

GENUINE MEDIUMSHIP
OR
THE INVISIBLE POWERS

[Excerpted to include only the final chapters on Mediumship.]

By

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GENUINE MEDIUMSHIP

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PART VI

MEDIUMSHIP

Among the higher categories of Nature's Finer Forces is included that which is popularly known as "mediumship." Although this term has suffered more or less by reason of its misappropriation by certain charlatans and the unprincipled exploiters of sincere investigators of the phenomena of the higher planes of existence, and also by reason of a certain prejudice against the term arising from misrepresentation and general misunderstanding, the term still remains a perfectly legitimate one and one clearly indicating the nature of the general class of phenomena sought to be embraced within its limits. Therefore there is no valid reason for its rejection in our consideration of the subject of Nature's Finer Forces in this book; and, accordingly, it is used here in a general way, although the more scientific term "higher plane communication," or similar terms, are employed herein in some cases.

What Is Mediumship?

Let us see just what is meant by the term "mediumship." The term "medium" is defined as: "That which lies in the middle, or between other

things: hence, that through which anything is conveyed from one thing to another." In a special sense, a "medium" is "a person serving as the channel of communication between decarnate entities and human being still in the flesh, in "spiritualistic phenomena." The suffix "ship," of course, denotes state or office; and in the case of "medium, ship" it indicates that the designated person possesses the state or office of a "medium," the latter term being used in the special meaning above defined.

Of course, the term "mediumship," as above defined, lacks a clear meaning unless the term "spiritualistic," or "spiritualism" be defined. The term "spiritualism" (or as many of the best authorities prefer to state it, "spiritism") is applied to "a system of communication with the unseen world, or with the inhabitants thereof, the latter being usually known as 'spirits,' through persons called 'mediums,' which has attained popular favor in Europe and America since about 1850." Or, as another authority states it, "Spiritualism is a term employed to indicate the belief that departed spirits hold intercourse with mortals by means of psychical phenomena, commonly through a person of special susceptibility called a 'medium.'"

Ancient Mediumship.

It is, of course, unnecessary to state in detail the fact that communication with decarnate entities has been known and practiced by the human race from the earliest days of recorded history, and probably long before that time, and is far from being a modern discovery. Moreover, such communication has been known and practiced by races of human beings

other than those inhabiting Europe and America—particularly in the oriental countries. In the oriental lands such communication has been well established for many thousand years, and the most ancient records give evidences of it. The Hebrew Scriptures contain many instances of such communication, showing that the same was an accepted fact of the life of the race at the time and in the places at which these records were written.

Mediumship and Religious Belief.

The careful student will of course notice that this communication with the higher planes of life and being—this so-called "mediumship"—does not depend upon any particular form of religious belief, or teaching, concerning the nature of the state or place of abode of the departed spirits of men; but, on the contrary, is common to all form of religion and to all phases of belief in the survival of the human soul. Therefore, a scientific consideration of the general subject does not necessitate the acceptance of any one particular phase of religious belief, or of any particular system of teaching concerning the nature or state of "life after death." All that is required of the person accepting the general fact of "higher plane communication" may be stated as follows: (1) Acceptance of the fact that the human soul persists after the death of the body, and independent of and removed from the dead body; (2) acceptance of the fact that the decarnate souls of human beings may, and do, establish communication with human being still dwelling upon the earth-plane of existence.

We may state here that the term "decarnate"

means "away from the physical body," or "out of the flesh;" the term being the opposite of "incarnate," meaning "clothed with flesh, or embodied in flesh." We may also state here that the teachings of most philosophies of the life after death hold that the decarnate human soul is not entirely devoid of a body, but rather occupies a body composed of some ethereal substance; this ethereal body being called the "astral body," or the "spiritual body."

The Ideals of Modern Spiritualism.

A writer well expresses the ideals of modern western spiritualism as follows: "Through the gateway of mediumship for upwards of fifty years the world has been catching glimpses of the glory of the land immortal, and visitants from that 'bourne' from whence it has been erroneously said that 'no traveler returns' have made their presence known beyond all doubt or denial, thus proving the continued conscious existence of human beings and the sequential chapter of the life hereafter. Though the messages from the unseen have at times been imperfect and fragmentary, still they have been messages. If but telegraphic dispatches, so to speak, instead of voluminous letters; or like telephonic snatches of conversation rather than face-to-face outpourings of thought and feeling, still they have been greetings and comforting assurances of undying affection from the people living in the land 'beyond the veil.' Although many a sorrowing soul has longed for further revelation, and regretted the inability of the spirits to comply with the requests for fuller information, still the gates have been ajar, and sometimes it has truly seemed as though they

had been flung wide open—so clear and consoling were the messages from the loved ones on the other side of death's valley of shadow. The manifestations of the presence of spirits and the evidences of their identity, which have been accumulating during all these years, have solved the 'great secret,' and we know that death is not a cul-de-sac, but a thoroughfare. The dread of death disappeared altogether with the mists of ignorance, as, through the gateway of mediumship, the shining presence of ministering spirits, 'our very own dear departed,' illumined the pathway which we must all tread to our great promotion.

Immortality Demonstrated Through Mediumship.

"Immortality demonstrated through mediumship' should be inscribed upon the banner of spiritualism, for the fact of life beyond the incident of death has been proved beyond all peradventure to millions of intelligent and enlightened people since the new spiritual era was inaugurated. To mediums—the modern mediators—therefore belong the office and honor of rolling back the stone from the tomb and establishing faith upon the firm basis of knowledge (scientifically ascertained and proven) of the continued intelligent existence in the spiritual realms of those who went forth through the death change into light and liberty 'over there.' Mediums, as intermediaries, have enabled spirit people to comfort the sad and encourage the weak; to relieve the doubter and console the bereaved; to confirm the old-world traditions regarding bygone spirit intervention and revelation, and supplement our hopes and intuitions with proof palpable.

Present-day experiences of inspiration and spirit manifestation make credible and acceptable many things in ancient records which must otherwise have been discarded as superstitious and false. Spiritualism redeems the so-called 'supernatural' and 'miraculous' occurrences of the Bible, by explaining them and proving the naturalness. The capability claimed for old-time seers and prophets to see angels and hear voices is now known to be a natural faculty, which, in certain people, is perfectly normal while it can be induced in others by the influence of operators in or out of the body. It can also be cultivated to some degree by most people who care to study the necessary conditions for its development and exercise. The famine, 'not of bread, nor of water, but of hearing words from the Lord,' and the loss of 'open vision' of the spirit, which afflicted Christendom for so many years (because of the blind in tolerance of zealots who, in their adherence to the 'letter,' crushed out the sensitives through whom the 'spirit' might have been revealed), that famine is rapidly passing away, and we are being fed with the living bread of spiritual inspiration, and are growing strong enough to welcome the messengers who come to us through the gateway of mediumship from their after-death home.

The Truth of Personal Survival.

"When once there is established the conviction of the truth of personal survival of our loved ones, and the actual and satisfactory demonstrations thereof through mediumship (and we know of no means whereby such evidences can be obtained save through mediumship), we are thrilled and do

lighted; and when this conviction is borne upon us and driven home by the evidences, and the truth of spirit ministry has been realized, nothing can destroy it. The spiritualist stands upon firm ground—the impregnable rock of ascertained fact. He knows that intercourse between the two worlds is real, continuous; therefore he is proof against all speculations, denunciations, and adverse theories. Dogmatic condemnations, 'bogey' cries, charges of fraud against mediums, fail to move or frighten him. He can 'speak what he knows and testify to what he has seen;' his positive and affirmative experience and testimony outweigh all the opposition of 'doubting Thomases' who do not know.

The Gateway of Mediumship.

"Through the gateway of mediumship the spirits make themselves known in a variety of ways. There are many phases of mediumistic phenomena, and the student will find that he must be patient, painstaking, and persevering if he would make sure of his facts. Careful investigation, possibly prolonged research, under many difficulties and with many discouragements, will be required, but 'success is certain if energy fail not,' and the results will adequately recompense him for all sacrifice and struggle! For in the light of the demonstrated fact of continued existence after death, it is clear that man is even now 'a spirit served by organs'—that consequently the basis of all religious experience and affirmation is the spiritual consciousness of mankind. There could be no revelation to man of spiritual truth or moral duty if he were not a spirit possessing the capabilities of receiving and

comprehending, of interpreting and applying, the revelations and inspirations which appeal to and quicken the inner (and higher) self."

The Mediumistic Character.

The following quotations from eminent modern spiritualists will further serve to illustrate the accepted general principles of "spirit communication" on the part of western spiritualism. E. W. Wallis says: "Spiritualism deals with a higher range and a wider field of supersensuous phenomena than mesmerism, hypnotism, telepathic psychometry, clairvoyance, etc., because the natural susceptibility of man in these directions is increased and intensified, and exercised upon a superior plane, when it is utilized by intelligent spirit operators. It is not true that sensitiveness is confined to those who are diseased, weak of will, neurotic, or hysterical. Those who are susceptible to psychic influence may be impulsive, warm-hearted, spontaneous, sociable, and not by any means, or of necessity, weak-minded or vicious." Dr. Dean Clake says: "The word mediumship, as understood and used by spiritualists, technically speaking, means a susceptibility to the influence, and more or less control, of decarnated spirits. Physiologically, it means a peculiar nervous susceptibility to what may be termed the 'psychic force,' which spirits use to move the mind or body or both, of their mortal instrument. Psychologically, it signifies a passive or negative state of mind and body which renders a person subject to the positive will-power of spirits who influence him or her." The spirit control who employed the hand of Stainton Moses, M.A., to write his thoughts, said: "The mediumistic peculiarity

is one of spirit solely, and not of body, seeing that it occurs in all varieties of physical frames, in the male and in the female; in the magnetic and in the electric; in the stout and robust as well as in the puny and thin of body; in the old and in the young; in all conditions and under all circumstances. This alone would lead you to see that it is not a physical matter; and that conclusion is strengthened for you by the fact that the gift is perpetuated even after death of the earth body. Those who on your earth have been mediums retain the gift and use it with us. They are the most frequent visitors to your world; they communicate most readily; and it is through them that spirits who have not the gift are enabled to communicate with your earth."

Mediumistic Sensitivity.

Emma Hardinge Britten said: "Whatever that force may be which constitutes the difference between a 'medium' and a non-medium, it is certainly of a mental and magnetic character—that is, a combination of the subtle elements of mind and magnetism, and therefore of a psychological and not of a purely physical character. Whilst the spiritualists of this generation have had no one to teach them either what spiritual gifts are, or how to use, or how to abuse them, experience has shown that the conditions under which spiritual phenomena are produced through mediums are not only helped or hindered by their mental states, but also by the will, magnetism, and mental states of those who surround them." E. W. Wallis says: "The same laws govern the relations between the sensitive and the spirit operator as between the hypnotist and his subject.

Therefore, mediumship is not necessarily spiritual; it may be of all kinds; there may be psychical relationship of a high grade and of a low one. There may be messages from beyond that prove the identity of spirits, and give evidence of the continuity of life, of the survival of mind, and yet they may not minister to spiritual growth, nor awaken any exalted desire to be of service to God and man. There may be psychical sympathy and not spiritual fellowship; there may be spirit intercourse and not that sweet spiritual communion which should be the goal of all who seek for evidences of life beyond the valley of death. It is no longer possible to regard mediumship as a supernatural endowment. It is, as regards the psychic susceptibility upon which it depends, the common property of the race, and is therefore as natural as are the 'gifts' of song or oratory, or the ability to paint or construct. But as certain gifts and graces are more developed in some individuals than in others, in like manner the sensitiveness which is called mediumship is more highly developed (or is capable of such development) in certain peculiarly constituted persons who may be regarded as supernormally gifted, yet as naturally so as are geniuses in other directions."

The Higher Vibratory Forces.

The student who has carefully read what we have said in the earlier portions of the present book regarding the subject of Nature's Finer Forces, and those concerned with "vibrations," and "planes of being," will be able to harmonize the apparently somewhat conflicting opinions of those authorities above quoted concerning the nature of mediumship

and spirit communication. In the first place, the student will remember that there exist planes of being higher and other than our own earth-plane, and that the rate of normal vibration on such planes is much higher than are those upon our own earth-plane. In the second place, he will remember that beings dwelling and manifesting on these higher planes are able to communicate only by means of their higher vibratory rate of manifestation. And, in the third place, he will remember that a person dwelling on the earth-plane will not ordinarily register and interpret these higher vibrations of communication; and that it is necessary for such a person to have originally, or else have developed, the capacity to raise his or her own vibrations to the key necessary to "catch" these higher vibrations. In short, we have here once more another instance of that "attunement" between sender and receiver the most common instance of which is the wireless telegraph.

Psychic Attunement.

The entity, or spirit, dwelling on one of the many higher planes of being who wishes to communicate with persons on earth through a medium, must first select some person capable of raising his or her own vibratory rate of consciousness to become "in tune" with that of the spirit himself. Then he must learn to project his own mental vibrations with sufficient intensity and force to be "caught" by the sensitive perceptive organism of the medium. These things are beyond the understanding and accomplishment of many decarnate spirits, and unless they are taught by some one on their own plane of existence they are

likely to fail in their attempts to communicate through a medium on the earth-plane. But at the present time, in view of the great interest being manifested "over there" in, the communication with the earth-plane, an earnest, persevering spirit will usually have comparatively little difficulty in finding a proper instructor, and in acquiring the art of "earth-plane communication," as it is called on the spirit plane.

The Development of Mediumship.

As regards the acquirement of mediumship qualities, information and scientific instruction is much needed, particularly at the present time. In this book we shall endeavor to throw much light upon this particular matter, and to give such instruction and information in a plain, practical form. We may begin by reminding the candidate for mediumship that the methods of development of mediumship are entirely different from those designed to develop ordinary psychic powers. In the case of development for ordinary psychic power, the person must acquire the power of concentration in the direction of sensing in his inner consciousness the impressions coming to him from the outside world, such impressions not being consciously directed to him. He must be able to so concentrate that he will be keenly sensitive to these impressions, and to interpret them intelligently. On the contrary, the person wishing to develop the power of mediumship must learn to develop the power of negative receptivity to the vibrations coming from the spirit planes. As has well been said, he is the acted upon, and not the actor

While he requires concentration, patience, and perseverance in developing the power to raise himself to the proper vibratory key, when the actual work of communication begins he must passively allow himself to speak and act, more or less unconsciously, under the guidance, direction, and control of the communicating spirit.

Unconscious Mediumship.

The student will do well, however, to remember that as a popular writer has said: "It must not, however, be supposed that spirit influence is limited to, and exerted solely upon, those who are known to be mediums; or that the spirits do not assist those who use their own psychic faculties. It is probable that all people who are psychically sensitive and open to impressions are indebted to spirit helpers, whether they are conscious of the fact or not. There is undoubtedly a greater degree of influx from the spirit side than even spiritualists are aware. Many persons are indebted to spirit friends for spontaneous impulses, which, while those persons act upon them and reap the consequences, they can neither explain nor trace to their source. Spirits frequently associate with and serve their earth friends, although the recipients of their benefactions are unaware of the fact. There would be very much more of this kind of guidance from the unseen, if, instead of being frightened, or repellant in their mental attitude toward the spirits, the great bulk of people were prepared to accept such assistance from the other side as perfectly natural and to be expected."

Mediumship and Individuality.

The student will find it desirable to acquaint himself with the best opinions concerning the possible or probable effects of the practice of mediumistic powers upon the medium himself. There is evidenced a disposition in certain quarters to hold to the idea that mediumship, or control by spirits, is more or less injurious, mentally or physically or both, to the medium. It is also frequently asserted that the medium tends to lose his individuality and personal strength of character. Again, there are some who would teach that the medium should be of a low order of intelligence, and should beware of exercising his intellect, the idea seeming to be that under these conditions the mental path will be freer and clearer for the spirit control. All of the aforesaid notions are erroneous, as will appear as we progress in the statements in this book concerning true and efficient mediumship.

Co-operation of Medium and Spirits.

The medium who observes certain simple and plain rules and habits of conduct will not suffer any loss of strength of character or individuality from his exercise of his mediumistic power; on the contrary, an intelligent exercise of the power of mediumship often tends to develop the intellectual power of the medium. As to the idea that the medium must be ignorant, we have but to call your attention to the fact that many of the most efficient mediums are intelligent, and even brilliant individuals. As a writer has said: "There may be some mediums who are ignoramuses, but it is doubtful if

there will be any great degree of intelligence or great spiritual illumination presented through their agency. It is possible that some mediums act foolishly when in their normal state, for the purpose of accentuating the difference between their ordinary and supernormal conditions of mental activity; but there is a more rational, intelligent, and, indeed, a more spiritual conception of the relations which should exist between mediums and their spirit guides, which is rapidly finding favor with thoughtful mediums and spiritualists alike. The proper method of communing with the spirits of the unseen realm is conducive to good, and not evil, to the medium. The co-operative association of medium and spirit on the plane of thought and purpose, emotion and motive, ethics and inspiration, results in the education and elevation of the medium."

Mediumship Not Dangerous.

The following additional quotations from spiritualistic writers on this point, serve to throw important light on this subject. J. J. Morse says: "Andrew Jackson Davis, Hudson Tuttle, and other writers, if I correctly understand them, claim that mediumship is a constitutional condition, and depends upon nervous adaptation, i. e., 'sensitiveness' and the quickening of the subjective (psychical) faculties; and, personally, my own firm conviction is that there is nothing dangerous in mediumship. The mere dabbling in mediumship, as either the means of a new sensation, or for the gratification of personal vanity, is to be thoroughly deprecated, as a perversion of some of the most wonderful possibilities of our natures; while the prosecution of mediumship,

or anything else, to the detriment of mind, nerves, or health, in any direction, is a sin against oneself, and will inevitably call down the resultant penalties of physical and mental deterioration. I have many times advised inquirers who wished to know how to develop mediumship, unless they desired to do so for serious use, and within proper limits, not to seek its development at all. And in cases where I could see it would prove personally detrimental, I have strongly advised the inquirer to let the matter entirely alone."

Wallis says: "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."

A. Morton says: "Elevated spirits do not require mediums to surrender their reason; on the contrary, they advise that every new thought should be tested in the crucible of reason, and that it be rejected if not in accordance therewith; but the control of domineering spirits, claiming the name of celebrities, who present unreasonable theories, and in a dictatorial 'thus saith the spirit' manner, demanding unquestioning compliance with their commands, must be rejected by all mediums as debasing and inconsistent with self-respect. Any associations or concessions which have a tendency to lower the spiritual standard must be carefully avoided, for there is no growth

in any relations which can only be maintained by the sacrifice of self-respect and self-justice."

Rational Mediumship.

Wallis says: "The rational course for mediums and inquirers to follow is assuredly that of avoiding the extremes alike of credulity and sceptical incredulity, by 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. No medium should remain ignorant, or refrain from giving effect to his (or her) natural desire for knowledge and self-improvement under the erroneous idea that he does not need to think, study, or learn, because he is a medium; and that the spirits will provide and teach through him all that is required. On the other hand, while thoughtfully observant of favorable conditions, and intelligent in self-study and culture, the medium should avoid 'getting up' certain subjects, or thinking along certain lines with the purpose and expectation that such information will be employed while under control. Such action, proceeding from a wrong motive, cannot fail to injure the psychic relations between the spirit and the medium, and

will render the work of control doubly hard, because such thoughts will have to be cleared away before those of the spirit can be transferred to, and have free course through, the medium."

The "Home Circle."

Mediums are born or made. That is to say, many persons are born with the gift of mediumship, while others, lacking this natural power, are able to develop the power by practice and gradual unfoldment. Some of the world's best mediums have been developed, while others in the same class have been born with the gift. At the same time, it must be remembered that there is a wide range of power existing between different individual mediums of both of these classes. In the opinion of the present writer, perhaps the very best way of developing mediumistic powers is that of actually participating in circle work. The wonderful results of earlier spiritualism in America and in Europe were undoubtedly due to the casual and general practice of holding "home circles." These home circles were the nursery of some of the world's greatest mediums. Here the born medium was made aware of his or her natural powers; and, likewise, here others were enabled to gradually unfold and develop their latent mediumistic power.

The Cure for Fraudulent Mediumship.

At the present time we have too few mediums, and this fact is attributable largely to the gradual discontinuance of the home circles. Present time folks are too fond of having everything worked out and presented to them, and they flock to the

sensational public demonstrations, some of which are undoubtedly "faked" in order to meet the public demand for sensational features; and at the same time the honest, careful, conscientious mediums are often overlooked, and the home circles almost unknown. Many so-called investigators of spiritualism are feverishly anxious to "see something," and are impatient and the comparatively slow order of developments at the home circle or at the careful mediumistic circles. Many earnest spiritualists lament the present tendency, and predict that in time there will be an almost complete dearth of honest, careful mediums, owing to the demand for "quick action" and the temptation to furnish fraudulent counterfeits of the genuine phenomena resulting from this feverish public demand.

Warning to Young Mediums.

Wallis says concerning this point: "After a time, as the development progresses, the medium and his spirit friends may be strong enough to undertake public work without the assistance and protection of a circle, in the same manner as did D. Home, Slade, Eglinton, and other noted public mediums; but they should be in no hurry about doing so, and they need to be very self-possessed and levelheaded to hold their own against the 'phenomena hunters' on the one side (who sap the very life of the sensitive), and the know-all, conceited sceptics on the other side (who freeze up all the psychic conditions), and before whom it is worse than foolish to cast these pearls of great price.

"The lot of the public 'physical, test,' and 'clairvoyant' medium is not to be envied or lightly chosen.

Such sensitives frequently suffer a martyrdom that none but sensitives can realize. What with foolish flatterers; the sitters who are never content, but cry 'give, give, give;' the injudicious friends, who seeing the exhaustion of the worn-out mediums, in mistaken sympathy urge them to take stimulants (instead of securing them rest and change of surroundings), they have a hard road to travel, and, our sincerest sympathy goes out to them all. We, plead for them. We bespeak kindly and human consideration. Too frequently they are tried and condemned unheard. They are expected to prove that they are not frauds, instead of, as in other cases, being accepted as reputable people. So much has this been the case that some mediums of unquestioned power have retired into private life and business pursuits, where they meet with the respect and recognition which were denied them while they were public workers in the ranks of spiritualism.

"Let us not be misunderstood. In saying this we are not apologizing for, or palliating fraud or wrong doing, but merely asking for fair and considerate treatment—not hasty, unreasoning condemnation. While it is true that mediumship has many compensations, and the medium who takes pleasure in his work has many pleasant experiences, it is also true that the professional medium is too frequently subjected to treatment which makes his task more difficult and thankless than it need be. The kindly and appreciative treatment which he receives from some sitters is a welcome stimulus, and affords good conditions for the spirits, who are thus enabled to operate to the best advantage."

PART VII

MEDIUMISTIC CONDITIONS

Mediumistic phenomena, i. e., the phenomena by and through which spirits manifest their presence and demonstrate their power, may be broadly classified under two heads, as follows, (1) physical phenomena, and (2) mental phenomena.

Physical Phenomena.

Physical Phenomena cover a wide range of mediumistic manifestations, among which are movements of tables, the production of "raps," the manifestation of spirit lights, freedom from the effects of fire, the passage of matter through matter, direct writing upon paper or upon slates, direct voices, levitation of the medium, spirit photographs, and the production of the materialized form of the spirit. While in rare cases the spirits may manifest these forms of physical phenomena without the assistance of the medium and the circle, nevertheless as a rule such phenomena are produced by the spirits only through the assistance of a medium, and usually only when there is gathered together a circle.

"Psychic Force."

Various explanations of the power employed by the spirits, assisted by the medium and by the circle, have been offered by the scientific investigators of the subject. The most generally accepted theory of the western scientists is that the spirits employ what is called the "psychic force" of the medium, often assisted by that drawn from the circle and focused in the medium. The medium is regarded as a psychic storage battery which is freely drawn upon by the manifesting spirit. The degree and character of the manifestations are determined largely by the peculiar quality of the psychic force, the capabilities of the medium, the knowledge and powers of the spirits, and the influence of the sitters.

Human Magnetism.

Dr. Dean Clarke says: "Human magnetism, or nerve aura, is probably the most sublimated form of ethereal matter, hence nearest in refinement to spirit substance, and therefore spirits use it as the vehicle of their vibrating forces. Those persons who have an excess of magnetism, of the proper quality to unite with both the psychic force of spirits and the forces inherent in natural objects, and thus form an electro-magnetic connection of spirits with the objects they wish to act upon, are the persons chosen by the spirits for physical mediums. The mind and brain of the medium are not often nor necessarily controlled, and only his magnetism and psychic forces are used, through which the spirits transmit the vibrations of their own power to mechanically produce concussions, or movements of material objects."

"Zoether."

Hudson Tuttle (writing under control) gives the following statement of a spirit concerning the manner in which physical phenomena are produced: "Zoether (psychic force) emanating from the medium charges the object to be moved, and a band of spirits directs a current of their own zoethic emanation in the direction they desire the article to move, and it passes along the current thus produced. The charging of the object by the medium is necessary in order that it may be in a state of vibration harmonious to the spirit current. If this current be directed against the table or other charged body, raps or concussions are produced, as a positive and negative relation exists between the spirits and the medium's zoether. One spirit alone cannot produce physical manifestations. If one purports to communicate, assistance will be rendered by many others, who combine their influence."

"Prana."

The orientals account for physical mediumistic phenomena in a similar way, though their terms are different. Instead of speaking of zoether, or psychic force, they always employ the term "prana." In the oriental philosophies "prana" is explained as a subtle form of energy permeating the universe, but manifesting in a special form in the organism of the human being. This subtle force, or prana, is held to be capable of being transmitted from one organism to another, and is held to be the energizing power by means of which many forms of occult or magic phenomena are produced. Prana is very much akin to the "human magnetism" of the western occultists,

and the properties attributed to the latter are really those which the orientals for centuries past have held to be among the essential properties of prana; so, at the last, there is found to be a practical agreement here between the oriental and the western schools of occultism, respectively, in spite of their differing terminology.

Mental Phenomena.

Mental Phenomena cover another wide range of mediumistic phenomena, among which may be mentioned the following, viz., involuntary or automatic writing and drawing, writing by means of the planchette or "ouija" board or similar mechanical aid to writing, clairvoyant perception of spirits, clairaudient hearing of spirit voices, prophetic utterances of spirits, impersonating and inspirational control of the medium. Mediums are frequently so thoroughly "under the influence or control," especially in private circle seances, that they seem to have been transformed into another personality. Sometimes the medium through which the spirit is manifesting will have his facial appearance changed so completely that persons present will recognize in the changed appearance the looks of the spirit as known when it was in earth life.

The Value of Phenomena.

The chief value of physical mediumistic manifestations is not, as generally supposed, that of affording entertainment or food for thought for those witnessing them, but rather that of affording proof of the possibility of spirit communication, particularly when spirit identity is established through the

manifestation of the phenomena. A writer says of this class of phenomena: "A good psychographic medium will usually obtain writing between closed slates, which may be brought by the investigator, who can insist upon their not leaving his sight, and not even leaving his hand. We have obtained writing on paper that we had previously marked, which was then covered by our own hand and a friend is and was untouched by the medium. On another occasion, a slate which we had personally cleaned was laid on the floor (fully six feet from the medium) with a small piece of pencil under it (in broad daylight), and on taking it up shortly afterwards there was found written on the under side a long message of a private nature from a deceased friend, of whom we were not thinking. Such phenomena as these are still good and impressive, they cannot be counterfeited under like conditions, and even when no proof of identity is given in connection with the writings, they point so distinctly to the action of a discrete, disembodied intelligence as to compel the recognition of their spiritual origin. The evidential utility of physical phenomena lies in their being inimitable by fraud. Imitations can of course be made which might satisfy the credible and the gullible, but the conditions for testing the phenomena we have specially referred to are so simple that no rational investigator need be deceived; first, to be sure that the slate, paper, or panel to be used is perfectly blank; second, that it does not leave the hand of the inquirer, or if it does, that it is marked in such a way that there can be no doubt of its identification when it is returned to him; and thirdly (with paintings), to observe if the paint be wet, and note the time occupied in their production."

Trance Condition Not Essential.

Many persons are under the impression that it is necessary for a medium to go into the trance condition in order to manifest physical mediumistic phenomena, but such is not the case. While many mediums do lapse into the trance conditions at such time, it is equally true that many others do not do so. Some of the very best mediums produce some of the most striking manifestations while in a perfectly normal, waking condition. A writer says of a well-known medium: "She constantly receives evidences of the presence of her spirit friends while she is perfectly normal. We have heard rappings and witnessed movements of physical objects in her presence, while holding friendly conversation with her, when we have been in a good light. Frequently, at meal times, the spirits announce their presence by raps, and respond to the salutations and questions of their medium and other members of the family."

Professor Loveland says: "Many of the best mediums in the world were never entranced in the sense of being in an unconscious sleep. And it is doubted whether that condition is desirable. The Fox girls, and most, if not all of the original rapping mediums, were never in the deep sleep trance. It is not necessary for any of the physical manifestations, and that includes a very large percentage of all the spirit phenomena. The rappings, tippings, movings, slate writings, automatic writings, paintings, telegraphing, voices, materializing, etc., can all occur without the sleep trance, the reason for which is very apparent, as in the production of such phenomena the spirits simply use the surplus radiated nerve-force of the medium."

Scientific Reports on Phenomena.

Sir William Crookes, in speaking of D. D. Home and Euspatia Paladino, said: "Most, if not all, of the occurrences with Euspatia seem to have taken place when she was in a trance and the more complete the trance the more striking the phenomena. This was not always so with Home. Certainly the two most striking things I ever saw with him, the fire test and the visible forms, were to be observed while he was entranced, but it was not always easy to tell when he was in that state, for he spoke and moved about almost as if he were in his normal condition; the chief differences being that his actions were more deliberate, and his manner and expressions more solemn, and he always spoke of himself in the third person, as 'Dan.' When he was not in a trance we frequently had movements of objects in different parts of the room, with visible hands carrying flowers about and playing the accordion. On one occasion I was asked by Home to look at the accordion as it was playing in the semi-darkness beneath the table. I saw a delicate looking female hand holding it by the handle, and the keys at the lower end rising and falling as if fingers were playing on them, although I could not see them. So lifelike was the hand that at first I said it was my sister-in-law's, but was assured by all present that both her hands were on the table, a fact which I then verified for myself."

Phenomena Without Darkness.

"Home always refused to sit in the dark. He said that, with firmness and perseverance, the phenomena could be got just as well in the light,

and even if some of the things were not so strong, the evidence of one's eyesight was worth making same sacrifices for. In almost all the seances I had with Home there was plenty of light to see all that occurred, and not only to enable me to write down notes of what was taking place, but to read my notes without difficulty. Home was very anxious to let everyone present be satisfied that he was not doing any of the things himself—too anxious, I sometimes thought, for frequently he would interfere with the progress and development of what was going on by insisting that some sceptic or other should come around and take hold of his hands and feet to be sure he was not doing anything himself. At times, he would push his chair back and move right away from the table when things were moving on it, and ask those furthest from him to come round and satisfy themselves that he had nothing to do with the movements. I used frequently to beg him to be quiet, knowing that, if he would not move about in his eagerness to convince us of his genuineness, the strength of the phenomena would probably increase to such a degree that no further evidence would be needed that their production was beyond the powers of the medium.

Test Conditions.

"During the whole of my knowledge of D. D. Rome, extending for several years, I never once saw the slightest occurrence that would make me suspicious that he was attempting to play tricks. He was scrupulously sensitive on this point, and never felt hurt at anyone taking precautions against deception. He sometimes, in the early days of our acquaintance, used to say to me before a seance, 'Now, William, I

want you to act as if I were a recognized conjurer, and was going to cheat you and play all the tricks I could. Take every precaution you can devise against me, and move about and look under the table or where else you like. Don't consider my feelings. I shall not be offended. I know that the more carefully I am tested the more convinced will everyone be that these abnormal occurrences are not of my own doings.' Latterly, I used jokingly to say to him, 'Let us sit round the fire and have a quiet chat and see if our friends are here and will do anything for us. We won't have any tests or precautions.' On these occasions, when only my family were present with him, some of the most convincing phenomena took place."

Is Darkness Necessary?

From the above it is seen that not only is the trance condition not absolutely necessary for the production of striking mediumistic phenomena, but that, also, there is no absolute necessity for the condition of darkness to be maintained as an essential feature of such phenomena. While many mediums insist upon the condition of darkness at seances, it is thought by some careful thinkers that this arises from the fact that such mediums have been accustomed to such conditions from their earliest days of mediumship, and have grown to believe that the same are absolutely necessary. It is thought that if such mediums would begin over again, practicing in full light in the company of a few sympathetic friends, they would before long grow accustomed to the new conditions, and would then be able to reproduce all of their most important phenomena in full light. Using the terms of modern psychology.

it would seem that such mediums are the victims of their own "auto-suggestion," and fixed beliefs; and, as all students of the subject well know, the mental states of the medium have a most important bearing of the quality of the phenomena produced, and form a very important factor of the conditions governing the success of the seance.

Developing Circles.

The person who is developing mediumship will do well to surround himself with persons of a certain type of psychical power, and to form circles of such persons. Such persons are invaluable in constituting a "developing circle." Such persons need not be mediumistic themselves, nor are they required to actually do anything. Instead, their service is that of being present as psychical reservoirs of force upon which the spirits can draw for manifesting power. The medium, being sensitive to helpful influences, and the reverse, will recognize such persons by the congenial and harmonious influence they exercise upon him; and he will do well to encourage such persons to sit in his developing circles.

Impersonating Mediumship.

What is known as "impersonating mediumship" occurs where the medium is so completely under the control of the manifesting spirit that he will exhibit, often in a marvelously accurate manner, the personal characteristics and mannerisms of the spirit, and which are readily recognized as such by the spirit's surviving friends in earth-life. Sometimes the medium will actually re-enact the dying moments of the controlling spirit. In many cases such impersonations have been so nearly photographically

and phonographically correct that they have afforded the most convincing proof to investigators, and in other cases have been a great consolation to relatives of the spirit who have been thus assured that their loved one was still in actual existence on a higher plane of being. These results, however, are possible only when a very close rapport condition has been established between the spirit and the medium. In cases in which such a close rapport condition is obtained, and a high degree of harmony developed, the spirit will be able to positively establish his identity by causing the medium to utter his exact words, and to give names, dates, and close details of incidents occurring in his earth life, and often to employ his exact set phrases and verbal tricks of speech, so as to bring to the consciousness of the sitters the realization that they are in the actual presence of the decarnate spirit friend.

The Proper Mental Condition.

The young medium, however, should beware against striving too hard to be the instrument of the phenomena of spirit impersonation. For a too intense anxiety, and desire to please sitters, frequently tends to produce a cloudy mental state in which the ideas in the mind of the medium blend with the spirit communication, and thus produces a most unsatisfactory result, and one which is apt to confuse the minds of the sitters and sometimes actual arouse suspicion that the medium is trying to practice deception. For this reason the young, medium should not seek the attendance of persons desiring "test seances;" at least, such should be his course until he has learned not to be carried away with his desire to please or to satisfy such persons attending

his circles. He should endeavor to cultivate a mental condition of calmness, and a determination not to influence or to interfere with the spirit communications in any way whatsoever, but, instead, to allow himself to become a passive instrument for the communication. The medium should remember that he is not a dealer in merchandise "warranted to please," but is, instead, a medium of communication between the spirit and those still in earth-life.

Demand Proof of Spirit Identity.

A certain degree of care and caution, and the employment of honest powers of discrimination, is necessary on the part of the sitters in cases of spirit impersonation. This not because of any lack of honesty on the part of the medium, but because of the habit of a mischievous class of dwellers on the planes of spirit life to falsely impersonate other spirits as such seances. As all investigators of the subject know very well, it is not an infrequent thing for such mischievous and meddlesome spirits to endeavor to pass themselves off as the relative or friends of those in the circle, or even to falsely impersonate some great historical personages. In such cases the sitters should insist upon the spirit positively identifying himself, just as they would in case of doubt regarding a person speaking to them over the telephone and claiming to be such-and-such a person. And the proof demanded should be similar to that which would be sought from the suspected telephone talker. An honest spirit communicator does not object to such demands, and is only too ready to do his best to furnish the right kind of proofs concerning his identity.

The "Trance Condition."

The psychic condition frequently attending the demonstration of mediumship powers is usually spoken of as a "trance," but this term is quite misleading, for it carries with it the suggestion of an entire loss of consciousness and of a condition of more or less deep sleep. But the mediumistic trance is seldom a deep sleep condition. Instead, it is the condition similar to that of a profound "day dream," in which the person is fully awake but in which the consciousness has been almost entirely taken off the sights and sounds of the outside world. As a writer has well said: "What is called 'trance mediumship' is seldom of the nature of the deep sleep of entire unconsciousness. It is more frequently the suspension of the ordinary consciousness of external surroundings, a temporary oblivion on the outer plane—a semi-conscious state, in fact—in which the subject does not retain the volitional ability to employ his thinking powers, the latter having been 'switched off,' so to speak, and the subject responds to the will of the spirit control."

Spirit Inspiration.

Wallis says, concerning the nature of a certain phase of spirit control: "In the case of speaking mediumship, where general and philosophical ideas are to be transmitted, the control is of a different order from that exercised for test manifestations. It is more frequently of the nature of 'suggestion.' The spirit suggestionist suggests to the medium a certain train of ideas, and then stimulates the brain and the organs of expression to do the work of dressing up the thoughts and giving them utterance. Unless the subject is a scientific or a biographical one,

in which specific terms are required and accurate data are to be imparted, the relationship between the 'inspired' speaker and the spirit control partakes more of the character of the engineer who feeds the fire and directs the movements of his engine, while the machine does the work, than it does of the actual voicing of the exact words, embodying in a full and complete fashion the ideas the spirit wishes to have expressed.

Spirit Suggestion.

"At first the operator may succeed by very imperfectly stimulating the brain of the sensitive and causing the cerebration and expression of his thoughts. The utterances may bear but a slight resemblance to what the spirit intended to express. The vocabulary is that of the medium, and the form in which the speech is cast of necessity partakes of the mold familiar to the sensitive—but, by continued close association and frequent control of the medium, the operator gains experience which enables him to exert a more decided influence; and the sensitive, becoming attuned, responds to and expresses the thoughts of the spirit with greater clearness and precision. Just as those who dwell together unconsciously approach nearer to each other and acquire a similarity in their mode of thought and of expressing their ideas (the more dominant personality impressing itself upon the less positive), so the medium imperceptibly, and very often unconsciously, acquires facility and proficiency in thought and elocutionary expression as the result of the co-operation between himself and his spirit guide."

Psychic Attunement.

Those who have read the above carefully stated opinion, will begin to see the reason why certain mediums who have attained the greatest proficiency in certain forms of mediumship, and who have become what are known as "reliable mediums," almost always have some particular spirit guide or guides with whom they have become in almost perfect psychic harmony and attunement. These harmonious spirits are not only enabled to express themselves with a high degree of clearness and power through their favorite medium, but are also enabled to assist in the production of the best rapport conditions between other spirits wishing to communicate and the said medium. There is a certain amount of spiritual and psychic co-operation between spirit and medium which is attained only by practice and continued association, which results in a psychic attunement between them. The closer and more harmonious the relationship existing between a spirit and his medium, the thinner is the veil separating the two planes upon which they dwell.

Automatic Writing.

In that phase of mediumship known as "automatic or inspirational writing", there is manifested two distinct forms of spirit control of the organism of the medium. In cases of pure automatic writing the spirit controls the arm and hand muscles of the medium, and uses them to write out the message under the direct and absolute control of the mind and will of the spirit. Cases have been known in which both hands of the medium have been so used by the spirit control, each hand writing a distinct and separate message, and both being performed without

any consciousness of the nature of the message on the part of the medium. In some cases of automatic writing the medium was engaged in thought about other subjects, or even in reading or study from a book. This is true not only in cases of automatic writing in which the hand is directly employed, but also in those in which some mechanical device such as the planchette or the ouija board intervenes.

Inspirational Writing.

In inspirational writing, on the other hand, the spirit impresses the message upon the mind of the medium, either as a whole, or else sentence by sentence or even word by word—in all of such cases, be it noted, the medium is aware of the substance of what he is about to write, either the word, the sentence, or perhaps the entire message. In such cases, of course, the medium retains control of his writing muscles and their action, and the spirit control is merely a phase of higher telepathy, as it were. When the message is impressed upon the mind of the medium word by word, or sentence by sentence, the style is of course that of the spirit exerting the control; but where the entire message is impressed upon the mind of the medium, the style is usually a blending of that of the spirit and that of the medium, for the medium is not likely to remember the literal message as given him, but merely is conscious of the general purport and meaning thereof, together with a few phrases or expressions formed by the spirit mind. In such cases, of course, the personality of the medium enters largely into the message, while in the case of pure automatic writing the personality of the medium plays no part whatsoever, and the personality of the spirit is present in its entirety,

This important distinction should be noted and remembered.

Gradual Development of Powers.

Most mediums develop their powers of mediumship gradually, and pass through a number of stages in their development of power. At first they may obtain only raps, or possibly the tilting or movement of tables. Then, very likely, they are moved to write, either automatically or else inspirationally. Later they experience the impulse to allow the spirit control to speak through their vocal organism, but it is seldom that the spirit is able to do this at first trial, as the medium is not as yet sufficiently sensitized or attuned to the spirit, and, instead, they can but gurgle, gasp, and make inarticulate sounds, or else shout, laugh, cry, or sing, and possibly jabber some strange jargon or unknown tongue, or else simply utter a series of sounds lacking in definite meaning. Later, the inarticulate sound is succeeded by definite sentences—perhaps a message, or a short address. Sometimes the spirit control will endeavor to relate some of his earth-life experiences, or perhaps even to give an impersonation manifestation. Often several different spirits strive to manifest through the developing medium, taking turns as manifestation, holding the control for only a few minutes and then giving place to his successor.

Spirit Guides.

As the development proceeds, it will be found that one or two particular spirits will manifest a greater power than the others, and after establishing a strong degree of harmony and attunement they will assume the position of "guides" to the medium, and

will accordingly begin to work in his interests on their side of life, and to accept or reject other spirits who seek to manifest through their medium. At this stage, the medium is often sufficiently advanced to be used as the channel for fuller and more complete manifestations, particularly in the direction of inspirational speaking. Often the medium in this stage of development is also able to manifest psychic powers which were formerly beyond his ability, as for instance psychometry, clairvoyance, etc. Then if his spirit guides be sufficiently advanced and powerful, and the medium be sufficiently receptive and harmonious to their influences, they will educate him to such an extent that he will be able, with their assistance, to become an instrument for the production of still higher forms of mediumistic phenomena. But the development is almost always gradual and proceeds by successive and well-defined steps and stages.

No Loss of Individuality.

In concluding this part of our book, we would call your attention to the following statements made by writers along the lines of spiritualism in the leading journals of that school of modern thought. The first writer says: "There is no need for the medium to decline to be influenced or controlled, by spirit friends for fear of losing his 'individuality,' any more than he should insist upon asserting his freedom and refuse the aid of tutors, lest they should infringe upon his sacred 'individuality.' What are called the unconscious phases of mediumship generally lead up to loving co-operation with the wise and kindly souls of the higher life in efforts to establish the fellowship of man; to bring knowledge

where ignorance now reigns; to banish the darkness by the light of that spiritual communion which shall yet be a blessing to the race; and reliance upon higher powers in or out of the body does not mean that we sacrifice our own abilities, nor do we thus become exempt from responsibility. Quite the reverse. It is the arrogance of individualism against which we protest. In fact, there is no abiding strength of purpose apart from the dependence every well-ordered mind should accord to the Infinite Light and Wisdom and the beneficial services which His wise and loving ministering spirits can render to us if we are desirous and responsive."

Mediumship Beneficial.

A second writer says: "There is no reason why the reactive consequences of frequent control by enlightened and earnest spirits, even in the case of the 'trance' medium, should not prove extremely beneficial to the sensitive, and this, we believe, has been the case with many of the speakers in the spiritualistic movement. Where the medium is inspirational and ready to respond to the thought impulsations of the control, it stands to reason that the transmitted ideas, and the stimulation of the thought-faculties caused by the transference and expression of the spirits' opinions, will not be lost to the medium. 'If you will take one step we can more easily help you to take a second than we could compel you to take the first if you were unprepared,' said a spirit teacher to Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, and there need be no loss of dignity or individuality, no injury to body or mind, but a gain of strength and spiritual vigor, education of mind and stimulation of moral purpose, by intelligent co-operation

and temporary surrender on the part of the medium to wise and loving spirit helpers and teachers."

Mediumship and The Bible.

A third writer, Rev. H. R. Haweis, says in connection with the relation of spiritualism with religion: "People now believe in the Bible because of spiritualism; they do not believe in spiritualism because of the Bible. Take up your Bible and you will find that there is not a single phenomenon which is recorded there which does not occur at seances today. Whether it be lights, sounds, the shaking of the house, the coming through closed doors, the mighty rushing winds, levitation, automatic writing, the speaking in tongues, we are acquainted with all these phenomena; they occur every day in London as well as in the Acts of the Apostles. It is incontestable that such things do occur, that in the main the phenomena of spiritualism are reliable, and happen over and over again, under test conditions, in the presence of witnesses; and that similar phenomena are recorded in the Bible, which is written for our learning. It is not an opinion, not a theory, but a fact. There is chapter and verse for it, and this is what has rehabilitated the Bible. The clergy ought to be very grateful to spiritualism for this, for they could not have done it themselves. They tried, but they failed."

PART VIII

HOW TO DEVELOP MEDIUMSHIP

Anyone is entitled to be considered a "medium" if he or she is psychically sensitive and capable of receiving and responding to spirit control or influence. Likewise, anyone is entitled to the designation who is capable of so generating freely a sufficient quantity of "psychic force," magnetism, prana, or whatever other name we may choose to apply to the force which is generated in the human organism and is capable of being employed by the spirits in order to produce mediumistic phenomena of the class usually referred to as "physical phenomena." As we have seen, the spirits themselves are not usually able to manufacture or generate by themselves this psychic required to produce the said phenomena, but, on the contrary, must depend upon mediumistic individuals for such force.

Who Are Mediumistic?

Many persons are more or less naturally sensitive to spirit influence, and therefore mediumistic. In many cases these persons tend to take on the psychic

conditions of others, both those in earth life and those on the spirit plane of existence, without realizing the nature of the influence operating on them, Such persons are frequently more or less erratic, and are considered as "flighty" by their friends They need instruction on the subject of psychic laws and self-control, so that they may intelligently guard themselves against undesirable influences, and at the same time cultivate the power of mediumship of the desirable kind. It has been asserted that "everyone is a medium," and in a way this is true, for practically every person is more or less sensitive to spirit influence, and is capable of being developed into an efficient medium of communication with the spirit world. But it is equally true that only a certain percentage of persons possess the true spiritual qualities requisite for the highest phases of true mediumship. That is to say, but few persons are fitted temperamentally and spiritually for the higher tasks of mediumship. We think it safe to say, however, that where a person is filled with a burning desire to become a true medium, and feels within himself or herself a craving of the soul for development along these lines, then that person may feel assured that he or she has within his or her soul the basic qualities required for true mediumship, and that these may be developed by the proper methods.

The Mediumistic Temperament.

A leading writer on the subject of mediumship has said: "It is a fundamental proposition that sensitiveness, or the capability of mediumship, is a faculty common to mankind, differing in degree—as hearing and sight are common heritages, but keener in some individuals than in others; or, under certain conditions,

it may disappear." What is called "the mediumistic temperament" is frequently marked self-consciousness and shrinking from public criticism, and a diffidence which causes the person to wish to be out of the range of the observation of strangers and those not sympathetic to them; on the other hand, however, there are other forms of the "mediumship temperament" which is marked by a nervous, almost hysterical, self assertiveness and desire for public notice and attention. Persons of either of these phases of this temperament, however, have the common quality of being extremely sensitive to sneers and slights, adverse criticism and oppositions, while ridicule drives them almost beside themselves. Likewise they are nearly always found to be enthusiastic and earnest workers when their interests and sympathies are aroused; as a writer has said "they are almost invariably emotional, enthusiastic, spontaneous, and ardent." And, as another writer has said they are usually "generous and impulsive, hot-headed and independent, close friends with warm hearts; too sensitive to criticism of an unkind nature, too easily pleased by praise; without malice, without revengeful thoughts." A striking feature of this temperament may be summed up in the phrase, hungry for sympathy and understanding."

Is Mediumship Desirable?

While it is true that a vast majority of persons possess the mediumistic power, latent and dormant, and capable of being developed to a greater or less active power, it is but honest to say that in many cases it is a grave question whether the person would be justified in undertaking the hard work, and long

time, required to develop himself for the minor success which would attend his efforts. As a writer has said: "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 efficacy would be far in excess of its value when so developed." But, as we have already said, the best indication is found in the "call" to develop his or her latent powers which the true medium always experiences.

Developing the Natural Power.

A writer on this subject well says: "Just as a drum or tambourine is incapable of being made to emit a tittle 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 degree 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, whatever his phase may be, has to be trained to respond to the will and the psychic force of the controlling spirit, just as much as the muscles of the musician or artist, and 'practice makes perfect'

in the one case as well in 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 and Genius.

The spirits controlling the hand of a celebrated writing medium, once delivered through him the following message regarding the nature and development of mediumistic powers: "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. The true and valuable gifts are purely spiritual and must be used for spiritual purposes; not for gain, or for satisfying curiosity, or for base or unworthy ends."

Spontaneous Mediumship.

What may be called "spontaneous mediumship" is experienced by many persons not claiming mediumistic powers, and not understanding the nature of the phenomena manifesting to and through themselves. Such persons at times are conscious of the presence of spirit friends, and may even catch glimpses of them either in the form of a mental image impressed upon their minds by the spirit friends, or else by a more or less clear partial materialization. Sometimes raps manifest themselves in their vicinity, and tables and light articles of furniture may manifest movement at their touch or approach. Such persons, not understanding the laws of spirit manifestation, are frequently greatly distressed, or even frightened, by such manifestations; and in not a few cases they experience considerable annoyance and grief by reason of the attitude of their friends who are apt to consider them "queer," or "spooky," and therefore to be avoided. Moreover, in the case of the physical manifestations such as the movements of tables, furniture, etc., and the production of raps, these persons are frequently accused of deliberate fraud in the production of such phenomena, whereas as a matter of fact they, themselves, are quite in the dark as to the cause and nature of the phenomena in question. It is obvious that the placing of the right information in the hands of such persons, and their instruction in the laws and principles of mediumship would be a blessing to them.

Mediumistic Flashes.

A writer has the following to say concerning this class of mediumistic persons: "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 'say themselves.' Others have equally sudden and fugitive clairvoyant experiences; they see spirits where they least expect, 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 affairs, 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.

Systematic Development.

'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 required to secure its development. But those who express these desires should remember that in all probabilities months, if not years, of patient development have been necessary for the success

and efficiency of those celebrated mediums whom they admire and probably envy." But, as we have said before, if the "call" to mediumship be felt, then it may be heeded; though the person must be prepared to pay the price of toil and work, patience and perseverance, required to attain the mountain top of mediumship.

The Development Circle.

As we have repeatedly stated in the foregoing pages, the actual spirit circle is the best possible means of developing the latent powers of mediumship, and the simplest, readiest, and most effective method of discovering the presence of such latent powers in the individual. As a leading medium has told us, it is "the primary school for the study of spiritual facts, and for the training of mediums." The "spirit circle," as most of you know, is a company of harmonious, earnest, sympathetic persons joining their psychic powers for the purpose of aiding the medium to establish the lines of psychic communication between the earth plane and the planes of the spiritual world. It must here be stated that by "development" we do not mean the cultivation of the powers of the spirits, but rather the training and unfoldment of the powers of the medium to receive and transmit the power exercised by the spirit controls.

The Aspirational Attitude.

To those who purpose to develop their latent mediumistic powers by and through the development circle, we would say that it is of the highest importance that they should cultivate a trustful, hopeful mental attitude, and a willingness to open themselves

to the inflow of the spiritual power of their friends of the spiritual planes. As a writer has said, they should "make some mental preparation, such as eliminating from their minds all disturbing or irritating thoughts, and by striving to consciously realize union of purpose with those who may have previously made their presence known or indicated their intention to help in the work of the development of their mediumistic powers, 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."

Natural Unfoldment.

Again, the person wishing to develop his latent mediumistic powers must exercise patience and perseverance, and must not insist upon a premature attempt at revelation on the part of the spirits. The process of the unfoldment of the mediumistic powers should be akin to that of the unfoldment of the bud of the flower, that is to say, it must be gradual, natural, and unforced. The writer above mentioned, says on this point: "Too many people, instead of waiting until the spirits were ready to communicate with them, have pressed for 'tests' before the connections were properly made. They have complicated matters by their eager questionings, and have worried the operators until everything went wrong; and then, because the answers were incorrect, inconsequent and 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."

Persistent Watchful Waiting.

Some persons are so disappointed because they have not obtained results after two or three sittings that they give up further efforts. It would perhaps amaze such persons to know that many of the world's most celebrated mediums have, in the beginning of their development circle work, sat for several weeks, or even several months, at frequent intervals, without obtaining more than the most meagre results; but they afterwards developed the most marvelous power. An extreme case is cited in the history of spiritualism, in which a couple sat night after night for six months, without missing a sitting and without being rewarded by a single physical result; but after this tedious and discouraging wait, all at once, as it were, the spirits secured the most perfect kind of communication through them, and difficult table tippings and levitation, convincing raps, messages, writings, and finally materializations follows, until their fame spread all over the world of spiritualism.

Building Lines of Communication.

Just how long it will require to obtain convincing results at the development circle is a matter largely dependent upon certain conditions. Much, of course, depends upon the faculty of the medium to adjust and harmonize himself with the spirits, so as to furnish a "clear wire" for them to operate over. Again, much depends upon the character of the

persons constituting the circle. A circle composed of harmonious, helpful persons will do much to hasten the coming of the manifestation, whereas one composed of inharmonious, sceptical, impatient, and materialistic persons will do much to retard the progress and development of the mediumistic powers.

Developing Concentration.

The following advice on this particular subject will be found helpful to those contemplating the formation of development circles, and the unfoldment of their latent powers of mediumship; it is from the pen of an earnest student of this subject, and one who is himself a competent medium. This person says: "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 now 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 is necessary. To cut one's self off from ordinary conditions, to retire into the sanctuary of one's own inner consciousness, to 'enter the silence' as it is sometimes called, is helpful training for the preparation of conditions favorable for the manifestation of spirit-power. The 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 Call for Illumination.

"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 subsequent 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.

The Jacob's Ladder of Communion.

"By the earnest study of the conditions requisite for the 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.

The Attainment of Excellence.

"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 cooperating with them will learn to know and trust his 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 hands of enlightened spirit people, with whom he can knowingly work for human good."

What a Development Circle Is.

Now then, with the above advice and admonitions in mind, the persons who desire to develop and unfold their mediumistic powers will do well to take the necessary steps to form a development circle. The "circle" it must be remembered, is not merely a crowd of persons gathered together for the purpose

pose of witnessing spiritualistic manifestations or phenomena. Instead, it is a gathering of persons who desire to co-operate in establishing relations with the world of spirits, and to receive communications therefrom. In the case of the development circle, the purpose is to demonstrate that well established spiritualistic principle that the mediumistic faculty in all of its forms is best developed and unfolded, cultivated and strengthened, by an actual sitting in the circle, in such a way as to perfect and spiritualize the magnetism of the sitters by their mutual action on each other, and by the influence and power of the spirits employing such magnetic and psychic forces so furnished them by the circle of harmonious sitters. Or, as a writer has well expressed it: "The purpose for which a 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."

Forming the Development Circle.

The circle should be composed of not less than four persons, and not more than twelve. It is well to have an equal number of persons of each sex, if this be possible; if not possible to obtain an equality of the sexes, the effort should be made to come as near to that equality as is possible. The members of the circle should seat themselves around

a table, and as nearly as is possible the sexes should be alternated in this grouping, that is to say, a man should sit next to a woman, and so on. It will be found well to have the same persons regularly attend the circles, so far as is possible. Likewise, it will be found advantageous to always use the same table, and to hold the circle in the same room—but these things are not absolutely essential, and very good results may often be obtained by having the members of the circle gather at the different homes of its respective members. While cheerfulness is well on the part of the sitters,—there should be no indulgence in levity and joking during the sitting. The room should be comfortably warmed and lighted in the ordinary way.

The Sitters in the Circle.

The sitters will do well to occupy their same places at each sitting, unless the spirits indicate otherwise. The medium, or in the absence of a recognized medium the most sensitive person in the circle, should sit in the circle at a place mentally recognized as the "head of the table," even though the table be circular in form. It will be well for the sitters to hold each others hands at the beginning of the circle, in order to generate the necessary magnetism. But after the circle is actually formed, the sitters should place their hands on the top of the table, close to its edge; the small fingers of the hands of each sitter touching those of the sitter on either side of him—in this way there is a psychic and magnetic battery formed of the sitters, providing perfect connection is maintained.

The Spirit Communication Code.

At the beginning, the leader should plainly announce the signalling conditions, so as to avoid confusion on the part of the sitters and the visiting spirits (for there are several codes in use, and confusion sometimes occurs). The most general used and approved code is as follows: "Three indicates Yes; One indicates No; Two indicates 'doubtful'; Four indicates 'don't know'; and Five indicates 'call the alphabet.'" The numbers refer to the number of raps or table-tilts, etc., given by the spirits in answer to questions asked them. When the alphabet is called for, some one of the circle slowly calls out each letter of the alphabet, in regular order, until a rap or table-tilt indicate that the right letter has been indicated; this letter should then be written down, and the alphabet again called, until the next letter is indicated; and so on until the message is completed. For instance, the name "John" would be spelt out as J-O-H-N, four callings of the alphabet being necessary to obtain the same.

The Matter of Time Conditions.

The time at which the seances are held is not in itself important, but it will be found best to fix such time at such an hour that will be most convenient for the sitters, and at which their minds will not be distracted by thoughts that they should return home, or should be attending to certain household or business duties, etc. The seances should be held not oftener than, say, twice a week, or at the most three times a week. Each seance should be continued for about an hour or a little over—certainly not over two hours at a time. The sitters

should be punctual in attendance, so that no time may be lost or wasted. The idea should be that the spirit friends are awaiting your coming to fulfill your engagement with them, and one should be as careful to keep such an engagement as he would were the engagement with his most valued friend or esteemed acquaintance. Regularity in attendance is also important, as it is important that so far as possible the same general conditions be maintained at each and every seance. The seance should be started at the same hour on each occasion, at least so far as is possible, so as to preserve the same time rhythm.

Opening of the Seance.

It will be well to open the seance with a few moments of earnest, silent meditation—a few moments of dwelling "in the silence," as some have well called it; and these moments should be observed in a religious and devotional state of mind, all frivolity and flippancy being carefully avoided. If some present feel moved to prayer, then by all means let the prayer be made, for there can scarcely be a more fitting occasion for reverent prayer than a properly conducted seance. A few moments of hymn-singing may also be found advantageous in the direction of producing the devotional state of mind on the part of the sitters. The sitters should preserve a solemn frame of mind and reverent general demeanor during the seance—perhaps the best model is that of an old time Quaker Meeting in which the silent devout spiritual feeling was so plainly manifest that it could almost be felt physically. Patience is necessary in conducting a seance, and perseverance is essential. The manifestations cannot be unduly forced,

and there is often required a great deal of psychical adjustment before the lines of the spiritual communication between the two great planes of life are fully established.

Developing a Medium.

If the circle be one devoted chiefly to the development of mediumistic powers in some one of its members, then it will perhaps be best to have only that particular medium present. The remainder of the sitters should be highly sympathetic toward the developing medium, and should assume the mental attitude of help and aid toward him. While the early results of such a circle may not be so interesting as those at which a fully developed medium is present, nevertheless the gradual unfoldment of the powers of the medium will be found highly interesting, and the gradual evolution of the character of the phenomena produced will be a liberal education in itself. In case that in the circle there are no particular persons regarded as being mediums, and where there is a general desire to develop mediumistic powers among many or all of the sitters, there must be carefully avoided anything approaching a rivalry between the members of the circle; and at the same time a strong desire and perfect willingness for the spirit power to manifest through whomsoever it may prefer, without regard to the personal ambitions of the individual sitters. Most certainly there must be no spirit of "competition" among the sitters in the circle.

The Personnel of the Circle.

The personal composition of the spiritualistic circle is a very important matter, and those entering

into circle work should pay careful attention to the personal and psychical character of those composing the circle; and it may be added here that such work requires very nice powers of discrimination, and a great degree of tact, in order to preserve the proper character of the circle, and at the same time to avoid wounding the pride of those who are to be rejected. Regarding the character of those composing the circle, the following statement of a practical medium will be found of importance. "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, but who are not influenced by spirit power to any great extent. Or probably there may exist 'cross magnetism,' that is to say the inharmonious magnetism of different members who are 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 react 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, dis-

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

Changing the Sitters.

Changes in the membership of a circle is sometimes found to be quite beneficial. If a circle meets night after night with the same membership, but without obtaining any perceptible results, then it may be well to consider the desirability of adding some new elements to the membership in the hope of improving the conditions. Sometimes the addition of a new sitter of the right physical and psychical temperament works a most remarkable improvement, and in many of such cases noteworthy phenomena are then produced almost from the time of the change. We have seen circles in which the condition of non-success was changed in a few moments to one of great and marked success by the introduction of a new element among the sitters.

Adding a Medium.

Sometimes there may result certain physical phenomena such as table tippings and movements of furniture, in cases in which there is a sufficient amount of psychic force generated among the sitters; but in such cases there may be an absolute failure to produce some of the higher forms of mediumistic phenomena,

such as, for instance, clear spirit messages by raps or otherwise, the failure being caused by the fact that the circle did not include in its membership any person of sufficiently developed mediumistic powers to be considered a "medium." In such cases the introduction into the circle of a person possessing fairly developed mediumistic powers of the higher order may change the condition of affairs at once, and almost immediately the higher manifestations may present themselves. In such cases the soil is richly fertilized and highly cultivated, and all that has been lacking is the strong, vigorous seed of true mediumship. In such cases when a true medium is discovered by means of his or her introduction into the circle (for such discovery is often made in this way), it may be well for the circle afterwards to devote itself to the development of that particular medium. And it must not be forgotten that such development of the particular medium frequently also results in the development of the other members sitting in the circle.

Reasons for Changes.

In cases in which the spirits suggest changes in the order of sitting of the members of the circle, or suggest other changes in the personnel of the circle, such suggestions should be heeded, and those who are asked to withdraw from the table should not feel hurt or offended, for there is usually nothing personal in the matter, and no personal reflection intended by the spirits; the whole matter is one connected with psychical or magnetic requirements, and all should so accept it. A writer on this subject has well said: "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 gained, think of what you have gained. A knowledge of immortality, possibly, or you have assisted in producing an instrument through which proofs of immortality may be given."

Psychic Attunement.

One of the most common faults of the sitters at a circle is to become unduly impatient, and to try to force matters to a clear manifestation of phenomena almost from the moment of the start. This is all wrong, and is frequently the cause of many failures to obtain the higher phases of mediumistic phenomena. Sitters should remember this important point, i. e., that the first requisite of the circle should be to secure perfect and free communication and flow of spiritual power—after this the more elaborate phases of phenomena may be obtained with comparative ease. One should hold in mind the illustration of a great wireless telegraph system, in which the sending and receiving instruments have not as yet been placed in perfect attunement. In such a case it is of course necessary for the two respective sets of instruments to be adjusted so that they may be in perfect attunement with each other; and until this is accomplished, there can be messages sent or received properly—certainly none received in this way. If this idea be held in mind, their circle will probably secure the psychic attunement in a much shorter time than otherwise.

Pre-Test Manifestations.

Do not be in too much of a hurry to obtain "test" messages. Let the communications flow on in a somewhat rambling manner at first, until the lines of communication are fully and firmly established, and then you may begin to think, about asking test questions of the spirits in order to, establish their identity. A writer says on this point: "Should table movements occur, or raps be heard, let them go on for a little. Do not ask test questions just yet. Request repetitions, or ask for them to be clearer or louder, so that they may be sharp and decisive. You may also ask for a certain number of movements or raps. After that, you may 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 such a case the sitter should not take umbrage for it merely means that their psychical conditions do not blend with those of the rest of the circle."

Premature Tests.

Regarding the matter of premature tests, or unreasonable demands, the same writer further says: "Remember that 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 at first most probable that the spirit operators will not be fully aware just what effect they are producing, and the mind of the medium may not as

yet be sufficiently passive, in fact it may be in a sort of state of protest against being acted upon in this particular way; accordingly, it is extremely unwise to attempt to obtain responses to test 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, of the devil.

Forcing Tests.

Another writer has said on this point: "I then, 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." Another writer, commenting upon the last quoted statement, says: "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 the imperfection in mediumship is 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, unasked for."

Spirit Directions.

Another point which should be borne in mind by the sitters in the circle is that the spirits should be

consulted as to just what they wish to manifest at the seance. They should be asked to state plainly just what order of phenomena they desire to manifest and demonstrate, and just what they wish the circle to do in order to create the best conditions for the manifestation. And it will be found advisable to heed the wishes and instructions of the spirits in such cases, and to conform as far as possible with the same. In this way the intelligent co-operation of spirits and the circle may be obtained, and the most desirable results be obtained. However, there is a limit to this acceptance and course, and in no case should the limits of reasonableness be exceeded in the matter. As a writer has well said: "It may happen that the conditions asked for by the communicating intelligence may seem to be ludicrous or impracticable; and in such case 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."

Questioning the Spirits.

After a satisfactory arrangement of the sitters is obtained, and the table tiltings or rappings have

assumed a clear, definite character, then the sitters may proceed to ascertain the identity of the spirit seeking to communicate to the circle; or else to ascertain whether the spirit wishes to deliver a message directed specially to some particular one of the sitters. In the latter case, the person indicated should prepare to question the spirit direct, either verbally or else silently and mentally. In either case the question should be stated clearly and to the point, so that the spirit may give a simple definite answer. Questions which may be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No" are of course preferable. If the spirit agrees to move the table, or else produce raps, as the alphabet is called over letter by letter, the communication and answers may of course be given in much fuller detail. In such case the spirit may be called on to spell out its name, and to designate its relationship to any of the sitters; or even to spell out a complete message. In addressing the spirit one should pursue the same general course employed in addressing questions to a friend in the flesh; and care should be taken to address the spirit politely and in a kindly tone. Some spirits are very sensitive concerning these details, and will resent any impoliteness or discourtesy, or flippancy from strangers.

Substance and Shadow.

Moreover, the earnest investigator of spiritualistic phenomena must always bear in mind that the mere production of mediumistic phenomena of the physical phase is not the real object of the investigation and sittings. These things, interesting as they may be in themselves, should be regarded as merely the incidents of the intelligent communication and reception

of messages from the inhabitants of the higher planes of life and existence. The spiritualistic circle should be more than a mere "wonder shop" in which are exhibited strange and unusual physical phenomena; rather should it be regarded as the receiving end of the wireless system over which we may and do receive valuable communications from those who have passed on before us.

As a writer has said: "It is not so much that the table moves with or without contact, or that strange rappings are heard, that is of paramount importance, but that by these means of communication actual and intelligent communication can be obtained and maintained with so-called dead people; and evidences of spirit identity, as well as loving and cheering messages may be obtained in that way from loved ones who were supposed to be gone forever. This is the important point to be established beyond all peradventure."

PART IX

MEDIUMISTIC PHENOMENA

Some students of this book who have noted in the foregoing pages certain references to the conduct of the sitters in the circle may ask themselves the question: "Why are the sitters so important, when the power is really exerted by the spirits through the medium?" In fact, such questions, often uttered in the spirit of adverse criticism, are frequently propounded by sceptics to spiritualists, and it is well that the answer should be correctly given. As a matter of fact the understanding of such answer will mean the possession of some important facts concerning the phenomena of mediumship, and without which the investigator will possibly wander far astray from the main road of truth concerning such phenomena.

The Part Played by the Sitters.

All of the best authorities on the subject of spiritualism are practically agreed concerning the important part played by the sitters in the circle in all manifestations of spirit power. As J. J. Morse

says: "There are three factors concerned in mediumship: (1) the spirit controlling; (2) the mental atmosphere of the medium controlled; and (3) the mental atmosphere of the people surrounding the medium. "And as A. Morton has said: "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."

Result of Bad Sitters.

And Wallis has said: "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 so-called failure was directly traceable to the destructive thought—atmosphere with which they surround 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 sitter 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."

Mental Atmosphere of the Medium.

Likewise, it must not be forgotten that an important factor in the production of mediumistic phenomena is that which Morse, in the above quotation, has called "the mental atmosphere of the medium controlled." In many cases the spirit powers are present and ready to manifest freely, and the mental atmosphere of the sitters is likewise desirable and sympathetic, but still the manifestations are but faint, irregular, and generally unsatisfying—the weak link of the chain being found in the mental state of the medium, and consequently in the mental atmosphere arising from the same. Such undesirable mental states and atmospheres may be said to arise principally from two general causes, as follows: (1) Desire on the part of the medium to produce sensational or brilliant results, and (2) Doubt on the part of the medium concerning the genuineness and validity of the communications. Let us consider each of these in further detail.

The Mediumistic Mind.

If the medium is filled with the idea or notion of producing brilliant or sensational results, he will in all probability so disturb the placidity of the receiving surface of his mind that the latter will fail to register or record the impressions being made upon it by the spirit vibrations. It is similar to the case of a placid bosom of a deep lake which, normally, will reflect clearly and distinctly the images of the surrounding scenery cast upon it from the light waves; but which, if disturbed by strong breezes, will exhibit merely a distorted, disturbed, incomplete, and untrue reflection of the surrounding

scenery cast upon its surface. A strong desire of the kind mentioned will tend to agitate and disturb the normal placid condition of the mental reflecting surface of the mediumistic mind.

Mediumistic "Stage Fright."

In the same way the placid reflecting surface of the mediumistic mind may become disturbed by the presence of fear, doubt, and distrust in the mind of the medium. It may at first seem strange that the medium should doubt the manifestations being made through his mentality, provided that he be honest and genuine. But the answer and explanation is very simple. The medium (particularly the young medium) may become panic-stricken by the thought that "perhaps this is merely the result of my own imagination or fancy, instead of spirit power," and the result will be that he will begin to halt and stumble, stammer and stutter, instead of allowing the message to flow through him uninterrupted. This is particularly true when the message is of the nature of a test of identity, and where the vocal organs of the medium are being employed in the manifestation. It occurs far more frequently than the public suppose, that the medium is stricken by stage-fright or the panic of fear, arising from the causes above given, i. e. the sudden fear that he is allowing his fanciful imagination to run away with him instead of his being under genuine control.

The Psychic Telephone System.

The medium should ever strive to guard against this harmful mental state, and should open himself completely to the spirit influence, casting aside all

fear and doubt, and placing all responsibility upon the controlling spirit or band of helpers. The medium should remember that he is merely the "medium" or psychic telephone system, and is not an active party to the process of spirit communication. He should, therefore, never either unduly strive to please, nor be fearful or distrustful concerning the validity of the manifestation being made through him. Let the spirits attend to their end of the line, and the sitters to the other end—the medium is on neither end of the line, but is the line itself.

Interrupted Communications.

It should not be forgotten, in this connection, that the spirits have their own difficulties to contend with. In the current slang phrase, they "have troubles of their own" to overcome in the production of mediumistic phenomena. Not only does the spirit wishing to communicate have to draw sufficient psychic power from the medium and the sitters, not only has he to scientifically adjust the apparatus at the sending end of the psychic telephonic line, but he has also to be sure that he is actually communicating the message so that it may be received by the sitters. In such cases the spirit is placed in a position similar to that of a person at one end of a telephone line, who after had an answer to his opening "Hello!" talks away, thinking that the person at the other end is hearing every word he utters, perfectly unconscious that the communication has been interrupted from some cause or other common to telephone lines. How often do we, in our telephone conversations, interrupt our flow of talk to anxiously inquire, "Are you still there?" or "Do you hear me?"

Some Difficulties of the Spirits.

A writer on the subject has well said regarding this difficulty on the part of the communicating spirit. "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 that he had actually 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 that 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.

Difficulties Overcome.

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 Psychic Triangle.

In considering the question of the requisites of the mediumistic circle, the student should remember always that there is a psychic triangle in all such circles, viz., a triangle of which the spirit constitutes one side, the medium a second side, and the sitters a third side. And it is essential that a harmony and sympathy between all three sides of the triangle should be preserved and maintained. Therefore, sitters at the circle should endeavor to do their part in producing and maintaining such harmony with both the medium, the spirits, and finally with each other—and this last is not the least, by any means. Unless there be at least a very fair degree of harmony between the several members constituting the circle, there will be something important lacking in their harmony of the circle as a whole toward the other two sides of the psychical triangle,

Harmonious Relationship.

The sitters composing the circle should always remember that mutual harmony is a most important factor contributing to the success of the manifestations sought to be secured. Accordingly, each sitter should strive to bring himself or herself into a sympathetic and harmonious relationship with each and every other sitter, so far as is possible. To accomplish this result the sitters should endeavor, so far as is possible, to lay aside their respective prejudices, jealousies, and differences of opinion. These incidents of their personality should be left, together with their hats and outer wraps, in the outer hall of the house in which the seance is held. Differences of religion, politics, race and creed, all should be cast aside at least temporarily, in order that the greatest amount of harmony should be manifested by the group. A safe rule to follow is this: seek to find the largest number of points of mutual agreement, and to set aside all the rest of the items of personal tastes, customs and habits of feeling and thought. Dwell together on the plane of common agreement, shutting out the planes of respective disagreements. In this connection we should state that the customary attitude of cold reserve, blended and colored by suspicion, which too often is found between comparative strangers, is far from being helpful in producing the best conditions for the seance. For the time being, at least, the sitters should try to remember that they are all members of one great human family, and united by the bonds of common origin and nature.

The Discordant Note.

A writer recites an incident in a circle which he once attended, which so thoroughly illustrates the point just made, that we think it worth while to reproduce it here. He says: "On one occasion in particular, we had a remarkable illustration of the detrimental influence of one or two sitters. It occurred at a seance at which a number of mediums were 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 they displayed no signs of interest. Their 'detective' attitude was so objectionable that even those who had endeavored to thaw out 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."

Antagonistic Elements.

Another incident of the kind is related by a writer, as follows: "On one 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 that 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." While we are far from holding that the sitters in a circle should lay aside all ordinary caution and good judgment, and instead to assume the mental attitude of utter and unquestioning credulity and acceptance, we do positively declare that the mental state of preconceived distrust and suspicion is often almost fatal to the production and demonstration of the highest manifestations of spirit phenomena.

The Open Mind.

The proper mental state of the scientific investigator of spiritualistic phenomena is that of "the open mind." The sitters should endeavor to lay aside all prejudices and preconceived conceptions, and in place thereof should endeavor to hold a fair,

impartial mental attitude—and this accompanied by a desire to have the manifestations proceed naturally, freely and fully. The results should be sympathetically awaited and received, and the judgment of careful reasoning withheld until afterward when the whole proceedings may be recalled and considered in the light of cold reason. One has but to consider the extremely sensitive psychical condition of the mentality of the medium, and the nicely balanced mental atmosphere of the circle, to realize how easily this sensitiveness may be affected, and the nice balance be disturbed, by the projection of strong mental waves of distrust, suspicion, and antagonism into the atmosphere of the circle. The attitude of the intelligent scientific investigator should be that of a calm and observant soul. Such an investigator should have what Sir William Crookes once called "a mind to let," i. e., a mind from which all prejudices and preconceived theories and notions have been ejected for the time being, and into which Truth, from any source, should always be welcomed as a tenant. Instead of seeking to throw obstacles in the way of the medium, one should endeavor to assist by mental attitude and demeanor, and by observance of the necessary conditions, in the production of the spirit manifestations and in the demonstration of spirit identity.

Spirits and the Sense of Humor.

It is not necessary for the sitters to assume an attitude of preternatural gravity and solemnity. Instead, they should be natural and cheerful, though of course not flippant or trifling, or indulging in an exhibition of the cheap remarks which by so many

is mistaken for wit. The sense of humor, however? need not be thrown aside or discarded, for as all investigators know many of the spirit visitors have a very highly developed sense of humor, and sometimes even go so far as to seemingly endeavor to shock some of the melancholy, over-serious, "prunes and prism" type of sitters. As a writer well says: "Spirits are human 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." Another has said: "Experience has taught that the spiritual circle should be presided over by 'a pure heart and a strong head'—to which qualities might well be added a well-ordered development of the sense of humor, for the absence of humor often tends to make philosophy grotesquely ill-proportioned."

Rhythmic Harmony.

The manifestation of rhythmic harmony often materially aids in the generation of psychic power, and the consequent production of advantageous conditions at the circle. Many circles are opened by having the several sitters indulge in harmonious rhythmic breathing for a few minutes—all breathing in unison—in order to produce this condition of rhythm. Those who have never practiced this unison of rhythmic breathing will be surprised at the consciousness of psychical harmony which may be produced in this way among a number of persons gathered together in a circle. This principle of rhythm is what is really involved in the call of many spirits for singing at the beginning of a seance. In singing there is a certain unison and rhythm

unconsciously observed, and it is this rather than the air or words of the songs which produces the desire conditions. A writer states that upon one occasion a manifesting spirit said: "It isn't noise that I want; it's harmony! If you cannot sing, you can at least count out loud, and count altogether—that may give us the right vibrations." That spirit had the right idea, and one which it would be well for all sitters to remember and put into effect. Vibration is the secret of all things, and rhythm is the measure and spirit of all vibrations; therefore, the very harmony of a circle may be said to be rhythmic. There is a great truth involved in these statements, and you will do well to ponder over them.

Retarding Factors.

It should be almost unnecessary to state that haste, hurry and impatience are retarding factors in a spiritualistic seance; but, alas, too many persons seem to be totally unaware of this important fact. We call your attention to the following remarks concerning this point, the same having been made by a writer on the subject who himself is a medium of extended experience. He says: "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 different 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 demonstrations of their power and identity."

Reasonable Demand of Spirits.

In the above stated instance, and others similar to it, it at first seems as if the spirits were over-particular, and "finnicky" about the conditions, but a little careful thought will show you that this is not the real state of affairs at all. The spirits are not "finnicky," but are merely desirous of securing the conditions necessary to a successful manifestation, and all their efforts are bent toward that end. This, and this alone, is the cause of their so-called "finnickiness." Surely they are justified in this—would not any and all of us feel the same way if we were trying to establish communications with another plane, where such communication largely dependent upon the production and maintenance of certain conditions? I think so.

Harmonious Conditions.

It is not an easy task to give specific directions for development of mediumistic power for the guidance of one who is desirous of unfolding such powers

after they have first manifested their presence in him. In fact, as many of the best authorities on the subject agree, it is practically impossible to lay out a course of cut-and-dried directions of this kind. This arises logically from the conditions present in such cases, and from the special circumstances surrounding the subject of mediumship. In fact, it may be broadly stated that at the beginning the medium can do but little in the direction of such development, other than to present harmonious conditions through which the spirits may be able to manifest their presence and their power.

The Channel of Communication.

It must be always remembered that the medium is not the active agent in the production of mediumistic phenomena—he is not called to do anything except to passively act as the medium or channel of communication between the two planes of existence. He is always the intermediary between the two planes, and is not the active agent on either plane. The active agents are the spirits on the one plane, and the sitters in the circle on the other plane. The sitters must supply much of the actual operative power from the one plane, and the spirits must do all of the communication from the other plane. The medium serves to connect the two opposite ends of the psychic telephone system so that the messages may pass through and over the mediumistic channel, secure and maintain the best psychic conditions.

The Role of the Spirits.

We have spoken of the part of the work which it is necessary for the sitters to perform in order to

And now we shall have something to say concerning the part to be played properly by the spirits wishing to communicate. It must not be supposed for a moment that every spirit is possessed of the necessary knowledge enabling it to communicate easily through a medium, or even to develop the medium so that he may become an efficient channel of communication. Spirits are frequently found to be sadly deficient in such knowledge and experience, and the development of the medium as well as the production of satisfactory phenomena, suffer from this lack. The spirits who seek to use a medium may or may not be fitted for such task. Many spirits are utterly unable to properly develop a medium; some fail by reason of their lack of knowledge, and others fail because of their lack of special aptitude for the task.

Differences Among Spirits.

A writer on this subject well says regarding this particular point: "Some spirits may lack both knowledge and aptitude; others may have the knowledge, but yet fail from want of the power to control. They may be able to affect one mediumistic person and not another. Likewise, they may be able to use a sensitive medium 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 sensitive who is fitted only for trance or clairvoyant mediumship, but who does not possess the quality or psychic force for strenuous 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.

Disturbing Elements.

"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 of '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 commences; mediums not infrequently get nervous or timid when they feel that they are being affected, and, although they desire to be controlled, they are afraid to submit to the influences 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."

Impersonation Mediumship.

One of the most interesting phases of mediumship, and the one perhaps most sought after by earnest seekers of the truth concerning those who have passed over to a higher plane of existence, is that commonly known as "impersonation mediumship," or perhaps "impersonating test mediumship," in which the vocal organs of the medium are employed by the communicating spirit in order to speak directly to those in the circle, or to the visiting friend of the decarnate spirit who comes into the presence of the medium. Many mediums devote their entire time and attention to this phase of mediumship, and place themselves at the service of those on the earth plane who wish to converse directly with their spirit friends or relatives who have passed on. This is by far the most satisfying phase of mediumship to those on the earth plane who are thus enabled to receive communications, and perhaps even direct answers to specific questions made to them. The most convincing evidences of the identity of the communicating spirit are also obtained through this particular form of mediumship. And this affording of comfort to those still on the earth plane is one of the most satisfying features of mediumship, and one which will do more than aught else to reconcile the medium to annoyances and to the personal sacrifices so often made by the medium.

The True Purpose of Mediumship.

A writer has well given to mediums the following inspiring message concerning the nature, purpose and aims of their work: "The modes of spirit manifestation

are many, the phases wonderfully varied, but, like a golden cord running through them all, there is a distinct purpose of bringing to those on earth the glad tidings and proof positive of continued conscious personal experience 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."

Gradual Development.

The best authorities constantly impress upon young mediums the fact that they should develop their mediumistic powers to a considerable degree before they venture to give public seances or exhibitions of their power. As Dr. Dean Clarke well says: "Novices in mediumship have no business to assume obligations they are not fully qualified to fulfil. Let them take the counsel metaphorically given by Jesus, to 'tarry in Jerusalem till their beards are grown.'" They should by all means wait until the spirits are strong enough to control and guard them from the meddlesome interferences of other persons, both those in the flesh and those out of it. Many spirits will overwork the medium, and the latter not knowing enough to protect himself will often suffer by reason thereof. On the other hand, young mediums often yield to the importunities of friends and other sitters, and will try to oblige and satisfy them, even often at the expense of their own powers and forces.

Public Seances.

A writer, himself a successful medium, gives the following good advice to young mediums: "I strongly advise all mediums to wait and serve out their apprenticeship thoroughly before they undertake to sit for sceptics or perform public work, either as test, impersonating, speaking, seeing, or healings mediums; and the best place to secure the necessary experience, training and unfolding is in the 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 semi-public 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.

Home Circle Development.

"Around the family table, where those who are united in affection meet to hold 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 another, 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 experiments, 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 on the sensitive he remains steadfast, realizing that the responsibility for use or abuse rests upon himself."

Undue Prolongation of Seances.

There is a great temptation to young mediums to allow their enthusiasm, and desire to aid in demonstrating spiritualistic phenomena, to cause them to prolong their seances far beyond the limits which prudence and regard for the medium's physical well-being would dictate. There is a certain stimulation and excitement arising from the manifestation of phenomena through the medium, and this in itself

is helpful rather than hurtful—a tonic rather than a depressant; but like all other forms of overindulgence, and excessive yielding to this excitement tends to bring on a reaction and a swing to the opposite emotional extreme, and the medium suffers thereby in many cases. There comes a time in all seances when the high-water mark of psychic power is reached, and this is a good time for the medium to bring the seance to a close—in fact, experienced mediums do precisely this very thing at this particular time. But this point once passed, there is experienced a peculiar weakening and depressing feeling, this often being accompanied by a physical weariness and a feeling of chilliness in the extremities, or even a slight chilly feeling over the whole body. When these feelings are experienced, the medium should remember that the limit of reason has been passed, and he should bring matters to a close without further loss of time. Experienced spirits will usually detect the approach of the reaction time, and will, themselves, bring the seance to a close, independent of any action on the part of the medium. But when the spirits are not experienced, they fail to notice this, or even may become careless about such things in their desire to communicate to the circle. In the latter cases, the medium must take care of himself.

Good Advice to Young Mediums.

A mediumistic writer gives the following advice on this subject to young mediums: "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 prostrations 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 act. If you feel that the circle is inharmonious, or that the sitters are depleted and exacting, refuse to sit. If you feel that you are tired, and feel weary and debilitated on the day following your seances, you may be sure that you are sitting too long, or that you require the help of a larger circle of congenial friends to supply the requisite psychic force for your further development."

Self-Protection for Mediums.

Another writer says on this subject: "Mediumship 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." But it must not be understood that the proper practice of mediumship is harmful and not conducive to good health. On the contrary, as a writer has said: "We consider the highest degree of

physical health perfectly compatible with the best manifestation of mediumship." Another writer has well said: "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 power 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."

Danger in Indiscriminate Magnetising.

Another point against which the medium should guard himself, is that of allowing others, indiscriminately, to "magnetize" him to "aid his development" or to "increase his power." Mediums, particularly while in the psychic condition, are very sensitive and susceptible to outside mental influences. And for this reason they should be particularly on guard against allowing themselves to be "magnetized" or influenced psychically by persons of whom they know nothing. Otherwise, the medium not only places himself under subjection to the mentality and emotionality of strangers and undesirable persons, just as would a hypnotic subject if he placed himself under the control of such persons. Moreover, in the case of the medium, there is a danger of his being so influenced in this way that thereafter he may attract to himself a class of undesirable spirit influences who would otherwise never have come into his psychic aura or world. We call attention to

the following advice on this point given by an experienced mediumistic writer:

Detrimental Magnetic Influence.

"No sensible person should surrender himself to the magnetic influence of a human being of whom he knew nothing; he should 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 magnetizer who comes along to experiment upon him. 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?' * * Mesmeric influence from an experienced operator, for the purpose of inducing susceptibility, is sometimes helpful to a sensitive. If the mesmerist can put you in 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 would not recommend you to submit to mesmeric influence or hypnotic suggestions from anyone, unless you know that he is 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."

Mediumistic Auto-Suggestion.

Other authorities have pointed out the fact that in some cases hypnotism has resulted in a sort of pseudo-mediumship, or bogus mediumship, in which the control is not that of a real spirit, but is merely the result of the suggestion of the hypnotizer, or else the auto, suggestion of the would-be medium himself. A writer on the subject has said of this: In too many cases, only the power of autohypnotism is manifested, and we have obsession, fraud and folly as the result. There is one sure method of detecting the autohypnotic 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 the hypnotist's 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 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."

"Psychic Sponges."

A writer has also called the attention of young mediums to another undesirable class of psychic hangers-on at seances, as follows: "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 are 'psychic sponges,' and should be requested to sit outside the circle, or be asked kindly to refrain from attending."

Investigate Your Spirits.

Finally, the young medium should understand the true nature of the spirits, and just how far he may be safely guided by their advice and wishes. The instructions given by an intelligent spirit of good character may be safely followed as a rule, but the character and general intelligence of a particular spirit must first be ascertained through acquaintance with him. Until the character of a spirit has been fully established, and his claim to intelligence well supported by his messages, the medium will do well to rely on his or her own good judgment and intuition. As a writer has well said: "The medium must keep a level head and proceed cautiously. He should never allow any spirit, in or out of the body, to usurp his right of private judgment or exercise any undue

authority over him. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty; you must use your own discretion and try the spirits before you trust to them."

Spirits Are Still Human Beings.

Many persons seem to be under the impression that because a spirit happens to have passed out of the body he will, of necessity, know the truth about every subject in the range of human thought, and can make no mistakes, and can always work miracles. But this is a grave mistake; it should always be remembered that a decarnate spirit is as much a human being as is an incarnate spirit such as yourself; and not any better or worse, on the average, than yourself or other incarnate spirits. One needs but to remember that all sorts and conditions of people are constantly passing out on to the spirit plane, and that, at least for some, time, they continue to be practically the same kind of persons that they were on the earth plane. This being so, it will be seen that it would be very unwise to surrender oneself indiscriminately to each and every kind of spirit who happens to manifest his presence at a seance. Persons in the flesh should talk and reason with those out of the flesh just as they would were the latter still on the earth-plane of life. A writer well says: "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 for one to refuse to be dictated to by the spirits and to decline to go on blindly."

Beware of Domineering Spirits.

A writer has given the following good advice to young mediums, which such will do well to heed: "Do not always be 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."

PART X

EXPERIENCES IN THE CIRCLE

When a circle of sensitive people has been formed, and the necessary preliminaries of the first sitting have been completed, it is not at all infrequent that even at the first sitting there should be more or less manifestation of spirit power. In many cases the sensitives among the sitters begin to experience a peculiar sensation in their arms and hands, the latter being placed on the table in front of them.

Signs of Spirit Presence.

There will be manifested in most cases a peculiar sense of heaviness or weight in the hands on the table, and an impression that the hands are being held to the table as if by glue or other adhesive material. In the arms are manifested peculiar tingling, pricking sensations, or a "needles and pins" feeling, something akin to a gentle current of electricity passing along them. Sometimes there is experienced the sensation of a gentle cool breeze passing over the sitters—particularly over the backs of

their hands. In other cases there may be a sense of numbness or partial loss of sensation, something akin to that experienced when a hand or arm "goes to sleep," as the popular phrase expresses it. In other cases there is manifested a peculiar jerking, twitching, or vibration of the hands and arms, sometimes extending to the whole body of some of the sitters. Sometimes the hand of the medium will begin to make motions as if he were trying to write, and a pencil placed in his hands may trace crude figures or attempts at letters. At this stage it will be found that the singing of hymns or similar music will tend to have a quieting, soothing, harmonizing effect.

Spirit Rappings.

At the first sitting, or one shortly following after the first, it is likely that raps will be produced, and communication established in this way. In such case the leader of the circle (not the medium) should be sure to inform the spirits just what communicating code is to be used in the circle, so that there may be no misunderstanding concerning the same. In such case he should address the spirits as if there were several present, for such will most likely be the case. It must be remembered, however, that the raps will not always come from the table. They may also, for that matter, come from the wall, the ceiling, or from some of the furniture in the room. The table raps come from the top of the table or under the table. Sometimes they sound like ordinary raps, and then again they may give forth a peculiar hollow sound which is difficult to describe or to definitely locate. The appearance of these

raps give positive proof that the conditions are being established more or less fully, and the success of the circle is almost sure to follow.

Table Tippings.

Sometimes, however, in place of the raps being manifested by the spirit forces, there will instead be manifested that peculiar tipping of the table which was the distinguishing characteristic of early spiritualistic phenomena in the western countries. In this case the tipping of the table will proceed just as in the case of the raps, so far as the transmission of messages is concerned. That is to say, the table will tilt three times, one time, etc., in accordance with the code, just as in the case of communication by means of the raps. In addition to this, however, the table may begin to manifest strange motions; it may begin to raise itself, jump around, spin around on one leg, slide across the rooms, etc. In such cases the hands of the sitters should be kept on the table, or if they slip off they should be at once replaced thereupon. Sometimes heavy tables will manifest more activity than the lighter ones.

The Spirit Signals.

When these rappings or table-tiltings begin to be manifested, all in the circle should keep cool and calm, and should refuse to become agitated or excited. If the phenomena should be apparently meaningless and disconnected, and resulting in no definite communication from the other side, do not jump to the conclusion that the meaningless rapping or senseless table tipping is the work of foolish spirits or flippant decarnate entities. On the contrary,

you must remember that not only is your circle experimenting, but that the spirits on the other side are also experimenting in hopes of securing proper conditions for intelligent communications and definite messages. As we have said before, the spirits have their own troubles, as well as the sitters, and both sides are really engaged in an effort to "find each other." As a writer has said: "Remember also that 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 do you. So many 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."

Flashes of Communication.

In some cases the circle will have to sit several times before the persistent though disconnected and apparently meaningless raps or table-tilts will begin to show positive signs of intelligent signalling. The same thing would probably occur were the inhabitants of the planet Mars to find themselves able to flash signals to our earth—for a long time the flashes would seem meaningless to us, until at last they would seem to manifest a definite intelligent purpose and rhythm. When this stage of the raps or table-tilts has been reached, then the leader of the circle,

should acquaint the spirits with the code used, and ask definite questions concerning the future conduct of the seance, the answers to which the spirits are requested to give through the signal code of raps or tilts. When these answers begin to "come through" plainly and definitely, then the seance enters a new phase.

Spirit Code Signals.

In this new phase, when once entered into, the formal set procedure to be followed will be about as follows: The leader of the circle, recognizing the signs of the presence of spirits in the circle, will address them and ask them whether or not there is a spirit present who wishes to convey a message to the circle, or to any one present. Then the spirits signal back in the affirmative or the negative. If the answer be in the affirmative, the circle leader asks the spirits to indicate by the affirmative signal when the name of the right person present is named and he then proceeds to slowly and plainly name each person present, in succession, until the affirmative signal is received. Or, he may ask the spirits to indicate the identity of the spirit friends present, when their names, are called; and he then proceeds to call over the names of the departed friends of those present, as the same are requested by the sitters or visitors to the circle. When the right name is reached, the spirits signal in the affirmative, either by raps of table-tilts, etc. After the question-and-answer line of communication has been firmly and strongly established, more definite information may be obtained by the instruction of the system of "alphabet calling," as described in a preceding portion

of this book. In this system, the letters of the alphabet are slowly and clearly called off, in succession, until the affirmative signal is given regarding the letter just called, which indicates that that letter is to be marked down as a part of the sentence. Wonderful messages have been received in this way, although the process is very slow and somewhat tedious in the case of long messages.

Ouija Boards.

Of late years the sitters at circles have found a quicker method of obtaining "letter by letter" messages by means of the apparatus called "the Ouija Board," which consists of a moving "Planchette" with an indicator which moves over the letters marked on a board, the hands of the sitters (or certain of their number) being placed on the table of the "Planchette." The indicator moves over the line of letters, and indicates the letters of the message, one by one. The Ouija Boards are sold at a moderate price, and will be found a valuable adjunct to any spiritualistic circle. During the past few years, public attention has been strongly directed to this manner of obtaining spirit communications by reason of newspaper notices concerning the same, and the fact that several books have been written under spirit guidance imparted in this particular way.

A Home-Made Ouija Board.

A writer has given the following directions for making a "home-made Ouija Board," viz., "A Planchette may be used as an 'Ouija' by laying down a sheet of paper upon which the letters of the alphabet

have been written or printed in a fairly large semi-circle, 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 numbers, answers your questions at 'Yes' or 'No,' or messages may be spelt out as you watch its movements."

Trance or Inspirational Mediumship.

Through the development and unfoldment afforded by the development circle, the mediumistic persons in that circle, particularly the medium who is "sitting for development" in the circle, will in all probability develop that phase of mediumship called "Trance Mediumship," or "Inspirational Mediumship." Of this phase of mediumship a writer has said: "This mental phase of mediumship involves 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 a mesmerist arouses the clairvoyant powers of his subject. The somnambulant 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 larger degree of freedom, and is able to perceive on the inner or spiritual plane.

Symptoms of Trance Condition

"If you are likely to become a trance-speaking medium, you will probably experience a sensation as a falling or dizziness, as if you were 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 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 insures 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 will thus destroy the very condition upon which success depends."

The Entranced State.

Another mediumistic writer says: "The entrancement usually takes place all at once, and the entranced one passes into the realm of communication with the spirits without much warning of any kind. When the medium is entranced it is highly essential that there be no commotion or fear expressed in thought or action in the circle. It must be remembered that the welfare of the medium depends a great deal on the conditions of the others present, and purity of thought and pleasant expectation should be the first thing looked after when the entrancement occurs. In passing into the trance, the

medium usually grows very pale and acts not unlike a person going into a faint. But he or she must be allowed to pass behind the veil without any commotion. When the entrancement is accomplished, the manifestations may take place in different ways. There are, in fact, many forms of manifestation belonging to this particular phase of mediumship, but they all come under the general rule and conditions.

Trance Phenomena.

Another writer has said: "In entering the trance condition of mediumship, you will probably become semi-conscious, or perhaps almost completely unconscious. 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 the part of the medium to undue noise, or violence, or absurdity. You will be aware of what you are doing, but will be unable to fully 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; so do not be hostile or critical, but act out your impressions.

Entering the Trance.

"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 of the trance (if you desire to do so) if you 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 cooperate 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 utterly 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 displayed by you when under the stimulating influence of the operator.

Advice to Trance Mediums.

"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; and 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 affects them is weak; they get only hazy impressions, and there is a woeful lack of ideas. It seems as if the heavens were brass, or that they themselves were unresponsive. They know not why, but whatever they can 'lay hold of' to speak, or whatever the spirit people can project into their sphere seems forced and incomplete. If you should ever 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."

Speaking Mediumship.

In that form of Trance or Inspirational Mediumship generally known as "Speaking Mediumship," the communicating spirit assumes partial or complete control of the vocal organs of the medium, and the spirit then directly addresses the circle or audience of listeners, just as he would do were he, himself, actually in the flesh confronting them and using his own vocal organs. In such addressing the spirit manifests many of the characteristics which distinguished him during his earth life. The medium's voice is changed, and his manner takes on a quite different form, i. e., that of the spirit which he possessed in his own earth life. In fact, in some cases, it has actually been observed that the very body of the medium seemed to either shrink, or else enlarge, as if taking the form of the etheric framework of the controlling spirit.

Public Speaking Under Control.

A writer gives the following advice concerning Speaking Mediumship: "Should you be controlled to give public addresses, it will be best to withhold the name of the spirit who prompts or controls 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 persons. Whereas, if you announce the name of a spirit, your hearers may consider that the address does not come up to the standard of the ability displayed by that individual before he dies, and may discredit and discard the good that they might otherwise have found in your utterances."

Spirit Advice and Counsel.

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 concerning 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 these things when they were here, and have no heed for such knowledge over there; and it will be well for you to learn to live your own life, do your 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.

Impersonating Manifestations.

It will often happen that some spirit will take control of the medium for the purpose of communicating with a friend present in the circle or audience,

and for the purpose of positively identifying himself to that friend, he may deem it necessary to cause you to impersonate himself as he was during his earth life. In such cases you will experience a peculiar feeling of undergoing a complete transformation of personality, and often a dual-personality for the time being. Another instance of this kind is where a spirit wishing to communicate with friends, and this being his first opportunity to manifest in the impersonating phase, he may yield to that peculiar psychic law which seems to operate in the direction of causing a spirit, manifesting for the first time, to enact his dying experiences, and to manifest a pantomimic reproduction of his last hours preceding death. In such cases, the medium reproduces, in a most startlingly real manner, the movements, ways of breathing, coughing, gestures, ejaculations, and may even go so far as to utter the "last words" of the dying man whose spirit now controls the medium. Every medium should be prepared for an experience of this kind, for it will sometimes completely upset a medium unfamiliar with it, and not knowing just what it all means.

Incidents of Impersonations.

In a case such as stated above, the medium will probably find himself either partially or completely conscious of what is being said and done by the spirit through his body or vocal organs. He will naturally strive to escape the utterance of the strange cries, moans, vocal gasps and efforts, and the dead cries and farewell words of the dying man or woman. Some mediums have felt at such times as if they were losing their reason, and they have struggled to

throw off the spirit control and influence in order to regain their mental balance. The best mediums advise the young mediums to keep as cool, calm, and collected as possible in such cases, and not to allow themselves to become panic-stricken. A writer on the subject has said: "Trust to the sincerity of the spirit and the good sense of the sitters, and throw off your fear. Yield obedience to your control, and neither help nor hinder it. 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."

Incidents of Inspirational Mediumship.

Another writer speaking concerning inspirational mediumship, has said: "In inspirational speaking it will be noted that the medium often gives a really wonderful speech, although he may naturally be a very poor conversationalist. These speeches are often preserved and some of them form exceptionally interesting literature. These speeches are generally given when the medium is seated, but sometimes he loses balance and falls to the floor. Still, as long as the spirit control has anything to say, he will say

it through the vocal organs of the medium. But it must always be borne in mind that a medium does not, as a general rule, become an inspirational speaker all at once. There is a stage of development through which he must pass in which the spirit control assumes charge of the body of the medium, and this takes some time and is usually accomplished in steps. First, the medium gives evidence of inspirational speaking by uttering guttural sounds, and very often his mouth merely moves without giving forth any sound whatever. Little by little the control gains access to the inner atmosphere of the medium, and when he has broken the final barriers, he can speak and act and deliver what he has to say. But it must be remembered that the mind of the medium is not to be left out of the question entirely. He is often called upon to aid in the interpretation of the speeches the spirit delivers, and these he may misinterpret and lend to them color of his own mentality, without his conscious intention to do so, however."

Value of Identification.

In impersonation mediumship, however, no matter how interesting the manifestation may be, it is of prime importance that the identity of the spirit should be clearly established, providing that the spirit himself claims positively to be some particular individual; this, of course, does not apply to instances in which the spirit does not claim identity with any particular departed person, and where the communications are given anonymously. It is this feature of identification that renders this phase of mediumship so valuable and important. A well

known medium, in a trance state, once delivered the following message from a spirit: "Impersonation mediumship is the most valuable that the world can possibly have today. When by the aid of the impersonating medium, the inquirer is enabled to converse with his beloved deceased friends, and they make themselves actually visible in the personality of the medium, plain to consciousness and understanding, and tell him specifically points and facts of identity and experience that are 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 impersonating medium is the most valuable medium you can present to inquirers." Another mediumistic writer has said: "This kind of mediumship 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 indications of a rational purpose on the part of the operator."

Fraudulent Claims of Identity.

We would be lacking in our sense of duty and obligation toward our readers, however, were we to refrain from calling their attention to the fact that positive and strict identification of the spirits, in cases where identity is claimed, is a duty on the

part of investigators, particularly on the part of those who happen to be relatives or friends of the deceased person whose presence and identity are being claimed by the controlling spirit who is manifesting the impersonation. As we have said, elsewhere, we must remember that there are all kinds of decarnate spirits, just as there are all kinds of incarnate spirits; and that the nature of a spirit is not greatly changed by passing out of the body. Just as there are imposters on the earth plane, so are there imposters on the spirit plane. And, accordingly, caution is to be exercised on both planes. The following quotations from mediumistic writers will serve to illustrate this point, and to show that the best mediumistic authorities themselves insist upon this precaution being taken.

Guarding Against Fraudulent Spirits.

One writer says: "While most mediums seek for some guide or control of prominence, it must not be always taken for granted that the controlling spirit during a seance is always just what he claims to be. For instance, a spirit control might give his name as Henry Clay, and he might deliver a spirited talk or oration, which, however, would be reeking with grammatical errors. Even though he insist that he is Henry Clay, our reason will tell us that he is not what he pretends to be. The change which we call death cannot lead all spirits to reform, and there are many who, as in earth life, are unworthy of our association, and should be gotten rid of as soon as they appear. When these fraudulent spirits appear, the atmosphere of the circle should be made very sacred and high in character. Evil spirits,

and those of low characters, cannot endure the presence of elevated and high thoughts, and by the holding of thoughts of this character the circle can soon rid itself for good of these troublesome entities—and it should do so without fail.

Spirit Jokers.

Another writer says, on this point: "That there are spirits who sometimes impersonate, and seek to pass themselves off as friends of the sitters, cannot be denied; in fact, we have had personal proof of the same on several occasions. But these troublesome and vexatious visitors invariably get 'bowled out' if the investigators are observant and careful. In fact, such entities are neither as numerous or as evilly disposed, as many persons imagine them to be. There are spirits who 'play up to' the weaknesses and flatter the vanity of those to whom they communicate. And it is equally true that there are spirits who 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. It is a well-known saying that 'people 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 and credulous mediums are too often in the main responsible for their own mystification and misleading. They are often so anxious to be guided by some 'eminent' person who will be to them an 'authority,' that they practically invite spirit pretenders to 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—and the 'wish becomes father to the thought.' and the sensitive medium's unrestrained imaginative powers do the rest."

A Typical Case of Identification.

The following typical case of undoubted identification of a visiting spirit is related by Smedley in his work concerning spiritualistic experiences, and may be taken as a pattern to be followed by investigators in demanding and obtaining proofs of identity in cases where same is asserted. The medium in this case was a woman of high standing in spiritualistic circles, and the seance took place in Mr. Smedley's own home. The medium was at that time a perfect stranger to the Smedley family, and to their little circle of invited friends. The seance was opened by the singing of hymns, and before long the medium went under control. Mr. Smedley says: "She passed under the control of an intelligent being, opened her eyes, and manifested the greatest amazement." He then relates the subsequent experience as follows.

Recalling Past Incidents.

"After looking around 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 my wife's neck, she kissed her most affectionately, addressing her as 'My dear sister.' After speaking with my wife in endearing terms, she came across the room to me,

and placing her right hand on my shoulder, said: 'Well, my dear brother.' (This was exactly as a deceased sister of my wife had been in the habit of doing.) 'How unspeakably glad I am for such a privilege as this! When we used to sit by 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 cried 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.

Identifying Property.

"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 around 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 Saviour 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 exclaim, 'Of a truth, that was my sister Charlotte!'"

Identifying Historical Personages.

Of course, a close, personal identification, similar to that stated in the above recital, is impossible in cases when the spirit claims to be some well-known historical personage. But in the last named class of cases it will be found possible to ask questions concerning the life and career of the supposed celebrity, and to form a general idea of the correctness of the claim by the quality and general character of the answers given. It will be found that genuine spirits are nearly always anxious to definitely establish the truth of their claims to identity, and will often go to great pains to do so. The character of the language employed, the grammar followed, and the general evidence of the intellectual capacity of the spirit, all these will be found useful in testing cases of claimed identity; and no genuine spirit has any just cause to object to such tests and questions, if made in the proper scientific spirit, and with ordinary

politeness. In short, treat the spirit just as you would were he in the flesh, speaking to you over a telephone, and endeavoring to establish his identity; this will always be a safe and just rule to employ and follow.

PART XI

HIGHER SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS

We frequently hear of, and witness manifestations of, what is called "spirit psychometry," "spirit clairvoyance," and "spirit clairaudience." In the earlier chapters of the present book we have spoken of the psychic principles and laws underlying psychometry, clairvoyance, and clairaudience. We have seen that all of these forms and phases of psychic phenomena are capable of being produced independent of spirit guidance, control, or influence. In fact, most of such manifestations are so produced, even when they are considered to be phases of spirit mediumship. But, outside of these manifestations, there are found cases in which such phenomena are produced by the aid, influence, and assistance, if not indeed the direct power of, the controlling spirits of the medium.

Spirit Psychometry and Clairvoyance.

In those instances in which the controlling influence of such phenomena is clearly that of disembodied

spirits, we find two distinct classes of the same, as follows: (1) cases in which the spirits aided in the establishing of the psychic rapport, and thus rendered more efficient, clear and, strong; (2) cases in which the spirits exerted their own psychometric, clairvoyant or clairaudient power, and then communicated the result through their mediums to the circle. In the first of above classes, the psychic faculties of the medium really perform the work, although greatly aided by the addition of the psychic power of the spirit. In the second of the above classes, the work is performed solely by the psychic powers of the spirits, and the medium acts merely as the line of communication between spirit and the circle. It must be remembered that the spirits who have passed out of the body are possessed of the same order of psychic faculties as are those still in the body, and that, likewise, on both planes there is a great variation of the degree of such powers between different individuals.

Spirit Psychic Assistance.

From the above, it will be seen that a mediumistic, person may practice in psychometry, clairvoyance, and clairaudience, either with or without the assistance of the spirits. In case the spirits are assisting in the direction of performing the psychic work themselves, and then communicating the result to the medium, the medium of course has but to remain passive and receive the communication. In cases, however, in which the spirits assist merely by strengthening the psychic power of the medium by aiding in the production of the rapport conditions,

or by lending the psychic power to add to that of the medium, then the medium has but to proceed just as we have pointed out in the earlier portions of this book devoted to the subjects of psychometry, clairvoyance, etc.

Writing Mediumship.

In what is known as "writing mediumship" the medium's hand is controlled by the spirit, and is caused to write messages to those present, or to answer questions propounded by some of those present at the circle. In some quarters such writing is called "automatic writing," but inasmuch as this last term is also applied to cases in which the hand of the person writes a message telepathed by a living person, it would seem that the old term "writing mediumship" is still the best one to use in the cases in which the spirit control is using the hand of the medium for the purpose of communication. The following statements made by different mediumistic writers on this particular subject will prove interesting and instructive to the young mediums seeking development along the lines of this special phase of mediumship.

Incidents of Writing Mediumship.

One writer says: "If the medium reaches the writing stage, he generally passes into it in much the same manner that he does into the inspirational speaking. That is, he becomes entranced, and in entrancement of this kind he usually loses his conscious self, although it is not essential that he should do so. He may remain partially conscious, but he

will be very pale and will have no control whatever over the hand which does the writing. When the hand that writes is generally the only part of him that becomes numb, one entire side may become limp and inactive, and it is at this stage that a pencil must be placed in his hand all ready for writing, and a large sheet of heavy paper be put on the table before him. It is urged that the pencil be a heavy one, and the paper tough and coarse, for the first writing of a writing medium is not even a fair specimen of penmanship, being heavy and very difficult to decipher. As his hand wanders here and there, his body may sway and the pencil be brought in contact with the paper. When he begins to write, the strokes are crude and jerky and uncertain. The first notes that he delivers to the sitters are very often difficult to make out, and sometimes it is impossible to tell what they are. But this condition will be gradually overcome until the writing is very fair, and finally it can be written on much finer paper and with an ordinary pencil. When questions are to be asked, they may be put direct to the medium, and the answers will be written out and signed by the spirit sending them. As the medium develops, it will not be necessary for him to have the questions put to him verbally. Write the questions on a little slip of paper, and place these slips in his hands. The spirit will read them, and then use his arm as before in writing out answers. But this stage cannot be attained in a day or a week, and it is a sign of the higher forms of development, and should be looked upon by the members of the circle as evidence of the highest order establishing the great success they have attained."

Developing Writing Mediumship.

Another writer on the subject of writing mediumship says to those developing this phase of 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 that you are unable to prevent the movements. In such a case, the sitters should provide pencil and paper 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 writing mediums 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 hands 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.

Stead's Method and Results.

W. T. Stead, the eminent English investigator, said: "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." The above statement of Mr. Stead becomes doubly interesting and valuable when we remember that through his hand, controlled by a spirit intelligence, came that wonderful series of messages afterward published under the title of "Letters from Julia, which book excited the attention and interest of the civilized world at the time of its publication, and even to this day enjoys a great popularity.

Automatic Writing vs. Inspirational Writing.

Another writer says: "Inspirational or impressional writing is frequently mistaken for that which is more purely passive or automatic. The medium or sensitive person 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 indicate 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 nor 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."

Use and Abuse of Automatic Writing.

J. A. White, a trance and clairvoyant medium himself, says of the phase of writing mediumship: "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 when it is in its 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 wants 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."

Advice to Writing Mediums.

A French medium says: "We urge beginners in their own interest not to take up the pencil 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." Another writer says: "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 statement made by the ordinary standards, apart 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 or dogmatic, or pretentious and flattering, they should be discarded; and, unless you change their character after repeated experiments, your attention should be turned in some other direction."

Drawing Mediumship.

What is known as "drawing mediumship is but a variation of writing mediumship, at least so far as is concerned the nature of the manifestation. In both cases the spirit control moves the hand of the medium, in one case forming letters and words, and in the other case forming figures, designs, etc. In some rare instances, the spirit control operating through the hand of the medium has produced crayon drawings, water color sketches, and even oil paintings, although the medium himself or herself, was unable to even draw a straight line, much less to execute a finished drawing or painting. The principle governing such mediumship, and the development thereof, is precisely the same as that governing the phase of writing mediumship previously described.

The Planchette.

From time to time, during the past fifty years, there have been invented or arranged various forms of mechanical contrivances designed to assist in the development of writing mediumship. The most popular of these has been the Planchette, which has enjoyed great popularity for many years past. The Planchette is a little heart-shaped board, having two

legs, with tiny wheels at the end, attached to the board. Near the pointed end of the heart-shaped board is a hole, into which a pencil is inserted. A sheet of paper of good size is spread upon a table, and the Planchette is placed thereupon. Then the sitter, or two sitters, place their hand or hands upon the board—generally resting only the tips of their fingers lightly upon it. The sitter or sitters then await results.

How to Use the Planchette.

If the sitter is mediumistic the Planchette will begin to move about slowly at first, gradually gathering force and definite direction. After a few preliminary strokes, circles, or lines having been drawn, the Planchette will seem to have been firmly taken bold of by some spirit hand, and will begin to write words and sentences in a more or less 'scrawly' fashion. When the writing once begins? questions may be asked of and answered by the spirits. Some persons report that to them the Planchette seems to move by itself, pulling their hands with it; but others report that they feel the movement of their arms and hands, as the spirit propels the machine in the work of writing. Some know what is being written during the process, while others do not know what has been written until they afterwards read it. Sometimes the writing begins soon after the sitting is commenced, while in other cases the sitters have to wait a long time, or even to sit several times before the writing actually begins. Sometimes the Planchette will refuse to write for certain persons, but will write freely for others. The general advice is to exercise patience in the

Planchette sittings, and not to expect to get the best results at once; and, particularly, not to begin asking questions immediately after the writing begins.

Healing Mediumship.

Some mediums seem to be particularly adapted to the work of healing by psychic force, and this phase of mediumship is known as "healing mediumship." The healing medium is guided principally by the spirit influence, so far as is concerned the choice of methods of procedure in his healing work. The following directions, however, given by a mediumistic writer, will give the young medium a very good, practical general idea of the procedure to be followed in case his spirit control does not indicate some other method. This writer says:

How to Heal by Spirit Power.

If you are impressed with the 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 the healing 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 mesmerism or hypnotism. The healing medium should centre his thought and interest solely and wholly with the idea of effecting a cure. He 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 feel comfortable, and lead him to expect good results; to do this you must be affirmative and confident. Unless you are 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 may 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 have received, and wash your hands thoroughly after each treatment."

Materialization Mediumship.

One of the rarest, and at the same time the most eagerly sought after phase of mediumship, is that known as "materialization mediumship." In this

phase of mediumship the decarnate spirit is able to draw upon the vital forces of the medium, and those present at the seance, to such effect that it may clothe itself with a tenuous, subtle form of matter, and then exhibit itself to the sitters in the same form and appearance that it had previously presented in its earth life. Many of the most remarkable testimonies to the truth and validity of spiritualism have been obtained through this phase of mediumship, and it is the aim of all investigators to witness, and of most mediums to be the channel of the production of, this remarkable phase of mediumistic phenomena.

In almost all instances of materialization phenomena in the record of modern spiritualism we find that a cabinet was employed. There are two reasons advanced for the necessity of the cabinet in this phase of mediumistic phenomena. The first of said reasons is that in many cases darkness has been found necessary for the preliminary work of the materialization, although absolute darkness is not necessary in the general room in which the materialized spirit forms afterward appear. The second of the said reasons is that there seems to be a psychic atmosphere created by the blending of the spirit forces with those of the medium, which atmosphere must be kept apart from and unmixed with the auras of the members of the outside circle or the general visitors at the seance.

Why the Cabinet Is Necessary.

Just what is the technical reason for this necessity is a source of argument and dispute among the different

authorities on the subject, and it may be said that the matter is not as yet definitely settled. But whatever may be such technical explanation, the fact remains that the seclusion of the medium has been found almost absolutely necessary for the production of the phenomena of spirit materialization. The few exceptions noted in the history of modern spiritualism only go to establish the general rule. For the purpose of a general study of the subject, it may be accepted as a general fact that the production of spirit materialization has as one of its necessary conditions the presence and use of a dark cabinet in which the medium is secluded from the circle or assemblage of persons attending the seance.

How to Make the Spirit Cabinet.

One of the best kind of cabinets for this purpose is a small alcove room, or other small room adjoining the room in which the visitors sit at the seance. A large closet will also answer the purpose very well, in fact many mediums prefer the closet to any other form of cabinet. If neither small room or closet is available, then it becomes necessary to build or erect a cabinet for the medium. One of the simplest and hast expensive methods of building or erecting a cabinet for the medium is as follows: Take a large piece of dark cloth, cotton or woolen, or else a large shawl, and fasten it by stout twine or cord across a corner of the room. It will be better if the curtain is made in two pieces, so as to allow it to part in the middle for the purpose of the entry and exit of the medium, and for the purpose of allowing the materialized spirit form to show itself to the circle. It

is not necessary that all light be excluded from the cabinet, and therefore it need cause no worryment if a little light filters in over the top of the curtain; but the lights in the main room should be kept burning "dim and low," not only for the purpose of aiding in the actual work or materialization, but also in order to preserve the proper conditions when the materialized spirit presents itself between the opened curtains.

How to Use the Spirit Cabinet.

When the cabinet is properly arranged the medium enters it and sits down on a chair provided for that purpose. He should not be disturbed thereafter, but should be encouraged and aided in his work by the maintenance of a quite, reverent mental attitude on the part of the members of the circle. It will be found helpful if a few hymns are sung while waiting for manifestations from the cabinet. The best way to encourage materialization at a regular circle is for gradual steps to be taken leading up to this high phase of phenomena. For example, the circle should sit in the ordinary way at its regular meetings, and devote itself to the production of the lesser forms of phenomena. Then, before adjournment, the medium may go into the cabinet while the circle sits for materialization phenomena. This practice may be made to form a regular part of the proceedings of the circle. But the circle must be very patient concerning the production of this class of phenomena, for the necessary conditions are very difficult to develop, even when aided by the most powerful spirits. Many sittings may be required before even the slightest sign of materialization is

obtained—but the final result will repay much waiting and watching, much patience and much perseverance. But sooner or later the phenomena will come if the proper conditions are provided for them.

Spirit Phosphorescence.

The first evidence of the presence and activity of the spirit forces striving to produce the phenomena and materialization will probably be the appearance of peculiar hazy phosphorescent lights playing in front of the curtain forming the front of the cabinet. These lights will consist of small globules or balls of phosphorescent light that will dance about like the familiar will-o'-the-wisp seen over swamps and in damp, woody places. These lights will flit here and there, will alternately appear and disappear. Sometimes they will appear as if a multitude of fire-flies were clustered in front of the curtain. When these fire balls appear the circle may know that it is well on the way to perfect materializations.

Appearance of Materialized Substance.

As the power increases, and the conditions become stabilized and perfected, the manifestations will become more pronounced. It often happens that cloudy nebulous bodies of psychic substance are formed and float around in front of the cabinet, like clouds of steam or vapor illumined by a dim phosphorescent light. Sometimes attempts will seem to have been made to form these clouds into the semblance of the human body, and often these bodies are more or less incomplete, as for instance the arms may be missing, or else there may be dark holes

where the eyes, nose, and mouth should be. It may be stated here that the sitters should not be frightened by these sights, nor should mental agitation be permitted to manifest too strongly, as such conditions act to retard further developments. Sometimes perfect hands and arms materialize, but apparently not attached to a body. These hands may float out over the circle, and may touch the members thereof. In rare cases these hands take articles handed them by members of the circle, which articles are then "dematerialized" and vanish from sight, afterward appearing in other parts of the house. Large articles of furniture have been known to be dematerialized in this way.

Materialized Spirit Forms.

Later on, the nebulous spirit forms will take on more definite lines and form, and will become more plainly visible, and will also assume a far more "solid" appearance. When the phenomena reaches its highest phases, the materialized spirit forms can be plainly seen and actually recognized by their friends in earth life. In some cases they will actually leave the front of the curtain and will walk down among the sitters, shaking hands with them, touching them on the cheek, or even embracing some loved one. In rare cases these materialized forms are able to converse with the sitters in the circle, just as plainly as when in earth life.

Scientific Proof of Materialization,

It is not the purpose of this book to prove the existence of mediumistic phenomena—rather it points out the means and methods whereby the student may

obtain such proof for himself or herself. But it may be suggested here that the sceptic may find an abundance of proof of the genuineness of materialization phenomena in the records and reports made by eminent scientists, statesmen, and others. Particularly, the report of Sir William Crookes, the eminent English scientist, will furnish such proof to the inquirer who demands "scientific proof" before he will believe anything out of the usual. Sir William Crookes has given convincing evidence of the genuineness of spirit materialization, even going so far to offer records of the weight of materialized spirits, and their photographs taken by him—in some instances the photographs showing the forms of both medium and spirit materialization.

How to Conduct a Materializing Seance.

In sitting for materialization, the circle should maintain the same general demeanor that it observes at other times. Silence or dignified conversation may be indulged in, but joking or levity should be forbidden. Hands should be held, and reverent singing indulged in. It should be remembered that this phase of mediumistic phenomena is not something apart and distinct from the lesser phases which have been described in detail in this book. On the contrary, it is simply a matter of degree, and the same general principles underlie all phases of mediumistic phenomena. Therefore, it is not necessary to repeat the instructions regarding the conduct of the circle, or the rules for the development of the medium, Read the earlier chapters for the same, which are equally applicable in this place as in the places in which they originally appeared.

Trumpet Mediumship.

In what is known as "trumpet mediumship," the sound of the voice of the communicating spirit is increased in power by the use of a trumpet shaped arrangement of paper, card-board, tin, or aluminum. There is no particular virtue in the material used, and anyone may make a serviceable trumpet out of heavy paper or thin card-board. The principle of the use of the "spirit trumpet" is precisely that of the well-known megaphone, i. e., it magnifies the sound, and increases its carrying power. A spirit speaking in the faintest whisper through the trumpet is enabled to have its voice heard plainly by those present in the circle, where otherwise nothing would be heard. Often the spirit force is so strong that it will pick up the trumpet and carry it around the circle, tapping the various members thereof, and whispering through it into the ear of some particular members. Weak spirits, therefore, who are unable to make themselves heard in the ordinary way, often employ the trumpet with effect in seances. When the trumpet is used, it should be placed on the table, awaiting the use of the spirits.

Spirit Playing on Musical Instruments, Etc.

The spirit forces also sometimes will see fit to play upon musical instruments placed in the cabinet with the medium, the guitar, mandolin, concertina, accordion, etc., being the instruments preferred in such cases. Of course the sceptics will claim that the medium may play the instruments himself or herself, and thus give ground for the claim of fraud; consequently in the case of public seances, and many

private ones as well, the medium will insist upon having his or her hands tied, and other precautions taken to eliminate the possibility of fraud and deception. Such precautions are in no way a reflection upon the medium, and are, in fact, demanded by many mediums as a matter of self-respect, self-protection, and the cause of truth. In many cases in which the mediums were entirely lacking in musical education, knowledge, or training, the spirits have performed skilled selections of music upon the instruments in the cabinet.

Independent Slate Writing.

'What is generally known as "independent slate writing" is a very interesting phase of mediumship, and one of the peculiarities thereof is that such phenomena is sometimes produced through mediums who seem to possess little or no mediumistic powers in other directions. In independent slate writing there is no employment of the hands of the medium by the spirit to form the letters, words, and sentences of the communication. On the contrary, the writing is done directly by the spirit forces, independent of the organism of the medium. Of course the psychic power of the medium and his vital energy as will is drawn upon by the spirits in producing this form of manifestation, but the medium is sometimes seated out of reach of the slates and in no case actually, touches the pencil.

The State Writing Circle.

Independent slate writing is performed as follows: The circle selects two common slates, or else one folding slate. A small bit of chalk, or a tiny piece

of slate pencil is placed between the two slates, the latter being then placed tightly together, and then bound with thick, strong twine—in some cases the ends of the twine are fastened with sealing wax, This trying and sealing is for the purpose of eliminating the suspicion of fraud or deceit, and for the purpose of scientifically establishing the genuineness of the phenomena. The bound slates are then placed on the table in the middle of the circle. In some cases the medium rests his hands on the slate, and in other cases he keeps his hands entirely away from them—the phenomena itself evidently being produced with equal facility in either case. A written question may either be placed inside the slate on a small bit of paper, or else sealed and placed on top of the tied slates. In some cases the scratching sound of the pencil may be heard proceeding from the tied slates, while on others no sound is heard while the writing is being done. When the slates are opened, at the end of the seance, the slates will be found to contain writing—the answer to the question, or else a general message to the circle—the writing sometimes consisting of but a word or two, while in other cases both of the inside surfaces of the slate will be found to be covered with writing. It often requires quite a number of sittings before this phase of phenomena is secured; in many cases it is never actually secured in a satisfactory form.

Spirit Paintings.

There are cases of record in which crayon drawings have been produced on the slates by enclosing small bits of various colored crayons therein when the slates are tied together. Again, oil paintings

have been secured on the slates, after small dabs of oil paint of various colors have been placed on the inside surface of the slates, a little linseed oil being poured on each.

Fraudulent Slate Writing.

Slate phenomena has been brought into some degree of discredit and disrepute during the past ten years or more, by reason of the fact that a number of unscrupulous "fakers," or bogus-mediums, employed a system where this class of phenomena was counterfeited by trick methods. But, as all careful investigators of mediumistic phenomena well know, some wonderful results are still obtained, quietly and without publicity or notoriety, in many family or private circles. In this case, and in many others, the very best mediumistic phenomena is often produced in those family or private circles, where mutual sympathy, harmony, and spiritual understanding prevail, and where there is an absence of the sceptical, cavilling, negative mental attitudes, which tend to interfere with the free flow of spirit power and the degree of manifestation. The tiny flame burning on the family altars and in the private shrines serve to keep alive the Light of the Spirit, which is too often dimmed by the public glare of counterfeit and sensational exhibitions of so-called spirit power.

Practical Advice to Developing Mediums.

The young developing medium who has read the foregoing pages of this book will in all probability soon discover just what phase of mediumship is best suited for his natural powers, temperament and

psychic constitution. As his innate psychic powers unfold and develop he will be almost instinctively led in the particular directions in which these powers may find the opportunity for the best form of expression and manifestation. And, at the same time, the spirit friends which the young medium will have drawn to himself will have discovered, by means of experimentation, just what phase of mediumship the young medium would best develop in order to convey the messages and communications from the spirit side of life. The following bits of advice from mediumistic writers of good standing will, however, perhaps serve to make the path clearer the young medium who is reaching out toward the best and most efficient form of manifestation of the powers which he has found are within himself.

Need of Special Development.

A writer says: "As a general rule, the best results of mediumship are secured by special development along the lines of natural aptitude. A 'Jack of all trades is master of none,' and such a one is a failure in mediumship as in anything else. You may find it helpful to visit a public medium who is already developed, and who can examine you and give you 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 upon 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 that 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. It is better to join some good private circle."

Advice to Discouraged Mediums.

A writer gives the following excellent advice to young mediums who have become somewhat discouraged at their lack of success, and slowness of progress: "You have been already informed that you are a medium, and that if you sit you will develop special 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 had satisfactory results.' When we hear such statements we are

prompt 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 marvelous 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 intelligence to afford humanity the benefit of their experiences 'over there.'"

Avoid Cross-Magnetism.

A popular mediumistic writer has given the following excellent words of warning to young mediums: "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 physical 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 into their other state 'all sorts 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."

Avoid Psychic Absorption.

"You can waste your time, and 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 a 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 or out of the physical body, and can voluntarily become passive and responsive to the true and trustworthy friends who= you know and love."

The Stewardship of Great Powers.

We can not hope to more fitly close this book devoted to the brief presentation of the facts of the psychic world, and the world of spirit, than by quoting the following words uttered by a faithful laborer in the vineyard of spiritualism: "Spiritualism helps us to understand the 'unity of spirit' and 'the brotherhood of man' in the divine relationship wherein the greatest among us is the servant of all. The possession of great gifts is an added responsibility. We are only stewards of our powers on behalf of others, and our desire to gain knowledge and influence should be vitalized and dignified by the intention to use them to help, teach, and serve our fellows, and in such service we shall ourselves be blest."

FINIS.