is the most valuable medium you can present to inquirers.'*

In illustration of the naturalness and convincing character of this phase of mediumship, we quote some of the experiences narrated by Mr. A. Smedley, in his 'Reminiscences.' The medium, Mrs. Hitchcock, was a friend of ours, a thoroughly sincere and trustworthy, high-principled woman. Mr. Smedley attended one of her seances, and was very much surprised at what took place. On informing his wife of what had occurred, she expressed a desire to invite Mrs. Hitchcock to hold a seance in their own home. The invitation was given, and it was accepted by

* 'Practical Occultism'

the medium, who was at that time a perfect stranger to both Mr. and Mrs. Smedley, who also invited a number of their friends. The meeting was opened with a hymn and prayer. After a second hymn had been sung, Mrs. Hitchcock passed under influence, and for a short time seemed dazed and unable to speak. Mr. Smedley says: 'She then passed under the control of an intelligent being, opened her eyes, and manifested the greatest amazement.'

'After looking round the room very deliberately at various objects, then at one person after another, and fixing her eyes on my wife, she ran across the room, and throwing her arms around her neck, kissed her most affectionately, addressing her as "My dear sister."

'After speaking with her in endearing terms she came across the room to me, and placing her right hand on my shoulder, said: "Well my good brother." (This was exactly as a deceased sister of my wife's had been in the habit of doing.) "How unspeakably glad I am for such a privilege as this! When we used to sit on the hearth at night, conversing on various topics that used to interest us so much, we little expected we should ever have such a privilege. You know we used to sit up at night discussing theological questions till the embers in the grate died out, and sometimes a chiding voice from upstairs called out: 'Alfred, Alfred, do come to bed. Do you know what time it is? You know Charlotte is not fit to sit up so late.'" This was precisely what had taken place, the exact words being used.

'She referred to a number of incidents known only to her and ourselves. She asked for an album in which she had written the dedication, pointing this out, and also various pieces of poetry she had written in it.

'She asked for a hymn book and desired us to sing what had been her favorite hymn, which at my request she instantly found. She next asked for a Bible, and asked me to read her favorite psalm. I requested her to find it, although I knew well which it was. She turned to it instantly, and I read: "The Lord is my shepherd," etc.

'When the psalm was finished, the medium stood transfigured before us; her countenance was radiant, and her

eyes bright with a heavenly light. Turning to my wife, she said, "Sister dear, by inviting strangers to your house tonight you have entertained angels unawares!"

'After the meeting the medium remarked: "When under control I was strongly influenced to look round for a picture, but could not find it. I do not know what it meant, but the control was anxious to find a picture."

'My wife replied: "My sister painted a picture of the Savior bearing His cross, many years ago, and it now hangs in our dining-room."

'The above incidents, combined with her mannerisms, and bearing in mind that the medium was an entire stranger to us, and uneducated, were sufficient evidence of the presence and influence of her deceased sister to cause my wife to explain, "Of a truth, that was my sister Charlotte. "'

The foregoing is an interesting glimpse of the kind of mediumship which carries conviction of the 'real presence' of the so-called dead, and your aim should be to get into communication with the intelligent operator at the other end of the line, and elicit from him evidences of his identity and purpose. Table movements, raps, materializations, writings, messages, or controls, are of comparatively little value unless by their agency you can secure proofs of the personal identity and survival after death of your departed friends, or some indication of a rational purpose on the part of the operator.

PSYCHOMETRY AND CLAIRVOYANCE.

If you have good vital magnetism and are sufficiently sensitive, spirits may put you into the unconscious—or at least into the semi-conscious—trance state, and cause you to become clairvoyant or psychometrical while under their control. They may, through you, diagnose the diseases of and cause you to lay hands upon, and heal, the sick. You may assist them in their efforts by maintaining your own health and observing the conditions which they recommend, and which experience shows are conducive to success. While you co-operate with them thus to secure the

fullest possible unfoldment of your psychic nature, the reactive benefits which will accrue to yourself as the result of their efforts will be very marked, especially so if you assist them by making experiments for *normal* self-cultivation, in which, you may rest assured, you will not be left unaided, and will begin to find that you can consciously do some of the things which were formerly only possible when you were under control. The spirits will help in your experiments if they are wise, because such self-culture on your part will promote the success of the work. If you take one step on the road they will be able to help you to take the second much more easily than they could make you take the first if you were indifferent.

It is necessary to remember that mental mediumship depends upon the degree of susceptibility and responsiveness, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the medium to the impressions, suggestions, pictures, thoughts, sensations, and impulses, which may reach and affect him from various sources—from *incarnate* or *excarinate* Intelligences. This fact makes it difficult to classify the experiences of the recipient; and as all psychic sensations seem to be merged in the one grand sense—*perception*—it is hard to differentiate them and say just what is psychometry, clairvoyance, clairaudience, impression, mental picture, thought-transference, intuition, or sympathetic response to the feelings and ideas of others in, or out, of the body. But it will be unwise for you to be too analytical, especially in your initial experiences. The first requisite is to develop your sensibility to the psychic conditions, auras, ethers, vibrations; classification may be attempted afterwards; but if you pause to analyze every sensation or impulse to determine if it is your own or someone else's, you will not make much progress.

Suppose you wish to become a psychometrist and to interpret the soul-sensations which you experience; you can easily make some interesting experiments if you ask your friends to lend you something belonging to, or a letter written by, a person you do not know. If a number of articles are offered you, do not let them be touched by others, and keep them separate. Take one article at a time

to experiment with; hold it in your hand or press it to your forehead, and try to get some idea of the sort of person who owns it; describe what you think he is like; explain any sensations that come to you which you think may indicate his state of mind, bodily condition, general character, spiritual surroundings, past experiences, present situation, feelings, and prospects. You will need to be spontaneous; do not wait to receive a very *decided* impression. 'First thoughts are best,' as a rule, in experiments of this nature; therefore speak out at once and describe your feelings fearlessly, and run the risk of being mistaken.

We are as yet but groping on the borders of the wonderful spirit-realm, seeking the clue that will lead us to the true interpretation of the subtile interior cognitions by which sensitives perceive spiritual states and things; hence, if you get a 'mental picture,' or seem to see an appearance, whether it is subjective or objective—an image, picture, thought-form, or a spirit—whatever it may be, it will help you if you describe what you see, or *think* you see, as fully and as clearly as possible. But if you are too timid to speak and are afraid to risk a rebuff, neither you nor others will be benefited; remember, 'Nothing venture, nothing win.'

To assist in focussing your attention and concentrating your psychic power for the cultivation of clairvoyance, you should take a clear glass tumbler, fill it with clean water and place it upon a stand or table over which a plain dark cloth has been spread, in such a position that it will not reflect any of the surrounding objects. It may be advisable to put up a screen (a folding draught-board will answer admirably if draped with black), so as to get the glass in the shadow and protect it from the direct rays of light. Then seat yourself so that you can gaze easily upon the glass or down into the water. Now look steadily at it—not so as to strain your eyes, but with sufficient intentness to fix your attention, and mentally ask the spirits to show you something or to reveal themselves. About a quarter of an hour will at first be sufficient for this experiment, and the time may be lengthened as you become accustomed

to the effects of the effort. If, after a dozen sittings, you do not perceive figures, symbols, faces, or writings *apparently in* the water, it will be as well to discontinue; but if you are rewarded with some degree of success you will no doubt feel inclined to persevere. Some investigators sit alone in a semi-darkened room, and with closed eyes, mentally desiring that their spirit friends will show themselves. One lady we knew did this, and was instructed to sit with her back to the light, to cover her head with silk, and *wait*. She was advised to either close her eyes or (if she could not keep her mind passive without feeling inclined to go to sleep) to gaze into a glass of water. She sat for a number of times, and began to despair of success, but finally felt the power of spirit people and became a good 'clear-seer.'

As so much will depend upon your ability to give graphic word-pictures of what you see, that others may recognize the spirits you describe to them, we should advise you to train yourself in that direction. When you are traveling, for instance, you should observe closely the appearance and personal characteristics of your fellow travelers, and then think out how you would describe them to others so as to convey mental pictures which would lead to their recognition. Any little peculiarity of appearance, dress, gesture, or speech should be especially noticed. Similar exercises in regard to places would also be serviceable in cultivating the powers of observation and clear description which are so necessary for success in giving psychometric and clairvoyant delineations, especially so in public meetings.

CLAIRAUDIENCE.

The faculty of clairaudience is frequently developed with that of clairvoyance. Some clairaudient persons distinctly hear the voices of spirits as though they were external, while others hear in a more interior fashion, as though the 'still small voice,' not of conscience, but of a spirit visitant, was heard by the mind. Some 'voices' sound as if they were muffled; or as if they came from a long distance or through an elongated tube. In other cases

they sound sharp and clear, but the words are spoken so rapidly that they can hardly be distinguished; or the utterances may be slow and measured, as though each word had to be *forced* out.

Andrew Jackson Davis says: 'When spirits speak to us they address our interior and spiritual sense of hearing, and when we behold spirits we exercise the internal principle of perception or seeing. It not infrequently occurs that an individual thinks his outward senses addressed when, like Saul, he hears a voice pronouncing his name, apparently, from the depths of the air; and when spirits have been seen, the beholder is apt to believe that the vision was confined or addressed to the outward sense of seeing, so distinct and self-evident is a real manifestation of spiritual presence.... To the healthy and discriminating mind there is no confounding of a substantial vision of supermundane personages and scenery with the dreamy hallucinations of the disturbed intellect. 'When the interior senses of the mind distinctly see a spirit, or hear its serene, rich, friendly tones, it is impossible for the thus favored individual to be mistaken. If, however, as it sometimes happens, we get only an *imperfect glimpse* of some guardian spirit who seeks our recognition and welfare—and if we cannot be absolutely certain and honest in our convictions of that angel presence, and have not a perfect assurance that the vision was no illusion—then it is wisdom to keep our understandings open to the reception of more substantial evidence, to the end that the mind may not be conducted into regions of uncertain hypothesis and imagination.' *

Spiritual association arouses and quickens dormant sensitiveness, and, indeed, some mediums are only clairaudient while the spirit people assist or control them. 'It is as though they are lifted out from their ordinary condition while under spirit influence, and grow keen in their ability to catch and convey the utterances of the spirits.

The great requisites for the development of this phase of mediumship are *attention*, concentration, desire, listening,

* A. J. Davis. *Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse*

and response. The inward hearing can be cultivated by training one's self to be on the alert to catch the echoes from the spheres. We are frequently 'absent-minded' and do not realize what is being said around us. We are too often inattentive to the sights and sounds as we go through life, even upon the ordinary plane, and there need be no wonder that we are blind and deaf to our spirit surroundings.

HEALING MEDIUMSHIP.

If you have an idea that you possess healing power you can easily experiment upon your suffering friends or acquaintances. If you are mediumistic, and spirits desire to develop you for this work, you will readily feel that you are impressed what to do. Your hands will be guided to the proper position, and you will spontaneously make the requisite passes. Magnetic healing has really nothing to do with massage, the induction of sleep, or with any form of hypnotism or mesmerism. The healing medium should centre his thought and interest solely and wholly with the object of effecting a cure. You will need to be sympathetic, but hopeful. Do not let your patient think about his ailments, but arouse his thought and engage his attention upon some outside subject. Make him comfortable, and lead him to expect good results; to do this you must be affirmative and confident. Unless you feel impressed, or are controlled, to do otherwise, sit in front and take hold of the hands of the sufferer for a time, then make gentle, short, downward passes over the part affected, and conclude with long, sweeping passes from head to foot without contact. For local affections, point your hands at or just touch the spot with your finger tips, or make direct horizontal or slightly downward movements, as if you were throwing something at him. A warm, comfortable room is favorable to magnetizing, and a genial mental atmosphere, created by cheerful and kindly minds in the operator and persons present, will contribute largely to the success of the treatment. You will do well to act upon your impressions and make the passes in whatever way you feel impelled or compelled. If you operate under

spirit guidance you will be 'impressed' more or less clearly how to proceed in each case. In all probability you will sympathetically 'take on,' and be affected by, the symptoms of the disease from which the patient suffers, and in that way be able to form an accurate diagnosis of the case; but you must guard against exhaustion, and should always 'throw off' from yourself the influence that you may have received, and wash your hands carefully after each treatment. Mr. James Coates, in his useful work on 'Human Magnetism,' says: 'In magnetic healing—as distinguished from cures in which "suggestion" is the main factor—the "laying-on of hands" is a special feature of the treatment.... The psychopathist lays on hands because he believes that beyond the conditions of health-magnetism furnished by himself he is a conduit through whom a spirit or a "band of spirits" pour healing virtues. I have no doubt that the attitude of mind in all these methods of cure, based upon sincere conviction, is a powerful healing agent.'

WRITING MEDIUMSHIP.

Your hands may be caused to shake and move about as if you desired to write. You may be quite conscious, or only semi-conscious, but you will feel you are unable to prevent the movements. In such a case the sitters should provide paper and pencils and await results. They should speak to the control and request him to work quietly, and in all probability the rapid preliminary scrawls will soon give place to slower and more legible writing.

Many persons have developed as 'automatic writers,' who have never sat in a circle and without being entranced. We should advise you, if you decide to sit alone and make experiments in this direction, to avoid excitement, expectancy and preconceptions. Proceed as though you were speaking to a visible friend, and request that someone will move your hand to write. Provide yourself with a writing pad or several sheets of paper, and, while holding a pencil in readiness, withdraw your thoughts from your hand and arm and assume a passive condition. If you are strongly mediumistic, words and sentences may be written, but you need hardly expect such results at first.

Mr. W. T. Stead says: 'I hold my pen in the ordinary way, but when the writing is beginning I do not rest my wrist or arm upon the paper, so as to avoid the friction and to give the influence, whatever it may be, more complete control of the pen. At first the pen is apt to wander into mere scrawling, but after a time it writes legibly. Unlike many automatic writers who write as well blindfolded as when they read what they write as they are writing it, I can never write so well as when I see the words as they come. There is danger in this, which is most clearly illustrated when my hand writes verse—especially rhymed verse—for the last word in each line suggests to my conscious mind a possible rhyme for the ending of the following line; this rouses up my mind, my own ideas get mixed with those of the communicating Intelligence, and confusion is the result.'

Inspirational or 'impressional' writing is frequently mistaken for that which is more purely passive or 'automatic.' The sensitive experiences a strong impulse to write, but does not receive any clear or consecutive train of thought. He sets down one word, and then others follow as fast as he can indite them, but he must begin to write before the complete sentence is given to him. In other cases the thoughts flow into his consciousness faster than his pen can record them; but in the truly 'automatic' form of communication the mind of the sensitive is not consciously affected. He can read and think about other and entirely different subjects, and need take no more interest in the work than he would if his hand did not belong to him, or than if a spirit laid hold of and guided the pencil. Some mediums who write automatically have to be mentally quiet; they find that if the mind is preoccupied the hand will not write, although, even in such cases, it frequently happens that the amanuensis is ignorant of the communication until he reads it afterwards.

Mr. J. A. White, an intelligent trance and clairvoyant medium, says: 'There is a great tendency, particularly in cases of automatic writing, to do too much of it. No sooner do some people find that the pencil will move than they spend all their spare time in this fascinating pursuit,

which, in their undeveloped state, I believe to be a dangerous and unwise practice. They are apt to exclaim, when any question arises during the day: "Let us see what the spirits have to say." This, carried to extremes leads to one thing, and one thing only—obsession. I believe in fixing a time, and, unless in exceptional cases, refusing to sit at any other. Of course I am speaking of mediumship while it is in the budding stage. A developed medium can judge for himself, and knows from experience how far to go. It is a favorite trick of a certain class of spirits when they find they have a sensitive who can "feel" them, to give them that pricking sensation in the arm which denotes their presence. "So-and-so want to write," and away rushes the medium for the pencil, and sits down. This I do not believe in. I have seen far more harm than good come from it. The proper way to develop, in my opinion, is to sit at home in a small, carefully-selected circle, two or three times a week, at stated hours, and with a *competent conductor* who knows what he is doing.'

A French writer in 'Les Grands Horizons de la Vie' emphasizes the same point: He says: "We urge beginners in their own interest not to take up the pencil (*i.e.*, for automatic writing) or to sit at a table (for communications) at any free moment, without rhyme or reason, for disorder in experiment is one of the first and most serious dangers to be avoided. An absolutely strict rule should be made not to attempt the effort more than once every other day.'

The communications that are received by the various forms of passive, impressional, automatic, and inspirational writing must not be regarded as valuable merely because of the conditions under which they were obtained, nor because of their spirit origin, real or supposed.

'Under all circumstances receive with the utmost reserve and caution long-winded communications from notable characters who claim to be "Napoleon Bonaparte," "Lord Bacon," "Socrates," or other great personages; for, in the majority of cases, the value of the communication is exactly the reverse of the importance of the name

attached.' * This applies to automatic writings quite as much as to spoken messages. Judge the statements made by the ordinary standards, apart altogether from their claimed exalted origin; if rational, beautiful, and spiritually helpful and enlightening, they are worth having on *their own merits*; but if they are unreasonable, wild and dogmatic, or pretentious and flattering, they should be discarded; and, unless they change their character after repeated experiments, your attention should be turned in some other direction.

PLANCHETTE AND OUIJA BOARDS.

To assist in the development of latent capabilities for writing mediumship, various mechanical devices have been constructed, the most popular of these being the Planchette, a heart-shaped little board which has two legs, with wheels at the end, attached to the broader part. Near the pointed end is a hole, into which a piece of pencil is inserted. A large sheet of paper having been spread upon the table, the sitter or sitters (two people often use it) lay their hands, or the tips of their fingers, lightly upon the upper surface and await results. If sitters are sufficiently mediumistic the instrument will begin to move, slowly at first, but faster and more decidedly later, and probably, after some preliminary strokes, circles, etc., it will settle down as if guided by an unseen hand and begin to write. Sitters need to be patient. They may have to wait some time—even to try, try, try again. If it will not move for one person it will probably do so for another. When it *does* move do not be too hasty in asking questions—do not expect to get *tests* right away. Some people feel that the Planchette moves of itself, so to speak, as if it were alive; with others the impulse to movement seems to be given as from their arms. Sitters occasionally do not know what has been written until the Planchette is removed and the writing deciphered; others get the thought of what is about to be written simultaneously with the movements. Scarcely two mediums have exactly the same experiences, therefore

* 'Practical Occultism,' by J. J. Morse.

experiment, wait, persevere, until you get into clear communication with Intelligences who have gained pretty full control of the instrument, and are able to give you satisfactory messages. The Planchette may be used as a 'Ouija' by laying down a sheet of paper upon which the letters of the alphabet have been written or printed in a fairly large semicircle, the words 'yes' or 'no' being written at either end, and figures from 1 to 9 written straight across a little lower down. Now remove the pencil and insert a small moderately sharpened stick as a pointer and the Planchette may run about, point to letters or number, answer your questions by standing at 'yes' or 'no,' or messages may be spelt out as you watch its movements.

These mechanical contrivances may be helpful to some people under certain conditions, but as a rule, anyone who has the gift of writing mediumship will do equally as well, and in time far better, if he will put a blank sheet of paper before him, hold a pencil in his hand, and *wait*—either for 'automatic,' or impressional writing. Any medium, in whose presence tables move or raps occur, will be most likely to succeed with the above-named 'boards.' No one can 'guarantee' that they will move with everyone who experiments with them, or promise that intelligent results will be immediately secured.

DRAWING MEDIUMSHIP.

Many people who have sought development for passive writing have found that their hands have moved in a seemingly erratic fashion, and curious drawings have resulted. Some of these have been beautiful, some symbolical, some few were quite artistic; but many, alas! were more curious than sensible or beautiful. Paintings and crayon drawings have also been produced in this 'passive' (or automatic) style by people who have never had any training in either drawing or painting; but although the coloring has sometimes been remarkable, even fine, we have seldom seen any that commended themselves on the score of their value as artistic productions. Here, as elsewhere, we can only judge by the results, and if mediums were to study the

rudiments of art they would be more easily acted upon by spirit artists to produce good work.

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC: WHICH?

If you find that you have good powers as a medium and your development proceeds satisfactorily, you will soon meet with numbers of people who will be glad to sit with you, and should you be able to obtain for them messages from their spirit friends or give them tests, advice, or guidance, the probability is that you will have more applications for admission to your circle than you can possibly grant. If you develop as a speaker and clairvoyant you will most probably be urged 'from the other side' to devote yourself to the cause and become a public medium, and thus the question will be forced upon you (in the first case by the demands made upon your time and strength, and in the second by the impelling power of the spirits) whether you shall become a public—or 'professional'—medium. It is a matter in respect to which each one should realize his own responsibility and be 'fully persuaded in his own mind' as to where his duty lies, and not be carried away by injudicious or enthusiastic friends, or over-persuaded by zealous spirits. In any case, we would warn you to avoid hasty action. The life of a public 'test' medium is by no means an easy one, and only those who have attained a fairly high degree of lucidity and responsiveness, together with strength of will sufficient to protect themselves against adverse surroundings, are fit to venture out upon the stormy sea, and successfully contend against the psychic influences which will of necessity assail them.

All mediums are more or less in danger of being dominated by their sitters unless they are careful to hold themselves well in hand and maintain a positive attitude towards those who visit them, and therefore it is necessary that you should be watchful and avoid becoming too negative. We have seen sensitives struggling to give test descriptions (both clairvoyantly and psychometrically) who depended too much upon the sympathy of their visitors, or the harmonious conditions of their audience. You must

study and practice until you can resist the adverse influences of your sitters and their surroundings; and, while receptive and responsive to the influences and impressions from the spirits, becomes impervious to the inharmony, suspicion, sneer and sarcasm of the sitters if you are strong, affirmative, determined, you may succeed; but if you are negative to such conditions you may not only fail, but you may respond to the unspoken 'suggestions' from the sitters, and confirm them in their skepticism.

As a public medium you will need much patience, tact, and kindness. If you are in love with your ministrations you can endure and overcome many of the difficulties and disagreeable trials which are inseparable from public service to 'all sorts and conditions of people,' but an impatient medium need not anticipate much success. Instead of becoming annoyed, dispirited, or angry because you are unable to satisfy or convince those to whom you minister, the best course is to calmly go on and give just what you get. Do not be afraid of making a mistake, and never be ashamed to admit an error. Do not try to evade such an admission or seek to make your description 'fit,' or the message you have given apply, by 'hedging,' but, if you can possibly do so, obtain further particulars until you secure recognition.

To all who aspire to be public mediums or platform speakers we can do no better than quote the words of Professor Loveland: 'Acting as medium is not always reposing on a bed of roses. The roses may be there; so also are the thorns. While humanity is as it is there will be the bitter with the sweet. Our vocation as mediums is to put all the sweet we can into the lives which come into contact with ours; that is the way to change to sweetness the bitter in our own.'

CHAPTER VI.

OBSESSIONS: ITS CAUSES AND CURE.

There must be some point of contact, of sympathetic vibration or harmony of spirit, otherwise there cannot be any permanent relation or association between a spirit and a sensitive. —B. G. E.

Undeveloped spirits will not be attracted to their opposites. Anyone who thinks he is obsessed should pay attention to himself first. If his own spirit is in the way of righteousness he need have no fear....

The medium who is unbiased in his own mind cannot be led away from right-doing by the influence of mortals or spirits. —HUDSON TUTTLE.

We have no desire to dwell unduly upon this branch of our subject, but is it as necessary to point out the pitfalls in the way of the young medium as it is to guide him into the pleasant paths.

We have received numerous inquiries from beginners who have had strange and bewildering experiences, and who, misunderstanding the nature of their feelings, have concluded that they are obsessed. It is quite evident, therefore, on the principle that 'prevention is better than cure,' and that 'to be forewarned is to be forearmed,' that we must emphasize the various explanations and warnings that we have already given in these pages and in Part I. 'Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise' is certainly not true in regard to psychic or spirit relationships. Neither is innocence a safeguard against error and folly. Innocent, but ignorant, people are all the time foolishly rushing in 'where angels fear to tread' and incurring risks

which, but for their innate simplicity and goodness, might lead to disaster. Even goodness and purity, however, are not always proof against the attacks of the unscrupulous and crafty. Sincerity of intention does not protect the careless or ignorant from the consequences of their mistakes and neglect of proper precautions.

'UNDUE INFLUENCE.'

That one mind can obtain undue influence over another is now generally admitted, and we need not go to the spirit world for instances of such domination—they are common enough in this world if we have eyes to see. The very 'copy-book' maxims of our youth indicate the fact—'Evil communications corrupt good morals'; 'A man is known by the company he keeps,' etc. The successful salesman or commercial traveler frequently exercises this hypnotic influence quite unconsciously and legitimately; while the 'confidence trick' man, who fleeces his unwary victim, illegitimately employs the same power. They both soothe and surprise their subjects, gaining their consent before they can realize the situation, and, being aroused, become positive enough to exercise their will power in opposition. Many a marriage has been solemnized in which one of the contracting parties was fascinated, psychologized, or hypnotized by the dominating influence which was unduly exerted by the other, and much misery might be avoided if young people of both sexes were taught the probability of such experiences and how to guard against being misled.

IS IT DANGEROUS, TO DEVELOP MEDIUMSHIP?

The student will sooner or later meet with the objection that it is 'dangerous to seek to develop mediumship.' That there are 'personating, tricky, disorderly and evil spirits'; and, further, 'as it is difficult to decide when those who communicate are honorable and trustworthy, it is best to leave the whole subject alone.' To this we reply, the same objection may be raised against intercourse with people on this side. Is it not often difficult to decide who among one's acquaintances are honorable and trustworthy? go

much so, in fact, that in certain moods one is almost tempted to emulate Diogenes, and set out to hunt for an honest man! But we have to take people as they are, and try to understand them, and then we realize that most of them are good, well-meaning, and sincere. Everyone has his limitations, and 'to err is human'; but when we 'try spirits' (embodied), we generally find that they are not as black as their enemies paint them, nor as white as their admirers depict them. In other words, they are *human* beings. If we deal with spirit people in the same natural and sensible way, and treat them as we do the people we meet with here, we learn that though some of them are thoughtless, mischievous, and, at times, pretentious, the majority of those who manifest their presence differ very little from the people who live around us on this side.

THE LAW OF ATTRACTION.

Spirits are attracted to those persons with whom they can establish sympathetic relations upon either the physical, affectional, or psychical planes. Although animated by the best intentions, it is possible for them to injuriously affect those whom they love. In their extreme anxiety to make their presence known, and to console their loved ones, they may attach themselves too closely to those who are susceptible to their influence, and cause the sensitives to experience sensations which may be mistakenly regarded as injurious.

SPIRITS OFTEN UNJUSTLY BLAMED.

It does not follow that because a sensitive shakes and feel peculiar sensations and impulses, that these phenomena are of necessity due to the operations of excarnate intelligences. Very much that is attributed to the influence of obsessing spirits may be explained upon purely physiological grounds.

Many people do not understand, and are not prepared for, the natural cravings and demands which inevitably arise within them, and they suffer great distress of mind in consequence of their ignorance regarding their own personality.

Sensitives are apt to regard these inclinations and tendencies as due to the influence of the devil; or, if they have learnt a little of mediumship, they find a scapegoat in 'obsessing spirits,' instead of studying human physiology. Furthermore, in the early stages of their development mediums generally experience strange feelings and much mental and nervous excitement. The unusual activity and the curious sensations that are induced by the influence of the spirits upon them, together with the element of uncertainty, not unmixed with fear, consequent upon the newness of the stirrings and impulses that are aroused in them, tend to unsettle the sensitives and cause them to imagine that the spirits wish them to do or say things which are in reality due to their own disturbed conditions, and it is necessary that they should guard themselves against becoming too much engrossed or too enthusiastic, lest they should be carried away by their own desires.

It is frequently asserted by non-Spiritualists that mediumship leads to insanity, but experience shows that it more often saves people from the lunatic asylum by explaining the nature and causes of their perplexing sensations and teaching them how to acquire self-control.

True mediumship does not consist in abject passivity and self-surrender to a dominating mind, but it involves the cultivation of the spiritual faculties and the exaltation of the consciousness until the sensitive acquires the positive power to receive or reject impressions or influences that may impinge upon his psychic nature.

The strong yearnings experienced by the bereaved who sigh

'For the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still,'

are frequently selfish and tend to bold the departed to the earth-conditions, thus setting up vibrations which may prove painful alike to the spirit and the mourner.

CULTURE BRINGS PAIN AS WELL AS PLEASURE.

The opening of the avenues of spiritual perception and the quickening of the responsiveness of his inner self to

psychic conditions, introduce the sensitive into a new realm of impulses, intuitions and experiences. The influences of places and people on this side, as well as on the other, impinge upon him and he grows conscious of sights, sounds, and sensations which he can neither name, account for, nor interpret. Like an Aeolian harp, that is stirred by passing vibrations, he may be responsive to the breath of love, or the gust of hate, the breeze of pure desire or the storm of passion. These subtle 'sensings,' and their registration in his psychic consciousness, sometimes disturb, perplex, and annoy him, and in the rough and ready way of finding an easy solution for difficult problems, he attributes them to evil spirits, but does not explain them nor truly interpret their significance.

The training of the eye and ear to distinguish the shades of color and the nice gradations in sound, and the cultivation of the artistic power of attention to, and appreciation of, harmony, necessarily lay the individual open to the liability of being painfully affected by discords and inharmonies. The sensitive may expect to have to pay the same penalty for his development until he learns how to become master of his powers and inhibit all discords; to shut off, and out, those 'suggestions' and influences which rasp and injure him, while he invites those which are congenial and spiritually beneficial.

CAST OUT ALL FEAR-THOUGHTS.

Fear hath torments, and the dread of the unknown is a sign of weakness born of ignorance. When we hold aloft the lamp of knowledge we fearlessly tread the path. Spectres grim and devils dark disappear when we can see the realities of the spirit. Fear has caused many poor souls to conjure up phantoms with which they have tortured themselves, cringing in terror where they should have been bold and confident. Traditional theology with its Satan and his emissaries has been responsible for a great deal of the insanity and for many of the hysterical hallucinations under which so many sufferers have broken down; and there is danger, unless they guard themselves against the

error, that unthinking and irrational people who dabble with Spiritualism will transfer their fear of the Devil to fear of obsessing spirits.

To one lady who had an idea that a living person had exerted an evil influence over her, but who subsequently discovered that she was mistaken, and then attributed her feelings to an incarnate individual, we felt constrained to point out that, while it was possible that a spirit was influencing her, she had, by her ignorance and her fears, attached too much importance to the sensations she experienced, and had imagined that they were far worse and more uncommon than they really were. She had, in fact, given a dominating suggestion to herself, and, while anxious for relief, she confessed by her fears what she denied with her words. She thus perpetuated the very conditions she deplored, and intensified her own sufferings. Victims of auto-suggestion are seldom in the condition of body or mind to understand their feelings, or to rise superior to the conditions that they have induced. If they could only see their folly, and realize how weak of will and infirm in purpose and principle they have been, they would speedily overcome their infatuation. But they think about and dilate upon their trouble, their feelings, their danger, and crave the sympathy of their friends, until 'trifles light as air' assume great importance, and purely natural subjective states are regarded as evidences of the malignant purpose of an unseen enemy.

NOT EVIL BECAUSE IMPERFECT.

We have elsewhere pointed out that many difficulties have to be surmounted on both sides before clear and definite intercourse with spirit people can be enjoyed, and therefore allowance must be made for mistakes, failures, and misunderstandings. Imperfect or inaccurate communications are not evil, nor the work of obsessing spirits or devils. It is so easy to misunderstand when both parties are groping in the dark that the wonder is, not that we get so few good and true messages, but that we get so many!

The intelligent study by mediums of the laws of association and of the conditions of mediumship will lead to

a more enlightened exercise of the powers of will by which they can hold themselves free from all influences except those to which they desire to yield.

It will be helpful to remember that spirits do not oust a man from his own body and take possession of his brain and personality, to use or abuse it at their own will and pleasure, whether he is agreeable or not. On the contrary, spirit influence is exerted upon a sensitive in the same manner as the mesmerist or hypnotist operates upon his subject; and while unthinking persons may heedlessly welcome any kind of influence in their eager desire to become mediums, and thus run the risk of being acted upon by undesirable spirits, they have the power to break all such associations if they are determined to gain their freedom.

IMPERSONATING SPIRITS.

That there are spirits who sometimes 'impersonate,' and seek to pass themselves off as, the friends of the sitters, we have had proof on several occasions; but they invariably get 'bowled out' if the investigators are observant and careful, and they are by no means as numerous or as evilly disposed as some people imagine. That there are spirits who 'play up' to the weaknesses and flatter the vanity of those to whom they communicate; that they give glowing assurances of the good things that they will perform by-and-by, and profess to be some of the 'great ones' of the past, is equally true. 'People dearly love a lord,' and this amiable weakness is fully realized by the jokers on 'the other side'—but the fault does not wholly rest with them! Their too-confiding subjects are in the main responsible for their own mystification and misleading. They are so anxious to be guided by some 'eminent' person who will be to them an 'authority,' that they practically invite pretenders who 'fool them to the top of their bent.' This does not apply to all cases of real or supposed deception, but it does cover a large proportion of such experiences. In many instances there is an element of self-deception—or auto-suggestion—'the wish becomes father to the thought,' and the sensitive's unrestrained imaginative powers do

the rest. There are many persons outside of Spiritualism who believe that they are in direct communication with God, while others are equally as sincere and earnest in their belief that the agents of the Devil are continually tempting them—is it any wonder, then, that when unbalanced people investigate Spiritualism they should go to similar extremes?

SPONTANEOUS MEDIUMSHIP NOT UNDERSTOOD.

Sensitives sometimes hear unpleasant 'voices,' which medical men are apt to regard as purely subjective or imaginary—but they may be truly voices—those of spirit people—as spontaneous or natural clairaudience is quite as probable as natural clairvoyance or psychometry. It may be that the inner hearing has been opened upon the lower plane of the thought-conditions of the soul realm, and the sensitive hears expressions, or senses the repulsive thoughts, that distress him, somewhat as one might be shocked by hearing the objectionable language of the *habitués* of a low public-house, or by the vulgar and brutal expressions of a group of coarse and ignorant men when passing them in the street. There would not necessarily be any intention to offend, under such circumstances, as those people would simply be speaking in their accustomed manner. In the same way it is probable that the spirits whose voices and thoughts produce unpleasant effects upon sensitives may be unconscious of the fact that they are overheard; or may not know how to move away from them, any more than the sensitives know how to close their psychic nature so as to become unconscious of, and unresponsive to, unwelcome companions.

CONDITIONS AND CAUSES OF OBSESSION.

The conditions and causes which lead up to real or supposed obsession may be summed us as follows:

Temporary association; such as living in a haunted house or in companionship with people of a low moral tone, and being, perhaps unconsciously, subject to 'suggestions' from them.

Nervous exhaustion and psychological depletion, resulting from too frequent and prolonged 'sittings' and promiscuous seances where inharmonious conditions prevail.

Mental concentration by excited and continuous thought about the one subject to the exclusion of others; and indiscriminate self-surrender to 'control' in the anxiety to become a medium.

Unrestrained imagination; the morbid pessimism which follows upon intense grief; or other 'shocks' which cause mental strain, hysteria, or melancholia, or both.

Auto-suggestion resulting from fear and due to the misinterpretation of sensations and impulses which may be accounted for on purely physiological grounds.

Diseased or unbalanced conditions of body of mind; or personal habits which make excessive drain upon the vital energies and lower the moral tone of the sensitive.

We do not deny that spirits may, and sometimes do dominate an individual, but we feel assured that in the majority of such cases, where the control obtains the mastery, there is some weakness or disease; some point of contact and similarity between the spirit and the physical, mental, moral, or psychological conditions of the sensitive. * Those associations, however, in which the disposition and purpose of the spirit may be called evil or malevolent are rare; and the instances in which the obsessing spirit cannot be reached by benevolent sympathies and services on the part of the sitters and the sensitive are still more rare! In our experience we have found that in the few cases where badly-disposed spirits were really at work, they came to gratify their spite, to mislead for revenge, or to 'get even' because of some injury or fancied slight.

* Hudson Tuttle holds that 'a deficiency of will power, induced by physical conditions, rather than mental, has been the immediate cause of what is called obsession, in varying degrees from a slight inclination to complete loss of self-control.... Unless the gateway is open, such influence cannot enter. Known or unknown, there is a weak point of attack, a physical state, more or less diseased, reflected on the mind, and making it plastic to impressions received through the lower nature.'

SPIRITS SOMETIMES PERSISTENT, BUT NOT MALICIOUS.

Spirits are sometimes very persistent. Having found someone who is sensitive, through whom they think they can reach their friends, they persevere in the most determined fashion, in spite of the objections and fears of the subject. Perhaps they are penitent, anxious to confess their faults, or follies, and to obtain forgiveness. Or they desire to convince their friends of their presence and console them, and, with such intentions in their minds, they, with a pertinacity that is distinctly human, but often very disagreeable, fasten on to the medium and will give him no rest. Then again, when spirits who have had little or no experience seek to control sensitives, they often exert too much influence. They transfer their own conditions and desires too strongly, and, in their anxiety, fail to realize that they are acting unkindly or prejudicially towards their instruments. Further, as 'first control experiences' are frequently of the nature of 'impersonations,' the sensitive who is overshadowed in that way by the memory-sphere of an unhappy, conscience-stricken soul may be excused if he rebels against such influences and misunderstands their purport. Still, distressed sensitives have frequently obtained relief by a temporary surrender to the wishes of the control in the presence of experienced observers.

By thus ascertaining the object of the spirit; by reasoning with him; by appealing to his sympathy; and by instructing him as regards the nature of the effects he has produced upon the medium and how to proceed in future, so as to secure happier results, intelligent and observant sitters can frequently relieve the sensitive from all fear; benefit the spirit; and themselves obtain experiences of a very educational character.

Many mediums can to-day number among their most faithful and helpful friends in spirit life those who at first were rough, overmastering, and apparently obsessing and undesirable controls; but who, by kindness and love, 'were assisted and educated and afterwards became useful and trustworthy friends and co-workers.

THREE COURSES OF TREATMENT.

When it is evident that a sensitive is under the influence of a spirit who either cannot or will not withdraw from the association, there is no reason for perturbation on the part of the medium or his friends. There are, as we have indicated, three courses open to them in dealing with such a case

1st. Try to ascertain who the spirit is, what he wishes to do, and why he persists in exercising his control over the medium. Talk to him kindly, help him, reason with him, pray for and with him, carry out his wishes as far as they are reasonable, and enlighten him to the best of your ability.

2nd. Invoke the assistance of strong, helpful, healing spirits, and call in a healer who is also a clairvoyant, or a medium who possesses the power to deal with undeveloped spirits, and build up the physical strength and the psychic nature of the sensitive and encourage him to resist and break the 'spell' that has been thrown over him.

3rd. This is the most important course, because it must be followed to some extent in every case, and is the one which we have already emphasized, viz., the medium must, by determined and persistent effort of will and spiritual aspiration, learn how to be confident, and *possess himself*, and *refuse* to be held in psychological captivity by, or be made the sport and plaything of, unseen beings. He should not surrender to the idea that he is 'obsessed'; or discuss the subject too freely with others, or weakly seek the sympathy and condolences of his friends, as all such admissions and recognitions tend to strengthen the impression that he is a captive and powerless to resist. He should not go to this, that, and the other person for advice and 'cure'—the *power* to overcome is *within*. 'I can and will be free' should be his affirmation, strongly felt and boldly proclaimed, and then he will speedily say 'I am free,' and know that it is true.

As distance on the spirit side is more a matter of *state* than geography, the psychic must strive to attain a higher degree of lucidity—to get away from the plane of haunting,

vicious, earthly or vindictive spirit people by rising above it, so as to be unaffected by those denser vibrations and respond to the more subtle and spiritual forces. The purpose of development can best be served when the sensitive, by sincere thought and earnest aspiration, prepares himself for the highest and purest baptisms of spiritual illumination and learns to inflexibly hold himself independent of all conditions save those to which he voluntarily opens his consciousness for wise guidance.

TO THE PURE ALL THINGS ARE PURE.

Very much depends upon the objects entertained by the medium and the sitters, as also upon the character and intentions of the spirit who seeks to manifest his presence; but, on general lines, where people of average intelligence and rectitude seek communion with those they have known and esteemed, or loved, the results are almost invariably beneficial. There is every reason why this should be so if the common-sense precautions are observed of keeping a level head, exercising patience, exhibiting unselfishness and sincerity, and desiring good spiritual counsel and fellowship. The rational course to follow is assuredly that of avoiding the extremes alike of credulity and sceptical incredulity, but letting the spirits do their best, and then collating the facts observed and drawing conclusions. Care, patience and perseverance will save both mediums and inquirers from many misconceptions and enable them to avoid the errors of others. Above all, mediums should observe their own feelings, study their own experiences, try to understand and co-operate with the spirits, but never yield servile or slavish service, nor permit themselves to be swayed by flattery nor dominated by any spirit (in the circle or on the spirit side) who claims obedience, poses as an 'authority,' or refuses to recognize the rights of others.

ADVICE TO THE SENSITIVE.

Do not *expect* that you will be influenced by a low class of spirit people, either on this side or the other; neither should you *fear* any such contingency, as by so doing you

will go half-way to meet the very danger you dread—but in case it should happen, it is well that you should know what to do to close the avenues of your psychic self to any such unwelcome intrusions. By brooding, introspective, sorrowful and self-pitying fear-thought, people become morbid and unbalanced. Do not give way to any such tendencies. We do not go about in terror of our lives because we know that there are scoundrels in this world—why, then, should you be cowardly and afraid because there are fools, frauds, and pretenders 'over there'? Remember that spirits *cannot, make* you do anything against your determined will.

Keep body and mind pure and healthy and control your thoughts. *Fear* makes cowards of us all—the remedy is *knowledge* and pure purpose. You can overcome weakness and evil thoughts by substituting good *strong* thoughts; by cultivating an affirmative and positive mental attitude and by rising to a higher spiritual plane.

When you know that, by the exercise of your own will, you can control your psychic conditions and become soul-centered so as to prevent any unwelcome or uncongenial influence affecting you to your injury, you need have no fear.

Like seeks like as a rule. But if, owing to inharmonious surroundings, or unspiritual sitters, or temporary weakness of body, or lack of watchfulness, you should become subject to the dominating thoughts of any spirit, in or out of the body, that are calculated to lower your tone, remember—you have but to be determined, and call upon your own governing will forces, to be positive and repel all such influences.

A GOSPEL OF GLADNESS, GOODNESS, AND CHEER.

Spiritualism is a gospel of *glad* tidings, and it should lift you above the mists of superstition and fear into the serener air of spiritual self-confidence, of faith in your own divine nature, and joyous self-possession. Obsessing influences cannot reach you or hold you when your soul is thrilling with delight and your mind is fully engaged in optimistic work for the good of humanity.

The path of mediumship is not an easy one to tread. Do not foolishly imagine that it will lead to the acquisition of knowledge, without effort and experience. It is not 'spiritual attainment made easy,' whereby the indolent can, by a species of substitution, wear the robes of righteousness and display the graces of exalted 'guides' in lieu of their own. It is not to be expected that the great and good souls of the higher life will have fellowship with the ignorant and frivolous, and be content to express their ideas through instruments who do not make earnest and persistent endeavors to render themselves fit for the service of such sweet and enlightened souls.

Forget *yourself*. Think, live, and find your joy in serving others. In the altruistic atmosphere, where self is forgotten, love and goodness are supreme. What are your woes and sufferings compared with those of the mourners and the world's burden-bearers? In helping *them* you will gain freedom.

CHAPTER VII.

SOME IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS.

Modern Spiritualism came as a reaction against materialism, and the single idea which gave it birth was that ghosts or spirits were individualized entities subject to law. It is distinguished from the ancient Spiritualism by its sweeping claim that all spiritual phenomena, and the evolution and existence of spirits, are governed by the operation of fixed and ascertainable laws. —HUDSON TUTTLE.

The evidences of the presence, power, and identity of the people we call dead have accumulated to such an extent that no really well-informed person will think of denying that under certain favorable conditions intercourse can be carried on between the people of earth and those of the after-death spheres of being. —B.G.E.

There is no need for us to give directions for seances for the various physical phenomena, such as slate-writing, spirit photography, direct voices, materializations, etc., because those mediums who possess the psycho-physical qualifications for these demonstrations almost invariably elaborate strong and abundant psychic force by means of which the spirits themselves can give instructions (by raps, table tiltings, or in writing) how the seances are to be conducted. They alone know what conditions they require; they alone can select and place the sitters and generally arrange matters, and, beyond providing the slates, cabinet, camera, and slides, or writing materials, very little can be done by the sitters or the medium, unless the latter acts upon such impressions as he may receive.

Mediums for physical demonstrations are sometimes entranced, but it is not always necessary, and many of the

most successful who were put under control during the early days of their mediumship afterwards remained conscious during their seances. This is also true of many public speakers. As a general rule excellence is attained in one direction, and it is advisable to find out what the spirits can do best through each medium, and let other forms of manifestation be supplementary.

We fully recognize the immense importance of the phenomena which demonstrate the continued existence of human beings, and prove the reality of our faith in a future life, and we only wish that they could be multiplied a thousand fold.

It is impossible for a medium, or for the spirits, to satisfy all the whims and demands of sceptical and cynical sitters, or to gratify the wishes of those who are always on the look-out for 'something new and strange.' They cannot produce phenomena on demand; or turn on the tap and let the forces flow like water.

It is probable that the inveterate sceptic loses more than he gains by maintaining an attitude of rigid unbelief, which well-nigh invariably leads to cynical and critical habits of thought which bias the judgment, poison the mind, and erect impassable barriers that shut out the spirits. The sceptical habit causes men to mistrust others, and weakens their faith in their own ability to observe and decide; or it leads to an opinionated, egotistical self-complacency which cannot be pierced by truth. On the other hand, sympathy and open-mindedness invite confidence and establish communion.

It is as unreasonable to accept, without the most convincing demonstrations of their accuracy, the asserted 'explanations' of the facts of mediumship put forward by non-Spiritualists (which explain too much and depend upon 'authorities' rather than facts) as to accept the spiritualistic claim without proof; but when we remember that men like Crookes, Wallace, Hodgson, and Myers have been literally driven to accept the spiritualistic position, by the weight of the evidence, we can justly claim that it is wisest and most reasonable to maintain, not only a 'mind to let,' but an attitude of hospitality towards the spirits, for we

are much more likely to 'entertain angels' if we invite them with kindly thoughts than if we try to quarantine them and put them through a critical cross-examination. The credulity of the incredulous sceptic is often greater than that of the 'believer,' and is, to say the least, equally as unscientific and unwise!

Only their sincere love for the truth and their desire to be of service to others can sustain the workers under the constant suspicion of fraud (if not the direct charges of trickery) which so many have had to endure.

PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENTS.

After the sitters in a circle have had physical phenomena for some time, the power for the production of that class of manifestation will probably be exhausted, and unless some new sitters are introduced the more interior and subtle psychical forces of the medium and the members of the circle may be drawn upon for more mental modes of intercourse.

Mrs. Britten, in her magazine, 'The Unseen Universe,' said that in early childhood she was a very susceptible magnetic subject, and continued: 'By a party of eminent occultists who held strictly private—or, I might say, secret—circles for investigation, I was frequently invited, with other young persons, to become a subject for the magnetic operations of inquirers. In my own case I was never rendered wholly unconscious by the will of the magnetisers, though nearly all the rest of the subjects they experimented with were made so. I believe now that the difference between the partial and total unconsciousness of the various subjects of these occult seances corresponded' to the different degrees of entrancement which we who are platform speakers experience. I realize that on the spiritual rostrum I am two distinct persons. I can go on speaking aloud, yet thinking of quite other matters, and when I can fix my mind on what I utter I have listened with a sense of strangeness, which brings conviction, to my mind, at least, that I am not the individual who originates the thoughts expressed, although they are undoubtedly shaped

by the organism and lingual capabilities through which they are transmitted. From this state of what I may call waking trance, up to the somnambolic sleep in which the spirit's ideas are expressed automatically, I have observed many gradations, ranging, as above observed, from semi-consciousness to the deep somnambolic sleep. There is one striking difference, however, between the entrancement induced by human and spiritual magnetism. The former is much stronger, more direct, and, in general, may be considered as being a much coarser, or more material, element than the latter. Human magnetic control annihilates individuality, and even identity, for the time being, and substitutes the sensuous perceptions of the magnetizer in place of those of the subject. "A good magnetic subject" is helplessly in the power of the magnetizer, unless that subject passes away from the human to a spiritual control, when that of the human operator is at once lost. This was constantly my own case, and thus I, and others similarly influenced, have come to the conclusion that the spiritual control is more subtle, finer, and—except in the case of obsession by evil spirits—far purer. Mediums, when once they have become such, are scarcely ever susceptible again to human magnetism. To avoid any such possibility, I have always been strictly charged by spirit friends never to submit to be magnetized by human operators, and when preparing for the spiritual rostrum to wear *silk*, and avoid as much as possible conversation or contact with those around me.'

Replying to a question as to how spirits control their medium, 'Tien,' the guide of Mr. J. J. Morse, said: 'There is an effort to gradually subdue the normal nervous activities of the body to a state of rest and quiescence. This induces a heavy, depressing, drowsy, kind of feeling, a lethargy stealing over the bodily functions, until one by one all the activities of the body still themselves and come to rest. They seem to do this to the consciousness of the individual subjected to the experiment. This quietude develops into a state of sleep, wherein the positive actions of the vital functions are turned inwardly, instead of being

allowed to express themselves outwardly, as in waking activity. When a complete state of quiescence has been established in the brain and body, there is a slow awakening of various nervous centers which are gradually stimulated to a certain amount of activity. This results in a drawing forth, so to speak, of a psychological aura, generated within the sphere of the body itself, which constitutes the bond or link between the medium as subject, and the spirit as operator, and completes the link between the subject's body and the controlling intelligence. When this nervous or psychic link has been created, there is a further effort on the part of the will of the operator to awaken certain ranges of faculties within the mental sphere of the subject. This will be determined exactly by the kind of work to be done by this agency. For this special purpose the superior intellectual faculties are more directly appealed to, agreeing with sublimity, reason, foresight, form, and color. Then a certain amount of physical energy is liberated as a sort of steam to direct the machinery when the handle is turned. Presently the wheels are set in motion, and mentally there is an awakening of the higher faculties. Spiritually speaking, it is necessary that the spiritual element, the consciousness of the individual—that is himself—shall be held as quiet as possible. In some cases the spirit is withdrawn from the body, though sufficient relation is maintained so that the individual may remain a living being. In other cases, where it is not necessary that the spiritual presence should be withdrawn, it is reduced to a state of quiescence. This is absolutely essential, because in proportion to the activity of consciousness in the individual, so are the difficulties of control. It is true, more or less, of all bodily and mental faculties, for just in proportion as the individual resumes sway over any part or parts of his body, just in that proportion is control prevented for the work in hand. Thus, bodily and mentally, the links are completed that enable us to build up, step by step, the complete result, which is called a "Control." '

When we remember that the more nearly the spirit and medium approach, or resemble each other mentally and morally—the more perfect the psychic sympathy; the

more rhythmic the magnetic vibrations—the more successful will be the transferences and inspirations enjoyed by the sensitive, we shall see how difficult it becomes to eliminate the influence of the medium from the results. The character and quality of his psychic sphere must, to a large extent, determine the nature of the manifestations, and where mutual sympathies and aspirations constitute the basis of rapport, or union, the blended forces of spirit and sensitive will be so harmonized that it will be well-nigh impossible even for the sensitive to say exactly where he leaves off and where the spirit begins. So long as no definite claim is made that the communications emanate from a given individual in the other state, they can be taken for what they are worth on general grounds, and allowance can be made for the well-known fact that medium of necessity give a tone and color to the expressions made through them, just as the character and quality of the instrument affects the music that is produced by its means.

Medium should remember that self-dissection, intense anxiety, desire for success, are bad conditions, and induce morbid self-consciousness, whereas the aim of the seeker after spirit guidance and soul-unfoldment must be to *forget* self, and, for the time at least, to be regardless of success or failure—neither anxious nor afraid, but absorbed in the process of receiving and transmitting the message. * Just so soon as the sensitive *wants to succeed*, he is liable to lose touch with the spirit, his own mind begins to work, and his own thoughts may be mixed up with those of the control, and confusion result.

SHOULD MEDIUMS BE PAID?

There are, unfortunately, very few developed mediums compared with the hosts of inquirers. There are

* 'When we are anxious or impatient we become intellectually positive and then exhale a magnetic atmosphere while we inhale the necessary electric emanations which rapidly exhaust the presiding medium, and the communications are thereby deranged, becoming, as many persons have frequently observed, contradictory and confused—A. J. Davis, in 'The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse.'

too few 'home circles' for the cultivation of mediumship for friendly intercourse with relatives and loved ones; and the tests sought from professional mediums are too often of a business or personal character instead of such evidences of identity as might be expected during an hour's sweet interchange of thoughts. It is generally felt that mediums should earn their livelihood and devote only their few hours of leisure to the study and cultivation of their mediumship, and yet they are expected, with spent forces and tired brains, to be well-tuned instruments for spirits to operate upon! Strong prejudices are felt by many people against 'paid mediums,' but we cannot see why! If the medium is sincere and earnest; if he devotes his time and energies to the service of his clients; if he is not a mere 'hireling' (working solely for a fee), but one who *loves* his work and desires to do good, why should he not be paid, and well-paid, too, so that he may be above the financial disturbances which would unfit him for his office?

Those who think mediumship too sacred for everyday life should do with mediums as the ancients did with their oracles—keep them, and surround them with good, true and happy conditions. Until that is done, and mediums are lifted out of the turmoil where they have to earn their daily bread, it must be manifest to unprejudiced people that if they devote their strength and service to the work, they are worthy of support.

To those of our fellow-sensitives who feel the 'call of the spirit' to go forth and preach the gospel, heal the sick, and comfort the bereaved, we would say, 'Magnify your office; do your utmost to perfect your powers; try to make progress and render yourself fit for the work you have to do, that it may be well and worthily performed; and at the "highest and the best." '

To be a successful public medium you will need to *live* for it, and devote your time and thought to the duties of your office just the same as does the artist, author, lawyer, doctor, and preacher, and, like them, you are justified in living by it.

All experience goes to show that mediumship should be sought for the good that it can do in many ways when

unselfishly used, and those who possess it should seek to improve and perfect it by studying and obeying its laws, and by earnest self-culture, physically, morally and spiritually. *Be good, so as to get good, with which to do good.*

True mediumship leads to the development of a strong character; to healthy, harmonious and rational manhood and womanhood; and true sensitiveness leads to sensibility and to a rational, intelligent, and religious life. Nothing of real value can be obtained without effort or costly sacrifice. But is not the attainment of communion with wise and loving spirits an adequate inducement to you, apart from the pleasure incidental to the progressive harmonization of both mind and body?

There is, we believe, a continual influx from the other side. Many people, who are externally oblivious of the fact, are undoubtedly frequently impelled and compelled to certain courses of conduct by spirits. Artistic, sensitive persons—teachers, preachers, authors, composers, inventors—aye, most people who feel and see and are *awake* on the interior side of their nature—are the instruments for expressing the thoughts and purposes of inspirers from the spirit side to an extent which will astonish most of us when we learn the truth 'over there.'

It is, perhaps, only our density and our unconsciously materialistic modes of thought that make it necessary for us to require 'control,' and demand sensuous or other 'test' evidences of the association and influence of spirit people. Spirit speaks to spirit, and true 'spirit-communion' (or community of feeling and purpose, thought and desire) has yet to be achieved. Some few sweet, serene, spiritually-minded souls have possibly entered into this realm, but the bulk of the race are still on the exterior, and are largely children of the senses rather than the spirit. We shall, however, deal with the voluntary and personal cultivation of psychic powers in the concluding portion of this work (Part III.), to which we refer the reader. There is no need to extol mediumship at the expense of psychical self-development, or to uphold personal and conscious unfoldment and depreciate mediumistic culture, for the one frequently leads to, and merges into, the other.

THE SPIRITUALISM OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

The great distinctive feature which will differentiate the Spiritualism of the twentieth century from that of the past fifty years will be this very change of attitude. Instead of living in the basement of the sense-self, the coming man and woman will naturally ascend to the psychic plane and throw wide the windows that open heavenward. The thoughts of welcome having overcome the feelings of fear, the visitants from the spirit realms will naturally find readier means of reaching the soul consciousness of sensitives and of transmitting through them fuller evidences of their intelligence and identity than was possible in the old days.

The right 'attitude' is beautifully expressed in the lines

'Lie open, Soul I the great, the wise
About thy portal throng;
The wealth of souls before thee lies,
Their gifts to thee belong.
Lie open, Soul! the angels wise
Will inspirations give:
Oh, let your aspirations rise,
That rightly you may live