

The Spiritist Review 1859

# **THE SPIRITIST REVIEW**

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# **1859**

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# The Spiritist Review 1859

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Preface to the English Edition

#### January 1859

Letter to HM Prince G

Mr. Adrien, clairvoyant medium - (2nd Article)

The elf of Bayonne

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Chaudruc Druclos

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Diogenes

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: The guardian angels

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: A forgotten night or Manouze, the witch (cont.)

Spiritist aphorisms and select thoughts

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

#### February 1859

Hurdles to the mediums

The Agénères (non-entity)

My Friend Hermann

Noisy spirits - how to get rid of them?

Dissertation from beyond the grave - Infancy

Correspondence – Letter of Morhéry, Doctor in Medicine

A forgotten night or Manouze, the witch (conclusion)

#### March 1859

Study about the mediums

Self-serving mediums

Phenomenon of transfiguration

Diatribes

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Paul Gaimard

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Mrs. Reynaud

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Hitoti, a Tahitian chef

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: An elf

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Pliny, The Young Man

#### April 1859

Portrayal of the Spirit's Life

Spiritist Frauds

Moral Problem – The Cannibals

Commercial Enterprises and Spiritism

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Benvenuto Cellini

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Girard de Codemberg

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Poitevin, the airman

Poetic thoughts

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Paid Somnambulists

Spiritist Aphorism and Select Thoughts

Warning

### May 1859

Scenes of the Spirit's Private Life

Music from Beyond the Grave: Mozart and Chopin

Intermediate or Transient Worlds

Bond between Body and Spirit

L'Univers (The Universe) Article – A Rebuttal

The Spirits' Book among the South American Natives

Spiritist Axioms and Select Thoughts

### June 1859

The Cracking Muscle

Spiritism and Science

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Mr. Humboldt

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Goethe

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Black Father Cesar

Varieties - The Princess of Rebinine - From the Courier de Paris

Major Georges Sydenham

### July 1859

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies - Speech given at the closing of the social year 1858-59

Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: The Zouave of Magenta

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: A High-Ranking Officer Killed in Magenta

Answer to the Reply of Abbot Chesnel

Varieties - Lord Castlereagh and Bernadotte

What is Spiritism? - New book published by Mr. Allan Kardec

### August 1859

Furniture from beyond the grave

Pneumatography or Direct Writing

A Servant Spirit

Mrs. Mally's Guide

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Voltaire and Frederic

Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

A M. L., de Limoges

### September 1859

Process to Send the Bad Spirits Away

Confessions of Voltaire

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: An Officer from the Italian Army

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: General Hoche  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Death of a Spiritist  
The Storms - Role of the Spirits in the Natural Phenomena  
The Home of a Spiritist Family  
Spiritist Aphorisms and Select Thoughts

### October 1859

The Miracles  
Magnetism Recognized by the Judiciary  
Inert Mediums  
Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies  
Spiritist Society in the XVIII century  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Father Crépin  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Mrs. E. de Girardin, Medium  
The Flying Tables

### November 1859

Should We Publish Everything the Spirits Say?  
Unintentionally Medium  
Uranie - Fragments from a poem by Mr. de Porry, from Marseille  
Swedenborg  
The Errant Soul - by Maxime Ducamp  
The Spirit and the Juror  
Warning from Beyond the Grave: The Officer from Crimea  
The Convulsive of Saint-Médard  
Observations Regarding the Word Miracle by Mr. Mathieu  
Warning

### December 1859

Response to Mr. Oscar Comettant  
Effects of Prayer  
A Spirit that does not acknowledge his death  
Doctrine of Reincarnation Among the Hindus  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Privat d'Anglemont  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Dirkse Lammers  
Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave: Michel François  
Spontaneous Communications at the Society  
A Former Drayman  
Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies  
The Convulsionaries of Saint Médard (cont.)  
Spiritist Axioms and Select Thoughts

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## Letter to HM Prince G

Your Majesty has given me the honor of enquiring about several questions regarding Spiritism. I will try to respond to them with the state of the art knowledge on the subject, summarizing in a few words what we have learned through study and observation. The referred issues are based on the principles of the Science. In order to give more clarity to the solution it is necessary to have those principles in mind. Thus, allow me to consider the subject from a little more elevated stand point, establishing certain fundamental preliminary propositions that will serve, as a matter of fact, as answers to some of those questions.

Outside the visible and corporeal world there are invisible beings that constitute the world of the spirits. The spirits are not disconnected beings but the souls of those who lived on Earth or in other worlds and have detached from their material envelope.

The spirits show all levels of intellectual as well as moral development. Hence, there are good and bad, liars and frivolous, scoundrels and hypocritical spirits that try to deceive people, encouraging them to wrongdoings, as there are those spirits who are well superior in everything, who don't do anything else but the good deeds. Such distinction constitutes a capital point.

The spirits surround us incessantly. They guide our thoughts and actions irrespectively, thus influencing over the events and destinies of humanity. They sometimes reveal their presence through material effects. Those effects have nothing to do with the supernatural; they only seem supernatural to us because they are founded on bases that are outside of our known laws of matter. Once those bases are known, the effects become part of the category of the natural phenomena. That is how the spirits can act upon the inert bodies and move them without the support of our external agents. Denying the existence of unknown agents just because we don't understand them is the same as restraining God's power, and believing that nature has already given us the last word.

Every effect has a cause, and nobody denies that. It is then illogical to deny the cause just because it is unknown.

Since every effect has a cause then every intelligent effect must have an intelligent cause. When we observe the parts of the telegraph producing signs which correspond to a human thought we don't conclude that those components are intelligent but that they are moved by intelligence. The same happens with the spiritist phenomena. If the intelligence which produces them is not ours then it is evidently from a foreign intelligence.

In the phenomena of natural Sciences, human beings act upon the inert matter, handling it at will. In the spiritist phenomena we act upon intelligences that have free will and are not submitted to our wishes. Thus, there is in principle a radical difference between the common phenomena and the spiritist phenomena. That is why ordinary Science is incompetent to judge the latter.

The incarnate spirit has two envelopes: one that is material, the body; another semi-material and indestructible, the perispirit. When discarnate, the spirit leaves the former and retains the latter that form a kind of second body that, essentially, has different properties. It is invisible to us in its normal state, but it can become visible and even tangible. Such is the cause of the phenomena of apparitions.

Hence the spirits are not abstracts, undefined beings, but real and limited, with their own existences, beings that think and act as a consequence of their free-will. They are everywhere around us; they populate space and move with the speed of thought.

Human beings can establish a relationship with the spirits and receive direct communications in writing, by the spoken word or other means. Since they are around us or can attend our call, it is possible to establish frequent communications with them through certain means, as a blind person can do with other persons that she cannot see.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Certain persons are more endowed than others of a special aptitude to transmit communications from the spirits. These are the mediums. The role of the medium is that of an interpreter; an instrument that serves the spirit; such an instrument can be more or less perfect, thus the communications can be easier or more difficult.

The spiritist phenomena are of two orders: the physical and material communications and the intelligent communications. Inferior spirits produces the physical effects; the elevated spirits don't get involved with such things in the same way that our wise individuals are not occupied with the hard labor; their role is to educate through reason.

The communications may come from inferior as much as superior spirits. Like human beings, the spirits can be recognized by their language: the language of the superior spirits it is always serious, dignified, noble and plentiful of benevolence; every trivial or inconvenient expression, every thought that shocks reason and common sense, which denotes pride, acrimony and malevolence necessarily comes from an inferior spirit.

The elevated spirits only teach good things. Their moral is that of the Gospels. They only preach union and charity and are never mistaken. The inferior spirits tell absurd, lies and sometimes even make rude remarks.

The good quality of a medium is shown not only by the easiness of the communications but above all by the nature of the received communications. A good medium is the one who sympathizes with the good spirits and only receives good communications.

All of us have a familiar spirit that is devoted to us from birth, who guides, advises and protects us. That is always a good spirit. Besides the familiar spirit there are others attracted to us thanks to their sympathy towards our qualities and defects or as a consequence of past Earthly affections. Hence, in all gatherings there is always a number of spirits, more or less good, according to the nature of the environment.

*Can the spirits reveal the future?*

The spirits can only know the future in proportion to their elevation. The inferior spirits do not know their own future, let alone other people's future. The superior spirits do know the future but they are not always allowed to reveal it. In principle, and by a wise design of the Providence, the future must be hidden from us. If we had the ability of knowing it, our free will would be compromised! Certainty of success would subtract from us the desire of doing anything, since we would no longer see the need for doing it; the certainty of a disgrace would discourage us. Nevertheless, there are cases in which knowledge of the future may be useful; we can never, however, be the judges of such cases. The spirits reveal it to us whenever they find it convenient and have been granted God's permission. Then, it is spontaneously done and never triggered by our request. We must wait for the opportunity with confidence and, above all, do not insist whenever it is denied, since we might otherwise risk to be dealing with frivolous spirits who make fun of us.

*Can the spirits guide us giving direct advice regarding things of our lives?*

Yes, they can and gladly do so. Such advices reach us every day through the thoughts that they suggest to us. We frequently do things whose merit we attribute to ourselves when in fact they are nothing more than inspirations transmitted to us. Now, as we are surrounded by spirits that influence us, some in one direction, some in another, we always have our own free-will to guide us with respect to the choices we make, being a real joy when we give preference to our good genie.

Besides the transcendental advices, we can obtain other direct advices through the mediums. However, the fundamental principles that we have just mentioned must be pointed out here. The first thing to consider is the quality of the medium, when the medium is a third party. A medium that only receives good communications, and due to his personal qualities only sync with the good spirits, is a precious server, from whom one can expect great things, as long as seconded by the purity of one's own instructions, conveniently connecting us to them. I will say more: it is an instrument of Providence.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

The second, not less important point, consists of the nature of the spirits with whom we communicate. We should not believe that the first spirit that shows up can guide us adequately. It would be a grave mistake to see spiritist communications as a means of prediction and the medium as a reader of good luck. It is necessary to consider that we have friends in the spiritual world who are seriously interested in us, more sincere and devoted than those considered so here on Earth, who don't have any interest in flattering or deceiving us. These are, besides our guardian spirit, relatives or persons who were dear to us or even spirits who wish us well, just out of sympathy. These spirits eagerly come when evoked, or even without being called. We often have them inadvertently by our side. These are the ones to whom we should directly ask for advice through the mediums, who give it to us even spontaneously. They do that particularly in the closeness, in silence and when they are not perturbed by any alien influence. They are, as a matter of fact, very prudent and we should not be afraid of any indiscretion on their side: they silence when there are too many ears around! They do more so when in frequent communication with us. Since they say only proper and timely things, we should expect their good will and never imagine that they would hastily satisfy our demands. By doing so they demonstrate that they are not under our control.

The nature of the answers depends a lot on the way the questions are framed. It is necessary to learn how to talk to the spirits, as we learn to talk to human beings. Experience is necessary with everything. On another hand, the habit leads the spirits to get acquainted with us and with the medium; the fluids combine and the communications become easier; the conversations then become really familiar between them and us. Something they don't say today they will say tomorrow; they get used to our way of living as we get to theirs; we become more reciprocally comfortable. Regarding the interference of bad and deceiving spirits – which constitutes the big obstacle – experience teaches us to combat them and we can always avoid them. If we don't provide shelter to those spirits they don't come since they know it will be a waste of time.

*Why promote the understanding of spiritist ideas?*

Since Spiritism is the tangible and evident proof of the existence, individuality, and immortality of the soul, it is the destruction of materialism, the denial of every religion and the ulcer of every society. The number of materialists that Spiritism has led to healthier ideas is considerable and it does increase every day. That alone represents a social benefit. Spiritism not only proves the existence and immortality of the soul but it also shows their happy or unfortunate state, according to the merits of this current life. The future penalties and rewards are no longer a theory but become a patent fact before our eyes. Now, considering that there is no possible religion without the belief in God, in the immortality of the soul and in the future penalties and rewards, Spiritism revives in people those beliefs, whenever those beliefs have faded away. It results that Spiritism is the most powerful support to the religious ideas. It provides religion to those who don't have it; reinforces it in those who hesitate; consoles by the certainty of the future; leads people to withstand the tribulations of this life with patience and resignation, deviating minds from suicide, an idea that we naturally repel by observing its consequences. That is why those who have penetrated into the mysteries of Spiritism feel happy. To those, Spiritism is a light which dissipates the shadows and anguishes of uncertainty.

If we then consider the moral teachings of the superior spirits we will see that it is totally the moral of the Gospels, for it is enough to say that it preaches the Christian charity in all its sublimity; it does more because it shows its necessity, as much to the present as to the future life, since the consequences of our good as well as bad deeds are there, before our eyes. Spiritism neutralizes the effect of doctrines subversive to the social order, thus redirecting people towards the feelings of reciprocal duties.

*Couldn't such beliefs represent a danger to reason?*

Haven't all Sciences supplied their masses to the asylums of the alienated? Should they all be condemned for that? Aren't the religious beliefs also greatly represented among them? Would it be fair to proscribe religion for that? Do we know the number of lunatics produced by the fear of devil? All great intellectual concerns lead to exaltation and may produce harmful reactions in a feeble mind. We would be right by



## The Spiritist Review 1859

assessing Spiritism as having a special danger if it were the only or even the major cause of madness. A huge noise is produced by two or three cases that, under other circumstances, would go unnoticed.

Furthermore, the prior predisposing causes are not taken into account. I could mention other cases in which the spiritist ideas halted the development of madness. In short, and with that in mind, Spiritism does not offer more danger than the other thousand and one causes. I will say more: Spiritism offers them in a much smaller number since it has the correcting element in itself and by the guidance it provides, by the calmness it brings to the spirits of those who understand it, it can neutralize the effect of strange causes. One of these causes is despair. Spiritism, by leading us to face the most unpleasant things with cold blood and resignation, gives us the strength to withstand them with courage and acquiescence, thus attenuating the dismal effects of despair.

*Aren't the spiritist ideas a consecration of the superstitious ideas of the antiquity and the Middle Ages, and aren't these ideas going to endorse those?*

Don't people without religion call superstition in the great majority of the religious beliefs? An idea is only superstitious if it is false; it is no longer when it becomes true. It is demonstrated that behind all superstitions there is an amplified truth or a truth modified by imagination. Well, removing from those ideas their fantastic content, leaving them with reality only, it destroys superstition. Such is the effect of the Spiritist Science by unveiling what is true and false in the popular beliefs.

For a long time the apparitions were considered as a superstitious belief. Now that they are a demonstrated fact and, even more, perfectly explained, they move into the domain of the natural phenomena. There is no point in condemning them because we will not preclude them from happening. However, those who understand them not only are no longer afraid but also become satisfied. And it is so much true that those who don't share these ideas wish to do so. By just leaving the field open to imagination, the unknown phenomena constitute a source of many accessory and absurd ideas which degenerate into superstition. Once the reality is shown and the causes are explained, the imagination stops at the border of the possible; the marvelous, the absurd and impossible disappear, and with them superstition. Such are the cabalistic practices; the virtue of the signs and magic words; the sacramental formulas; the amulets, the disastrous days; the diabolic hours and so many other things whose ridicule Spiritism understands and demonstrates well.

Those are, Prince, the answers which seemed appropriate to me to the questions that Your Majesty has honored me with. I will feel happy if they corroborate the ones that Your Majesty already has about this issue and persuade Your Majesty to the deeper study of the subject, of so elevated interest. It makes me even happier still if my further help can be of any utility.

With my deepest respect, I am the much humble and obedient server of Your Majesty,

ALLAN KARDEC

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## Mr. Adrien, clairvoyant medium (2<sup>nd</sup> Article)

Since the publication of our article about Mr. Adrien, the clairvoyant medium, a large number of facts have been communicated to us confirming our opinion that this faculty, as well as other mediumistic faculties, is more common than previously thought. We had already observed it in a large number of private cases and, notably, in the somnambulistic state. The phenomenon of the apparition is now a demonstrated fact and occurs frequently. In addition, there are numerous examples offered by throughout history and within Sacred Scriptures.

Many of the reported facts are of a personal nature, happening to those that reported them to us. These are, however, almost always serendipitous and accidental. We had not yet seen someone who would have such a faculty in a normal state. With Mr. Adrien that faculty is permanent. Wherever he is, the occult population that surrounds us is visible to him, without any evocation. He plays with us the role of the person that can see in the middle of a population of blind people; he sees the beings that we could call the doublets of the human kind, mingled with us and with our actions, while attending their own businesses, if we can say so.

The incredulous will say that it is all hallucination, a misguided word that one uses to explain what one cannot understand. We wish we had the explanation about what hallucination is and, most importantly, what is its cause.

Nevertheless, it has an absolutely remarkable character in Mr. Adrien: the permanence. Up until now what has been conventionally called hallucination is an abnormal fact and almost always the result of a pathological state. But that is not the case.

And we who have been studying and observing the phenomenon in its minimum details, we can even attest to its reality. It is not an object of doubt to us, and as we will see, it has provided an outstanding support to our spiritist studies. It has allowed us to introduce the scalpel of the investigation into the extra corporeal life. It is a torch in the darkness.

Mr. Home, endowed by a notable faculty of physical effects, produced surprising results. Mr. Adrien initiates us into the causes of such effects, because he sees them as they are produced and he goes much beyond those things that affect our senses.

The reality of Mr. Adrien's clairvoyance is demonstrated by the description that he makes of persons that he has never seen before and whose description is acknowledged as exact. For sure, when he describes with rigorous minutia the minimum details of a relative or a friend that we evoke through him, we are positive that he sees, since it could not be something created by his imagination, although there are people whose prevention leads them to deny their own evidence. What is even more awkward is that in order to refute what they don't want to admit, they explain those facts with causes even more difficult to understand than the ones we offer.

The descriptions provided by Mr. Adrien, however, are not always infallible. With that, as with any other Science, when an anomaly is presented, it is necessary to search for the cause since the cause of an exception frequently does confirm the general rule. In order to understand this fact we must not lose sight of what we have already said about the apparent form of the spirits. Such a form depends on the perispirit whose nature, essentially flexible, is subjected to all changes that the spirit may wish to implement. Leaving the material envelope the spirit carries along its ethereal envelope which constitutes another kind of body. In it's a normal state that body bears a human shape but not exactly mirrored, trace by trace, particularly from someone deceased for some time already. In the initial moments following death, when there still is a bond between the two existences, the similarity is greater. Such similarity, however, fades

## The Spiritist Review 1859

away while the separation takes place and the spirit becomes stranger to its last corporeal envelope. However, the spirit can always recover that initial appearance both in its looks as well as with respect to its outfit, whenever the spirit considers useful to be recognized. In general, however, this requires a great effort and will power. Thus, it is not surprising that in certain cases there isn't similarity in every detail: the main features are sufficient.

Also to the medium such investigation is not carried out effortlessly, becoming painful if repeated several times. The common visions aren't a cause of any fatigue to the medium because he is not involved except with the general aspects. It is the same that happens when we observe a crowd: we see everything; all individuals stick out to our eyes, with their distinctive traces, but without those traces impressing our senses to the point of describing everybody. In order to precisely describe them we would need to concentrate, paying attention to the smallest details that we want to analyze, only with the difference that under ordinary circumstances we concentrate our eyes onto a material and invariable form, whereas in the case of the vision the eyes rest on an essentially fluid-like form, which can change by the simplest action of the will.

Then, we must learn to consider things as they are; let us consider them in themselves and as a function of their properties. Let us not forget that with Spiritism we do not handle the inert matter but with intelligences that have their free will and, consequently, we cannot submit to our caprices nor force them to act according to our own will, as if we were displacing a pendulum. We will deviate whenever we want to take our exact Sciences as a starting point to the spiritist observations. That is why the common Science is incompetent with such a subject; it is exactly like the musician who wanted to judge Architecture from a musical point of view.

Spiritism reveals to us a new order of ideas, of new forces, new elements, of phenomena which are not absolutely based on what we know. In order to judge them it is necessary to understand that we need to liberate ourselves from all prejudices and preconceived ideas. Above all, we need to enroot this truth: outside those things that we know there may be something else, if we don't want to be ridiculed by the absurd idea, which is the child of our pride, of believing that God keeps no more secrets from us.

From the above, it is understandable that delicate influences may act upon the production of the spiritist phenomena. There are others, however, which deserve a not less serious attention.

As we said, once the spirit is undressed from its material body, it keeps all its will and freedom of thought that is even greater than when alive; the spirit has susceptibilities that we would hardly understand; something that frequently seems simple and natural to us may hurt and displeases the spirit; an inadequate question may shock and hurt them; they show us their independence by not doing what we want them to do, whereas sometimes they do things that we would not even remember having asked. That is why the requests for proofs and out of curiosity that they rarely respond satisfactorily are essentially antipathetic to them. The serious spirits do not respond to that and under no circumstance they would serve as motive of entertainment.

It is then comprehensible that the intention may strongly influence over the spirits mood to present themselves under this or that appearance, to the eyes of the clairvoyant medium; and finally, as they do not have a given appearance unless it is convenient to them, they only do that when there is a serious and useful reason.

There is another reason that somehow is connected to what we could call Spiritist Physiology. The vision of the spirit by the medium occurs through a kind of fluid-like radiation that comes from the spirit towards the medium; the latter one absorbs, so to speak, and assimilates the rays. If the medium is alone or surrounded by sympathetic persons, united by intention and thoughts, those rays concentrate on him; then the vision is clear and precise and in such a way that the appearances show a remarkable accuracy. If, on the contrary, the medium is surrounded by antipathetic influences and divergent and hostile thoughts; if there is no worshipping, the fluid-like radiation disperses and is absorbed by the environment;

## The Spiritist Review 1859

hence there is a kind of cloud, projected over the spirit, not allowing a distinction of details. The same would happen to a light beam with or without a reflector.

Another less material comparison can help us to understand the phenomenon. We all know that the enthusiasm of a speaker is stimulated by the sympathy and attention received from the audience and if the speaker is otherwise distracted by the rumors, by a lack of attention and ill manners, its thoughts will no longer be free: they disperse and the resources scarce out. A spirit that is influenced by an absorbent environment finds itself in the same condition: instead of having the radiations focused onto one point they spread out, losing strength.

We must add one consideration to the preceding ones, one whose importance will be easily understood by everyone who knows the progress of the spiritist phenomena. It is a known fact that there are several causes which may preclude a given spirit from attending our appeal at the time of the evocation: the spirit may be reincarnate or busy somewhere else.

Well, the medium must distinguish, among the spirits that show up almost always simultaneously, the one who is wanted; in case the spirit is not there, the medium may confuse with another spirit, equally sympathetic to the person who is evoking. The medium then describes the spirit, not being able to ensure that it is the evoked spirit or another one. However, if the spirit who showed up is serious the identity will be revealed. Once questioned about this the spirit may explain the cause of error and tell us who in fact is speaking.

A less obvious evocation can also be harmful for a different reason. Each one of us has companions, spirits that sympathize with our defects and our qualities. Such spirits are good or bad according to the individuals. The larger the number of people gathered the larger the variety of spirits and the higher the possibilities of finding antipathies. Then, if there are hostile persons in the meeting, be it through malicious thoughts or by frivolous character, or even from systematic incredulity, these will attract non-benevolent spirits who occasionally hinder manifestations of every kind, both written and visual. Hence the need to position ourselves in the most favorable conditions if we want serious manifestations: the results justify the means. The spiritist manifestations are not something with which we can amuse ourselves and go unpunished. If you want serious things, be serious then, in the strictest meaning of the word, otherwise you will be toys in the hands of frivolous spirits who will make fun of you.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## The elf of Bayonne

In our last edition we mentioned something about this strange manifestation. The information had been verbally passed on to us by one of our subscribers, a friend of the family with whom the event took place, describing it in a very quick summary. He had promised a more detailed description thus we owe him for his cooperation in making available the letters containing the detailed facts.

The family resides near Bayonne and the letters were written by the mother of the girl who was then ten years old, letters which she sent to her son who was living in Bordeaux, making him aware of the things that were happening back home. Her son was the one who transcribed the letters to us; hence their authenticity cannot be contested. We are infinitely grateful to him for his kindness.

The reservation with which we protect the names of the persons involved is understandable as this rule is always observed by us, unless we have a formal authorization otherwise. Not everybody likes to attract the curiosity of the crowds. To whom such reservation may indicate a reason for suspicion we say that it is necessary to establish a difference between an eminently serious journal and those that only aim at amusing the public.

Our objective is not to tell stories which will fill out whole pages but to illuminate Science. Had we been deceived we would have been so in good faith. When something is not formally demonstrated before our eyes we only register it. That is not the case when dealing with respectable people, whose honorability we attest, people who are far from trying to lead us to err, and who are also seeking enlightenment. The lady's son sent the first letter to our subscriber.



“Saint-Esprit, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1858

Dear friend,

The reason for the delay in responding to you was the death of my brother that God thought appropriate to take from us and my mother's return home. I have since been away from my house for some time. I would be really sad if Mr. Allan Kardec considered you just a story teller. This is why I want to forward you the detailed facts that occurred with my family. I believe I have already told you that the apparitions have stopped sometime ago and have no longer manifested to my sister. There you have the letters which my mom wrote to me about those events. Notice that many facts were omitted, although not less interesting. I will write again to complete the story in case you cannot do it by recalling what I have told you in person.”



“April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1855

One afternoon, about three months ago, your sister X felt like going out to do some shopping. As you know the hallway in the house is long and dark; our old habit of walking through that badly illuminated hall somehow makes us do it without stumbling on the steps of the stair. X had already let us know that every time she left the house she would hear a voice telling her things that she did not understand in the beginning, but which became intelligible later. Sometime later she saw a shadow and heard an insistent voice on her way. The words said by that invisible being tended to calm her down and give her wise advices. The essence of those words was a sound moral. X used to get really perturbed and, as she told us, sometimes felt incapable of proceeding.

“Child”, the invisible being would tell her every time she felt perturbed, “fear nothing since all I want is your well-being”. The voice pointed her towards a path where she found some coins for a period of several days; she found nothing on other occasions. X accepted the recommendations given to her and for

## The Spiritist Review 1859

a long time she would find either money or toys which you will see yourself. Those gifts were certainly given to her in order to encourage her. You were not forgotten in the conversations. On several occasions he spoke about you and gave us news about you through your sister. He often let us know what you were doing at night. He saw you reading in your room; on other occasions he told us that your friends were over at the house; thus, he always calmed us down when you were too lazy to write to us.

For some time now X has an almost continuous contact with the spirit. She sees nothing during the day. She always hears the same voice that tells her sensible things, always stimulating her to the work and to the love of God. At night she sees a pinkish light which does not illuminate the room, at the place from where she hears the voice. In her opinion that light could be compared to the twinkle of a diamond, in the shade. Now, she is no longer afraid. If I am doubtful, she then says: - *“Mom, it is an angel that speaks to me; and if you are courageous enough, he says, he will make you get up tonight and you should respond to him if he talks to you. You should go to the place he will indicate; you will see someone before you but don't be afraid.”* I did not want to try my courage. I was afraid and the impression all that had on me made me stay up all night. Several times at night I had the impression of hearing a breath near the headrest of my bed. The chairs were displaced when nobody touched them. My fear completely disappeared sometime later, and I am very sorry for not having submitted myself to the proposed test in order to have direct connections with the invisible, and also to avoid having to continuously fight disbelief. I then advised X to question the invisible with respect to his nature. Here is the dialogue between the two:

X – Who are you?

Inv. – I am your brother, Eliseu.

X – My brother died twelve years ago.

Inv. – It is true. Your brother died twelve years ago but there was something in him, as there is in all beings, a soul which doesn't die and that right now is in your presence, loves you and protects everybody.

X – I wish I could see you.

Inv. – I am right here across from you.

X – However, I see nothing.

Inv. – I will take a visible form for you. After the religious services you will go to the lower side of the temple; then you will see me and I will embrace you.

X – Mom would also like to see you.

Inv. – Your mother is my mother. She knows me. I would prefer to manifest to her instead of you. That was my duty but I cannot show up to many people, since God would not allow. I am sorry that mom did not have the courage. I promise to give you proofs of my existence and then all doubts will disappear.

In the afternoon, at the scheduled time, X showed up at the door of the temple. A young man came to her and said: “I am your brother. You said you wanted to see me. Are you happy now? Give me a hug since I cannot keep this form, which I have taken, for a long time.”

As you appreciate, the presence of that being should have scared X to the point of blocking her from making any observation. As soon as he hugged her he disappeared in the air.

Next day, in the morning, taking advantage of the time when X was supposed to leave, the invisible being manifested again and told her:

“You should have been very surprised with my disappearing. Now then, I want to teach you to float in the air so that you can follow me.”

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Anybody but X would have been afraid of such a proposal. She, however, promptly accepted it and soon felt flying, like a robin. Shortly after she felt like she had arrived at a place where there was a considerable crowd. She told us that she saw gold, diamonds and everything that excites our imagination on Earth. Nobody gave more importance to those things than we give to the stones of the pavements where we walk. She recognized several children of her age who lived in our street, and died long ago. Coming to an empty and richly decorated apartment she was greatly impressed by the vision of a large table where there were some scattered sheets of paper. Near each sheet there was an inkpot. She saw pens tracing characters on the paper, without the support of any hand. When she came back I reprimanded her for being absent without permission and prohibited her from going back to such expeditions. The spirit apologized to her for having caused her trouble, promising that from then on he would no longer invite her without letting me know.

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1855

The spirit transformed itself before X's eyes. It took your form so well that your sister thought you were in the living room. To be assured, she asked him to take its primitive form and after you disappeared it took my form. Well, as soon as you disappeared you were replaced by me. She was really impressed: she then asked how I could be there if the door to the room was locked. Then another transformation occurred. It took the form of your dead brother and told X: "Your mother and all members of the family can't see all the facts that are realized by my intervention without fear and some concern. I don't wish to scare; however, I want to prove my existence and spare you from the incredulity of everybody else, for it would be stubbornness on their part not to surrender to the evidence. Ms. C. is a shopkeeper; you know that you need to buy buttons; we will go shopping together. I will transform myself into your little brother (who was then nine years old) and when you return to the house you will ask mom to question Ms. C. about who was with you when you bought the buttons."

X observed the instructions. I queried Ms. C. who responded that your sister was accompanied by your brother who she actually praised, saying that at his age nobody could imagine that he would give so easy answers and show so little shyness.

You should know that the little one was in school and would only return home at seven o'clock. Besides, he is very shy and does not show the easiness attributed to him. A really curious fact, don't you think? I believe that God's hand is not foreign to these inexplicable things.

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1855

I am no more credulous than one should be and I do not allow myself to be dominated by superstitious ideas; however, I cannot refuse to believe in facts that happen before my eyes. Highly evident "proofs" were necessary so that I could stop punishing your sister, always afraid that she could be trying to deceive us, abusing our trust.

Yesterday, around 5 pm, the spirit told X: "It is likely that mom will send you somewhere to take a message. On your way you will be pleasantly surprised by the arrival of your uncle's family." X then immediately transmitted to me what the invisible had told her. I was far from expecting such a visit and was even more surprised for having learned about it in such a manner. Your sister left and the first persons she met outside were my brother, his wife and children who were coming to see us. X was quick to acknowledge that I had just had another proof of the truthfulness of her stories.

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1855

Today I can no longer doubt that something extraordinary happens in the house. I fearlessly see all these facts taking place without being able to extract any teaching from them, since these mysteries are inexplicable to me.

Yesterday, after having cleaned the whole house, and you know that I pay special attention to this, the spirit told X that, despite the proofs it had given about its intervention in all curious facts that I have told you, I was still doubtful and it wanted to eliminate that for good. A minute only had passed and was



## The Spiritist Review 1859

enough for me to find every room of the house in a complete mess, all done without a single noise. A red substance which I thought to be blood was spilled on the floor. Had it been only a few drops I might have thought that X had a bruise or a bleeding nose; but know this that the floor was inundated. This strange proof made us work hard to recover the primitive shine of the floor.

X also knows the content of letters, before they are open. It is the spirit that tells her.

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1855

X did not accept an observation made by her sister, I don't know about what. She gave her an inconvenient response, then receiving the deserved reproach. I punished her so that she went to bed without dinner. She has the habit of praying to God before falling asleep. That night she forgot it. A few moments in bed and the spirit appeared to her. He showed her a candleholder and a book of prayers, similar to the one she normally used, and told her that despite the deserved punishment she should not forget her duties. She then got up, did what she was commanded to do and it all vanished when her prayer was over.

The following morning, after having given me a hug, X asked me if the candleholder which was over the table upstairs had been removed. Well, that candleholder, like the one presented to her the night before, and the book of prayers had not been moved.

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1855

For some time now, there has been no significant event, apart from the following one: I had a cold for a few days; yesterday your sister was busy so I had nobody to send for some balm. I told X that when she had finished her chores she should go to the nearest pharmacy to buy me something. She forgot my request and I did not remember that either. I am positive about the fact that she did not leave the house or did not stop what she was doing but only to fetch a bowl of soup that we needed.

What a surprise when we removed the lid of the bowl to find barley candies that the spirit had brought in, avoiding her going out and also satisfying my wishes, which I had forgotten.”



We evoked that spirit in one of the sessions of the Society, asking it the questions below. Mr. Adrien saw the spirit with the appearance of a ten to twelve year old boy, black and wavy hair, black and lively eyes, pale, ironic lips, frivolous but benevolent character. The spirit said that it ignored the reason why it was evoked. Our corresponding member was present in that session, telling us that the description made corresponded perfectly to the description that the girl had given him on multiple occasions.

1. We heard about the story of your manifestation in a family of Bayonne and would like to ask you a few questions about that.
  - Ask and I will answer. But do it fast because I am in a hurry.
2. Where did you get the money that you gave your sister?
  - I took it from other people's pockets. You understand that I would not amuse myself by producing money. I take it from those who can give it.
3. Why have you bonded to that girl?
  - Due to a great sympathy.
4. Is it true that you were her brother, who died at the age of four?
  - Yes.
5. How come you are visible to her and not to your mother?
  - My mom must be precluded from seeing me but my sister does not need punishment. As a matter of fact it was through a special concession that I appeared to her.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

6. Can you explain how you become visible or invisible at will?
  - I am not sufficiently elevated and I am too concerned with things that attract me to be able to answer such a question.
7. If you wanted to, could you appear before us as you did with the shopkeeper?
  - No.
8. In that state, would you feel pain had you been spanked?
  - No.
9. What would have happened if the shopkeeper had spanked you?
  - She would have hit air.
10. Which name should we use when talking about you?
  - You can call me Elf, if you wish. But let me go, I have to leave.
11. (To St. Louis) Would it be useful to have a spirit like that at our service?
  - You frequently have it, assisting you without your knowledge.
  -



### CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE ELF OF BAYONNE

If we compare these facts to those of Bergzabern, which our readers still remember, we will see a capital difference. The spirit from Bergzabern was more than a rapping spirit – and still is at this point in time – it was a disturbing spirit, literally. It is a very unpleasant and inconvenient guest, although harmless. We will return to this subject in the next issue, when considering new and more recent events.

The spirit from Bayonne is, on the contrary, eminently benevolent and helpful; it is like those good servant spirits whose actions are transmitted to us by the German legends, a new proof that there could be a sign of truth in the legendary stories. As a matter of fact, it is clear that imagination would need little effort to transform these facts into a legend, and that they could be taken by a medieval story, hadn't they taken place, say, right before our eyes. One of the most remarkable traits of the so called Elf of Bayonne is its transformation. What can be said now about Proteus' fable<sup>1</sup>? Between the spirit of Bayonne and the one of Bergzabern there is still the difference that the latter only appeared in dreams whereas the former became visible and tangible, like a real person, not only to its sister but also to strangers; the purchasing of buttons from the shopkeeper confirms that. Why it would not appear to everybody and at any time? It seems that it does not have such a power and also that it could not hold the appearance for long. There would be perhaps the need for a long and intimate work, from a higher power, above its strength. New details, which were promised about these strange phenomena, will allow us to return to the subject in due course.

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<sup>1</sup> Greek God of the Navy. He was son of Poseidon (Neptune) and the goddess Phoenicia; presided over the future and guarded the navy schools of Amphitrite, the goddess of the sea. He lived in an Island in Egypt and could take multiple forms so as to avoid the curiosity of those who wanted their futures revealed (NT).

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Chaudruc Druelos

1. Evocation

- I am here.

Mr. Adrien, a clairvoyant medium who had never seen the spirit during its life, gave the following description, considered very accurate by those who were present and who knew it: Long face, willow cheeks; wrinkled and shaggy forehead; slightly aquiline and long nose; gray protruded eyes; median, mocking mouth; a little pale complexion, gray hair and long beard; bigger rather than small build. Frayed and worn out blue cloth jacket; old and rotten black pants; a colorless handkerchief replacing a tie.

2. Do you remember your latest Earthly life?

- Perfectly.

3. What was the reason that led you to live such an eccentric life?

- I was tired of life and felt sorry for people and their motivations.

4. Some say that it was vengeance and that you wanted to humiliate a relative in a better position. Is that true?

- Not only that. By humiliating that man I humiliated many others.

5. If it was vengeance then it cost you dearly since it prevented you from enjoying all pleasures of social life for many years in order to satisfy that desire. Don't you find it a bit too harsh?

- I enjoyed things differently.

6. Was there a philosophical thought besides that? Would it be the reason why they compared you to Diogenes?

- There was a relationship with the less healthy part of that man's philosophy.

7. What do you think about Diogenes?

- Not much: in a lesser degree it is the same that I think about myself. Diogenes had the advantage that he did what I did but among people who were less civilized than my contemporaries.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

8. Nevertheless there is a difference between you and Diogenes: his behavior was a consequence of his philosophical system whilst yours was led by vengeance.
  - Vengeance led me to the philosophy.
9. Did you suffer by being so isolated, for being the object of neglect and disdain and for the fact that your education separated you both from the hobos and from the educated people?
  - I knew that we have no friends on Earth. Ah! How much I experienced that!
10. What do you currently do and how do you spend your time?
  - I visit better worlds and enlighten myself... There are many good souls there who reveal the celestial Science of the spirits to us!
11. Do you sometimes come to the Palais-Royal, after your death?
  - Why would I bother with the Palais-Royal?
12. Among the persons attending this meeting, do you recognize some that you may have met during your pilgrimage to the Palais-Royal?
  - How could I not recognize them?
13. Does it please you to seem them?
  - It gives me pleasure, a great pleasure really. They were good to me.
14. Do you see your friend Charles Nodier?
  - Yes, particularly after his death.
15. He is errant or incarnate?
  - Errant, like me.
16. Why have you chosen the Palais-Royal, then the mostly visited place in Paris, for your promenades? Wouldn't that be contrary to your tastes for misanthropy?
  - I saw everybody there, every afternoon.
17. Wouldn't that be a sentiment of pride?
  - Yes, unfortunately. Pride had an important participation in my life.
18. Are you happier now?
  - Oh! Yes!
19. However, your life style must not have contributed to your betterment.
  - That terrain life? Much more than you imagine! Wouldn't I experience somber moments when returning home, alone and isolated? I then had the opportunity to ruminate many thoughts.
20. If you had the opportunity to choose another existence, what would that be?
  - It would not be on your Earth. Today I can expect something better.
21. Do you remember your existence before the last one?
  - Yes, and others also.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

22. Where have you lived those existences?
  - On Earth and in other worlds.
23. And the one before the last?
  - On Earth.
24. Can you tell us about it?
  - No. It was an obscure and occult life.
25. Without revealing that existence, can you tell us the relationship it holds to the one that we know, since one should be consequence of the other?
  - Not exactly a consequence but a complement. I led an unhappy life due to vices and defects which were much modified before I came to live the life that you know.
26. Can we do anything useful or pleasant to you?
  - Ah! Not much. I am now well above Earth.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Diogenes

1. Evocation
  - Ah! I come from far away!
2. Can you show up to Mr. Adrien with the same looks you had in your existence which is familiar to us?
  - Yes. And if you want I can bring the lantern.  
  
Mr. Adrien: Wide forehead, pronounced frontal bones; aquiline and long nose; large and serious mouth; suspicious black eyes. It shows a little elongated, skinny and wrinkled face; yellow skin; coarse beard and mustache; gray and rare hair. It wears white, very dirty clothes; naked arms and legs; skinny and bony body.
3. You said you came from far away. From which world have you come?
  - You don't know it.
4. Would you kindly answer some questions?
  - With pleasure.
5. Was the existence from which we know you by the name Diogenes, the cynic, useful to your future happiness?
  - A lot. You are wrong by ridiculing it like my contemporary did. I am actually surprised by the fact that History knows so little about my existence and that posterity, one may say, is unfair to me.
6. What good were you able to do since your existence was so much self-serving?
  - I worked for me but others could have learned a lot from me.
7. Which qualities would you like to have found in the man you looked for with your torch?
  - Firmness.
8. Had you encountered Chaudruc-Duclos, the man we have just evoked, would you have taken him by the man you were looking for? He also voluntarily renounced to everything that seemed superfluous.
  - No.
9. What do you think about him?
  - His soul was corrupted on Earth. How many are like him and don't know it! At least he knew.
10. Did you think that you had the qualities which you were looking for in man?
  - No doubt. I had my criterion.
11. Which philosopher of your time had your preference?
  - Socrates.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

12. Who do you prefer now?
  - Socrates.
13. How about Plato?
  - Too harsh. His philosophy is too strict. I admitted the poets, he didn't!
14. Is it true what they say about your interview with Alexander?
  - Very true. History has even truncated it.
15. What is it that history has truncated?
  - I refer to other conversations between the two of us. Do you really think that he came to see me to tell me one word only?
16. Is the statement attributed to him true that if he were not Alexander he would be Diogenes?
  - He might have said that but not in my presence. Alexander was a crazy, vain and proud young man. In his eyes, I was nothing more than a beggar. How could the tyrant be educated by the miserable?
17. Have you reincarnate on Earth after your life in Athens?
  - No, but in other worlds. I currently belong to a world in which we are not slaves. It means that if you were evoked in a state of vigil you could not attend the request, as I do tonight.
18. Could you delineate to us the qualities that you were looking for in man, how you conceived it then and how you conceive it now?
  - In the past: courage, boldness, self-confidence and power over people by intelligence. Now: abnegation, kindness and power over people by heart.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## The guardian angels

Spontaneous communication obtained by  
Mr. L... a medium of the Society

There is a doctrine that should convert the most incredulous for its enchantment and kindness. This is related to the subject concerning guardian angels. Just think about the fact that you have near you beings who are your superiors, who are there to counsel you, to sustain you, to help you to escalate the difficult mountain of righteousness; who are more certain and dedicated friends than the most intimate relationships that you can establish on Earth; isn't that a consoling idea? Those beings are there following God's orders. It was God who placed them by your side. They are there out of love for God, thus accomplishing a beautiful and tough mission. Yes, they will be with you wherever you go. The dungeons, the hospitals, the places of mockery, the solitude, nothing separates you from those friends that you don't see but whose kind impulse your soul feels, hearing their wise advices.

Had you known this reality better, how many times would that help you at moments of crisis! How many times would that save you from the hands of the bad spirits! However, on the great day this angel of goodness may tell you: "Haven't I told you? And you did not do it. Haven't I shown you the abyss? And you fell into that. Haven't I made you hear the voice of truth in your conscience? Nevertheless, you followed the advices of lie." Ah! Interrogate your guardian angels; establish with them this fond intimacy that reigns among the best of friends. Think not of hiding anything from them since theirs is God's eyes and you cannot deceive them. Think of the future and endeavor to advance in this life. Thus your trials will be shorter and your existences happier. Go people, courage! Cast away your prejudices and hidden thoughts, once for all. Take the new path that opens up before you. March on; march on, since you have guides that you must follow. The target cannot frustrate you for the target is God Himself.

To those who think it is impossible for elevated spirits to attach themselves to such a laborious and constant task, we say that we influence your souls even by being millions of miles away from you. To us, space is nothing and even living in another world, our spirits keep the bonds with yours. We enjoy faculties that you cannot understand but be assured that God has not imposed on us a burden beyond our strength and that God did not abandon you without friends and support on Earth. Each guardian angel has his own protégé who it watches like a father over the son. It is happy when sees the child following the good path and suffers when its advices are neglected.

Don't be afraid of bothering us with your questions. On the contrary, be always in touch with us, since you will then be stronger and happier. What makes all people mediums are these communications between each person with their familiar spirit – mediums who are ignored today but who will manifest later, spreading like a boundless ocean to keep incredulity and ignorance away. Educated people, educate; talented people, teach your brothers and sisters. You don't know the work that you accomplish by doing so. It is the works of Christ which God imposes on you. Why would God have given you intelligence and Science but to share with your brothers and sisters and make them advance in the path of the eternal venture and happiness?

St. Louis and St. Augustine

OBSERVATION: The doctrine of the guardian angels, watching over their protégés, despite the distance that separates the worlds, is not surprising. It is, on the contrary, grandiose and sublime. Don't we see on Earth a parent watching over one's child, even from a distance, helping with one's advice and exchanging correspondence with them? What would then be strange in the fact that the spirits could guide those taken under their protection, from a world to the next, since for them the distance which separates the worlds is less than the one which separates the continents on Earth?



# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## A forgotten night or Manouze, the witch (cont.)

The one thousand and second night of the Arabic tales  
dictated by the spirit of Frédéric Soulié

### Second Part

OBSERVATION: The Roman numerals mark the interruptions in the dictation. Several times the work was only restarted after two or three weeks and, despite that, as we have already observed, the report develops as if written at once. And this is not one of the less curious features of the production from beyond the grave. We repeat to those who could see this as futile that we don't publish it as a philosophical piece of work, but as material for study. Nothing is useless to the observer. He knows how to take advantage of everything in order to better understand the investigated Science.

### III

Nothing, however, could disturb our happiness. Everything was calmness around us. We lived in perfect security when one night, thinking that we could not be safer, from our side (we were in a roundabout, so to speak, reached from several alleys) appeared the Sultan and his Grand Vizier. Both men bearing a frightening expression in their faces: rage had altered their expressions. Both were – particularly the Sultan – showing an obvious exasperation. The first thought that crossed the Sultan's mind was of killing me, but knowing the family I belonged to and fearing for his fate, he dared not touch one single hair from my head. He then pretended not to have noticed me, as I had moved to the side as he got closer. However, he continued like a furious man over Nazara, swearing that her deserved punishment would not be long. He took her away, always followed by the Grand-Vizier. As for myself, once the initial scaring moment was over, I swiftly returned to my palace, thinking of any means to take back the star of my life from the hands of that savage who would likely destroy her precious existence.

- And then what did you do, asked Manouze. Because, after all, I don't see any reason for you to be in so much pain, unable to remove your lover from this situation that you created. You give me the impression of being a weak man that has neither courage nor will power when dealing with difficult situations.
- Manouze, before you criticize you must listen. I come to you after having examined all means at my disposal. I made offers to the Sultan; I promised gold, jewelry, camels, even palaces, if he returned my smooth gazelle. He despised everything. Since I saw my offers repelled, I threatened him; those were despised as the others. He laughed at everything and made fun of me. I also tried to break into the palace; I corrupted slaves; I got to the rooms but despite all my efforts I could not reach my beloved one.
- You are honest, Nureddin. Your sincerity deserves an award and you will have what you came for. As such, I will do something terrible to you. If you have the strength to withstand the trial that I will submit you to, you can rest assured that you will recover your old happiness. I give you five minutes to decide.

Once the five minutes was over, Nureddin told Manouze that he was ready to do everything she demanded in order to save Nazara. The witch then stood up and said: "That is fine. Come!" She then opened a door at the back of the room, showing him the way. They went through a somber patio, full of

## The Spiritist Review 1859

horrible things: serpents, frogs sternly strolling side by side with black cats, holding an air of superiority among other filthy animals.

### IV

At the opposite side of that patio there was another door also opened by Manouze. Once Nureddin went through they got into a lower room, only illuminated from the ceiling above: the light came from a very tall dome, surrounded by multicolored glasses, forming all sorts of arabesques. In the middle of the room there was a lit chafing dish and on a tripod; above the chafing dish, a large bronze vase with a simmering potion of aromatic herbs whose pungent odor was unbearable. By that vase there was a kind of a black velvet couch. When sitting on that couch the person would immediately disappear. Manouze sat down while Nureddin helplessly tried to find her for a few minutes. She suddenly reappeared and said:

- Are you still ready?
- Yes, said Nureddin.
- Then, sit on that couch and wait.

Nureddin had just sat on the couch when everything changed appearance. A crowd of white figures populated the room suddenly. These figures, at first barely visible, later appeared to be covered in blood caused by their bleeding wounds. They were dancing in a kind of infernal circle with Manouze in the center, showing sparse hair, sparking eyes, ragged clothes, bearing a crown of serpents on her head. She held a lit torch in her hand, like a flame casting scepter, whose smell constricted the throat. After dancing for about a quarter of an hour, they suddenly stopped, following a signal given by their queen, who had thrown the torch into a fervent boiler. Once all those figures were prostrated around the chair, Manouze asked the oldest figure to approach. This figure, recognized by his long white beard, said:

- Come here, you who follow the devil. I must assign you with this very delicate task. Nureddin wants Nazara and I promised him that I would give her to him. It is a difficult business. Tanapla, I count on your support. Nureddin will endure all required trials. Move on, then. You know what I want; do it as you please but do it. Watch it if you fail. I reward the one that serves me but cursed be the one who does not grant my wishes!
- Your wish will be attended, said Tanapla. Leave that to me.
- Then go and do it!

### V

As soon as she mentioned those words everything changed before Nureddin's eyes. The objects went back to what they were doing before and he was alone again with Manouze.

- Now, she said, go home and wait. I will send you one of my gnomes to tell you what to do. Obey him and everything will be fine.

Nureddin felt happy with those words and more so for leaving the witch's den behind. He crossed the patio again and the room from where he came in; she then followed him to the entrance door. Then, as Nureddin asked if he should return, she responded:

- No, it would be useless for now. If it is necessary I will let you know.

Nureddin quickly returned to his palace. He was impatient to find out if something new had happened since his departure. He found everything unchanged. The only thing different showed up in the marble room, a summer resting room used by the inhabitants of Bagdad. There is where he saw, near the small pool in the middle of the room, a kind of disgustingly ugly dwarf. He was dressed in yellow, with red and blue embroidery; he had a monstrous hunchback, tiny legs, a wide face, and green crossed eyes, an ear-to-ear wide mouth and a red hair that rivaled the sun.

Nureddin questioned him about what he was doing there and how he had gotten there.

- I am Manouze's envoy, he said, to deliver your lover. My name is Tanapla.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- If you are really Manouze's envoy, I am ready to obey you. But hurry up. The one who I love is in chains and I am in a hurry to free her.
- If you are in a hurry then take me to your room and I will tell you what to do.
- Follow me then, said Nureddin.

### VI

After having crossed patios and gardens Tanapla got to the young Nureddin's room. He closed all doors and said:

- You know that you have to do everything that I tell you to, without objection. Go and dress up like a merchant. You will carry a package on your back with the objects that we need. I will dress up like a slave and will carry the other package.

Greatly surprised Nureddin saw two large packages by the dwarf's side, although he had not seen nor heard anybody bringing them over.

- Then, Tanapla said, we will go to the Sultan's house. You will ask to have the Sultan be informed that you carry rare and curious objects; that if he wanted he could offer them to his favorite and that no other huri had ever worn something like that before. You know the curiosity. He will feel like seeing us. Once he is in your presence you will have no difficulty in showing him your merchandise and you will sell everything that we will take to him: these are wonderful dresses which transform the person that wears them. As soon as the Sultan and the favorite wear them they will take our places and we will take theirs: you the Sultan's and me Ozara's, the new favorite. Once this metamorphosis is completed, we will be free to act at will; you will then free Nazara.

It all happened as predicted by Tanapla: the sale to the Sultan and the transformation. After a few minutes of horrible furor from the part of the Sultan, who wanted to expel the inopportune, making a terrible fuss, Nureddin called several slaves, following Tanapla's orders; he ordered that the Sultan and Ozara should be arrested as rebel slaves; he then ordered that he should be taken to the presence of Nazara. He wanted to verify that she was prepared to confess her crimes and then die. He also wished Ozara, the favorite, to follow him, in order to witness the punishment that he had inflicted to the unfaithful woman. Next he marched for about fifteen minutes, followed by the chief of the eunuchs, through a somber corridor terminated by a solid and massive iron gate. The slave opened the three locks; they all got into a large room that was only four or five feet high. Nazara was sitting there, on a straw mat, with a vase of water and a few dates by her side. She was no longer the brilliant Nazara of former times: she was beautiful as always but pale and skinny. She had the shivers of fear when she saw the one that she took by her master, thinking that her time had come.

*(Continue in the next issue)*

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

January 1859

## Spiritist aphorisms and select thoughts

From time to time we will offer select thoughts under the title above, which in a few words will summarize certain essential principles of Spiritism.

- ✓ Those who believe to be capable of avoiding the action of the bad spirits by the abstention of the spiritist communications are like children who believe to be capable of avoiding danger by blindfolding themselves. It would be the same as affirming that it is preferable not to know how to read and write in order to not be exposed to the reading of bad books or to the writing of stupid things.
- ✓ The one that receives bad spiritist communications, verbal or written, is under a bad influence. Such an influence is exerted on the person irrespective if the person is writing or not. The written text offers a means of proclaiming the nature of the spirits that act upon them. If the person is fascinated enough to the point of not understanding the communications, others can open their eyes.
- ✓ Does someone have to be a medium in order to write an absurd? Who can tell that among all the ridiculous or bad things that have been written already, there aren't some which the unsuspected writer, led by some malevolent or jester spirit, represented the role of an obsessed medium through his writing?
- ✓ The good, but ignorant spirits, confess their insufficiency regarding something that they don't know. The bad ones pretend to know everything.
- ✓ The advanced spirits demonstrate their superiority by their words and by the constant sublimity of their thoughts, but they are not boastful. Be suspicious of those who emphatically say that they are at the highest level of perfection and among the elected ones. Swaggering is always a sign of mediocrity among the spirits, as it is among us.

# **The Spiritist Review 1859**

**January 1859**

## **Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies**

### **Warning**

The sessions that were held on Tuesdays are now moved to Fridays, at the Society's new headquarters, Rue Montpensier 12, Palais-Royal, at 8 pm. Newcomers will only be admitted on Mondays and Wednesdays, upon presenting personal letters of introduction.

Regarding all businesses related to the Society's matters, refer to Mr. Allan Kardec, Rue des Martyrs 8, or Mr. Ledoyen, book seller at Galerie d'Orleans, 31, Palais-Royal.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Paris, Typography of Cosson & Co., Rue de Four-Saint-Germain 43

# The Spiritist Review 1859

February 1859

## Hurdles to the mediums

The mediumistic faculty is diverse. It presents infinite nuances in mechanisms and effects. Anyone who is capable of receiving or transmitting the communications of the spirits is thus a medium, whatever the employed means or the degree of development of the faculty, from the simple occult influence to the most remarkable phenomena. However, in the common use, the word has a more restrictive meaning and it is generally applied to persons endowed by a very important mediumistic power, both to produce physical effects and to transmit the thoughts of the spirits, through writing or the spoken word.

Although the faculty is not an exclusive privilege, it is certain that it finds refractory minds, at least regarding the meaning given to that faculty. It is also certain that it is not exempt of hurdles to those endowed by such faculty: it can be altered and even be lost, and frequently be a source of grave disillusion. About this point, we judge useful to call the attention of all those who deal with the spiritist communications, be it directly or through third parties. We say through third parties because it is important to those that are served by mediums to be able to appreciate the worth and trust that their communications deserve.

In order to notice this state of affairs and understand what we are going to say, it is necessary to refer to the fundamental principle that there are all degrees of benevolence as well as wickedness, of knowledge and ignorance among the spirits; that they pullulate around us and when we think that we are alone, we are incessantly surrounded and nudged by beings, some with indifference, like strangers, others that observe us with more or less benevolent intentions, according to their nature.

The proverb "*each sheep seeks its flock*" has its application among the spirits as well as with us, and possibly even more with them, since they are not under the influence of social prejudices. If such precepts, however, sometimes confuses individuals of very diverse tastes and culture, such a confusion is only material and transient. The similarity or the divergence of thoughts will always be the cause of attractions or repulses.

Our soul, which in the end is nothing more than an incarnate spirit, is still a spirit. Although momentarily dressed by a material envelope its relationships with the incorporeal world, although not as easy as when in such a state of freedom, are not absolutely broken because of that. Thought is the bond between the spirits and us, and through our thoughts we attract those who sympathize with our ideas and inclinations. Let us then represent the mass of spirits that surround us like the crowds that we find in this world. Everywhere we intend to go we find people attracted by the same tastes and desires. In the meetings of serious objectives we find serious persons; in those of frivolous objectives, we find frivolous persons. Spirits attracted by the prevailing thought are found everywhere. If we observe the moral state of humanity, in general, we will understand without difficulty that in such an occult crowd the elevated spirits should not constitute the majority. This is one of the consequences of the state of inferiority of our planet.

The spirits that surround us are not passive. They form an essentially uneasy population which incessantly thinks and acts, influencing us irrespectively; exciting and discouraging us; pushing us to the good or to the evil, a fact which does not subtract our free-will more than the good or bad advices that we receive from our fellow human beings. However, when the imperfect spirits incite someone to do something bad, they know very well who they are talking to and they will not waste their time when they realize that they are not welcome. They excite us according to our own inclinations or according to the germs that they see in us, as to our disposition to listen to them. That is why a person who is firm in the principles of good doesn't give them the opportunity.

Those considerations naturally lead us to the problem of the mediums. As with all beings, they are submitted to the occult influence of the good or bad spirits; they attract or repel them according to the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

sympathies of their own souls, and the bad spirits take advantage of all faults, as from a missing protection, in order to impose themselves, irrespective of the medium, meddling with every act of the medium's private life. Moreover, once such spirits find in the medium the means of intelligibly expressing their thoughts and attesting their presence, they also meddle with the communications, provoking them, because they expect to have a greater influence by doing so, then becoming the masters of the medium. They act as if they were at home, sending away the other spirits who could create any difficulty to them and, according to the need, they adopt the names and even use the language of those, with the objective of deceiving.

However, they cannot represent such a role for long. In contact with a more experienced and forewarned observer, such spirits are soon unmasked. If the medium allows to be dominated by such an influence the good spirits stay away from him or absolutely do not attend when evoked or even come with certain antipathy, since they see that the spirit who has identified with the medium and that, so to speak, has settled in, can alter their instructions. If we have to choose an interpreter, a secretary, any mandatory, it is obvious that we would choose not only a capable one, but one who is even worthy of our affection; that we would not entrust a delicate mission, as well as our interests, to someone that is insane or that is an a habitué of a suspicious society. The same happens to the spirits. The superior spirits will not choose a medium familiarized with frivolous spirits to transmit serious instructions, unless there is the need for that or that there aren't other mediums available at the time of the communication; or even when they want to teach the medium a lesson, which sometimes does happen; but in such cases they only accidentally use the medium, abandoning him when convenient, leaving him to his own sympathies in case he insists on keeping them. The perfect medium then would be the one who would not grant any access to the bad spirits out of negligence. However, such a condition is very difficult to fulfill, if absolute perfection is not an attribute of the human being it is always possible to assess them by their actions, and the spirits, more than anything, take their efforts, their will power and perseverance into account.

Thus, the perfect medium would not have but perfect communications, in terms of truthfulness and morality. Since perfection is impossible, the best medium would be the one who would give the best communications. It is by their works that they can be judged. The constantly good and elevated communications, in which not a trace of inferiority could be detected, would undoubtedly be a proof of the moral superiority of the medium, because they would attest happy sympathies. Due to the simple fact that the medium is not perfect, frivolous, impostor, and liar spirits may meddle with their communications, altering their purity and leading the medium to stumble as well as those who seek their help. This is the highest hurdle to Spiritism whose seriousness we don't disguise. Can it be avoided? We say out loud and clear: yes, we can avoid it. The means is not hard, only requiring good judgment.

The good intentions and the morality of the medium are not always sufficient to prevent the prying of frivolous, lying and pseudo-wise spirits into the communications. Besides the spirit of the medium own faults, the medium can also provide entry to those spirits through other causes from which the most important is the weakness of character and an excessive confidence in the invariable superiority of the communicating spirits. Such blind confidence resides in a cause that we will explain below.

If we don't want to become victims of those frivolous spirits it is necessary to assess them. In order to do this, we have an infallible criterion: common sense and reason. We know that the qualities of the language characterizing the really good and superior individuals among us are the same as with the spirits. We must assess them based on their language. It would never be too much to repeat what characterizes the language of the elevated spirits: it is permanently dignified, noble, without swagger or contradiction, exempt from trivialities and marked by an accent of unaltered benevolence. The good spirits advise; they don't command; they don't impose; they remain silent about things that they ignore.

The frivolous spirits show the same level of confidence about things that they know and things that they ignore; they respond to everything without any concern for the truth. In a supposedly serious message, we have seen them placing Cesar in the same period as Alexander, with an untouched audacity; others



## The Spiritist Review 1859

affirmed that it is not Earth that turns around the Sun. In short, every gross or simply inconvenient expression; every indication of pride and presumption; every maxim contrary to the sound moral; every scientific heresy is to the spirits an incontestable sign of their evil nature, of ignorance or at least frivolity, similarly to what happens with human beings. Hence it is necessary to weigh-in at everything they say, pushing it through the winnow of logic and common sense. This is a recommendation incessantly made by the good spirits. They say: “*God has purposelessly given you reason. Use it so that you know what you are doing.*”

The bad spirits fear examination. They say: “*Accept our words and do not judge them.*” If they were consciously telling the truth they would show no fear of light.

The habit of scrutinizing the simplest messages from the spirits, of assessing their worth – from the point of view of the content and not the grammatical form, to which they give little importance – does naturally keep away the spirits of ill intent, who would not uselessly come to waste their time, since we reject everything that is bad or that may have a suspicious origin. However, when we blindly accept everything that they say, when, say, we kneel before their pretense wisdom; they do what human beings would do: abuse us.

If the medium is his own master and not dominated by a senseless enthusiasm, he will then be able to do what we advise. It frequently happens, however, that the spirit subjugates the medium to the point of fascination, leading the medium to consider the most ridiculous things.

Then the mediums become even more overconfident, getting all wrapped up by their good intentions and feelings. The medium thinks that this is enough to keep the bad spirits away. Unfortunately, that is not enough, since those bad spirits enjoy trapping such mediums, taking advantage of their weakness and credulity. What to do then? Have everything brought to a third and uninterested person. This will allow the third person to assess and judge, without prejudice, areas where the third person may well see a speck of sawdust where the medium could not see a plank.

The Spiritist Science demands a great experience only acquired through a long, assiduous and persevering study, and through numerous observations, as with every other Science, philosophical or not. That Science encompasses not only the study of the phenomena, per se, but also and above all, the habits, if we can say so, of the occult world, from the lowest to the highest degree of the scale. It would be presumptuous to judge oneself sufficiently enlightened and graduated as a master after a few tests. This would not be the pretension of a serious person, since whoever lay investigative eyes on these strange mysteries sees, unfolding before their eyes, such a vast horizon that long years would not be enough to cover them all. There are some, however, who wish to do so in a few days only!

From all moral dispositions, pride is the one that mostly facilitates entry to the imperfect spirits. The more arrogant the medium, the more it constitutes a danger. It is pride that gives the medium a blind belief in the superiority of the spirits who are attached to him, by bragging about certain names imposed on him. Whenever a spirit says: I am “Joe Doe” those mediums bow and don’t admit any doubt, as their self esteem would suffer if an inferior or low level spirit would be found under that mask. The spirit detects all these things and takes advantage of the weak side of the medium; flatters his supposed protégé; talks about illustrious origins which trap the medium even further; promises a brilliant future, honor and fortune, of which the spirit seems to be the distributor; and if necessary, shows a hypocritical tenderness towards the medium.

How to resist such a generosity? In one word, the spirit fools the medium, as vulgarly said; the spirit’s happiness is to make someone dependent.

We have questioned several of those spirits regarding the reasons for their obsession. One of them responded as below.

“I want to have a person who submit to my whims. That is my pleasure.” When we told him that we would do our best to uncover his tricks thus removing the veil from the eyes of the oppressed, he said: “I

## The Spiritist Review 1859

will fight you and you will not prevail because I will do so many things that he will not believe you.” This is in effect one of the tactics of these malicious spirits: they inspire mistrust and separation from the persons that can unmask them, giving good advice. This can never happen with the good spirits. Every spirit that stimulates disagreement, that excites animosity and that entertains resentment reveals their inferior nature, as a consequence. It would be necessary to be blind in order not to understand this and to believe that a good spirit could lead anyone to disharmony.

Pride frequently develops in a medium as their mediumistic faculty improves. The mediumistic faculty makes them feel important. They are sought thus they feel indispensable. Hence, many times, the boasting and pretentious tone, or an air of sufficiency and disdain, incompatible with the influence of a good spirit. The one that falls into such a mistake is lost because God has given such a faculty for the good and not for the satisfaction of their vanity or to transform that faculty in a ladder to their ambition. They forget that such power, which makes them proud, can be subtracted and that it has frequently been given as a trial only, as it also happens to some people’s wealth. Once that faculty is abused the good spirits move away, step by step, until they become a toy in the hands of the frivolous spirits, who shake those mediums with their illusions, feeling happy for having won over those who considered themselves strong. That is how we have seen the annihilation and loss of the most precious faculties that without such a behavior would have become the most powerful and useful supporters of the cause.

This applies to all kinds of mediums, be of physical or intelligent manifestations. Unfortunately pride and arrogance is one of the defects which make us less inclined to acknowledge in ourselves and even less so by pointing it out on others, since they would not believe. Try to tell a medium that he is being led like a child. He will turn his back on you, saying that he knows how to behave and that you cannot see things clearly. You can tell a man that he is a drunk, scornful, lazy, awkward and silly and he will laugh and agree; tell him that he is arrogant and he will be upset. That is the evident proof that you are telling the truth. In such cases the advices are so more difficult the more the medium avoids those who can give them. He flees from a feared proximity. The spirits, once feeling that the advices are blows against their power, push the medium to the opposite side, in order to feed his illusions. Thus, many deceptions will come, making the self- esteem of the medium suffer. Fortunate are those who do not have to endure even more serious things.

If we have significantly over emphasized in regard to this theme it is because experience has demonstrated to us, on many occasions, that this is one of the large stumbling stones with respect to the purity and sincerity of the communications from the medium. Hence, it is almost useless to speak about the other imperfections of the mediums, such as selfishness, envy, jealousy, ambition, greed, stiffness of heart, ingratitude, sensuality, etc. Everyone understands that these are additional doors open to the imperfect spirits, or at least, causes of weakness. In order to repel those spirits it is not good enough to ask them to leave; it is not even good enough to wish or even less to conjure them. It is necessary to close the doors and the ears to them; demonstrate that we are stronger than they are – and we are incontestably, through the love of good, through charity, kindness, simplicity, modesty and disinterest, qualities that attract the benevolence of the good spirits. It is their support that gives us strength. If they sometimes allow us to face evil, it is a trial to our faith and character.

May the mediums not fear those conditions so much, which we have just mentioned. We must acknowledge that those conditions are logical thus it would be a mistake to feel discouraged. In any case they give us a means of recognizing our own imperfections. We have already said in another article that it is not necessary to be a medium to be under the influence of the bad spirits, who act in the shadow. The enemy shows up and betrays himself through the mediumistic faculty. We become aware of whom we are dealing with and how to combat them. That is how a bad communication may become a useful lesson, if we know how to take advantage of that.

As a matter of fact, it would be unfair to attribute all bad communications to the medium. We speak of those that are obtained by the mediums alone, without any other influence, and not about those that are

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

produced in any other environment. Well, everyone knows that the spirits, attracted by that environment, may damage the manifestations, be it by the diversity of characters, or be it by the lack of reverence. It is a general rule that the best communications occur in the closeness of a concentrated and homogeneous group. Several influences play a role in every communication: the medium, the environment and the person that interrogates the spirits. These influences may interact with one another, neutralize or reinforce each other. That depends on our proposed objective and on the dominating thought. We have seen excellent communications in gatherings and from mediums that did not have all the necessary conditions. In this case the spirits would come for one person in particular, since that was useful. We have also seen bad communications obtained by good mediums only because the interrogator did not have serious intentions and attracted the frivolous spirits who made fun of him or her. It all requires sensibility and observation. The preponderance that all these conditions combined must have is easily understandable.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

February 1859

## The Agénères (non-entity)

We have discussed the theory of the apparitions several times. It was recalled in our last issue given the fact that we had the report of strange phenomena. We remind our readers about those phenomena in order to better understand what follows next.

Everybody knows that among the most extraordinary manifestations produced by Mr. Home there was the appearance of perfectly tangible hands, which everyone could see and touch; which shook hands and suddenly offered the emptiness when attempted to be caught by surprise. That is a positive fact, produced under several circumstances, attested by numerous eyewitnesses. However, abnormal and as strange as those facts may seem, the marvelous stops from the moment when it is possible to give them a logical explanation. It then enters into the category of the natural phenomena, although of an order completely different from those that take place before our eyes and with which we should not confuse them.

We can find elements of comparison with the common phenomena – like that blind person who could feel the shining light or the colors by the sound of a trumpet – but not similarities. It is precisely the attempt of comparing everything to what we already know that leads so many people to confusion: some think that these new elements can be manipulated as if they were molecules of Oxygen and Hydrogen. Well, that is a mistake. Those phenomena are submitted to conditions that escape the normal circle of our observations. Before anything else, it is necessary to know those conditions and comply with them if we wish to be successful. It is necessary, above all, not to lose sight of this essential principle, the true key of the Spiritist Science: the agent of the vulgar phenomena is a physical force, material, that can be submitted to the laws of Calculus, whereas in the spiritist phenomena such agent is always an intelligence that has its own free-will and does not submit to our caprices.

Was there flesh, skin, bones and nails on those hands? Of course not: it was an appearance but in such a way that it produced the effect of reality. If the spirit has the power of turning a given part of their body visible and tangible, there is no reason why the same would not happen to other organs. Let us then suppose that the spirit extends that appearance to all parts of the body and we will then have the impression of seeing one of our analogous, acting like us, when in fact that is nothing more than a momentarily solidified vapor.

Such is the case of the Elf of Bayonne. The duration of that appearance is submitted to conditions unknown to us. No doubt it depends on the will of the spirit, who can produce or undo them at will, but within certain limits which they do not always have the freedom of surpassing. Once questioned about this and all intermittences of any manifestation, the spirits have always said that they were acting following superior permission.

If with certain spirits the duration of the corporeal appearance is limited, we can in principle say that it is variable and it is capable of persisting for a more or less lengthy time interval, since it can be produced all the time and at any time. A spirit whose body was completely visible and tangible would have the appearance of a human being to us; the spirit could talk to us and sit around us at home, as any other visitor, and we would take that spirit by one of our fellow human beings.

We start from a patent fact – the appearance of tangible hands – to arrive at a hypothesis that is the logical consequence of that. However, we would not have considered it if the story of the boy from Bayonne would not have paved the way, showing such possibility to us.

Once interrogated with that respect, a superior spirit answered that we can effectively meet beings of such a nature, unsuspectedly. He added that the fact is rare but it does happen.

Since we need a name to each and every thing in order to make ourselves understood, the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies call them *agénères*, in order to indicate that its origin is not the result of a generation.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

The following fact that recently happened in Paris seems to belong to that category.

A poor woman was in the Church of Saint Roche begging for God's help to alleviate her sufferings. Coming through the exit door at Saint Honoratus Street she finds a gentleman who approaches her, saying:

- My good lady, would you like to find a job?
- Ah! Good man, she answers, I beg God for that favor since I am in great need.
- Then, go to X... Street, number # and look for Mrs. T... she will give you a job.

That said the man followed his way. The poor lady wasted no time to go to the referred address. The indicated lady told her:

- In fact, I do have a job opening but since I have not told anybody, I don't know how you could have come here, looking for me.

Then the poor lady, observing a portrait hanging on the wall, responded:

- Madam, it was that gentleman who sent me.
- That gentleman? Said the other lady, now scared. But it is impossible! That is the picture of my son, who died three years ago.
- I don't know how could that be but I assure you that he was the gentleman that I met when I left Church, where I had gone to beg for God's help. He approached me and sent me over here.

From what we have just seen, it is not surprising that the spirit of that lady's son, in order to do a good deed to that poor woman, whose prayer he had certainly heard, would have then appeared to her under a corporeal form, indicating the address of his own mother. What has become of him after this? No doubt, what he was before: a spirit, unless he had found it convenient to appear to other people on his path.

That woman would have then met an *agénères* with whom she talked. A question that may be asked is this: why then he did not appear to his mother?

Under such circumstances, the motives that determine the action of the spirits are completely unknown to us: they act as they will, or even, according to what they have said themselves, under a permission without which they cannot reveal their existence in a material way. As a matter of fact, it is clear that his presence might have caused his mother a great commotion. Who knows he had not appeared to her in her dreams or by any other means? Moreover, wouldn't that be a way of revealing his existence to her? It is very likely that he had witnessed the encounter between the two ladies.

It does not seem to us that the Elf of Bayonne should be considered an *agénères*, at least under the circumstances in which he manifested; to the family he always showed the characteristics of a spirit, which he had never tried to dissimulate. It was his permanent state. The corporeal appearances that he embodied were only accidental, whereas the *agénères*, per se, does not reveal its nature and is nothing but a living person to our eyes. Its corporeal appearance may have a long duration, according to the need, in order to establish social relationships with one or several individuals.

We enquired the spirit of Saint Louis to kindly clarify us about several points, responding to our questions.

1. The spirit of the Elf of Bayonne could show up, corporeally, in other places and to other persons, besides its own family?
  - Yes, no doubt.
2. Would that depend on its will?
  - Not exactly. The power of the spirits is limited. They only do what is allowed to them.
3. What would happen if it presented itself to an unknown person?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- It would have been seen as an ordinary child. I will however tell you something: sometimes there are spirits on Earth that take such an appearance and are not recognized by people.
  
- 4. Such spirits belong to the category of the superior or inferior spirits?
  - They can belong to one or the other. These are rare facts that the Bible has examples.
  
- 5. Rare or not, it is enough that the phenomenon is possible so as to deserve attention. What would happen if such a being, taken by an ordinary man, received a mortal wound? Would it die?
  - It would suddenly disappear, like the young man in London.<sup>3</sup>
  
- 6. Do they have passions?
  - Yes. As spirits, they have the passions of the spirits, according to their inferiority. If they take a visible body it is sometimes to enjoy the human passions. If they are elevated it is with a useful objective.
  
- 7. Can they procreate?
  - God would not allow that. This is contrary to the laws established by God on Earth and those laws cannot be broken.
  
- 8. If such a being showed up to us, would we have any means of recognizing it?
  - No, unless through an unexpected disappearance. It would be the same as the motion of furniture from one floor to the next, which you have previously read.
  
- 9. Which objective can lead the spirits to take such a corporeal state? Are they acting with a good or wicked intent?
  - Many times with a wicked one. The good spirits use inspiration in their favor. They act upon the soul and the heart. You should know that inferior spirits produces the physical manifestations, and the ones we are dealing with are of that category. However, as I said, the good spirits may also take that corporeal appearance, with a useful objective. I say that as a general principle.
  
- 10. In such a state they can become visible and invisible at will?
  - Yes, since they can disappear whenever they wish.
  
- 11. Do they have an occult power, superior to that of human beings?
  - They only have the power of their category in the spirits' scale.
  
- 12. Do they have real need for food?
  - No. Their body is not real.
  
- 13. Nevertheless, the young man from London, although he did not have a real body, he had breakfast with his friends and shook hands with them. What happened to the food that he ingested?
  - Before he shook hands, where were the tightening fingers? Do you understand that the body disappears? Why don't you want to understand that the matter also disappears? The body of the

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<sup>3</sup> See Spiritist Review, December 1858, Phenomenon of bi-corporeity

## The Spiritist Review 1859

young man from London was not real since he was in Boulogne; it was thus an appearance. The same happened to the food that he apparently ingested.

14. If we had among us a being of that kind, would that be good or bad?
- That would be bad. Besides, it is not possible to keep in touch for a long time with those beings. We cannot tell you much. These facts are excessively rare and have never a permanent character. Still more rare are the instantaneous corporeal apparitions, like those of Bayonne.
15. Can the family protector spirit take that form sometimes?
- No. Doesn't that spirit count on innermost resources? The spirit manipulates them with more easiness than it would do under a visible form and taken by one of your similar.
16. There is a question about the Count of Saint-Germain; wouldn't he belong to the category of the *agénères*?
- No. He was a skillful mystifier.

The story of the young man from London, reported in our last December issue, is a fact of bi-corporeity, or even, of double presence, that essentially differs from what we are discussing. The *agénères* has no living body on Earth; it is only their perispirit that takes a tangible appearance. The youngster from London was perfectly alive. While his body was asleep in Boulogne, his spirit, surrounded by the perispirit, went to London, where it took a visible form.

An almost analogous case happened to us. While lying calmly in bed, one of our friends saw us several times at his house, although under an appearance that was not tangible, sitting by his side and talking to him, as usual. Once he saw us wearing a robe, other times wearing a jacket. He transcribed our conversation and sent it to us the following day. It was clearly about our favorite works. Willing to carry out an experiment, he offered us a beverage. Here is our answer: "I don't need this, for it is not my body that is here, you know that. Then, there is no need to create an illusion to us."

A very strange fact then took place. Be it through a natural disposition, be it the result of our own intellectual works, serious since our youth and we would even say, almost since our infancy, our character has been the one of extreme gravity, even at the age when one thinks of anything but pleasures.

That constant concern gives us a cold appearance, really cold. This is, at least, what we have been criticized for on several occasions. However, under this apparently glacial envelope, the spirit may feel more vividly than if it had a greater external expansion. Well, during our nightly visits to our friend, he became really surprised for seeing us completely different; we were more extroverts, more talkative, almost happy. Everything in us would reveal the satisfaction and calmness of feeling well. Wouldn't that be an effect of the spirit, disengaged from matter?

# The Spiritist Review 1859

February 1859

## My Friend Hermann

Under this title, Mr. H. Lugner published in the feuilleton of the *Jornal des Débats*, on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1858 a witty and fantastic story, of Hoffmann's style, that at first glance seems to have some analogy with our *agénères* and the phenomena of tangibility, which we have just discussed. The length of the story does not allow us to reproduce it completely. We will limit ourselves to its analysis, pointing out the fact that the author reported it as a fact, that he had witnessed and attached to the hero of the adventure by what is perceived to be bonds of friendship.

That hero, named Hermann, used to live in a small town in Germany. "He was", says the narrator, a handsome 25 years old man, of strong build, full of nobility in all his movements, gracious and witty in his language. He was very educated, not pedantic; very fine and without malice; very conscious of his dignity and without the least arrogance. Hence he was perfect in everything and even more perfect still in three things: his love for philosophy; his particular inclination for waltz and his kindness of character. That kindness was neither a weakness nor a fear of others, or an exaggerated mistrust of oneself. It was a natural inclination, a super abundance of that essence of human kindness that we generally find only in the poet's fiction. Hermann was endowed with a singular dose.

He contained and, at the same time, animated his adversaries with such goodness of heart that it raised itself to the omnipotent and above the offences. One could harm but not enrage him. One day his barber was trimming his hair when he snipped off the tip of his ear. Hermann was quick to excuse him, taking the blame, assuring him that he had moved awkwardly. That actually was not the case since I was present and clearly noticed that the incident was, in fact, the barber's error. He gave many other proofs of the unperturbed goodness of his soul. He listened to the reading of bad poems bearing an angelical air and responded to the silliest epigrams with nice praises, when the worst spirits had used their malevolence against him. Such a singular kindness turned him into a celebrity. There was no woman who would not give her life to watch Hermann's character, uninterrupted, trying to make him lose his patience, at least once in his life."

"Add to all that capability the advantage of a complete financial independence sufficient to place him among the richest men in town. It would be difficult for you to imagine that Hermann would miss anything in his life that would leave him without complete happiness."

"Unfortunately, however, he was not happy and constantly looked sad and depressed... This was due to a singular illness that afflicted him all his life and since long ago was provoking the curiosity of the whole little town."

"Hermann could not stay awake for a moment after sunset. When the day neared its end, he was taken by an invincible languidness, slowly falling onto a uncontrollable lethargy that nobody could rescue him. He would go to bed with the sun and wake up at dawn. His early bird habits would have turned him into an excellent hunter if he were able to overcome his horror for blood and withstand the idea of inflicting a cruel death to innocent creatures."

"Here are the terms with which he describes his situation, over a moment of relief, with his friend of the *Journal des Débats*:"

"You know my dear friend the illness that I am subjected to and the invincible sleepiness that regularly oppresses me, from sunset to dawn. You know what everyone knows about it and as everybody else you heard that such a sleep is almost confused with death. Nothing closer to the truth and with such a prodigy I would not bother, I swear, if nature would be content by taking my body by an object of its fantasies. But my soul is also one of its toys. I cannot tell you without horror the bizarre and cruel fate inflicted on my soul. Each one of those nights is fulfilled by a dream and that dream is connected with the most fatal



## The Spiritist Review 1859

clarity to the dream of the previous night. Those dreams, God wished they were dreams, follow up and interconnect like the events of a common existence that develops under sunlight and in the company of other men. Hence, I live twice and lead two different existences. One happens here, with you and our friends; the other, far away from here, with men that I know so well as I know you, with whom I speak as I speak with you, and who call me crazy, as you do, when I refer to another existence, beyond the one I live with them.”

“However, am I not here, living and talking, sitting by your side and well awake, as it seems to me, and whoever would pretend that we are dreaming, or that we are shadows, wouldn’t in all fairness go by a senseless person? Then! My dear friend, each of those moments, each action that fulfills the hours of my inevitable sleep is not less real. When I find myself entirely in that other existence it is this one here that I would be tempted to consider a dream.”

“Nevertheless, I don’t dream more here than I live there. I live alternatively on both sides and I could not doubt it, although my reason becomes strangely shocked for my soul successively animates two bodies thus living two lives. Ah! My dear friend, I wish God had allowed me the same instincts and the same behavior in both lives and that I was the same man that you know and appreciate here. But it is not like that and people would not dare to dispute the influence of the physical over the moral if my story were known. I don’t wish to brag about it; as a matter of fact, pride that might inspire one of my existences is strongly abated by the inseparable shame of the other. However, I can say without any vanity that I am fairly loved and respected by everyone here; people praise my manners and condition; they say that I have a noble, liberal and distinct looks. As you know, I love literature, philosophy, arts, freedom, everything that gives life its enchantment and dignity. I help the unfortunate ones and envy nobody. You know that my kindness became proverbial as my spirit of justice and my insuperable horror of violence. All these qualities that elevate and embellish me here I expiate there by the opposite vices.”

“Nature that has blessed me so much here curses me there. It has not only outcast me into an inferior condition, in which I am obliged to remain, illiterate and without culture, but also gave to that other body of mine such rough or perverse organs; such strong or blind feelings; certain inclinations and needs obeyed by my soul rather than commanded by it, thus allowing me to be dragged by that despotic body, under the most vile orders. I am tough and coward there; while I persecute the weak I am servile to the powerful; unmerciful and envious; naturally unfair and violent to the point of rage. Nonetheless, it is me and however much I hate and despise myself, I cannot help it but to recognize me.”

“Hermann stopped for a moment. His voice was trembled and his eyes wet. I smiled gently and told him: “I want to mitigate your madness, so that you can be cured. Tell me everything. For starters, where does that other existence take place, and what is your name there?”

“My name is William Parker, he said. I am a citizen of Melbourne, Australia. There is where my soul flies to, in the antipodes, after leaving you here. At sunset here my soul leaves the unanimated Hermann behind, then giving life to Parker on the other side, at dawn. It is when my miserable life of vagabond, of fraud, of quarrels and begging begins. I belong to a bad society in which I count among the scum. I am constantly fighting my companions and frequently hold a knife in my hand. I am always at war with the police and at times I am forced to hide. However, everything comes to an end in this world and this suffering is about to finish. I have fortunately committed a crime. I have cowardly murdered a poor creature that was associated with me. Thus, I led public opinion to indignation, already excited by my perverse attitudes. The grand jury has condemned me to the death penalty thus I wait for my execution. Some merciful and religious persons have intervened with the Governor, in my name, in order to obtain the grace or a conditional, which would give me time to convert; however, my intractable and gross nature is well known. The request was denied and tomorrow, or better still, tonight, I will be infallibly led to the gallows.”

“Well then, I said smiling. It is so much the better for you and us. The death of that rascal is a good way out. Once Parker is thrown away into eternity Hermann will live in peace; he will be able to wake, as

## The Spiritist Review 1859

everybody else, and stay with us day and night. That death will cure you my dear friend, and I am thankful to the Governor of Melbourne for having refused to grant a pardon to that scoundrel.”

“You are mistaken, said Hermann, with a graveness of voice that made me feel sorry for him: we will die together, the two of us, because we are not but one. Despite our diversity and antipathy we have only one soul that will be wounded by the same blow; in all things we respond for each other. Do you believe that Parker would still be alive if Hermann had not felt that both are inseparable, in life and death? Would I have hesitated for a moment had I been able to cast that other existence into the fire, like the damned eye that the Scriptures talk about? I was so happy to live here that I could not decide to die there; and my indecision lasted until fate decided such a terrible question. Now, everything is over. Believe me that this is a farewell.”

“On the very next day Hermann was found dead in his bed. A few months later the newspapers in Australia brought the news of the execution of William Parker, with all the circumstances described by his double.”

This entire story is told with an unperturbed cold blood and in a serious tone. There is nothing missing in the details that were omitted to give it a character of truth. In the presence of the strange phenomena that we have witnessed, a fact of such a nature could seem real, at least possible and, up to a certain degree, connected to those that we have mentioned. Wouldn't it be perhaps analogous to the youngster who was asleep in Boulogne while, at the same time, was talking to his friends in London? And to the case of Saint Anthony of Padua, praying in Spain on the same day that he showed up in Padua to save his father, then accused of murder?

At first sight one can say that these latest facts are exact. It is not impossible either that this Hermann would live in Australia while sleeping in Germany, and vice versa. Although our opinion is perfectly established with that respect, it is our duty to report it to our instructors from beyond the grave, in one of the sessions of the Society.

To the question: “Is it true the fact that was reported by the *Jornal des Débats*?”

They answered: “No; it is a story specially written to entertain the readers”.

Then they were asked: If it is not true, is it possible?

They answered: “No. one soul cannot animate two bodies.”

In fact, in the story of Boulogne, although the young man was seen simultaneously in two places, there was one body only of flesh and blood, which was in Boulogne. In London there was only the appearance or the perispirit, tangible is true, but not the actual body, the mortal body. He could not die in London and in Boulogne. According to the story, on the contrary, Hermann would in reality have two bodies, since one would have been hanged in Melbourne and the other buried in Germany. The same soul would have then simultaneously animated two existences that according to the spirits, is not possible.

The kind of phenomena of Boulogne and Saint Anthony of Padua, although very frequent, are as a matter of fact very serendipitous and accidental in one individual and it never has the characteristic of permanence, whereas the supposed Mr. Hermann was like that since his infancy. But the most serious reason is the difference of characters. If those individuals had one and the same soul, which could not certainly be alternatively that of a righteous man and a scoundrel. It is certain that the author founds his story on the influence of the organisms. We regret the fact that it is his philosophy, and even more so that he tries to endorse it, since that would be the same as denying one's responsibilities for one's actions. Similar doctrine would be the denial of the whole moral, since it would reduce the human being to the condition of a machine.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

February 1859

## Noisy spirits - how to get rid of them?

We got this letter from Gramat, Lot:

“Extraordinary noises have been heard for about two months in a house from the Coujet village, a community of Bastat, Department of Lot. In the beginning the noises were dry blows, similar to those produced by an axe on the floor, heard from all sides: under the feet, above the heads, on the doors, in the furniture. Then it was the noise of steps of a bare footman, followed by fingers playing on the window glass. The residents became scared and organized Church masses. The disturbed population would go to the village and listen; the police was informed, carrying out several investigations; the noise only got worse. Soon the doors would open; the objects would be turned upside down; the chairs thrown from the top of the stairs; the furniture transported from the floor to the attic. Everything that I tell you happens at daylight and is attested by a large number of people. The house is not an old, dark and somber shanty that gives you ghostly nightmares just by its looks. It is a shiny new construction. The owners are good people, incapable of deceiving any one and those who are really scared. Nevertheless, many people think that there is nothing supernatural there, trying to explain everything that seems extraordinary by Physics or the ill intention attributed to the residents. Since I have seen it all and do believe in all facts, I decided to correspond with you so that you can tell me who the spirits who make such noise are, and to learn about the means of silencing them. It is a service that you would do to this good people, etc....”

Facts of such a nature are not rare. They are all more or less similar and, in general, only differ as for the intensity or its greater or smaller tenacity. People are hardly bothered when these events are limited to a few noises, without consequence, but become a true calamity when they reach large proportions.

Our distinct correspondent asks about the kind of spirits that make such noise. There is no doubt with respect to our answer. It is a known fact that only the spirits of a very inferior order are capable of such a thing. The superior spirits, as among us the serious and grave persons, don't enjoy themselves by creating uproars. We have evoked them many times in order to enquiry about the reason why they perturb someone else's rest. The great majority replies that their only objective is to have fun. These are rather frivolous than bad spirits. They enjoy the fear that they provoke as much as the useless searches carried out to determine the cause of the uproar. They frequently remain close to an individual that they like to tease, and that they chase from house to house; on other occasions they get attached to a given place, without any reason, but caprice. Sometimes it is also a vengeance that they carry out, as we will have the occasion to see. In some cases their intention is more commendable: they want to call the attention and establish contact, be it to give a useful warning to the person that is targeted by them or to request something for them. We have seen them frequently asking for prayers; others request the accomplishment of a promise that they were unable to carry out; there are others, finally, who want to fix a bad deed that they may have practiced when incarnate, in the interest of their own peace.

Generally speaking there is no reason to be scared. Their presence may be an inconvenience but it is not dangerous. As a matter of fact, the desire to get rid of them is understandable. However, we almost always do exactly the opposite of what we should do. If they are spirits having fun, the more we take it seriously, the more they persist, like naughty kids that bother us even more the more we show impatience, and scaring the cowards. If laughed at their naughtiness they would end up tired and would leave us alone. We know someone that far from getting irritated he would excite them, challenging them to do this or that, hence after a few days they no longer showed up. That is why it is always useful to know what they want. If they request something we may rest assured that they will leave as soon as their wish is granted. The best way to learn about it is by evoking the spirit through a good psychographic medium. We will immediately see whom we are dealing with from their answers, and as a consequence we will be able to act. If it is an unfortunate spirit, charity demands that we treat it with the deserved care. If it is a

## The Spiritist Review 1859

jester spirit, of bad taste, we can act unceremoniously with the spirit. If it is a malevolent spirit, it is necessary to ask God to make it better. In any case, the prayer can only produce good results.

Nevertheless, the gravity of the formulas of exorcism makes them laugh and they have no respect for that. If we can enter into communication with them it is necessary to be suspicious about their burlesque or frightening qualifications, which sometimes they attribute to themselves in order to make fun of our credulity.

In many cases the difficulty rests in the fact that there is no medium available. We must then try to replace the medium by ourselves or directly interrogate the spirit, according to the precepts we gave in the Practical Instructions about the Manifestations.

Although produced by inferior spirits, those phenomena are many times provoked by spirits of a more elevated order, with the objective of convincing us about the existence of the incorporeal beings and the existence of a power superior to that of human beings.

The repercussion resulting from that, the fear it creates calls the attention, and in the end will open the eyes of the most incredulous. The latter ones find it easier to take those phenomena to the field of imagination, a very simplistic explanation that dispenses any other. However, when the objects are disarranged or thrown at people's heads, it would be necessary a very complacent imagination to suppose that such things do happen, when in fact they do not. If we observe any given effect, it will necessarily have a cause. If a calm and cold observation demonstrates that such effect is independent of any human intervention and independent of any material cause; if, moreover, it gives us evident indications of intelligence and free-will, which constitutes the most characteristic of signs, then we are forced to attribute them to an occult intelligence.

Who are those mysterious beings? This is what the spiritist studies teach us in the most indisputable way, through the means with which we are presented in order to communicate with them. Furthermore, these studies teach us how to separate what is real from what is false or exaggerated in those phenomena, whose causes we do not detect. If a remarkable effect is produced – noise, motion, even an apparition – the first thought that has to come to mind is that we are facing something that has an absolutely natural cause, which is the most likely. Then it is necessary to investigate that cause with great care and do not admit the intervention of the spirits unless it is an established fact. It is the means of not eluding ourselves.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

February 1859

## Dissertation from Beyond the Grave

Infancy

Spontaneous communication from Mr. Nélo, medium

Read at the Society on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1859

You don't know the secret that children hide in their innocence; you don't know what they are or what they were or what they will become. Nevertheless, you love them; you cherish them as if they were a part of you and in such a way that the mother's love for her children is considered to be the greatest love that one person can devote to another. Where does this kind affection come from, this tender benevolence that even strangers feel towards a child?

Do you know the answer? No. This is what I will explain to you.

Children are the beings that God sends into new existences. God gives them the looks of total innocence so that they cannot complain of excessive severity. Even in a naturally malicious child the defects are covered by the unconsciousness of their acts. Such innocence is not a sign of real superiority with respect to what they were before; No: it is the image of what they should be; and if they are not, they will be the ones to blame.

But it was not to their benefit only that God gave them such looks. It was also – and above all – for their parents, whose love is necessary to their weakness, since such love would be substantially debilitated before an impertinent and intractable character, whereas by supposing that their children are good and sweet, the parents give them all the affection, surrounding them with the most delicate attention. However, when the children no longer require such protection, the assistance given to them for fifteen or twenty years, their character is then revealed in its fullest: it remains good if they were good, but it is always patched by the nuances that were hidden in the first infancy. Know this that God's paths are always the best and that the explanation can be easily understood as long as one bears a pure heart.

In fact, imagine that the spirits of the children born from you may come from a world where completely different habits were acquired. How would you like to have such a creature around you, with passions that are completely different from yours, with inclinations, with tastes totally opposed to yours? Would you like to have them joining your ranks in a different way, different from the one that God wished, that is through the winnow of childhood?

It is here that all thoughts, all characters, all varieties of beings come to blend, engineered by that multitude of worlds where the creatures improve. And you yourselves, after death, will face another kind of infancy, among new brothers and sisters. In your new non-Earthly existence you ignore the habits, the customs, culture and the relationships in this world new to you. With difficulty you will handle a language that you are not used to speak, a language even more lively than your current thought. Infancy has another utility. The spirits only get into the corporeal life for their improvement, their betterment; the weakness of childhood makes them flexible, accessible to the advices of experience, from those in charge of their advancement. It is in that period that their character may be reformed, by the repression of their bad inclinations. Such is the duty that God has conferred the parents with, a sacred mission for which they will respond.

Thus, childhood is not only useful; it is necessary and indispensable, but also a natural consequence of the laws established by God, laws that govern the Universe!

OBSERVATION: We call the readers' attention to this remarkable dissertation whose elevated philosophical reach is comprehensible. What can be more beautiful, more grandiose than this solidarity that there is among the worlds? What can be more convenient to give us an idea about God's majesty and

## The Spiritist Review 1859

benevolence? Humanity grows by such thoughts, whereas it is diminished if reduced to the petty proportions of our transient life and to the boundaries of our world, imperceptible among other worlds.

### February 1859 Correspondence

Dear Mr. Allan Kardec,

I congratulate myself for being in touch with you through the kind of studies to which we both devote ourselves. For more than twenty years I have been working on a book that should bear the title "Study on microorganisms". It should focus on physiology; however, my intention was to demonstrate the limitations of Bichat's system. This system does not acknowledge the existence of a spirit but does connect the relationship of organic life's desire to survive. I wanted to demonstrate that there is a third mode of existence that outlives the two others, in a non-organic state. This third mode is nothing but the animic or spirit's life, as you call it. In one word, it is the primitive microorganism that engineers the two other modes of existence: the organic and that of relationship. I also wanted to demonstrate that the microorganisms have a fluidic nature, that are biodynamic, attractive, indestructible, autogenic and, in a defined number, in our planet as well as in all circumscribed environments.

When the book *Heaven and Earth* by Jean Reynaud was published, I was forced to modify my convictions. I acknowledged that my system was too narrow, thus admitting, like him, that the globes, through the exchange of electricity mutually established among them, through several electrical currents, must necessarily favors the transmigration of the microorganisms or spirits, having the same fluidic nature.

When the turning tables were spoken about I immediately dedicated myself to that practice, obtaining results that leave me no doubt regarding the manifestations. I soon understood that it was time for the invisible world to become visible and tangible and that, since then, we were marching towards an unprecedented revolution in Science and Philosophy. However, I was far from imagining that a spiritist journal could be established so fast and be maintained in France. Today, Sir, thanks to your perseverance, it is a sure fact and of enormous reach. I am far from thinking that all difficulties have been overcome. You will find many obstacles and endure many jokes but truth will shine after all. One will recognize the fairness of the observation of our renowned Professor Gay-Lussac who was telling us in his course, with respect to the imponderable and invisible bodies, that these were inexact expressions that only attested our limitation in the current state of art of our Sciences, adding that it would be more logical to call them imponderable. Thus, the same also applies to the visibility and tangibility. What is not visible to one may be visible to someone else, even to the naked human eye, as the example given by the sensitive. Finally, the hearing, smelling, and tasting, which are nothing more than modifications of the tangible property, are unperceivable in humans when compared to those of the dog, eagle and other animals. Hence, there is nothing of absolute in those properties that multiply according to the organisms. There is nothing invisible, intangible, and imponderable. Everything can be seen, touched or weighed, when our organs, which are our first and most precious instruments, may have become subtler.

I ask you to add the following experience to those many others which you must have used to confirm our third mode of existence, the spirit's life: Magnetize a person who is blind by birth and in the somnambulistic state frame a series of questions about the forms and colors. If the sensitive is lucid, he will unequivocally demonstrate that he has knowledge about these things that was not possible to acquire but in one or several prior existences.

I finish, Sir, by asking you to accept my very sincere congratulations for the kind of studies that you dedicate yourself. Since I have never been afraid of manifesting my opinion you can include this letter in your Review, if considered useful.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

Yours very dedicated server,  
Morhéry, Doctor in Medicine  
Loudéac, December 20 1858

OBSERVATION: We are happy for the authorization given by Dr. Morhéry to publish the remarkable letter that we have just read, bearing his name. It demonstrates that there is in him, besides the man of Science, the sensible man, that sees something beyond our sensations and who is capable of sacrificing his own personal opinions before evidence. For him conviction is not a blind faith, but a reasoned one. It is the logical deduction of the wise individual that does not pretend to know everything.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

February 1859

## A forgotten night or Manouze, the witch (cont.)

The one thousand and second night of the Arabic tales  
dictated by the spirit of Frédéric Soulié

Third and final part

VII

- Get up, said Nureddin, and follow me.

Nazara threw herself at his feet, crying, begging for clemency.

- No clemency for such a fault, said the deceitful Sultan. Be prepared to die.

Nureddin felt really bad for speaking like that but looked forward to the moment when he could reveal himself.

Once Nazara realized that it was impossible to be heard, she followed him trembling. They returned to the bedroom. Nureddin then asked Nazara to dress up properly. Once she was ready and without any other explanation, Nureddin told her that along with Ozana (the dwarf) they would lead her to a suburb in Bagdad where she would find what she deserved. Next they covered themselves with large cloaks so that they could not be recognized and left the palace. But, oh! Horror! They had just transposed the palace doors when their looks changed before Nazara's eyes; they were neither the Sultan nor Ozana, or the merchants, but Nureddin himself and Tanapla. They were all in shock, particularly Nazara, since they were so close to the Sultan quarters they were fast to move away in order not to be recognized. They had hardly arrived at Nureddin's house to find it surrounded by a large number of the Sultan's men, slaves and troops that were sent to have them arrested.

At the first sign of trouble Nureddin, Nazara and the dwarf sought refuge in the most far away room of the palace. The dwarf told them that they should not be afraid of anything. There was only one thing needed to avoid prison: to introduce the pinky finger of the left hand into their mouths and whistle three times. Nazara should do the same and they would thus become immediately invisible to the hostiles who wanted them arrested.

The uproar at the house proceeded to increase in an alarming fashion; Nazara and Nureddin then followed Tanapla's advice: when the soldiers came into the room they found it empty. After a detailed search they left. Then the dwarf told Nureddin that they should do the opposite now and introduce the pinky finger of the right hand into their mouths and whistle three times. Once they did that they soon became what they were before.

The dwarf warned them that they were not safe in that house and that they should leave it for some time, until the Sultan's rage had diminished. He then offered to follow them to his underground palace, where they would feel comfortable, while the means for their fearless return to Bagdad would be arranged in the best possible conditions.

VIII

Nureddin hesitated but Nazara insisted so much that he finally agreed. The dwarf then asked them to go to the garden and eat an orange facing east; they would be unnoticeably transported. Since they were suspicious, Tanapla then objected that he could not understand their misgivings after everything he had done for them.

Having gone down to the gardens and eaten the orange, as requested, they promptly felt elevated to a prodigious height. The couple then suddenly felt a strong vibration and a cold sensation, noticing that they were now going down at a very high speed. They saw nothing on the way down but when they recovered their awareness of the situation they found themselves in the basement, in a magnificent palace illuminated by twenty thousand candles.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Let us now leave our two lovers in their underground palace and return to our dwarf that we had left at Nureddin's house. We saw that the Sultan had sent his soldiers to arrest the fugitives. After having searched the farthest corners of the house, as well as the gardens, and as they did not find anything, they had to go back and report their useless search to the Sultan.

Tanapla followed them all the way, showing a funny face, and once in a while he would ask how much would the Sultan pay to whoever delivered the two fugitives. And added: "If the Sultan is willing to allow me an audience of one hour I will tell him something that will calm him down and he will be very happy for getting rid of a woman like Nazara that has a bad genie and who would cast every possible disgrace over his head, had she remained there for a few moons."

The chief of the eunuchs promised to take the message to the Sultan and to bring his answer back.

They had hardly arrived at the palace when the chief of the slaves came to tell him that his master was waiting for him; but warned him that he would be killed if he were trying to trick him.

Our little monster sped up to meet the Sultan. In the presence of that tough and strict man he bowed three times, according to the tradition before the prince of Bagdad.

- What do you have to say? Asked the Sultan. You know what is waiting for you if you don't tell the truth! Speak! I am listening.
- Great Spirit, celestial moon, triad of suns, I will not tell you but the truth. Nazara is the daughter of the Black Fairy and the Genie of the Great Serpent of Hell. Her presence in your house would bring every imaginable plague: rain of serpents, eclipse of the sun, blue moon impeding the nocturnal loves; finally, all of your wishes would be denied and your women would become old before the night had finished. I could give you a proof of what I am telling you. I know what Nazara is. If you wish I will fetch her to convince you. There is only one way to avoid such disgraces. It is giving her to Nureddin. He is not what you think either: he is the son of Manouze, the witch and the Genie Rock of Diamond. If you allow them to get married, Manouze will protect you as a sign of recognition. If you refuse... Poor prince! I am sorry for you. Try it. You decide later.

The Sultan heard Tanapla's words very calmly but then called a troop of armed men and commanded that the little monster be arrested until any event could demonstrate what he had just said.

Tanapla responded:

- I thought I was dealing with a great prince; I see, however, that I was wrong and leave up to the genies the matter of revenging their children. Having said that he then followed those who came to arrest him.

### IX

Only a few hours had passed since Tanapla was taken to prison when the sun was covered by a somber cloud, as if a veil covered the Earth; then a huge noise was heard and a giant came from inside a mountain, just outside town, stomping towards the Sultan's palace.

I would not say that the Sultan was very calm. He was far from that. He trembled like a leaf from an orange tree. As the giant approached he ordered that all doors should be closed and that all soldiers should be in a state of readiness, in order to defend their prince. But, oh! What a surprise! Once the giant approached all doors were opened as if pushed by an invisible hand; then the giant advanced steadily towards the Sultan without a sign or a word. The Sultan got on his knees, before the giant, asking to have his life spared; he wanted to know what the giant demanded from him.

Prince! Said the giant, I don't say much at this first encounter. I only warn you. Do as Tanapla has advised you to and we ensure that you have our protection. Otherwise you will suffer the consequences of your stubbornness.

That said, he left!

## The Spiritist Review 1859

In the beginning the Sultan became awestruck but after a quarter of an hour he recovered from the scaring surprise and far from following Tanapla's advice, he commanded that an edict be published, promising a magnificent reward to whom gave him the direction of the fugitives. Then he ordered that guards be placed at the entrance of the palace and around town and waited patiently. However, his patience did not last long, or even better, he was not given time to test it. Just on the second day an army showed up at the entrance of the city, seemingly coming from the depths of Earth. The soldiers wore moleskin for clothes and used turtle's carapace as their shields; their axes were made of stones.

The guards wanted to resist but the formidable aspect of that army discouraged them, and dropping their weapons, they opened the doors without saying a word, keeping their posts, and the hostile army solemnly marched towards the palace. The Sultan wanted to resist their entry into his bedroom but, with great surprise, the guards fell asleep and the doors opened by themselves. After that the army commander firmly advanced towards the Sultan and said:

- I came to tell you this: Observing your stubbornness, Tanapla sent us to look for you. Instead of remaining the Sultan of a people that you cannot govern, we will send you to the moles. You will become a mole and you will be a softened Sultan. Behold what you prefer: It is either this or you do what Tanapla told you to do. You have ten minutes to think about it.

X

The Sultan would rather resist, but, for his own good, after a few moments of consideration he agreed with the demands. He only wanted to impose one condition: that the fugitives would not live in his kingdom. He got the promise and immediately, without knowing how and where to, the army just disappeared before his eyes.

Now that the fate of the two lovers was perfectly guaranteed, let us return to them, observing that we have left them in the underground palace.

After a few minutes, astonished, enchanted by the aspect of the wonders surrounding them, they wanted to visit the palace and its surroundings. They saw amazing gardens and, a strange thing; they saw it almost as clearly as in the open sky. They approached the palace. All doors were open and there was an ongoing arrangement as if for a big party. They saw this magnificently dressed lady at the main door. Our fugitives did not promptly recognize her. However, as they approached, they recognized Manouze, the witch. A completely transformed Manouze was no longer the dirty, old and crumbling rag. She was a lady of a certain age, but nice, bearing a magnificent poise.

- Nureddin, said the witch, I promised you help and assistance. Today I will accomplish that promise. You are close to the end of your sufferings and will receive the price of your tenacity. Nazara will be your wife. Besides, I give you this palace. You will live here and you will be the king of a brave and thankful people. They are worth of you as you are worthy of reigning over them.

Following those words a harmonious melody was heard. A huge crowd of men and women came from all sides, all dressed up for a party. Noble gentlemen and great ladies kneeled before him. He was offered a golden crown, covered in diamonds, while he was told that they acknowledged him as their king; that the throne belonged to him as a paternal inheritance; that for 400 years they were enchanted by the will of perverse witches and such an enchantment could only end by Nureddin's presence. Then a long speech was given about his virtues and Nazara's virtues also. Manouze then said:

- You are happy and I no longer have anything to do here. If one day you feel you need me, knock on the statue that is in the middle of your garden and I will attend immediately. After that she disappeared.

Nureddin and Nazara felt like keeping her longer in order to thank her for all the goodness that she showed towards them. After having talked for a while they returned to their vassals. The parties and

## The Spiritist Review 1859

celebrations lasted for eight days. His kingdom was long and happy. They lived thousands of years and I can tell you that they still live. The only thing is that their country has never been found, or even better, never known.

The End

OBSERVATION: We bring to the attention of the readers the observations that preceded this story, in the numbers of November 1858 and January 1859.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Paris – Typography Cosson & Co. – Rue de Four-Saint-Germain, 43

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Study about the mediums

As interpreters of the spiritist communications, the mediums have an extremely important role, thus the attention given to the study of all possible influencing causes will never be excessive, all that with respect to the mediums' own interest as well as the interest of those who, not being mediums, are served by them as their intermediaries. Everyone can then judge the degree of confidence deserved by the communications received by them.

Everyone is a medium in a greater or lesser degree, as we have already said. That name, however, has been conventionally given to those who present patent and facultative manifestations, so to speak. Well, the aptitudes among them are widely diverse. One can say that each medium has their specialty. At first examination there are two well-established categories: the mediums of physical effects and those of intelligent communications. The latter ones present a large variety, being the principal: the writing or psychographic mediums, the drawing mediums, the speaking, hearing and clairvoyant mediums. The mediums of poetry, musicians and the polyglots are subclasses of the writing and speaking mediums. We will not return to the definitions of those several classes. We just want to recollect and succinctly remember the whole picture for a better explanation.

From all sorts of mediums the most common is that of psychography as this is the easiest type which can be acquired through exercise. That is why, and rightly so, the desires and efforts of the aspiring mediums are geared towards it. It also presents varieties equally found in the other categories: the mechanical writers and the intuitive writers. In the former case the movement of the hand is independent of the medium's will. The hand moves by itself; the medium is not aware of what he writes. His thoughts can even be somewhere else. With the intuitive mediums, the spirit acts upon the mind; his thoughts cross the thoughts of the medium, if we can say so, but without confusion. As a consequence, the medium is aware of the writing, sometimes even having an earlier awareness, since the intuition precedes the movement of the hand; however, the expressed thought is not that of the medium.

A very simple comparison helps us to understand the phenomenon. When we want to talk to someone whose language we ignore we use the support of an interpreter. The interpreter is aware of the thoughts of the interlocutors; he must understand them in order to be able to express them; however, those are not his thoughts. Thus, the role of an intuitive medium is the same as that of an interpreter between the spirits and us. Experience has taught that the intuitive as well as the mechanical mediums are equally good, equally capable of receiving and transmitting good communications. As a means of convincing, the mechanical mediums have more value, no doubt about it, but once conviction has already been acquired then there is no useful preference. Attention should be entirely concentrated on the nature of the communications, say, about the aptitude of the medium for receiving communications from bad as well as the good spirits. This summarizes the whole issue and this is of the essence, since this is the only means of determining the degree of confidence that the medium deserves. This is the result of study and observation and that is why we recommend our preceding article about the hurdles to the mediums.

With the intuitive medium the difficulty lies in the distinction of their thoughts from those that are suggested. The medium also faces that difficulty. The suggested thoughts seem so natural to the medium that it is frequently taken by their own thoughts, and therefore the medium doubts his faculty. The means of convincing the medium and the others is a frequent exercise. Then, among the evocations in which the medium will take part in, there will be a thousand and one circumstances; a lot of private information, particulars that the medium could not have any previous knowledge about, which will undeniably indicate total independence of the spirit.

The different varieties of mediums rest on the special skills whose principle we don't understand well so far. At first sight, and to the persons who did not carry out a systematic study of this Science, it seems that

## The Spiritist Review 1859

it is not more difficult to write poetry than prose. One would say – particularly if the medium is mechanical or unconscious – that the spirit can make him write in a foreign language as well as make a painting or write music. However, that is not the case. Although we see paintings, poetry and music produced by mediums that in their normal state are not painters, artists, poets or musicians, it is certain that not all of them are capable of producing those things. Despite their ignorance about those arts, they have an intuitive faculty and a flexibility that transform them into the kindest instruments. That is what Bernard Palissy responded, when asked about his choice of the medium Victorien Sardou, who could not paint, and still produce his remarkable paintings.<sup>5</sup> “That is because I find him more flexible”, he said. The same happens to other abilities. And – what an interesting thing – we have seen spirits refusing to dictate poems through mediums that are familiar with poetry, while dictating delightful verses to others who were ignorant about the rules of poetry. This demonstrates once more that the spirits have free will and that any attempt to submit them to our caprices are useless. From the previous observations it results that the medium must follow the impulses that are natural to them, according to their own abilities; that must try to perfect such ability through exercise; that any effort to develop the one that is missing will result fruitless since it could be harmful to the ones that he has. Forcing our talent would yield no grace, as La Fontaine said, to which we could add: we would not do anything good. When a medium has a precious faculty with which he can become really useful he should be content with that and do not try to seek the vain satisfaction of his self-love with a variant that would weaken his fundamental faculty. In case a given faculty has to be modified, as it frequently does, or if the medium has to acquire a new faculty, it will all come spontaneously and not as a result of the medium’s wishes.

The faculty of producing physical effects is a very distinct category, rarely associated with intelligent communications, particularly those of elevated reach. It is well known that the physical effects are peculiar to spirits of an inferior order, as among us the exhibition of strength is peculiar to the acrobats. Well, the rapping spirits belong to that inferior class; they frequently act on their own, in order to have fun or tease others, but they sometimes act under the orders of superior spirits who use them as we do with our servants. It would be absurd to think that superior spirits would come to have fun by knocking on tables or making them turn. They use such means, we said, through intermediaries, be it to convince us or to communicate with us, as long as we do not have other means; however, they abandon such means as soon as they can act more rapidly, more conveniently and more directly, as we have abandoned the air telegraph as soon as we had the electrical one available to us. The physical effects must not be neglected by any means, since they represent a means of conviction to many people. Moreover, they offer a precious study material about the occult forces. However, it should be noticed that the spirits generally refuse to produce such phenomena to those who don’t need them or, at least, they advise us to not get particularly involved with them. This is what the spirit of St. Louis wrote about at the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies:

“They mocked the turning tables but they will never mock the philosophy, the wisdom and the charity that shines out of the serious communications. The turning tables were the lobby of the Science that once initiated we cast our prejudices aside, like the mantle that is left behind. You will never be advised enough to turn your meetings into serious centers. May the physical demonstrations be done elsewhere; that one may see and hear somewhere else but that among you, may there be love and understanding. How do you expect to be seen through the eyes of the superior spirits when you make a table turn? Ignorant! Does the scholar spend his time reviewing Science 101? If you, on the contrary, are seen in

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<sup>5</sup> See Spiritist Review, April and August 1858

## The Spiritist Review 1859

search of intelligent and instructive communications, you will then be considered serious people, searching for the truth.”

It is impossible to summarize in a more logical and precise way the character of both kinds of manifestations. The one who receives elevated communications owes them to the assistance of the good spirits. It is a demonstration of their sympathy. Resigning to that in order to entertain the material effects is the same as exchanging a select society by an inferior one. Willing to unite both is the same as attracting antipathetic beings and, in such a conflict, it is likely that the good ones will leave and the bad ones stay. Having said all that, there is no disregard for the mediums of physical effects. They exist for a reason and their objective is providential. They do an incontestable service to the Spiritist Science but when a medium has a faculty which puts him in contact with superior spirits, we do not understand that the medium would resign from that faculty or even wish others, unless out of pure ignorance. Frequently, the desire to be everything may in the end transform the medium in nothing.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Self-serving mediums

In our article about the hurdles to overcome as a medium we placed greed on the list of the flaws that can provide entry to the imperfect spirits. It will not be useless to elaborate on this subject. The medium that could turn their faculties into a profession is in the first row of the self-serving mediums, offering what is typically called sessions or paid consultations. We don't know them, at least in France. Since everything can become the subject of speculation, it would not come as a surprise to us if one day they wanted to exploit the spirits. One still needs to know how the spirits would handle this matter in case such speculation was introduced. Even without any initiation in Spiritism one can understand how shameful this is.

However, those who only know, even if a little, the difficult conditions required by the communication of the good spirits with us, and the little which is needed to send them away, as well as their rejection towards anything representing a selfish interest, will never be able to admit that the superior spirits may serve the caprices of the first one to evoke them at some sort of hourly rate.

The simplest common sense repeals such hypothesis. The evocation of your father, your mother, your children and your friends through similar means, wouldn't that also be sacrilege? There is no doubt that one can obtain communications through such a mode but God knows from which source! The frivolous, liars, naughty, jester spirits and the whole crowd of inferior spirits always come. They are always ready to answer to anything. St. Louis was telling us the other day at the Society: "Evoke a stone and it will respond to you."

Those who want serious communications must, before anything, be informed about the nature of the sympathies between the medium and the beings from beyond the grave. The communications fed by the ambition of profit can only inspire a really mediocre confidence.

Self-serving mediums are not the only ones that could demand a given payment. Self-serving is not only translated as the expectation of a material profit but also by greedy thoughts of any kind, through which personal hope may be founded. Furthermore, it is an anomaly which the jester spirits know how to use very well, taking advantage of that with a really remarkable skill and insolence, feeding with deceptive illusions those who position themselves under their dependence.

In summary, mediumship is a faculty given for the good and the good spirits stay away from whoever intends to transform it into a ladder to reach any goal that is not in the designs of the Providence. Selfishness is the ulcer of Society. The good spirits fight it, therefore, it is not possible to suppose that they may come to stimulate it. This is so rational that it is useless to insist on that point.

The mediums of physical effects are not in the same category; unscrupulous inferior spirits who are not concerned about moral sentiments produce these effects. This type of medium, who wanted to exploit his faculty, could very easily find spirits who would assist him. However, we would still have another inconvenience. As with the medium of intelligent communications, the one of physical effects has not received his faculty for his own pleasure. It has been given to him on the condition that it is used properly. If it is abused it can be taken away from the medium or converted into a loss, as, in reality, the inferior spirits are under the command of the superior ones.

The inferior spirits like to mystify but they do not like to be mystified. If they willingly agree to respond to jokes and questions of curiosity on one hand, on the other hand, like the other spirits, they do not like to be exploited and constantly prove that they have their own free will; that they act when and how they wish to do so, implying that the medium of physical effects becomes even more insecure with respect to the regularity of the manifestations than the writing mediums. Pretending to produce them at will on given days and at predetermined times would be a demonstration of profound ignorance. What can then



## The Spiritist Review 1859

be done to make money? Simulate the phenomena. That is what can happen not only to those who have openly turned this into a profession but also to the apparently simple persons who had reduced themselves to receiving any retribution from the visitors. If the spirits don't produce anything then the mediums produce it. Imagination is really fertile when there is money involved. It is a thesis that we will develop in a special article to help to preclude fraud.

We conclude from all the above that the most absolute disinterest is the best guarantee against charlatanism, since there is no uninterested charlatan.

If disinterest does not always ensure the good quality of the intelligent communications it does, however, subtracts from the bad spirits a powerful means of action, shutting up the mouth of certain detractors.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Phenomenon of transfiguration

The fact below was extracted from a letter addressed to us in September 1857 by a corresponding member from Saint-Etienne. After talking about several communications witnessed by him, he adds:

“A most remarkable fact takes place with a family of our knowledge. They moved from the turning tables to the talking couch; later a pencil was attached to the foot of the couch, indicating the psychography; this was then practiced for a long time, more of a distraction than a serious thing. Finally the writings designated a young lady of the house, ordering that she should have her head caressed after lying down. The lady fell asleep almost immediately and after a certain number of experiments she transfigured. The youngster would take over the facial traces, voice and gestures of deceased relatives; those of her grandparents who she had never met, and a brother that had died a few months earlier. The transfigurations took place one after the other in the same session. She spoke a dialect that is not from our days, as I was told, and since I am not familiar with the current one or the other. What I can affirm is that in one session she assumed the appearance of her funny, strong brother; the thirteen-year-old young lady medium then gave me a tough handshake. The phenomena have been constantly repeating in the same way, for about 18 months to two years, now with the only difference that it is produced naturally, without the imposition of hands.”

Although very rare, this phenomenon is not exceptional. We have heard about similar cases and we have ourselves witnessed something similar with somnambulistic mediums, in the state of ecstasy, as well as with some ecstatic mediums that were not in the somnambulistic state. On another hand it is certain that violent emotions operate a change in physiognomy, giving the person a completely different look as from the normal state. Don't we also see people who have the ability of changing their own appearance through the controlled use of some changeable traces? We then see that the rigidity of the face is not such that it cannot be submitted to a more or less profound temporary change. There is no surprise then that a similar fact may take place here, although through a cause which is independent of the person's will. Here are the answers given by St. Louis in the session of the Society, on February 25<sup>th</sup> last:

1. The case of transfiguration that we have just discussed, is that true?
  - Yes.
2. Is there a material effect in that kind of phenomenon?
  - The phenomenon of transfiguration may occur in a material way, to the point that its several phases may be registered through daguerreotype (obsolete photographic process).
3. How does this effect take place?
  - Transfiguration, as you understand it, is nothing more than a change in appearance, an alteration or modification of the contour lines of the face, which can be produced by the action of the spirit over its own envelope (perispirit) or by an exterior influence. The body never changes, but it shows different appearances through a nervous contraction.
4. Can the spectators be deceived by a false appearance?
  - It can also happen that the perispirit plays the role that you know well. In the cited case there was nervous contraction, much amplified by imagination. As a matter of fact, this phenomenon is very rare.
5. The role of the perispirit would be analogous to what happen in the phenomena of bi-corporeity?
  - Yes.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

6. Then in the case of transfiguration is it necessary that there is a disappearance of the real body, so that the spectators may see only the perispirit under a different form?
  - Not a disappearance, properly, but an occlusion. You must be clear about the terms.
7. From what you have just said it seems we can conclude that in the phenomenon of transfiguration there may be two effects: I – alteration of the traces of the real body, originated from a nervous contraction; II – variable appearance of the perispirit, made visible. Is that right?
  - Certainly.
8. What is the primary cause of this phenomenon?
  - The will of the spirit
9. Every spirit can produce it?
  - No. The spirits cannot always do what they wish.
10. How do you explain the abnormal strength of that girl, transfigured into the person of her brother?
  - Doesn't the spirit have a great strength? As a matter of fact, the strength is that of the body, in its normal state.

OBSERVATION: There is nothing remarkable about this fact. We often see very weak persons momentarily endowed by a prodigious force due to super excitation.

11. Since in the phenomenon of transfiguration the eye of the observer may receive an image different from the reality, could the same happen to other physical manifestations? For example: when a table is lifted without the support of hands and we see the table above ground, is it really the table that moves?
  - You still ask?
12. What is it that lifts up the table?
  - The strength of the spirit.

OBSERVATION: This phenomenon has already been explained by St. Louis and we thoroughly treated it in the May and June 1858 editions of the review, when discussing the theory of the physical manifestations. We were told that in such a case the table or any other object that moves is taken by a momentary factious life that allows the object to obey the will of the spirit.

Some people wanted to see a simple optical illusion in that fact, through a kind of mirage, that would make us see a table in the air when in reality it would be on the floor. If it were like that it would not be less worthy of attention. It is interesting that those who want to dispute or criticize the spiritist phenomena explain them through causes which would also be true prodigies and equally difficult to understand. But why then treat the subject with so much disdain? If the cause which they indicate is real, then why not study that cause in depth? The physicist tries to understand the minimum motion of the magnetic needle; the chemist the slightest change in the molecular attraction. Why then showing so much indifference to so strange phenomena, such as the ones we have mentioned here, be it through

## The Spiritist Review 1859

a simple consequence of the visible light beam, or be it by a new application of the known laws? This is not logical.

It certainly would not be impossible, through an effect analogous to the one that makes us see an object in the water at a higher position that it really is due to the refraction of light rays, a table would apparently be in the air while in reality it would be on the ground. There is a fact however that definitely resolves the issue. It is when the table violently falls on the floor, broken into pieces. It does not look like an optical illusion.

Let us return to the transfiguration.

If a muscular contraction may modify the physiognomic traces, it would not be but within certain limits. But certainly if a young lady takes the appearance of an old man, no physiological effect would give her a beard. Then we have to look for a cause elsewhere. Bearing in mind what we have said about the role of the perispirit in all phenomena of apparition, even those of living persons, and one will understand that this is the key to the phenomenon of transfiguration.

In fact, since the perispirit may be isolated from the body; that it can become visible; that through its extreme subtleness it may take several appearances, according to the will of the spirit, it is not hard to understand that it may thus go by a transfigured person: the body continues to be the same; it is only the perispirit that changed its appearance. But then, you will ask, what becomes of the body? How come the observer does not see a double image, that is, the real body on one side and the transfigured perispirit on the other? These are strange facts about which we will talk soon, demonstrating that from a fascination that assails the observer under such circumstances, the real body may somehow become hidden by the perispirit.

The phenomenon that is the object of this current article has been communicated to us long ago. We had not published it yet because our proposal is not to transformer our Spiritist Review into a simple catalogue, destined to feed curiosity; or a rough compilation without appreciation and comments. Our task would then be very easy but we do take it much more seriously.

First of all, our target audience is the person of reason. Those individuals like us, who want to understand things as much as possible. Well, experience has taught us that facts, however strange and amplified they may be, are not elements of conviction. The stranger they are the less convincing they will be. The more extraordinary a fact is the more abnormal it seems to us, and the less willing to believe we become. We want to see, and after seeing we still doubt; we are suspicious of illusion and connivance. It no longer happens when we find a plausible cause to the facts. We daily see people who have attributed the spiritist phenomena to imagination and blind credulity, and who are avid followers today, precisely because today those phenomena no longer repulse their reason: explain them, understand their possibility and then believe, even if they have not been seen. Having to talk about certain facts, we should wait until the fundamental principles were sufficiently developed, so that we could understand their causes. Among these facts is the transfiguration. For us, Spiritism is more than a belief, it is a Science and we feel happy to see that our readers have understood us.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

**March 1859**

## **Diatribes**

Some people certainly expect to find here an answer to certain attacks to the Society, not so much moderated attacks to us personally and generally to the adepts of Spiritism, attacks from which we have seen victims lately.

We ask our readers to refer to our article about spiritist controversy that opens up our last November issue, in which we have made our profession of faith with that regard. We must add only a few words, once we have no time to spare with idle discussions. To those who have time to waste laughing at everything, even at things that they do not understand; to the slander; to the calumny or to the jokes, you may feel happy: we do not have the intent of creating hurdles to you. The Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, which is composed of dignified individuals for their knowledge and position, French nationals and foreigners, doctors, artists, workers, officers, business men, etc., daily receiving the highest social notabilities and corresponding with all parts of the world, that Society is above the little intrigues of envy and self-love. The Society continues with its works in calmness and privacy, not distracted by the tasteless jokes that do not spare even the most respectable organizations.

Regarding Spiritism in general, which is one of the powers of nature, the mockery will bend over itself, as it has done regarding so many other things that were consecrated by time. This madness, this utopia, as classified by certain persons, has gone around the world and even all diatribes will not hinder its march, in the same way that, in the past, the anathemas did not block Earth from turning. Then, let the jester laugh as they will. They will do it to the price of the spirit. If they laugh at religion, why wouldn't they at Spiritism that is a Science? We hope they will do us more service than prejudice, and that they spare us costs of publicity, since there isn't one of their articles, more or less witty, that has not resulted in the sales of some of our books and that has not brought us some subscribers. Then, we are grateful to them for the service they involuntary do to us.

We will not say much about what affects us directly either. All those who ostensibly or disguisedly attack us waste their time if they think that it affects us. They are also mistaken if they think that they can obstruct our path, since we ask for nothing and the only thing we aspire is to become useful, to the limit of our God given strength. For the more modest that our position may be we are satisfied with what would be mediocre to many. We do not long for any position, honor or fortune. We do not wish for the world or its pleasures.

We are not displeased for the things that we cannot have. We see them with the most absolute indifference. That is not compatible with our tastes; consequently, we do not envy anyone who has such advantages, if any – which to our eyes it is a problem – since the puerile pleasures of this world do not ensure a place in the other world, much to the contrary. Our life is all about work and study, even dedicating our breaks to work. There is nothing in all this that may be a cause of envy. As many others do, we are bringing our stone to the edifice that is rising; however, we would blush if this were taken as a step to achieving anything. May others bring more stones than we do! May others work as much and better and we will see it all with real happiness. Before anything else and above all, what we want is the triumph of truth, coming from wherever it may, since we do not have the pretension of seeing the truth alone. If this can bring some glory, the field is open to everyone and we will reach out to everyone who

## The Spiritist Review 1859

will follow us through this tough path of life, with loyalty, with abnegation and without personal second intentions.

We knew very well that openly raising the flag of the ideas of which we became promoters, facing prejudices, we would attract enemies, always ready to throw poisoned arrows against whoever dares to stick the head out and be in evidence. There is, however, a difference between them and us. We do not wish them the harm that they want to inflict on us, for we understand the human fragility and that is the only point in which we consider ourselves superior to them.

Human beings violate themselves through envy, hatred, jealousy and all petty passions, but elevate themselves by the forgiveness of the offenses. That is the spiritist moral. Doesn't that have as much value as those who destroy their fellow human beings? The spirits that assist us dictated such moral. We can then judge if they are good or bad from that. They show us the elevated things so great and the lower ones so little that we must only feel sorry for those who voluntarily torture themselves by providing transient satisfactions to their self-love.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Paul Gaimard

Navy physician and naturalist traveler died on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1858 at the age of 64. He was evoked on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month, by one of his friends, Mr. Sardou.

1. Evocation
  - I am here. What do you want?
2. What is your current state?
  - I am errant like the spirits who leave Earth and feel the desire to advance through the good path. We seek enlightenment and later we choose.
3. Have your ideas about the nature of human beings modified?
  - Very much. You can assess that well.
4. What do you think now about the kind of life that you led in the existence that you have just left on Earth?
  - I am happy since I have worked.
5. You thought that everything ends at the grave. Thus the Epicureanism and the desire that you sometime expressed of living for centuries, in order to enjoy life well. What do you think about those who have that philosophy?
  - I am sorry for them. However, that thinking is useful to them. With such a philosophy they can coldly appreciate everything that excites others. This allows them to judge in a sound way many things that easily fascinate the credulous.  
OBSERVATION: This is a personal opinion of the spirit that we give as such and not as a maxim.
6. A person that endeavors morally, more than intellectually, does better than the one that is bonded to the intellectual progress, above all, and neglects the moral?
  - Yes. The moral aspect is more important. God gives *spirit* as a reward to the good ones, whereas the moral must be acquired.
7. What do you understand by the *spirit given by God*?
  - A vast intelligence.
8. However, there are many evil ones that have a vast intelligence.
  - I told you already. You asked what would be better to endeavor to acquire, and I said that the moral would be preferable. But the one who works for the betterment of their spirit may acquire a high degree of intelligence. When will you understand it?
9. Are you completely detached from the material influence of the body?
  - Yes. What you have been told about it only encompasses a small portion of humanity.  
NOTE: It happened sometimes that evoked spirits, even a few months after their death, declared to be still under the influence of matter. All of them, though, were people that have not progressed moral or intellectually. It is to this part of humanity that the spirit of Paul Gaimard refers.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

10. Have you had other existences on Earth, besides the last one?

- Yes.

11. Was the latest one a consequence of the preceding one?

- No. There was a large interval between them.

12. Despite the interval, however, couldn't there be a relationship between those two existences?

- If you understand me well, each minute of our lives is a consequence of the preceding minute.

NOTE: Attending this meeting, Dr. B. gave his opinion that certain instincts sometimes awake in us could well be the reflex of a preceding existence. He mentioned several cases perfectly verified in young ladies who, during their pregnancy, were led to erratic behavior, like for example the one that grabbed the arm of a young butcher, biting him ferociously; another one that beheaded a child and the lady herself took the child to the police commissioner; a third one that killed her husband, sliced him into pieces, salted him, feeding herself from him for several days. That doctor then asked if in previous existences wouldn't those ladies have been anthropophagous.

13. You heard what Dr. B. has just mentioned. Would these instincts, which go by the name of desire in pregnant ladies, be a consequence of habits held on a previous existence?

- No. These are a transient madness; a passion in its highest degree. The spirit becomes eclipsed by the will.

NOTE: Dr. B. indicates that the physicians really consider these acts as transient madness. We share such opinion, but for other reasons, since persons not familiar with the spiritist phenomena are led to attribute them to exclusive causes that are known to them. We are persuaded that we must have reminiscences of certain previous moral dispositions. We will even say that it is impossible that things occur differently, since progress only takes place gradually. But this is not the case here because the persons gave no signs of ferocity, before that pathological state. There was evidently only a temporary perturbation of the moral faculties. The reflex of previous dispositions is recognized through other signs, unequivocal in a way, which we will develop in a special article supported by facts.

14. Have you accomplished simultaneous moral as well as intellectual progress in your latest existence?

- Yes. Mainly intellectual.

15. Could you tell us what was the kind of life you had in your life before the last one?

- Oh! I was obscure. I had a family that I made unhappy. Later I had to expiate in a hard way. But, why do you ask me? That is over and now I am in a new phase.

NOTE: Paul Gaimard died single, at the age of 64. More than once he regretted not having had a family.

16. Do you expect to reincarnate soon?

- No. I want to study first. We like this errant state because the soul is more its own self; the spirit has more consciousness of its strength. The flesh weighs, darkens and hinders.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

NOTE: All spirits say that they study, do research and observe in the errant state, in order to make a choice. Isn't that the counterpart of the corporeal life? Don't we make mistakes, sometimes for years, before we select a career that we consider more adequate to our progress? Don't we sometimes change it as we get more mature? Don't we go about everyday trying to establish what to do next? Well, what do the several corporeal existences represent to the spirit other than periods, days of the spiritual life that is, as we know, the normal life, for the corporeal life is only transient and passing? Nothing more sublime than this theory. Isn't that in perfect agreement with the harmonious grandiosity of the universe? Still once more, it was not us who invented that and we are sorry for not having that merit. Nevertheless, the more we go deep into that theory the more we find it productive in solving the problems that were inexplicable hitherto.

17. In which planet do you plan or wish to reincarnate?
  - I don't know. Give me time to search.
18. Which kind of existence would you ask God for?
  - The continuation of the last one; the greatest possible development of the intellectual faculties.
19. It seems that you place the intellectual development in the first line, leaving the moral faculties in second place, contrary to what you said before.
  - My heart is not sufficiently well formed to be able to appreciate the others.
20. Do you see the other spirits and have a relationship with them?
  - Yes.
21. Are there some among them with whom you were acquainted on Earth?
  - Yes. Dumont-d'Urville.
22. Do you also see the spirit of Jacques Arago, with whom you traveled?
  - Yes.
23. Are those spirits in the same condition as yours?
  - No. Some are more elevated, others less.
24. We refer to the spirits of Dumont-d'Urville and Jacques Arago.
  - I don't want to specify.
25. Are you happy that we have evoked you?
  - Yes, particularly for one person.
26. Can we do anything for you?
  - Yes.
27. If we evoked you within a few months, would you still kindly answer our questions?
  - With pleasure. Good-bye.
28. You say good-bye. Can you please tell us where you are going to?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Without any waste of time (to express myself as I would have done a few days ago), I will cross a space a thousand times longer than the itinerary that I followed in my journeys on Earth, which I considered so long, and that in less than a second, out of a thought. I am going to a meeting of spirits where I will take lessons and where I will be able to learn my new Science, my new life. Good-bye.

OBSERVATION: Who had known Mr. Paul Gaimard perfectly well would attest that this communication is highlighted by the hallmark of his individuality. Learn, see and get to know things were his dominant passion. That is what explains his trips around the world and to the regions of the North Pole, as well as his excursions to Russia and Poland, during the first breakout of cholera in Europe. Dominated by his passion and by the need of satisfying it, he exhibited a rare cold blood before the greatest dangers. That is how, thanks to his calmness and determination, he was able to free himself from an anthropophagus tribe that had surprised him in a Pacific island.

One statement of his characterizes well his avidity for seeing new things, for watching the spectacle of unexpected accidents. One day, during the most dramatic period of 1848, he said: "What a happiness to live during a period so fertile of extraordinary and unpredictable events!"

Almost uniquely dedicated to the sciences that deal with the organized matter, his spirit had substantially neglected the philosophical sciences. Thus, one could say that his ideas lacked elevation. However, not a single act of his life demonstrates that he had ignored the great moral laws imposed on humanity. In short, Mr. Paul Gaimard had a beautiful intelligence. Essentially worthy and honest, naturally kind, he was incapable of causing any loss to anybody. We can only criticize his perhaps excessive friendship with the pleasures; but neither the world nor the pleasures corrupted his reason or his heart. Thus, Mr. Paul Gaimard was worthy of the friend who misses him and everyone that knew him.

SARDOU

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Mrs. Reynaud

Somnambulist, deceased in Annonay, about a year ago. Although illiterate, she had a remarkable lucidity, particularly with respect to medical issues.

One of our corresponding members that knew her when she was alive, thinking that some useful teachings might be obtained, sent us a few questions to be addressed to her in case we thought it would be adequate to evoke her. It was what we did in the session of the Society, on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1859.

1. Evocation.
  - I am here. What do you want from me?
2. Do you have an exact memory of your corporeal existence?
  - Yes, very precise.
3. Can you describe your current situation to us?
  - It is the same as every spirit that inhabits Earth. Generally have the intuition of the good and, nonetheless, cannot meet perfect happiness, only reserved to a higher degree of perfection.
4. When alive, you were a lucid somnambulist. Could you tell us if the lucidity of those days was analogous to the present one, as spirit?
  - No. It was different since I did not have the timeliness and sharpness that my spirit has now.
5. Is the somnambulistic lucidity an anticipation of the spiritual life, that is, a separation between the spirit and matter?
  - It is one of the phases of the Earthly life; but the Earthly life is the same as the celestial life.
6. What do you mean by saying that the Earthly life is the same as the celestial life?
  - That the chain of existences is formed by rings, in a continuous sequence. No interruption can preclude its course. One can then say that Earthly life is the continuation of the preceding celestial life and the prelude of the future celestial life, and so on, for all incarnations of the spirit. This means that between two incarnations there is not an absolute separation as you think.

OBSERVATION: During the terrestrial life the spirit or soul may act independently of matter and, at certain times, the human being enjoys the spiritual life, during the sleep or even in the state of vigil. Considering that the faculties of the spirit are exercised, despite the presence of the body, there is between the Earthly life and life beyond the grave a constant correlation that led Mrs. Reynaud to say the same thing. The following question clarified her thought.

7. Why then not everybody is a somnambulist?
  - The fact is that you still ignore that all of you are but in differing degrees, not only when you sleep but awake as well.
8. We understand that all of us are more or less somnambulists, during the sleep, since the dream is a kind of imperfect somnambulism. But what do you mean by saying that we are also even in the state of vigil?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Don't you have intuitions that you are not aware of and that are nothing but a faculty of the spirit? The poet is a medium, a somnambulist.
9. Has your somnambulistic faculty contributed to the development of your spirit after your death?
    - A little.
  10. At the time of your death did you remain perturbed for a long time?
    - No. I immediately recognized myself. I was surrounded by friends.
  11. Do you attribute your prompt detachment to your lucid somnambulism?
    - Yes, a little. I already knew about the fate of the agonizing, but that would not do me any good if I did not have a soul capable of conquering a better life, thanks to a higher number of good faculties.
  12. Is it possible to be a good somnambulist not having a spirit of an elevated order?
    - Yes. The faculties are always in agreement. You are really mistaken when you think that these faculties require a certain disposition. No, what you think is good is actually, at times, bad. If you don't understand it I will elaborate on this idea.

There are somnambulists who know the future and tell things that are facts of the past completely ignored in their normal state. There are others who perfectly describe the character of the persons that interrogate them; they tell their age as well as the amount of money they have in their pockets, and so forth. That does not require any real superiority. It is only the exercise of the faculty that the spirit has and that is manifested in the sleeping somnambulists. What requires a real superiority is the employment of that faculty for the good; it is the consciousness of good and evil; understanding God better than people do; it is the ability of giving advices capable of making others advance in the path of good and happiness.

13. Does the employment of their faculty influence the state of the somnambulist's spirits after their death?
  - Yes, and a lot, as with the bad or good employment of all faculties given by God.
14. Can you explain to us how come you have medical knowledge without having had any formal education?
  - It is always a faculty of the spirit. Other spirits advised me. I was a medium: it is the state of all somnambulists.
15. The medications prescribed by a somnambulist are always indicated by another spirit or are they also given from instinct, similarly to what happens with the animals that look for the herb that is healthy to them?
  - They are indicated, if the somnambulist asks for advice, in case his experience is not sufficient. He knows them by their qualities.
16. Is the magnetic fluid the agent of the somnambulistic lucidity?
  - No. It is the agent of sleep.
17. Is the magnetic fluid the agent of vision, in the state of spirit?
  - No.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

18. Do you see us here as clearly as when alive, and with your body?
  - Now I see even better. I see further into the inner individual.
19. Could you see us in the same way if we were in the dark?
  - Yes, the same way.
20. Do you see us better, worse or as well as when you were alive, in the somnambulistic state?
  - Even better.
21. What is the agent or the intermediary that allows you to see?
  - My spirit. I have no eyes or pupils; I have no retina or lashes; however, I see better than any of you see your neighbor. You see through your eyes but it is your spirit that sees.
22. Are you aware of darkness?
  - I know it exists to you, not to me.  
OBSERVATION: This confirms what we have always been told: that the faculty of vision is a property inherent to the own nature of the spirit and that resides in the whole being. In the body, it is localized.
23. May the second sight or remote viewing be compared to the somnambulistic state?
  - Yes. The faculty does not come from the body.
24. Does the magnetic fluid emanate from the nervous system or it is spread into atmosphere?
  - From the nervous system but the nervous system takes it from the atmosphere, which is its main source. The atmosphere itself does not have it. It comes from the beings that populate the universe. It is not the nothingness that produces it. It is, on the contrary, an accumulation of life and electricity extracted from that crowd of beings.
25. Is the nervous system fluid its own fluid or would that be the result of the combination of all other imponderable fluids that penetrate the bodies, like heat, light and electricity?
  - Yes and no. You don't know the phenomena sufficiently to say that. Your words cannot express what you want to say.
26. What is the cause of the numbness produced by the magnetic action?
  - The agitation produced by the overload of the fluid that the magnetized person accumulates.
27. Does the magnetic power of the magnetizer depend on his physical organization?
  - Yes, but it also depends much on his character. In a word: depends on him.
28. What are the moral qualities that can help the somnambulist in the development of their faculty?
  - The good ones. You asked about the ones that can help.
29. What are the defects that can mostly harm it?
  - The ill faith.
30. What are the most essential qualities of the magnetizer?
  - The heart; the always-firm good intentions; the disinterest.
31. What are the defects that mostly harm them?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- The bad inclinations, or even worse, the desire to cause harm.
32. When alive, did you use to see the spirits in the somnambulistic state?
- Yes.
33. Why don't all somnambulists see them?
- They all see at times and on several degrees of clarity.
34. Where does the faculty of seeing the spirits come from, in certain non-somnambulistic persons?
- That is a gift from God, as intelligence and benevolence to others is a gift from God.
35. Does such a faculty result from a special physical organization?
- No.
36. Can it be lost?
- Yes, as much as it can be acquired.
37. What are the causes that may determine its loss?
- We have said that already: the malevolent intentions. As a first condition it is necessary the intent of making good use of that faculty. Given that, one needs to verify if such a favor is deserved, since it is not given uselessly. The difficulty to those who have that faculty is that it meddles with the unfortunate human passion that you know well – pride – even when there is the desire of seeking the best results. They brag about what is really God's work and many times want to take advantage of that. Good-bye now.
38. Where are you going from here?
- To my occupations.
39. Could you tell us more about your occupations?
- I have some, like you do. I try to learn and for that I take part in a society of those who are better than me. While resting, I do the good deeds. My life moves on with the hope of reaching a greater happiness. We have no material need to satisfy and, consequently, our whole activity aims at our moral progress.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**



# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Hitoti, a Tahitian chef

A Navy Officer present in the Session of the Society on February 4<sup>th</sup> last, showed his wishes to have a Tahitian chef called Hitoti evoked, who he met when visiting the Oceania.

1. Evocation
  - What do you want?
2. Could you tell us why you preferred to embrace the French cause in the Oceania?
  - I liked that nation. Besides, my interest obliged me to that.
3. Were you happy with the trip to France that we provided to your grandson and with the care given to him?
  - Yes and no. The trip might perhaps have improved his spirit a lot but that made him completely alien to his homeland, for it gave him ideas that he should never have entertained.
4. What were the rewards from the French government that pleased you the most?
  - The decorations.
5. What was your preferred decoration?
  - The Legion of Honor

OBSERVATION: The medium and all of those attending the meeting ignored this circumstance. The person who made the evocation confirmed it. Although the medium was intuitive and not mechanical, how could such a thought have been attributed to him? It could be admitted in the case of an ordinary question, but this would be inadmissible since dealing with a positive fact from which nobody could have given him any idea about.

6. Are you happier now than when you were when alive?
  - Yes, much more.
7. What is the state of your spirit?
  - Errant, but I must reincarnate.
8. What do you do in this errant life?
  - I enlighten myself.  
OBSERVATION: This answer is almost general among the errant spirits. The more morally advanced they are the more they add the practice of good and assistance to those who need their advices.
9. How do you get instructed since you don't do that in the same way you did when alive?
  - I work my spirit and travel. I understand that this is not very clear. Later you will know.
10. Which regions do you visit with more satisfaction?
  - Regions? Rest assured that I do not travel over your Earth. I move up and down; I go from one side to the other, moral and physically. I have seen and examined worlds with great care at your sunrise as well as your sunset; some which are still in terrible states of barbarism and others well above yours.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

11. You said that you would be incarnate soon. Do you know in which world?
  - Yes. I have been there many times.
12. Can you designate it?
  - No.
13. Why do you neglect Earth in your travels?
  - Because I already know it.
14. Although you don't travel around Earth any longer, do you still think of some persons that you loved?
  - A little.
15. Aren't you concerned with the persons who gave you affection?
  - A little.
16. Do you remember them?
  - Very well. But we will meet again and then I hope to pay them everything back. I was asked if I do not worry about them. No, but it does not mean that I forgot them.
17. Haven't you seen again that friend I referred to earlier on and that, like you, is also dead?
  - Yes but we will see one another more physically. We will incarnate in the same sphere and our paths will cross.
18. We are thankful to you for attending our appeal.
  - Good-bye. Work and think.

OBSERVATION: The person that did the evocation and knows the habits of those people declares that the last statement is in agreement with their practices. It is a usual expression among them, kind of vulgar, and which the medium could not guess. It is also acknowledged that the whole conversation is in agreement with the character of the evoked spirit and that his identification is evident.

The answer to question 17 offers remarkable insight: we will incarnate in the same sphere and our paths will cross. It is demonstrated that the beings that loved each other meet in the world of the spirits. However, as it seems also from many analogous answers, one may also follow the other in their corporeal existences. Then, unnoticeably, the circumstances lead them closer through physical relationships or through friendships. This gives us the reason for certain sympathies.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

an elf

Mr. J..., one of our comrades at the Society, had seen blue flames flying around several times, over his bed. Certain that it was a kind of manifestation, we had the idea of evoking one of those spirits in the session of January 20<sup>th</sup> last, in order to learn about their nature.

1. Evocation.

- But what is it that you want from me?

2. What was the objective of your manifestation at Mr. J... ' house?

- Why does it matter to you?

3. In reality it is not important to me but to Mr. J... is different.

- Ah! What a good reason!

NOTE: Mr. Kardec framed the initial questions. Mr. J... continued the interview.

4. The fact is that I do not receive anyone in my house just out of good will.

- You are wrong. I am very good.

5. Can you then do me a favor and let me know what are you doing in my house?

- Do you really believe that because I am good I must obey you?

6. I was told that you are a frivolous spirit.

- Then I was very badly judged.

7. If it is a calumny than prove it.

- I don't care.

8. I could well use means of making you state whom you really are.

- My word that I would have some fun with that.

9. I demand that you say what you have come to do in my house.

- I had only one objective: have fun.

10. This is not in agreement with what I was told by the superior spirits.

- I was sent to your house and you know the reason. Are you happy?

11. You lied then?

- No.

12. Didn't you then have ill intentions?

- You were told the same as I did.

13. Can you tell us what your category among the spirits is?

- Your curiosity amuses me.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

14. Since you pretend to be good, why don't you respond to the questions in a more convenient way?
  - Have I eventually insulted you?
15. No but why do you respond evasively and refuse to give me the explanations that I require?
  - I have the freedom to do what I want, under the command of certain spirits though.
16. That is good! I see with pleasure that you begin to be more reasonable hence I foresee that we will have a friendly relationship.
  - Stop the useless talk! It will be much better
17. Under which form are you here?
  - I have no form.
18. Do you know what the perispirit is?
  - No, unless it is the wind.
19. What can I do to please you?
  - I told you already. Shut up.
20. The mission that was assigned to you in my house, has it made you improve as a spirit?
  - That is another subject. Do not ask me such questions. You know that I obey certain spirits. Talk to them. As for me, let me go.
21. Have we eventually had a bad relationship in another existence that would be the cause of your bad humor?
  - Don't you remember how badly you spoke of me to whoever wanted to hear? Shut up, I tell you.
22. I only speak of you what the superior spirits has said about you.
  - You also said that I had obsessed you.
23. Were you happy with the end result?
  - That is my problem.
24. Do you then want me to keep an unfavorable opinion of you?
  - It is possible. I am leaving.

OBSERVATION: From the reported conversations we can see the extreme diversity in the language of the spirits, according to their degree of elevation. The language of spirits of this nature is characterized by rudeness and impatience. When invited to serious meetings it is noticeable that they do not come willingly and are in a hurry to leave, for they do not feel comfortable among their superior spirits and among people that put pressure on them with questions. The same does not happen in frivolous meeting where people enjoy their mockery. There, these spirits are in their element and rejoice.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

March 1859

## Pliny, The Young Man

Letter to Sura

(Book VII – Letter 27)

“Our break allows you to teach, while I learn. I wish I knew if the ghosts do have something of real; if they have a real expression; if they are genies or no more than vain images created by imaginations disturbed by fear. What leads me to believe that there really are true shadows is what I was told that happened to Curtius Rufus. When he did not have a name or fortune yet he followed the governor to Africa. One evening Rufus was strolling under a porch when a lady of impressive beauty and elegance presented herself to him and said: “I am Africa. I come to predict what is going to happen to you. You will go to Rome; you will be in charge of the highest positions; then you will return to govern this province, where you will die.”

“It all happened as she had predicted. Some even say that the same figure showed up to him when he left the ship upon arrival at the port of Cartago.”

“The truth is that he was taken ill and by judging the future from the good things of the past, and by the misfortune that threatened the good luck he had enjoyed, he soon lost any hope of cure, despite the opinion of his closest ones.”

“Here you have another story, not less remarkable and much more terrible. I will tell you the way I heard it.”

“There was a very large and comfortable house in Athens which was condemned and deserted. In the deepest quietness of the night, noises of chains and shackles were heard - in the beginning it seemed to have come from far away but the noises got gradually closer. Soon the shadow of a somewhat very skinny old man showed up, pale, bearing a long beard, disheveled hair, chains in his feet and wrists, which he would violently shake. All that explained the horrible and sleepless nights of the people who lived in the house. The prolonged insomnia brought the disease, and the disease, multiplying the horror, was followed by death; during the day, although the shadow would not appear, the impression it had left would always revive in people’s minds, and the fear it had caused generated new fear.”

“The house was finally abandoned, left to the ghost. It was announced on the market for sale or rent, in the hopes that someone not well informed about the terrible nuisance could be deceived.”

“Athenodorus, the philosopher, came to Athens. He reads the ad for the house and wishes to know the price. The low numbers make him suspicious. He searches for clues. He learned about the story and, far from breaking the deal, he rushed to cut it. He then moves in; comes the afternoon and he asks to have his bed moved to the front bedroom; he also wishes to have planchettes, pen and light brought in, and that the remaining persons be dislodged to the back of the house.”

“Fearing that his imagination could be taken over by a cold horror, to the point of imagining ghosts, he delivers his mind, his eyes and hands to writing. In the beginning, as evening breaks, a profound quietness falls around the house. All is then broken by the noise of chains and shackles. He does not raise his eyes nor stop writing; he calms down and tries to listen. The noise increases, comes closer and gives the impression that it is at the door. He then looks and sees the shadow, as it was described to him. The ghost was standing, calling him with his finger. He then wastes no time, stands up, takes the lamp and follows the ghost that walks with difficulty, as if pressed by the weight of the chains. Arriving at the internal courtyard, the ghost suddenly disappears, leaving behind our philosopher who then picks leafs and herbs, using them to identify the place where the ghost disappeared. On the very next day he sought the courts, requesting authorization to excavate the place. Once it was done they found bones still attached to chains. Time had eaten the flesh. All remains were carefully gathered, and a proper public burial carried out;

## The Spiritist Review 1859

since the last eulogies and tributes were duly paid to the deceased, he never showed up again or perturbed the peace of the house.”

“What I have just told you I did so by repeating the word passed on to me by someone else. Here, however, is what I can attest to others from my own faith:”

“I have a freed slave by the name of Marcus, who is not an ignorant man. He was lying in bed with his younger brother when he thought to have seen someone else sitting on his bed, and who had swung a pair of scissors by his head, to the point of cutting his hair over his forehead. In the morning he noticed that he had his hair cut at the top of his head and the hair was spread on the floor around him. Soon after, a similar thing happened to one of my relatives who gave me no doubts about the previous event. One of my young slaves was asleep with his mates, in the rooms that were destined to them. According to their story, two men dressed in white came to the room through the window, cut his hair thin on top, while asleep, and left the same way they had entered. He was found bald head the day after, like the other one, and his hair spread on the floor.”

“Such adventures had no consequences other than having me accused before Domitian, in whose Empire these things took place. Had he outlived me and I would not have escaped since there was a complaint against me that was found in his briefcase, filed by Carus. From this, one may conjecture that since the habit of the accused was to allow their hair to grow freely out of negligence, those who had cut the hair of my people assured that I was in no danger. I beg you to give all the attention to this subject. It deserves profound meditation and perhaps I am not unworthy of sharing your clarifications. If, as it is in your traditions, you balance the two contrary opinions, make the scale swing in one direction so that I can be spared from such a discomfort. I consult with you about nothing else but this – Farewell.”

Answers given by Pliny to questions addressed to him at the Society, on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. Evocation
  - Speak that I will respond.
2. Although you have been dead for about 1743 years, do you still keep memories of your life in Rome during Trajan’s time?
  - Why then we, the spirits, would not remember? You have memories of several years of your infancy. What is a previous existence to the spirit other than the infancy of existences, which we have to go through before reaching the end of the trials? Every worldly existence or existence wrapped by the material veil, is a step towards the ether, and at the same time a material and spiritual infancy: spiritual because the spirit is still in the beginning of the trials; material because the spirit has just got to the more dense phases, through which they must learn and deurate.
3. Could you tell us what you have been doing since that time?
  - It would take long to tell you what I have done. I tried to be good. No doubt you wouldn’t like to spend hours and hours until I told you everything. Then be satisfied with an answer. I repeat: I tried to do the good deeds, learn and lead the Earthly beings to approach the Creator of all things, the One who gives us the spiritual as well as the material bread.
4. In which world do you live now?
  - Never mind. I spend some time everywhere. Space is my domain and of many others too. These are questions that a wise spirit, enlightened by the saint and Divine ray, should not respond, unless on very rare occasions.
5. In a letter that you wrote to Sura you reported three cases of apparitions. Do you remember them?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- I confirm them because they were true. You daily have similar facts to which you don't pay attention. Those are very simple, but at that time, they were considered remarkable. This should not surprise you. Leave these things behind since you have others much more extraordinary.
6. However, we would like to ask you a few questions with regard to this.
    - I will give you generic answers and that will be enough for you. Nonetheless, ask if you will. I will give you terse answers.
  7. In the first case a lady appears to Curtius Rufus, and tells him that she is Africa. But who was that lady?
    - A great figure. It seems to me that she is too simple to the enlightened people of the XIX century.
  8. What was the reason behind the appearance of Athenodorus' spirit, and why those shackles' noises?
    - Symbol of slavery; manifestation; means of convincing people and to draw their attention, making them talk about it and demonstrate the existence of the spiritual world.
  9. You defended the cause of the persecuted Christians before Trajan. Were you driven by a simple duty of humanity or by conviction, regarding the truthfulness of that Doctrine?
    - Both but humanity came second.
  10. What do you think about your panegyric of Trajan?
    - It should be redone.
  11. You wrote about the history of your time, writings which have been lost. Could you repair that loss by dictating it to us?
    - The spiritual world does not manifest for these things in particular. You have these forms of manifestations but they have their objectives. There are multiple guidelines, laid down on the left and on the right hand side of the great path of truth. But leave it behind; do not dedicate your time or studies to that. It is up to us to see and judge what is important to you to learn. There is a time for everything. Thus, do not move away from the guidelines that we have delineated to you.
  12. We are pleased to be worthy of your elevation and above all, your altruism. They say that you charged nothing to the clients who were defended by you. Was such altruism as rare in Rome as it is among us?
    - Don't praise my past qualities. I give no importance to them. The altruism is almost non-existent in your century. In every two hundred people you will find only one or two true altruist. You know very well that this is the century of money and selfishness. Presently, people are made of mud, coated by metal. Formerly, there was feeling, the stuff of antiquity; today, there is only the social position.
  13. Although not defending our century, it does seem that it is more valuable than yours, when corruption was in its apex and accusations had no sacred grounds.
    - I give you an accurate depiction. I know that there wasn't much altruism over that time; however there was something that you don't have or have in small dose – the love of beauty,

## The Spiritist Review 1859

of noble, of greatness. I speak about everybody. Today's individual, particularly those of the west, and even more particularly the French, have their hearts ready to achieve great things but that is only a transient spark. Soon there comes reflection and reflection leads to second thoughts, saying: the positive, the positive before anything else. Then selfishness and money take the lead again. We manifest ourselves exactly because you have moved away from the principles given by Jesus. So long. You will not understand.

OBSERVATION: We understand very well that our century falls short of what is expected. Its ulcer is selfishness and selfishness engenders greed and the mindless search for opulence. From that point of view we are far from the altruism that the Roman people gave us so many sublime examples, during a certain period, but which was not that of Pliny. However, it would be unfair not to recognize its superiority in more than one point, even over the most beautiful times of Rome that also had its time of barbarism. Then, there was ferocity even in greatness and altruism, while our century is going to be marked by the soothing of the traditions and by the feelings of justice and humanity, which presides over all institutions since birth and even over the disputes among nations.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>6</sup>



# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Portrayal of the Spirit's Life

Everyone will, without exception, sooner or later, reach the fatal term of their lives. No force can take away from us this requirement and it should be viewed as very positive. Oftentimes the concerns about the world deviate our thoughts from what happens beyond the grave, but when the supreme moment comes, only a few do not wonder what they will become, since the idea of leaving their lives behind, without the possibility of coming back, does not sit well. Indeed, who could face with indifference the idea of an absolute and eternal separation from everything that was cherished? Who could fearlessly see, opening before their eyes, the immense abyss of emptiness, in which all their faculties and hopes would forever vanish?

“What? After me, it is the void; nothing more than emptiness; everything irremediably vanished? A few days more and the reminiscence will disappear from the memories of those that outlived me; soon no traces of my passage on this Earth; even the good things that I had done will be forgotten by the ungrateful who I have helped, and nothing to compensate for all that; no perspective but to have my body devoured by worms?!”

Such a materialistic image of the end, painted by a spirit who had nourished those thoughts, doesn't that represent something horrifying and catastrophic? Religion teaches us that it cannot be so and reason reinforces that fact. But that vague and undefined future existence contains nothing that can satisfy our love for the positive things. That is what generates doubts in so many minds.

Be it, we have a soul! But what is our soul? Does it have a form and an appearance? Is it a limited or an undefined being? Some say that it is the breath of God; others that it is a spark; others still that it is part of a great whole, the principle of life and intelligence. Nevertheless, what can we conclude from it all? Some still say that the soul is immaterial. But an immaterial thing could not have defined proportions. It represents nothing to us.

Religion also teaches us that we will be happy or unhappy according to the good or bad deeds that we may have practiced. But what is such happiness, waiting for us by God's side? Will it be beatitude, an eternal contemplation, without other objective but to sing praises to the Creator? Are the flames of hell a reality or a fiction? The Church itself understands it in the latter meaning; but what are the sufferings? Where is the place of torment? In one word, what is it that is seen or done in this world that waits for us in the next? There is a saying that nobody has returned to give us advice. This is a mistake and that is precisely the mission of Spiritism, enlightening us about such a future, allowing us, so to speak, to touch and see it, not by reasoning but by facts.

Thanks to the spiritist communications it is no longer a presumption or a probability, about which each person gives wings to imagination and the poets beautify with their fictions or fulfill it with deceiving allegoric images. It is the reality that presents itself to us, since it is them, the very beings of beyond the grave who come to describe their situation and talk to us about what they are doing, thus allowing us to observe all events of their new life, then showing us the inevitable fate that waits for us, according to our merits and demerits. Would there be anything anti-religious in this? Much to the contrary since the incredulous finds faith in that and the tepid a renovation of their fervor and confidence. Spiritism is then the most powerful ally of religion. And if that is the case it is because God allows so, allowing it to animate our vacillating hopes and to redirect us to the good path, through the perspective of the future that looms ahead of us.

The conversations from beyond the grave that we publish; the descriptions contained about the situation of the spirits who speak with us, revealing their penalties, their joys and affairs; these are an animated picture of the spirits' life, and it is in the variety of subjects that we can find the analogies most interesting to us. Let us try to summarize that picture.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

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Let us initially consider the soul when leaving this world, and let us see what happens in that transmigration. Having the vital forces been extinguished, the spirit detaches from the body at the moment when the organic life ceases. The separation, however, is not abrupt and instantaneous. It sometimes starts before the complete cessation of life and it is not always finished at the time of death. We know that between the spirit and the body there is a semi-material link that forms the first envelope. It is that link that does not break suddenly. While it persists, the spirit remains in a state of perturbation, comparable to the one that follows our waking up. The spirit frequently even doubts its own death; feels that it still exists, sees itself and does not understand that it can live without its body, from which it is now separated. The bonds that still attach the spirit to matter make it accessible to certain sensations that are mistaken as physical sensations. The spirit only recognizes itself when completely free. Up until then it does not understand its situation. The duration of such a state of perturbation, as we have said on other occasions, is very variable: it can be of a few hours as well as a few months, but it is rare the case in which after a few days the spirit does not recognize itself, more or less well. However, since everything is strange and unknown, the spirit requires a certain time to become familiarized with the new way of seeing things.

The very moment when one of them sees the end of the bondage, through the breakdown of the links that attached it to the body, that moment is solemn. When entering into the world of the spirits friends who come to greet it, as if returning from a long journey, welcome it. If the journey was fortunate, that is, if the time of exile was employed in a productive way for the spirit, and it has elevated itself in the hierarchy of the world of the spirits, they congratulate it. The spirit meets its acquaintances, mingles with those who love it and with whom it sympathizes, and thus its new existence truly begins. The semi-material envelope of the spirit constitutes a kind of body, of a definite and limited form, analogous to that of the physical body. But that semi-material body does not have our organs and cannot feel our impressions. Nevertheless, it can perceive everything that we perceive: light, sounds, smells, etc. These sensations are not less real, although they have nothing of material; they are even clearer, more precise, subtler, since they get to the spirit without intermediaries, not passing through the filter of the organs that attenuate them. The faculty of perception is inherent to the spirit; it is an attribute of the whole being. The sensations get to them from all sides and not through circumscribed channels. Talking about the vision, a spirit once said: "It is a faculty of the spirit and not of the body. You see through the eyes however it is not the eyes that see but the spirit."

Due to the conformation of our organs, we need certain vehicles for the sensations. That is why we need the light to see the objects and the air to transmit the sounds. Such vehicles become useless once we no longer bear the intermediaries that make them indispensable. Thus, as a consequence, the spirit sees without the need of our light and hears without the need of the vibrations of the air. That is why there is no obscurity to the spirit. Nevertheless, the permanent and undefined sensations, however pleasant they may be, would become tiresome with time, in case they could not be blocked. Hence the spirit has the faculty of suspending them. The spirit can stop seeing, hearing, feeling this or that at will, and consequently, does not see nor hear or feel but only what is desired. Such a faculty is relative to the spirit's superiority, since there are things that the inferior spirits cannot avoid, thus the reason why their situation becomes painful.

In the beginning the spirit does not understand such a new way of feeling, only gradually becoming aware of that over time. Those whose intelligence is limited do not absolutely understand it and would feel great difficulty in expressing it, exactly like among us the ignorant sees and moves not knowing how or why.

Such impossibility of understanding what is beyond their reach, added to the jester, the usual companion of ignorance, is the source of absurd theories given by certain spirits that would lead us to mistakes, if we accepted it without control and if we were not assured by the means offered by experience and by the habit of talking to them, with respect to the degree of trust that they deserve.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

There are sensations whose source is the actual state of our organs. Well, the needs that are inherent to the body no longer exist since the body is no more. Hence the spirit does not experience fatigue, or the need for resting or feeding, since there is no loss to recover. The spirit is not taken ill by any of our diseases. The needs of the body determine social needs that are inexistent to the spirit. Therefore, there is no more business concerns, disagreements, the thousand and one tribulations of the world and the torments we face to attend our needs or the superfluous in life. They feel sorry for our endeavor towards futilities. However, the happier the elevated spirits, the more the inferior spirits suffer, but such sufferings are mainly anguish that, although not material, are no less difficult. They have all the passions and desires that they had when alive (we refer to the inferior spirits) and their punishment is that of not being able to satisfy them. It is a torture considered eternal to them, since their inferiority does not allow them to see the end, which again is a source of punishment.

The articulate word is a necessity of our organization. Since the spirits no longer need the vibrations of the sound to reach their ears, they understand each other through the transmission of thought, as we sometimes understand one another through the looks in our eyes. However, the spirits make noise. We know that they can act upon matter and that matter transmits the sound to us. That is how they make themselves understood, be it through knocks or screams that break in the air. But they do that to reach us and not one another. We will return to this subject in a special article in which we will deal with the faculty of the hearing mediums.

While we painfully drag our material and heavy body on Earth, like the condemned prisoner in chains, the body of the spirits, vaporous and ethereal, tirelessly moves from one place to the other; it tears space with the speed of thought, penetrating everything, not finding any material obstacle.

The spirits see everything that we see and even more clearly than we do. More than that, they see what our limited senses cannot see. Since they penetrate matter they can discover things that matter hides from our vision.

As a result, the spirits are not vague and undefined beings, as from the abstract definitions of the soul mentioned above. They are real beings, determined, constrained, that enjoy all of our faculties and others that are unknown to us, as those are inherent to their nature. They have the faculties of their peculiar matter and constitute the invisible world that populates space, incessantly surrounding and nudging us. Let us suppose for a moment that the material veil that hides them from our eyes is lifted. We would see ourselves surrounded by a crowd of beings who come and go, agitating around us and observing us, in the same way that we would do if we were taking part in an assembly of blind people. We are the blind ones to the spirits and they are the ones who can see.

We said that the spirits sometimes need to recognize themselves when entering into their new life; that everything is strange and unknown to them. The question that follows is how can that be, considering that the spirit has already had other corporeal existences? Those existences were separated by time intervals in which the spirit inhabited the world of the spirits. Then, such a world should not be unknown, considering that it is not the first time that the spirit sees it.

Several causes contribute to the fact that those perceptions seem new, although they have already been experienced. As we said, death is always followed by a period of perturbation, but that it can be of a short duration. In that sense the spirit's ideas are always vague and confuse; the corporeal life, to a certain extent, confuses with the life of the spirit and the spirit cannot separate them in its mind. Once the first impression is dissipated, the ideas become progressively clearer and the memory of the past gradually returns, since such a memory never surges abruptly. It is only when the spirit is completely dematerialized that the past unfolds before its eyes, like a shadow that comes out of the mist. It is then that the spirit remembers its acts during its latest existence, then the existences prior to that and the various passages through the world of the spirits. Thus, it is understandable that for a certain period such world may seem new to the spirit, until it is completely recovered and thoroughly recalled the precise memories of the sensations experienced in that world.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Another, no less important, cause, however, should be added.

The state of the spirit, as a spirit, varies extraordinarily in proportion to their elevation and to their degree of purity. As the spirit elevates and purifies, their perceptions and sensations become more accurate; they acquire more acuity, more subtleness, and more kindness; they see, feel and understand things that they could not see, feel or understand in an inferior condition. Thus, as each existence is an opportunity of progress, the spirit is thrown into a new environment. As it has progressed, spirits of another order, whose thoughts and habits are all different, will surround it. Add the fact that such purification allows the spirit, always as spirit, to penetrate in those worlds inaccessible to the inferior spirits. The less enlightened the more limited the horizon of the spirit. The more the spirit elevates and depurates, the more that horizon amplifies and with that the circles of ideas and perceptions.

The following comparison may facilitate our understanding:

Suppose a rude, ignorant peasant, comes to Paris for the first time. Will that person be able to get to know and understand the elegant and top-notch intellectual environments of Paris? No, for the person will only get around those of the same class and the neighborhoods inhabited by them. But if in the interim between the first and the second trip that peasant has developed and acquired education and good manners, his habits and relationships will change. He will then see a new world, not at all similar to the Paris of former times.

The same happens to the spirits but not all of them experience the same degree of uncertainty. As they progress, their ideas develop and their memory sharpens up. They get previously familiarized with their new situation hence their return to the world of the spirits no longer entails any cause for admiration. They feel like they are in their own element again, and, once the first moment of perturbation is over, they reintegrate almost immediately.

That is the general situation of the spirits in a state that we call erraticity (errant state). But what do they do in such a state? How do they spend their time? This is of capital importance to us. They are the ones who are going to answer this, as they were the ones who gave the explanations that we have just transmitted, since none of that is the result of our imagination. It is not a system that came out of our minds. We judge from what we have seen and heard.

Leaving aside any opinion relatively to Spiritism, one has to acknowledge that such a theory about life beyond the grave has nothing of irrational. It shows a perfectly logical sequence and chain of events that would honor any philosopher.

We would be mistaken if we believed that the life of the spirit is an idle life. On the contrary, it is essentially active and all spirits talk about their occupations. Those occupations vary necessarily, according to the spirit being errant or incarnate. In the state of incarnation they are relative to the nature of the worlds they inhabit; the needs depend on the physical and moral state of those worlds, as well as the organization of the living beings. This is not what we will discuss here. We are going to talk about the errant spirits.

Among those who have already achieved a certain degree of development, some assist with the execution of God's designs, in the great destinies of the Universe; they drive the march of events, supporting the progress of each world. Others take individuals under their protection, becoming their tutor genies and guardian angels. Follow people from birth to death, struggling to guide them through the good path. They feel happy when their efforts are rewarded with success. Some of them incarnate in inferior worlds try to accomplish missions of progress. Through their work, examples, good feelings and advices, they endeavor to make some people advance in sciences and arts, others in moral. They are then voluntarily submitted to a sometimes painful corporeal life, aiming at doing good and being held accountable for the good they get done. Many still don't have a specific assignment. They go everywhere where their presence may be useful, giving advice, inspiring good ideas and cheering up the discouraged ones, giving strength to the weak and punishing the arrogant.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

If we take into account the infinite number of worlds that populate the Universe and the incalculable number of beings that inhabit them, we will understand that the spirits have a lot to do. Such activity, however, is painless. They do it happily and without embarrassment, and their joy is in the accomplishment of their missions. Nobody thinks about an eternal idleness that would be really painful.

When required by the circumstances, they form councils; deliberate about the next steps ahead, according to the events; distribute orders to the spirits that are their subordinates and then go back to wherever duty may call them. Those assemblies are more generic or more specific, depending on the importance of the issue. There is no special or circumscribed place for those gatherings. Space is the domain of the spirits. However, those meetings tend to happen in worlds that are the specific object of the spirits. The incarnate spirits who accomplish their missions in those worlds also attend the assemblies, according to their elevation. While the body rests they receive advice from spirits and, sometimes, receive orders related to their conduct among the incarnate. It is true that when they wake up they do not keep a very sharp memory of the events but they keep their intuition that leads them to act as if that intuition were from their own initiative.

Moving down in the hierarchy we find less elevated spirits, less purified and consequently less enlightened, but not necessarily less good and who, in a more restrict sphere of activities, exercise similar functions. Instead of covering different worlds, their action is more exercised in a particular world and related to their degree of development. Their influence is more individual, having things of less importance by objective.

Then comes the crowd of vulgar spirits, those who are more or less good, more or less wicked, that swarms around us. Those are slightly above humanity, whose nuances they represent and sort of reflect, since they have the same vices and virtues of those that characterize humanity. In many of them we find the same tastes, ideas and inclinations that they had when alive. Their faculties are limited, their judgment fallible like that of human beings and sometimes mistaken and loaded with prejudices.

In some others the moral sense is more developed. Even without a great superiority or acuity they judge with more criteria, sometimes even condemning what they had done or thought in their lives. As a matter of fact, there is a remarkable thing: even among the most common spirits, in general, their feelings are purer as spirits than as incarnates. The spiritual life clarifies them regarding their faults, and except on rare occasions, they bitterly regret and feel sorry for what they have done, since they suffer more or less intensely their consequences. We have seen some of these who were not better than when they were alive. We have never, however, seen them worse. The absolute hardening is very rare and only temporary, given that sooner or later they end up regretting their position. One can then say that all of them aspire for their betterment since all of them understand it as the only means of leaving their inferiority behind. Learn and be enlightened, that is their great concern so that they feel happy when they can add small missions of trust that elevate them before their own eyes.

They also have their gatherings, of greater or lesser importance, according to the nature of their thoughts. They talk to us, see us and observe everything that happens around us. They attend our meetings; take part in our games, parties and spectacles, as well as in our serious businesses.

They hear our conversations; the frivolous ones in order to have fun or laugh at us, or even still to trick us whenever they can; the others do so in order to learn; these spirits do observe people, analyze their character and do what they call a study of the customs and culture, so as to choose their future life.

We have seen the spirit at the very moment when the body is left, entering then into the new existence. We analyzed their sensations and followed the gradual development of their ideas. The initial moments are spent in the acknowledgment of oneself followed by the understanding of what is going on. In short, so to speak, the spirit tries their faculties, like the child that gradually experiences the increase in strength and thoughts. We speak about the vulgar spirits since the others, as we said, are somehow previously identified with the spiritual state, thus it is no surprise to them other than the joy of finding themselves

## The Spiritist Review 1859

free from the corporeal hurdles and sufferings. Many of the inferior spirits miss their Earthly life given that their situation as spirits is a hundred times worse. That is why they engage with the vision of what was delightful to them in the past. Such a vision, however, becomes a suffering since the desires they feel can no longer be satisfied.

The need for progress is general among the spirits. That is what drives them to work for their own betterment, since they understand that it is the price of their happiness. But not all of them feel such a need in the same degree, particularly in the beginning. Some even enjoy a kind of idleness, of short duration, as a matter of fact; activity soon becomes an inexorable need, then dragged by other spirits who stimulate the good feelings in them.

Then comes what one could call the scum of the spiritual world, made of all impure spirits whose only concern is wickedness. They suffer hence they wish that everyone else would suffer like them. Every sign of superiority is hateful to their envy. Hate is their essence. Since they cannot blame the spirits for that they then charge against human beings, attacking those who seem to be the weakest of all. Their dominant thoughts are: excite the passions; provoke disagreement; separate friends; encourage rivalries; encourage the ambitious to display their pride for the pleasure of taking them down later; spread mistakes and lies, in one word, deviate them from good.

However, why would God allow such a thing to happen? God does not have to report to us. The superior spirits tell us that the wicked spirits are trials to the good ones and that there is no virtue where there is no victory to conquer. As a matter of fact, if those malevolent spirits are here on Earth, it is here that they find echo and sympathy. May it be a reassuring thought that above this mud which surrounds us there are pure and benevolent beings who love us, sustain and encourage us, reaching out to us, attracting us so that we can be led to better worlds, where wickedness has no entry, as long as we do what it takes to deserve it!

# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Spiritist Frauds

Those who do not admit the reality of the manifestations generally attribute the produced effects to fraud. Their thought is that skillful conjurers do things that seem prodigious as long as we do not know their secrets. Thus, they conclude that the mediums are nothing but swindlers. We have already rebutted that argument or opinion, specifically in the articles about Mr. Home and in the issues of the Spiritist Review, January-February 1858. We will only add a few words to that, before engaging into a more serious subject.

Due to the fact that there are charlatans selling medication to the public; that there are also doctors who, although not doing it openly in public, abuse the trust given to them, will it follow that all doctors are charlatans and that the class will suffer in its reputation? Due to the fact that there are some people who sell dyes for wine making, will it follow that all wine dealers are falsifiers and that there isn't good wine anymore? Everything is abused; even the most respectable things, and one can say that even fraud has its genie. But fraud has always an objective, some sort of material gain and interest, thus where there is nothing to gain there is no interest in deceiving. That is why we said in the previous issue of the Review, about the self-serving mediums, that the best of all guarantees is a total material disinterest.

One can say that this guarantee is not unique though, since with respect to the subject of trickery, there are very skillful amateurs who aim at amusing people, not doing it as a duty of profession. Couldn't that also happen to the mediums? There is no doubt that it is possible to be amused for a few moments, amusing others in the process, but to spend endless hours doing it, for weeks, months and years, it would be necessary to be possessed by the devil of mystification, and the first to be mystified would be the mystifier. Needless to repeat everything that has already been said about the good faith of the mediums and attendees to the meetings, as for being a toy of illusion and fascination. We have already responded to that objection many times as well as to all other objections on the subject, for what we refer the reader to our *Instruction Pratique sur les Manifestations (Practical Instructions about the Manifestations)* and to our previous articles in the Spiritist Review.

Our objective is not to convince the incredulous. If they are not convinced by the facts, they would be even less by reason. It would then be a waste of time. On the contrary, we address the adepts in order to warn them against the subterfuges that could victimize them from people driven by any kind of interest to simulate certain phenomena. We say certain phenomena because there are some which evidently defy every skill of prestidigitation as, in particular, the motion of objects without contact; the suspension of heavy bodies in space; the knocks given in all directions; the apparitions, etc. But even to some of those phenomena it would be possible, to a certain degree, the simulation, thanks to the advancement of the art of trickery. What is necessary to do in such cases is to carefully observe the circumstances and above all to take into account the character and condition of the persons, as well as the objective and possible interest they might have in deceiving. That is the best of all controls since there are circumstances that reject any reason for suspicion.

Thus, we establish the principle that it is necessary to distrust everyone who makes a spectacle out of those phenomena, an object of curiosity or amusement, or who would take any advantage of them, however small it might be, bragging about producing them at will and for any reason. It would never be too much to repeat that the manifesting occult intelligences have their susceptibilities and want to prove that they also have their free will, not submitting to our caprices.

From all physical phenomena, one of the most common is the internal rapping, vibrating in the inner substance of the wood, with or without the motion of the table or any other object which may be utilized. Well, that effect is one of the easiest to imitate, and as it is also one of the most frequently produced, it seems useful to reveal a little trick with which we can be deceived. All it requires is that both hands are

## The Spiritist Review 1859

placed wide open on the table, sufficiently close so that the thumb nails firmly support each other; then through an absolutely imperceptible muscular movement, the nail is led to produce a dry cracking noise, very similar to those of the internal typtology. That noise vibrates in the wood thus producing a complete illusion. There is nothing easier than making as many noises as desired; the beat of a drum, and so forth; then respond with a *yes* or *no* according to the number of raps or even by the indication of the letters of the alphabet.

Once warned about it, the means of recognizing the fraud is very simple. It will no longer be possible if the hands are kept away from each other and if we ensure that no physical contact might produce the noise. As a matter of fact, the authentic noises have the characteristic of willingly changing places and tone, a fact that does not happen to those produced through the means mentioned above, or any other for that matter. The true ones leave the table and are produced on any other piece of furniture, touched by nobody, answering to unexpected questions. Thus, we draw the attention of those good faith persons with respect to this little gimmick, as well as others that may be discovered, to unceremoniously denounce them.

The possibility of imitation and fraud does not prevent the reality of the facts and Spiritism has only to gain with the exposure of the imposters. If someone says: I saw such a phenomenon but there was fraud, we will respond that it is possible; we even saw pseudo somnambulists who skillfully simulated somnambulism. However, that does not mean that somnambulism is not a fact. Everybody has already seen merchants selling cotton for silk, which does not mean that there isn't a real fabric made of silk. It is necessary to examine all circumstances and verify whether the doubt is meaningful. But for that, as for everything else, one needs to be an expert. Well, we cannot accept for the judge of a given cause someone who did not understand anything about that subject.

We say the same about the psychographic mediums. People generally think that the mechanical mediums offer more guarantees, not only due to the independence of their ideas but also against deception. But that is a mistake. Fraud permeates everywhere. We know that with proper skills it is possible to make the planchettes write and give it every appearance of spontaneous movement. The actual thought is what refutes all doubts, coming from a mechanical, intuitive, hearing, speaking or clairvoyant medium.

There are communications that go so much beyond the ideas, knowledge and even intellectual reach of the medium that it would be necessary to be completely mistaken to give the medium the actual credit. We acknowledge that charlatanism has a great capability and vast resources, but we have not yet recognized in them the gift of turning an ignorant person into a wise person or giving talent to someone who does not have it.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Moral Problem – The Cannibals

One of our correspondents addressed the following question to us, requesting a solution from the spirits who guide us, in case we did not have the solution yet.

“After a more or less lengthy lapse of time the errant spirits wish and ask God for the reincarnation, as a means of their moral progress. They choose the trials and using the free will they naturally choose those incarnations that seem more appropriate to them, in order to progress in the world where the incarnation is granted. Well, during the spirit’s errant life they get instructed, as the spirits themselves tells us, then they learn which nations are more convenient to them in order to achieve their objectives. They see populations of savage anthropophagus, assuring them that they would become ferocious flesh eaters by reincarnating among them. That environment would certainly not be the means of achieving their spiritual progress. The force of habit can only provide more consistency to their gross instincts. Then their objective would have failed had they chosen that people or another one.”

“The same happens to certain social positions. Among them there are those that show invincible obstacles to the spiritual progress. I will only mention the slaughter people, the executioners, etc. Some people say that such creatures are necessary because we cannot go without animal food, others say that because it is necessary to implement legal sentences, all required by our social organization. It is not less accurate that by reincarnating in the body of a boy destined to embrace one or another of those professions, the spirit must know that a wrong path has been taken, voluntarily deprived from the means which lead to perfection. Couldn’t it be the case that, with God’s permission, no spirit would want that kind of life and in such circumstance, what would happen to those professions, still necessary given our current social condition?”

The answer to that question is a consequence of the whole teachings that have been given to us. We can then answer, without submitting it to the spirits again. It is obvious that an already advanced spirit, such as an educated European, could not choose a savage existence as a means of progress, since instead of advancing he would march backwards. We know, however, that even the anthropophagus is not on the bottom of the scale and that there are worlds where the brutalization and ferocity have no analogy here on Earth. Those spirits are even inferior to the most inferiors of our planet. Thus, for them, it is a progress to incarnate among our savages. If they don’t aspire to a higher position it is because their moral inferiority does not allow them to understand a more complete progress. The spirit can only progress gradually, going successively through all levels so that each step forward may serve as the basis for the construction of a new progress. The spirit cannot leap from barbarism to civilization, as the student cannot pass from English in elementary school to Rhetoric. That is one of the requirements of reincarnation, which is really in agreement with God’s justice. Otherwise, what would happen to those millions of people that die in the last stage of deprivation, had they not had the means of achieving superiority? Why would God have disinherited them from the favors conceded to other people? We repeat it for being an essential point: according to their limited intelligence they can only understand what is better from their narrow point of view. There are those, however, that willing to climb too high deviate, offering us the sad spectacles of ferocity that we see amidst civilization. Those will even profit by returning to the cannibals. These considerations also apply to the professions mentioned by our correspondent. Those professions offer relative superiority to certain spirits and it is in that sense that we must conceive their choices. For the same reason they may be chosen as an atonement or mission, since there is no profession through which one cannot do good and achieve progress through the very means of realizing them. As for the question about what would happen in case no spirit wanted to adopt it, it is responded by the facts. Since the spirits that occupy those positions come from an inferior condition, there is no need to be afraid of unemployment. When the social progress allow for the extinction of positions like the executioner, the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

function will disappear but not the candidates who will apply for that same job among other peoples or in other less advanced worlds.

**April 1859**

### **Commercial Enterprises and Spiritism**

SPONTANEOUS COMMUNICATION OBTAINED BY THE MEDIUM MR. CROZ, READ AT THE SESSION OF THE SOCIETY ON JANUARY 21<sup>st</sup>, 1859

The companies that we see forming every day are acts of the Providence and the development of germs cultivated throughout the centuries. Humanity and the inhabited planet have one and the same existence, whose phases are concatenated accordingly.

As soon as the great torments of nature are over, as well as the fever that leads to the wars of extermination, Philosophy will shine; slavery will vanish and the Arts and Sciences flourish.

Divine perfection may be summarized by beauty and usefulness. If God created the human being to His own image it is because God wanted human beings to live out of their own intelligence, as God himself lives amongst the splendors of God's own creation.

The enterprises blessed by God, whatever their proportions, are those which fall in line with God's designs, bringing their contribution to the collective work, whose law is written in the Universe: the beautiful and the useful. Art, daughter of rest and inspiration, is the beauty. Industry, daughter of Science and work, is the utility.

OBSERVATION: This communication is more or less the initiation of one medium that has just developed with remarkable speed. One must recognize that, as an experiment, it is really promising. Since the first session he wrote, without interruption, four pages which owe nothing to the one that he has just read, considering the perspicacity of thoughts, indicating in him an admirable ability to serve as an intermediary to all spirits, in private communications. As a matter of fact, we need to study that subject further, since not all mediums are given to that flexibility. We know mediums that cannot serve as intermediaries but to certain spirits and to a certain type of ideas.

After having written this note we even confirmed the real progress of the medium, whose faculty offers special characteristics, deserving great attention from the observer.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Benvenuto Cellini

PARISIAN SOCIETY OF SPIRITIST STUDIES, SESSION ON MARCH 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. Evocation
  - Ask. I am ready. Take your time as you wish since I have time to attend you.
2. Do you remember your existence on Earth in the XVI century, between 1500 and 1570?
  - Yes, yes.
3. What is your current situation as a spirit?
  - I lived in several other worlds and I am very satisfied with the position that I presently occupy. It is not a peak but I am advancing.
4. Have you had other corporeal existences on Earth, after the one we know?
  - Corporeal, yes. On Earth, no.
5. For how long did you stay in the errant state?
  - I cannot precise. Some years.
6. What did you do in that errant state?
  - I worked towards my development.
7. Have you eventually returned to Earth?
  - A few times.
8. Have you watched the drama by which you are represented? What do you think of that?
  - I watched it several times. I was as happy as Cellini but not as much as a spirit that had progressed.
9. Before the existence from which we know you, have you had any other on Earth?
  - No, none.
10. Could you tell us what you were in your preceding existences?
  - My careers were very different from what I did on Earth.
11. In which world do you live?
  - You don't know and don't see it.
12. Could you describe it to us, from a physical as well as moral point of view?
  - Yes, easily. From the physical point of view, my dear friends, its plastic beauty satisfies me. Nothing shocks our vision there; there is a perfect alignment of forms; mimic is somehow a permanent expression; we are surrounded by perfumes of nature and lack nothing for our physical wellness, since we are subjected to only a few needs, promptly satisfied.
  - From a moral point of view, however, perfection is not as great since one can find perturbed consciences and spirits dedicated to evil. It is no perfection, far from that, but as I have already told you, it is the path to that and we all expect to reach it one day.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

13. What do you do in the world that you live in?
  - We work with the Arts. I am an artist.
14. In your memoirs you tell the story of witchcraft and a possession that would have taken place in the Coliseum, in Rome, in which you would have taken part, do you remember?
  - Not very clearly.
15. If we read it to you, would that clarify your memory?
  - Yes, it would give me a notion.

Then the following excerpt is read from his memoirs:

“In the middle of that strange life I was acquainted with a Sicilian priest of very fine spirit, seriously educated in Greek and Latin. One day our conversation was about necromancy and I told him that during my whole life I really wished I could see and learn something about that art. In order to get involved with that, said the priest, one needs to have a firm and intrepid soul.”

“One evening, though, the priest made the arrangements and asked me to find one or two companions. He invited a man from Pistoia, who was also involved with necromancy, and we all went to the Coliseum. There the priest dressed up according to the followers of necromancy then he started to draw circles on the ground, followed by the most beautiful ceremonies that one can imagine. He had brought precious perfumes, smelly drugs and fire with him. When it was all set he created an opening in the circle, taking us there by the hand, one by one. He then distributed the papers, placing the talisman in the hands of his necromancer friend. He assigned the others with the task of tending the fire and the perfumes, after which the conjurations began. That ceremony lasted more than an hour and a half. The Coliseum was then taken by legions of infernal spirits. When the priest noticed that they were in good number he turned to me, who was taking care of the perfumes, and said:”

“ – Benvenuto, ask them for something.”

“I responded that I wished they could reunite me with my Sicilian Angelica.”

“Despite the fact that we had no answer that night, I was impressed by what I had seen.”

“The necromancer said that it was necessary to return a second time and that I would then obtain everything I wanted, as long as I brought a virgin young man along.”

“I chose one of my apprentices and brought two other friends of mine.”

“The priest placed the talisman in my hands, asking me to turn it in the direction that was indicated. My apprentice was placed under the talisman. The necromancer started his terrible evocations. He evoked several chiefs of the infernal legions by the name and gave them orders in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, in the name of the uncreated, living and eternal God. The Coliseum was soon taken by a number of demons, a hundred times more than the first time. Following the necromancer’s advice, I asked again to meet Angelica. He turned to me and said:”

“Haven’t you heard their announcement that you will be with her in one month?”

“He then asked me to keep my firmness since there were a thousand legions which were not called yet, adding that these were more dangerous, and since they had attended my request, it was necessary to treat them kindly and calmly dismiss them. On another hand the boy commented with fear that he could see thousands of terrible men who were threatening us, and also four giants, armed from hair to toe, who seemed to want to get into our circle. Meanwhile, trembling of fear, the necromancer tried to conjure them, using the sweetest tone of voice. The boy hid his head between his knees, screaming like that:”

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- "I want to die! We are all dead!"
- "I then told him:"
- "These creatures are all below us. What you see is no more than smoke and shadow. Raise your eyes then."

"He had just obeyed me when he said:"

- "The whole Coliseum is taken by flames and the fire is coming towards us."

"The necromancer then demanded to have asafetida burned. Agnolo, in charge of the perfumes, was almost dead, horrified."

"The noise and the bad smell made the boy raise his head. Once he heard me laughing he got a little animated, saying that the demons were starting to leave. We remained like that until dawn was announced. The boy told us that he could only see a few demons, from far away. Finally, when the necromancer concluded the ceremony and undressed his outfit, we left the circle."

"While we returned home through Via dei Banchi, he assured us that two demons were performing acrobatics in front of us, sometimes running over the roofs, and other times on the ground."

"The necromancer had sworn that since he had set foot for the first time in a magic circle he had never witnessed something so extraordinary. Later he tried to convince me to study a book with him that should provide us with incalculable richness and give us the means of forcing the demons to indicate places where hidden treasures are located, well kept by Earth..."

"After different reports more or less related to the preceding, Benvenuto tells how, after thirty days, or within the time frame established by the demons, he found his Angelica."

16. Could you tell us what is true about that scene?

- The necromancer was a charlatan; I was a romance writer and Angelica was my lover.

17. Have you met your protector Francis I again?

- Certainly. He has seen many others who were not his protégés.

18. How did you consider him when alive and how do you judge him now?

- I will tell you how I judged him: like a prince and as such, blinded by his education and by those who surrounded him.

19. And now what do you have to say about him?

- He made progress.

20. Did he protect the artists out a sincere love for the arts?

- Yes, but also for pleasure and pride.

21. Where is he now?

- Alive.

22. On Earth?

- No.

23. If we evoked him now could he come to speak with us?

- Yes. But do not force the spirits like that. Your evocations must be prepared well in advance and then you will not have much to ask the spirit. That way you will take much less risk of being deceived, as it does happen sometimes (St. Louis).

## The Spiritist Review 1859

24. (To St. Louis): Could you arrange that two spirits would come to talk to each other?

- Yes.
- In that case would it be useful to have two mediums?
- Yes, it is necessary.

NOTE: The dialogue in question happened in another session. We will publish it in the next issue.

25. (To Cellini) What is the origin of your inclination towards art? Would it be due to a special prior development?

- Yes. I was attracted to poetry and the beauty of language for a long time. While on Earth I was linked to art as a reproduction. Nowadays I am involved with the beauty as an invention.

26. You were also trained in the military hence Pope Clement VII assigned you with the defense of St. Angel Castle. However, your gift as an artist should not give room for many skills of the art of war.

- I had talent and knew how to apply it. There is the need for discernment in everything, particularly in the military art of that time.

27. Could you give some advices to the artists that try to follow your footsteps?

- Yes. I will tell them that more than what they do and more than what I did they should seek pureness and the true beauty. They will understand me.

28. Isn't beauty relative and conventional? The European considers themselves prettier than the black and the black prettier than the white. If there is an absolute beauty where is the standard? Can you give us your opinion about it?

- With pleasure. I did not want to mention a conventional beauty. On the contrary, there is beauty everywhere, as a reflex of the spirit over the body and not only as a material form. As you said, a black person may be beautiful of a beauty only appreciated by their similar, which is true. Following that, your Earthly beauty is deformity in heaven as much as black beauty is almost misshapen to you, whites. To the artist, life is beauty, it is the feeling that the artist can associate to his work. With that the artist will provide beauty to the most vulgar things.

29. Could you guide a medium in the execution of a model, as Bernard Palissy did with respect to the paintings?

- Yes.

30. Could you lead the medium that currently serves you to produce something?

- Like the others but I would rather use one that knew the tricks of art.

OBSERVATION: Experience demonstrates that the ability of a medium for this or that kind of production depends on the flexibility presented to the spirit, abstraction made of his talent. The knowledge of the business and the material means of execution do not constitute the talent, but it is understandable that the spirit would find less mechanical difficulty to overcome by leading such a medium. However, one can see mediums that produce remarkable things without having the minimal notions, like in the case of drawings and poetry, engraving and music, etc. but certainly there is an innate ability in those mediums, no doubt, due to a previous development from which they only preserve the intuition.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

31. Could you guide Mrs. G. S. who is present here, an artist, but who has never been able to produce something as a medium?
  - If she is willing to, I will try.
32. (Mrs. G. S.) When do you want to start?
  - Whenever you wish, starting tomorrow.
33. How could I know that the inspiration came from you?
  - Conviction comes with proof. Allow it to come slowly.
34. Why haven't I been successful so far?
  - Little perseverance and lack of good will from the part of the spirits to whom you ask.
35. I thank you for the promised assistance.
  - Good bye. So long, my colleague.

NOTE: Mrs. G. S. started the work but we still ignore the results.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Girard de Codemberg

A graduate from the Polytechnic School, member of several scientific associations, author of a book entitled: *The Spiritual World, or Christian Science of communication with the celestial powers and happy souls*. Deceased in November 1858, evoked at the Society on the following January 14<sup>th</sup>.

1. (Evocation)
  - I am here. What do you want?
2. Have you willingly attended our call?
  - Yes.
3. Would you tell us what do you think now about the book that you published?
  - I made some mistakes but there are useful things there. I believe, without self-praising, that you yourself agree with what I said.
4. You said that you had communications with Christ's mother. Can you now be sure that it was really her?
  - No. It was not her but a spirit that would take her name.
5. What was the objective of that spirit by taking her name?
  - That spirit saw me taking a wrong path and pushed me even further. It was a perturbing spirit, a frivolous being, more inclined to evil than good. She would feel happy for my false enjoyment. I was her toy as you men are frequently to your fellow humans.
6. How could you, gifted by a superior intelligence, not have noticed the ridiculous of certain communications?
  - I was fascinated, appreciating everything that I was told.
7. Don't you think that such a book may do some harm in the sense that it may be ridiculed as far as the communications from beyond the grave are concerned?
  - In that sense, yes. But I also said that there were useful things, as well as true ones, that from another point of view impress the masses. Sometimes we find a good seed in what seems evil to you.
8. Are you happier than when you were alive?
  - Yes, but I still have the need for much enlightenment since I am still in the mist which follows death. I feel like the student beginning to spell.
9. When alive did you know *The Spirits' Book*?
  - I had never given it any attention. I had preconceived ideas. That was my sin since it is never too much to deeply study all things. However, pride is always present, giving us illusions. That is proper of the ignorant, in general, who do not investigate anything else but what they prefer and don't listen to but those who praise them.
10. But you were not uneducated. Your titles demonstrate that.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Who is the wise person from Earth before the Science of Heavens? As a matter of fact, there is always the influence of certain spirits, willing to push us away from light.

OBSERVATION: This confirms what has already been said that certain spirits inspire people to stay away from those who could give them good advices, thus frustrating their plans. That influence could never be from a good spirit.

11. And now, what do you think about that book?

- I could not tell without shamelessly representing myself and we don't praise. You have to understand.

12. Have you changed your opinion about the future penalties?

- Yes. I believed in the material penalties. Now I believe in the moral penalties.

13. Can we do anything to please you?

- Always. May each one say a prayer tonight on my behalf! I will appreciate that. Most importantly, do not forget me.

OBSERVATION: Mr. Codemberg's book has caused some sensation, and we even say, a painful sensation among the adepts of Spiritism, as a consequence of the extravaganza of certain communications, given to ridicule. His intention was praiseworthy since he was a sincere man, but it is an example of domination that certain spirits may exercise, flattering and exaggerating ideas and prejudices of those who do not ponder with great severity the pros and cons of the spiritist communications. He mainly shows the dangers of very lightheartedly publicizing them to the public, since they can become a reason for denial, strengthening the incredulity in certain people, thus doing more harm than good, once it provides weapons to the enemies of the cause. We would never be careful enough with that respect.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Poitevin, the airman

Session of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies,  
on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859

He passed away about two months ago, from typhoid fever contracted after a forced aircraft landing at sea.

1. (Evocation)
  - I am here. Speak.
2. Do you miss your Earthly life?
  - No.
3. Are you happier now than when you were alive?
  - Much.
4. What was the reason that led you to aeronautics experiences?
  - The need.
5. Have you considered serving science?
  - No way.
6. Do you see aeronautics now from a different perspective as compared to when you were alive?
  - No. I saw it as I see today since I saw it with good eyes. I used to see many improvements to be introduced but I could not do them myself, due to my lack of knowledge. But wait. Other people will come, giving it the importance it deserves and that it will one day have.
7. Do you believe that aeronautics will one day become of public utility?
  - Yes, certainly.
8. The major concern of those involved with that science is the drivability of the balloons. Do you believe that it will be achieved?
  - Yes, for sure.
9. In your opinion what is the major difficulty for the drivability of the balloons?
  - The winds and the storms.
10. Then it is not the lack of a supporting point?
  - If we could drive the winds we could drive the balloons.
11. Could you indicate the focus to which the researches should be driven?
  - Let us leave it as is.
12. When alive, did you study all the proposed systems?
  - No.
13. Could you give advice to those involved with that subject?
  - Do you think that your advice would be followed?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

14. Not ours but yours.
  - Do you want a treaty? I will have it prepared.
15. By whom?
  - By the friends that guided me.
16. We have here with us two very distinct inventors, in matters of air stations, Mr. Sanson and Mr. Ducroz, both men received prestigious scientific awards. Do you know their systems?
  - No. There is a lot to say. I don't know them.
17. Admitting that the problem of drivability is solved, do you believe in the possibility of large-scale air navigation over the oceans?
  - No, never like the telegraph.
18. I am not talking about the speed that can never be compared to that of the telegraph, but to the mass transportation of people and load. Which result can we expect from that side of developments?
  - Not much usefulness.
19. When in imminent danger, have you thought of what you could be after death?
  - No. I was completely absorbed by the maneuvers.
20. Which impression had danger caused in you?
  - Fear had diminished with the habit.
21. What was your sensation when you felt lost in space?
  - Perturbation, but happiness. It seemed that my spirit was running away from your world. However, the need for maneuvering would bring me back to reality, bringing me back to my cold and dangerous reality.
22. Does the fact that your wife follows the same adventurous career as yours give you pleasure?
  - No.
23. What is your situation as a spirit?
  - I live like you do, that is, I can provide for my spiritual life as you do for yours.

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OBSERVATION: The curious experiences of Mr. Poitevin, his intrepidity, his remarkable ability in balloon maneuvering, gave us more expectations with respect to his elevation and greatness of ideas. The result did not correspond to our expectations. As we have seen, aeronautics to him was nothing else but an industry, a way of life, and a special kind of spectacle. Every faculty of his was concentrated on the means of satisfying public amusement. That is why some predictions in these family conversations are sometimes uncertain: sometimes they are outdated, other times they are below expectation, which is an evident demonstration of the independence of the communications. In a private session, Poitevin dictated, through the same medium, the following advices in order to carry out the promises he had made above

***Each person may assess their value since we provide it as an object of study about the nature of the spirits and not for its scientific merit, which is more than arguable.***

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## The Spiritist Review 1859

“You will always find great difficulties to drive a gas balloon: the huge area exposed to the winds; the insignificance of the weight that can be carried by air; the weakness of the wrapping, required by the subtleness of air. All these causes will never allow you to obtain the system with the desired features. A powerful means of communication is required in order to make the aerostat useful. We said that it would represent a medium between electricity and steam. Yes, based on two points of view:

1. It must transport passengers faster than the railroads and messages slower than the telegraph;
2. It is not placed as a mid-ground between the two systems just because it is simultaneously part of air and ground, both operating as a path. It is between the sky and Earth.

You have not asked me if by such a means you will be able to visit other planets. However, such a thought has already occupied several minds and its solution would scare your world. No. You will not achieve that. Consider that it takes light years in order to cover the millions and millions of leagues of space. Then consider how long it would take to get to those planets, even considering the steam and wind.

Returning to the central point, I was saying that one should not expect much from the current system but that a lot more would be obtained by acting upon the air by strong and extensive compression. The support point that you are looking for is standing before your eyes, surrounding you from all sides. You clash with that in all of your movements; it blocks your route every day, influencing on everything that you touch. Think carefully about this and take from this revelation all that is possible. The consequences are enormous. We cannot take you by the hand and lead you to build the utensils needed to the task. We cannot persuade you word by word. It is necessary that your spirit do the work, maturing your projects, without which you would not understand the achievements nor would you know how to handle the instruments. We would be forced to operate your devices; then the unforeseeable circumstances which, one day or another, would hinder your endeavors and would also cast you back into your primitive ignorance.”

“Do the work and you shall find what you seek. Guide your spirit towards the direction that we have indicated to you for we do not lead you astray.”

OBSERVATION: Although containing undisputable truths, these advices still show a not very enlightened spirit, from certain angles, since he seems to ignore the actual impossibility of reaching other planets. It is another proof of the diversity of aptitudes and knowledge in the world of the spirits, as we find on Earth as well. It is through the multiplicity of observations that we shall understand and assess that world. That is why we provide examples of all sorts of communications, taking the necessary care of pointing out to the weaknesses and strengths.

This one from Poitevin ends by a very fair statement, seeming to have been inspired by a spirit more philosophical than his. As a matter of fact he had said that his advices would be revised by his friends which definitely teach nothing. We also find a demonstration that men who had a specialization on Earth are not always the best ones to provide teachings as spirits, particularly if not much elevated and detached from the earthly life. It is most unfortunate that for the progress of aeronautics the majority of those intrepid men cannot use their experience to the benefit of Science while the theorists ignore practical things, like the seamen who had never seen the sea. No doubt, one day there will be aeronautics engineers, like there are naval engineers, but only when they have seen and probed the depths of the oceanic spaces themselves. How many ideas wouldn't they be able to pick up from the direct contact with the elements, ideas that escape those in the industry, whatever their knowledge level, since they cannot perceive all difficulties from behind their desks. Nevertheless, if this Science is to become reality one day, it can only be through them. To the eyes of many people these thoughts are illusions thus the inventers who are typically not wealthy cannot find the necessary encouragement or the support. When the airstation yield dividends, even if an expectation, and may be financially assess, there will be no lack of capital. Meanwhile it is necessary to count on the dedication of those who place progress above speculation. While there is lack of resources for the execution there will be failures due to the impossibility of carrying out experiences in sufficient number or in adequate conditions. If we have to do

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

it in limited terms then it is not done properly, as with everything else. There will not be success but to the price of sufficient sacrifices in order to definitely belong to practical life. This excludes any idea of profit. Hopefully the thought of providing the world with the solution to a big problem, even if only from the point of view of science, will inspire some generous disinterestedness. But the first thing to do would be to provide theorists with the means of gaining experience in the air, even with the imperfect means at our disposal. Had Poitevin been a knowledgeable man and had he invented a system of aerial locomotion that would have unquestionably inspired more confidence than those who have never left the ground, and he would probably have found the resources that are denied to others.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Poetic thoughts

### Dictated by the Spirit of Alfred de Musset to Mrs...

If you on Earth suffer,  
Oh! Afflicted heart;  
If to misery handcuffed  
Is your part;  
Think of your affliction  
That follows the path;  
From the crying condition,  
To the better aftermath.  
Life's regrets,  
Are they so numerous  
That the heart forgets  
The day that among the illustrious,  
As for suffering compensation,  
The sidereal man  
Will get the decoration  
Of the ethereal domain?  
----  
Life is a passage;  
Know the way about.  
Acting with courage  
You'll happily cover its route.

OBSERVATION: The medium that served as interpreter not only did not know the most elemental rules of poetry but also had never written a single verse. She writes them with extraordinary facility, when dictated by the spirits. Although she has been a medium for a short time, she already has a large and interesting collection. We have seen some very charming and opportune among them, dictated by the spirit of a person who is alive, evoked by her, residing 200 leagues away. That person, when in the state of vigil, is not a better poet than the medium herself.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

April 1859

## Paid Somnambulists

One of our corresponding members has sent us a letter about our latest article on the self-serving mediums, questioning if our observations are also applicable to the paid somnambulists.

If we wish to go back to the cause of the phenomenon we will see that although it may be considered a variation of mediumship, the somnambulist is a kind of a different medium, so to speak. In fact, the mediums receive their communications from foreign spirits, who may communicate or not, depending on the circumstances and on the existing sympathies. The somnambulist, on the contrary, acts on his own; it is his own spirit that detaches from matter and sees, more or less well, according to the more or less complete withdrawal. It is true that the somnambulist is in touch with other spirits, who assist him with some or a lot of good will, according to the sympathies, but it is definitely his own spirit that sees and may, to a certain degree, use his own capabilities without the need for third parties or their indispensable support. Hence the somnambulist who seeks a material compensation for his sometimes significant efforts, as a consequence of exercising his faculty, does not have to overcome the same susceptibilities as the medium does. The medium is nothing more than an instrument.

Besides, it is well known that the somnambulist lucidity is developed by exercise. Well, those who turn this into a permanent occupation acquire more facility the more they see things with which they identify themselves, as well as with certain special terms that easily return to their memory. In a word, they get familiarized with the state that becomes, so to say, their natural state. Nothing else is strange to them. In reality, the facts are here to demonstrate the clarity and sharpness of their visions, from what we conclude that the compensation given to certain somnambulists is no obstacle to the development of their lucidity.

An objection is raised to that argument: since the lucidity is sometimes variable and depends on serendipitous causes, the question is in the search to get paid could this not prompt the somnambulist to fake such lucidity, even when lacking that clarity, due to fatigue or any other cause, an inexistence inconvenience when there is no material interest afoot. This is correct but we will respond that everything has its bad side. One can abuse everything and wherever fraud is insinuated, it is necessary to denounce it. The somnambulist acting in such a manner would be failing loyalty, which unfortunately also happens to those who are not somnambulists.

With a little bit of experience we can easily detect that. It would be difficult to deceive an experienced observer for long. In this, as in everything else, it is necessary to ensure the degree of trust that the person we are dealing with deserves. If the non-salaried somnambulist does not offer such an inconvenience it does not follow that her lucidity is infallible. He can be mistaken as anyone else, if not in good conditions. With that respect, the best guide is experience.

In summary, we do not profess these or those. We were able to attest remarkable services done by all of them. Our objective was only to demonstrate that it is possible to find good somnambulists in either category.

# **The Spiritist Review 1859**

**April 1859**

## **Spiritist Aphorism and Select Thoughts**

- ✓ Spirits incarnate as men or women since they do not have sex. As spirits must progress in everything, each sex, as each social position, imposes special trials and duties to the spirits, when acquiring experiences. The one who always had to be a man would only know what men do.
  
- ✓ According to the Spiritism, the solidarity is not only restricted to the Earthly society: it encompasses all worlds. The solidarity is universal through the relationships that the spirits establish among the several spheres, as human beings help one another from one world to the next.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

**April 1859**

## **Warning**

We receive endless letters from our corresponding members requesting the books Story of Joan of Arc and the Story of Louis XI, from which we have published excerpts, as well as the album with the drawings of Victorien Sardou.

We remind our readers that the Story of Joan of Arc is now sold out; the life of Louis XI as well as the life of Louis IX has not been published yet. We hope they are one day. The announcement in the Review will then be a duty to us. Until then, any order for those works will be fruitless. The same happens with the album of Mr. Sardou. The published drawing of Mozart's house is the only work that is on sale, at Ledoyen's bookstore.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>7</sup>

# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## Scenes of the Spirit's Private Life

In our last number we presented the picture of the spiritual life as a whole. We followed the spirits since they leave behind their physical body and briefly sketched their occupations. Today we propose to show them in action, therefore we have gathered several intimate scenes in the same picture, whose testimony has been given to us through the communications. The multiple family conversations from beyond the grave already published in this Review can give us an idea about the situation of the spirits according to their degree of progress. Here, however, there is a special kind of activity that allows us to get to know the role that they represent among us, despite our own ideas.

The theme of study whose adventures we will report was spontaneously presented to us, showing great interest although the hero of the story is not one of those superior spirits, inhabitants of unknown worlds, but one of those who are still attached to Earth by nature; a contemporary spirit that has given us proofs of his identity. The action takes place around us and each one of us has a role in the story. In addition, this study of the habits of the spirits has the particular interest of showing the progress of the spirits while errant, and the way through which we can help with their enlightenment.

After several unsuccessful experiments, from which his patience has triumphed, one of our friends suddenly became a magnificent psychographic and hearing medium. The other day, while he was busy with the psychography, side by side with one friend of his, he obtained a strange and not very serious answer from a spirit who did not correspond to the serious character of the spirit who was actually being evoked.

Once questioned about that, in the name of God, the spirit then offered the name Pierre Le Flamand, a name totally unknown to the medium. Since then a series of conversations have been established between the medium and the spirit and later between the spirit and us.

### FIRST CONVERSATION

1. Who are you? I don't know anybody by that name.
  - I am one of your old colleagues from school.
2. I have no recollection.
  - Don't you remember been beaten up once?
3. It is possible. That happens among school kids. I remember something of that kind but I also remember to have avenged this act.
  - It was I but I keep no hard feelings.
4. Thank you. But as much as I remember you were a really naughty boy.
  - Now you remember. However, I did not change while alive. I was a knucklehead but deep down I was not bad. I would fight the first one who showed up. It was like a necessity to me. Once I'd turned my back the case was forgotten.
5. When and at what age did you die?
  - Fifteen years ago. I was about twenty years old.
6. How did you die?
  - From a young man's madness... consequence of my poor judgment...

## The Spiritist Review 1859

7. How about your family?
- I had lost my father and mother long ago; I used to live with an uncle, my only relative. If you ever go to Cambrai<sup>8</sup> I advise you to look for him. He is an excellent person, who I am very fond of, although he disciplined me severely. But I deserved it.
8. He bears the same name as you do?
- No. There isn't anybody else with my name in Cambrai. His name is W...; he resides at ... You will see that It is really me who is speaking with you.

NOTE: The fact was confirmed by the medium himself, in a leisure trip sometime later. He found Mr. W... at the referred address. Mr. W... confirmed that in fact he had a nephew by that name, mischievous and devilish, deceased in 1844, short after having been drafted to the military service. The spirit had not indicated such a circumstance. He did that later, spontaneously, as we will see in due course.

9. Why have you serendipitously come to me?
- It was by accident if you will but I prefer to believe that it was my good nature that brought me to you, since it seems to me that both of us are going to profit from the reestablishment of our relationship... I was here near your neighbor; appreciating the pictures... but not the paintings of saints... suddenly I saw you and came by. I saw you entertained with another spirit and wanted to meddle in the conversation.
10. But why have you answered the questions addressed to the other spirit? This is not proper of an old comrade.
- I was in the presence of a serious spirit who seemed to me that was not willing to respond. I thought that he might answer if I tried to respond in his name but I was not successful. I wanted to force him to speak by not telling the truth.
11. That is not right and it could have yielded unpleasant results had I not noticed the trick.
- You would have noticed, sooner or later.
12. Tell me then how did you get in here?
- That is a good one. Since when we need to ring the bell?
13. Then you can go anywhere and get into any place?
- Of course I can and unannounced! It is not for another reason that we are spirits.
14. However, I did not think that every spirit could attend any meeting they wished to.
- Do you by any means think that your bedroom is a sanctuary and that I am not worthy of it?
15. Do answer my question seriously and stop kidding. Behold that I have no intention of entertaining jokes and that the mystifying spirits are not welcome here.

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<sup>8</sup> A small town in northern France (NT)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- There are meetings of spirits in which we, the idle ones, cannot participate. That is true but it is the superior spirits that block us not you, people. As a matter of fact, when we go to a given place we know very well how to remain quiet and at a distance, if necessary. We listen and then, when we get bored, we leave... Come on! It seems that you are not happy with my visit.

16. The fact is that I do not welcome the first one who shows up and frankly, I was not impressed when you perturbed a serious conversation.

- Don't be angry... I don't want to bother you... I am always nice. Next time I will have myself announced.

17. So you died fifteen years ago...

- Let us make it clear. My body is dead, but I, the one talking to you, I am not dead.

NOTE: Even among the frivolous and jester spirits one finds profound words. That "I am not dead" contains a whole philosophy.

18. That is how I understand it. By the way, tell me something: The way you are now, can you see me with the same clarity as if when you were in your body?

- I see you even better. I was short sighted. That is why I wanted to get rid of the military service.

19. Then, as I was saying, you have been dead for fifteen years and it seems that you are as crazy as before. Does it mean that you have not progressed?

- I am what I was. Not worse, not better.

20. How do you spend your time?

- I have no other concern but to have fun and to be informed about the events which may have influence over my fate. I see many things. I spend part of the time at my friends' houses, in the theater... Sometimes I find funny things... If the persons only knew that they have company when they think to be alone! Finally, I go in such a way as to make the passage of time as light as possible... I wouldn't know how long this is going to last, however, I have been like that for a while... Have you seen many cases like that?

21. In short, are you happier now than you were when alive?

- No.

22. What is it that you are missing? You need nothing else; you no longer suffer; you are not afraid of being bankrupt; you go everywhere and see everything; you are not afraid of the human concerns or diseases, or the ailments of age. Wouldn't that be a happy life?

- I lack the reality of the pleasures. I am not sufficiently elevated to enjoy a moral happiness. I desire everything that I see and that is my very punishment; I get bored and try to kill time the way I can! And how this lasts... I experience an indefinable qualm. I would rather feel the miseries of life than this anxiety that tortures me.

NOTE: Isn't that an eloquent picture of the sufferings of the inferior spirits? They envy everything that they see; they have the same desires and don't enjoy anything in reality; this must be a real torture.

23. You said you would go visiting your friends. Isn't that a real distraction?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- My friends cannot feel my presence. Besides, they no longer even remember me. That hurts.
24. Don't you have friends among the spirits?
- Senseless and useless like me; that get bored like me. Their company is not very nice. Those who think and are happy stay away from me.
25. Poor man! I am sorry and if I can be useful to you I will be with pleasure.
- If you only knew how these words do me good! It is the first time that I hear that.
26. Couldn't you find opportunities when watching and listening to good things that would be useful to your progress?
- Yes, but for that it would be necessary that I would take advantage of the lessons. I confess that I prefer to watch the scenes of love and mockery that have not influenced my spirit towards the good. Before coming here I was there, observing pictures that would give me ideas... But let us stop that. However, I was able to resist the temptation of asking for an incarnation in order to enjoy the pleasures that I have abused so much. Now I see how much I would be mistaken. I feel that I did well coming to your house.
27. There you go! I hope that in the future, in case you want my friendship, you will give me the pleasure of not having you observing those pictures which give you bad ideas; that on the contrary, you may think of those things that you may hear among us, good and useful to you. You will feel good, believe me.
- If it is what you want, I will wish that too.
28. When you go to the theater do you experience the same emotions as from when you were alive?
- Several different emotions. At first those; then I meddle into the conversations and hear very singular things.
29. What is your favorite theater?
- "Les Variétés" – In fact, I frequently go around all of them in the same evening. I also go to the balls and places of amusement.
30. Then you learn at the same time that you have fun, since you can observe a lot in your position.
- Yes but what I enjoy the most is certain conversations. It is really interesting to see the maneuvering of certain people, particularly of those who still want to pretend to be young. Nobody tells the truth with all those words. They paint their hearts very much like the makeup they wear so that nobody understands anybody. I did study their habits.
31. There you go! Don't you see that we can establish good conversations, like this one, from which we can both benefit?
- Certainly. As you say, first you, then me. You have to attend your bodily needs. I can walk all possible steps to learn without any prejudice to my existence.
32. Then you will continue your observations or, as you say, your studies of the habits. So far you have not taken advantage of them. It is necessary that they may serve your enlightenment for which you must carry them out with a serious objective and not to have fun and buy time. You will tell me what you have seen. We will reason together and come to the conclusions aiming at our mutual instruction.
- This is going to be very interesting. Yes, I am at your services, no doubt.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

33. That is not all. I would like to offer you an occasion for the practice of a good deed. Do you want that?
- With all my heart! Then, they will say that I can be useful to something. Please go on and tell me what I must do.
34. Slow down! I don't assign such delicate missions to those that I don't trust enough. You have good will, no doubt. Will you also have the necessary perseverance? That is the question. It is then necessary that I teach you to know yourself better so that you will know what you are capable of doing and how much I can count on you. We will speak another time.
- You will see.
35. Bye for now!
- So long.

### SECOND CONVERSATION

36. Then, my dear Peter, have you given a serious thought to what we discussed the other day?
- More than you think. I have decided to prove to you that I have more value than I show. I feel more at ease since I have something to do. Now I have an objective and no longer feel bored.
37. I spoke about you with Mr. Allan Kardec. I told him about our conversation with which he was very happy. He wants to be in touch with you.
- I know. I was in his house.
38. Who took you there?
- Your thoughts. I came back here after that day; I noticed that you wanted to talk to him about me and then I said to myself: Let us go there first; I will possibly find material for observation and may find an occasion to be useful.
39. I like to see you with such serious thoughts. What was your impression of the visit?
- Oh! It was great. I learned things that I did not suspect and that clarify me regarding my future. It is like a light source inside of me. Now I understand everything that I have to gain from my betterment... it is necessary... it is necessary.
40. Could I ask you, without an indiscretion, about what you saw there?
- Certainly. Not only what I saw there but also in other places, however I will only tell you what I want to, what I can...
41. How come? You cannot say everything that you wish to?
- No. Since a few days now I see a spirit that seems to be following me everywhere, that pushes or stops me. One could say that he drives me. I feel an impulse whose origin I ignore but obey, irrespectively. If I want to say or do something inappropriate he stands before me, looks at me and I silence... I stop.
42. Who is that spirit?
- I don't know, but he dominates me.
43. Why don't you ask him?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- I dare not. When I want to speak with him he looks at me and I feel my tongue got tied.

NOTE: It is evident that the word tongue here is used in the figurative sense. The spirits have no articulated language.

44. You must feel if he is good or bad.

- He must be good since he blocks me from saying silly things. But he is strict... Sometimes he shows rage; some other times he looks at me kindly... I had the intuition that it could be the spirit of my father that wants to go unidentified.

45. It is possible. It seems that he is not very happy with you. Listen. I will give you some news about that. We know that the parents have the mission of educating their children leading them to the good. Consequently they are responsible for their good or evil deeds, according to the education that they received; hence the parents suffer or are happy in the spiritual world. The behavior of the children thus influence, up to a certain degree, the happiness or misfortune of their parents after their death. Since your behavior was not very constructive while on Earth and since you have not done much after your death, your father suffers with all that in case he is blaming himself for not having guided you properly...

- If I did not become a good man it was not due to a lack of reproof, more than once.

46. Perhaps it was the best way of changing you. Nevertheless, his affection for you is always the same and he demonstrates that by getting closer to you, I suppose. He must feel happy with your recent changes. That explains his oscillations between kindness and rage. He wants to help you in the good path that you have just entered and when he sees you resolutely walking that path he will identify himself. Thus, working towards your own happiness you will also work towards his. I would not be surprised if it were him who pushed you here. If he did not do it before was to give you time to understand the hollowness of your existence without accomplishments; he wanted you to feel that sorrow.

- Thank you, thank you! He is here, behind you! He rests his hand on your head, as if dictating the words that you have just said.

47. Let us return to Mr. Allan Kardec.

- I went to his house yesterday. He was busy, writing in his office... He was working on a new book... Ah! He takes good care of us, poor spirits. If we are not known it is not his fault.

48. Was he alone?

- Yes alone – that is, there was no other person with him. However, there was about twenty spirits around him, whispering above his head.

49. Has he heard them?

- He heard them so well that he looked around to try to establish the origin of the noises, trying to see if they were not coming from thousands of flies. Then he opened the window to see if that was not coming from the wind or rain.

NOTE: The fact is absolutely exact.

50. Do you recognize any of those spirits?

- No. They are not those in which company I pleased myself. I had the impression that I was an intruder. I remained in a corner of the room, observing.

51. Have the spirits given the impression that they were observing what he was writing?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- I believe so. Two or three in particular whispered what he was writing, giving the impression that they heard the opinion of the others. However, he strongly believed that the ideas were his and seemed happy with that.

52. Was that all?

- Then a group of about eight or ten people came in and joined Mr. Kardec in another room. They were talking. Asking questions that he responded, explained.

53. Do you know those persons?

- No. The only thing I know is that they seemed to be important for one was always referred to as Prince and the other Duke. The spirits also arrived in a large crowd. There was at least a hundred from which some had a kind of crown of fire. The others remained at a distance, listening.

54. And you, what did you do?

- I was listening too. Mostly observing. Then I had the idea of doing something useful to Mr. Kardec. When I am successful I will tell you about it. Then I left the meeting strolling around the streets, enjoying myself around the shops, meddling with the crowds.

55. Then, instead of going about your business you were wasting your time?

- I did not waste it since I stopped a crime.

56. Ah! Then you are also involved with police matters?

- Why not? I was walking by across from a closed store when I noticed that there was something strange happening inside; I went in and saw a very agitated young man, walking up and down as if deciding to break into the cashier. There were two spirits with him, whispering into his ears: Come on, you coward! The drawer is full; you will have a lot of fun, etc. The other had a delicate face, nice and noble, something of celestial and good in his looks. He said: leave, leave now! While whispering the words: prison, dishonor.

The man hesitated. Once he approached the counter I positioned myself in front of him, so as to impede him. The bad spirit asked why I was getting involved. I told him that I wanted to stop the young man from doing something wrong that could lead him to the dungeons. Then the good spirit approached me and said: "He needs to suffer the temptation; it is a trial. If he fails, it will be his fault." The thief would triumph after the bad spirit had employed a disgusting but successful trick: He led the man to see a bottle on the table. It was liquor. He inspired in the man the idea of drinking it to have the courage. The unfortunate man is lost, I thought... Let us try so save something at least. I have no resource other than informing the owner... Quick! In a split second I was there. He was about to initiate a card game with his wife; I had to find a way of making him go downstairs.

57. If he were a medium you could have him writing that he was about to be mugged. Do you think that he would at least believe in spirits?

- He was not *spirited* enough to understand that.

58. I did not know that you were skillful in word playing.

- If you interrupt me I will say no more. I provoked a violent sneeze in that man. He felt like taking a snuff and then noticed that he had left the container in the store. He woke his son up who was snoring at a corner of the room, sending him to fetch the box. That was not what I



## The Spiritist Review 1859

wanted... the boy stood up complaining. I whispered to the mother the words: do not wake the boy up, you can go and fetch it yourself. He finally made the decision and went... I followed him to speed him up. Once he got to the store he noticed the lights on and heard a noise. He was afraid, his legs trembling; I forced him forward. Had he suddenly entered he would have trapped the thief. Instead, the stupid started screaming thief, thief! The criminal escaped but in the rush and altered by the alcohol he left his hat behind. When the shop owner entered the store there was nobody inside... What is going to happen to the hat? That is not up to me. That man is in trouble. Thanks to me there was no time for the crime to be perpetrated, the businessman was saved by fear. This was not enough to stop him from saying, when he went back upstairs, that he had confronted a six-foot tall man. Look at this, he said. If I did not have the idea of taking a snuff! Had I not stopped you from sending the child, said the woman. Let us agree that both of us had a premonition. It was a real luck! Now you, my dear, you can thank me!

59. You are brave my dear Peter. I congratulate you. Don't feel discouraged by people's ungratefulness. You will experience it many times now that you are prepared to serve them, even among those who believe in the intervention of the spirits.

- Yes, I know. The ungrateful will be paid with ingratitude.

60. I now see that I can count on you and that you will become really serious.

- You will see that later it will be me who will teach you moral.

61. I do need that as any person does and receives the good advices with good will, coming from wherever. I told you that I wanted you to do a good deed. Are you ready?

- And do you doubt it?

62. One of my friends seems to be on the verge of great deceptions if he continues in the current path; his illusions may lose him. I would like to have you helping him to return to the good path, by any means that could strongly impress him. Do you understand my thought?

- Yes. You want me to produce some good manifestation to him, like an apparition for example. But that does not depend on me. However, I can eventually and as long as I have permission for that, give him patent signs of my presence, as you know.

NOTE: The medium to whom this spirit seems to be linked feels his presence by a very strong impression, even when he is not willing to contact him. He acknowledges his presence by a kind of shivers in his arms, back and shoulders. The effects, however, are sometimes more energetic. In our gathering in my house, on March 24<sup>th</sup> last, this spirit answered the questions through another medium. We were talking about his physical strength. Suddenly, as if wanting to give a proof of that, he grabbed one of the attendees by the leg, which was violently shaken and thrown to the other side of the room, stunned.

63. Do as you please, or better, as you can. I warn you that he has some mediumistic capability.

- Even better to my plans.

64. What are your plans?

- I will study the situation, to start with. I will check the spirits who surround him and if there is any way of doing something with them. I will announce my presence at his house, as I did with you. I will be questioned and will respond: "It is me, Pierre Le Flamand, spiritual messenger. I come to be at your service and I heard that you entertain certain ideas that are

## The Spiritist Review 1859

transforming your mind, already making you turn your back to your friends. It is my duty to warn you, in your own interest, that your ideas are far from useful to your future happiness. You have Le Flamand's word. I can assure you that I visit you with the best of the intentions. Be afraid of the spirits' wrath and even further, God's wrath; and believe in the words of your servant who wishes to affirm that his mission is for the general well-being.

If I am kicked out I will return three times. Then I will see what needs to be done. Is that okay?

65. Well done my friend. Say no more or less.

- Word by word.

66. But if you are asked about who has assigned you with that mission, what will you say?

- Superior spirits. For good, I may not say the whole truth.

67. You are mistaken. Since it is good, it is always by inspiration of the good spirits. Thus, your conscience may be at peace since the bad spirits will never lead us to do good things.

- It is clear.

68. I thank you and congratulate you for your good resolution. When do you want me to evoke you to present the results of your mission?

- I will let you know.

(Continue in the next issue)

# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## Music from Beyond the Grave

Mozart

The spirit of Mozart has just dictated a piece of a sonata to our excellent medium, Mr. Bryon-Dorgeval. As a means of assessing the work, the medium had the piece heard by several artists, not indicating its origin, but only asking for their opinion about the piece. Each of them acknowledged, without hesitation, Mozart's style. The piece was executed in the session of the Society on April 8<sup>th</sup> last, in the presence of several knowledgeable persons, of Ms. Davans, Chopin's pupil and distinguished pianist, who kindly provided us with her service.

As an element of comparison, Ms. Davans executed beforehand a sonata that Mozart had composed when alive. Everyone unanimously agreed, not only with the similarity of styles, but also with the superiority of the spirit's composition. Then the same pianist executed a piece of Chopin with his typical talent.

We could not let the opportunity of evoking both composers escape, then having the following conversation:

MOZART

1. You know for sure the reason why we called you.
  - Your call pleases me.
2. Do you acknowledge as yours the piece that we have just heard?
  - Yes, very much so. I recognize it perfectly well. The medium who served as my interpreter is a friend that has not betrayed me.
3. Which one do you prefer?
  - The second one, no doubt.
4. Why?
  - The sweetness and charm are more tender and lively in that one.

NOTE: These are the qualities indicated by others in the piece.

5. Can the music in the world where you live compare to ours?
  - You would have difficulty understanding it. We enjoy senses that you still don't have.
6. We were told that there is a natural, universal harmony in your world that we do not know here.
  - It is true. You create music on Earth; here, the whole nature produces melodious sounds.
7. Could you play piano?
  - No doubt I could. But I don't want to. It would be useless.
8. It would, however, be a powerful means of conviction.
  - Aren't you convinced?

NOTE: Everyone knows that the spirits do not submit themselves to trials. They frequently and spontaneously do what we have not asked them to do. As a matter of fact, this type of manifestation would fall in the category of the physical manifestations, not proper of the superior spirits.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

9. What do you think about the recent publication of your letters?
- They vivified my memory a lot.
10. Your memories are in everyone's memory. Could you describe the effect that these letters had on public opinion?
- Yes. They made me more loved. People got more connected to me as a man than before.

NOTE: The person that framed the last questions, in reality strange to the Society, confirmed that as the actual opinion produced in public opinion.

11. We would like to question Chopin. Would that be possible?
- Yes. He is sadder and more somber than I am.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## Music from Beyond the Grave

Chopin

12. (After the evocation) – Could you tell us about your situation as a spirit?

- Still errant.

13. Do you miss your Earthly life?

- I am not unhappy.

14. Are you happier than before?

- Yes, a little.

15. You say a little, meaning that there isn't much difference. What is it missing so that you can be even happier?

- I say a little for what I could have been, since with my intelligence I could have advanced more than I did.

16. Do you expect to achieve the happiness you miss now?

- It will certainly come but new trials will be needed.

17. Mozart said that you are more somber and sad. Why so?

- Mozart told the truth. I get sad because I did not accomplish a committed assignment and do not have the courage to restart.

18. How do you see your musical compositions?

- I have them in high account. However, we do it better among us here, particularly when we have more resources.

19. Who are the members of your orchestra?

- We have legions of musicians at our service that play our compositions with a thousand more talents than any one among you. These are complete musicians. They use their throats as instruments, so to speak, supported by instruments similar to organs that retain incredible accuracy and sound quality that I believe you cannot begin to comprehend.

20. Are you really an errant spirit?

- Yes. That is, I do not exclusively belong to any planet.

21. How about your musicians, are they errant as well?

- Errant like me.

22. (To Mozart) could you kindly explain what Chopin has just said? We do not understand that execution of music by the errant spirits.

- I understand your surprise. However, we have already said that there are particular worlds destined to errant beings, worlds that can be temporarily inhabited, a kind of bivouac or makeshift resting camp to these spirits, fatigued by a long erraticity, an always somewhat painful state.

23. (To Chopin) do you recognize one of your students here?

- Yes. It seems.

24. Could you kindly watch the execution of a piece of your composition?

- That would give me great pleasure, particularly having it executed by a person that has kept a good memory of me. Please transmit my appreciation to him.

25. Can you give us your opinion about Mozart's music?

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

- I like it very much. I consider Mozart my master.

26. Would you share that opinion with respect to today's music?

- Mozart said that music was better understood in his time than nowadays. That is true. I will object, however, that there still are true artists.

NOTE: The fragment of sonata dictated by the spirit of Mozart has just been published. It may be acquired from the office of the Spiritist Review or from the bookstore of Mr. Ledoyen, Palais Royal, Galerie d'Orleans, 31. Price 2 francs – it will be posted against a mail order of that amount.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## Intermediate or Transient Worlds

We saw in one of the answers given in the previous article that, as it seems, there would be worlds destined to errant spirits. Such an idea was not in the mind of any of the attendees and nobody would have thought of that except from the spontaneous revelation given by Mozart, what can be a proof that the spiritist communications may be independent of all preconceived ideas. Aiming at obtaining a more profound knowledge in that field, we submitted it to another spirit, outside of the Society, and through another medium, who had no knowledge about the subject.

1. (To St. Augustine) – Are there worlds which serve as stations to errant spirits or like resting places, as we were told?
  - There are but they represent different degrees, that is, occupy an intermediary position among the worlds, according to the nature of the spirits that seek them, enjoying a greater or a lesser well being there.
2. Can the spirits that inhabit those worlds leave them at will?
  - Yes. The spirits that inhabit them can leave and go where they please. Imagine them as migrating birds that can land on an island in order to recover their energies so as to move on with their destinies.
3. Do the spirits progress while inhabiting such intermediate worlds?
  - Certainly. Those who gather like that do it for their instruction and more easily obtain permission to go to better places, achieving the position of the elected ones.
4. Such worlds, for their special nature, are eternally reserved to errant spirits?
  - No. Their situation is transient.
5. Are they simultaneously inhabited by corporeal beings?
  - No.
6. Is their constitution similar to other planets?
  - Yes, but their constitution is sterile.
7. Why that sterility?
  - Those who inhabit them need nothing.
8. Such sterility is permanent and due to their special nature?
  - No. They are temporarily sterile.
9. Then such worlds lack natural beauties?
  - Nature is translated by the beauties of the immeasurable that are not less remarkable than those which you call natural beauties.
10. Are there worlds like that in our planetary system?
  - No.
11. Since this is a transient state, will Earth one day be in such a state?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- It has already been.
12. In which period?
- During its formation.

NOTE: Once more this communication confirms that nothing is useless in nature. Everything has an objective, a destiny; there is no emptiness, everything is inhabited; life is everywhere. Thus, during the long series of centuries that passed before human beings appeared on Earth; during those slow periods of transition, confirmed by the geological layers; even before the formation of the first organic beings, over that shapeless form; in that arid chaos where the elements were mixed together, there was no absence of life. Beings that did not have our needs, or the physical sensations, took refuge here. It was God's will that even in that imperfect state, Earth was useful for something. Who then would dare say that among those thousands of globes that move in space, only one, and one of the smallest among all, lost in the crowd, would have the exclusive privilege of being inhabited? What would then be the utility of the others? Would God have created them to please our eyes? This is an absurd supposition, incompatible with the wisdom that shines from all of God's works. Nobody can dispute the fact that there is in this idea of the worlds, still inadequate to the material life, but inhabited by living beings appropriate to the environment, something of grandiose and sublime, in which perhaps there is the solution to many problems.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## Bond between Body and Spirit

One of our lady friends, Mrs. Schutz, perfectly attached to this world, who does not seem to be willing to leave it soon, was evoked in her sleep, giving us more than once proof of perspicacity while in that state. One day, or better, one evening, after a long conversation, she said: "I am fatigued. I need some rest. I am going to sleep. My body needs that."

I then responded: "Your body can rest. I do not wish to cause you any harm by talking to you. It is your spirit that is here, not your body. You could then entertain my questions without hurting your body."

She replied: "You are wrong. My spirit separates a little bit from my body, but it is like a captive balloon, tied by ropes. When the balloon suffers the bumps of the turbulent winds, the pole feels the effects transmitted by the ties. My body represents the pole to my spirit, with the difference that it experiences sensations unknown to the pole and such sensations significantly fatigue the brain. That is why my body requires some rest, as does my spirit."

According to the lady's own declaration, she had never thought of that explanation before, which showed perfectly well the existing relationships between the body and the spirit, whilst the latter enjoys partial freedom. We knew well that the absolute separation only happens after death and even some time later. However, that connection had never been so clearly and impressively described to us. Thus, we congratulate that lady who, even in her sleep, has demonstrated to bear such a lively spirit. For us, however, it was not more than an ingenious comparison. The image has lately taken the proportions of reality.

While visiting us Mr. R..., a former resident minister of the USA, together with the King of Naples, a knowledgeable man in matters of Spiritism, asked if we had already observed any distinction between the spirit of a living person and that of a deceased one, as it relates to the phenomena of the apparitions. In short, when a spirit appears spontaneously, be in the vigil state or during the sleep, if we have any means of recognizing if the person is dead or alive. Learning that we had no means other than asking the spirit, he then said that he knew a clairvoyant medium in England endowed by a great faculty, who says that every time a spirit of a living person shows up to him, he notices a shiny trail, starting at the chest of the apparition, traveling through space and not blocked by any material obstacle, terminating at the body. It is a kind of umbilical cord that unites the momentarily separated parts of the living being. He had never seen such a thing when there was no corporeal life. That is how he recognizes when the spirit is of a dead or living person.

The comparison made by Mrs. Schutz came to mind, thus we took it as a confirmation of the fact that we have just reported. However, we will make an observation with that regard.

It is a known fact that the separation, at the time of death, is not sudden. The perispirit detaches gradually while the perturbation stands, keeping some affinity with the body. Couldn't that be the case that the bond observed by the medium, described above, was present at the very moment of death, or a few moments later, as it frequently happens? In that case the presence of the cord would not be an indication that the person is alive.

Mr. R... could not tell us if the medium had made such an observation. In any case it is not less important, shinning a new light onto what we can call the physiology of the spirits.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## *L'Univers (The Universe) Article – A Rebuttal*

In their latest April 13<sup>th</sup> edition, the journal *The Universe* brings an article authored by Abbot Chesnel, in which the problem of Spiritism is extensively discussed. We would have left it without an answer as done to so many others to which we gave no importance, had it been one of those gross diatribes from their authors revealing the most absolute ignorance about the subject.

We have the satisfaction of acknowledging that the article by Abbot Chesnel was written in a completely different way. By the moderation and convenience of the language he deserves an answer, even more so since the article contains a serious mistake and may give a false idea of Spiritism as a whole, as well as impact the character and objective of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies.

Below is the transcript of the original article:

“Everybody knows the spiritualism of Mr. Cousin that is based on the philosophy destined to gradually replace religion. Under the same title, we have today a body of revealed doctrines that gradually becomes complete. It is a really simple cult but of wonderful efficacy as it would allow the devotees to be in a real sensitive and almost permanent communication with the supernatural world.”

“Such a cult has periodical meetings, initiated by the evocation of a canonized saint. As soon as the faithful attest the presence of St. Louis, King of France, they ask him to prohibit the entry of the evil spirits in the temple, then reading the minutes of the previous meeting. Then, invited by the President, a medium is called to the podium, near the Secretary in charge of annotating the questions addressed by one of the experts and the answers given by the evoked spirit. The assembly intensely watches the scene of necromancy, sometimes very lengthy, and once the session is over people leave more convinced than ever about the truths of spiritualism. During the interval between two sessions members do not forget to keep in close but private contact with the spirits who are more accessible or dear to them. There are many mediums and almost no secret in the other life which the mediums don't end up by penetrating.”

“Once revealed to the faithful, those secrets are no longer kept away from the public. The *Spiritist Review* published every month and with regularity, does not deny subscription to the profane and to whoever may wish to be able to acquire the books containing the revealing texts, with their authentic comments.”

“We would be led to believe that a religion that consists uniquely in the evocation of the dead would be very hostile to the Catholic Church which has always prohibited the practice of witchcraft. But such petty feelings, however natural they may seem, are strange to the hearts of the spiritualists, as they say. They are worthy of the message of the Gospel and its Author. They acknowledge that Jesus lived, acted, spoke and suffered as told by our four Evangelists. The Evangelical Doctrine is true but that revelation, of which Jesus was the instrument, far from excluding progress, must be completed. Spiritualism is what is going to give the Gospels the missing robust interpretation and the complementation waited for eighteen centuries.”

“Besides, who can establish limits to the progress of Christianity as taught, interpreted and developed as it is by the souls not bonded to matter, strange to the Earthly passions, to our human interests and prejudices? The infinite itself unfolds before us. Well, infinite is boundless and all indications are that the revelation of infinite will proceed uninterrupted. As the centuries move on, revelations will be added to revelations with their endless mysteries, whose extension and profundity seem to increase since they are freed from the obscurity which surrounded them up until now.”

## The Spiritist Review 1859

“Thus, spiritualism is a religion since it places us in an intimate relationship with the infinite, broadening Christianity even further; it is easily recognized as the most elevated, the purest and most perfect religious form, from past to present. However, boosting Christianity is a difficult task that cannot be accomplished without removing the barriers behind which it remains entrenched. The rationalists respect no wall. Less ardent and better informed, the spiritualists only find two barriers whose rupture seems indispensable to them: the authority of the Catholic Church and the dogma of the eternal penalties.”

“Is this life the only trial that the individual has to endure? Will the tree forever remain where it has fallen? Is the state of the soul, after death, definitive, irrevocable and eternal? No, answers the spiritualist necromancy. Nothing ends with death. Everything restarts. Death is a starting point of a new incarnation, of a new life, a new experience.”

“According to the German pantheism, God is not the being but the eternal being to be. However God may be, the human being has no other destiny to the Parisian spiritualists but the progressive or regressive state, according to the merits and works. The moral or religious law has a true sanction in the other lives, where the good ones are rewarded and the bad ones punished but for a more or less lengthy period of time, of years or centuries, but not for the whole eternity.”

“Would spiritualism be the mystical form of mistake envisaged by the theologian Mr. Jean Reynaud? Perhaps!”

“Would it be possible to go further and say that between Mr. Reynaud and the new sectaries there is a closer connection than that of an identity of doctrines? Maybe still. But such question, due to a lack of sound information, will not be definitely resolved here.”

“What is important, much more than the relationship or the heretical alliances of Mr. Jean Reynaud, is the confusion of ideas whose manifestation is the progress of spiritualism; ignorance with respect to religion is what allows so much extravaganza; the frivolity with which really distinguished people accept such revelations from the other world, having no merit whatsoever, even that of the novelty.”

“It is necessary to go back to Pythagoras and to the Egyptian priests to discover the origins of the contemporary spiritualism. We will find them by browsing the archives of the animal magnetism.”

“Since the XVIII century, necromancy represented an important role in the practice of magnetism. Several years before hearing about the rapping spirits of America, certain French magnetizers obtained the confirmation of the doctrines condemned by the Church, as they said, from the mouth of the dead or the demons, and specially the mistakes of Origen relative to the future conversion of the bad angels and the outcasts.”

“It is also necessary to say that the spiritualist medium, while exercising his functions, is not much different from the subject in the hands of the magnetizer, and the circle which surrounds the revelations of the former does not go even beyond what blurs the vision of the latter.”

“The teachings obtained by public curiosity about private matters, through necromancy, generally do not teach anything that is not already known. The answer of the spiritualist medium is obscure in points that our own personal research could not clarify; it is clear and precise in those that are well-known to us; it remains quiet with respect to everything which escapes our studies and efforts. In one word, as it seems the medium has a magnetic vision of our soul, but does not uncover anything already written there. Such interpretation, apparently very simple, is however subjected to several difficulties. In fact, it presupposes that one soul may be able to read what is in the deepest of another soul, without the support of signs and independently of the will of someone who would become an open and perfectly readable book to the first who shows up. Well, the good and bad angels do not naturally enjoy such privilege among themselves in their mutual relationships or with us. It is only God who can immediately penetrate and scrutinize the inner souls of the most stubbornly shut to God’s light.”

“If the so called strangest spiritualist facts are authentic, it is then necessary to resort to other principles to explain them. We generally forget that the facts refer to an issue that strongly concerns the heart or the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

intelligence; which has led to extensive research and about which we frequently speak outside of the spiritualist environment. Under such conditions, which should not be neglected, certain knowledge of things which are of our own interest does not go beyond the natural limits of the spirits' power."

"At any rate, the spectacle offered to us these days is nothing more than an evolution of magnetism, struggling to become a religion."

"Under the dogmatic and polemic format given by Mr. Jean Reynaud, the new religion incurred in the condemnation of the *Périgueux Council*, whose authority, as everybody remembers, was gravely denied by the culprit."

"Given the mystic format that it now takes place in Paris, it deserves to be investigated, at least as a sign of the current times in which we live. Spiritualism has attracted a number of people, among which there are some distinctly well known around the world. The power of seduction that the spiritualism exerts; its slow but uninterrupted progress, witnessed by trustworthy people; the boasted pretensions; the problems it presents; the harm it can cause to the souls, all those are, no doubt, many listed reasons to attract the attention of Catholics. Let us be careful in not attributing more importance to the new sect than it deserves. Nevertheless, in order to avoid the exaggeration which amplifies everything, let us not be tricked by the denial of all things."

*"Nolite omni spiritui credere, sed probate spiritus si ex Deo sint, quoniam multi pseudoprophetae prodierunt in mundum. I John, 4:1."*<sup>9</sup>

L'Abbé François Chesnel

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Mr. Abbot,

Your article published in *L'Univers*, with respect to Spiritism, contains several mistakes which need to be rectified and, no doubt, are originated from an incomplete study of the subject. In order to refute them all it would be necessary to refer to the basis, to all points of the theory, as well as to the facts that substantiate them. I do not intend to do here and will limit to the main points.

You were right by saying that the spiritist ideas have attracted a certain number of people, among which some are distinctly known in the world. This fact, whose truthfulness goes much beyond your imagination, undeniably deserves the attention of serious people, since so many celebrities known for their notable intelligence, knowledge and social positions do not fall in love with an idea which has no foundation. The natural conclusion is that there must be something concrete here to assess.

You will certainly object that certain doctrines, religions, and social activities have found followers lately in the heart of the intellectual aristocracy. This situation has not spared them from ridicule. Thus, people of intelligence may be dragged by utopias.

In response I will say that the utopias are short lived. Reason will prevail, sooner or later. That is what is going to happen to Spiritism, if proven a utopia. However, if it is the truth, it will then triumph over every opposition and sarcasm, and I will even say, over all persecutions, if these still belong to our century, and the detractors will waste their time. Whatever the price, the opponents will have to accept it, as so many other things were accepted against the protests that were raised in the name of reason. Is Spiritism true? The future will tell. It seems, however, that there is already an announcement; such is the speed of

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<sup>9</sup> *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world (1<sup>st</sup> Epistle, John 4:1)*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

propagation of these ideas. Also carefully notice that it is not within the ignorant and illiterate classes that the acknowledgment takes place. It is, on the contrary, among the educated people.

It is still important to consider that all philosophical doctrines are the work of people, whose ideals are more or less grandiose, more or less just. They all have a leader uniting all those who share the same principle.

Who is the author of Spiritism? Who has envisaged such a theory, right or wrong? It is true that it was necessary to coordinate, formulate and explain it. But who has conceived the initial idea? Nobody did. Or even better, everybody, since everybody could see and those who did not see was because they did not want to see or wanted to see it their own way, not breaking the circle of their preconceived ideas, what led them to see and judge poorly. Spiritism derives from observations that can be carried out by everyone, observations which are the privilege of nobody, thus explaining its propagation. Spiritism is not the result of any individual system, a circumstance that distinguishes it from all other philosophical doctrines.

Those revelations from the other world, you say, don't even have the merit of novelty. Would merit demand novelty? Who has ever declared that Spiritism is a modern discovery? Those communications, as a consequence of nature and produced by the will of God, are part of the immutable laws with which God governs the world. Consequently, they must have existed since the human being exists on Earth. That is why we find it in the remotest antiquity, among all peoples, both in their profane as well as in their sacred history. The ancestry and universality of such a belief are arguments in its favor. The conclusion that this would be unfavorable to the doctrine is, before anything else, lack of logic.

You then say that the faculty of the mediums is not much different from that of the subjects in the hands of the magnetizers, or in other words, of the somnambulist. Let us even admit that there is a perfect identity. What would be the cause of that remarkable somnambulist clairvoyance, which finds no obstacle in matter or distance, and that occurs without the support of the organs of vision? Wouldn't that be the most patent demonstration of the existence and individuality of the soul, the axle of religion?

If I were a clergyman and wanted to give a sermon, proving that there is something in us more than the body, I would undeniably demonstrate it through the phenomena of natural or artificial somnambulism. If mediumship is nothing but a variety of somnambulism, its effects are not less worthy of observation. I would find in them an additional proof in favor of my thesis and would use it as a new weapon against atheism and materialism.

All of our faculties are the works of God. The greater and the more wonderful they are, the more they attest God's power and benevolence.

As for myself who has carried out special studies about somnambulism for thirty five years; who has considered somnambulism as a not less profound faculty than so many others of mediumship, I assure you, as everyone else who does not pass judgment by just analyzing one face of the problem, that the medium is endowed by a particular faculty which does not allow it to be confused with that of the somnambulist and that the complete independence of the medium's thought is demonstrated by facts of ample evidence to anyone who is properly positioned with the required conditions to observe with impartiality.

Abstractions are made by direct written communications. Has a somnambulist ever made a single thought come out of an inert body? Which one has ever produced visible and even tangible apparitions? Which one has ever been able to maintain a heavy body suspended in the air without a supporting point? Was it through a somnambulist effect that a medium can draw the portrait of a young lady, deceased eighteen months prior, who the medium had never met before and whose picture was recognized by her father who was present at my house, fifteen days ago, in the presence of twenty eye witnesses? Would it be through an effect of somnambulism that a table accurately responds to framed questions and even to mental questions? We can certainly admit that the medium was magnetized. It would be difficult to believe that the table, however, was somnambulist.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

You say that the medium cannot speak with clarity unless it is about known things. How to explain the following fact and hundreds of others of the same kind, that have happened multiple times and of my personal knowledge?

One of my friends, an excellent psychographic medium, enquires a spirit about a person with whom he had lost contact for over fifteen years, asking if that person would still be alive. "Yes", responded the spirit: "the person is still alive, living in Paris, number... street..." My friend goes there and finds the person at the indicated address.

Is it an illusion? Could it be that his own thought had suggested such an answer? If in certain cases the answer may coincide with the thought, would that be rational to conclude that it is a general law?

In that respect, as with everything else, the hasty judgments are always dangerous, for they can be refuted by facts that were not analyzed.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Abbot, my intention is not to provide a course in Spiritism here, nor to discuss if it is right or wrong. As it has already been said, it would be sufficient to remind you about several facts that I have mentioned in the Spiritist Review as well as the explanations given in my many texts.

I then come to the part of your article, Your Most Reverend, which seems most important to me.

You gave the title to your article: "*A New Religion in Paris*". Supposing that this would really be the character of Spiritism, you would have made there your first mistake, since Spiritism is far from been circumscribed to Paris. It counts on millions of adepts spread in all five continents, and Paris was not its primitive focus.

Second, is Spiritism a religion? It is easy to demonstrate the opposite.

Spiritism is based on the existence of an invisible world, formed by incorporeal beings that inhabit space, and who are not but the souls of those who lived on Earth or in other worlds, where they have left their material envelopes. We gave those beings the name, or even better, they gave themselves the name of spirits. These beings surround us continuously, exerting a powerful influence onto human beings, despite people's will. They play a very active role in the moral world, and to a certain degree, in the physical world. Thus, Spiritism belongs to nature and one can say that, from a certain point of view, Spiritism is a force of nature, like electricity is another and the universal gravitation is a third one.

Spiritism unveils invisible worlds, as the microscope has revealed the world of the infinitely small, whose existence we did not suspect. Therefore, the phenomena whose source is the invisible world must have been produced and were produced at all times, as well covered by the history of all peoples. It was only people that in their ignorance have attributed such phenomena to causes more or less hypothetical, allowing a free path to imagination in that respect, as done to all phenomena whose causes were imperfectly known.

A better observed Spiritism since its popularization comes to shed light onto a large number of problems that were unsolved or poorly solved hitherto. Its true character is then of a science and not of a religion and the proof is that it counts on people of all beliefs in its rows, people who have not renounced to their convictions because of that: fervent Catholics who practice all duties of their cult; Protestants of all sects; Jewish, Muslims and even Buddhists and Brahmans. There is everything but materialists and atheists since these ideas are incompatible with the spiritist principles.

Hence, Spiritism is founded on general principles independent of every dogmatic question. It is true that it has moral consequences, like all philosophical sciences. Such consequences are compatible with Christianity because from all doctrines, Christianity is the most enlightened and the purest, reason why from all religious sects in the world, the Christians are the ones more capable of comprehending Spiritism in its true essence.

Spiritism then is not a religion. Otherwise it would have its cult, its temples, and its ministers.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

There is no doubt that every person may transform their own beliefs into a religion and interpret the existing religions at will, but from this to the constitution of a new church there is a great distance and I believe it to be imprudent to follow such an idea.

In summary, Spiritism deals with the observation of the facts and not with the particularities of this or that belief; with the research of the causes; with the explanation that the facts may give to the known phenomena, from a moral as well as a physical point of view, not imposing any cult to its adepts, the same way that Astronomy does not impose a cult to the stars, nor the pyrotechnics a cult to the fire.

Even more: as *Sabianism* was born from a poorly understood Astronomy, the badly understood Spiritism in ancient times was the source of Polytheism. Today, thanks to the lights of Christianity, we can assess Spiritism more appropriately. Spiritism positions us better against the wrong systems, originated by ignorance. And religion itself can find in Spiritism the tangible proof of many truths contested by certain opinions. Thus, marching against the opinion of most philosophical sciences, one of its effects is to lead back to the religious ideas those who have deviated by an exaggerated skepticism.

The Society to which you refer has its objective expressed in the title itself. The denomination *Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies* is not similar to any sect. It has such a diverse character that its regulations prohibit the discussion of religious questions. It is classified in the category of the scientific societies because its objective is to study and deeply analyze every phenomena resulting from the relationship between the visible and the invisible worlds. It has its President, Secretary, Treasurer, as all societies do. It does not invite the public to its sessions in which there is no speech or any other thing that characterizes a cult. It proceeds with its activities with calm and privacy, first because it is a necessary condition to the observations and second because those who no longer live on Earth knowingly deserve respect. The Society evokes them in the name of God because it believes in God, in its omnipotence, and knows that nothing is done in this world without God's permission. It opens the sessions with a general appeal to the good spirits, since it knows that there are good as well as bad spirits, thus assuring that the latter ones do not fraudulently meddle into the received communications, leading to mistakes.

What does it prove? It proves that we are not atheists. But in no way it implies that we are experts of a religion. The person who described what happens among us would be convinced had that person followed our works, particularly if not assessed so lightheartedly and perhaps with a less prejudiced and passionate spirit. Hence, the facts themselves object to the qualification of a new sect that you give to the Society, certainly for not knowing it better. You finish the article by calling the attention of Catholics to the harm Spiritism causes to the souls. If the consequences of Spiritism were the denial of God, of the soul, of its individuality after death, of human's free will, of the future penalties and rewards, it would be a profoundly immoral doctrine. Far from that, Spiritism demonstrates those fundamental bases of religion by the facts and not by reasoning, foundations whose most dangerous enemy is materialism. Even further, by the consequences Spiritism teaches to withstand with resignation the miseries of this life; it mitigates despair and teaches people to love one another like brothers and sisters, according to the Divine precepts of Jesus. If you only knew, as I do, how many tough incredulous Spiritism has led back to the path; how many victims it has saved from suicide by the perspective of fate reserved to those who abbreviate their lives, contrary to God's law; how much hatred it has abated, bringing the enemies closer! Is it what you call *do harm to the souls*? No. You cannot think like that and it gives me pleasure to suppose that you would evaluate it differently had you only known it better. You will say that religion can do all that. Far from me to dispute it but do you believe that it would be better to those who were rebels when found Spiritism to be left in an absolute incredulity? If Spiritism has triumphed over that incredulity; if it presented them with clarity what was darkness before; if it made evident what was doubtful to them, where is the harm? As for myself I will say that instead of losing souls Spiritism has saved them.

Sincerely,

ALLAN KARDEC

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**



# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## The Spirits' Book among the South American Natives

We know that The Spirits' Book has sympathetic readers all over the world, but we wouldn't imagine to find it among the natives of South America, had it not been for a letter that came to our hands from Lima, a few months ago, whose thorough translation seemed to us appropriate to publish, considering the significant fact contained in that letter and its easily understandable reach. The letter has a comment that spares us from any reflection.

"Your Excellency Mr. Allan Kardec,

Forgive me for not writing in French. I can read but cannot write correctly and intelligently in French.

For more than ten years now I visit, with a certain frequency, the natives that inhabit the eastern side of the Andes, in those American regions of Peru. The Spirits' Book that I purchased in one of those trips to Lima follows me in my solitude. Do not be surprised when I tell you that I read it with enthusiasm and that I continuously re-read it. Also, I would not bother wasting your time with so little if I did not have certain information that should be of your interest and if I did not wish to receive your advice. I have no doubt that your human feelings are in agreement with the sublime principles of your book.

Those native people which we call savages are less ignorant than generally assumed. If one says that they live in huts and not in palaces; that they don't know our arts and sciences; that they ignore the etiquette of the civilized world, then they will be true savages. However, with respect to their intelligence, we find among them ideas of a remarkable fairness; a great finesse of observation, as well as noble and elevated feelings. They understand things with a marvelous ability and have an incomparably less slothful spirit as the peasants of Europe. They despise whatever seems useless to them, with respect to the simplicity, which is sufficient to their life style. The tradition of independence is always alive among them, explaining their insurmountable aversion towards their conquerors. However, whilst showing hatred towards the race in general, they get attached to the individuals who inspire in them an absolute trust. It is to that trust that I owe the blessings of sharing their intimacy. When I am among them I feel safer than in some large cities. When I leave them they become sad and make me promise that I will return. When I return it is party time all over the tribe.

Such explanations were necessary for the following reason:

I told you that I had The Spirits' Book in hands. One day I had this idea of translating to them a few passages, which very surprisingly to me they understood better than I supposed, given their very judicious observations.

Here is an example.

The idea of reincarnating on Earth seems absolutely natural to them. One day, one of them asked me: "When we die, can we be reborn among the white people?"

- Certainly, I said.
- Then you may well be one of our relatives?
- It is possible.
- That is certainly why you are good to us and we love you.
- It is also possible.
- Then, when we meet a white man we should not do any harm to him since he could be one of our brothers.

You will for sure be impressed, as I am, by such a conclusion from a native and the feeling of fraternity that grew in him. As a matter of fact the idea of spirits is not new among them. It is present in their beliefs and they are convinced that it is possible to talk to their deceased relatives who come to visit them. The

## The Spiritist Review 1859

important thing is to take advantage of that and to try and moralize them. I do not think it would be impossible since they still do not have the vices of our civilization.

That is why I need your advices and your experience. As I see it, there is no reason to suppose that we can only influence the ignorant by talking to their senses. I do think, on the contrary, that it would only be a way of keeping them with those narrow ideas, developing in them the tendency towards superstition. I believe that reason, when we learn to position ourselves on the level of the intelligences which will always have a more lasting influence.

I wait for your response, with most cordial...etc.

DON FERNANDO GUERRERO

# The Spiritist Review 1859

May 1859

## Spiritist Axioms and Select Thoughts

- ✓ When you wish to study the skills of a medium do not just evoke the first spirit that comes to mind through this individual, since we have never said that the medium is capable of serving all spirits, and a frivolous spirit may well snatch the name of the evoked spirit. You should preferably evoke a known spirit since that one will always attend; you will then assess that spirit based on the language, being in a better condition to assess the nature of the communications received by the medium.

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- ✓ The incarnate spirits act on their own, according to their good or bad nature. They can also act under the influence of non-incarnate spirits, of which they become instruments for the good or evil, or for the accomplishment of something. Hence, irrespective of us, we are the agents of the spirits with respect to what happens in the world, in the general as well as in the specific sense. Thus, we always find someone who encourages us to doing or not doing something. We typically think that things have happened by chance when, in the majority of the cases, it is the spirits who impel us towards one another, because such gatherings must lead to a given result.

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- ✓ Incarnate in different social positions, the spirits are like actors who dress up like everybody else, but when playing their roles they wear all kinds of outfits, and represent all characters, from the King to the homeless person.

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- ✓ There are people who are not afraid of death, which they have faced a hundred times, but who experience a certain fear of darkness. They are not afraid of thieves but in the solitude, at a cemetery, at night, they fear something. It is the presence of the spirits around them, whose contact produces an impression of inexplicable fear.

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- ✓ The origins attributed to us by certain spirits, through the supposed revelation of past existences, are often a means of seduction and a temptation to our pride, flattered by the fact of having been this or that character.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>10</sup>

# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

## The Cracking Muscle

The adversaries of Spiritism have just made a discovery that must upset the rapping spirits. To them it is like one of those blows from which they will never recover. In fact, what should those poor spirits be thinking after the terrible poking in the eye given by Mr. Schiff, then by Mr. Jobert (de Lamballe) and later by Mr. Velpeau? I can actually see the spirits very embarrassed, moaning and groaning something like this: "Well, my dear, we are in real trouble! We are done! We did not count on the discovery of how the anatomy interacts that has unveiled our tricks. Positively, we cannot live in a country in which there are people who can see so far ahead!"

- Come on, gentlemen onlookers who simply have believed in all these old wives' tales, impostors who have wanted to make us believe that there may be things that we do not see. Ignorant who believe that something can escape the scalpel, even your soul, and all of you, spiritist writers or spiritualists, more or less witty, curtsy and acknowledge that you were all fools, charlatans, and even rogues or imbeciles. Those gentlemen allow you the choice because here is the light, the pure truth:

"Science Academy, Session of April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – **About the rhythmic muscular involuntary contraction.**"

"Mr. Jobert de Lamballe reports a curious fact about the involuntary rhythmic contraction of the right hand side lateral peroneus brevis muscle, which confirms the opinion of Mr. Schiff with respect to the occult phenomenon of the rapping spirits."

"Ms. X..., a 14 years old, strong, well-built young lady, is affected by regular involuntary movements of the right hand side lateral peroneus brevis muscle, since she was six, and also by knocks that can be heard from behind the external right malleolus, with the regularity of the pulse. These symptoms occurred for the first time at night, followed by great pain. Soon after the left hand side lateral peroneus brevis was affected by the same thing, although with lesser intensity."

"The effect of such cracks is the production of pain, insecurity while walking and even falling down. The sick young lady informed that the extension of the foot and the compression exerted upon certain points of the foot and leg make them stop, although she might continue to feel pain and fatigue in that limb."

"When this interesting child came to us, this is the state in which we found her. It was easy to verify, at the right external malleolus, on the superior portion of the tip of the bone, a regular knock, followed by a transient sagging and the lifting of the soft parts of the region, producing a dry noise after each muscular contraction. Such a noise was heard in her bed, near the bed, and even at a considerable distance from the place where the child was resting. Remarkable by the regularity and sharpness, the sound followed the girl everywhere. By auscultating the foot, the leg and the malleolus, one could notice an unpleasant shock going through the whole path of the muscle, such as a mechanical shock transmitted from end to end of a wooden beam. Sometimes the noise seemed like a squeak, a friction, when the contractions were less intense. All that happened when the patient was standing, sitting or lying down, at any time of day and night when examining her."

## The Spiritist Review 1859

“If we study the mechanism of those knocks and if for a better clarity we decompose each knock into two periods of time, we will see that:

“In the first stage, the peroneus brevis tendon moves out of the gutter, necessarily raising the peroneus longus and the skin.”

“In the second period, the phenomenon of contraction is completed; the tendon is released, moved back into the gutter, striking against it, thus producing the dry sound that we talked about.”

“It was renewed, so to speak, every second, and every time the little toe felt a jolt and the skin covering the fifth metatarsal was raised by the tendon. It stopped when the foot was greatly extended. It stopped again when pressure was exerted on the muscle or the sheath of the peroneus.”

“In recent years, French and foreign newspapers talked a lot about hammering like noises, sometimes happening in regular succession, sometimes following a particular rhythm, occurring with certain people lying in their beds.”

“Charlatans have taken over these strange phenomena whose reality, in fact, is also attested by credible witnesses. They have been trying to correlate these phenomena to the intervention of a supernatural cause, using it to exploit public credulity.”

“Observing Miss X... it shows how, under the influence of muscle contraction, the displaced tendons can, when fall back into their bone gutters, produce beats that for some people announce the presence of rapping spirits.”

“Through exercise, any person can acquire the ability of producing similar movements of the tendons at will, resulting in the dry beats that are heard from a distance.”

“Repelling any idea of supernatural intervention, and noticing that such knocks and strange noises happened at the bedside of the individuals excited by the spirits, Mr. Schiff asked himself if the source of those noises would not be in the patients, and not outside. His knowledge of anatomy led him to believe that those things could happen in the leg, in the peroneus region where there is a bone surface, tendons and joints.”

“Since such a thought was very entrenched in his mind, he has been experimenting and testing himself, not allowing him to doubt that the noise would have its chamber behind the lateral malleolus and the groove of the peroneus tendon.”

“Mr. Schiff was soon able to perform voluntary noises, regular, harmonious, and before a large number of people (fifty witnesses), he could mimic the signs of the rapping spirits with or without shoes, standing or lying down.”

“Mr. Schiff states that all these noises are caused by the tendon of the peroneus longus, as it passes through the fibular groove, and he adds that they coexist with the thinning or absence of the common sheath of the peroneus longus and brevis.”

“As for us, first assuming that all those cracking sounds are produced by the motion of a peroneal tendon against the bone surface, we believe however that it is not necessary to have

## The Spiritist Review 1859

an anomaly of the sheath in order to have that sound produced. All it is needed is a muscle contraction, the movement of the tendon and its return to the gutter so that the noise is produced. In addition, the peroneus brevis is the only agent of the noise in question. In fact, it affects a more straight direction than the peroneus longus, which suffers several deviations in its path; it is located deep in the gutter; it entirely covers the bone gutter, from what is natural to conclude that the noise is produced by the shock of the tendon against the solid parts of the gutter. It presents muscle fibers up to the entrance of the tendon into the common gutter, while with the peroneus longus it is the opposite.”

“The noise is of variable intensity and several tones may be distinguished. That is how we can find noises that vary from the reverberating sound heard from a distance to others like the rubbing friction, the saw, etc.”

“We made successive incisions by the subcutaneous method, through the body of the right peroneus brevis and the body of the same muscle on the left side of our patient, using an apparatus to keep her limbs still. After the suture the functions of those two members were recovered without any trace of that rare and singular disease.”

“Mr. VELPEAU. The noises that Mr. Jobert has just reported in his interesting communication seem to be related to a broad question. These noises, in fact, are observed in a variety of regions. Hip, shoulder, as well as the inner side of the foot that often becomes their seats. I observed a lady, among others, who with the help of some rotational movements of the thigh produced a kind of music which could be heard clearly enough from one side to the other of the room. The tendon of the longer part of the biceps brachialis easily produces that sound, by leaving its sheath groove and when the naturally attaching fibrous branches loosen or break. The same happens with the tibialis posterior or the flexor hallucis longus behind the medial malleolus. Such noises are explained, as well understood by MM. Schiff and Jobert, by the friction or tendon jerks in the grooves or against the edges of the synovial surfaces. They are, therefore, possible in countless areas or near a large number of organs. Sometimes clear and vivid, other times deaf or obscure, sometimes wet, sometimes dry, those sounds vary extremely in intensity.”

“Hopefully the example given on this subject by MM. Schiff and Jobert will lead the physiologists to seriously investigate these noises, and one day they will provide a rational explanation to the misunderstood phenomena hitherto attributed to occult and supernatural causes.”

“Mr. Jules Cloquet, supporting the observations of Mr. Velpeau about the abnormal noises that can be produced by the tendons in various parts of the body, gives the example of a young girl between sixteen and eighteen years old, who was introduced to him at the St. Louis hospital, at a time when MM. Velpeau and Jobert were associated to the same institution. The girl’s father, who called himself the father of a phenomenon, a kind of showman, hoped to take advantage of his child in a public exhibition. He announced that his daughter had the movement of a pendulum in her belly. The girl was perfectly appeased. By a slight twisting motion in the lumbar region of the spine, she produced strong snapping sounds, more or less regular, following the rhythm of slight movements that she made at the lower region of her chest. Those abnormal noises could be distinctly heard more than twenty-five feet away, resembling the sound of an old rotisserie. The sounds were produced at the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

young lady's will, and seemed to have their seats in the muscles of the lumbodorsal region of the spine."

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This article from *L'Abeille Médicale*, whose full transcription seemed to be a duty for the enlightenment of our readers, then avoiding the accusation of running away from certain arguments, was reproduced in several newspapers with some variations, followed by the usual adjectives.

It is not our habit to reveal criticism. We got over that since our common sense tells us that nothing is proved with silliness and harm, not matter how smart someone may be. Had the above article been limited to those trivialities which are not always followed by civism and education, we would not mention it. However, it faces the question from a scientific point of view. Let us see if we are really dead by decree from the Academy of Sciences or if we have any survival chance like the poor and crazy Fulton, whose system the Academy declared to be an empty and impracticable dream, only denying France from the initiative of the steam boat. Who knows the consequences that such a power might have had in the hands of Napoleon I in the future events!

We will quickly address the qualification of charlatan attributed to the followers of the new ideas. It sounds somewhat audacious to us the application of this concept to millions of people that take no profit from such ideas, achieving the highest echelons of the social scale. They forget that Spiritism has made incredible progress in a very short time, in all corners of the globe; that it spreads not only among the ignorant but also among the educated; that it counts on doctors, magistrates, clergymen, artists, writers and high profile public servants in its ranks – people to whom one would generally associate some light and common sense. Well, mixing them up in the same group and unceremoniously out casting them out to the class is an act of great petulance.

They may still say: "You talk about people of good faith, victims of an illusion. We do not deny the effect; we dispute the cause that you attribute to those effects. Science has just discovered the true cause; makes that cause known and hence destroys all that mystic scaffolding of an invisible world that can seduce the exalted but sincere imaginations."

We have no intention of being considered wise and even less so would we dare to position ourselves on the same level as our distinguished adversaries. We will only say that our personal studies of Anatomy and Natural Sciences, that we had the honor of teaching, allow us to understand your theory and in no way we feel perturbed by that avalanche of technical vocabulary. The phenomena you describe are perfectly known to us. In our observations about the effects attributed to the invisible beings, we were careful enough by not neglecting a so patently negligible cause. When a fact is presented to us we are not satisfied with a single observation only. We want to see it in all angles, all faces and before accepting a theory we verify if that theory embraces all circumstances and if any unknown fact would be able to contradict it. In one word, if that theory resolves all questions. Such is the price of truth.

Gentlemen, you certainly admit that this procedure is absolutely logical. Very well! Despite all respect owned to your knowledge, there are some difficulties in the application of your system to what is conventionally called *the rapping spirits*.

First, one may consider at least singular the fact that such a faculty so far acknowledged as exceptional and considered as a pathological case, which Mr. Jobert de Lamballe classifies as a "rare and singular disease", suddenly became so common. It is true that Mr. Jobert says that everybody may acquire it through exercise. But, as he also says that it is followed by pain and fatigue, which is perfectly natural, one must agree that it requires a very strong desire for mystification to make one's muscle crack during a

## The Spiritist Review 1859

session of two or three uninterrupted hours, without any profit and with the only objective of entertaining a few people.

Let us now speak seriously. This is a more serious subject since it is related to science.

Those gentlemen who found such marvelous property of the peroneus longus did not imagine everything that those muscles can do. Well, here you have a nice problem to solve: The displaced tendons do not knock on the bone gutters only. Through a really singular effect they also knock on doors, on walls, on ceilings, and all that at will, exactly at points that are requested. Here there is something even stronger: Science was far from suspecting all virtues of that cracking muscle. It has the power of lifting a table without touching it; of making it knock with its feet, move around the room and stay in the air without a support; of making the table open and close! And imagine its power! It has the ability of breaking the table when falling.

Do you think that we talk about a fragile table, light as a feather, which we lift with a breath? What an illusion! We talk about solid and heavy tables, from 110 to 130 lb., which obey the little ladies and children. However, Mr. Schiff will say, I have never seen such prodigies. That is easy to understand. He only wanted to see legs.

Would Mr. Schiff have given the necessary independence to his ideas? Was he exempt from any prevention? We have the right of posing doubts to that and it is not us who say so. It is Mr. Jobert. According to him, Mr. Schiff, on talking about the mediums, asked himself if the seat of such noises wouldn't be in the medium, instead of outside. His knowledge of anatomy led him to think that it could well be the leg. Since that thought was very entrenched in his mind, etc. Thus, according to the confession of Mr. Jobert, Mr. Schiff did not take the facts as a starting point but *his own ideas, his preconceived and well-entrenched ideas*. Hence the research in one exclusive direction, and consequently one exclusive theory, which perfectly explains the fact seen by him but does not explain the ones that he did not see.

And why hasn't he seen them?

Because in his thoughts there was only one true starting point and only one true explanation. From that, everything else should be false and would not deserve examination. Hence, in the heat of striking the mediums, he missed the shot.

Gentlemen, you thought you knew all properties of the peroneus longus just because you caught it playing guitar by the cover? Now, now! We have very different things to register in the archives of anatomy. You thought the brain was the seat of thought? Wrong! One can think through the ankle. The knocks give proof of intelligence. Thus, if those knocks come exclusively from the peroneus, from the longus according to Mr. Schiff, from the brevis, according to Mr. Jobert (fact that would require an agreement between them) then the peroneus is intelligent.

There is nothing remarkable about it. Making his muscle crack at will allows him to execute anything that he wants: he will imitate the saw, the hammer; he will play the military formation sounds, or even the rhythm of a music which will be requested by the audience. Be it, let us assume so, but when the noise responds to something that the medium completely ignores; when the noise reveals those secrets that only you know, those secrets that we would like to bury deeply, it is necessary to admit that the thought comes from a different part of the brain.

Where would that come from then? Well, then! It comes from the peroneus longus. And that is not all. The muscle is also a poet since that great peroneus creates charming poetry, even though a medium that had never done it in his life. The muscle is multilingual since it dictates very sensible things in languages completely unknown to the medium. The muscle is a musician, we know, since Mr. Schiff made it execute very harmonious sounds, with or without shoes, in the presence of fifty people. Yes, but the muscle is also a composer. Well now Mr. Dorgeval, you that recently gave us the nice sonata, do you really believe that the spirit of Mozart dictated it? What a hope! It was your peroneus longus that played the piano. In reality, dear mediums, you did not suspect that there could be so much spirit in your ankles.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

Honor may be awarded to the authors of such discovery. May their names be inscribed with capital letters for the edification of posterity and honor of their memory!

Some may say that we are joking about serious things, and that jokes don't entail reasoning. It is a fact. Not less rational than silliness and vulgarity. Confessing our ignorance before those gentlemen we accept their wise demonstration and take it very seriously. We thought that certain phenomena were produced by invisible beings, who called themselves spirits. It may well be that we were wrong. As we seek the truth, we do not have the silly intention of getting stuck in one idea that they so peremptorily demonstrate to be false. Since the moment when Mr. Jobert, through a subcutaneous incision, eliminated the spirits, there is no more spirits. Once all noises come from the peroneus, as he says, it is necessary to believe in that and accept all of its consequences. Thus, when the knocks take place on the wall or ceiling, either the peroneus does so or the wall has a peroneus. When the noise dictates a poem through a table that knocks with a foot, it is one out of two possibilities: either the table is a poet or it has a peroneus. That seems logical to us. We go even further. An officer of our acquaintance, while carrying out spiritist experiments, one day was slapped twice in the face by an invisible hand. The slaps were so strong that he still felt the effect two hours later. How can one come to terms with that? Had it happened to Mr. Jobert he would remain impassive? He would simply say that he was slapped in the face by the peroneus longus.

Below is what we read about this subject in the *La Mode* newspaper on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859:

“The Academy of Medicine continues its crusade of the positivist spirits against all kinds of wonders. After having in fairness, but somewhat awkwardly, slain the famous black doctor, through the organ of Mr. Velpeau, it has now just heard Mr. Jobert (de Lamballe) that reveals in the Institute the secret of what he calls the great comedy of the rapping spirits, so successfully represented in both hemispheres.”

“According to the distinct surgeon, every knock-knock, every pop-pop that gives the shivers to those who in good faith hear them; those singular noises, those dry hits, those successively vibrating and kind of rhythmic sounds, precursors of the arrival and positive signs of the presence of the inhabitants of the other world, are simply the result of a motion imposed on a muscle, a nerve, a tendon! It is a kind of bizarre thing of nature, skillfully exploited so as to unnoticeably produce that mysterious music that enchanted and seduced so many.”

“The seat of the orchestra is in the leg; it is the tendon of the peroneus, playing on its cover, which produces all those noises that are heard under the tables or at a distance, controlled by the conjurer.”

“As from my side, I doubt very much that Mr. Jobert had touched, as he believes, the secret of what he himself called “a comedy” and the articles that were published in this newspaper by our comrade Mr. Escande, about the mysteries of the invisible world, seem to me to present the subject with an amplitude much more sincere and philosophical, in the true meaning of the word. “If, however, the charlatans of all kinds are unbearable with their playing skills, we have to appreciate that those wise men sometimes are not less, with the eraser which they wish to apply over everything that shines outside the official chandeliers.”

“They don't understand that the thirst for the marvelous that devours our time is caused exactly by the excess of positivism to where certain minds wanted to drag our society. The human soul needs to believe, admiring and contemplating the infinity. They worked to shut down the windows opened by Catholicism. The human soul looks through the skylights, whatever they may be.”

Henry de Pène

“We ask our distinct friend Mr. Henry de Pène to excuse us in order to make an observation. We don't know when Mr. Jobert made that immortal discovery and what was the memorable day that he communicated it to the Institute. What we know is that the original explanation had already been given by others. In 1854 Dr. Rayer, distinguished clinician, who then did not give demonstration of great perspicacity, also presented to the Instituted a German patient whose ability, in his opinion, provided the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

key to every knocking and rapping of the two worlds. As with today's report, it was related to the motion of one of the muscular tendons of the leg, called peroneus longus. The demonstration was made in one session and the Academy expressed their recognition for such an interesting communication. A few days later a substitute professor from the Faculty of Medicine consigned the fact in the *Constitutionnel*, having had the courage of adding that "the scientists had finally voiced their opinion and the mystery was solved". That did not preclude the mystery from persisting and increasing, despite science which, by refusing to carry out the experiments, is satisfied by attacking it with burlesque and ridiculous explanations, as the one we have just mentioned above."

"Out of the respect that Mr. Jobert (de Lamballe) deserves, we prefer to believe that the experience, which is absolutely not his, was attributed to him. Some newspaper, looking for novelties, would have found somewhere in their files the old communication from Mr. Rayer and resurrected it, then publishing it under their flagship, just for a change. *Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur*. It is certainly unpleasant, but still better than if the paper had told the truth."

A. Escande

# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

## Spiritism and Science

The opposition from scientific community is one of the arguments incessantly used by the adversaries of Spiritism. Why haven't they dealt with the phenomena of the "turning tables"? Had they seen anything serious in them, they say, they would not be on guard against such extraordinary facts nor would they treat them with disdain, whereas now they are all against you. Aren't the scientists the light of nations, and isn't their duty to spread light? Why would you want to diminish that just when the occasion was so great for them to reveal a new force to the world?

It is a serious mistake to think that all scientists are against us, to begin with, since Spiritism propagates precisely within the educated class. The wise individuals are not exclusively in the official Science and official organizations. Can the issue be prejudged by the fact that Spiritism does not enjoy the status of citizenship with the official science? The circumspection of that official science with respect to new ideas is well known. If science had never been wrong then its opinion could weigh in. Unfortunately, experience shows the opposite.

Hasn't science repealed as pure illusion a number of discoveries that have later distinguished the memories of their authors? Should we then say that the scholars are ignorant? Does it justify the trivial epithets used by some bad taste people to call them names? Certainly not! There isn't any sensible person who wouldn't make justice to the scientists, acknowledging though that they are not infallible and, for that very reason, their judgment is not the last resort. Their mistake is to resolve certain questions a little lightheartedly, putting too much trust in their own lights, before the judgment of time, thus exposing them to the contradiction of experience.

Nobody is a good judge but on the subject of their expertise. Wanting to build a house should we look for a musician? If we were sick would we prefer to be treated by the architect? If we faced a lawsuit should we be advised by a dancer? Finally, if it is a question of theology should we seek the solution by a chemist or an astronomer? No. Each one will stick to one's own profession. Traditional sciences cover the properties of matter that we can manipulate at will. The produced phenomena have material forces as their agents.

The phenomena produced in Spiritism have intelligences as their agents, intelligences that are independent, have free will, and in no way submit to our caprices. They therefore escape from our anatomic or laboratory methods, as well as from our calculations, hence they are not in the scope of science, per se. Thus, science was wrong by trying to experiment with the spirits like it does with an electric battery.

Science started from a single, restricted and preconceived idea, wanting to forcibly associate to the new idea. It failed, as it should, since it used a nonexistent analogy from the beginning. Then, without investigating further, it concluded by the negative: weak judgment, daily repaired by time, as time has done to so many others, and those responsible will in turn be sentenced to the shame of having so hastily taken a false position against the infinite power of the Creator.

Thus, the scientific organizations should not, now and in the future, pronounce about the subject, considering that it is not more in their scope than it is the right of attesting God's existence. It is then a mistake to take them by judges. However, who will be the judge? Do the spiritists boast about their rights of imposing their own ideas? No. The great judge, the sovereign judge is public opinion, and when that opinion is formed by the approval of the masses and the educated people, the official scientists will accept it as individuals, submitting to the force of the circumstances. Let us allow a generation to pass and with that the obstinate prejudices of self-love. Then we will see what occurs to Spiritism in the same way to what has happened to so many others who fought against injustices. Today the believers are called crazy,

## The Spiritist Review 1859

tomorrow crazy will be those who do not believe, exactly like in the past those who believed that Earth turned were considered mad. But this believe did not preclude the Earth from turning.

Nevertheless, not all wise individuals thought in the same way. Some used the following train of thoughts:

There is no effect without a cause and the most vulgar effects may yield the greatest discoveries. Had Newton not paid any attention to the falling apple; had Galvani repelled the maid, calling her crazy and quixotic, when she talked to him about the frogs dancing on the plate, maybe we might not have discovered the remarkable laws of gravitation or the fecund properties of the battery. The phenomenon designated by the burlesque name "dancing tables" is not more ridiculous than the dancing frogs, and may contain some secrets of nature that will revolutionize humanity, when we have their key.

They went further: since so many people are involved with those facts; since careful people have investigated them, there must be something. An illusion, madness, if you will, cannot have such a character of generality. It could seduce a circle, a group, but it could never take the world.

Here is in excerpt what a doctor in medicine used to tell me, then a non-believer, now a fervent expert:

"They say that the invisible beings communicate with us. Why not? Before the invention of the microscope did we suspect the existence of those thousands of microscopic animals that caused so much devastation to our economy? Where is the material impossibility of the existence of beings in space that escape our senses? Would we, by any means, have the ridiculous pretension of knowing everything, telling God that we have nothing else to learn from Him? If those invisible beings that surround us are intelligent, why wouldn't they communicate with us? If they maintain a relationship with human beings it is because they must play a role in their destinies and events. Who knows they are not one of the powers of nature, one of those occult forces that we do not suspect? What new horizons are open to our thoughts! What a vast field of observation!

The discovery of the invisible world would be very different from that of the infinitely small. It would be more than a discovery: it would be a thorough revolution of ideas. How much light can shine from that! How many mysterious things would be explained! Those who believe in these things are ridiculed, but what does it demonstrate? Hasn't the same happened to all discoveries? Wasn't Christopher Columbus sent off, covered in sadness and considered insensible? These ideas, he was told, are so strange that reason denies them. We would had laughed only half a century ago if we were told that we would communicate from one end to the other of the world in a few minutes; that we would travel across France in a few hours; that a ship would navigate against the winds driven by the steam of some boiling water; that the means of illumination and heating would come from water. If a man had proposed to illuminate the entire city of Paris with only one source of an invisible substance, he would have been taken to the hospital. Would it then be more prodigious if space were inhabited by intelligent beings that, after having lived on Earth, left their material envelope behind? Don't we find in that fact the explanation to a number of beliefs that goes back to the remotest eras of antiquity? Isn't that the confirmation of the existence of the soul, of its individuality after death? Isn't that the proof of the very foundations of religion? However, religion only vaguely tells us what happens to the souls. Spiritism defines it. What can the materialists and atheist object to? It is worth investigating these things further."

Such were the reflections of a scientist but of an unpretentious scientist. These are also the thoughts of a large number of educated people, who have thought about it, who have seriously investigated it, without preconceived ideas, having had the modesty of not saying: *I don't understand it, thus it does not exist.*

Their conviction came after observation and meditation. If these ideas were illusions, would it be possible that so many distinguished persons had embraced them? Would it be possible that they would have being victims of an illusion for such a long time? Hence, there is no material impossibility for the existence of beings who are invisible to us and that inhabit space. Such simple consideration should instigate more thoughts in some. Not long ago, who would have thought that a single drop of water could contain

## The Spiritist Review 1859

thousands of living creatures, of such a small size that defies imagination? Well then, the acknowledgement of such minuscule beings would be more difficult to be accepted by reason than those that we call spirits.

The adversaries of Spiritism ask why the spirits, who should be concerned about proselytizing, why wouldn't they be more positively dedicated to the task of convincing certain persons whose opinion could have huge influence. They add that we accuse them for showing lack of faith, then responding, and rightly so, that faith cannot come in anticipation.

It is a mistake to think that faith is necessary; however, *good faith* is something else. There are skeptics that deny even the evidence and that even miracles would not convince them. There are even those who would be really upset if they were obliged to believe, since their self-love would suffer by confessing that they were wrong.

How do you respond to people that can only see illusion and charlatanism everywhere? Say nothing. It is necessary to leave them alone, saying that they saw nothing, for however long they wish, and that we were unable to make them see anything. Side by side with these tough skeptics there are those who wish to see things their own way. Once they form an opinion, they want to submit everything to that belief, not recognizing that there are certain phenomena that are not submitted to their will.

They either know nothing or do not wish to bow before the necessary conditions. If the spirits do not seem as interested in convincing them through exceptions it is due to the fact that, at that point in time, there is little interest in convincing certain people, whose importance the spirits do not measure as these individuals measure themselves. It is really not very flattering, but we do not govern their opinion. The spirits have a way of assessing things that are not always in agreement with ours. They see, think and act based on other elements. While our life is constrained by matter, limited by the narrow circle in which we find ourselves, they see the whole picture. Time, that seems so lengthy to us, is an instant to them, and distance is only a step. Certain details that seem of extreme importance to us are nothing but childish things to them. On the other hand, they consider to be important certain things whose reach we hardly comprehend. In order to understand them it is necessary that we elevate our thoughts above our material and moral horizon so as to be positioned from their standpoint. It is not up to them to come down to ours. We are the ones who must elevate to them, achieving that by the study and observation. The spirits like the assiduous and conscientious observers to whom they multiply the sources of enlightenment.

It is not the doubt originated by ignorance that sends them away. It is the fatuity of the pretense observers who observe nothing, keeping them under pressure and wanting to maneuver with them as they do with puppets; it is the feelings of hostility and criticism that they bear in their minds, above all, or in their words, despite the protests against it. The spirits do nothing to these ones, showing little or no concern with respect to what they may think or do, for their time will come. That is why we say it is not faith that is needed, but good faith.

Well then, we question if our wise adversaries are always in such conditions. They want to control the phenomena but the spirits do not obey their orders. It is necessary to wait for their good will. It is not enough to say: show me a given fact and I will believe. It is necessary to persevere; allow the facts to be spontaneously produced, not willing to force or drive them. That very thing that you wish for is exactly what you will not obtain, but others will take place and maybe what you wanted will come when you expect the least.

The phenomena multiply to the eyes of the attentive and assiduous observer, reciprocally confirming one another, but the one who thinks that the only requirement is to move the lever to crank up the engine is completely wrong. What does the naturalist who wishes to study the habits of a given animal do? Does he command the animal to do this or that in order to have the opportunity to freely observe it, according to his conveniences? No. He knows perfectly well that the animal will not obey him. However, he watches the spontaneous manifestations of the animal's instinct; he waits for them and observes as they happen.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

The simple common sense shows, with more reason, that it is how it must be with the spirits, who are intelligences much more independent than that of the animals.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

## Family conversations from beyond the grave

Mr. Humboldt

Deceased on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1859; evoked at the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month.

To St. Louis: Could we call the spirit of Mr. Alexander Humboldt who has just died?

- If you wish so my friend.

1. Evocation

- I am here. This is amazing.

2. Why are you amazed?

- I am far away from what I was just a few days ago.

3. If we could see you, how would we see you?

- As a man.

4. Does our call bother you?

- No, no.

5. Were you aware of your new condition just after death?

- I waited for that for a long time.

NOTE: People like Mr. Humboldt who die of natural causes, and by the gradual extinction of the vital forces, recognize themselves in spirit much more promptly than those whose life is abruptly interrupted by an accident or some sort of violence, since there is already the initiation of the detachment before the organic life is over. The superiority of the spirit and the elevation of Mr. Humboldt thoughts eased the separation, always slower and more painful in those whose lives are exclusively material.

6. Do you miss your Earthly life?

- No, absolutely not. I feel happy. I no longer feel in prison. My spirit is free... What a pleasure! And how nice the moment that brought me such a grace from God!

7. What is your opinion about the statue that will be erected to you in France, despite the fact that you are foreign?

- I am thankful to the honor addressed to me. What I do appreciate is the feeling of union and the desire to extinguish all hatred, through that fact.

8. Have your beliefs changed?

- Yes, a lot. However, I have not revised everything. Wait a little before you talk to me with more depth.

NOTE: This answer and the word "revise" are characteristic of the actual state of the spirit. Despite the quick separation of his spirit there still exists a certain confusion of ideas. Since he left his body only eight days ago, he did not have time yet to compare his worldly ideas with those that he may have now.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

9. Are you happy with the way you lived your last existence?
- Yes. I have more or less accomplished the objective proposed by myself. I served humanity; that is why I am happy now.
10. When did you propose that objective?
- When I came to Earth.
- NOTE: Since he proposed the objective when he came to Earth it means that he had achieved a prior progress and his soul was not born at the same time as the body. This spontaneous answer couldn't have been provoked by the nature of the question or by the thought of the interlocutor.
11. Have you chosen this worldly existence?
- There were many candidates for this mission. I begged the Being by Excellence to concede it to me and I got it.
12. Do you remember your existence prior to the one that you have just left?
- Yes. It happened far from Earth, in a world very different from yours.
13. Is that world equal, inferior or superior to Earth?
- I am sorry. It is superior.
14. We know that our world is far from perfection and hence we don't feel humiliated by the fact that there are other worlds above us. However, how would you have come to a world inferior to yours?
- One does not give to the rich. I wanted to give therefore I came to the poor's shanty.
  -
15. Could you give us a description of the living beings that inhabit the world where you lived?
- A little while ago I wanted to tell you that but then I understood that I would have great difficulty in perfectly explaining it to you. The beings are good, very good there. You already know that point, the basis of the whole moral system of those worlds. Nothing blocks the development of the good thoughts there; nothing stimulates the recollection of bad thoughts; it is complete happiness since everyone is content with oneself and with those who surround them. With respect to the matter and to the senses any description would be useless. How much of a simplification in the engines of society! Now that I am capable of comparing the two; I am surprised by the distance. Do not think that I say so in order to discourage you. No. Much to the contrary. It is necessary that your spirit be very much convinced of the existence of those worlds. You will then feel an ardent desire to reach them and your work will pave the way.
16. Is that world part of our planetary system?
- Yes. It is very close to you. However, you cannot see it since it has no light of its own and does not receive nor reflects the light from other stars that surround it.
17. A short while ago you said that your prior existence was far away from us and now you say that world is very close. How can these two things be conciliated?
- It is far from you if you take into account your distances, the worldly measures. However, it is close if you use God's ruler and if from a single gaze you try to embrace the whole creation.
- NOTE: Evidently if we take by comparison the dimensions of our globe we can then consider it far away but it is close with respect to other globes that are located at unimaginable distances.
18. Can you be specific about the region in the sky where it is located?
- It would be useless. The astronomers will never find it.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

19. Is the density of that planet the same as ours?  
- The ratio is of a thousand to ten.
20. Is that planet of the same nature as the comets?  
- No, absolutely.
21. If it hasn't got its own light and if it does not reflect solar light then it is in eternal obscurity?  
- The beings that inhabit it do not absolutely need light. There is no obscurity to them; they don't understand it. Since you are blind you think that nobody else may have the sense of vision.
22. According to certain spirits, planet Jupiter is much superior to Earth. Is that true?  
- Yes. Everything you were told is true.
23. Have you ever seen Arago again, after you returned to the spirits' world?  
- It was him who reached out to me when I left your world.
24. Have you known Spiritism during your life?  
- Not Spiritism. Magnetism, yes.
25. What is your opinion about the future of Spiritism among the scientific organizations?  
- Grandiose. But its path will be rough.
26. Do you think that the scientific institutes will one day accept it?  
- Certainly. However, do you see that as indispensable? You must first endeavor to implant its principles in the hearts of the unfortunate ones that are plentiful in your world. It is the balsam that mitigates despair and gives hope.
- NOTE: François Arago, evoked on May 27<sup>th</sup>, through another medium, gave the following answers to similar questions:
- Q – When alive, what was your opinion about Spiritism?  
A – I hardly knew it and thus did not give it much importance. You yourself can now judge if I have changed opinion.
- Q – Do you think that it may one day be accepted and recognized by the scientific organizations, that is, by the official science, since many scholars do personally accept it?  
A – I not only think but I am sure. It will follow the fate of all discoveries that are useful to humanity. Mocked in the beginning by the proud scholars and by the silly ignorant, it will be acknowledged by everyone in the end.
27. What is your opinion about the sun that illuminates us?  
- I have not learned much here yet in the field of Science. However, I continue to think that the Sun is no more than a vast electrical center.
28. Is such opinion the result of the ideas you had as a man or is it your opinion as a spirit?  
- It is my opinion since I was alive, reinforced by what I feel now.
29. Considering that you came from a world superior to Earth, how come you did not acquire accurate knowledge about these things, before your last existence, which you could remember now?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- I certainly had them. Nevertheless, what you have just asked me has no relationship with all that I was able to learn in my existences prior to this one that I have just left, so different from the others. Astronomy, for example, was a completely new science to me.
30. Many spirits have told us that they inhabited or had inhabited other planets. None, however, said to have inhabited the Sun. Why?
- The Sun is an electrical center, not a world. It is an instrument, not a dwelling.
  - Then it has no inhabitants?
  - Permanent inhabitants, no. Visitors, yes.
31. Is it possible that after some time, when you have been able to carry out new observations, you may give us better information about the nature of the Sun?
- Yes, perhaps and with pleasure. However, do not count much on me since I will not remain roaming for long.
32. Where do you think you are going to when you leave your current state?
- God allows me to rest for a while. I will take the opportunity to review very dear friends who wait for me. Then, I know nothing else.
33. With your permission, we would still like to ask you a few questions that your knowledge of Natural History will no doubt allow you to respond.
- The mimosa pudica (sensitive) and the Venus flytrap show movements that indicate a great sensitivity, and in certain cases a certain will, like in the last one whose leaves catch the insects that land on them, seeking their juice. It seems that the plant prepares a trap to later kill the insect. Our question is that if such plants are endowed by any ability to think; if they have a will; if they form an intermediary class between the vegetable and the animal state. In one word, do they represent a transition from one to the other?
  - Everything in nature is transition by the simple fact that nothing is the same, despite the fact that it is all interconnected. Those plants do not think and consequently do not have a will. The oyster that opens up as well as all zoophytes absolutely does not think. All they have is a natural instinct.
34. When the plant is hurt does it feel any pain?
- No.
- NOTE: One member of the Society voices an opinion that the movements of the sensitive plants are similar to those produced by the digestive and circulatory systems of the animal organism that occur involuntarily. In fact, don't we see the pylorus contracting in the presence of certain bodies, denying entry? The same must happen with the sensitive and the Venus flytrap plants in which the movements do not imply the need for a perception and even less the need for a will.
35. Are there fossils of humans?
- Time has gradually destroyed them.
36. Do you admit the fact that there were humans on Earth before the geological floodwaters?
- It would be better if you had clearer explanations about this subject before framing the question. There were humans on Earth before several floods.
37. Adam then was not the first man?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Adam is a myth. Where do you place Adam?
38. Myth or non-myth I speak about the period that history assigns to him.
- It is hard for you to assess. It is actually impossible for you to evaluate the number of years over which the first human being lived in a savage and animal state, which did not end but after a long time since their first appearance on Earth.
39. Will Geology one day find the material traces of the existence of humans on Earth before Adam's times?
- Not Geology, but common sense.
40. The evolution of the organic kingdom on Earth is marked by the successive appearance of the acotyledons, the monocotyledons, and the dicotyledons. Did human beings exist before the dicotyledons?
- No, their phase followed that.
41. We thank you for your kindness in attending our call, as well as the teachings.
- It was a pleasure. Good-bye. So long.

NOTE: This communication is distinguished by a general character of goodness, benevolence and great modesty, a sign of undeniable superiority of the spirit. There is not one single trace of vanity, swagger, desire to dominate, to impose, typically present in the answer of the pseudo-wise spirits, always driven by preconceived ideas and systems that they try to impose. Everything and even the most beautiful thoughts breathe simplicity and absence of pretension in the spirit of Mr. Humboldt.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Goethe

PARISIAN SOCIETY OF SPIRITIST STUDIES

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1859 <sup>11</sup>

1. Evocation
  - I am with you.
2. What is your situation as a spirit: errant or reincarnate?
  - Errant.
3. Are you happier than when you were alive?
  - Yes, since I am separated from the dense body and I can now see what I could not before.
4. It seems to me that you were not in an unfortunate condition when alive. Where thus the superiority of your present situation?
  - I have just said that. You, the followers of Spiritism, must understand such a situation.
5. What is your current opinion about the Faust?
  - It is a piece of work whose objective was to show the vanity and emptiness of human Science and, on another hand, exalt the feeling of love in its beauty and purity, condemning what it showed as immoral and evil.
6. Was it a kind of intuition of Spiritism that led you to describe the influence of the bad spirits over human beings? How could you have made such a description?
  - I had an almost perfect memory of a world where I saw the spirits exercising their influence over the material beings.
7. Did you then have the recollection of a preceding existence?
  - Yes, certainly.
8. Can you tell us if that existence was on Earth?
  - No, since one cannot see the spirits in action here. It was really in another world.
9. However, since you could see the spirits in action it should be in a world superior to Earth. How come you ended up in an inferior planet? Have you fallen? Kindly explain.
  - It was a superior world to a certain extent, but not as you understand it. Not all worlds have the same organization and yet there is no great superiority just because of that. Furthermore, you know that I had a mission among you that you cannot ignore, since you still play my

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<sup>11</sup> In the original French text the date for this communication show 1856 that seems to be a typo since the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies was only formed in 1858. Besides, the message that follows Goethe's communication shows 1859 (pages 160-162).

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- works. There was no falling down considering that I served and still serve to help your moralization. I applied what I had of superior from that preceding world, in order to improve the passions of my heroes.
10. Yes, your work is still played. Just recently The Faust was adapted to an opera. Have you seen that?
    - Yes.
  11. Can you give us your opinion about the way Mr. Gounod interpreted your thoughts through music?
    - Gounod evoked me, without knowing it. He understood me very well. As a German musician I would not have done better. Perhaps he thinks as a French musician.
  12. What do you think about the Werther?
    - I now reproach the end part.
  13. Wouldn't such a work have caused a lot of harm, exalting passions?
    - It did and caused disgraces.
  14. It was the cause of many suicides. Would you be responsible for that?
    - Since there was a wicked influence spread by me, it is exactly for what I suffer and regret.
  15. It seems to me that when alive you showed great aversion towards the French. Do you still have it today?
    - I am very patriotic.
  16. Are you still more connected to a country than to the others?
    - I love Germany for its thoughts and for its almost patriarchal tradition.
  17. Do you want to give your opinion about Schiller?
    - We are brothers in spirit and through our missions. Schiller had a great and noble soul, reflected in his works. He did less harm than I did. He is my superior for he was simpler and truer.
  18. Could you give us your opinion about the French poets in general, comparing them to the German ones? This is not a vain feeling of curiosity but the search for our instruction. We consider your feelings really elevated thus needless to ask for your impartiality, leaving aside any national prejudice.
    - You are curious but I want to satisfy this curiosity. The modern French frequently write beautiful poems but employ more nice words than good ideas. They should dedicate more to the feelings than to the minds. I speak in general but make exceptions to some: a great poor poet, among others.
  19. A name was whispered in the audience. Is that the one you talk about?
    - Poor or that simulates poverty.
  20. We would like to obtain a dissertation from you about a subject of your choice, for our instruction. Could you kindly dictate something to us?
    - I will do it later, through other mediums. Evoke me on another occasion.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Black Father Cesar

Father Cesar was a black free man, deceased on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1859, at the age of 138 years, near the town of Covington, in the USA, born in Africa and taken to Louisiana at the age of 15. The remains of that patriarch of the black race were carried to the cemetery by a certain number of Covington's inhabitants and a large number of black people.

Parisian Society, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. (to St. Louis) – Could you kindly tell us if we could evoke Father Cesar that we have just mentioned?
  - Yes. I will help him to respond.

NOTE: This start leads to a supposition about the condition of the spirit that we wanted to interrogate.
2. (Evocation).
  - What do you want from me? What can a poor spirit like me do in a meeting like yours?
3. Are you happier now than when you were alive?
  - Yes, because my situation on Earth was not good.
4. However you were free. In which sense you feel happier now?
  - Because my spirit is no longer black.

NOTE: This answer is more sensible than it seems at first sight. The spirit is certainly never black. He means that as a spirit he no longer suffers the humiliations to which the black race is submitted.
5. You lived a long life. Did you take advantage of that for your progress?
  - I felt upset while on Earth but at a certain age I did not suffer enough to be fortunate to progress.
6. How do you employ your time now?
  - I try to enlighten myself and find out in which body I can achieve that.
7. What did you think of the white men when alive?
  - They are good but lighthearted and proud of a “whiteness” that is not their call.
8. Do you eventually consider the whiteness as superiority?
  - Yes, since I was neglected for being black.
9. (to St. Louis) – Is the black race really inferior?
  - The black race will disappear from Earth. It was made for latitude that is different from yours.
10. (to father Cesar) – You said that you are looking for a body with which you could advance. Will you pick a white or black body?
  - A white one since the abandonment would hurt me.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

11. Did you really live up to the age attributed to you, of 138 years?

- I don't know exactly for the reason that you mentioned.

NOTE: We had just made considerations about the age of the black people that could only be calculated approximately since there was no civil registration, especially for those born in Africa.

12. (to St. Louis) – Is it true that the whites sometimes reincarnate in black bodies?

- Yes. When, for example, a master has mistreated a slave, he may ask to live in the body of a black person, as atonement, so as to suffer the same that he had made suffer, then advancing and obtaining God's forgiveness through that.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

Varieties

The Princess of Rebinine

From the *Courrier de Paris*, May... 1859<sup>12</sup>

“Do you know that every somnambulist, all turning tables, all magnetized birds, every sympathetic pencil and fortunetellers have predicted the war long ago? Many prophecies have been made about it to several important people who pretending not to have taken such revelations into account, were not less evidently worried about them. As from our side, not resolving the issue in one direction or the other, and even thinking in what François Arago had doubts about, at least we are allowed not to mention them, limiting ourselves to the report of some facts which we witnessed, with no comments added.

“Eight days ago we were invited to a spiritist gathering in the residence of Baron G... All twelve guests were sitting around the table at precisely the scheduled time; ... a simple, miraculous mahogany table, where the tea and sandwiches were initially served. It is necessary to say that from those guests there was none who could for any reason be called charlatan. The owner of the house is a close relative of several ministers, belonging to an important foreign family. Two very distinct English officers, a French mariner, a well-known Russian prince, a renowned physician, a millionaire, a secretary of embassy and another two or three important people from the Saint-Germain area formed the faithful group. We were the only profane ones among the illustrious spiritists, but in the condition of a skeptical Parisian journalist by duty we could not be accused of an exaggerated credulity.

The meeting then could not be under the suspicion of representing a comedy. And what a comedy! Would that be a useless and ridiculous comedy in which each person would have voluntarily played the role of mystifier and mystified? That is not acceptable. Besides, what would be the intention? What would be the interest? Wouldn't that be the case to ask: “Who is being deceived here?”

No, there was no ill intention or madness there. If you wish we could agree that there was chance... It is all that our conscience may concede.

Here is what happened:

After the spirit was questioned about a number of things, he was asked if the hopes for peace – that seemed significant – were founded.

- No, responded the spirit on two different occasions.
- We will then have the war?
- Certainly!
- When?
- In eight days.
- However, the Congress will meet next month... this strongly indicates that hostilities will not start, eventually.
- There will be no Congress!
- Why?
- Austria will refuse.
- And what will be the winning cause?
- Justice and righteousness... that of France.

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<sup>12</sup> The date shows incomplete in the original as shown here (NT)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- And how will this war be?
- Short and glorious.

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That brings to memory another event of the same kind that also happened before our eyes some years ago. Everyone remembers that during the Crimean war the Emperor Nicholas recalled all vassals that lived in France back to Russia, or otherwise in case of disobedience face confiscation of all their properties.

We were then in Leipzig, Saxony, where like everywhere else there was a vivid interest in all those events. One day the following message got into our hands:

“I am here for a few hours only. Come to see me at the Poland Hotel, # 13. Princess de Rebinine.”

Princess Sophie of Rebinine was a close acquaintance of ours, a charming and distinct lady, whose history is a whole romance (which we will write one day) who honored us by calling us a friend. We promptly attended her kind invitation since we were as pleasantly surprised as happy for her passage by Leipzig.

It was Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup>, and the weather was naturally grey and gloomy, as usual over that part of Saxony. We found the Princess in her quarters, more gracious and witty than never; just a bit pale and melancholic. We made that observation to her.

To begin with, she said, I left like a bomb. It had to be that way, since we are at war and I feel a little fatigued by the journey. Then, although we are enemies now, I don't hide from you that I regret leaving Paris. It is some time now that I considered myself almost French and the Emperor's orders made me break up with sweet and old habits.

- Why haven't you just stayed in your beautiful apartment of Rue Rumfort?
- Because my budget would have been cut!
- However, don't you count on so many and good friends among us?
- Yes... at least I believe so. But in my age a woman doesn't like to mortgage herself... the interest sometimes is higher than the capital! Ah! If I were an old lady it would be different. But then nobody would give me a loan.

Then the Princess changed the subject.

- You know I have a very demanding character... I know nobody here... Can I count on your company for the whole day?
- Easy to guess our answer.

At one o'clock we heard the bells in the patio and went downstairs for lunch. At that point everybody was talking about the war and the turning tables.

As for the war, the Princess was certain that the Anglo-French fleet would be destroyed in the Black Sea and she would courageously have set them on fire, if the Emperor Nicholas had assigned her with that delicate and dangerous mission. Regarding the turning tables, her faith was less solid, but she proposed to carry out some experiments with another friend that we introduced to her when we were having dessert.

We returned upstairs to her room. We had coffee served. Since it was raining, we spent the afternoon interrogating a tri-legged table, like those that we still see around.

- How about me, the Princess suddenly asked; you don't have anything to say?
- No.
- Why.

The little table knocked thirteen times. Well, we must remember that it was the 13<sup>th</sup> and that the Princess's apartment number was also number 13.

- Does it mean that the number 13 is fatal to me?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Yes! The table knocked.
- Never mind! I am a female Bayard. You may speak freely, whatever you have to announce to me.

We interrogated the table that persisted, at first, in its prudent reservation. Finally, we were then able to get the following words:

- ... eight days...Paris, violent death!

The Princess was then very well. She had just left Paris and did not expect to return to France so soon... The table's prophecy was at least absurd regarding the three initial points... As for the last one, it is unnecessary to say that we gave no attention to that.

The Princess was supposed to leave at 8 pm, taking the train from Dresden, in order to get to Warsaw two days later in the morning. She missed the train, though.

- In reality, she said, I will leave my luggage here and will take the 4 am train.
- You will then sleep over at the hotel?
- I will go back to the hotel but will not sleep over. I will watch today's ball from the foreigners' balcony. Would you like to join me?

The Poland Hotel, whose magnificent and large ballrooms accommodate at least two thousand people, holds a great ball almost daily, in the summer as in the winter, organized by some society of town; the assistance from upstairs in a private gallery is reserved to the travelers who can appreciate the spectacle and listen to an excellent orchestra.

As a matter of fact, the foreigners are never forgotten in Germany, finding reserved balconies all over the place, explaining why the Germans on coming to Paris for the first time always ask for the foreigners' balconies in theaters and concerts.

That evening's ball was really brilliant and the Princess, despite being a simple observer, really enjoyed watching it. She had then forgotten the tri-legged table and its ominous prediction when a hotel waiter brought her a telegram which had just arrived. The message read:

“- To Madam Rebinine, Poland Hotel, Leipzig – Indispensable presence Paris – Serious interests – followed by the signature of the Princess' attorney. A few hours later she took the route to Paris instead of Dresden. Eight days later we learned of her death!

Paulin Niboyet

# The Spiritist Review 1859

June 1859

## Major Georges Sydenham

We found the following report in a remarkable collection of authentic stories of apparitions and other spiritist phenomena, published in 1682, in London by Reverend J. Granville and by Dr. H. More. The title reads: "Apparition of Major Georges Sydenham's Spirit to Captain V. Dyke", extracted from a letter by Mr. Jacques Douche, from Monkton, to Mr. J. Granville.

"... soon after the death of major Georges, Dr. Th. Dyke who was a close relative to the captain, he was called to treat a sick child. The doctor and the captain lay down on the same bed. After a brief nap the captain asked the maid to bring him two lit candles, the biggest and thickest that could be found. The doctor asked him about the meaning of all that. The captain responded:

"You know about my discussions with the major, relatively to the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. It was not possible for us to elucidate those points, although it has always been our wishes."

"We agreed that the first to die would come back on the third evening after the funerals, between midnight and 1 am, to the gardens of this small house, clarifying the one that outlived about the subject."

"Today is the very day when the captain should keep his promise."

"Therefore he set the alarm clock by his bed and woke up at 11:30 pm; he then took a candle in each hand and left through the back door, spending the next two and a half hours in the garden. When he came back he declared to the doctor that he had not seen nor heard anything that was not very natural. However, he added, I know that the major would have come if he could."

"Six weeks later the captain went to Eaton to take his son to college, and the doctor accompanied him again. They stayed for about two or three days in a lodge called San Christopher, but did not sleep together like in Dulverton. They occupied two different rooms."

"One morning the captain remained in his room longer than usual, before calling the doctor. At last he came to the doctor's room showing altered faces, bristly hair, eyes popped and his body shaken."

"What happened, cousin captain? The doctor asked."

"-I saw the major, responded the captain."

"The doctor seemed to smile."

"I am positive that I saw him today or I have never seen him in all my life."

"He then told me the following story:"

"At day break this morning someone came by my bed, removed the sheets and screamed: Cap!"

"Cap was the word that the major normally used to call the captain."

"I responded: - Hi there, my major!"

"He continued: - I could not come the other day. Now however, I am here and will tell you this: There is a very just and terrible God! If you don't change your skin you will see it when you arrive here."

"A sword that the major had given me was resting on the table. He walked around the room a couple of times then he took the sword from the scabbard; since he did not find it as polished as it should be he said: - Cap, cap, when this sword was mine it was better conserved."

"He then suddenly disappeared after those words."

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The captain was not only persuaded about the reality of what he had seen and heard but since then he had become much more serious. His character, jovial and lighthearted, was remarkably modified. When he had his friends over, he treated them prodigally but always controlled. Those who knew him ensured that

## The Spiritist Review 1859

he believed to have heard the major's words several times in his ears, during the two years that he outlived that adventure.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>13</sup>

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13 Paris – Typography de Cosson & Co., Rue de Four-Saint-Germain, 43

# The Spiritist Review 1859

July 1859

## Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

Speech given at the closing of the social year 1858-59

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the time of expiration of your social year, allow me to present a short summary of the status and works of the Society.

You know its origin. It was formed without a pre-established design, without a preconceived project. A few friends gathered at my house in a small group; step-by-step those friends asked me for permission to introduce their friends. There was no president then. Those were intimate gatherings, of eight to ten people, as there are to the hundreds in Paris and elsewhere. It was natural that I had the direction of what happened at my house, as a consequence of being the owner and of the studies that I had carried out, which gave me certain experience in the matter.

The interest produced by those meetings increased, although we did not get involved but with serious things. The number of attendees grew gradually, one by one, and my modest living room was no longer adequate to an assembly, becoming insufficient. It was then that some among you proposed that we should look for another place, a more adequate, and that we should pool resources in order to cover for the expenses, since they did not think that it was fair that I would take care of everything as of up until that moment.

However, in order to gather regularly, beyond a certain number of persons and in a different place, it was necessary to comply with the legal requirements, have regulations, and consequently, a formal president. Finally, it was necessary to constitute a society. It was what happened, with the agreement of the authorities whose benevolence has not failed us. It was also necessary to give a methodic and uniform direction to the works, so that you thought appropriate to assign to me the work I was already doing in my house, in our private sessions.

I dedicated to my functions, that I can call laborious, all the accuracy and devotement that I was capable of doing. From the administrative point of view I endeavored to maintain the sessions in a rigorous order, ensuring a serious character, without which the prestige of the serious assembly would have soon disappeared. Now that my task is over and that the kickoff has been given, I must communicate to you the resolution I have made to resign, for the future, to any function in the Society, even the one of director of studies. I don't ambition any title but that of a simple regular member, with which I will always feel happy and honored. The reason for my decision resides in the multiplicity of my duties which increase daily, given the size of my network of contacts and also because, besides the work you know, I prepare other more considerable publications that require laborious studies, which will take no less than ten years.<sup>14</sup>

Well, the Society's activities take a lot of my time in the preparation, coordination and final editing of the material. Furthermore, they also require an assiduity that sometimes interferes with my personal activities, making it indispensable an almost exclusive dedication to what you have assigned me. That is the reason, ladies and gentlemen, that made me take the word so often, in several of those occasions regretting the fact we were deprived from the lights of distinguished and enlightened members. It has been since some

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<sup>14</sup> Allan Kardec died in March 1869 (N.T.)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

time now that I wanted to resign from my functions. On several occasions I have explicitly indicated such desire here, as well as in private, to several colleagues, notably to Mr. Ledoyen.

I would have done it earlier, not afraid of causing inconvenience to the Society by leaving in the middle of the year, but that could give the impression of defection. We needed not to give that pleasure to our critics. I then had to carry my task to the end. However, now that such motives no longer exist, I promptly communicate my resolution to you, so as not to preclude you from making the choice you must. It is only fair that each one may share the honors and duties.

The Society has seen its importance grow rapidly in one year. The number of regular members tripled in a few months. You have multiple corresponding members in the two continents and the number of in-person observers is beyond the possible limit, had we not established the strict observation of the regulations as a threshold. You have noticed the presence of the highest social dignitaries and many distinguished figures among the latter ones. The hurry in requesting admission to your sessions demonstrates the interest there is on attending them, despite the absence of any experimentation aiming at satisfying curiosity, and even perhaps due to its simplicity. If not all of them leave here convinced, what would actually be wishing for the impossible, the serious persons, those who do not come with a preconceived demeaning idea, those take home such an impression about the seriousness of your works that predisposes them to study these questions even further. As a matter of fact, we should not but applaud the restriction in the admission of strangers. Thus, we avoid a crowd of inconvenient curiosity. The steps you have taken to limit the admission of strangers to certain meetings, saving the others exclusively to the members of the Society, resulted in more freedom to your studies, which could have been impaired by the presence of non-initiated persons of uncertain sympathy.

Such restrictions will seem very natural to those who know the objective of our institution and who know that we are, before anything, a Society of studies and research and not a vehicle of propaganda. That is why we do not admit in our ranks those who would make us waste our time in endlessly repeated elemental demonstrations, for not having the first notions of the science.

No doubt we all wish the propagation of the ideas that we profess since we all consider them useful and each one of us contributes towards that. We know, however, that conviction can only be acquired through continuous observation and never by some isolated facts, without continuity and reasoning, against which incredulity may always raise objections. One will say that a fact is always a fact. It is an unbreakable argument, no doubt, as long as it is not disputed or disputable. When the fact is beyond the limits of our own ideas and knowledge, at first sight it seems impossible. The more extraordinary the fact is, the more objections it raises. That is why they are contested. The person who probes the causes and finds them also finds the basis and the very reason for the existence of the fact; understands its possibility and since then no longer rejects it. Many times a fact is only intelligible through its connection to other facts. Taken in isolation it may seem strange, incredible and even absurd. But if it is one link of the chain, if it has a rational basis, if it can be explained, all anomalies will disappear.

Well, in order to understand such connection, to comprehend the whole to which we are led from consequence to consequence, it is necessary with all things – and perhaps even more with Spiritism – a series of rational observations. Reason is thus a powerful element of conviction, today more than ever, since the positive ideas lead us to know the *why and the how* of each and everything.

We are impressed by the persistence of the incredulity in matters of Spiritism, from people who have witnessed facts, whereas others who have not seen are firm believers. Should we say that these are superficial, who accept everything they are told without examination? It is much to the contrary. The former have seen but do not understand; the latter have not seen but understand, and understand because they reason.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

The suite of reasons on which the facts are supported constitutes the science, a still imperfect science, that is true, whose apex nobody pretends to have been reached, but nevertheless it is a science in its beginning and your studies support the research on everything which can broaden and establish that science.

This is what is important to be well known outside this room, making no mistake with respect to our objectives so that when people come here they do not expect to see a spectacle given by the spirits. Curiosity has a limit. When it is satisfied it looks for another distraction. The one who does not stop at the surface, who sees beyond the material effect, always finds something to learn. Reason is an endless, boundless source to them. Our line of conduct could not be better delineated than by the remarkable words addressed to us by the spirit of St. Louis, words which we should never forget:

“They mocked the turning tables but will never mock the philosophy, the wisdom and the charity that shine from the serious communications. May it be seen somewhere else, may it be heard somewhere else, but may there be understanding and love among you.”

The expression “may there be understanding among you” contains a whole teaching. We need to understand and we endeavor to understand since we don’t want to believe like the blind. Reasoning is the light that guides us. But reason of an individual only may divert. That is why we wanted to gather in a Society so that we can mutually clarify one another through the reciprocal support of our ideas and observations. From that point of view we are similar to all other scientific institutions and our works will produce more serious proselytes than if we spent our time making the tables turn and rap. We would soon be fed up with that. Our thought requires a more solid food. That is why we try to penetrate the mysteries of the invisible world, whose first signs are those elemental phenomena. Do people who can read have fun by endlessly repeating the alphabet? It is possible that we might have more influx of curious people, succeeding in our sessions like images from a dynamic scenery. But those curious people who could not acquire an improvised conviction by seeing phenomena inexplicable to them, who would judge without investigating further, would rather be an obstacle to our works. That is why, not wishing to deviate from our scientific character, we keep away anyone who come to us without a serious objective.

Spiritism has so grave consequences; it touches questions of such a reach; gives the key to so many problems; it finally offers such a profound philosophical teaching that compared to it all, a turning table is a purely childish thing.

The observation of facts, without thought, we were saying, is insufficient to lead to a complete conviction. We could call lighthearted anybody who would declare to be convinced by a fact that was not understood. Such a system, however, has another inconvenience which must be pointed out and that each one of us may testify: it is the experimentation mania, as a natural consequence of the above.

Whoever observes a spiritist fact without having studied all its implications generally does not see more than the material fact. Then assess it from the standpoint of their own ideas, not considering that outside of the common laws there might be unknown laws. Judge to be able to maneuver with the fact at will; imposes conditions and will not be convinced, as they say, if the fact does not repeat in a given fashion, rather than in another one. Imagine that one can carry out experiences with the spirits as one does with the electrical battery. By not knowing their nature and how they react, since those were not studied, thinks that one can impose their will on those phenomena, imagining that they must act responding to a simple signal, for the simple pleasure of having them convinced. Because one is prepared to listen to them for fifteen minutes, one supposes that they should remain at their services.

These are mistakes not incurred by those who take the time to investigate further. They know the obstacles and do not ask for the impossible. Instead of trying to convince the spirits from their own point of view, something to which the spirits do not voluntarily submit to, they position themselves on the standpoint of the spirits, with which the phenomena change their aspects. In order to get there, one needs patience, perseverance and strong will power, without which nothing is achieved.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

The one who really wants to know does need to submit oneself to the thing itself, not otherwise wanting it to submit to his conditions.

That is why the Society is not given to experimentations that would not yield result, since it is aware from experience that Spiritism, as any other Science, cannot be understood in a flash and in a few hours. As a serious Society, it does not wish to deal but with serious persons, who understand the duties imposed by such study, as long as one consciously wishes to do that. The Society does not recognize as serious those who say: Let me see a fact and I will be convinced.

Does it mean that we neglect the facts?

It is much to the contrary, since our whole science is based on facts. We investigate with interest every fact that offers matter for study or confirms the admitted principles. The only thing I want to say is that we waste no time in reproducing the facts that we already know, in the same way that a physicist does not enjoy repeating endlessly the experiments which teach him nothing new. We focus our investigations on everything that may illuminate our paths, preferring the intelligent communications, source of the Spiritist Philosophy and whose boundless field is much ampler than the purely material manifestations, which are of momentary interest only.

Two equally publically announced and practiced systems are presented regarding the mode by which the spiritist communications are received: some prefer to wait for the spontaneous communications; others provoke them through a direct appeal to this or that spirit. The former pretend that in the absence of control to establish the identity of the spirits, then waiting for their good will, we are less exposed to be led to err. Since the spirit speaks it is because he is present and wants to talk, whereas we would not be certain that the one we evoke could come and respond. The latter object, allowing the first one who shows up to speak, would be the same as opening the door to the good as well as to the bad spirits.

The uncertainty in the identity is not a serious objection, since we frequently dispose of means of ensuring that, and such a confirmation, besides, is object of a study related to the principles of the science. The spirit who communicates spontaneously is almost always limited to generalities whereas the framed questions establish a more positive and constructive picture.

As for ourselves, we only condemn the exclusivity of systems. We know that excellent things are obtained in a way or another. If we prefer the second it is due to the fact that experience teaches us that the mystifying spirits do not refrain from painting themselves with respectable names, as much as in the evocations. They even have more room for maneuvering whilst with the questions we easily dominate them, not counting on the fact that the questions have an invaluable utility in the studies. It is to this mode of investigation that we owe the amount of observations collected daily, allowing us to penetrate more deeply into these extraordinary mysteries. The more we advance, the more the horizons open up, thus showing how vast is the field that we must harvest.

The numerous evocations that we made allowed an investigative eye over the invisible world, from one end to the other, from what there is of most insignificant to the most sublime. The uncountable variety of facts and characters that sprouted from those studies, carried out in profound calmness, with continuous attention and prudent circumspection of serious observers, opened up the arcane of this new world to us.

The order and the method applied into all of your researches were indispensable elements to the success.

In fact, you know from experience that it is not enough to call the spirit of this or that person, at random. The spirits do not come like that, at our will or caprice, and do not answer to everything that we are led to ask them by our own fantasies. In order to deal with the beings from beyond the grave, one needs skills and language adequate to their nature; to their moral qualities; to their degree of intelligence; to the position they occupy. We must be dominant or be submissive with them, according to the circumstances; show compassion to those who suffer; be humble and respectable with the superior ones; firm with the bad and stubborn ones that only dominate those who complacently listen to them. Finally, it is necessary to know how to methodically formulate and structure the questions, so as to obtain more explicit answers;

## The Spiritist Review 1859

capture from the answers the nuances that sometimes are characteristic traces, important revelations, escaping the superficial, inexperienced or occasional observer.

The mode of conversation with the spirits is thus a true art that requires tact, knowledge about the terrain where we step onto, somehow constituting the practical Spiritism. Conveniently guided, the evocations may teach a lot. They offer a powerful element of interest, morality and conviction. Element of interest since they allow us to know the state of the world which awaits for us all, from which sometimes we have an extravagant idea; morality since we can see, by analogy, our future condition; conviction since we have in these private conversations the manifesting proof of the existence and individuality of the spirits, which are nothing else but our own souls, detached from the dense matter.

As long as your general opinion about Spiritism is formed, you have no need to found your convictions on the material proof of the physical manifestations. On another hand, advised by the spirits, you wanted to limit yourselves to the study of the principles and moral issues, without neglecting, however, the examination of the phenomena that may support the search for the truth.

The systematic criticism condemned upon us for accepting too easily the doctrines of certain spirits, particularly those related to scientific questions. Those persons show, for that very reason, that they do not know the true scope of the Spiritist science, nor the one to which we proposed, thus giving us the right of returning their criticism for the lightheartedness in their judgment.

One cannot certainly teach you the reservation with which we must receive everything that comes from the spirits. We are far from accepting all that they say as articles of faith. We know that there are all nuances of knowledge and moral among them. For us they form a whole population which presents varieties a hundred times greater than the one we notice among men. What we want is to study that population; to get to know and understand it. For that we study the individualities; we observe the subtle differences; we try to identify the distinct traces of their customs, culture, habits and characters. Finally, we want to identify ourselves, as much as possible, with the state of that world.

Before we move into a dwelling we like to know how it is; if we will be comfortable there. We want to know the habits of the neighbors; the kind of society that we will participate. Well then! It is our future dwelling. The spirits allow us to know the habits of the people in whose environment we are going to live. However, as among us there are ignorant and shortsighted people that have an incomplete idea about our material world and its environment, all strange to them, so are the spirits of limited moral horizon, who cannot comprehend the broad picture and are still under the domain of prejudices and systems. Those cannot, as a consequence, instruct us about everything that is related to the spiritual world, in the same way that a peasant could not do it with respect to the high society of Paris or to the scientific world. It would then be a sad assessment of our reason if thought that we listen to every spirit as if they were oracles.

The spirits are what they are and we cannot alter the order of things. As not all of them are perfect we do not accept their words but with reservation and never with a childish. We assess, compare and derive conclusions from what we observe. Even the mistakes of the spirits are teachings to us, since we do not resign to our own discernment.

These observations equally apply to all scientific theories that the spirits may give. It would be too easy if all we needed were to interrogate them to find the complete science and discover all technological secrets. We do conquer science but after hard work and research. The mission of the spirits is not to free us from that obligation. We do know, besides, that not all spirits know everything and that among them there are also pseudo-wise spirits, as there are among us, who think to know what they don't, talking about what they ignore with the most unperturbed audacity.

A spirit could then say that it is the Sun and not the Earth that turns. His theory would not be more exact just because it came from a spirit. Thus, may those who attribute to us such a puerile credulity know that we take the opinion issued by a spirit as a personal opinion; that we do not accept it but after having

## The Spiritist Review 1859

submitted it to the control of logic and the means of investigation offered by the Spiritist science itself, means known by all of you!

Such is, ladies and gentlemen, the aim proposed by the Society. It is not up to me, for sure, to tell you, although it pleases me to recall it here, so that if my words have a repercussion out there, may anybody make no mistake with respect to its true meaning. As for myself, I feel happy having only had to follow you in this serious path that elevates Spiritism to the heights of the philosophical sciences. Your works have already produced fruits, however, those which will still be produced later are incalculable, as long as – and I have no doubts about that – you keep the adequate conditions in order to attract the good spirits to your environment.

The support of the good spirits, this is in effect the condition without which one cannot expect the truth. Well, that support depends on us. The first of all conditions to deserve their sympathy is privacy and purity of intentions. The serious spirits go wherever they are seriously called, with faith, fervor and trust. They do not like to be used in experiments, or to provide spectacles. On the contrary, they like to instruct those who interrogate them without preconceived ideas. The frivolous spirits, who make fun of everything, go everywhere and preferably to places where they have the opportunity to mystify. The bad ones are attracted by evil thoughts, and by evil thoughts we must understand all those that do not comply with the principles of the evangelical charity. Thus, whoever may bring to a meeting feelings which are contrary to those precepts, carry along spirits who wish to spread perturbation, disagreement and hostility.

The communion of thoughts and feelings towards the good is thus a crucial condition and it is not possible to find that communion in a heterogeneous environment, where inferior passions have access, like pride, envy and jealousy, passions always revealed by the malevolence and acrimony of the language, however thick the hiding veil may be, with which one attempts to disguise them.

This is the Spiritist Science 101. If we want to close the door of this room to the evil spirits, than we need to start by closing the door of our hearts and let us avoid anything that may empower them against us. Had the Society one day become a toy in the hands of the deceiving spirits it would be for the fact that they were attracted to it! Attracted by whom? By those in whom they find echo, since they only go where they know they are going to be heard. We all know the proverb: “Show me your company and I will tell you who you are.” We can parody it with respect to our sympathetic spirits, by saying: “Tell me what you think and I will tell who your spiritual companies are.”

Well, thoughts are translated into actions. If we admit that discord, pride, envy and jealousy cannot be inspired but by bad spirits, those who would bring elements of disharmony here would attract obstacles, with which they would indicate the nature of their hidden satellites. Then we could only regret their presence in the heart of the Society. God willing – so I hope – this will never happen, and also supported by the good spirits, if we make ourselves favorable to them, the Society will consolidate by both the deserved consideration and by the utility of its works.

If we were only aiming at experiences for the satisfaction of our curiosity, the nature of the communications would be more or less indifferent, considering that we would only see in them what they are. However, since we are not looking for entertainment to us or to the public, but true communications is what we really want, we do need the sympathy of the good spirits for that, a sympathy that can only be conquered by those who keep the bad spirits away by the sincerity of their hearts.

Saying that the frivolous spirits have never meddled among us, in order to cover for any vulnerability from our side, it would be too much presumption of perfection. The superior spirits can even allow that to happen in order to test our perspicacity and our zeal in the search for the truth. Our reasoning, however, must keep us on guard against the traps that can be set against us, providing the means of avoiding them in all cases.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

The objective of the Society is not only the research on the principles of the Spiritist science. It goes further. It also studies their moral consequences since it is particularly on those consequences that its true utility resides.

Our studies teach us that the invisible world that surrounds us interacts constantly with the visible world, being one of the forces of nature. Wouldn't that be the key to many problems to get to know the effects of such an occult force, which dominates and subjugates us, irrespective of our will; the explanation of a number of facts that go unnoticed? If those effects can be dismal, knowing the cause of the problem wouldn't be a means of avoiding them, as the knowledge about the properties of electricity has given us the means of mitigating the disastrous effects of lightning? If we then succumb we cannot complain but about ourselves, once ignorance will not serve us as an excuse. The danger lies with the empire that the bad spirits exert onto people, which is not only a bleak thing from the point of view of the mistaken principles that they can propagate, but also from the point of view of the interests of the material life. Experience tells that we are never left unpunished under the domination of the bad spirits, for their intentions can never be good. One of their tactics to achieve their aim is discord since they know well that they can easily dominate whoever has no support. Thus, their first action when they want to control someone is to inspire mistrust and isolation, so that nobody can unmask them by clarifying the person giving sound advices. Once in control, they can fascinate the person with seducing promises; subjugate by flattering their inclinations, taking advantage of any weak spot which they may find, making that person feel the bitterness of deception later; hurt in their relationships; humiliated in their pride and, many times, elevate that person for a split second, only to be left alone on a free fall from a higher position.

Those are, ladies and gentlemen, the things that we learned from the examples that unfolds every time before our eyes, both in the world of the spirits and in the corporeal world, circumstance that we can use to ourselves, at the same time trying to make it useful to others.

Nevertheless, some will ask if we are not going to attract the bad spirits by the evocation of people who were the scum of society.

No, because we never suffer their influence. There will only be danger when it is the spirit that imposes itself; never when we impose to the spirit, though. Know this that such spirits do not attend your call unless they are constrained and forced; that generally feel so much awkward in your environment that are always in a hurry to leave. Their presence is a study to us, for it is necessary to see everything in order to know. The doctor cannot reach the summit of knowledge without probing the most difficult situations.

The doctor comparison is so appropriate when you consider what we have done to cure the suffering and alleviated pain from a spiritual perspective. Our duty is to present ourselves charitable and benevolent towards the beings from beyond the grave as we do our fellow human beings.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would personally feel extraordinarily privileged had I been exempted from criticism. We cannot be in this situation without being exposed to the darts of those who do not think as we do. There are, however, two kinds of criticism: one that is malevolent, acerbic, poisoned, in which jealousy betrays itself in every word; the other that aims at the sincere search for the truth, has absolutely diverse characteristics. The first one only deserves disdain. I have never bothered with that. It is only the other one that is arguable.

Some people said that I was too precipitated with the spiritist theories; that time was not right to establish them, since the observations were not complete.

Allow me a few words about the subject.

There are two things to consider with respect to Spiritism: the experimental part and the philosophical or theoretical part.

Abstraction made of the teachings of the spirits; I ask if I don't have the right to imagine, as many others do, a philosophical system. Isn't the field of opinions open to everyone? Why then I cannot bring about my own ideas? It is up to the public to judge if it makes sense or does not.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

But that theory, instead of conferring me any merit, if any, I declare that it comes entirely from the spirits.

Q - Be it, some will say, but that is too much.

A - Those who pretend to give the key to the mysteries of creation; unveil the principles of all things and the infinite nature of God do not go further than I do, I who declare, in the name of the spirits, that it is not given to man the investigation of such things about which we can only make more or less likely conjectures.

Q - You are moving too fast.

A - But would it be a mistake to be ahead of certain persons? As a matter of fact, who is holding them back, preventing them from walking?

Q - The facts are not sufficiently observed yet.

A - How come? Right or wrong I believe having observed them sufficiently. Must I wait for the good will of those who are behind? My publications block the way to nobody.

Q - Since the spirits may be wrong how can you be certain that the spirits who gave you the instructions are not mistaken?

A - In fact, the whole question resides in that point, once the objection of precipitation is too puerile. Well! I must say that my confidence is founded on the truthfulness and superiority of the spirits that instructed me. To begin with I will say that according to their advice I accept nothing without control and examination. I only adopt an idea when it seems logical, rational and in agreement with the facts and observations, and as long as nothing may seriously contradict it. My judgment, however, could not be an infallible criterion. The approval I got from people that are more enlightened than I am give me the first guarantee. But I find another one not less preponderant in the character of the communications, since I have been involved with Spiritism. It has never – I can say – escaped a single of those words, of those signs through which the inferior spirits always betray themselves, even the smartest ones. They never intend domination; never wrong advices or advices contrary to charity and benevolence; never ridiculous prescriptions. Far from that, I have only found great, noble, sublime thoughts, exempt from greed and petty feelings. In one word, their relationship with me, both in small as well as in great things, have always been such that had it been a man who was talking to me I would consider him the best, the wisest, the most prudent, the most moralized and enlightened person.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are the reasons for my confidence, reinforced by the identity of the teachings given to a large number of other people, before and after the publication of my books. The future will tell if I am right or wrong. Meanwhile I believe to have helped the progress of Spiritism, by carrying some bricks to the building. By showing that the facts may be based on reason I would have contributed to make it leave the path of frivolous curiosity, making it enter the serious road of demonstration, the only one capable of satisfying people who think and who do not stay on the surface of things.

I finish, ladies and gentlemen, by the quick scrutiny of a current issue.

It is about other societies that would supposedly wish to rival with ours.

Some say that one of them already counts on 300 members and that it has considerable financial resources. I want to believe it is not swaggering, so much not commendable to the spirits who may have given rise to that as to those who echoed it. If it is a reality we sincerely congratulate them, as long as it obtains the required unity of feelings to frustrate the influence of the bad spirits and consolidate its existence.

I completely ignore the elements of the society or societies that they say are forming. I will only make a general observation.

There are in Paris, as elsewhere, a number of private meetings, as ours once was, where the spiritist manifestations are treated more or less seriously, not to mention the United States where they happen

## The Spiritist Review 1859

in the thousands. I know some in which the evocations occur under the best conditions and where remarkable things are obtained. It is the natural consequence of the increase in the number of mediums that develop everywhere, despite the sarcasm. The more we advance, the more such centers multiply.

Spontaneously formed by a small number of elements and variables, these centers have nothing of fixed or regular and do not constitute proper societies. A regularly organized society requires conditions of vitality that are completely diverse, as a consequence of the number of people which form it, their stability and permanence. The first of those conditions is the homogeneity of principles and the way of seeing things. Every society that is formed by heterogeneous elements has the germen of dissolution. We can consider it born-dead, whatever its objective: political, religious, scientific or economical.

A spiritist society requires another condition – the assistance of the good spirits – if we want to obtain serious communications, since from the bad spirits, if we allow them to stand, we will not obtain but lies, deceptions and mystification. That is the price of its own existence, because the bad spirits will be the first agents of its destruction. They will gradually undermine it, in case they do not destroy it up front.

Without homogeneity there will not be communion of thoughts thus calmness and seclusion will not be possible. Well, the good spirits only present themselves under those conditions. How can we find them in a meeting where the beliefs are divergent, in which some do not even believe and, as a consequence, the spirit of opposition and controversy incessantly dominates? They only assist the ones who ardently wish to be instructed toward the good, without second intentions, and not to satisfy a vain curiosity.

Wishing to form a spiritist society outside of those conditions would be the same as giving proof of the most absolute ignorance regarding the elemental principles of Spiritism.

Would we then be the only ones capable of forming them? It would be very impertinent and even ridiculous for us to think so. Others can certainly do what we have done. May other societies then deal with works similar to ours, may they prosper and multiply. The more the better since it will be a sign of progress of the moral ideas. This is even better if they are supported and receiving good communications, a condition that we cannot pretend to have the sole privilege. As we aim at our personal instruction and at the interest of the Spiritist science, may our society hide no idea, no direct or indirect speculation, no ambition and may its existence do not rest on questions of money. May other societies be considered our sisters and not competitors! If we are envious then we will give indication that bad spirits support us. If one of them is formed to rival against us, with the preconceived idea of overcoming us, from its objective it would be revealing the very nature of the spirits presiding over its formation, since such a thought would not be good, nor charitable, and the good spirits do not sympathize with the feelings of hatred, envy and ambition.

As a matter of fact, we have an infallible means of not been afraid of any rivalry. It has been given to us by St. Louis: *May there be understanding and love among you*, he said. Let us then work in order to understand one another. Let us fight the others but with charity and abnegation. May the love to the neighbor be written in our flag and may it be our slogan. With that we will dare the mockery and the influence of the bad spirits. They may equal us with that respect and that will be better since they are brothers that come close to us. It is up to us, however, to never be overtaken.

But some may say: you have a way of seeing things that is not ours. We cannot sympathize with principles that we do not admit because nothing demonstrates that you are with the truth. I will then respond: nothing demonstrates that you are more right than we are once you still doubt and the doubt is not a doctrine. We can diverge in opinion about certain points of the science without biting or stoning one another, which would be unworthy and not much scientific. Do your research then, from

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

your side, as we have done from ours. The future will tell who is right. If we are wrong we will not have the silly self-love of persisting on false ideas. There are, however, principles about which we have the certainty of not been mistaken: the love of righteousness, the abnegation, and the abjuration of every feeling of envy and jealousy. These are our principles with which is always possible to sympathize without compromising. It is the bond that must unite all good individuals, whatever their divergence of opinion. Only selfishness creates an unsurpassable barrier between them.

These are, ladies and gentlemen, the observations that I believed I had to present when leaving the functions that you have assigned to me. From the bottom of my heart I thank all of those who have given me their testimonies of sympathy. Whatever happens, my life is dedicated to the work that we have undertaken and I will feel happy if my efforts may help it enter the serious path that is its essence, the only one that may safeguard its future.

The objective of Spiritism is to improve those who understand it. Let us try to set the example and show that the Doctrine is not a dead letter to us. In one word, let us be worthy of the good spirits if we want their assistance. The good is an armor against which all weapons of malevolence will always break.

ALLAN KARDEC

### **July 1859 Studies**

From now on we will regularly publish the report of the Society's sessions. We intended to do it starting from this current issue but the excess of material forces us to postpone it to the next issue.

The members residing outside Paris and the corresponding members will then be able to follow the works of the Society. As for now we restrain ourselves by saying that despite Mr. Allan Kardec's intention to resign to the Presidency, expressed in his closing speech on the occasion of the administrative renewal, he was unanimously reelected, minus one vote and a blank ticket.

He considered it to be an inconvenience to pursue his resignation, before such a flattering testimony. He has however accepted it conditionally, with the reservation that he will resign from his functions as soon as the Society has the condition to offer the presidency to someone whose name and social position are such that it will elevate the Society to a higher level. His wish was to dedicate all his time to the works and studies that he is currently carrying out.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**



# The Spiritist Review 1859

July 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

News from the War

The government has allowed the apolitical newspapers to publish news about the war. Since the reports are abundant in all shapes and forms it would be useless to have them repeated here. The greatest news to our readers is the story from the other world. Although it has not been extracted from the official source of the *Moniteur*, it offers a no less interesting point of view to our studies. Thus, we thought of interviewing some of the glorious victims of the victory, assuming that we could extract some useful instruction from that exercise. Similar themes of studies, and particularly contemporary, cannot be found at any time. Because we did not know personally any of the participants of the last battle, we beseeched the spirits who assist us to send us someone. We even thought that the presence of strangers would be preferable compared to friends or relatives, taken by the emotion. After a positive answer we obtained the following communications.

### THE ZOUAVE OF MAGENTA

FIRST CONVERSATION AT THE SOCIETY, JUNE 10<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. We beg our Almighty God to allow the spirit of a military deceased during the Battle of Magenta to come to communicate with us.
  - What do you want to know?
2. Where were you when we called you?
  - I wouldn't know that.
3. Who warned you that we wanted to talk to you?
  - Someone wiser than me.
4. When you were alive did you doubt that the dead could come to communicate with the living ones?
  - No, not really.
5. What are the sensations that you experience by being here?
  - It gives me pleasure. You have great things to accomplish, I was told.
6. What was your regiment in the army? (Someone whispers: by the language it seems to be a Zuzu<sup>15</sup>)
  - Ah! You are right!
7. What was your position?
  - That of everybody else.
8. What was your name?
  - Joseph Midard.

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15 A common French word meaning Zuavo, a soldier of the French colonies of Northern Africa, wearing a picturesque uniform of multiple colors, particularly the red culottes very loose at the top.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

9. How did you die?  
- Do you want to know all this without paying anything back?
10. Fortunately you have not lost your sense of humor. Tell us now, we will pay you later. How did you die?  
- From a plum that I got<sup>16</sup>.
11. Were you upset with your death?  
- My word that I was not. I am okay here.
12. Were you aware of what was happening at the moment of your death?  
- No. I was so stunned that I could not believe.
- NOTE: This is in agreement with what we have observed in the case of violent death. The spirit does not consider oneself dead given that his situation is not promptly realized. Such phenomenon can be easily explained. It is analogous to the somnambulists that do not believe that they are asleep. In fact, to the somnambulist the sleep is synonym of suspension of the intellectual faculties. Thus, as the somnambulist thinks he does not believe that he is asleep. It is only later that the fact will be accepted when the somnambulist is already familiarized with the meaning of that word.
- The same happens to a spirit who is unexpectedly surprised by a sudden death, when there is no preparation for the separation from the body. To the spirit, death is synonym of destruction, annihilation. Well, since the spirit sees, feels and thinks he understands that he is not dead. It is necessary some time for the spirit to recognize oneself.
13. The battle was not over when you died. Did you follow the events afterwards?  
- Yes, since as I have told you, I did not think that I was dead. I wanted to carry on bashing the other dogs<sup>17</sup>.
14. What was your sensation then?  
- I was delighted because I felt really light.
15. Could you see the spirits of your comrades leaving their bodies?  
- I did not think of that because I did not believe I was dead.
16. What happened to the crowd of spirits who lost their lives in the tumult of war?  
- I believe they did the same as I did.
17. The spirits who were fighting bloodthirstily, what did they do when they met in the world of the spirits? Did they still charge against one another?  
- Yes, for some time and according to their character.
18. Do you recognize yourself better now?

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16 Use of vulgar language meaning that he had been shot.

17 Here the spirit employs wordplay: *The Austrians* (les austrichiens in French) and *the other dogs* (les autres chiens) have approximately the same pronunciation.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Yes, otherwise they would not have sent me here.

19. Could you tell us if among the spirits of the soldiers who died long ago was there still some who were interested in the outcome of the battle? (We begged St. Louis to help him with the answers so that they were as clear as possible, for our own enlightenment).

- In large quantity. You should know that such battles and their consequences are prepared long before and that our adversaries would not have been involved in crimes, as they did, if they were not compelled to that for the reason of future consequences which you will get to know soon.

20. There should have been, in the battlefield, spirits interested in the Austrians' success. Were there then two battlefields among them?

- Evidently.

NOTE: Aren't we seeing here the gods of Homer, some taking sides with the Greeks, others with the Trojans? Truly, what were those gods of paganism other than spirits that people from ancient times transformed into divinities? Aren't we right when we say that Spiritism is a light that will clarify many mysteries, the key to numerous problems?

21. Did they exert any influence onto the combatants?

- Very significant.

22. Can you describe to us how such influence was exerted?

- In the same way that all influences are exerted from the spirits onto people.

23. What do you expect to do now?

- Study more than I did in my last period.

24. Are you going to return as a spectator to the combats that are still to come?

- I don't know yet. I have affections that tie me up at the moment. However, I hope to be able to escape from time to time to have fun with the forthcoming beatings.

25. Which kind of affection is still keeping you?

- An old and suffering mother who still cries for me.

26. I ask for your forgiveness regarding the thought that crossed my mind, with respect to the affection that keeps you.

- No problem. I say silly things to make you laugh a little. It is natural that you do not take me in high account considering the mediocre regiment to which I belonged.

27. When you were among the spirits, did you hear the sounds of the battlefield? Did you see things as clearly as when alive?

- In the beginning I lost sight of it but after a while I saw it much better because I could see all the tricks.

28. My question is did you hear the sound of the cannon shot?

- Yes.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

29. During the action, did you think about death and in what you would become in case you were killed?  
- I thought of what would happen to my mother.
30. Was it your first in the line of fire?  
- No, no. How about Africa?
31. Did you see the French entering Milan?  
- No.
32. Are you the only one here from those who died in Italy?  
- Yes.
33. Do you think that the war will last long?  
- No. It is easy and not much meritorious to make that prediction.
34. When you see one of your officers among the spirits, do you still recognize him as your superior?  
- If he is, yes, otherwise, no.

OBSERVATION: In his simplicity and conciseness his answer is profound and philosophical. The moral superiority is the only one that stands in the spiritual world. Someone who did not have it on Earth, irrespective of his position, has in fact no superiority. There the officer may be below the soldier and the manager under the server. What a lesson to our pride!

35. Do you think about the justice of God and does it bother you?  
- Who would not think about that? Fortunately I do not have much to fear. I have redeemed a few frivolous deeds committed when I was a zuzu, as you say, through a few actions that God considered good.
36. When watching a combat, could you diverge a fatal shot aimed at one of your comrades, thus protecting him?  
- No. We cannot do that. God determines the instant of death. If it is supposed to happen, then nobody can change it in the same way that it would not hit that person had his time not come yet!
37. Do you see General Espinasse?  
- I haven't seen him yet. But I do hope to see him soon.

### SECOND CONVERSATION

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1859

38. (Evocation)  
- Present! Firm! Avant!
39. Do you remember having come here eight days ago?  
- How could I forget?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

40. You said you had not seen General Espinasse yet. How could you recognize him since he has not taken his uniform of General with him?
- No, but I do know how he looks like. Besides, don't we have several friends around us ready to tell us what the password is? Over here it is not like in the barracks. We are not afraid of bumping into someone and I assure you that it is only the rogue that stays alone.
41. What is your appearance here?
- A Zuavo.
42. Supposing that we could do it, how would we see you?
- Wearing a turban and the culottes.
43. Suppose you appear to us wearing the turban and the culottes. Where would you have gotten those clothes from, considering that you have left yours in the battlefield?
- Now, now. I don't know how it happens but I have a tailor who fixes that for me.
44. What are the culottes and turban that you wear made of? Do you have any idea?
- No. That is the ragman's job.
- OBSERVATION: This question about the spirit's outfit, as well as several others related to the same principle, were completely clarified through our observations carried out at the very heart of the Society. We will bring news about this subject in the next issue of our Review. Our good Zuavo is not sufficiently advanced to solve it alone. We needed the help of some circumstances that happened serendipitously, giving us the right lead.
45. Do you know why you can see us while we cannot see you?
- I believe your glasses are weak.
46. Wouldn't that be the same reason why you do not see the General in his uniform?
- Yes, but he does not wear it every day.
47. When does he wear it then?
- Come on now! When he is called to the palace.
48. Why are you dressed as a Zuavo here if we cannot see you?
- Simply because I am still a Zuavo, even after eight years, and also because we keep such a form among the spirits for a long time. But that is only among us. You must understand that when we go to a different world, like the Moon or Jupiter, we don't bother with all that make-up.
49. You talk about the Moon and Jupiter. Have you actually been there after your death?
- No. You don't follow me. We are informed about many things after death. Haven't they explained to us several things about Earth's problems? Don't we know God and the other beings much better than fifteen days ago? With death the spirit goes through a metamorphosis that you cannot understand.
50. Have you seen the body left in the battlefield again?
- Yes but it is not very nice.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

51. Which impression has such a vision left on you?
  - Sadness.
  
52. Do you have any knowledge about your previous existence?
  - Yes but it is not glorious enough for me to brag about it.
  
53. Just tell me the kind of life you had.
  - A simple merchant of wild animals' skin.
  
54. We thank you for your kindness in coming for the second time.
  - So long. This is enjoyable and I learn from it. Since I am well tolerated here I will gladly come back.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

July 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

A High-Ranking Officer Killed in Magenta

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. (Evocation)
  - I am here.
2. Can you tell us how could you attend our appeal so promptly?
  - I was warned about your wishes.
3. Who warned you?
  - One of St. Louis' envoys
4. Did you know about the existence of our Society?
  - You know that.

OBSERVATION: Indeed the officer in question helped with the registration of the Society

5. How did you see our Society when you helped to register it?
  - I was not completely decided but I I was actually inclined to believe. If it were not for the events that took place, I would certainly be instructed in your circle.
6. There are many celebrities who share the spiritist ideas but dare not to publicly confess them. Would it be desirable that influent people would openly hold that flag?
  - Patience, God wishes so and this time the expression does correspond to the truth.
7. From which influent side of society do you think that such an example will come?
  - From all classes. From some in the beginning but later from all classes.
8. From the point of view of the study, could you tell us if your ideas are more lucid than those of the Zouave who was here a few moments ago, although you died approximately at the same time?
  - Very much so. What he could tell you, indicating a certain elevation, was whispered to him. He is very good but very ignorant and a bit frivolous.
9. Are you still interested in the success of our army?
  - More than ever since now I am aware of the objective.
10. Can you define your thoughts? The objective has always been publicly acknowledged and in your position you should know it after all?
  - The objective established by God, do you know it?  
OBSERVATION: One cannot ignore the seriousness and extent of that answer. When alive he knew people's objective; as a spirit he sees what is providential in the events.
11. In general terms, what do think about wars?
  - I wish you progressed so rapidly as to make them impossible and useless.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

12. Do you believe that such a day will come when the war will be impossible and useless?
- Yes, no doubt. I can tell you that such a moment is not as distant as you may think although I am not giving you the hopes that you would see that.
13. At the time of death, did you promptly recognize yourself?
- I recognized that almost immediately thanks to the vague notions I had about Spiritism.
14. Could you tell us something about Mr. ... also deceased in the last battle?
- He is still entwined with matter. It is harder for him to detach from it. His thoughts were not devoted to this side of life.

OBSERVATION: Thus, knowledge about Spiritism helps the detachment of the soul after death and abbreviates the period of perturbation that follows such separation. It makes sense since the spirit knew beforehand the world where he is now.

15. Did you watch your troops entering Milan?
- Yes, with pleasure. I was amazed by the reception given to our troops, first out of patriotism but later for the expectation of the future.
16. As a spirit can you exert any influence over the strategic plans?
- Don't you believe that this has happened since the beginning and can't you imagine by whom?
17. How come the Austrians gave up a strong hold like Pavia so rapidly?
- Out of fear.
18. They are demoralized then?
- Completely. Besides, if we influence ours in one direction you must think that another force acts upon them.

OBSERVATION: The intervention of the spirits in the events of life is unequivocal here. They pave the way for the accomplishment of God's designs. The former peoples would have said that it is the wishes of the gods. We say that it is the works of the spirits under the commandment of God.

19. Can you give us your opinion about General Giuly as a soldier, leaving aside any nationalistic thought?
- Poor, poor general!
20. Would you gladly return in case we called you?
- I am at your service and I promise to come, even without your call. You must believe that the sympathy I had with you cannot but increase. Good-bye.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

July 1859

## Answer to the Reply of Abbot Chesnel

On May 28<sup>th</sup> last, the newspaper *L'Univers* published our response to the article written by Abbot Chesnel about Spiritism, followed by the Abbot's response. We could not respond to this second article, which repeats the arguments of the first one but now without the civil character of the first one, to which everybody applauded, we could not respond but through the repetition of everything that we have said before, seeming completely useless to us. Abbot Chesnel strives to demonstrate that Spiritism is, must be and could not be anything else but a new religion, since a whole philosophy stems from it, and through Spiritism we deal with the physical and moral constitution of the worlds. From that point of view every philosophy would be a religion. Well, considering that the different systems abound and that each one has a more or less large number of experts, this would significantly restrict the circle of Catholicism. We don't know the extent of such imprudence and the danger in proclaiming such a doctrine since it would be the same as provoking an inexistent split. This is at least the proposal of an idea. Carefully observe its consequences. When science contested the meaning of the Biblical text about the six days of creation, anathemas were thrown; they said it was an attack to religion. Today, the facts gave reason to science; there no longer is any means of disputing it unless it is through the denial of light; Church has moved to line up with science.

Let us assume that over that time one had considered the scientific theory as a new religion, a sect, for it seemed in contradiction with the sacred books as it was destroying a secular interpretation. The result from all this would be that someone could not be Catholic and adopt such new ideas.

Let us think for a moment about the reduced number of Catholics in case those who do not believe that God created Earth in six days were excluded!

The same happens to Spiritism. If you consider it as a new religion, it means that it is not Catholicism to your eyes. Well, follow my train of thoughts. It is one or the other: a reality or a utopia. If it is a utopia there is no reason for concern since it will fall by itself. If it is a reality then not even all storms will preclude it from existing, in the same way that Earth was not impeded from turning in the former times. If there truly is an invisible world that surrounds us; if we can communicate with that world, obtaining information about the condition of their inhabitants – the whole Spiritism is in this – it will soon seem as natural as seeing the Sun at noon or finding thousands of living and invisible creatures in a crystalline drop of water. Such a belief will be so much vulgarized that you will have to surrender to the evidence. If that belief is a new religion to your eyes, it is outside Catholicism, since it cannot simultaneously be the Catholic religion and a new religion. If by the force of the facts and the evidence it generalizes, and it cannot be different once it is one of the forces of nature, from your point of view there will be no more Catholics and you yourself will no longer be Catholic since you will be forced to act like the others.

That is Mr. Abbot, the terrain to which your doctrine leads us to, and it is so absolute that you already gratifies me with the title of supreme priest of that religion, an unsuspected honor. But you go further. In your opinion every medium is a priest of that religion. I wish to stop you here in the name of logic. Up until now it seemed to me that the priesthood was facultative; that one could become a priest only from an act of will; that one could not be priest irrespectively, and as a consequence of a natural faculty. Well, the medium's faculty is natural, depends on their organization, like the somnambulistic faculty; it does not require gender, age or instructions, once we find it in children, with the ladies and with the old folks;

## The Spiritist Review 1859

among wise as well as ignorant people. Could it be understandable that boys and girls would become priests, without knowing or willing to do so?

Really, Mr. Abbot, this is an abuse of the right of interpreting words. As I said, Spiritism is outside the field of the dogmatic beliefs, which are not Spiritism's concern. We do consider it a Philosophical Science that explains to us a number of things that we did not understand and, exactly because of that, instead of smothering the religious ideas like some other philosophies, it makes them sprout in those who did not have them. If, however, you want to elevate it at any cost to the level of a religion, you throw it into a new path.

That is what is perfectly understood by many clergymen and instead of pushing it towards a rupture, they struggle to conciliate things, following this reasoning: if there are manifestations from the invisible world, those can only be by the will of God and we cannot go against God's will, unless we say that there are things that happen in this world without God's permission, which would be an impiety. If I had the honor of being a priest, I would take advantage of all that to serve religion. I would use it as a weapon against incredulity and would tell the materialistic atheists: Do you want proofs? There you have them; it is God who sends them.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

July 1859

## Varieties

Lord Castlereagh and Bernadotte

About forty years ago the following adventure happened to the Marquis of Londonderry, later Lord Castlereagh. He visited with a kind man, of one his friends' acquaintance that lived in a castle in Northern Ireland, one of those places used by romance writers to impersonate apparitions. Marquis' apartment was in perfect harmony with the entire building. In fact, the richly carved wood, blackened by time; the huge arc of the chimney, similar to the porch of a tomb; the heavy and dusty rugs, covering every spot and surrounding the bed, all that would really give rise to melancholic thoughts.

Lord Londonderry examined the room, getting to know the former masters of the castle, who seemed to be standing there, waiting for his greetings, portrayed in the paintings hanging on the walls. He then dismissed the room maid and went to bed. He had just put the candle out when he noticed a spark of light on top of his bed. Convinced that there was no fire in the fireplace; that the curtains were drawn and that the room was completely dark minutes earlier, he then supposed that there was an intruder in the room. Turning his eyes back to the place from where the light beam came he saw, with great surprise, the figure of a beautiful child, surrounded by a halo.

Persuaded of the integrity of his own faculties but suspecting a mystification from one of the many guests of the castle, Lord Londonderry advanced towards the apparition, which moved away from him. The more he moved closer the more it would move away. It then got to the fireplace's somber arch and disappeared in the ground.

Lord Londonderry did not sleep that night.

He decided not to mention what had happened to him, until he had the chance of carefully examining the facial expressions of everybody who was at the house. During breakfast he unsuccessfully tried to detect some disguised smiles, convenient looks and blinks of eyes that generally denounce the authors of such domestic plots.

The conversation followed its ordinary course. It was animated, not revealing any mystification. The Marquis finally could no longer resist the desire of telling the others what he had seen. The owner of the castle observed that the report given by Lord Londonderry might seem very strange to those who had not visited the castle for a long time and did not know about the legends of the family. Then, he turned to Lord Londonderry and said: "You saw the shining child... Be happy then since this is a presage of great luck. However, I prefer that we do not talk about such apparition."

On another occasion Lord Castlereagh saw the shining child in the House of Commons. He saw a similar apparition on the day of his suicide<sup>18</sup>. It is a well-known fact that this Lord, one of the most important Ministers of Harrowby, and one of the most bloodthirsty enemies of Napoleon, during his setback, cut his own throat, then dying instantly on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1823.

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They say that the amazing fate of Bernadotte had been predicted by a famous necromancer, who had also announced the fate of Napoleon I, and that the necromancer enjoyed Empress Josephine's trust.

Bernadotte was convinced that a kind of tutelary divinity was dedicated to his protection. Perhaps the wonderful traditions that surrounded his cradle were not strange to this thought that never left him. Truly,

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18 Forbes Winslow. Anatomy of Suicide, vol. 1, in-8, page 242. London 1840.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

an old chronicle was around in his family about a fairy, the wife of one of his ancestors, who had predicted that one King would illuminate their posterity.

Here is a fact that demonstrates how much the wonderful king had maintained its domination over the spirit of the King of Sweden. He wanted to face the difficulties opposed by Norway with the sword, sending his son Oscar with an army to defeat the rebels. The State Council strongly opposed that project. One day, when Bernadotte had just had a heated discussion about this subject, he rode his horse away from the Capital city. After a long ride he got to the entrance of a dense forest. Suddenly an old woman appeared before him, dressed in a bizarre way, showing a disheveled hair.

- What do you want? The King asked bluntly.

The witch then responded impassively:

- If Oscar fights in this war that you plan he will not be the one to shoot but the one to be shot at.

Bernadotte returned to the palace, touched by the apparition and her words. On the very next day, still showing in his face the signs of a long and agitated vigil, he went to the Council and said: "I changed my mind. I will negotiate peace but I want to establish honored conditions."

In his *Vie de M. de Rance*, founder of the Order of Trap, Chateaubriand tells the story that this celebrity was strolling around the Avenue of the Veretz Castle when he seemed to have seen a huge fire, destroying the aviary. He dashed there. The fire diminished as he approached. At a certain distance the inferno was transformed into a lake of fire; in the middle stood half of the body of a woman, devoured by the flames.

He rushed home, horrified. He was exhausted, throwing himself in bed, feeling half dead. It was only much later that he told this vision whose simple memory made him pale.

Are these mysteries pure madness? It seems that Mr. Brière de Boismont has attributed them to a more elevated order of things, with what I agree. This does not displease my friend Dr. Lélut. I prefer to believe in the genius of Socrates and in the voices of Joan of Arc than in the madness of the philosopher and in the virgin of Domrémy.

There exist phenomena that go beyond the intelligence; which embarrass knowledge, but it is necessary that human logic humbly bow before their evidence. Nothing is more brutal and undeniable than a fact. Such is our opinion and particularly that of Guizot:

"What is the great question, the question that concerns the spirits today? It is the question between those who recognize and those who do not recognize a super natural order, true and sovereign, although impenetrable to human reason; the question raised to give things their true name, between the super naturalism and the rationalism. On one side the incredulous, the pantheists, and the skeptical of all sorts, the pure rationalist; on the other side the Christians. For our future and present salvation it is necessary that the faith in the natural order; that the respect and submission to the super natural order penetrate in the world and in the human soul; in the great spirits as in the simple ones; in the more elevated classes as in the most humble. The real, truly efficient and regenerative influence of the religious beliefs, have such a condition. Outside that circle they are superficial and very close to become vain." (Guizot)

No, death does not separate forever, even in this world, the elected that God received in his heart and the exiled that remained in the valley of tears, *in hac lacrymarum valle*, employing the melancholic words of the Save the Queen. There are mysterious and blessed times in which the beloved dead lean over those who cry, whispering into their ears words of consolation and hope. Guizot, this strict and methodical mind, is right when proclaiming: "Outside that circle the religious beliefs are superficial and are very close to becoming vain."

SAM (extracted from the *La Patrie*, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1859)

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

July 1859

## What is Spiritism?

New book published by Mr. Allan Kardec

The book is an introduction to the knowledge of the invisible world or the world of the spirits, containing the fundamental principles of the Doctrine and the answers to some important questions.

By ALLAN KARDEC

Author of *The Spirits' Book* and director of the *Spiritist Review*

Grand in-8, price: 60 c<sup>19</sup>

People that only have a superficial knowledge about Spiritism are naturally led to frame certain questions, whose in-depth study would, no doubt, give them the solution, but they lack the time and frequently will not dedicate themselves to regular observation. They would like to at least know what it is all about and if it is worth to get involved with that, before initiating the task. Thus, it seemed useful to us to present, in a limited picture, the answers to some fundamental questions that are addressed to us daily. To the reader it will be a first initiation and to us it will be time saved by the avoidance of constant repetitions of the same things. The format of dialogue seemed more convenient since it does not offer the dryness of the purely dogmatic style. We end this introduction by a summary that will allow the understanding of all of the fundamental principles of the science through a quick reading. Those who after that short exposition consider the subject worthy of their attention can investigate it further with knowledge of cause. The objections come, most of the time, from the false ideas that we acquire *a priori* about something that we don't know. The rectification of such ideas operates in anticipation to the objections. That is our proposed objective in writing the small book. Persons unfamiliar to Spiritism will find in that publication the means of acquiring an idea about the subject, in a short time and at a low budget; those who are already initiated will find the means of resolving the main difficulties that are proposed to them. We count on the support of every friend of this Science, helping with the propagation of the short summary.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> All publications of Mr. Allan Kardec can be found in the bookstores of Mr. Ledoyen and Mr. Dentu and in the Review newsroom.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

August 1859

## Furniture from Beyond the Grave

We extracted the following passage from a letter sent by a corresponding member of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, from Jura County:

“As I told you Sir, the spirits liked our old dwelling. In October last (1858) lady Countess C..., a close friend of my daughters, came over with her 8 year old son to spend a few days in our mansion. The child slept in the same room as his mother and the door between my daughter’s room remained open, so as to prolong the hours and the conversation. The boy, who was awake, told his mother: “What are you going to do with this man that is seating by your bed? He smokes a big pipe. Look how the room is full of smoke! Send him away ‘because he is shaking the curtains.’”

“Such vision lasted the whole evening. The mother was unsuccessful in trying to quiet the boy and nobody could sleep. This event did not scare my daughter or me since we know that the spiritist manifestations do happen. The mother, however, thought that the child was sleep-talking or making fun of us.”

“Here is another fact that I personally witnessed, which happened in the same room in May 1858. It is the case of the apparition of the spirit of a living person, who was really surprised for having come to visit me. I was very sick, not having slept for a long time when I saw a friend of the family seating by my bed, at about 10 pm. I manifested my surprise for having his visit at such late hours. He said: - Don’t speak because I came to watch you; don’t speak because you do need to sleep – and then he extended his hand over my head. I opened my eyes several times to check if he was still there and each time he would make a sign for me to close my eyes and be quiet. He played with the “snuff-box” between his fingers and from time to time he smoked, as usual. I finally slept and when I woke up the vision had gone.”

“Several circumstances demonstrate that during the time of such an unexpected visit I was perfectly awake and that it was not a dream. When he really visited me for the first time I was careful enough to thank him. He had the same “snuff-box” in his hand and held the same nice smile that he showed when watching me.”

Since he attested that he had not come and that there was no reason for him to come to spend the night by my side, I understood that it was his spirit only that had come to visit me while his body rested peacefully at his house.”

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The apparitions are so numerous that it would be impossible to register all of those of our knowledge or those from which we know about from perfectly authentic sources. As a matter of fact, now that the facts are explained; that we are aware of how they happen and that they belong to the laws of nature, we know that there is nothing wonderful about them. We have already provided the complete theory of the apparitions thus we will only recollect in a few words for a good understanding of what comes next.

We know that besides the material, corporeal envelope the spirit has another one, semi-material, which we call the perispirit. Death is the destruction of the first body only. In the errant state the spirit maintains the perispirit that constitutes a kind of ethereal body, invisible to us in the normal state. The spirits populate space. If, on a given moment, the veil that hides them were lifted, we would see an immense population agitating around us, walking on air. We have them permanently around us, observing us and frequently meddling with our businesses and pleasures, according to their character. The invisibility is not a permanent property of the spirits. Sometimes they show up under the same appearance that they had when alive and it is not rare to find persons who, searching deep into their memories, have knowledge of any fact of this kind. The theory of the apparitions is very simple and it is explained through a very familiar comparison such as the vapor that in the gaseous state is completely invisible. On the first level

## The Spiritist Review 1859

of condensation it becomes foggy; condensed further it changes to the liquid state and then to the solid. Something similar takes place with the substance of the perispirit by the will of the spirit. In fact, this is not more than a comparison, as we said, since we do not wish to identify one with the other. We use the example of the vapor to show the changes that may occur in an invisible body, but there is no inference from this that there is a condensation of the perispirit, in the actual meaning of the word. There is a molecular change in the material that forms the perispirit that makes it visible and even tangible, and that can give it, to a certain extent, the properties of the solid bodies. We know that bodies, which are perfectly transparent, may become opaque by a simple change in the position of the molecules or by the addition of another body, equally transparent. We don't know well what the spirits do to make their ethereal bodies visible. The majority of them don't even realize that but from the examples we have mentioned, we understand its physical possibility, which is enough to remove from the phenomenon what could seem, at first sight, supernatural. Hence the spirit can do it through a simple intrinsic modification or by the assimilation of an amount of strange fluid that momentarily alters the appearance of their perispirit. It is, in reality, this latter hypothesis that sticks out from the explanations that have been given to us and that we have reported when discussing the subject (Review, May, June and December 1858).

Up until now, there is no difficulty regarding the personality of the spirit. We know, however, that they show up wearing outfits whose aspect they change at will; sometimes they even show some accessories of toilet, jewelry, etc. In the two apparitions mentioned above one had a pipe that produced smoke; the other a snuff-box, taking a snuff from time to time. Notice, however, that this spirit was that of a living person and that his snuff-box was totally similar to the one that he normally used, and that it was at his house. What is the meaning then of those pipe, snuff-box, clothes and jewelry? Do the material objects that exist on Earth have a representation in the invisible world? Would the condensed matter, which forms those objects, have a quintessential component that escapes our senses? This is a huge problem whose solution may provide the key to a number of things so far inexplicable. It was that "snuff-box" that gave us the hint not only about the fact but also about the most extraordinary phenomenon of Spiritism: the phenomenon of the pneumatography or direct writing that we will discuss below.

If some criticize us due to the fact that we are advancing too much in the theory, we will respond that once we find an opportunity to advance we don't see a reason to fall behind. If they are still looking to the turning tables not knowing why they turn, that is not a reason for us to stay put in the path. Spiritism is, no doubt, a science of observation, but it is perhaps even more a Science of reasoning and reason is the only means that can make it progress and triumph over certain resistances. Such fact is only contested because it is not understood. The explanation removes the character of wonderful, referring it to the general laws of nature. That is why we see on a daily basis people who have seen nothing and believe just because they understand, while others have seen and don't believe because they don't understand. This takes Spiritism to the path of reason, making it acceptable to those who want to know the "why" and the "how" of all things and their number is large in this century since the blind belief is no longer in our culture. Well, if we had only pointed to the route and would have the clean conscience of having contributed to the progress of this new science, we would fulfill the object of our constant studies.

Let us return to our "snuff-box".

Every theory we presented, with respect to Spiritism, was given to us by the spirits, who have contradicted our own ideas many times. This is consistent with the present case and illustrates the answers were not a reaction of our thoughts. But the way by which a solution is obtained is not something without importance. We know from our own experience that it is not good enough to request something in order to obtain it. The answers are not always very explicit; it is necessary to develop the subject with certain precautions; progressively get to the objective and through a chain of deductions that require previous work. In principle, the way of formulating the questions, the order, the method and the clarity are things that cannot be neglected and that please the serious spirits, for they see the serious objective in all that.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

Here is the conversation we had with the spirit of St. Louis, regarding the “snuff-box”, aiming at solving the problem of formation of certain objects in the invisible world (Society, June 24<sup>th</sup> 1859).

1. The report of Mrs. R..., it is related to a child that saw a man smoking a big pipe near his mother’s bed. It is understandable that the man could have taken the appearance of a smoker; it seems, however, that he was really smoking, considering that the boy saw the room full of smoke. What was that smoke?
  - An appearance produced for the boy.
2. Mrs. R... also mentions the case of an apparition of the spirit of a living person, seen by her. That spirit had a snuff-box and took snuffs from time to time. Could he have experienced the sensation that we have when taking a snuff?
  - No.
3. The snuff-box was like the one he customary uses and that was at his house. What was that snuff-box in the hands of the spirit?
  - Always appearance. It was for the circumstances to be noticed, as they were, and for the apparition not to be taken as a hallucination produced by the health condition of the clairvoyant. The spirit wanted that lady to believe in the reality of his presence thus taking all the appearance of reality.
4. You say it is an appearance but an appearance has nothing real; it is like an optical illusion. I would like to know if that snuff-box is not an unreal image only, like for example, that of an object that reflects from a mirror.

NOTE: One of the members of the Society, Mr. Sanson, observes that in the image reproduced by the mirror there is something real. If the image does not stick to the mirror it is because there is nothing to fixate it, but if it is projected onto a daguerreotype plate it leaves an impression, an evident proof that it is produced by some sort of substance and that it is not an optical illusion only.

- Mr. Sanson’s observation is perfectly fair. Could you kindly tell us if there is any analogy with the snuff-box, that is, if there is anything of material with that snuff-box?
- Certainly. It is with the support of that material principle that the perispirit takes the appearance of outfits similar to the ones that the spirit wore when alive.

OBSERVATION: The word appearance must evidently be taken here as an image, an imitation. The real snuff-box was not there. What the spirit had was only a reproduction. Compared to the original, it was only an appearance yet formed by a material principle.

Experience teaches us that we must not take certain expressions used by the spirits literally. By interpreting them according to our own ideas we expose ourselves to blunder hence we need to investigate further the meaning of their words, whenever there is the smallest ambiguity. That is a constant recommendation made by the spirits. Without the explanation that we provoked the word *appearance*, continuously repeated in similar cases, could give rise to a false interpretation.

5. Would there be an extension of the inert matter? Would there be, in the invisible world, an essential matter, covering the form of the objects that we see? In one word, would these objects have their *double ethereal* in the invisible world, like men are represented there in spirit?

OBSERVATION: This is a theory as any other and was our thought. The spirit, however, did not take it into account, based on the fact that it did not absolutely humiliate us. Its explanation seemed very logical and supported by a general principle, of which we find many applications.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- That is not how it happens. The spirit has over the elements spread in space, in our atmosphere, a power that you are far from suspecting. The spirit can, at will, concentrate those elements and give them an apparent shape, adequate to their intents.
6. I repeat the question categorically, so as to avoid any misunderstanding. Are the clothes that cover the spirits something?
    - It seems that my previous answer resolves this question. Don't you know that the perispirit itself is something?
  7. It results from that explanation that the spirits make the ethereal matter suffer transformations at their will and thus, in the case of the snuff-box, the spirit did not find it readymade; the spirit made it itself; it made it when needed and then made it disappear. The same must happen to all other objects such as clothes, jewelry, etc.
    - But that is evident.
  8. That snuff-box was so perfectly visible to Mrs. R... to the point of deceiving her. Could the spirit have turned it tangible?
    - It could.
  9. In that case Mrs. R... could have taken it in her hands, thinking that she was holding an authentic snuff-box?
    - Yes.
  10. Had she opened the box it is likely that she have found snuff. Had she taken it, would it have made her sneeze?
    - Yes.
  11. The spirit can then not only give the form but even some special properties?
    - If it wishes so; it is as a consequence of this principle that I responded affirmatively to the earlier questions. You will have proofs of the powerful action that the spirit exerts on matter and that, as I have said, you are far from suspecting.
  12. Suppose then that it wanted to make a poisonous substance and that a person had taken it. Could that person have been poisoned?
    - It could but it would not have happened, since the spirit would not have been given permission to make it.
  13. Could the spirit have made a healthy substance, proper to cure in case of diseases? Has this happened before?
    - Yes; many times.

OBSERVATION: A fact of that kind will be found with a very interesting theoretical explanation in the following article about *A Servant Spirit*.

14. Then it could also have made an edible substance; suppose it had made a fruit or other goodies. Could someone have eaten them and felt satisfied?
  - Yes, yes. But do not try so hard to understand what is simple. A single beam of sunlight is enough to make visible these dense material particles, plentiful around the space in which you live. Don't you know that the air contains water vapor? Condense it and you will have it in

## The Spiritist Review 1859

the natural state. Remove heat and there you have the intangible and invisible molecules turning into solid, very solid. There are other matters that will lead the chemists to show you even more remarkable wonders. It is only the spirit that has more perfect instruments than yours: their own will and God's permission.

OBSERVATION: The question of satisfaction is very important here. How come a substance that only has temporary existence and properties and, to a certain extent, conventional, may produce fulfillment? Through its contact with the stomach that substance produces satiation but not the one resulting from plenitude. If that substance may act upon the physical organization and modify a morbid state it can also act upon the stomach, producing the feeling of satiation. However, we ask the Pharmacists and restaurant owners not to be jealous and do not think that the spirits come to compete with them. Such cases are rare and exceptional and don't ever depend on the will. Otherwise cure and alimentation would be very cheap.

15. Could the spirit make coins in the same way?
  - For the same reason.
16. Since made tangible by the will of the spirit could these objects have a character of permanence and stability?
  - They could but this does not happen. It is out of the laws.
17. All spirits have that same degree of power?
  - No, no.
18. Who are those who more particularly have that power?
  - Those to whom God bestow that, when it is useful.
19. The elevation of a spirit plays a role in such case?
  - It is certain that the more elevated the spirit, the easier to obtain such a power. That however depends on the circumstances. Inferior spirits may also be granted.
20. The production of semi-material objects always takes place from a willful act of the spirit or the spirit sometimes exert such power irrespective of their will?
  - This frequently happens irrespective of the spirit's will.
21. Such a power would then be one of the attributes, a faculty inherent to the very nature of the spirit? It would somehow be an attribute like seeing and hearing?
  - Certainly. However, the spirit sometimes ignores this. Then another spirit employs it, irrespectively, when required by the circumstances. The Zouave's tailor was exactly the spirit that I have just mentioned and to whom he referred with his humorous language.

OBSERVATION: We find an example of such faculty in certain animals, as for example the electric fish that irradiates electricity not knowing what or how it does it, not even knowing the mechanism through which that happens. Don't we sometimes produce certain effects through spontaneous acts that we don't realize? Thus, it seems very natural to us that the spirit may operate under those circumstances through a kind of instinct. The spirit acts through the will, not knowing how, as we walk without calculating the forces at play.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

22. We understand that in both cases reported by Mrs. R..., one of the spirits wanted to have a pipe and the other a snuff-box to impress the vision of a living person. I ask, however, if the spirit were not successful in making her see the object, could the spirit think that he had the object, thus creating the illusion to himself?
- No, if it holds certain superiority, because it would have a perfect awareness of its condition. The same does not apply to the inferior spirits.
- OBSERVATION: That was, for example, the case of the Queen of Oude, whose evocation can be found in the issue of March 1858, who still thought herself covered in diamonds.
23. Can two spirits mutually recognize each other by the appearance that they had when alive?
- That is not how they recognize each other since they will not take that appearance one to the other. If, however, under certain circumstances, they were in the presence of one another, showing that appearance, why wouldn't they recognize each other?
24. How can the spirits recognize one another in the midst of a crowd of other spirits, and above all how can they do it when one goes to a distant place and many times to other worlds looking for someone that we evoke?
- That is a question whose answer would take you a long step forward. It is necessary to wait. You are not sufficiently advanced. At this point in time be satisfied with the certainty that it is like that and you have sufficient proofs of this fact.
25. If the spirit can take the materials to make all these things from the universal element and give them a temporary reality, with their properties, the spirit can also take from there the material to write. Consequently, that gives us the key to the phenomenon of direct writing.
- You finally understand.
26. If the matter that the spirit utilizes is not permanent, how come the traces of the direct writings do not disappear?
- Do not judge from the words. From the beginning I have never said "never". In the studied cases it was related to bulky solid materials. Here it is related to signs that are convenient to preserve and they are preserved.

OBSERVATION: The theory above may be summarized like this: The spirit acts upon matter; takes from the primitive universal matter the elements necessary to willfully form objects with the appearance of several objects that exist on Earth. The spirit can also willfully operate over the elemental matter, producing an intimate transformation that gives determined properties to that matter. That faculty is inherent to the nature of the spirit who frequently exerts it when necessary, like in an unnoticeable instinctive act. The objects formed by the spirits have a temporary existence, subordinated to their will or to the necessity. The spirits can do and undo that at will. In certain cases these objects may have every indication of reality to the eyes of the living persons, that is, may become momentarily visible and even tangible. There is formation but no creation, since the spirit cannot take something from the nothing.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

August 1859

## Pneumatography or Direct Writing

Pneumatography is a writing produced directly by the spirit, without any intermediary. It differs from psychography since the latter takes place through the transmission of the spirit's thought via the writing hand of the medium. We inserted these two words in the Spiritist Vocabulary, in the beginning of our Practical Instruction, with the indication of their etymological difference. Psychography, from the Greek *psykhe* = butterfly, soul, and *graphô* = I write; *Pneumatography*, *pneuma* = air, breath, wind, spirit.

With a writing medium the hand is an instrument, but his soul, the incarnate spirit in the medium, is an intermediary, or agent or interpreter of the strange spirit that communicates. With the pneumatography it is the strange spirit that writes directly, without intermediary.

The phenomenon of direct writing is unarguably one of the most extraordinary areas of Spiritism. However abnormal as it may seem, at first sight, it is today a verified and incontestable fact. If we have not spoken about it yet it is because we expected to be able to explain it after having personally made all the required observations in order to handle the subject with causal knowledge. If the theory is necessary for us to understand the possibility of the spiritist phenomena in general, it is perhaps even more necessary in this case, no doubt one of the strangest ever presented, but which no longer seems supernatural when we understand its principle.

The first revelation of this phenomenon provoked doubt, followed by the idea of deception. In fact, everyone knows the effect of the so-called sympathetic inks, whose traces initially completely invisible, show up after certain time. It could seem that one was abusing people's credulity and we do not guarantee that such trick may have never been used. We are even convinced that certain persons, without any mercenary intention, but exclusively out of self-love and to make others believe in their power, have employed such hoaxes.

J. J. Rousseau reports the following fact in the third letter of those written from *Montagne*:

"In 1743 I saw in Venice a new way of fortune telling, stranger than those of Préneste. Who wanted to consult had to get into a chamber and, if wanted, could stay alone. There, from a book formed by blank pages, the person chose one page to take off; then, holding that page, mentally requested the answer to something that they wished. Then the blank page had to be folded and inserted into an envelope that was then sealed and placed inside a book. Finally, after having repeated certain bizarre formulas, always keeping an eye on the book, the person removed the envelope from the book. The seal was examined and the page removed from the envelope, where there was a written answer."

"The magician who did such tricks was the first secretary of the French Embassy, called J. J. Rousseau."

I doubt that Rousseau had known the direct writing otherwise he would have known other things relatively to the spiritist manifestations and would not have handled the subject so lightheartedly. It is possible, as he himself acknowledged, when we interrogated him about this fact, that he employed a process learned from an Italian charlatan.

However, just because we can imitate something it would be absurd to conclude that such a thing does not exist. Haven't we recently seen means of imitating the somnambulistic lucidity to the point of an illusion of reality? Just because that juggler's trick has gone around all amusement parks should we conclude that there wouldn't be true somnambulists? By the fact that certain merchants sell false wine is there any reason for not finding pure wine? The same happens to the direct writing. The precautions to ensure the reality of the fact were, as a matter of fact, very easy and simple, and thanks to them, there could not be any doubt today.

Once the possibility of writing without intermediary is an attribute of the spirit and considering that the spirits have existed at all times, and also that they have produced the phenomena that we know in all

## The Spiritist Review 1859

epochs, then they equally produced the direct writing in the antiquity as produced in our days. That is how we can explain the appearance of the three words in Belshazzar's feast room (Daniel 5:5). The middle ages, so prolific in occult prodigies, but which were burnt at the stake, must also have known the direct writing and we would probably be able to find it in the theory of the modifications that the spirits may produce over matter, discussed in our previous article – the principle of transmutation of metals. It is a point which we will discuss one of these days.

One of our members have recently told us the story of one of his uncles, a clergyman, that for many years was a missionary in Paraguay; around 1800 he obtained direct writing together with his friend, the renowned Abbot Faria. His method, which our subscriber did not know well, having only superficially observed it, consisted of a series of hanging rings, to which some pencils were vertically adapted and whose tips rested on some sheets of paper. This system represents the infancy of the art. From then on we made progress. Whatever the results obtained at different times, it was not but after the vulgarization of the spiritist manifestations that the direct writing was taken seriously. It seems that the first person to report it in Paris, more recently, was the Baron of Guldenstube, who published a very interesting book about the subject, containing a large number of facsimiles of the direct writings obtained by him.<sup>21</sup> The phenomenon was known in the US for some time. The social position of the Baron; his independence; the respect he enjoyed at the high society, undeniably keep away any suspicion of fraud once he could not be moved by any greedy interest. If that much one could admit that he was a victim of an illusion but there is a fact that peremptorily counters that: the fact that the phenomena are obtained by other persons that have taken all precautions to avoid any possibility of fraud or mistake.

The direct writing is obtained, as in reality the majority of the spiritist manifestations, in an ambient of worshipping, prayer and through evocation.

They have been obtained many times in churches, by the tombs, near statues or images of persons who were called. It is evident, however, that the place has no other influence but that of allowing better reverence and concentration of thoughts, since it is demonstrated that those communications may also be obtained without those accessories and in the most common places, like over a simple piece of furniture at home, as long as we hold the required moral conditions and enjoy the mediumistic faculty.

In the beginning there was an assumption that it was necessary to have a pencil and a piece of paper. The fact could be explained up to a certain extent. It is a known fact that the spirits move and displace objects, that sometimes take them and thrown them in the air. Then they could also take a pencil and utilize it to write characters; they do the same with the hand of the medium, using a planchette, etc. to obtain the direct writing. However, it did not take long to discover that the presence of the pencil was unnecessary and that a simple piece of paper was enough, folded or not, on which the characters were found after a few minutes. The phenomenon completely changes its aspect here, throwing us into an entirely new order of things. The characters are traced with any given substance. As that substance has not been supplied to the spirit then the spirit made it himself. Where has the spirit taken it from? That is the problem.

The Russian General, Count of B..., showed us the first ten lines from a poem, obtained in such a manner through the Baron of Guldenstube's sister, by placing a single piece of paper, torn off from her own notebook, under the clock's pedestal, by the chimney. After a few minutes she found fine characters written on the paper, in perfect German. Through a writing medium the spirit asked her to burn that paper; as she hesitated, afraid of sacrificing such a precious specimen, the spirit added: "Don't be afraid. I will

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21 La réalité des Esprits et de leurs manifestations, démontrée par le phénomène de l'écriture directe. By the Baron of Guldenstube: 1 vol. in-8, with 15 slides and 93 facsimile. Price 8 francs at Rue de Richelieu. Also found in the Dentu and Ledoyen bookstores.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

give you another one.” Having that promise she threw the paper in the fire, then she prepared a second sheet, also torn off from her notebook, on which the verses were reproduced exactly in the same way as before. It was this second edition that we saw and carefully examined and – strange thing – the characters presented signs of pressure as if they had just been produced.

Thus, it is not with pencil and paper that the spirits may operate but also with ink and printing characters.

One of our honorable friends from the Society, Mr. Didier, a few days ago obtained the following results which we had the opportunity of attesting and whose authenticity we can guarantee. He had gone to Our Lady Victory’s Church, with Mrs. Het, who had obtained results of this kind not long ago; he took a sheet of paper containing the headings of his commercial outfit, folded it in four and placed it over the steps of an altar, asking for a good spirit to come to write something in the name of God. After worshipping for ten minutes he found on the bottom side of the paper, in one of the folds, the word *faith*, and in another fold the word *God*. Then, after having asked for the kindness of the spirit to identify himself, he placed the paper back on the steps and after ten minutes he found these words: *by Fénelon*.

Eight days later he wanted to repeat the experiment, on July 12<sup>th</sup>, going then to the Louvre, in the room Coyzevox, located in the clock pavilion. He placed a folded piece of paper, like on the first occasion, over the basis of the bust of Bossuet, obtaining nothing. A five-year-old boy was with him and he had placed the boy’s hat on the pedestal of the statue of Louis XV, just a few feet away from the other one. Considering his experiment unsuccessful, he was ready to leave when he noticed under the boy’s hat, apparently written with pencil, on the marble, the words “Love God”, followed by the letter “B”. The first thought of the observers was that such words might have been written before, by strange hands, going unnoticed. In any case, they wished to obtain a new proof, thus placing the folded paper on top of those words, covering it with the hat. After a few minutes they noticed that the paper contained three letters. They replaced the paper, requesting that the phrase be completed, obtaining: “Love God”; that is the same that was written on the marble, without the letter “B”. It was then evident that the first words had been written through direct writing. Still sticking out was the curious fact that the letters were traced successfully and not at once, considering that on the occasion of the first inspection the phrase had not been concluded yet! Once he left the Louvre, Mr. Didier went to Saint-Germain l’Auxerrois where, through the same process, obtained the words - *Be Humble. Fénelon* - very clearly written. These words can still be seen on the referred statue.

The substance that forms the characters has total similarity with graphite and it is easily erased. We examined it in the microscope, verifying that it is not incorporated to the paper but simply irregularly deposited on its surface, forming a roughness similar to certain crystallizations. The erased part shows a dark layer introduced in the cavities of the paper’s wrinkles. Carefully removed these layers are the actual matter used in the operation. We regret to say that the small amount of material recovered did not allow us to make a proper chemical analysis. We have not lost hope, however, of doing that one day.

We refer the reader to our preceding article, where one can find the whole explanation of the phenomenon.

In this kind of writing the spirit does not use any of our substances nor any of our instruments. The spirit himself creates the substance and the instruments required, taking the material from the primitive universal element which, by the action of the spirit’s will, suffers the modifications necessary to the effect that he wants to produce. The spirit thus can produce the printing tone as well as the common ink and the graphite of the pencil; and even produce typographic characters strong enough to produce a ripple effect onto the impression.

This is the result that led us to the phenomenon of the snuffbox from our previous article, and about which we have elaborated a lot as we have seen an opportunity to probe one of the most serious laws of Spiritism, whose knowledge may shed light onto several enigmas, even from the invisible world. That is how, from an apparently vulgar phenomenon, light can shine out. The most important thing from it all is

## The Spiritist Review 1859

to carefully observe what everyone can do, as we can, not limiting ourselves to seeing the effects without seeking the causes. If our faith stood up from one day to the next it was because we understood. If you want to produce serious proselytes have them understood. The knowledge of causes has another result: it delineates the borderline between truth and superstition.

If we look at the direct writing with respect to the advantages it may offer we would say that up until now its main function was that of leading us to the material confirmation of an important fact: the intervention of a supernatural power that uses another means of manifestation. However, the communications obtained by such process are rarely extensive. They are generally spontaneous, limited to a few words, sentences, and sometimes to unintelligible signs. They have been obtained in several languages, such as Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, etc., or in hieroglyphic characters, but have not been used in continual and quick conversations, as allowed by the psychography or the hand writing of the mediums.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

## August 1859 A Servant Spirit

We extracted the following passages from a letter of one of our correspondents from Bordeaux:

“Here you have, my dear Mr. Allan Kardec, a new report of extraordinary facts which I submit to your appreciation, requesting your kindness in verifying them, evoking the spirit who produced them.”

“A young lady, here called Mrs. Mally, is the person that operates as an intermediary to the manifestations that constitute the subject of this letter. She lives in Bordeaux and is the mother of three children.”

“She has had visions since the age of nine. One night, coming to the house with her family, she sees at the corner of the stairs, the distinct form of her aunt, who died four or five years back. She says in surprise: A! My aunt! And the vision disappears. Two years later she heard a voice calling her, which she assumed was from her aunt. The call was so strong that she said: Come in aunt. As nobody come in she went to get the door. As she saw nobody she went downstairs asking her mother if she had seen anyone going upstairs.”

“A few years later we find this lady under the influence of a guide, or familiar spirit, who seems to be in charge of watching over her and her children, doing a number of small services in the house, among others waking up the sick ones when it is time for their tea, or waking up those who need to go out. He reveals his moral state through other manifestations. His character is not very serious; adding to the signs of frivolity he has however given proof of sensibility and dedication.”

“Mrs. Mally generally sees him under the form of a spark or a great clarity but to the children he appears under a human form. A somnambulist said that she was the one who gave Mrs. Mally that guide, over whom she would have influence. When Mrs. Mally spent some time without worrying about her guide he took care of reminding her through some more or less unpleasant visions. Every time, for example, that she went downstairs, she noticed a shiny cadaver covered by bed sheets. This lady has a strong strength of character, as we will see later. Nevertheless, she could not avoid suffering a painful impression from all that. She would seek refuge in her mother’s room, quickly closing the door behind her. On other occasions she would have the impression that her clothes were pulled or that someone or some animal touched her.

This naughtiness stopped as soon as she addressed one thought to her guide or when the somnambulist warned the spirit, prohibiting him from tormenting the lady.”

“In 1856 the third daughter of Mrs. Mally, a four-year old girl, fell ill. It was in August. The child was permanently in a state of sleepiness, interrupted by convulsions. For eight days I saw the child myself, who seemed to have come out of that state, taking a happy and smiley expression, eyes half closed, not looking around to those who surrounded her; then she would extend her hand in a gracious gesture, as if receiving something; she would take it to her mouth and eat, then appreciate that with a delightful smile. During those eight days the child was fed by that invisible food and her body recovered the usual appearance and freshness. When she was able to speak she seemed to have come out of a profound sleep, describing wonderful visions.”

“During the recovery in the same house, on August 25<sup>th</sup>, there was the appearance of a non-entity. Around 10:30 pm Mrs. Mally was walking downstairs, holding the child by the hand when she noticed a person walking upstairs. The stairwell was perfectly clear, receiving light from the kitchen, so that Mrs. Mally could distinguish very well the person who had the appearance of a healthy person. They met face to face at the stairway landing.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

It was a young man of pleasant expression, well dressed, wearing a hat and having something in his hand that she could not figure out. Surprised by such an unexpected meeting, at that time and using the service stairs, Mrs. Mally stared at him not saying a word, not even asking what he wanted. The unknown person observed her for a moment, then turned back and went downstairs, rubbing the object he had in his hand on the handrail, producing a noise similar to a wooden stick. As soon as he disappeared Mrs. Mally dashed into the living room where I was shouting that there was an intruder in the house. We searched with the help of my dog. Every corner of the house was examined. We noticed that the main door to the street was closed; that nobody could have entered and that it would not have been possible to close it without a noise. It was unlikely then that an intruder had come to a lighted staircase, at the time when there was a good chance of being seen by people from any room of the house. On another hand, how could a stranger have been found walking on the stairs? In any case, had he been there by mistake he would have said so to Mrs. Mally. Instead he turned his back on her and calmly left, like someone who is not in a hurry nor is a stranger to the whereabouts. All those facts left no doubt about the nature of that individual.”

“That spirit manifests itself several times through noises which are similar to the drums; by violent blows on the stove; by stumping feet at the doors which open on their own; or by noises of gravel thrown at the windows. One day Mrs. Mally was in the kitchen when she saw the doors of a cabinet opening and closing several times, as if done so by an invisible hand. Other times, when starting a fire she would feel someone pulling her dress or holding her heel when climbing the stairs. Several times she had the scissors and other working objects hidden from her and after having already looked for them for a long time she would have them deposited on her lap.”

“On a given Sunday she was working in the kitchen, seasoning a knuckle of ham when the garlic clove was taken from her hands. She thought it had fallen, she then tried to find it, unsuccessfully. She then turned the ham, finding the garlic buried in a triangular hole, without the skin, as if indicating that someone had intentionally hidden the garlic there.”

“Mrs. Mally was strolling around with her oldest daughter, the four year old, when she noticed that the child was entertained by an invisible being which seemed to be asking for the kid’s candies. The girl would close her hand and say:

- These are mine. If you want you can buy yours.

Surprised, the mother asked who she was talking to.

- It is this boy that wants me to give him my candies.
- Who is this boy? The mother asked.
- This boy here by my side.
- But I see nobody.
- Ah! He is gone. He was wearing a white frizzled garment.”

“On another occasion the sick girl that I have already mentioned was entertaining herself, making paper birds.

- Mummy, mummy! Stop this boy. He wants to take my paper.
- Who? The mother asked.
- This boy, he took my paper. And the child was crying.
- But where is he?
- There! He is leaving through the window. Naughty boy.”

“The same girl was one day hopping on her toes to the point of becoming breathless, despite her mother’s urging to stop as the mother was afraid she would hurt herself. She suddenly stopped and said: Ah! It is Mom’s direction. When asked about the meaning of that she said that she had seen an arm holding her, forcing her to stop. She added that she was not afraid and that she immediately thought that it was her

## The Spiritist Review 1859

mother's direction. Facts of that nature have repeated constantly, becoming familiar to the children that have no fear since the thought of their mother's guide immediately comes to mind."

"The intervention of that guide has manifested in more serious circumstances. Mrs. Mally had rented a house with a garden in the commune of Caudéran. The house was isolated, surrounded by vast prairies. She lived alone with the children and a young woman tutor. The neighborhood was then infested by criminals who used to vandalize properties around and that had naturally set their eyes on her property since they knew that it was inhabited by two women only, thus they used to come every night to try to force the doors and windows. For three years in a row Mrs. Mally lived in that house, constantly alarmed, but every night she would deliver herself to God. After her prayer, her spiritual guide manifested in the form of a spark. Several times, at night, when the outlaws tried to force their way into the house, a sudden flash of light illuminated her room and she heard a voice telling her: 'Don't be afraid. They will not come in.'"

"In fact, they had never been successful when trying to enter the house. Despite that, and for precaution, she had acquired firearms. One evening when she saw them coming around the house she fired her gun twice, hitting one of them because she heard the groaning. But they had disappeared the next day. The fact was reported by a Bordeaux newspaper as follows:"

"We have been informed about a fact that demonstrates the courage of a young lady who lives in the commune of Caudéran."

"A lady that occupies an isolated house in that commune has for companion another young lady who is in charge of educating her children."

"On the eve of the fact that we will report, the lady was victim of an attempt theft. They have then decided to be on the watch, and if necessary at night."

"They did what they had planned to do. Then when the thieves showed up to conclude their unfinished business of the previous night they found a reception. They were careful enough not to establish any dialogue with the inhabitants of the surrounded house. When the young lady felt their presence she opened the door and fired a gun shot which may have hit one of the thieves since they found blood stains in the yard."

"So far the responsible persons for that second attempt have not been found."

"I will speak about other manifestations that occurred in that same house in Caudéran, while those young ladies were there. Strange noises were frequently heard at night, like balls rolling on the floor or firewood thrown on the ground. However, everything was in perfect order in the morning."

"In case you think it to be convenient please evoke the guide of Mrs. Mally and question him about the manifestations that I have reported. Kindly ask him in particular if the somnambulist who has supposedly given her that guide has the power of recalling him and if he would leave in case the somnambulist died."

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

August 1859

## Mrs. Mally's Guide

PARISIAN SOCIETY, JULY 8<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. (Evocation of Mrs. Mally's guide)
  - Here I am. This is easy to me.
2. How can we call you?
  - However you wish. Use the name by which you know me already.
3. What was the reason that attached you to Mrs. Mally and her children?
  - First of all, old relationships; then a friendship, a sympathy always protected by God.
4. They say that it was a somnambulist, Mrs. Dupuy, who assigned you to Mrs. Mally. Is that true?
  - It was the somnambulist who affirmed that I was with her.
5. Do you depend on that somnambulist?
  - No.
6. Could she keep you away from that lady?
  - No.
7. In case the somnambulist died would that have any influence on you?
  - None.
8. Was it long ago since you left your body?
  - Yes, many years ago.
9. What were you then?
  - A boy, deceased when I was eight years old.
10. As a spirit are you happy or unhappy?
  - Happy. I have no personal concerns about the others and if I suffer it is because of them.
11. Was that you who appeared to Mrs. Mally at the stairway, making her suppose that was an intruder?
  - No, it was a companion.
12. How about the other day, in the form of a cadaver? That could impress her unpleasantly. That was a naughty thing that demonstrates lack of benevolence.
  - Far from that, in many cases, but in that one the intention was to stimulate more courageous thoughts in Mrs. Mally. What is so frightening about a cadaver?
13. You then have the power of becoming visible at will?
  - Yes, but as I said it was not me.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

14. Then you don't have anything to do with the other manifestations that took place in her house either?
  - Excuse me! That I do. It was what I have imposed myself to do on her side, as a material work, but I do another work for her, much more useful and serious.
15. Can you become visible to everyone?
  - Yes.
16. Could you become visible here, to one of us?
  - Yes if you ask God for that. I can but I dare not.
17. If you don't want to become visible could you at least give us a manifestation, as for example, bringing anything to this table?
  - Certainly, but what would be the usefulness? For her that is how I give testimony of my presence, but for you it would be useless since we are talking.
18. Wouldn't the obstacle be the lack of a medium, needed to produce such manifestations?
  - No, that is a small obstacle. Don't you frequently see sudden apparitions to persons without any mediumistic faculty?
19. Then everyone is capable of seeing spontaneous apparitions?
  - Yes, since every human being is a medium.
20. However, doesn't the spirit find better conditions in the organization of certain persons in order to communicate?
  - Yes but I told you – and you must know – that the spirits have the power on their own. The medium is nothing. Don't you have the direct writing? Do you need a medium for that? You only need faith and this sometimes happens even in spite of human beings, that is, without faith and desire.
21. Do you think that the manifestations, like the direct writing for example, will become more common than in our days?
  - Certainly. How do you understand the full potential of Spiritism without spreading in more direct ways like this?
22. Can you explain to us what was it that Mrs. Mally's daughter took in her hand and ate when she was sick?
  - It was manna; a substance created by us that contains the principle of an ordinary manna and the sweetness of the sugar.
23. Is that substance formed in the same way as the clothes and other objects which the spirits produce at their will and by the action exerted upon matter?
  - Yes but the elements are very different. The ingredients that form the manna are not the same that I used to create wood or clothes.
24. (to St. Louis) Were the elements utilized by the spirit to form the manna different from those utilized to form other things? We have always been told that there is only one primitive universal element, from which all bodies are simple modifications.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Yes. It means that such a primitive element is in space, here under a given form, there under another. This is what he means. He obtains his manna from one part of that element that he supposes different, but it is always the same.
25. The magnetic action through which one can give special properties to a given substance, like the water for example, does it bear a relationship with that of the spirit that creates one substance?
- The magnetizer does not employ anything beyond his own will. It is a spirit that helps him who is in charge of preparing the medicine.
26. (to the guide) Sometime ago we reported curious facts of manifestations of a spirit who we called "the Gnome of Bayonne". Do you know that spirit?
- Not particularly, but I followed what you did regarding his case and that was how I learned about him.
27. Is he a spirit of inferior order?
- Does inferior mean bad? No. If simply meaning not entirely good, not much advanced? Yes.
28. We thank you for your kindness in coming to us and for the explanations you gave us.
- At your service.

OBSERVATION: This communication offers a complement to what we have said in the two preceding articles about the formation of certain bodies by the spirits. The spirits prepared the substance given to the child during her illness. This manna added in her healing. Where did they take this material from? They took it from the universal element, transformed for the desired application. This strange phenomenon of the properties transmitted through magnetic action, an unexplained problem we outline below, which has entertained the incredulous, is now resolved. In fact, we know that it is not only the spirits of the dead that act but also the living ones that have their part in the action in the invisible world. The man with the snuffbox gives us this proof.

What is remarkable about the fact that the wishes of a person, acting for the good, may operate transformations in the primitive matter, giving it special properties? In our opinion this is the key to many supposedly supernatural phenomena, which we will have the opportunity to talk about. That is how, through observation, we come to observe things that are part of the reality and wonderful. However, who can assure that such a theory is true? Be it! It has at least the merit of being rational and in perfect agreement with the observed facts. If any human brain finds another theory more logical than this one given by the spirits, may them be compared. One day, perhaps, we will be thanked for opening the path to the rational study of Spiritism.

Someone told us the other day: "I really liked to have a servant spirit at my command, even to the price of having to bear some of its tricks."

It is a satisfaction that we all enjoy unnoticeably, for not all spirits who assist us manifest in an ostensive way, but it does not mean that they are not by our side, and just because their influence is occult, it is not less real.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**



# The Spiritist Review 1859

August 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Voltaire and Frederic

Dialogue obtained through two mediums that served as interpreters to these spirits, in the session of the Society on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1859.

### Prior Questions to Voltaire

1. What is your situation as a spirit?
  - Errant, but regretful.
2. What do you do as a spirit?
  - I tear off the veil of error that I thought was the light of truth when alive.
3. What do you think about your writings in general?
  - My spirit was dominated by pride for I had the mission of giving an impulse to a people in their infancy. My books are a consequence of this.
4. What can you say particularly about your *Joan of Arc*?
  - It is a diatribe. I did worse things.
5. When alive, what were your thoughts about life after death?
  - Come on, you know well that I only believed in matter; and it dies.
6. Were you an atheist in the true meaning of the word?
  - I was proud; I denied the Divinity from pride, which made me suffer and for which I regret.
7. Would you like to talk to Frederic, who has also kindly accepted our evocation? Such a conversation would be instructive to us.
  - If Frederic wishes, I am at your service.

Voltaire – My dear monarch, as you see I acknowledge my mistakes and I am far from speaking as I did in my books. Formerly we gave the spectacles of our turpitude; now we are obliged to give that of our regret and our desire to get to know the great and pure truth.

Frederic – I supposed you were less good than you really are.

Voltaire – A power that we are obliged to adore and acknowledge in its whole sovereignty, forcing our soul to proclaim, perhaps to those abused by us, a completely opposite doctrine from the one that we professed.

Frederic – It is true, my dear Arouet, but let us pretend no more. All veils have fallen.

Voltaire – We left so many disasters behind us that many tears will be needed for our pardon and acquittal. We can never be united enough in order to erase and repair the harm we have caused.

Frederic – We must consider also that the century that praised us was very poor in its judgment and that just a little is needed to fascinate people. It was nothing more than some audacity.

Voltaire – How come? We made a lot of noise in our century!

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Frederic – It was that noise that has suddenly fallen into complete silence and threw us into the bitter reflection, almost regret. I deplore my life but how bored I am for no longer being Frederic! So do you for not being Mr. Voltaire any longer.

Voltaire – Then speak for yourself Majesty.

Frederic – Yes, I suffer; but don't say that again.

Voltaire – You have abdicated then! You will later do as I did.

Frederic – I cannot.

Voltaire – You asked me to be your guide and I will still do that. I will only make sure that you don't get negatively influenced in the future. If you can read find here what can be useful to you. It is not the Highnesses who question you but spirits who seek and find the truth with the help of God.

Frederic – Take me by the hand then; design a line of conduct, if you can... let us wait... but it will be for you... As for myself I am very perturbed and this has lasted a century already.

Voltaire – You still incite in me the desire to be proud of being better than yourself. This is not generous. Become good and humble so that I can become humble as well.

Frederic – Yes but the hallmark left in my heart by my Majesty always impedes me from humiliating myself as you can do. My heart is tough like a rock, arid like the desert, dry like sand.

Voltaire – Are you a poet then? I did not know that was a skill of yours, Sir!

Frederic – You pretend... you... I ask only one thing from God: to forget the past... an incarnation of trial and work.

Voltaire – It is better. I am with you but I feel that I will have to wait for a long time for my remission and forgiveness.

Frederic – Well my friend; let us then pray together once.

Voltaire – I always do that since God decided to take away my veil of flesh.

Frederic – What do you think about these men who call us here?

Voltaire – They can judge us and we can only humble ourselves before them.

Frederic – They bother me. Their ideas are very strange.

(Question to Frederic) – What is your opinion about Spiritism?

- You are wiser than we are. Don't you live in a century after ours? Although we are in heavens since then, we have just got there.
- We thank you for attending our appeal as well as your friend Voltaire.

Voltaire – We will return whenever you want.

Frederic – Don't evoke me many times... I am not as sympathetic to this.

- Why aren't you sympathetic?
- I disdain and find myself contemptuous.

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1859

(Evocation of Voltaire)

- Speak.

1. What do you think about Frederic, now that he is no longer here?

- He rationalizes very well but he did not want to explain himself. As he told you, he disdains, and such disdain for everybody blocks him from opening up, afraid of not being understood.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

2. Then can you kindly cover for him, telling us what he understands by “I disdain and find myself contemptuous”?
  - Yes. He feels weak and corrupted, as all of us; perhaps he understands even better than we do since he has abused, more than the others, the gifts of God.
3. How do you see him as a Monarch?
  - Skillful.
4. Do you consider him a righteous man?
  - You should not ask that. Don't you know his actions?
5. Could you give us a more precise idea about your occupations as a spirit?
  - No. At every moment of my life I discover the goodness under another point of view and I try to practice it, or at least, to learn to practice it. When someone had an existence like mine there are many prejudices to combat, many thoughts to repel or change completely, before the truth is reached.
6. We wish you could write a dissertation about a subject of your choice. Could you do that?
  - About Christ, if you want.
7. In this session?
  - Later. Wait for another session.

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1859

1. (Evocation of Voltaire)
  - I am here.
2. Could you kindly write the dissertation that you promised?
  - I can do what I promised, however, I will be brief.

My dear friends! When I was among your parents I had opinions and to sustain them, making them prevail among the contemporary, I many times simulated a conviction that I did not have. That is how, on trying to attack the defects and vices of religion, I sustained a thesis that I am now condemned to refute.

I attacked many pure and saint things that should have been respected by my profane hand. That is how I attacked Christ himself, this model of superhuman virtues. Yes, poor people! We will show perhaps some similarity to our model but will never have the dedication and holiness that he demonstrated to us. He will always be above us for he was better before us. We were still immersed in vice and corruption and he was already seated on the right hand side of God. Here, before you, I retract from everything I have done with my pen against Christ, for I love him, yes I do love him. I regret for not had been able to do it yet.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

August 1859

## Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

NOTE: According to the announcement, from now on we will publish the bulletin of the works of the Society. Each number will contain the report of the previous month's session. These bulletins will only give a brief summary of the works and the minutes of each session. Regarding the obtained communications, as well as the others from strange sources that were read, we will always publish them entirely, as long as they offer something of useful and instructive. We will continue to indicate the date of the sessions as we have done so far. The abundance of material and the need for classification sometimes force an inversion in the order of certain documents. This is not important since sooner or later they will find their place.

Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859  
(Private session)

Administrative matters:

Admission of Mr. S... corresponding member from Bordeaux.

Postponement until broader information is available, membership of two members presented on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.

Designation of three new chairmen for the general sessions.

Reading of the minutes of the previous session in June.

Communications:

Mr. Allan Kardec announces that he was with Mr. W... son, from Bologne-sur-Mer, covered in the issue of December 1858 of the Review, regarding an article about the phenomenon of bi-corporeity. He confirmed the fact of his simultaneous presence in Boulogne and London.

Letter from Mr. S..., a corresponding member from Bordeaux, containing precise details about interesting manifestations and apparitions of his personal knowledge from a familiar spirit. The letter is published in this issue as well as the evocation related to the subject.

Dr. Morh ry awards the Society with two cantatas whose lyrics were authored by him, entitled *Italia* and *Venetian*. Although the productions are completely strange to the works of the Society, they were thankfully accepted.

Mr. Th... notes that, with respect to the communication of Christopher Columbus, obtained in the previous session that his answers related to his mission and that of the spirits in general seem to bless the doctrine of fatality.

Several members contested such consequence of the answers given by Christopher Columbus, since the mission does not subtract from the spirit the freedom of doing or not doing something. The human being is not fatally impelled to do this or that thing. It may happen that, as an individual, the person behaves more or less blindly but as spirit is always aware of his actions. Supposing that the principle of fatality was derived from Columbus' answers, this would not be the consecration of a principle that has been contested by the spirits all the time. At any rate, it is only a personal opinion. Well, the Society is far from accepting it as an irrefutable truth since the Society is aware that the spirits may be wrong. A spirit may well say that it is the Sun that turns and not the Earth that would not be more truthful just because it had come from a spirit. We take the answers by their value. Our objective is to study the individualities, whatever their degree of advancement or inferiority. We thus acquire the knowledge about the moral state

## The Spiritist Review 1859

of the invisible world, giving no credit to the doctrine of the spirits, unless fit to reason and common sense and when there is real light in them. When an answer is illogical or erroneous, we conclude that the spirit that gave that answer is delayed. That is all. As for Columbus' answers, there is no implication of fatality whatsoever.

Studies:

Questions about the long lasting perturbation of Dr. Glower, evoked on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Questions about the causes of the painful physical sensations produced on Mr. W... son, from Boulogne, by suffering spirits.

Questions about the theory behind the formation of material objects in the world of the spirits, such as outfits, jewelry, etc. and the transformation of the elemental matter by the spirit.

Explanation about the phenomenon of direct writing (see our article "Pneumatography or Direct Writing" in this issue)

Evocation of a high ranked officer killed in Magenta (second conversation); questions about certain sensations beyond the grave.

Proposal put forward by Mr. S... for the evocation of Mr. M..., disappeared for a month, in order to know if he is dead or alive. When questioned about it St. Louis said that such evocation cannot be made; that the uncertainty about the fate of that man has the objective of a trial and that later, through ordinary means, one will know what happened.

Friday July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1859  
(General session)

Reading of the minutes and works of previous session.

Communications:

Reading of two spontaneous communications obtained by Mr. R..., member: one from St. Louis, giving advice to the Society as for the modes of assessment of the answers given by the spirits; another from Lamennais. They will be published in the next issue.

Reading of the news about Deacon Pâris and the convulsions of Saint-Médard, prepared by the working committee as a matter for study.

Mr. Didier, member, reported curious experiences he carried out about the direct writing and the remarkable results obtained.

Studies:

Evocation of the familiar or guide spirit of Mrs. Mally from Bordeaux, regarding the news transmitted by Mr. S... about the manifestations produced in her house, read in the previous session.

Evocation of Mr. K... deceased on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1859, in the Department of Sarthe. Mr. K..., a righteous man, very educated, was versed in spiritist studies and the evocation carried out after the request of his family and relatives, confirming the influence of those studies upon the state of detachment of his soul after death. Besides, it spontaneously revealed the important fact of the spirits nightly visits among the spirits of living persons. Grave consequences are derived from this fact for the solution of certain moral and psychological problems.

Friday July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1859  
(Private session)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Reading of the minutes of previous session.

Administrative matters:

On the request of several members and considering that many persons are absent during this season, the President proposes, according to what is established in all societies, that a period of vacations be established. The Society decides to suspend the sessions during August, resuming its activities on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Cr..., deputy secretary, writes requesting his substitution, due to new occupations which do not allow him to regularly take part since the beginning of the sessions. His replacement will be done in due course.

Communications:

Reading of a letter from Mr. Jobard, from Brussels, Honorary President of the Society, reporting some facts relative to Spiritism and offering a song to the Society entitled "The Zuavo's Song", inspired by the evocation of The Zouave of Magenta, published in the July issue of the Review. The song was presented in the Brussels' Theater. The aim of that song, in which the spiritual inspiration of the author unfolds, is to show that the spiritist ideas have the effect of destroying the apprehensions of death.

Mr. D... reports new facts about the direct writing, obtained by him in The Louvre and in Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois (see article "Pneumatography or Direct Writing" in this issue).

Reading of a letter addressed to the President with respect to the storm of Solferino. The author indicates several similar facts and asks if there wouldn't be something of providential in such coincidence. This question was answered through a question addressed to the high ranked official deceased in Magenta. As a matter of fact, this conversation will be the subject of a more detailed examination.

Letter from Mrs. L... in which she mentions a mystification that victimized her from the part of a malevolent spirit that pretended to be St. Vincent of Paul, who deceived her with an apparently elevated language, providing details about her and her family, inducing her to compromising attitudes. The letter itself indicates to the Society that the spirit had revealed his nature by certain facts that would not allow any doubt regarding his identification.

Studies:

Moral problems and several questions: About the merit of the good deeds, aiming at the future life; about the missions of the spirits; about the influence of the type or the wish of death; about the intuitive mediums.

Questions about nightly visit among living persons.

Evocation of Deacon Pâris.

Evocation of the false spirit of St. Vincent of Paul, mystifying spirit of Mrs. L...

Friday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1859

(General Session)

Reading of the minutes of previous session.

Communications:

Reading of a private communication from the member Mr. R..., about the theory of madness, dreams, hallucinations and somnambulism, by the spirits of Francois Arago and St. Vincent of Paul. That theory is a scientific and rational development of the principles already issued about the subject, to be published in the next issue.

Mr. R... communicates a recent fact of apparition. He was acquainted with Mr. Fume. On the day of his funeral, Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Fume appeared to the wife of Mr. R... at night, with the same appearance

## The Spiritist Review 1859

as he had when alive, trying to approach her, while another spirit, whose face she could not distinguish, held him by the arm, trying to keep him away. Perturbed by such a vision she covered her eyes but continued to see him as before. On the next day, that lady who is a writing medium, like her husband, started to frenetically trace irregular characters that seemed to form the name Fume. In fact, another spirit that was questioned about it, responded that Mr. Fume wanted to communicate with them, but in his current state of perturbation he hardly recognizes himself, adding that it would be necessary eight more days before evoking him, so that he could communicate freely.

Dr. V... reports a case of spirits' prediction, which took place in his presence, even more remarkable for the accuracy of dates provided by the spirits. About six weeks ago a lady of his acquaintance, an excellent psychographic medium, received a communication from the spirit of her father. Suddenly, and without provocation, her father started to spontaneously talk about the Italian war. He was asked if the war would end soon. He answered that the peace would be signed on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Not giving importance to that prediction Mr. V... inserted the answer in a sealed envelope and sent it to a third person, recommending that it should not be open before July 11<sup>th</sup>. It is a fact that the event happened as announced.

It is worth noting that when the spirits talk about things of the future they do so spontaneously, certainly because they consider it useful to do so; however, they never do that when provoked by curiosity.

Studies:

Moral problems and diverse questions.

Complementary questions about the merit of the good actions; about the spirit's visits and about the direct writing.

Questions about the intervention of the spirits in the phenomena of nature, like the storms, and about the attributions of certain spirits.

Complementary questions about the Deacon Pâris and the convulsions of Saint-Médard.

Evocation of General Hoche.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

**August 1859**

**To Mr. L... de Limoges**

*We kindly ask the person who took the burden of writing to us from Limoges, indicating interesting documents relatively to Spiritism, to facilitate our direct contact, allowing us to respond to the questions which we had the honor of receiving from him. The lack of space does not allow the publication of certain passages of your letter.*

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>22</sup>

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## Process to Send the Bad Spirits Away

The intervention of deceiving spirits in the written communications is one of the greatest difficulties of Spiritism. It is known from experience that they do not have any scruples in taking supposedly pretense and even respectable names. Is there a way of keeping them away? That is the question. In order to keep them away certain persons employ what we call processes, that is, particular formulas of evocation, or some sort of exorcism, as for example making them swear in the name of God that they are telling the truth, making them write something, etc. We know a person who requires the spirit to sign their name, phrase by phrase. If the spirit is truthful he writes without any difficulty; otherwise they stop right in the middle, incapable of concluding. We have seen this person receiving the most ridiculous communications, from spirits that signed a false name with a clean face. Other people think that an efficient way is to make them confess to Jesus or other principles of religion.

Well then, we declare that if some more scrupulous spirits stop before the idea of perjury or profanation, others swear whatever we want, signing all names, laughing at everything, profaning the most venerable signs, from which we can conclude that among those things called processes there is no formula or material action which can serve as an efficient antidote.

In such a case some may say that the only thing to do is to stop writing. This would not be the solution. Far from that, in many cases that would be worse. We have said, and it is never too much to repeat, that the actions of the spirits upon us are incessant and not less real for being supernatural. If it is going to be bad, it will be even worse by the simple fact that the enemy is hidden. He has revealed through the written communications, he is unmasked; we get to know whom we are dealing with and we can fight it.

However, if there is no means of keeping them away, what to do then?

We did not say that there is no way but that most employed means are inefficient. That is the thesis that we propose to develop.

One needs to keep in mind that the spirits form a whole world, a whole population that fills up the space; that circulates around us; that meddles into everything that we do. If the veil that hides them from us were lifted we would see them around us, coming and going; following or avoiding us, according to their degree of sympathy, some indifferent, true vagabonds of the invisible world; others too busy with themselves or with other men to whom they connect with a more or less worthy purpose, according to their distinct qualities.

In one word, we would see a replica of our humanity, with good and bad qualities, with their virtues and vices. Such involvement, from which we cannot escape since there is no single corner sufficiently hidden to the point of becoming inaccessible to the spirits, exert upon us, irrespective of our will, a permanent influence. Some impel us to the good deeds, others to evil, and frequently our attitudes are the result of their suggestions. We are fortunate when our judgment is good enough to distinguish between the good and the bad path to which they try to drag us.

Considering that the spirits are nothing else but men without the gross envelope or souls that outlive the bodies, it follows that there are spirits since there are human beings in the Universe. They are one of the forces of nature and they have not waited for the mediums to act. The proof is that people have committed inconsequences at all times, the reason why we say that their influence is independent of the faculty of writing. This faculty is a means of recognizing such an influence; of knowing who are the ones wandering around us, attached to us. Thinking that we can subtract ourselves from that by not writing is to act like the children who think to be able to avoid danger by blindfolding themselves. By revealing those that we have as companion, friends or enemies, the writing offers us a weapon to combat the enemies, for which we must be thankful to God. Instead of a clairvoyance to be able to recognize the spirits we have the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

written communications through which they show what they are. That is a sense that allows us to judge them. Denying such a sense is the same as gladly accepting blindness and exposing oneself to uncontrolled mistakes.

Then, the intervention of the bad spirits with the written communications is not a danger of Spiritism since if there is danger it continues and will always continue to exist, despite all that. We need to be convinced of the following: this is only a difficulty but over which it is easy to triumph, if we address the issue conveniently.

We can establish as a principle the fact that the bad spirits will only be where there is something attractive to them. Thus, when they meddle into the communications it is due to the fact that they sympathize with the environment where they present themselves, or they at least find weak spots from which they expect to take advantage. In any case it is clear that they do not find a strong enough moral force to repel them.

Among the causes which attract them we must include first the moral imperfections of all kinds, since evil always sympathize with evil; second, the excessive confidence with which their words are received.

When a communication indicates a bad origin it would be logical to infer that there is parity between the spirit and the evokers. We frequently see very honest persons exposed to the mockery of deceiving spirits, as it does happen in the world with decent people, cheated by rascals; but when we take precautions the rascals have nothing else to do. That is what also happens with the spirits.

When an honest person is deceived by them this can happen for two reasons: first, there is an absolute trust which fails an adequate examination; second, the best qualities do not exclude certain weak spots which provide entry to the bad spirits, willing to discover the minuscule openings in the armor. We do not speak of pride and ambition that are more than hurdles. We speak of a certain weakness of character and particularly about the preconceived ideas that these spirits skillfully exploit, flattering them. That is why they wear all masks to inspire trust.

The open gross communications are the least dangerous since they cannot trick anyone. The most deceiving ones are those with a false appearance of wisdom or seriousness, in one word, those from the hypocritical and pseudo-wise spirits. Some may deceive in good faith, due to their ignorance; others only act malevolently. Let us see the means that we have to unravel from them.

The first thing to do is not to attract them, avoiding everything that may give access to them.

As said before, the moral dispositions are a fundamental cause. However, abstraction made of this cause, the mode employed to communicate with them has influence also. There are persons who have by principle not to make evocations ever, waiting for the first communication to come out of the medium's pencil. Now, keeping in mind what we said about the crowd of spirits that surrounds us, we can easily understand that, by acting in such a way, we are offering ourselves to the influence of the first one to show up, good or bad. As the bad ones outnumber the good ones in that crowd, there is more opportunity to the bad ones. This is the same as if we open the door of our house to everybody that walks in the street, whereas through the evocation we make the choice and, while surrounded by good spirits, we silence the bad ones, who may sometimes try to sneak in despite all that. The good ones may even allow it in order to exercise our sagacity in recognizing them. In such a case their influence will be null.

The spontaneous communications have great utility when we are sure about the quality of the spirits who surround us. In that case we must congratulate ourselves for leaving the initiative to the spirits. The inconvenience is only in the absolute system, consisting of an abstention of direct appeal and questioning.

Among the causes that powerfully influence the quality of the spirits who visit the centers, and which must not be omitted, is the nature of the subjects that are discussed. Those who are associated to a serious and useful objective attract serious spirits as a consequence; those who aim at the satisfaction of a vain curiosity or their personal interests are at least exposed to mystifications, or even to something worse. In summary, we can take the most sublime and useful teachings from the spiritist communications, as long as we know how to drive them. The whole secret lies in not allowing ourselves to be driven by the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

astuteness of the jester or malevolent spirits. Well, for that, we need to know whom we are dealing. For starters, let us listen to the advices given by the spirit of St. Louis at the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, through Mr. R..., one of its good mediums. This is a spontaneous communication, received at his house, with the mission of transmitting it to the Society.

“However great it may be the confidence inspired in you by the spirits that preside over your activities, it is never too much to repeat the recommendation that you must always have in mind, when dedicating to your studies: thinking and reflection. Submit every communication that you receive to the strictest control of reason. As long as an answer may seem doubtful or obscure, do not forget to ask for the necessary clarifications to guide you. Know that the revelation has existed since the remotest times but it was always adequate to the degree of evolution of those who received them. Today there is no need to speak through parables or images. You must receive our teachings in a more clear, precise and unambiguous way. It would be too comfortable, however, to limit oneself to question in order to receive the clarifications. As a matter of fact, this would be to run away from the laws of progress, which oversee the universal evolution. Don’t be surprised, then, if in order to credit you with the merit of the choice and the work, and also to punish the infractions against our advices, it may sometimes be allowed that certain spirits, more ignorant than ill intended, may in certain cases come to answer your questions. Instead of a reason for discouragement this must be a powerful stimulus for an ardent search for the truth. Be then assured that following this path you cannot fail to achieve happy results. Be united through hearts and intentions; work everyone; seek, seek always and you will find it.”

Louis.

The language of the good and serious spirits has a trait that makes it impossible to be mistaken, however little tact, reason and habits of observation we may have. However much they disguise their turpitudes by the veil of hypocrisy, the bad spirits cannot play this role indefinitely. They somehow always let it out. Otherwise, if their language were immaculate they would be good spirits. The language of the good spirits thus gives us the true criterion by which we can judge them. As the language is the expression of thought, it always contains a reflection of the good or bad qualities of the individual. Isn’t that also by the language that we judge the persons that we don’t know? If we receive twenty letters from twenty persons that we have never seen before, wouldn’t we be differently impressed by their reading? Wouldn’t that be by the quality of style, by the choice of expressions, by the nature of thoughts and even by certain details of form that we would recognize the rustic man, the well educated, the wise or ignorant, the proud or the humble? It is absolutely the same with the spirits.

Let us pretend that it is men who write to us and let us judge them in the same way. Let us be strict since the good spirits would never be offended by such a scrupulous investigation, for they are the ones themselves who recommend that as a control. We know that we can be deceived. Hence, our first feeling must be that of suspicion. The bad spirits that try to lead us to mistakes may fear the investigation because far from provoking it they want to be accredited under oath.

The most efficient way of keeping the bad spirits away, preventing ourselves from their malicious intents, is a very natural and logical consequence of that principle. A man that is not heard, silences; someone who sees his mischievous acts always discovered moves somewhere else; the thief, aware that we are always alert, does not make fruitless attempts.

That is how the deceiving spirits abandon the game when they know that they can do nothing or when they find vigilant people that repel everything that seems suspicious.

To finalize, let us review the main characters that indicate the origin of the spiritist communications:

1. As we have already said on many occasions, the superior spirits always have a dignified language, noble, elevated, without any contamination by triviality. They tell us everything with simplicity and modesty; never boast; never make exhibition of their wisdom or position among the others. The language of the inferior or vulgar spirits always has a reflex of human passions.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Every expression that indicates rudeness, presumption, arrogance, pride or acrimony is an indication of inferiority and deception, as long as the spirit bears a respectable and venerable name.

2. The good spirits only say what they know. They go quiet or confess their ignorance with respect to what they don't know. The bad spirits talk about everything with confidence, not giving any importance to the truth. Every scientific heresy or every principle that shocks reason and common sense reveal fraud, as long as the spirit considers itself an enlightened being.
3. The language of the superior spirits is always the same, if not in the form but at least in the content. The thoughts are the same at any place and at any time. They can be more or less developed, according to the circumstances, to the needs and to the means of communication, but will not be contradictory. If two communications with the same signature are in opposition, one will necessarily be apocryphal and the other truthful, will be the one in which nothing may deny the known character of the spirit. When a communication presents a character of sublimity and elevation, without any fault, it comes from an elevated spirit, whatever the name. If it contains a mix of things, good and bad, it will be from a common spirit, if presented as such; it will be from an imposter spirit if presented with a name that cannot be justified.
4. The good spirits never give orders. They do not impose, but give advice, and if they are not heard, they leave. The bad spirits are dominant. Give orders and want to be obeyed. Every spirit that imposes upon others betrays his origin.
5. The good spirits do not flatter. They approve the good actions but always with reservations. The bad spirits praise in excess, stimulate pride and vanity, even when preaching humility, and try to exalt the personal importance of those who they want to capture.
6. The superior spirits are beyond all formal puerilities in all things. For them, thought is everything, and the form means nothing. Only the vulgar spirits give importance to certain details, incompatible with the really elevated ideas. Every meticulous prescription is a certain sign of inferiority and deception from the part of a spirit who carries an important name.
7. It is necessary to be suspicious of any bizarre and ridiculous name that certain spirits take, willing to impose its believability. It would be a supreme absurd to take those names seriously.
8. One must also be suspicious of those who easily present themselves with highly venerable names, not accepting their word but with the greatest reservation. In such cases, particularly, it is necessary a strict control since in general it is a mask that they adopt to make us believe in supposed intimate relationship with spirits of high elevation. It is how they flatter and exploit vanity, in order to frequently encourage people to regrettable or ridiculous attitudes.
9. The good spirits are very careful with respect to actions that they advise. In all cases they always have a serious and eminently useful objective. We must then consider suspicious all those that do not have that character and we must carefully think before adopting them.
10. The good spirits only prescribe good deeds. Every maxim, every advice which is not strictly according to the purest evangelical charity cannot be the work of the good spirits. The same applies to every malicious comment, tending to incite or feed feelings of hatred, jealousy or selfishness.
11. The good spirits only give perfectly sensible advices. Every recommendation that is away from the straight line of common sense or from the immutable laws of nature indicates a limited spirit, still under the influence of Earthly prejudices, thus not trustworthy.
12. The bad spirits or simply imperfect spirits are also betrayed by material signs, with which one cannot be mistaken. Their action upon the medium is sometimes violent, provoking jerk and irregular movements in the writing process: a convulsive and febrile agitation, contrasting with the calm and smoothness of the good spirits.
13. Another sign of their presence is the obsession. The good spirits never obsess. The bad ones impose themselves at all times. That is why the medium must be suspicious about the irresistible

## The Spiritist Review 1859

need of writing which occurs at the most inadequate times. It is never from a good spirit and the medium must never give in.

14. Among the imperfect spirits who interfere with the communications there are those that jokingly sneak in, who leave at the first confrontation as easily as they came in. Others, on the contrary, are tenacious. These spirits bond to the individual and only yield after persistence and constraint. They control, subjugate and fascinate the person, to the point of inducing them to the grossest absurd, as if they were wonderful things. These persons are fortunate when find calm and centered people who can open their eyes, not always easy since these spirits have the skills of inducing mistrust and distance from whoever can unmask them. Therefore, we must suspect inferiority and ill intent from any spirit that prescribes separation from individuals who can give good advices. The medium self-love helps negatively since it is difficult to recognize that one was victimized by mystification, recognizing as a scoundrel a spirit who honored the medium with his protection. Such influence of the spirit is independent from the writing faculty. In the absence of writing, the malevolent spirit has a thousand and one ways of acting and deceiving. To the spirit it is a means of persuasion but not a cause; to the medium it is a means of enlightenment.

Passing all spiritist communications through the control of the preceding considerations, we will easily recognize their origin and destroy the malice of the deceiving spirits, who only target those who are easily deceived. When noticing that we listen to them, they take advantage, as the simple mortals would do. It is up to us then to prove to them that they are wasting their time. We must add that prayer is a powerful help; through prayer we attract God's assistance and the assistance of the good spirits, increasing our strength. The precept is known: *help yourself and heavens will help you*. God wants to assist us but with the condition that we pull our own weight doing what is necessary.

Let us add an example to that principle. One day I was visited by a gentleman who I did not know before, saying that he was a medium. He was receiving communications from a very elevated spirit who had assigned to him the mission of coming to me, to make a revelation with respect to some secrets that my enemies were plotting against me. And he added: "Do you want me to write in your presence?" With pleasure, I said. But to begin with I must tell you that those enemies are less fearful than you suppose. I know I have them. Who doesn't? The most bloodthirsty are in general those who we most benefit. I know I have never voluntarily done harm to anyone. Those who do me harm will not be able to say the same and God will be the judge before us. However, let us hear the advice that the spirit wants to give me.

The gentleman then wrote the following:

"I have ordered C... (the name of that person), who is a beam of light from the good spirits, from whom he received the mission of spreading it among his brothers, to go to Mr. Allan Kardec's house, who will blindly believe in what I say, for I am among the elected of God, watching the salvation of people and because I come to announce the truth..."

"That is enough, I said; no need to continue. This preface is sufficient to show the kind of spirit you are dealing with. I will say one word only: to a spirit that pretends to be smart he is a bit too clumsy." That gentleman seemed stunned by the little importance I gave to the case of his spirit, which he naively took by an archangel or at least a saint of first order that specially came to him.

I said:

"This spirit betrays himself with the few words only that he has just written. Let us agree that he cannot hide his game very well. To begin with he commands. Therefore he wants to have you under his belt, a characteristic of the inferior spirits; he calls you "beam of light from the good spirits", a painfully emphatic and ambiguous language, well dissociated from the simplicity which characterizes the good spirits; through that language he flatters your pride, exalting your importance, which is enough to turn him into a suspect. He unceremoniously places himself among the elected of God. This is arrogance, unworthy of a really superior spirit. Finally he tells me that I should believe blindly. This crowns the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

work. That is the style of the deceitful spirits, who want us to believe in them under oath, once they know that they have everything to lose by a serious examination. With a little more perspicacity he should have seen that I do not bend to the beautiful words and that he was wrong by prescribing me a blind trust.

Thus, I conclude that you are a toy in the hands of a spirit that mystifies you, abusing your good faith. I advise you to pay serious attention to this otherwise you can be victimized by a harmful action.”

I don't know if he took the advice because I have no longer seen him, or the spirit. I would never stop if I were to mention all the communications of such a kind that have been submitted to me, sometimes very serious, as if from the greatest saints, from the Virgin Mary and from Christ himself. It would be really curious to see the turpitudes attributed to those venerable names.

One needs to be blind to be mistaken with respect to their origin, when many times an equivocal word only, a single contradictory thought is enough to whoever takes the burden of reasoning, to discover the lie.

For remarkable examples supporting this, we advise the readers to refer to the articles published in the Review, July and October 1858 issues.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## Confessions of Voltaire

Regarding the interview of Voltaire and Frederic, published in the last number of the Review, one of our correspondents from Boulogne sent us the following communication, which we publish with as much satisfaction, as it presents an eminently instructive aspect from the spiritist point of view. Our correspondent made some previous reflections that I don't want to omit.

"If there is a man who, more than anybody else, must suffer the eternal penalties, that man is Voltaire. God's wrath and vengeance will forever persecute him. That is what the old school theologians tell us."

"What do the theologians of the modern school tell us now? It is possible, they say, that you don't know the man as much as you don't know the God that you talk about. Avoid the inferior passions of hatred and vengeance and do not stain your God with all that. If God is unhappy about this wicked man, if He touches that insect to remove his stinger, to straighten his exalted head and perverted heart. Let us say this still, that God reads the hearts differently from you, finding good where you see evil. If He bestowed that man with a great genius it was to the benefit of the human race, and not against it. What does it matter then, his first extravagant and sniper attitudes among us? Such a soul could hardly act differently: mediocrity was impossible to him, whatever its reach. Now that he has been redirected, that he threw away the paws and the fangs of the untamable horse in his Earthly pasture; now that he comes to God like an always great but sweet steed, he is a much wonderful to the good as he was to the evil."

"In the following article we will see how such a transformation took place. We will see our stallion of the deserts with his wavy mane to the winds, chasing the open spaces of the universe. Thee, with his free thought, he found the freedom inhaled to full lungs, the breath of life! And what happened to him?"

"He got lost and confused. The great preacher of the nothingness found nothing, at last, but not as he thought. Humiliated, self-abated, disturbed by his littleness, the one who judged himself so great now annihilated before his God. There he is, face on the ground, waiting for his sentence that says: "Stand, my son! Or "Go, miserable! The sentence will be found in the communication below."

"This confession of Voltaire will have more value in the Spiritist Review for it shows him in both aspects. We saw that some naturalist and materialist spirits, having as twisted a mind as their master, but without his feeling, persisted with their puff-up, their cynicism. May they stay in their hell while belittling everything that constitutes human being's happiness; it is logical since it is their place. However, we also find logical that those who acknowledge their mistakes may be rewarded. Thus, we are not apologists of the old Voltaire. We just accept him in his new role, happy for his conversion, which glorifies God and vividly impresses those who were dragged by his writings. There one finds the poison, here the antidote."

"This communication, translated from the English, was extracted from judge Edmonds' book, published in the USA. It has the format of a dialogue between Voltaire and Wolsey, the famous English Cardinal from the time of Henry VIII. Two mediums served as intermediaries to the reception of the dialogues."

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Voltaire – What an immense revolution in human thinking since I left Earth!

Wolsey – In fact, that unfaithfulness then criticized in you has grown immeasurably since those days. It is not that it maintains so much pretension but it is more profound and universal, and, unless it can be stopped, it threatens to swallow humanity into materialism, even more so than it has done over the centuries.

Voltaire – Unfaithfulness to what and to whom? Regarding the laws of God and man? Do you intend to accuse me of unfaithfulness because I could not submit to the narrow prejudices of the sects that



## The Spiritist Review 1859

surrounded me? My soul sought broader amplitude of thoughts, a beam of light beyond human doctrines. Yes, my darkened soul was thirsty for light.

Wolsey – I wanted to speak only about the unfaithfulness attributed to you, but unfortunately you don't know how much such imputation still burdens your shoulders. I do not wish to criticize you but manifest my sorrow, as your disdain to the existing material doctrines, invented by man, could not harm a spirit of your kind. However, the same charge brought upon your spirit was also brought onto the others, too weak and small to get to the same results as you did. That is why a denial of human's dogmas in you was translated into a denial of God in the others. It was from that source that human's doubt about the future spread so rapidly. That is also why human beings yielded to egotism and hatred towards their neighbor, limiting all their aspirations to this world. Yes, it is the cause, the cause of this state of affairs that has to be sought, since the remedy will be easy once the cause is found. Tell me: do you know that cause?

Voltaire – In reality, there was in my words, as they were given to the world, a feeling of bitterness and satire. Notice, however, that my spirit was broken, so to speak, by an internal fight. I saw humanity as inferior in intelligence and perspicacity. I only saw puppets which could be driven by anyone having a strong will, feeling stunned by seeing that humanity, arrogantly expecting an immortal existence, molded by ignoble elements. Could anyone believe that a being of such a kind were part of Divinity, capable of taking immortality over into his petty hands? Such a blank space between those two so disproportionate existences shocked me and I could not accept it. I saw only the animal in man and not God.

I acknowledge that in some cases my opinions had a dreadful influence. I have the conviction, however, that from other points of view they had their good side. Those ideas were able to lift some souls, degraded by slavery. They broke the chains of thought and gave wings to great aspirations. But ah! I who was flying so high, I got lost like the others.

Had I developed the spiritual side as I did with the material one, I would have reasoned with more discernment. I confused them, lost sight of this immortality of the soul that I badly sought and wished.. Thus, carried away by that fight against the world, I denied the existence of a future, almost against my own will. My opposition to the silly opinions, to the blind credulity of human beings, impelled me to deny and, at the same time, to contradict all the benefit which could be promoted by the Christian religion. However incredulous I was, I felt superior to my adversaries; yes, well beyond the reach of their intelligence. The beautiful face of nature revealed the universe to me, inspiring the feeling of a vague veneration, mixed with the desire of a boundless freedom, feeling which they never experienced, squatting under the darkness of slavery.

Thus, my books had their good side because without them, evil that would have reached humanity, by a lack of opposition, would have been even worse. A large number of people no longer accepted slavery; many freed themselves. If my preaching gave them a single elevated thought or made them walk one step only in the path of Science, wouldn't that be an eye opener regarding their true condition? What I regret is to have lived for such a long time on Earth not knowing what I could have been and what I could have done. What wouldn't I have done if I only had been blessed by these lights of Spiritism, now shining over the spirits of human beings!

Skeptical and hesitant, that is how I got to the spiritual world. My presence was enough to send away any spark of light that could have illuminated my murky soul; my material side is what had been developed on Earth. As for my spiritual self, that had been lost, led astray in search of light; left behind bars, in prison.

Mocking and arrogant, that is how I initiated there, not knowing nor trying to know this future against which I fought so hard when alive. However, let us make this confession clear here: there was always a frail voice in my soul, heard through the shackles of matter, asking for light. It was an endless fight between the desire for knowledge and the obstinacy in not knowing. Thus, my entry was far from pleasant. Had I not just discovered the falsity and the nothingness of the opinions that I had sustained with

## The Spiritist Review 1859

all my heart! The human being was immortal, after all, and I could not but admit that a God must also exist, an immortal spirit who would be in charge, governing such boundless space surrounding me. I travelled incessantly, not allowing myself any rest at all, trying to convince me still that this new world could well be a little material as well; my soul fought the crushing truth! I could not see myself as a spirit that had just left his material lodge! There was nobody to establish a relationship with since I had denied immortality to everyone. There was no resting place for me. I remained wandering and doubting. My murky and bitter spirit was like a maniac, incapable of following guidance or stopping.

That is how, mocking and daring, as I said, that I entered the spirits' world. In the beginning I was taken far away from the spirits' dwellings, and I wandered around the immense space. Then I was allowed to see the wonderful habitations of the spirits, and they seemed amazing to me. I was dragged from one side to the other by an irresistible force. I was forced to see, see up to the point that my soul was stunned by the splendors and crushed before the power that controlled such wonders. Finally, I felt like hiding in the cavities of the rocks, but I couldn't do it.

It was when my heart started to feel the need for expansion. It urged for company of any sort, since I burned for the wishes of confessing how much encouraged to err I was, not by the others, but by my own dreams. There was no more illusion as for my personal importance because I felt belittled in this vast world of the spirits. Thus, I had fallen so much from tiredness and humiliation that I was allowed to gather with a few inhabitants. It was from that moment on that I realized the position that I had established on Earth and the consequences of that in the world of the spirits. Just imagine if such appreciation could be a pleasant one.

A complete revolution, a thorough transformation took place in my spirit and, from the master that I was, I became the most ardent disciple. With my intellectual expansion, what a progress I could make! My soul felt illuminated and burned by the Divine Love. The aspirations to immortality, from constrained that they were, took a gigantic expansion. I saw how big my mistakes had been and the dimension of the reparation before me, to atone everything I had said and done, by seducing or misleading humanity. Oh! How magnificent these lessons of wisdom and the celestial beauty! Much beyond everything I could have ever imagined on Earth.

In summary, I lived enough to acknowledge in my Earthly existence a bloodthirsty battle between the world and the spiritual nature. I profoundly regretted the opinions I had issued, which diverged so many; however, at the same time, full of gratitude to the Creator, the infinitely wise, I feel to have served as an instrument to help human beings' spirits to turn to evaluation and progress.

OBSERVATION: We will not add any comment to this communication, whose depth and reach can be appreciated by all, where one can find the whole superiority of the genius. It is possible that such a grandiose and impressive picture of the spiritual world had never been given before, as well as about the influence of the Earthly ideas on the ideas of beyond the grave. In the conversation that we published in our previous number one can find the same kind of ideas, although less developed and not so poetically expressed. Those who only appreciate the form may say that they don't recognize these two communications as from the same spirit, and that particularly the last one does not seem worthy of Voltaire. From that they will conclude that one of them is not his.

It is certain that he did not bring his birth certificate when we called him, but whoever may see above the surface will be touched by the identity of points of view and principles between these two communications, obtained at different times, far from each other and in different languages. If the style is not the same, there is no contradiction in the thoughts, and that is essential. However, considering that it was the same spirit that spoke on both occasions, why is he so explicit and poetic in one of them, and terse and vulgar in the other? It is necessary that one did not study the spiritist phenomena in order to not understand it. The fact is due to the same cause that leads the spirit to dictate charming poems through a medium and not be able to give a single verse through another. We know mediums that absolutely do not write verses, but receive remarkable poems, as we know others who have never learned to paint but who

## The Spiritist Review 1859

produce wonderful paintings. It is thus necessary to acknowledge that the mediums have special aptitudes that make them more or less flexible or more or less adequate tools to certain spirits, abstraction made of the intellectual qualities.

We say to certain spirits because they also have their preferences, founded on not always known reasons. Hence, the spirit will be more or less explicit pending on the medium that serves him as interpreter and, above all, according to the habit in utilizing his service. Besides, it is certain that a spirit who frequently communicates through the same person does so with more easiness than another that communicates for the first time. The transmission of thought can thus be stalled by many causes; but when it is the same spirit, the underlying thought is the same, although the form may be different, and the sharp observer can easily recognize him through certain characteristic signs.

The following fact is reported with that respect:

The spirit of a sovereign, who had a distinct role in the world, was evoked in one of our sessions. He showed rage at his arrival, tearing the paper off and breaking the pencil. His language was far from benevolent since he felt humiliated for being among us. He asked us if we thought that he should downgrade himself to the point of answering our questions. He agreed however that if he was responding it was by some sort of constraint, obliged by a force superior to his own; if it depended on him, however, he would not do so.

One of our correspondents from Africa, who knew nothing about the fact, wrote to us about a meeting in which they wanted to evoke the same spirit. His language was identical in all aspects. He said: "Do you believe that I would voluntarily come to this house of merchants, which perhaps even one of my servants would refuse to inhabit? I do not respond to you. This reminds me of my kingdom where I was happy and had authority over my people. Now I have to submit."

The spirit of a queen, who was not distinguished by her good heart when alive, responded in the following way to the same group: "No more questions, since you bother me. If I still had the power I enjoyed on Earth I would make you regret the lot of you, but now that I have no power over you, you laugh at me and my misery. I am very unhappy!"

Don't we have here a curious study of the spirits' habits?

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

An Officer from the Italian Army  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Conversation)

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies  
July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859 (see July 1859 issue)

21. (Evocation)
  - I am here.
22. You promised to come to us again and we will take the opportunity to request a few complementary explanations from you.
  - With pleasure.
23. Have you watched some battles after your death?
  - Yes, the last one.
24. When you witness a combat as a spirit, watching men killing one another, do you have any feeling of horror as we would, if we watched similar images?
  - Yes, I experienced that, even as a man, but then human respect was based on a feeling not worthy of a soldier.
25. Are there spirits that feel pleasure by watching such blood shedding?
  - A few.
26. What do the spirits of a superior order feel when witnessing that?
  - Great compassion; almost disdain. The same that you feel when you see the animals killing one another.
27. When you see a combat and people dying, do you see the separation between the soul and the body?
  - Yes.
28. At that moment do you then see two individuals, the spirit and the body?
  - No. What is the body then?
  - But the body is still there. It must be distinct from the spirit.
  - A cadaver, yes, but no longer a human being.
29. What is then the appearance of the spirit?
  - Light.
30. Does the spirit move away immediately from the body? I ask you to kindly explain things as explicitly as possible and how we would see them in case we witnessed them.
  - There are only a few really instantaneous deaths. The spirit who was hit by a bullet or a grenade, tells oneself most of the time: "I am going to die, let us think of God and heavens. Good-bye beloved land." After that first feeling the pain extracts him from the body and it is when we can distinguish the spirit, moving around the cadaver. This seems so natural that the sight of the dead body does not produce an unpleasant effect. Since life has been totally

## The Spiritist Review 1859

transported to the spirit, it is the spirit that calls our attention; it is with the spirit that we talk and command.

OBSERVATION: We can compare this effect to the one that is produced by a group of swimmers. The spectator does not give attention to the clothes that were left at the beach.

31. Generally, when surprised by a violent death, the individual does not consider oneself dead, for some time. How can we explain one's situation and how can the person has illusions, since one must feel all to well that one's body is no longer material and resistant?
- One knows and has no illusions.

OBSERVATION: This is not exact. We know that there are spirits that in some cases keep that illusion and think that they are not dead.

32. There was a huge thunderstorm at the end of the Battle of Solferino. Was it due to a serendipitous cause or a providential design?
- Every serendipitous cause is the result of God's will.
33. Such a storm had an objective then? What was that?
- Yes, for sure: to cease the battle.
34. Was it provoked in the interest of any of the belligerent parts? Which one?
- Yes, particularly in the interest of our enemies.
  - Why? Can you elaborate on that?
  - You ask me why? Don't you know that without that storm our artillery would have annihilated the Austrians?
35. If the storm was provoked it must have been done by agents that provoked it. What were those agents?
- Electricity.
36. Those is the material agent but are there spirits whose attribution is to drive the elements?
- No. God's will is enough. He does not need such common auxiliaries.

(See an article later about the storms)

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

General Hoche

Society July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1859

1. (Evocation)
  - I am with you.
2. Mrs. J... told us that you have spontaneously communicated with her. Why did you do that since she had not called you?
  - She is the one that brings me here. I wanted to be evoked by you and I knew that going to her house you would be informed and would likely call me.
3. You told her that you were following the military operations in Italy. That is natural. Can you tell us what you think about that?
  - They produced great results. In my time we would fight longer.
4. Do you have an active role by watching that war?
  - No, a simple spectator.
5. Have other generals from your time been there with you?
  - Yes, as you can figure out.
6. Could you let us know who some of them are?
  - It would be useless.
7. They say that Napoleon I was present, a fact that is not difficult to believe. During the first wars of Italy he was a simple general. Could you tell us if in this war he saw things from the point of view of a general or an Emperor?
  - From both, besides a third one: the diplomat.
8. When alive you held a similar position as his. Since he moved up the ranks a lot from the time of your death, could you tell us if you consider him as your superior, as a spirit?
  - Equality reigns here. What do you want to know about that?

OBSERVATION: No doubt that he understands that the spirits do not carry their Earthly distinction over, with which they are not much concerned, meaning nothing among them; however, moral equality it is far from existing there. There is a hierarchy and subordination among them, based on the acquired qualities and no one can avoid the ascendancy of those who are more elevated and pure.
9. Did you foresee the near peace when following the events of war?
  - Yes.
10. Was it a simple prediction or did you have a previous and certain knowledge?
  - No; I was told so.
11. Are you sensitive to the memories we have of you?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Yes, but I did so little.
- 12. Your widow has just died. Have you immediately met her?
  - I waited for her. I will leave her now. The existence calls me.
- 13. Is it on Earth that you will have another existence?
  - No.
- 14. Do we know the world where you are going?
  - Yes. Mercury.
- 15. Is that world morally superior or inferior to Earth?
  - Inferior. I will elevate it. I will contribute to improve its classification.
- 16. Do you already know that world?
  - Yes, very well. Perhaps even better than I will know it when I inhabit it.

OBSERVATION: This answer is perfectly logical. As a spirit he sees the world in its wholeness. As an incarnate spirit he sees from a restrict point of view, limited to his personality and the social position that he occupies.

- 17. From a physical point of view, are the inhabitants of that world as material as those from Earth?
  - Yes, completely and even more.
- 18. Was it you who chose that world for your next existence?
  - No, no. I would have preferred a calm and happy land. I will find streams of evil there and the furors of crime to punish.

OBSERVATION: When our Christian missionaries travel to places where the barbarians live, sowing the germens of civilization on them, don't they exert a similar function? Why then should we be surprised by the fact that an elevated spirit goes to an inferior world to make it advance?

- 19. Was such an existence imposed on you by constraint?
  - No. It was advised to me. I was led to understand that destiny, the Providence if you will, called me there. It is like death before heavens. One needs to suffer and I did not suffer enough.
- 20. Are you happy as a spirit?
  - Yes, without any issue.
- 21. What were your occupations as a spirit, since the time when you left Earth?
  - I visited the world, the whole planet Earth. That required a few years. I learned about the laws employed by God to drive all phenomena which contribute to the Earthly life. Then I did the same in several other spheres.
- 22. We thank you for having willingly accepted our appeal.
  - Good-bye. You will not see me again.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Death of a Spiritist

Society, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1859

Mr. J..., a businessman from the department of La Sarthe, deceased on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1859, was a righteous man, of a boundless charity in every aspect. He had carried out a serious study of Spiritism and was one of its followers. He was in indirect contact with us as a subscriber to the Spiritist Review, although we had not met him in person. By evoking him we aim at not only satisfying his relatives and friends wishes but also to give him our personal testimony of sympathy, thanking him for the kindness of his thoughts and words about us. Besides, it would be an interesting object of study for us from the point of view of the influence that a deep knowledge about Spiritism may have on the state of the soul after death.

1. (Evocation)
  - I am here already for a long time.
2. I never had the pleasure of meeting you. However, do you recognize me?
  - I recognize you very well, since I frequently visited you and had more than one conversation with you in spirit, during my life.

OBSERVATION: This confirms the very important fact from that we have numerous examples about the communications among human beings, without knowing, during their lives. Thus, during the sleep of the body, the spirits reciprocally travel and visit one another. Awakening, they keep the intuition of the ideas that they acquired during those occult conversations, and whose source they ignore. Therefore we have a double existence during our life: the corporeal, which gives us the life of exterior relationships and the spiritual one, which gives us the life of occult relationships.

3. Are you happier than you were when on Earth?
  - And that is you who is asking?
4. I understand. However, you enjoyed a fortune that was honestly acquired, which allowed you the pleasures of life. You were granted with affection and consideration attained by your goodness and benevolence. Can you tell us what is the latitude of your current superiority?
  - It naturally consists of the satisfaction I have from the memory of the little good I have done and in the certainty of the future that it promises me. Besides, don't you take into account the absence of the uncertainty and difficulties of life; the corporeal sufferings and all those torments that we create to satisfy the bodily needs? During life the agitation, the anxiety, the endless anguishes, even when wealthy. Here we find tranquility and rest. It is calm after the storm.
5. Six weeks before you died you said that you still had five years to live. Where did that illusion come from considering that so many people foresee the nearing death?
  - A benevolent spirit wanted to keep that idea away from my mind; although I knew the future of the spirit, I had the unconfessed weakness of fearing death.



## The Spiritist Review 1859

6. You did an in depth study of the Spiritist Science. Could you tell us if you found things as expected when you entered the spiritual world?
  - Almost exactly the same except for a few areas of detail that I had misunderstood.
7. Have the careful reading of the Spiritist Review and The Spirits' Book helped you there?
  - Undoubtedly. That was what really prepared me for my entry in this true life.
8. Were you afraid in any way when you got to the spiritual world?
  - Impossible to be otherwise. However, afraid is not a good word. It would be better to say awe. You are far from having an idea about the meaning of that!

OBSERVATION: Someone that before moving to a region had studied it from the books; familiarized with the customs and culture of its inhabitants; analyzed its topology and appearance through drawings, designs and descriptions, will certainly be less surprised than another one who had no idea. However, reality shows him a number of details that he had not foreseen, impressing him. The same must happen in the world of the spirits, whose wonders we cannot completely understand, for there are things beyond our understanding.

9. Once you left the body did you immediately recognize some spirits near you?
  - Yes, dear spirits.
10. How do you see now the future of Spiritism?
  - A more brilliant future than you think, despite your faith and wishes.
11. Your knowledge with respect to the spiritist subjects will undoubtedly allow you to respond to a few questions with precision. Can you clearly describe what happened to you at the time when your body exhaled its final breath and your spirit was free?
  - Personally I find it very difficult to explain in a different way than what has already been done, that is, comparing the sensation we have when waking up from a heavy sleep. Such awakening is more or less slow and difficult in direct proportion to the moral situation of the spirit, always strongly influenced by the circumstances of death.

OBSERVATION: This is in agreement with every observation carried out about the status of the spirit at the time of separation from the body. We have always seen the moral and material circumstances of death powerfully influencing the condition of the spirit at the initial moments.

12. Has your spirit maintained the awareness of its own existence up to the last minute, immediately recovering it? Was there any moment in which there was a lack of awareness? What was its duration?
  - There was a time of perturbation, almost unnoticeable to me.
13. Was there anything painful in the awakening?
  - No, on the contrary. I felt, if I can say so, happy and fresh, as if I was breathing pure air after leaving a smoky room.

OBSERVATION: Ingenuous clever comparison which can only be the pure expression of truth.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

14. Do you remember the existence prior to this one that you have just left? How was that?
  - I remember that very well. I was a servant working for a good man who has, together with others, welcomed me on my arrival into this blessed world.
15. I believe your brother is less involved with the spiritist things than you were.
  - Yes, I will do something so that he may have more interest, if I am allowed to. If he only knew what we gain from that he would give more importance.
16. Your brother asked Mr. D... to communicate your death to me. Both wait anxiously the result of our dialogue. However, they will be more touched by a direct message from you, in case you wish to send them a few words through us, or even to other persons who miss you.
  - I will tell them through your intermediary what I would have told them directly, but I am afraid I no longer have influence over some of them as I had before. However, in my name and in the name of their friends, who I can see well, I urge them to seriously reflect and study this grave question of Spiritism, even if it is only for the help that it brings to go through this so much feared transition, feared by the majority of people, and so little feared by the one that has previously prepared himself by the study of the future and the practice of the good deeds. Tell them that I am always with them, in their environment; that I see them and that I will be happy if their determination may grant them a place which will make them always congratulate themselves, in the world where I am. Tell my brother in particular whose happiness is my profound wish, brother that I never forget although I am happier than he is.
17. The sympathy that you have kindly showed towards me during your life, even not knowing me personally, gives me the hope that we will easily meet when I am in your world. Until then I will be happy if you want to assist me with my work in order to conclude my mission.
  - You judge me with great benevolence. Yet, be sure that if I can be of any utility I will always help, even unsuspectedly.
18. We thank you for having kindly attended our call and by the instructive explanation you have given us.
  - At your services. I will be with you many times.

OBSERVATION: This communication is undoubtedly one of those that describe the spiritual life with more clarity. It offers a powerful teaching with respect to the influence that the spiritist ideas have upon our condition after death.

The dialogue, however, seems to have missed something to the friend who has participated us the death of Mr. J..., who said: "He has not preserved in his language the original traits he used with us. He maintained a reservation never shown to anybody. His incorrect, subtle style, used to reveal inspiration; he dared it all; he used to win over any argumentation about his beliefs, reducing us to nothing in order to convince us. In his psychological profile he does not show any particularity regarding the numerous relationships he had with a number of people close to him. We all would like to see our names mentioned by him, not to satisfy our curiosity but for our instruction. We wished he had clearly spoken about some ideas that we expressed before him, during our dialogues. He could have told me personally if I was right or wrong when insisting with this or that consideration; if what I had told him was right or wrong. He has not absolutely mentioned his sister who is still alive and so much worth of his interest."

## The Spiritist Review 1859

After this letter we evoked Mr. J... again and addressed him with the following questions:

19. Are you aware of the letter that I received in response to the communication you gave?
  - Yes, I saw when they wrote it.
20. Could you kindly give us some explanations about certain passages of that letter with an educational objective, uniquely to provide us with elements to give an answer?
  - Yes, if you consider that useful.
21. They find it strange that your language has not maintained its original trait. It seems that you showed an overwhelming argumentation when alive.
  - Yes but Earth and heavens are very different and here I have found masters. What do you want? They made me impatient with their absurd objections. I showed them the Sun and they did not want to see it. How to keep a cold blood? There is no need to discuss here. We all understand things.
22. Those gentlemen are surprised that you have not mentioned them by their names to refute them, as you did when alive.
  - Let them be surprised! I wait for them. When they join me they will see who is right. It is necessary that they come to this side, willing or not, some sooner than they think. Their arrogance will fall like the dust abated by the rain. Their swagger... (the spirit stops here, refusing to finish the sentence).
23. They infer that you don't demonstrate all the attention they were rightfully supposed to get from you.
  - I wish them well but I will do nothing against their own will.
24. They are also surprised that you said nothing about your sister.
  - Are they in any way between her and me?
25. Mr. B... wished you had mentioned something that he confided to you. It would have been a means of clarification to him and the others.
  - What is the benefit of repeating what he already knows? Does he think that I have nothing else to do? Don't they have the same means of enlightenment that I had? May they take advantage of that! I guarantee they will feel well. As for myself, I thank heavens for having sent me the light that opened the path of happiness to me.
26. But it is that light that they wish and which would make them happy had it come from you.
  - Light shines to all. Blind is the one who refuses to see. That one will fall from the cliff, cursing his blindness.
27. Your language seems very strict to me.
  - Haven't they found me too soft?
28. We thank you for having come and for the lessons given to us.
  - Always at your service since I know it is for the good.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## The Storms - Role of the Spirits in the Natural Phenomena

Society, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1859

1. (To Mr. Arago) We were told that the Solferino storm had a providential objective, and several facts of that nature were pointed out to us, particularly in February and June of 1848. Did those storms had a similar objective during the combats?
  - Almost all of them.
2. Once questioned about that the spirit told us that it was only God acting, without intermediaries. We take the liberty of asking you a few questions in that regard, asking you to kindly respond with your customary clarity. We understand perfectly well that God's will is the primary cause in this, as in everything else. However, we also know that the spirits are God's agents. Well then, if we know that the spirits exert action upon matter, we cannot see why some of them would not exert influence over the elements, so as to agitate them, calm them down or drive them.
  - But that is evident. It cannot be different. God does not act directly upon matter. God has His dedicated agents on all degrees of the scale of the worlds. The evocated spirit said those things for having a limited knowledge about these laws, as also with respect to the laws of war.

OBSERVATION: The communication of the officer mentioned above was obtained on July 1<sup>st</sup>; this one only took place on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, through another medium. The current question makes no reference about the elevation of the first spirit who was evoked then, just mentioned by the spirit in this current evocation. This circumstance is characteristic and demonstrates that the medium's thought did not absolutely influence the answer. That is how the spirit reveals in several serendipitous circumstances his independence as well as his identity. That is why we have said that it is necessary to observe and see a lot. That is how we detect a number of nuances which otherwise go unnoticed by the hastily and superficial observer. We know that we need to capture the details as they present themselves and that they will not be obtained when provoked. The attentive and patient observer always finds food for thought.

3. The mythology is entirely founded on the spiritist ideas. There we find all properties of the spirits with the difference that the former peoples transformed them into gods. Well, mythology presents those gods, or spirits, with special attributes. Thus, some were in charge of the winds, others the lightning or vegetation, etc. Is such a belief with merit?
  - It is so much merit that it is very close to the truth.
4. In the beginning of our communications the spirits told us things that seem to confirm that principle. We were told, for example, that certain spirits inhabit more particularly the interior of Earth, presiding over the geological phenomena.
  - Yes, and it will not be long for you have an explanation of all this.
5. The spirits who inhabit the interior of Earth, presiding over the geological phenomena, are they of an inferior order?
  - Those spirits don't positively live on Earth but preside over and drive the geological phenomena. They are from a completely different order.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

6. Have those spirits been incarnate in human beings like us?
  - They have been and will be. I will momentarily tell you more about that if you want.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## The Home of a Spiritist Family

Mrs. G... ,widowed three years ago, was left with four children. The oldest son is a seventeen year old kind young man and the youngest a charming six year old girl. This family has been dedicating to Spiritism for a long time and even before this belief had become popular as in our days, having the husband and wife had a kind of intuition developed by a number of events. Mr. G... 's father had appeared to him several times in his youth always to warn about important things and give him useful advices. Similar facts had also taken place with his friends so that the existence beyond the grave was not object of doubt to any of them, as well as the possibility of communication with our beloved ones.

When Spiritism appeared it was only the confirmation of a solid and sanctified idea by the feeling of a clarified religion, since that family is an example of evangelical benevolence and charity. They learned about the most direct means of communication with the new science. The mother and one of the sons became excellent mediums. Far from employing such faculties in futile questions they considered it as a precious gift from the providence, which one could not use but to serious things. Hence, they never practiced it without respect and worship, and always far from the sight of the curious and unwelcome.

In the meantime Mr. G... fell ill. Predicting his near end, he gathered the children and told them:

“My dear children and beloved wife: God calls me to his side. I feel that I am going to leave you soon but I also feel that you will find the strength to withstand such separation with courage in your faith in the immortality, as I am taking with me the consolation that I may always be among you, helping you with my advices. Thus, call me when I am no longer with you. I will come to sit by your side and talk to you, as our ancestors do. In reality we will be less separated than if I had gone to a distant land. My dear wife I leave you with a huge task but the heavier it is the more glorious it will be. I am certain that our children will help you to bear it. Isn't that true children? You will help your mother; you will avoid anything that may make her suffer; you will always be good and benevolent to all; you will reach out to your unfortunate brothers since you don't want to have one day to helplessly beg for that yourselves. May the peace, union and concord always reign among you! May material interest never split you apart since material interest is the greatest barrier between Earth and heavens! Think that I will always be with you; that I will see you as I see you now and even better since I will read your thoughts. Thus, don't make me sad after my death in the same way that you have not done in life.”

The life of that benevolent family is a really inspirational spectacle. Fed by the spiritist ideas those children did not consider themselves separated from their father. To them, he is present. They are afraid of doing the slightest thing that may displease him. They dedicate one evening per week, and sometimes more, to talk to him. However, the daily needs must be provided for, considering that this is not a wealthy family. That is why such blessed conversations are scheduled to a specific day and anxiously expected by all. Several times the little one asks: “Is it today that Dad is coming?” That day is spent among familiar conversations and intelligent instructions, sometimes childish ones, other times grave and sublime. These may be advices about naughty little things that he observes. If, on one side, there is praise, there is no lack of criticism and the naughty one turns the eyes down, as if in the physical presence of their father; asks for his help that sometimes is granted only after a few weeks of trial. His presence is awaited with avid anxiety. What happiness when their father says: “I am pleased with you!” The most terrible sentence is: “I will not come next week.”

The annual party is not forgotten. It is always a solemn day, to which the grandparents and other family members who had passed on are invited, not forgetting a little brother deceased a few years back. The family pictures are adorned with flowers and each child prepares a small essay, sometimes just a traditional salutation. The oldest writes an essay about a serious subject; one of the girls plays a piece of

## The Spiritist Review 1859

music; the little one tells a story. It is the day of the great communications, and each guest receives a souvenir from the friends left on Earth.

How beautiful are these meetings, in their touching simplicity! How much all that speaks to the heart! How can one leave those gatherings not being saturated by the love of good? Not one look of mockery, not one skeptical smile comes to perturb the devout worship. Some friends who share the same convictions as the family, adepts of the same religion, are the only ones allowed to participate into that feast of love.

You may laugh as much as you want, you who laugh at the most sacred things. However arrogant and tough-hearted you are I don't believe that your pride may remain impassive and cold before such a spectacle. One day, however, it was a real day of sorrow to that family: the father had announced that he would be away for some time, actually for a long time. He had been assigned to an important mission far from Earth.

The annual party was still celebrated but it was said since the father was not there. When he left he said: "My children, may I find you all worthy of me on my return", and each one endeavors to be worthy of him. They are still waiting!



# The Spiritist Review 1859

September 1859

## Spiritist Aphorisms and Select Thoughts

- ✓ When evoking a relative or a friend, whatever the affection we have maintained towards them, we must not be carried away by these moments of tenderness that would seem natural after a painful separation. The affection is not less felt because it is calm and it can be even more real than that translated by great emotions. The spirits think but do not act like human beings. Two friendly spirits see each other, love one another, are happy about the mutual presence but have no need to be thrown in the arms of the other. When communicating with us through the writing one word is enough to them, and tell them more than emphatic sentences.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>23</sup>

# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## The Miracles

Mr. Mathieu, former Pharmacist working with the Army, has just published a list of several facts of direct writing that he witnessed, under the title *A Miracle*. The facts occurred under circumstances more or less similar to those reported in our August 1859 issue. They do not show anything more characteristic thus we will not reproduce them. They are only mentioned to demonstrate that the spiritist phenomena are not a privilege of anyone and we take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Mathieu for his zeal in propagating those facts. Several other small brochures and articles, published in several journals, are a proof of that.

Mr. Mathieu is a man of Science who, as many others, including ourselves, walked the paths of incredulity. However, he gave in to the facts since before the facts one needs to lay down the weapons. We allow ourselves to uniquely criticize the title of his last publication, not for a question of wordplay but because we believe that it has some importance and deserves a serious exam.

In its primitive origin and etymology, the word *miracle* means an extraordinary thing, something remarkable. As many other words, however, it has moved away from its original meaning and, according to the Academy, today it refers to an act of the Divine power, contrary to the common laws of nature. That is, in fact, its usual meaning and it is only through comparisons and metaphors that it is applied to common things that surprise us and whose causes are unknown to us.

Has the phenomenon, reported by Mr. Mathieu characterizes a miracle, in the true meaning of the word? It certainly has not. A miracle, as we have already said, is an exception to the laws of nature.

We do not wish to examine if God has considered useful to create an exception to the laws established by Him, under certain circumstances. Our objective is exclusively to demonstrate that the phenomenon of direct writing, however extraordinary it may be, does not bear any miraculous character, since it does not absolutely create an exception to those laws. A miracle cannot be explained; the direct writing, on the contrary, is explained in the most rational way, as seen in our article about the subject. Thus, it is not a miracle but a simple phenomenon supported by the general laws. The miracle has still another character: of being uncommon, isolated. Well as long as a fact is repeated, say, at will and through the intermediary of people, it cannot be a miracle.

Science makes miracles every day to the eyes of the ignorant. That is why in the former times those who had more knowledge than the people were suspected of being witches. And, since it was believed that every scientific phenomenon would come from the devil, they were burned at the stake. Nowadays, considering that we are much more civilized, we are happy to send them to asylums. After having allowed the inventors left there to suffer, we erect statues and name them as benefactors of humanity.

Let us leave those sad pages of our history behind, and return to our subject.

If a truly dead man were called back to life by a divine intervention this would be a miracle since this is contrary to nature. However, if such a man only bears the appearance of death; if he still has latent vitality; if science or a simple magnetic action may reanimate him, to the educated people this will be a natural phenomenon but to the eyes of the ignorant the fact will be miraculous and the author may be stoned or venerated, according to the characters of the persons. If in certain fields a physicist flies an electrical kite, creating a lightning which discharges onto a tree, this new Prometheus will be certainly looked at as if endowed by a diabolic power; and one must say, in passing, that as it seems Prometheus was substantially ahead of Franklin.

The direct writing is one phenomenon that most patently demonstrates the action of the occult intelligences. The fact that it is produced by an occult power, however, does not mean that it is more miraculous than all other phenomena due to invisible agents, since these occult beings, which populate space, are one of the powers of nature, power that is constant over the material world, as well as over the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

moral world. Through the explanation about such a power, Spiritism gives us the key for the understanding of a number of phenomena, otherwise unexplained and which were considered prodigies in remote eras. As with magnetism, it reveals a law, if not unknown at least badly understood; or even better, the effects were known since produced at all times, but the law was unknown, and it was the ignorance of this law that produced the superstition. Once the law is known, the marvelous ceases and the phenomena enter the order of natural things.

That is why the spiritists do not make miracles when making a table turn or an incarnate person write, in the same way a doctor does not make it by reviving a moribund patient or the physicist when producing an electrical discharge.

That is why we repel with all our heart the qualification employed by Mr. Mathieu, although we are convinced that he did not intend to give that word any mystical meaning, but because the persons who do not investigate in depth – and those are the majority – could be mistaken and believe that some adepts of Spiritism attribute to themselves a supernatural power. Anyone who pretended to make miracles, supported by this Science, would be either ignorant of the subject or a mystifier. One should not give ammunition to those who laugh at everything, including what they ignore, because it would be the same as exposing oneself to ridicule, in good faith.

As with the magnetic phenomena, the spiritist phenomena could be considered prodigies before their causes were known. Well, like the skeptical, the strong spirits, that is, those who in their opinion have the exclusive privilege of reason and common sense, do not believe that something is possible if they cannot understand it. That is why every fact considered prodigious to them is just a matter for mockery. Since religion has a large number of facts of such a nature, they do not believe in religion. From that, absolute incredulity is just a step away.

Spiritism shows the reason for the occurrence of the majority of those facts. It then comes in support of religion, demonstrating the possibility of certain facts which no longer require the miraculous character, although not less extraordinary. God is not smaller or less powerful just because God did not break His own laws.

How many jokes were not told about the levitations of St. Cupertino? Well, the ethereal suspension of the solid bodies is a fact, demonstrated and explained by Spiritism. We ourselves witnessed the phenomenon and Mr. Home, as other persons of our circle, repeated the phenomenon produced by St. Cupertino many times. Thus, such phenomenon is part of the natural phenomena. Among the facts of such a kind the apparitions are in the frontline for being the most frequent ones. The apparition of La Salette, which divides the clergy, has nothing of remarkable. We certainly cannot affirm that the fact has occurred since we do not have the material proof, but the fact is possible to us once we know thousands of recent analogue facts. We believe in them not only because their reality is attested by us but above all because we know perfectly well how they are produced. Refer to the theory we gave about the apparitions and one will see that the phenomenon becomes so simple and plausible as a number of physical phenomena considered prodigious just because their key is missing.

As for the person who appeared in La Salette, it is another question. The identity is not demonstrated in any way. We only attested that there was an apparition. The rest is not up to us. Our objective is not to examine if God can break His own laws either, by making miracles, in the true meaning of the word. This is a point of theology that is not part of our cogitations.

Each person may then have one's own convictions with that respect and Spiritism must not be involved with that. We only say that the facts produced by Spiritism reveal new laws and provide the key to several things that seemed supernatural. If some of those facts that seemed miraculous find a logical explanation here and a reason to occur, it is one more reason not to hastily deny what we do not understand.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

Certain persons criticize us for exposing spiritist theories that they consider premature. They forget that many contest the facts of Spiritism precisely because they seem outside of the common law, and because they are not explained.

Give them a rational basis and the doubt will disappear. Let us simply tell a person that we will send a telegram from Paris to the US and receive the answer in a few minutes and the person will laugh at us. Explain the communication process and the person will believe, even without seeing the operation. In this century in which words are not spared, explanation is a powerful means of conviction. Thus, we daily see persons who have never witnessed any fact, who have not seen one single table turning or a medium writing, and who are as much convinced as we are, only because they learned and understood. If we were supposed to believe only in what we see with our own eyes, our convictions would be reduced to almost nothing.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## Magnetism Recognized by the Judiciary

In the October 1858 issue of the Spiritist Review we published an article under the title Official Application of Animal Magnetism and Magnetism and also Somnambulism Taught by the Church. In the first we discussed the magnetic treatment prescribed to King Oscar of Sweden, by his own doctors; in the second we mentioned several questions and answers extracted from a book entitled Elementary Christian Course of Catechism for Christian Schools, published in 1853 by Abbot Marotte, general vicar of the dioceses of Verdun, in which magnetism and somnambulism are clearly defined and recognized. Now the justice system give them a reverberating sanction through the judgment passed by the Correctional Court of Douai, on August 27<sup>th</sup> last. Since all newspapers have covered that trial it would be useless to repeat it. We will summarize the events.

A young man who only knew magnetism by name and who had never practiced it, consequently ignoring the measures of prudence advised by experience, one day proposed to magnetize the nephew of a head waiter of the hotel where he used to dine. After a few passes the boy fell deep into a somnambulist state but the improvised magnetizer did not know how to proceed to make the boy return to his normal state, fact followed by the boy's persistent nervous breakdowns. Hence the boy's uncle filed a court suit against the magnetizer. Two doctors were summoned as experts. Here is an extract of their affidavit, more or less identical, at least regarding the conclusions. After having described and attested the somnambulist state of the boy, the first doctor says:

"I absolutely don't believe in the existence of a new fluid, of a physical agent more or less similar to the Earth's magnetism, developing in human beings under the influence of passes, touches, etc., which would sometimes produce miraculous effects on the influenced persons. The existence of such a fluid has never been scientifically demonstrated. Far from that, every time that members of the Academy of Science or well-known doctors, people who are hard to deceive, wanted to verify the alleged facts, the princes of magnetism retreated; shielded by very clear pretexts, subtracted themselves, so that neither the question of fact nor even less and with stronger reason the question of doctrine could be clarified. Then, to the whole scientific world, there is no animal magnetism. Nevertheless, it does follow that the practice of the magnetizers does not produce any effect, and if with good reason magnetism is denied, can't magnetization be admitted?"

"I am convinced that if susceptible and nervous imaginations are daily and strongly impressed by the aforementioned maneuvers, we must see the presented phenomena there and not in a kind of radiation from the experimenter. This explanation would be applicable to the Jourdain case, if the attacks that followed the first one, supposing that it had been produced by magnetization, would have been scarcer and weaker in intensity, once a single impulse must logically produce diminishing effects. Well, in the present case the opposite happens: as time goes by the events speed up and increase in intensity. This confuses me. There is evidently an undetermined influence at play. What would that be? I don't have sufficient health and behavioral background information about Jourdain to attribute those things to his temperament. I must declare that I can't establish the cause."

At that point in time the boy has one of his attacks. Like his colleague, the witness attests general and intermittent muscular contractions; no sensitivity in the skin and eyes, which deviate under the action of light when the eyelids are opened; absence of mouth secretion and thumb flexion. No repetition of initial screams; besides, the crisis stops gradually, passing through the somnambulist period. The doctors declared that the boy does not bear signs of epilepsy or catalepsy.

The witness was questioned about the word somnambulism, with the objective of establishing if the patient, considered somnambulist, would have had an event of that kind of illness on August 15th,

## The Spiritist Review 1859

responding: “to begin with, it has not been established that the boy was a somnambulist and besides, the referred phenomenon had occurred under entirely remarkable conditions; instead of occurring at night, during natural sleep, it had happened in day light, in the vigil state. The magnetic passes, as it seems to me, are the cause of the boy’s condition. I see no other cause.”

Here the second doctor’s statement:

“I saw the little patient on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1858. He was in a somnambulist state, enjoying voluntary motion. He would recite catechism. My son saw him in the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>. He was in the same state, conjugating the verb *can*. It was only sometime later that I learned about his magnetization and that a visitor would have said: if he is not demagnetized he may stay like that for his whole life. I knew a student, in my youth, who was cured without medical support, becoming a distinguished man in his profession. The accidents experienced by the patient are nervous breakdowns only. There is no symptom of epilepsy or catalepsy.”

The court pronounced the following sentence:

“Considering that as a result of the debates, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1858 imprudently applying touches and approximations qualified as magnetic passes on the 13 year old Jourdain, and at least impressing the weak imagination of the boy by such unusual apparatus and maneuvers, the accused produced a super excitation on the patient, a nervous disorder, and finally a lesion or disease, whose events have since repeated at different intervals;

“Considering that the imprudent maneuvers which provoked the so called lesion or disease constitute crime as stated in Art. 320 of the Penal Code;”

“Considering that the referred fact caused losses to the plaintiff who must be repaired;”

“Considering that there exist attenuating circumstances;”

“The Tribunal condemns the accused to pay a fine of 25 francs; another 1,200 francs of losses and damages and to cover for the legal fees.”

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We have nothing to say about the trial itself. Was the court right or wrong to condemn the accused? Was the sentence too harsh or too weak? That is none of our business. Justice has been pronounced and we respect its decision, but we will examine the consequences of the trial, which has a fundamental reach. There was condemnation thus there was a crime. How was that crime carried out? The sentence says: *by touches and approximations qualified as magnetic passes*. Then the touches and magnetic passes have an action and are not simple gestures. These touches and passes differ somehow from the ordinary touches and gestures. But how can they be distinguished? This is an important difference for if there were no difference it would no longer be possible to touch anyone or make signals without the risk of committing a crime or being subjected to a fine.

It is not the Court that we have to teach and even less to say how the passes and touches, having a magnetic character, may produce any given effect. It attests the fact of an accident and its cause. Its duty is to assess the damage and determine the compensation. However, the experts called in to clarify the Court will certainly teach us about the facts. Even not having a formal training about the subject they must substantiate their opinion, as in all cases of legal medicine, for this is the first condition to be fulfilled by an expert. Well, we were shocked by the opinion of those gentlemen. Their affidavit reveals a complete ignorance about what they must give their opinion. They not only ignore magnetism but also the facts of natural magnetism are unknown to them. That is why they think that – at least one of them – those phenomena can only be produced at night, during the natural sleep, a fact contradicted by experience.

However, that is not the most remarkable part of the statement, at least from the first witness. He says: “*if with good reason magnetism is denied, can’t magnetization be admitted?*” In reality I don’t know if it is a matter of logic, but I humbly confess that it goes beyond my intelligence and that many others are in the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

same situation as I am, since it would be the same as saying that it is possible to magnetize without magnetism, or that a man may be hit by a walking stick without the existence of the stick. Well, we firmly believe, as from an old saying and until proven otherwise, that to be hit by the walking-stick, the walking-stick is necessary, and by analogy in order to magnetize someone, magnetism is necessary in the same way that to purge something the purgative is necessary. Our intelligence cannot reach an effect without a cause.

You may say that I don't deny the effect; on the contrary, I attest it; what I deny is the cause to which you attribute the effect. You say that between your fingers and the patient there is something invisible, which you call magnetic fluid. I say that there isn't such a thing; that such a fluid does not exist. Now, what does exist is magnetism and your gestures are magnetization. Agree. You then admit that simple gestures without intermediaries may produce nervous crises, somnambulistic effects, cataleptics and others, exclusively because imagination was touched. Be it. I want a person impressed by such means to the point of sleeping in daylight, and against their will, which would already be a remarkable fact – as you should agree. Would that sleep be natural, as some say? In that case how can you explain the instantaneous sleep, produced in a few seconds? Why can't you easily awake that person by just shaking her arm? Let us leave aside many other phenomena not much explained by your system, for obvious reasons. There is one, however, whose solution you can certainly provide, as I don't believe that you have created a theory about such an important subject, not making sure that it resolves all cases, theory which must be so certain that you announce it to the tribunal. Hence you must be sure. Well then! For the benefit of general instruction and every person simple enough to believe in the existence of a magnetic fluid, kindly resolve the following two questions by your system:

1. If the effects attributed to the magnetic fluid are not but the simple result of an excited and strongly impressed imagination, how can they be produced by default when the person is magnetized during natural sleep or when she is in an adjacent compartment, not seeing the magnetizer and not knowing that she is magnetized?
2. If the touches or magnetic passes may produce nervous breakdowns and somnambulistic states, how can those same touches and passes produce the opposite effect; destroy what they did and calm down the most violent nervous crisis which they provoked; suddenly and like by magic, stop the somnambulistic state? Would that be an effect of imagination, considering that the person does not see or hear what happens around her? Or we do have to admit that it is possible to act upon imagination without imagination, what would be perfectly possible once it is possible to magnetize without magnetism? This reminds me of a little joke. A reckless person was manipulating a rifle. He shot and killed another person. An expert called in to examine the weapon declared that the person had been killed by a rifle shot, but the rifle was unloaded.

Isn't that the case of our magnetizer, who harms through magnetization, but without magnetism? The Court of Douai, in its elevated wisdom, certainly did not mess up with all these contradictions, about which it did not have to pronounce. As we have seen, the Court only considered the effect that was produced and declared that it was produced by magnetic touches and passes. It was not up to the Court to decide if there is or there isn't a magnetic fluid. The trial attests with authenticity that magnetism is a reality; otherwise the magnetizer would not have been condemned for the application of insignificant gestures. May this serve as a lesson to the reckless, those who play with what they ignore.

Those gentlemen did not notice that, through their issued assessment, the attained result was opposite to their objective; endowing the magnetizers with such a power which they are far from claiming. In fact, the magnetizers state that they can only act with the help of an intermediary; that their action is null when they lack such intermediary. They do not attribute to themselves the power of hitting someone without the walking-stick or killing with rifle shots of an unloaded rifle.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Very well! With their theory those gentlemen come to realize another prodigy, because they act empty handed and empty pocketed. There are things in fact which cannot be taken seriously. We apologize but it does not diminish their merit. They may be very skillful and very well prepared as physicians. That is why the Court consulted with them. We only take the liberty of criticizing them with respect to magnetism.

We finish by an important observation.

If magnetism is a reality, why hasn't the Academia officially recognized it? There would be a lot of things to say about it. We limit ourselves, however, to one consideration only, asking why the discoveries that are well accepted today haven't been so much accepted in the beginning, by the scientific organizations? I leave the task of responding to others. The medical class is divided with respect to magnetism, as with homeopathy, allopathy, phrenology, the cholera treatment, the use of purgatives, bleeding and a number of other things. Thus, an opinion is always individual, not bearing the power of law. What is worth is the general opinion established about the facts, despite all opposition, exerting an irresistible pressure onto the recalcitrant. That is what happens to magnetism as well as to Spiritism, and it is not too much to say that half of the doctors today recognize and admit magnetism, and even that three quarters of the magnetizers are physicians.

The same happens to Spiritism, which counts on a number of doctors and people of science in its ranks. Why does it matter then those focused on process or opinion? Let time pass, sweeping away the hurt self-love and the petty concerns! Truth may be discussed but not destroyed and posterity will register the names of those who attacked or sustained it. Had magnetism been a utopia, it would be gone long ago whereas like its brother, Spiritism, it sows its roots everywhere. Fight, then, against the ideas that invade the whole world, from top to bottom of the social scale!



# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## Inert Mediums

Among the important questions related to the Spiritist Science, the role of the mediums was a subject of many controversies. Mr. Brasseur, director of the Industrial Center, published his private ideas with respect to this in the *Moniteur de la Toilette*<sup>24</sup>, particularly in the month of August last, from which we extracted the texts transcribed below. He honors us by requesting our opinion. We will most sincerely give it, not pretending that our point of view becomes law. We let our readers and observers judge the question. As a matter of fact, it is enough to summarize what we have said about it in several occasions, when treating the subject with much more extension than we can do here, since it is not possible to repeat everything that can be found in our writings.

Here the main passages of one of Mr. Brasseur's articles, followed by our answers:

*"What is a medium? Is the medium active or passive? Such are the questions aiming at the clarification of a subject which concerns those willing to get educated about the matters from beyond the grave and, consequently, about their relationships with that world."*

*"On May 18<sup>th</sup> last I sent a note to the President of the Spiritist Society entitled: The medium and the spirits. On July 15<sup>th</sup> Mr. Allan Kardec published a new book entitled: What is Spiritism? By reading it I supposed to have found a categorical answer but that was in vain. The author persists in his errors: the mediums, he says on page 75, are THE PERSONS capable of patently receiving the impression of the spirits, serving as intermediaries between the visible and the invisible worlds."*

The book mentioned above is not a course of Spiritism. It is a summary explanation of the principles of that Science, to be used by persons willing to acquire its first notions. The analysis of details about the issues as well as the multiple opinions cannot enter into such a restricted space that has a specific objective. As for the definition we gave about the mediums, it seems perfectly clear to us, and it is with that definition that we respond to Mr. Brasseur's question: "What is a medium?" It is possible that it does not correspond to his personal opinion. As for ourselves, however, we have so far no reason to modify it.

*"Mr. Allan Kardec does not acknowledge the inert medium. He speaks of boxes, cards or planchettes, but does not see in those things (page 62) but appendices of the hand, whose uselessness would have been recognized..."*

*"Let us be clear".*

*"In your opinion the medium is an intermediary between the visible and invisible worlds. But is it absolutely necessary that such a medium be a person? Isn't it enough that the invisible may have any instrument for their manifestation?"*

No, we will respond to that. It is not sufficient that the invisible may have any instrument at their service in order to manifest, since the fluidic support of a person is missing and to us, that person is the true medium. If it were enough to the spirit the use of any given instrument, we would see planchettes and baskets writing on their own, fact that has never happened. The direct writing, apparently the most independent fact of any cooperation, can only be produced under the influence of mediums, endowed by special aptitudes. A powerful consideration comes to support this opinion. According to Mr. Brasseur, the instrument is the main thing; the person is an accessory. In our opinion, it is exactly the opposite.

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24 Journal of the Salons, fashion, literature and theater. Rue de l'Échiquier, 15

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Otherwise why wouldn't the planchettes move with nobody? If, then, to make them move it is necessary to be endowed by a special aptitude, then the role of the person is not simply passive. That is why such a person is to us the true medium. The instrument, we repeat, is no more than an appendix of the hand, which we can go without. This is so true that every person who writes through the planchette can also do it directly with the hand, without the planchette and even without the pencil, since the characters may be drawn with the finger, whereas the planchette does not write without a person. As a matter of fact, every variety of mediums, as for their *active* or *passive* role, is widely developed in our *Practical Instructions about the Manifestations*.

*“Separated from matter by the dissolution of the body, the soul no longer has any physical element of humanity.”*

And what happens to the perispirit? The perispirit is the link uniting body and soul, the semi-material wrapping of the soul when alive and that remains after death. It is through that envelope that the soul shows itself in the apparitions. That wrapping is also matter, which although etherealized, may acquire the properties of tangibility.

*“It has been observed that the person, directly holding the pencil, mixes her feelings and ideas with the feelings and ideas of the invisible, so that in such a way only mixed communications are given, whereas by the use of boxes, cards and planchettes, under the hands of two persons together, those persons do not absolutely intervene with the manifestation, being given only by the invisible. Hence I declare this mode superior and preferable to that of the Spiritist Society.”*

That opinion could be true if not contradicted by the thousands of observed facts, at the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies and elsewhere, which demonstrate with incontestable evidence that the inspired mediums, even intuitive, and even with stronger argument, the mechanical mediums, may be absolutely passive instruments and enjoy the most thorough independence of thoughts. With the mechanical medium the spirit acts upon the hand, which receives an entirely involuntary impulse, taking the role of what Mr. Brasseur called inert medium, be the hand alone or holding a pencil, or even resting on a mobile object which is holding a pencil.

With the intuitive medium the spirit acts upon the brain, transmitting the movement of the arm through the nervous system, and so forth. The mechanical medium writes without the slightest awareness about his production. The act *precedes the thought*. With the intuitive medium the thought follows the act, and sometimes precedes it. Hence it is the thought of the spirit which crosses the medium's brain, and if sometimes they seem to blend together, their independence is not less patent when the medium writes, even out of intuition, things that he cannot know or which are entirely contrary to his own ideas, his way of seeing things, his own convictions. In one word, when he thinks white and writes black. Besides, there are so many spontaneous and unpredictable facts that the doubt is not possible on those who observe them.

The role of the medium, in that case, is of an interpreter that receives a strange thought; transmits it; must understand it in order to transmit but does not assimilate it. That is how things are with the speaking mediums, who receive an impulse onto the organs of the word, as others receive on the arm or hand, and also with the hearing mediums, who clearly hear a voice speaking with them, dictating what they must write. And what will you say about the clairvoyant mediums, to whom the spirits show up as they were when alive, mediums who see them circulating around us, coming and going like the crowd we see before our eyes? And how about the impressionable mediums who feel the occult touches, the impression of fingers and even nails which mark their skin, leaving a sign? And how about the mediums of double sight who clearly see in daylight and awake what happens far away? Isn't that a faculty, a kind of mediumship? The mediumship is the faculty of the mediums. The mediums are persons accessible to the influence of the spirits, being able to serve as their intermediaries. That is the definition found in the small *Abbreviated French Dictionary of the Dictionaries*, by Napoleon Landais, and so far it seems to give us a very exact idea.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

We do not deny the utility of the instruments designated as inert mediums by Mr. Brasseur, name that he has total freedom of choice if he considers it appropriate. From experience, the names incontestably have an advantage to individuals who have not seen anything. However, since the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies is formed by experienced persons, whose convictions are already formed, not carrying out any experience to satisfy public curiosity; it does not invite people to the meetings so as they are not perturbed in its researches and observations and those primitive means would teach the Society nothing. That is why the Society prefers others, more expedited, considering that it has a significant experience with the subject to perfectly distinguish the nature of the communications that are received.

We will not follow Mr. Brasseur in every argument which he bases his theory for we are afraid of weakening and truncating them. Given the impossibility of reproducing them all we prefer to refer the readers interested in knowing about it to the newspaper that he edits with incontestable talent, where there are also very well written articles from Mr. Jules de Neuville, having one problem only to our eyes: not been preceded by a sufficiently deep study of the subject, thus allowing for many superfluous questions.

In short, and in common agreement with the Spiritist Society, we persist in the consideration of persons as the true mediums, who can be passive or active, according to their nature and aptitudes. We may call the instruments by the name of inert mediums if you will. It is a distinction that may be useful. We would make a mistake, however, had we attributed them with the role and properties of the animated beings of the intelligent communications. Furthermore we say *intelligent* to make the necessary distinction from the spontaneous, purely physical manifestations. This is a subject widely discussed in the *Review*.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

FRIDAY, JULY 29<sup>th</sup> 1859

(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes and works of the previous session.

Communications:

Curious facts of death predictions and warnings from beyond the grave which took place one with Mr. Chamissot and Mr. de Brunoy, emigrants who resided in Koblenz in 1794; another with Countess C... (it will be published).

Microscopic and analytical observations of direct writing (see the August 1859 issue of the Review).

Reading of a letter in response to material sent regarding the evocation of Mr. J... (de La Sarthe), carried out on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Studies:

Complementary questions regarding the spirits' rest. The answers do not seem to correspond to the elevation of the evoked spirit since one cannot recognize the habitual clarity and precision. As they do not provide a satisfactory solution, the Society does not take them into account.

Questions addressed to François Arago with respect to the mistaken answers mentioned above. He says that the spirit who answered was not the evoked spirit. This spirit, he says, is not bad, but not very elevated and incapable of solving certain questions. We allowed him to answer to exercise your assessment and, at the same time, give him a lesson.

Questions addressed to the same spirit regarding the chemical analysis of the matter related to the direct writing.

Questions, still to the same spirit, about the storms and the role of the spirits in the natural phenomena (published in the September issue of the Review).

Second evocation of Mr. J... (de La Sarthe), after the letter mentioned above (published in the September issue, Death of a Spiritist).

Evocation of Jacques Arago (will be published).

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1859

(PRIVATE SESSION)

Reading of the minutes and works of previous session.

Administrative businesses:

Introduction and admission of two new regular members and a corresponding member from Madrid.

Communications:

Letter from Mr. D..., member of the Society, citing a remarkable passage extracted from the *Tableau de Paris*, from Mercier, 1788 edition, vol. 12, entitled Spiritualists. The text attests the existence of a Society in Paris, in those days, having the communication with spirits as its objective. It thus provides an additional proof that Spiritism is not a new creation and that it was accepted by the most distinguished people (to be published next).

## The Spiritist Review 1859

With that respect Mr. S... observes that in those days a Mr. Martinez Pascalis had founded the Martinists sect, which also intended to enter into communication with the spirits through the initiated, who were supposed to keep it as a secret.

A letter from Mr. B..., from New York, thanking the Society for the title of corresponding member which was awarded to him, giving interesting details about the commercial exploitation of Spiritism in America.

Several letters from Mr. Dumas were read; active member of the Society in Sétif, Algeria, containing a large number of evocations, many of which of great interest from the point of view of the study. They inform about the development of several mediums in that country and that Spiritism is a matter of great concern. Among the cited facts the following one sticks out: an uneducated coalman tried to write as a medium, only producing some doodles in the beginning with which he filled out six pages. Then he had the idea of putting those pages side by side and had the impression that the traces combined, forming a whole picture. Later the same person wrote entire pages with great facility. However, the abundance, prolixity and nature of certain communications give reason to fear for an obsession.

Mr. Allan Kardec points out a fact of spontaneous manifestation, occurring during a session at his house, under remarkable circumstances. Princess S... was present, manifesting her interest in the evocation of Dr. Beaufils, her doctor, deceased around seven or eight months earlier. Three mediums, including the Princess' daughter, who is also a very good medium, were taken by convulsive, violent jerky movements, breaking the pencil and tearing the paper. Summoned to let her identity to be known, the spirit ended up revealing his name, after some hesitation. Pressed by the questions he said that his name was known from the newspapers; that he was a miserable, who had murdered, and was a butcher's assistant, assassin from the Rue de la Roquette, recently executed. He was questioned about the reason for his presence once he was not invited, then saying that he was sent by other spirits so as to convince that the mediums do not write from their own thoughts... He finishes by asking for prayers since he regrets his actions and suffers. He left after the promise that his desire would be granted and some advices were given to him.

Next came Dr. Beaufils who calmly and lucidly answered several questions that were addressed to him.

In fact that communication is absolute proof of the independence of the mediums, for every member of the gathering was concerned with the evocation of the doctor, and nobody thought of that man that came to surprise everybody, manifesting by identical signs through three different mediums, who did not have cards or planchettes.

Reading of a spontaneous communication obtained by Mr. R..., member of the Society, about the antique spiritist beliefs and their vestige left in all religions (to be published next).

Study:

Evocation of Privat d'Anglemon (will be published).

Evocation of the stingy millionaire from Lyon, known by the nickname Père Crépin (will be published).

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>th</sup> 1859  
(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes and works of previous session.

Communications:

Reading of a spontaneous communication received by Viscount H..., recently developed medium, and transmitted by Mr. D..., member of the Society, who lives in Lille (it will be published).

Reading of a spontaneous communication of Lamennais, obtained by Mr. R..., member of the Society (it will be published).

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Another spontaneous communication obtained by the same, from Dr. Olivier, who showed up without being invoked. This communication has the following notable aspect: shows that spirit in a situation identical to that of Voltaire, as described by the latter in his confessions, published in the September issue of the Review. He doubts everything, including God. He is errant, not finding anybody to help him, deepening him into an anxious state even more painful for the reason that he cannot see the end of it. The words of consolation addressed to him by the medium are a beam of light, giving him relief. It will be published.

Mr. Allan Kardec reports a remarkable fact of obsession by a brutal spirit, a former coachman, over the person of Mr. C..., an excellent medium. Besides, the fact confirms the possibility of haunted places by certain spirits. (It will be published).

About the noisy spirits of Madrid. Report of a fact published by a newspaper from Madrid, without comments, related to a house from that city, which was inhabitable, given the noise and nightly mess, having the police investigate and try to take measures that were ineffective.

Studies:

Questions about avarice, regarding the evocation of Père Crépin from Lyon (it will be published following the publication of that evocation).

Evocation of Privat d'Anglemont, second conversation (it will be published).

Evocation of Mr. Julien S..., carried out at the request of Mr. B... from Bouxhors.

Evocation of Mr. Adrien de S..., carried out by a visitor who was attending the session. This evocation, although of a purely personal interest, offers a characteristic trace with respect to the influence exerted by the errant spirits over the incarnate ones.

The tomb of Saint-Leu. Searching for the grave of the great chancellor Pasquier at the Church of Saint-Leu, in Paris, on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1859, the workers excavated a whole in one wall, finding below the church choir a five meters long by four meters high by two meters wide tomb, hermetically sealed by a slab. There were about fifteen to twenty skeletons in the tomb, without coffins and in different positions, indicating that they were not buried there. A sticky instrument was used to write the following names on the wall: Marvé, 1733; Chenest, 1733; Marx, altar boy, 1727; Charles Remy, 1721; Gabriel, 1727; Thiévan, 1723; Maupain, 1728 and several other illegible names.

The spirit of St. Louis was questioned about the possibility of the evocation of one of the spirits whose names were found in the tomb, in order to clarify that discovery. He answered: "I advise you to leave it aside. There are crimes in the case, too recent to exhume things with that respect."

Verteuil, former drama author and actor from the *la Cité* Theater. He was an intelligent young man, handsome, and successful man. He soon lost all his assets in a bankruptcy, then his speaking, hearing and vision. He died in Bicêtre, where he lived deaf, dumb and blind for twenty years. He was only communicated with through characters drawn on the palm of his hand. He would then respond in writing. Such exceptional situation seemed to offer an interesting theme for a psychological study. Consulted about it St. Louis responded: "Do not evoke him, for his is incarnate". Then he offered a number of information about the antecedents of that young man and the causes and circumstances of his illness. The details of this touching story may be read in the *La Patrie* of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1859.

Evocation of the former coachman whose communications we have already mentioned. He manifests through signs of violence, breaking the pencil, forcing it on the paper; through a rough, irregular and not much legible writing. This evocation presents a remarkable trace, particularly with respect to the influence that man may exert on certain inferior spirits, through prayer and good advices (it will be published).

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16<sup>th</sup> 1859  
(PRIVATE SESSION)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Reading of the minutes and works of the previous session (September, 9<sup>th</sup>).

Communications:

Reading of an article from *d'Illustration*, 1853, sent by Mr. R..., under the title *The Driving Tables*. This article demonstrates, according to the Russian newspaper *Sjevernava Plschela*, from April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1853 and according to documents provided by Mr. Tscherepanoff, that the phenomenon of the turning tables is known and practiced in China, Siberia and among the Kalmoucks from meridional Russia, since immemorial times (published next).

Mr. Dorgeval sent a poem to the Society entitled *Uranie*, from Mr. de Porry of Marseille, in which the fundamental points of the Spiritist Doctrine are clearly enunciated, although at the time of its composition the author had no notion about this Science. Not less worthy of note is the fact that Mr. de Porry seems to have written his poem through some sort of mediumistic faculty. It is early evening, he feels sleepy, the verses are formed in his mind and he writes them on waking up in the morning. Several fragments of the poem that will be published in this Review were read.

Letter from Mr. P... of Marseille, containing the communication of a spirit identifying himself by the name of Paul, remarkable by several answers of great profundity.

Reading about a spontaneous communication given to Mr. R..., member of the Society, by the murdered butcher from Rue de la Roquette, which we mentioned in our September 2<sup>nd</sup> session, and who came to a session held at Mr. Allan Kardec's house. The spirit came to thank the prayers said in his favor, as he had requested. This communication is remarkable, given the good thoughts it contains, and sheds a new light on the assistance that can be given to the suffering spirits (it will be published).

Studies:

The spirit of St. Louis was asked if, irrespective of the subjects prepared in advance, the spirits could give us spontaneous communications about a theme of their choice. He answered positively and said that next time Cesar would write through Mr. R..., with the agreement of the latter.

Attending the session as an observer, Mr. C... asks if he is allowed to evoke his son, whose death is to his mother a cause of pain that nothing can attenuate. He would like to report to her on the very next day a conversation as an instrument of consolation. This evocation will not be published as it is personal in nature.

Exam of Mr. Brasseur's theory about the mediums. He considers the boxes, planchettes and other instruments as the only true mediums, which he calls inert mediums, since, he says, in the animated mediums there always are a participation of personal opinions in a greater or lesser degree. Several members take part in the discussion and agree to combat Mr. Brasseur's opinion, founded on an incomplete observation, as they say, for the absolute independence of the medium is demonstrated by undeniable facts. One of the arguments opposed to Mr. Brasseur's opinion is that the cards and planchettes never speak on their own, but are only instruments or, as already said, dispensable appendices; they are the accessories rather than the main component. The planchette fitted with a pencil and influenced by the person is not any more a medium than the pencil directly in the hand of the person.

Mr. Sanson reads some verses he wrote as a tribute to St. Louis and as thanks to the cure to which he experienced. Since he does not consider himself a poet he asks who would be the spirit that inspired him. The answer was that it was his own spirit taken by the appreciation for what had alleviated his pains.

Evocation of Swedenborg. He responded to the evocation of Mr. Allan Kardec as:

- Speak my old friend.
- You honor me with the title of your old friend. However, we are far from being contemporary since I only know you from your writings.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- It is true but I do know you since long ago.
- We wish to make several questions about many points of your doctrine, but it is late now and our only objective is to ask you if we can frame these questions in our next session.
- With pleasure. Allow me already to make a correction in my writing that is important to me. When I wrote my doctrine I affirmed, under the inspiration of the heavenly counselors who dictated it to me, that each people were in a separated sphere in the heavens, and that the distinct character of each nation was preserved, not by individuals but in large families. Experience has convinced me that that is not the case.
- Aren't other points subject to dispute?
- Yes, many others, but this is one of the most important.
- We have here several mediums. Do you have preference to communicate with us?
- No... or better, yes. I would choose a mechanical medium, as you call them, and fast as well.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1859

(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes of the previous session (September, 16<sup>th</sup>).

Introduction of four candidates to regular membership. Their admission to be discussed in the next private session on October 7<sup>th</sup>, when the acceptance will be pronounced, if that is the case.

Communications:

Reading of a letter from Rouen, reporting a fact that took place with the family of the person who writes the letter. It references the apparition of his grandmother at the time of her death.

Another recent fact of apparition and warning from beyond the grave. Mr. D..., from Paris, doctor in Medicine, had for some time treated a young lady that suffered from an incurable disease and who no longer lived in Paris. About 15 days ago Mr. D... was awakened by knocks on his bedroom door. He assumed that someone had been sent to him to help a patient, and then asked: "Who is that?" He immediately saw that lady standing before him, saying in a clear voice: "It is me, Mr. D... I come to tell you that I have died." He was later informed that the lady had actually died on that very evening of the apparition.

A curious fact concerning temporary separation between the soul and the body that happened some days ago to a medium of the Society, Mr. C... (It will be published with the explanation given by the spirits).

Reading of a remarkable communication from the spirit of Privat d'Anglemont to Mr. C..., medium of the Society (it will be published together with other communications from the same spirit).

Studies:

Three spontaneous communications had been promised to this session: one from Cesar, one from Swedenborg and one from Privat d'Anglemont. They were written simultaneously, by three mediums, all mechanical.

Next, several questions were addressed to Swedenborg about some points of his doctrine, which he acknowledge were wrong. A previous reading of a biographic note about Swedenborg prepared by Mrs. P..., member of the Society, was carried out (it will be published).

Mr. D..., member of the Society, had prepared a series of very intelligent questions about Cesar but the spontaneous explanations given by the spirit made the majority of them superfluous. Yet, they will be examined and those considered convenient will be used in a future proposition.

Mr. Dumas, from Sétif, regular member of the Society, present at the session, requested that some spirits who have appeared to him be evoked, in order to have control over the communications from Algeria.



## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

The result of these evocations is identical and confirms the answers that were given to him earlier. When he wanted to know if he could efficiently cooperate with the propagation of Spiritism in Africa, he was not answered that he can but also that he should.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## Spiritist Society in the XVIII century

TO MR. PRESIDENT OF THE PARISIAN SOCIETY OF SPIRITIST STUDIES

“Mr. President,

It is not since 1853, a period in which the spirits started to manifest through the motion of the tables and the knocks, that the renovation in these evocations is marked. In the history of Spiritism that we read in your publications, you don't mention a Society that existed and, like ours and to my great surprise, was revealed to me by Mercier in his *Tableau de Paris*, 1788 edition, in the chapter entitled *Spiritualists*, volume 12. Here is what he says:

“Why do theology, philosophy and history mention several apparitions of spirits, genies or demons? The belief of part of the ancient times was that each person had two spirits, one good, inviting virtue, the other bad, inciting evil.”

“A new sect believes in the return of the spirits to this world. I heard several people really influenced that there are means of evoking these spirits. We are surrounded by a world that we don't see. Around us there are beings that go completely unnoticed. Endowed by a superior intellectual nature, they see us. There is no emptiness in the Universe; this is what the followers of this new science affirm.”

“Thus, the return of the souls of the dead, accepted since the remotest antiquity, mocked by our philosophy, today is accepted by people who are neither ignorant nor superstitious. All these spirits, called princes of air in the scriptures, are always under the orders of the lord of nature. Aristotle says that the spirits always appear to human beings because ones need the others. I do nothing more here than reporting what the partisans of the existence of the genies say.”

“If we believe in the immortality of the soul we must admit that the crowd of spirits must manifest after death. Among the huge amount of prodigies reported in all countries on Earth, *if only one has in fact occurred*, then the incredulity is mistaken. I then believe that there would not be less risk in denying this than supporting the truthfulness of the apparitions. We are in an unknown world.”

Mercier will not be accused of incredulity and ignorance. In the preceding excerpt we see that he does not reject the spirits manifestations by default, although he did not have the opportunity of witnessing them. However, as a prudent man, he suspended his judgment up until the availability of better information. As for magnetism he had already said: “This is so mysterious, so profound and incredible that we must laugh or fall on our knees. I don't do either one. I wait and observe.”

It would be interesting to know why these evocations, reestablished in 1788, were interrupted up until 1853. Would the members of the Society have perished during the revolution? It is unfortunate that Mercier had not mentioned the name of the president of that Society.

Sincerely, etc.

“Det...”

A regular member of the Society.”

OBSERVATION: The fact reported by Mercier is very important and a reach that no one can deny. It proves that, since those days, people commendable by their intelligence seriously dealt with the Spiritist Science. As for the cause that determined the extinction of the Society, it is more likely that the disturbances that followed had a strong role on that. But it is not correct to say that the evocations were interrupted until 1853. It is true that the manifestations had a greater development around that time but it is demonstrated that they have never stopped. We had, in hand, a manuscript reporting that in 1818, in the Society of the Theosophists, existing in the beginning of this century, indicating that through worship and

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

prayer it was possible to enter into communication with the spirits. It could perhaps be the continuation of the Society mentioned by Mercier. Since the year 1860 the celebrity Abbot Faria, according to a friend of his, former missionary in Paraguay, dealt with evocations and obtained written communications. We daily learn about persons that witnessed those manifestations well before it was cogitated in America.

Nevertheless, it is proper to clarify that before those days everyone who had such knowledge kept that in secrecy. It vulgarizes today, as public domain. That is the whole difference. And if it were an illusion it would not have implanted in all corners of the world in just a few years. Common sense would have made it justice, since everyone can see and understand. Certainly nobody will dispute the daily progress of these ideas, even in the most educated layers of society. Well, an idea that requires reasoning, that grows and gets illuminated by discussion and examination, does not bear the features of a utopia.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Father Crépin

PARISIAN SOCIETY, SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1859

The papers have recently announced the death of a man from Lyon, where he was known by the nickname Father Crépin. He was a multi-millionaire of an uncommon greed. Over the last years of his life he moved in with the Favre's couple, under the obligation to feed him for only thirty cents per day, outside of an additional deduction of ten cents for tobacco. He owned nine houses, formerly living in one of them, in a kind of niche that he had built under the stairs. When it was time to collect rent he would pick up paper from the streets and use the material for the receipts. The local government decree to whitewash the houses caused him a great distress; he made useless attempts to get an exemption. He would scream that it was his ruin. If he had one house only he would accept but, he added, he had nine.

1. (Evocation)
  - I am here. What do you want from me? Oh! My gold! My gold! What was made of it?
2. Do you miss your life on Earth?
  - Oh! Yes!
3. Why do you miss it?
  - I can no longer touch my gold, count and keep it.
4. How do you spend your time?
  - I am still too bonded to Earth and it is difficult to regret.
  -
5. Have you come many times to see again your dear treasure and your houses?
  - As many times as I can.
6. When you were alive, haven't you given any thought to the fact that you would not take any of that with you to the other world?
  - No. My only thought was related to the treasure, aiming at its accumulation. I have never given any thought to the separation.
7. What was your objective by piling up that treasure that served nothing, not even yourself, since you were deprived of everything?
  - I experienced the ecstasy of touching it.
8. Where did you take such parsimonious behavior?
  - From the pleasure experienced by my spirit and my heart for having a lot of money. I had no other passion here on Earth.
9. Do you understand what the greed was?
  - Yes, I understand now that I was a miserable. However my heart is still too worldly and I still experience certain pleasure when I see my gold. But I cannot touch it and it is the beginning of a punishment in my current life.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

10. You never had any pity towards the unfortunate ones who suffered in misery? Had you never had the idea of alleviating them?
  - Why didn't they have any money? Too bad for them!
11. Do you have any memory of your existence prior to this one that you have just left?
  - Yes, I was a shepherd, physically very unhappy, but happy in my heart.
12. What were you first thoughts when you found yourself in the world of the spirits?
  - My first thought was to search for my treasure and, above all, my gold. When I saw nothing but space I felt very unhappy. My heart was shattered and remorse started to take me over. It seems that the more time goes by the more I will suffer from my worldly avarice.
13. What is now the consequence of your Earthly life?
  - Useless to my fellow human beings, useless before eternity, unfortunate to me before God.
14. Could you foresee a new corporeal existence?
  - I don't know.
15. If you were to have a brief corporeal existence which one would you choose?
  - I would pick one through which I could be useful to my fellow human beings.
16. You had no friends when alive since a greedy person like yourself could not have them. Do you have them among the spirits?
  - I never prayed for anybody. My guardian angel, which I disregarded, is the only one that has pity on me.
17. Has anybody welcomed you when you entered the world of the spirits?
  - Yes, my mother.
18. Have you been already evoked by other people?
  - Once, by a person who I mistreated.
19. Haven't you been in Africa, in a center where they deal with the spirits?
  - Yes, but those people had no pity on me. That is really sad. Here you have compassion.
20. Will our evocation be beneficial to you?
  - Very much.
21. How did you acquire fortune?
  - Some I honestly earned but I exploited a lot and stole some from my fellow citizens.
22. Can we be of any help to you?
  - Yes, have some pity on this suffering soul.

SOCIETY, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>th</sup>, 1859

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO ST. LOUIS REGARDING FATHER CRÉPIN

## The Spiritist Review 1859

1. Father Crépin that we evoked lately is a rare kind of greedy individual. He could not give us information about the origin of his passion. Could you kindly enlighten us? He said he had been a shepherd, physically very unhappy, but happy in his heart. We see nothing there, which could produce such a sordid avarice. Could you tell us what triggered that?
  - He was ignorant and inexperienced. He asked for the wealth and it was conceded but as a punishment for his request. Be assured that he will no longer request that.
2. Father Crépin offers us the kind of ignoble greed but that passion has degrees. There are people who are greedy to the others only. Our question is which one is more culpable: the one who accumulates by the pleasure of it, depriving himself even from the necessary, or the other who deprives himself from nothing but greed when involving the least sacrifice towards his neighbor?
  - It is evident that the last one is more guilty since profoundly selfish. The first one is crazy.
3. Has the spirit to go through all sorts of temptations in the trials that it needs to endure reaches perfection? Could we say that the turn of greed came to Father Crépin through the treasures that were at his disposal and that he succumbed?
  - This is not a general rule but it is exact in his particular case. Know this that there are many who, since the beginning, take a path that exempt them from many trials.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Mrs. E. de Girardin, Medium

We extracted the following article from the chronicle of the Paris-Journal, number 44. There is no need for comments. It shows that the apparent “experts” of Spiritism are misguided, as unkindly say those who unceremoniously assume the privilege of bearing common sense judgment. We, however, can find consolation and even feel honored to be consoled, following insight at the level of Mrs. de Girardin and so many others.

“The other day I promised you the story of Mrs. de Girardin and a famous doctor. I will do that today for I was granted permission to do so. It is a very curious story. We will remain in the supernatural with which we have been involved for a long time, we, who by duty, take Paris’ pulse and feel that it is in a fervor-like disposition. Human imagination definitely has the need of knowing the future and penetrating into the mysteries of nature. When we see intelligences like that of Delphine Gay given to practices which we consider puerile, we cannot deny them a certain importance, particularly when supported by irrefutable testimonies, such as this one that I will tell you and you will learn. I refer to the testimony and not to the doctor – be aware.”

“Mrs. de Girardin had a little planchette and a pencil. She consulted with that incessantly. She thus obtained conversations with many famous people throughout History, and even the devil who also were amongst those people. Once he came in one evening, revealing himself to an important person who was not afraid since his role was to expel the devil. The great Delphine did nothing before consulting with the planchette. She asked for literary advice that was not refused. It was even considered an academic severity to the illustrious poet. Thus it constantly reiterated the request to no longer write tragedies without considering the wonderful verses of her play Judith and Cleopatra. Who is going to watch the representation of a tragedy? People who are drama and poetry fanatics. What do they seek in a tragedy? The beautiful verses, which touch and move them as well as Judith and Cleopatra, have plenty of these woman’s thoughts, expressed by the heart of a woman of eminent spirit and heart, whose talent is contested by no one. In one word, the planchette wanted no more tragedies; it was obstinate with prose and comedy; cooperated with the scripts and corrected the prolixity.”

“Delphine not only entrusted it with her literary works but also her sufferings, asking for orientation regarding her health. Ah! Those orientations dictated by the ill imagination or by the devil contributed to keep her away from us. She took incredible medicines like slices of bread with butter and pepper, bell pepper and all creations harmful to an inflammable nature like hers. Proofs of that were found after her death, from which her friends and admirers will never find consolation.”

“Everybody knows Chasseriau, also disappeared in the prime of his age. He made a great portrait of the beautiful deceased from memory. A poster image of that was made and now it can be found everywhere. He took the portrait to the mentioned doctor and asked him if he was happy with that. The doctor made some repairs. The painter was about to agree with the modifications when both had the idea of addressing the model herself. They placed their hands onto the planchette and thus Mrs. de Girardin revealed herself almost immediately. One can only imagine their commotion. Questioned about the picture, she said that it was not perfect but they should not touch it as they would take the risk of spoiling it, and since total similarity is very difficult to capture when there is no other resource but memory. They asked her other questions. She refused to answer some but responded to others.”

“They asked about the place where she was.”

- “I don’t want to say, she replied.”

## The Spiritist Review 1859

“Despite every request they could not obtain any answer about that.”

- “Are you happy?”
- “No”.
- “Why?”
- “Because I can no longer be useful to those who I love.”

She became adamantly mute while she was told about the other life and gave no explanation. She did not say either if she acted in such a manner for prohibition or her own will. After a long conversation, she left. The minutes of this session were registered. The two witnesses were so impressed that they no longer dealt with the case. The doctor now could evoke the one who helped him on that day and have these two spirits guiding his planchette. How things are in this world! And what teachings come out from these strange facts, if we consider them from the philosophical and religious point of view.”



# The Spiritist Review 1859

October 1859

## The Flying Tables

We found an article with the title above in the *Illustration*, from 1853, preceded by the indispensable jokes that we offer to our readers.

“It is about the turning tables! There you have the flying tables! And the phenomenon is not new. It exists since long ago. Where, you ask? Give my word that it is a bit far away, in Siberia. A Russian newspaper *Sjevernavá Plschela*, which means The Northern Bee, in its last April 27<sup>th</sup> number, containing an article by Mr. Tscherepanoff about the subject, who has traveled around the regions of the Kalmuks. Here is a passage:”

“It is well-known that the Lamas, Buddhist priests, a religion which counts on the adherence of all Mongolians and Russian Kalmuks<sup>25</sup>, similarly to the Egyptian priests, do not reveal the discovered secrets, using them however to increase the influence that they exert upon the naturally superstitious people. That is how they pretend to have the power of finding stolen objects, utilizing the *flying tables*. Those things happen in the following way:

“The victim of theft addresses the Lama, asking him to reveal the place where the objects are hidden. The Buddhist priest requests two or three days to get ready for that grave ceremony. When the time comes, he seats on the floor having a small squared table in front of him, rests his hand on the table and reads something obscure. It lasts about half an hour. After mumbling the initial prayers he stands up, keeping the hands in the original position, and the table moves up in the air. The Lama straightens up and raises his hands above the head. The table moves up to the height of his hands. The Lama moves one step forward and the table follows the example. The Lama steps back and the table does the same. Finally, the table moves to several places before falling back on the floor. The searched object is in the main direction taken by the table. If we believe in what the inhabitants of the region say, there have been cases in which the table fell exactly on the place where the stolen object was hidden.”

“In the experience witnessed by Mr. Tscherepanoff the table flew over a distance of 15 fathoms.<sup>26</sup> The stolen object was not immediately found but in the direction indicated by the object resided a Russian peasant who noticed the signal. He committed suicide on that very day. His sudden death raised suspicions. His home was searched and the stolen object was found.”

“The traveler saw three other unsuccessful experiences. The table did not want to move. As a matter of fact the Lamas had no difficulty in explaining such immobility. If the furniture did not move it meant that the objects could not be found.”

“Mr. Tscherepanoff witnessed that phenomenon in 1831 in the village of Jelany – I did not believe it with my own eyes, he says, but I was persuaded that there was some sort of fraud there and that my Lama was using a string, skillfully dissimulated or a wire to raise the table in the air. Looking closely, however, I was unable to detect any cord or wire. The table was a thin board of pine, not weighing more than a pound and a half. Today I am convinced that the phenomenon is produced by the same cause which produces the dancing tables.”

“Thus, the bosses of the sect of the Spiritist, who believed to have invented the turning tables, did nothing else but to spread the news of an invention known long ago by other peoples. *Nihil sub sole novi*, said Salomon. Who knows over the time of Salomon himself the way of making the tables turn wasn't already

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25 Mongolian tribe

26 Unit of measure, equivalent to six feet

## The Spiritist Review 1859

known! What do I say? This was known well before the rightful son of David. Read the North China Herald, cited by the Gazette d'Ausbourg, from May 11<sup>th</sup>, and you will see that the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire have been having fun with this game since immemorial times.”

We have already said, hundreds of times, that Spiritism, belonging to nature, is one of its powers. The phenomena resulting from that must have happened at all times and among all peoples, interpreted, commented, and dressed according to the corresponding traditions and degrees of instruction. We have never intended that it is a modern invention. The more we advance the more we discover the traces it has been left everywhere and at all times. The contemporaries have no other merit but to have undressed it from mysticism, exaggeration and superstitious ideas from the time of ignorance. It is impressive that the majority of people that so frivolously speak about it have not taken the time to study it. Judge it from the first impression, most of the time by having heard, without knowledge of cause, and become surprised when on the bottom of all that we show them one of the principles related to the gravest interest of humanity. One should not think that we are talking about the interest regarding things of the other world only. Those who do not stop at the surface easily see that it is related to all vital questions of the present world. Who could have guessed that from a frog dancing on a plate, in contact with a silver spoon, would have born a means of communication from one extreme to the other of globe in a few seconds; of guiding the lightning; of producing a light similar to the Sun? Patience Mr. Mocker! From a turning table it can well derive a giant to put aside the scorners. Considering the way things are, this will not be long.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>27</sup>

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## Should We Publish Everything the Spirits Say?

This question was addressed to us by one of our corresponding members. We answer that as below:

Would that be good to publish everything that men say and think?

Those who may have a notion of Spiritism, however superficial it may be, know that the spiritual world is composed of all those who have left their visible envelope on Earth. By having undressed the carnal person not all of them have, for that reason, dressed the mantle of the angels. Thus, there are spirits of all degrees of knowledge and ignorance, morality and immorality. That is what we cannot lose sight of. Let us not forget that among the spirits, as with human beings, there are frivolous, reckless, joking spirits; pseudo wise, vain and proud of an incomplete knowledge; hypocritical, malevolent and what would seem inexplicable to us, had we not known the physiology of this world, there are sensual, villain and perverse spirits who drag in the mud. Besides, as there is on Earth, there are good creatures, humane, benevolent, enlightened and endowed by supreme virtues. However, since our world is not in first place nor last, although closer to the last than to the first, it then results that the world of the spirits encompasses beings more advanced intellectually and morally than our most enlightened individuals and others in situation inferior to the most inferior people.

Since these beings have a patent mean of communicating with human beings and expressing their thoughts through intelligible signs, their communications must effectively be the reflex of their feelings, qualities and vices. The communications could be, pending on the character and elevation of the spirits, frivolous, trivial, gross, and even obscene or marked by the intellectual elevation, wisdom and sublimity. They reveal themselves by their own language. That is why one should not blindly accept everything that comes from the occult world, submitting everything to a strict control. A not very constructive collection could be built up from the communications of certain spirits, in the same way that it could be built from the speeches of certain people. We have before our eyes a small English book, published in the USA, which demonstrates that fact. One can say that a lady would not recommend it as a reading to her daughter. For the same reason we do not recommend to our readers.

There are people who find it funny and entertaining. May they enjoy it in their intimacy but keep it to themselves. What is even less conceivable is the fact that they brag about receiving such inappropriate communications. This is always a sign of sympathies that should not be a reason for pride, particularly when these communications are spontaneous and persistent, as happens to certain persons. This does not absolutely allow us to pass hasty judgment on their current morality for we know persons afflicted by that kind of obsession that by no means represent their character. However, as all effects, this one may also have a cause and if we cannot find it in the present, we must look for it in a previous existence. If that cause is not in us, it is outside. However, there is always a reason for us to be in that situation, even if that reason is only a weak character. Once the cause is known, it is up to us to stop it.

Besides these frankly bad communications, which harm any delicate ear, there are others that are simply trivial or ridiculous. Would there be any inconvenience in publishing them? If they are published for their worth there would be a lesser evil. If done so for the study of that kind of communication, with the adequate precautions, necessary comments and restrictions, they can even be instructive, as they may contribute to the knowledge of the spiritual world in all its nuances. With prudence and skill, everything can be said. The harm is in presenting as serious things that shock common sense, reason and conveniences. In such case the danger is greater than thought.

To begin with, those publications have the inconvenience of leading to mistakes persons who are not in a position to examine them, discerning between true and false, particularly in such a new subject as Spiritism. Second, these are weapons provided to the adversaries of Spiritism that don't miss the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

opportunity of taking advantage of that fact, giving them argument against the high morality of the spirits' teachings, because, let us repeat once again, the harm is in presenting as serious something that is notoriously absurd. Some may even see a profanation in the ridiculous role that we may attribute to certain venerable characters, attributing to them an unworthy language. Those who have profoundly studied the Spiritist Doctrine know well which position to adopt in similar cases. They know that the mocking spirits have no scrupulous in taking over respectable names, but they also know that these spirits only abuse those who enjoy the abuse and who do not know or do not wish to destroy their traps through the means of already known controls. The public who ignores this can only see one thing: an absurd, offered to their imagination as if a serious thing, and because of that, they tell themselves that if all spiritists are like that, then they all deserve the epithet given to them. There is no doubt that such a judgment is hastily. You justly accuse the authors of levity, telling them: study the subject and do not examine one side of the coin only. There are so many people, however, that judge *a priori*, not taking the burden of moving one hay straw, particularly when there is no good will, that it is necessary to avoid everything which can give them reason for censorship, having in mind that if malevolence adds up to the lack of good will, which is very common, they will be very happy to find what to criticize.

Later, when Spiritism is vulgarized, more widely known and understood by the masses, such publications will not have more influence than a book of scientific heresies would have today. Up until then, circumspection would never be too much for there are communications which may essentially harm the cause which they intend to promote, in a much greater scale than that of gross attacks and injuries from certain persons. If some were carried out with that objective, they would not be successful. The mistake of certain authors is to write about a subject before having sufficiently studied it in depth, thus giving place to a founded criticism. They complain about the frightening judgment of their antagonists, not aware of the fact that many times they are the ones who give away their weak spot. As a matter of fact, despite all precautions, it would be presumptuous to consider oneself shielded from all kinds of criticism, in principle because it is impossible to please everyone; then, because there are those who laugh at everything, even at the most serious things, some for their condition, others for their character. They laugh a lot at religion. There is no surprise then that they laugh at the spirits, who they ignore. If those jokes were at least witty there would be compensation. Unfortunately in general they neither shine for their finesse nor for their good taste, nor for their urbanity nor for their logic. Let us then do the best we can, bringing reason and convenience to our side, and then bringing the teasers also.

Everybody will easily understand these considerations, but there is another one no less important, as it refers to the own nature of the spiritist communications, and because of that we cannot omit it. The spirits go where they find sympathies and *where they know that they will be heard*. The gross and inconvenient communications, or simply false, absurd and ridiculous, can only derive from inferior spirits. Simple common sense indicates that. These spirits do what people who are complacently heard do. They bond to those who admire their silliness and take them over, to the point of fascination and subjugation. The importance given to their communications, through publicity, attracts, excites and encourages them. The only true means of keeping them away is to demonstrate to them that we do not allow ourselves to be deceived, pitilessly rejecting as suspect and apocryphal everything that is not rational; everything that betrays the superiority attributed to the manifesting spirit and whose name he uses. Then, when he notices that it is a waste of time, he leaves.

We believe to have responded satisfactorily to the question of our corresponding member about the convenience and opportunity of certain spiritist communications. Publishing everything that comes from that source without examination or correction, in our opinion is to give proof of a lack of discernment. That is at least our personal opinion that we will submit to the appreciation of those who, uninterestedly by the question, can impartially judge, keeping aside any personal consideration. As everyone else, we have the right of expressing our thoughts about the Science which is object of our studies, treating it our own way, not pretending to impose our ideas, to whoever it may be, nor treating them as bylaws. Those

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

who share our opinion do so because they believe, as we do, that we are with the truth. The future will tell who is right and who is wrong.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## Unintentionally Medium

Several fragments of a poem by Mr. Porry from Marseille were read at the Society, in the session on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1859 entitled *Uranie*. As noticed, the poem has plenty of spiritist ideas, apparently taken from the very source of The Spirits' Book. It was attested, however, that the author had no knowledge of the Spiritist Doctrine when he wrote the poem.

Our readers would certainly be grateful if we provided some fragments. They certainly remember what was said with respect to the way Mr. de Porry wrote his poem, which seems to denounce a kind of mediumship (see Bulletin of the private session on September 16<sup>th</sup>, Review October 1859). As a matter of fact, the spirits who constantly surround us, and, without regard, exerting an incessant influence upon us, take advantage of the dispositions they find in certain individuals, transforming them into instruments of ideas which they want to express, bringing them to the public knowledge of people. Such individuals are, unknowingly, true mediums and do not need the mechanical faculty for that. All people of genius, poets, painters and musicians are in that category. Their spirits may certainly produce on their own, in case they are advanced enough for that, but many ideas may also come to them from a strange source. Don't they seem to be making an evocation when asking for inspiration? Well then, what is inspiration other than a suggested idea? What we take from our inner self is not inspired. We have it and there is no need to receive it. If the genius took everything from himself why he would then lack ideas exactly when he is seeking them? Wouldn't he be able to take them from his own brain, like someone that has money and take it from his pocket? If he does not find anything there at a given time it is because he does not have it. Why then, at the least expected moment, do the ideas sprout on their own? Could the physiologists explain that phenomenon? Have they ever tried to solve it? They say that the brain produces today but it will not produce tomorrow. Why is that? They limit themselves to say that it does happen because the brain has already produced before. According to the Spiritist Doctrine the brain can always produce what it contains. That is why the most inept person always finds something to say, even if just a silly thing. But the ideas over which we have no ownership, those are not ours. They are suggested to us. When there is no inspiration it is because the inspirer is not present or does not judge appropriate to inspire. It seems to us that this explanation is better than the alternative.

One can object that if the brain is not producing there should be no fatigue. This would be a mistake. The brain is still the channel through which the strange ideas flow; the instrument of their execution. Doesn't the singer fatigue her vocal cords, although the music is not of her composition? Why wouldn't the brain fatigue when expressing ideas that it is in charge of transmitting, although it might not have produced them? It is no doubt to give the brain a breather for the acquisition of new forces that the inspirer imposes it a break.

It can also be objected that such a system subtracts from the author the personal merit, attributing him ideas from a strange source. We will answer that if it were like that we wouldn't know what to do and would not have as much need to be proud as for the merit of others. But such objection is not serious since we have not said that the genius cannot produce on his own, to begin with, and also because the ideas which are suggested to him mix up with his own ideas, indistinguishably, thus he cannot be criticized for attributing the paternity to himself, unless receiving them through a patent spiritist communication and wanted to take ownership of that. This could, however, lead the spirits to make him pass through some deceptions. Finally we will say that if the spirits suggest great ideas to a human beings, the kind of ideas that characterize a genius, that is because the human being is capable of understanding them, working and transmitting them. They would not take an imbecile by interpreter.

We can then feel honored for having received a great and beautiful mission, particularly if pride does not detour it from its praiseworthy path, causing loss of merit.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

May the following thoughts be of the personal ownership of Mr. de Porry, may they have been suggested through an indirect mediumistic way, the poet however will not have less merit for it because if the idea was given to him, the honor of having elaborated them cannot be denied to him!

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

Uranie

Fragments from a poem by Mr. de Porry, from Marseille

*Open to my claims, oh! Veils of the Sanctuary!  
May the bad tremble, the good shine under the light of the chandelier!  
Move my chest before the sacred clarity  
In a bright beam spear heading verity!  
And you, oh! Thinkers of the contemporary fights,  
You promise us light and give us night,  
Which in false dreams, and frivolous illusions,  
You incessantly rock the human afflictions,  
Assembly of the wise, of trembling pride,  
A woman's voice will confuse your drive!  
The God you wish to vanish from creation,  
To which helplessly you intend an explanation,  
Trying vain systems to figure its essence,  
Irrespectively revealing to your conscience;*

*And the one given to honest thinking,  
While in a loud voice denying Him, will in secret be proclaiming!  
Everything is born, grows and changes at His preference;  
He is the supreme basis and the Eternal Existence;  
It all rests in Him: material and spiritual;  
Remove His breath – that is the death sidereal!  
One day the atheist said: Oh! God is a fantasy;  
Daughter of chance, life is the wait only;  
The world which receives the being so early,  
Is solely governed by necessity;  
If death extinguishes our lively feelings,  
The abyss of nothing claims the beings;  
Immutable nature in its course eternal,  
It collects our remains in its heart, maternal.  
Let us enjoy the moments given by fate;  
May our illuminated heads, roses coronate!  
There is only one God: pleasure in our insanities,  
Let us dare the wrath of uncertain destinies!  
But as soon as your conscience, internal nemesis,  
Criticizes you, oh! Mad one, the intoxicating guiltiness,*



## The Spiritist Review 1859

*The poor repelled by your gesture, inhumane,  
The crime staining your hands, insane,  
It will be from the dark seal of the blind matter  
That in your heart sparks the light which disowner  
Your crimes before your anxious sight,  
Turning you hateful, how terrible, to your own plight.  
Then, from the Sovereign who your audacity still  
Wants to deny, you will endless feel  
The oppression, harassment, and despite your effort,  
Revealing in you, through the screams of remorse!  
Avoiding the humans, full of inquietudes,  
In the forest you seek the dark solitude;  
You think, through the savage mazes that you follow,  
To escape from that God, always your shadow!  
The tiger sleeps over the prey, in pieces;  
The bloody man wakes in the scathing darkness;  
Scared looks, in shiny terror  
His body trembles under a cold sweat cover;  
A dry sinister rumor harms the hearing;  
Ferocious spectra surrounds, groaning.  
His voice confessing, terrible flawed,  
Exclaims in horror: Thank you God!  
Remorse, the eternal executioner of conscience,  
Revealing in God our immortal essence;  
It frequently turns a criminal  
Through regret, in glorious sacrificial;  
Separating humans from brute creatures,  
Remorse is the flame that the soul matures;  
Through its spur the being regenerated  
In the scale of good becomes more elevated.  
Yes, truth shines and from the arrogant nonbeliever  
The audacity is repelled by its splendor.  
Then pantheism comes, trying to produce  
From a silly argument a stunning juice.  
“Oh mortals, fascinated by a laughable dream,  
Where are you going to find the invisible Grand-Being?  
There, before your eyes, the Grand-Whole;  
Its essence in everything, it summarizes the world;  
God shines in the Sun, greens the verdure,  
Roars of the volcano, of the storm thunder,*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

*Sprouts in the gardens, murmurs in the wind strong,  
Kindly whisper through the birds' songs,  
In thin air diaphanous fabrics tinting,  
It is Him that moves us, our organs keeping  
Thinking through us, and the most diverse  
Beings are Him; at last, that is God: the universe!"*  
*Oh! God manifest Himself so contrary!  
He is lamb and wolf, dove and serpent! So vary  
He becomes, turn by turn, rock, plant, and animal;  
His nature bonds and melts good and evil;  
He goes through the whole scale, from brute to archangel,  
Is light and mud, antithetical arrange and eternal!  
He is brave and coward, little and vast,  
Truthful and false, immortal and past!  
At the same time victim and oppressor, tyrannize;  
Cultivating virtue rolls over crime;  
La Mettrie and Plato in one single epithelium,  
Socrates and Melito, Nero and Marco Aurelius,  
A servant of glory and ignominies!  
The forming force is also the fulminea!  
Against its own essence sharpens the eternal blades,  
Turn to paradise and casts in hades,  
Invokes the nothingness and to its own injury,  
Against its own essence, raises the voice in fury!  
Oh! A thousand times no, such dogma, monstrous,  
It could never be born from such a heart, so virtuous.  
Immerse in remorse, where crime expiates,  
The daring author that madness indoctrinates,  
At the heart of pleasure, he felt scared  
Of the image of God who wanted denied;  
And to send Him away, blasphemy of profanes!  
He bonded Him to this world and to his vein.  
At least the atheist squeezed in the plight,  
Daring to deny God, does not degrade His Might!*

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*God that this human race incessantly reaches out for,  
God, that although unknown we have to adore,  
You are the beginning and the end to all:  
However, to reach you, what is the path after all?  
It will not be through Science, ephemeral mirage*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

*That fascinates our minds, with its brilliant image  
Always frustrating the feeble aspiration,  
Vanishing through the hands, mistaken comprehension.  
Wise men, you collect debris over debris,  
And your vain systems, like the thunders, flee!  
That one God that nobody can see before passing away,  
Whose essence contains an incredible sway,  
But who loves His children gently,  
And cannot be understood but through unity!  
Ah, to unite to Him, find Him again one day,  
The soul needs to fly, as love would pray.  
To the winds, let us throw pride and disbelief;  
God will prepare the paths of belief.  
His infinite love has never sent away  
A soul who has sincerely come his way,  
Leaving behind wealth and liking,  
Aspiring to become one with His pure Being.  
But God, who loves the humble, the decent,  
Who expels from His heart the proud tyrant,  
Hiding from the wise, giving away to the prudent,  
He does not share like the lover, inclement.  
And to please Him one needs to uphold  
A firm disaffection against the illusions of the world.  
Fortunate the children who in their loneliness  
Give themselves to the good, to the beautiful, to the truthfulness.  
Happy the fair man, entirely tight  
To the triple flash of the first light!  
In the middle of the affliction, in their turbulent flow,  
In the closed circle of this world, low,  
Like the oasis flower of the deserted,  
The treasure of faith to His soul is uncovered;  
And God, occult, invades the minds,  
Giving a strange happiness to humankind.  
A prudent man then accepts his destiny,  
And from the unbreakable calm, he keeps Divinity.  
When the starry night surrounds him  
He sleeps in peace, feeding the dreams  
That fulfills his heart, a heavenly  
Sample of the supreme balmy.  
Does your soul, thirsty of truth,*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

*Want to dive from the whole into the depth?  
Like a painter, it starts from the mind  
The masterpiece that the brush glides,  
The Eternal takes everything from nature,  
Not confusing Himself with His creature,  
The receiving intelligence, light from above,  
Is free to fail or elevate to God.  
The whole from His mind and word  
Each creation comes from Him... and works,  
In a circle bounded by immutable decrees,  
The chosen destinies, the aims to be.  
Like the artist, God thinks before creation,  
Like him, what is produced may face termination.  
Yes, inextinguishable source of beings, diverse,  
And of the globes sown in the immense universe,  
God, in His eternal life and unstoppable Might,  
Transmit to His creation the spark of light.  
Made by the artist, the book and the painting,  
Idle works, imperfect remaining,  
But the word cast by the Almighty  
Points out, achieving its own actuality.  
Incessantly transforming, never perishable,  
It projects from the metal to the spirit, invisible.  
The creating Verb sleeps in the plant,  
In the animal it dreams, in man it stands;  
It steps up and down and up again,  
Shining in creation, glittering the whole plan,  
On the wavy ether it forms the immense chain,  
Starting from the rock, the archangel attains.  
Abiding by the laws of individual organizations  
Each germen attracts or repels the Author of creation,  
Whether to the good or to the evil thrown.  
The intelligent being climbs or falls on its own.  
Well, if man in the atmosphere of evil  
Is taken by crime to the animal level,  
The pure man an angel becomes, and that angel,  
Climbing step by step may turn into an archangel.  
Raised to his throne, the archangel, now divinity,  
Will preserve his personality  
Or even melt with the Omnipotence*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

*That can assimilate such a pure essence.  
Thus, more than one archangel in celestial magnificence  
Has united with God through love, pure excellence.  
But others, envy of the Sovereign glory,  
Fascinated by pride, father of human fury,  
Wished to question God's enterprises,  
Diving into the night of His devises;  
Instead of reducing them to dust with his Might,  
That God just burned them with the shine of his light.  
Then, transformed, errant in the universe,  
Always frightened by devouring remorse,  
Those lost angels by their gesture of incredulity  
Dare no longer show up at the doors of the heavenly.  
And sharpening the bestial spurs, in embarrassment,  
Throw the rebel soul into the infernal punishments,  
While the pure man, finished ordeals,  
Elevate to paradise, through the trials.  
All those multiple worlds in the infinitude  
Harming your eyes in their beatitude.  
May the universal surge roll in space  
Of worlds and beings, altogether in a wave.  
Those world united, luminous focus,  
Are celestial vessels, fabulous  
Ships wandering in space, far distant residences,  
Courts of light of graduated intelligences.  
There are horrible worlds and happy globes,  
In the latter ones reign sovereign judges,  
Three Divine principles: honor, love and justice,  
Cementing the social fabric, with no greed.  
Eternally loved by its inhabitants,  
Constitute the guarantee of venture, constant.  
Other turning worlds, insolent vertigoes,  
Followed what the sinful angels impose.  
Those worlds, authors of their own disgrace,  
Replaced God's spotless laws by their own trace.  
And in their soil by a mad storm swept,  
The impure crowd of creatures regret.  
Our novice globe, in its first steps,  
Until now fluctuates between those two paths.  
Affront the moral and nature itself,*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

*When a world of crime goes beyond the belt;  
When the peoples dive into thundering pleasures,  
Closing their ears to the voice of the foretellers;  
When the divine verb, in its lightest tone,  
Is muted in this world blind and lone,  
Then, from the omnipotent the boiling wrath  
Falls onto the guilty one, leads to his death.  
Avenger archangel, with powerful wings,  
Hit the impious ground... oceans whimpering,  
Huge growing waves surpassing the faces,  
Devastating the soil, waters precipitate;  
Roar and explode in flames rotund volcanoes,  
In space dispersing the world's residues.  
The Sovereign Being, whose revenge explodes,  
Breaking the impure globe that no longer believes.  
Our petty Earth is a region of trials  
Where the just suffers for his renewal;  
By purifying his heart, tears  
Prepare his way to a better sphere.  
Thus, the numb dream not in vain  
Takes us in a trip of inebriating dream.  
In a flash like move, we are led  
To a shiny star, in light interweaved,  
Where we believe errant in vast plains,  
Inhabited by wise men;  
We see that globe illuminated by stars,  
White, blue and red, whose auroras  
Cross-space with their varied shades,  
Painting the fields with their grades.  
If you keep in this word a virtuous  
Heart you will go to that globe, sumptuous,  
Where there is joy and peace,  
Where wisdom lives and eternal happiness releases.  
Yes, your soul sees those radiant states,  
Which heavens favors, decorating feasts,  
Where the creature depurates and gradually elevates,  
While wickedness recedes in its mad lanes,  
From its evil kingdom turning around its jewels,  
From circle to circle it falls among the unfaithful.  
Mirror reflecting the image of the universe,*

## The Spiritist Review 1859

*Our soul foresees these fates, diverse.  
Soul, this energy that drives the senses,  
That promptly obeys its minimum wishes,  
Like a vase of clay containing a flame  
Whose heat the fragile prison annihilates -  
The soul that keeps the memory of the past ways  
And sometimes may read the future, far away  
Is not a sudden spark of fire, the vital.  
You, yourself, you understand that the soul is immortal.  
In the sidereal regions, in whole eternity  
Keeping the constancy and its own identity,  
No, the soul does not die, only transports,  
And from shelter to shelter it always exhorts.  
From the exterior world secluded, our soul  
May conquer a superior know,  
And intoxicated by the dream, magnetic,  
May possess another vision, and the gift prophetic.  
Instantly freed from the terrestrial harnesses,  
Easily cover the celestial vastness.  
It is agile; from a sudden leap to the firmament climbs,  
Sees through the bodies and reads the minds.*

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

Swedenborg

Swedenborg is one of those characters better known by name than in fact, at least by the public. His books are bulky and the text generally very abstract, almost exclusively read by the scholarly. Thus, most people who speak about him would be very embarrassed to define him. To some he is a great man, object of profound veneration, although they don't know why. To others he is a charlatan, a visionary, a thaumaturge.

As every person who professed ideas contrary to the majority, particularly when those ideas harm certain prejudices, he had and still has his contradictors. Had the latter ones limited themselves to refute him they would be in their own right, but the spirit of faction respects nothing, not even the noblest qualities. Swedenborg could not be an exception.

His doctrine, no doubt, lacks a great deal. He himself is far from approving it in all its points today. Irrespective of how much it is refutable, however, it does not take from him the fact that he was one of the most eminent men of his century.

The information below was extracted from an interesting note sent by Mrs. P... to the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies.

Emmanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm in 1688, dying in London in 1772 at the age of 84 years old. His father, Joeper Swedenborg, Bishop of Scava, was distinguished for his merit and knowledge. His son, however, went much beyond him. He sticks out in all Sciences, particularly Theology, Mechanics, Physics and Metallurgy. His prudence, wisdom, modesty and simplicity gave him the high reputation he still enjoys these days. The kings invited him to their counsels. In 1716 he was appointed assistant to Charles XII in the School of Metallurgy of Stockholm. He was granted a nobility title by Queen Ulrika, taking with distinction the most important positions up until 1743, time when he had the first spiritist revelation. He was then 55 years old. He resigned, wishing to dedicate to his doctrine and to the establishment of the New Jerusalem. That is how he describes his first revelation:

"I was in London, having a very late dinner in my modest guesthouse, where I had reserved a room in order to have more freedom to meditate. I was hungry and ate with great appetite. After the meal I noticed a kind of mist spreading before my eyes, the floor covered by horrible reptiles such as serpents, frogs, lizards and others. I felt frightened as the darkness spread further but it soon dissipated. Then I clearly saw a man in the middle of a live and radiant light, seating in one corner of the room. The reptiles had gone with the darkness. I was alone. Just imagine the fear that took over me when I heard him distinctly pronouncing words, but with a tone of voice capable of producing horror: "Don't eat as much!" After those words my vision was blurred, slowly reestablishing, when I then saw myself alone in the room. Still a bit scared for everything that I had seen, I promptly retired into the room without saying a word about what had happened. Then I gave myself to reflection, not conceiving that it had been the effect of chance or any physical cause."

"In the following evening the same man appeared, still radiant in light, and said: "I am God, the Lord, Creator and Redeemer. I chose you to explain to men the interior and spiritual meaning of the Sacred Scriptures. I will dictate what you have to write."

"That time I was not so scared and the light that surrounded him, although very strong and resplendent, did not produce any painful sensation in my eyes. He was dressed in purple and the vision lasted a good quarter of an hour."

"On that very evening the eyes of my inner self were opened and prompted to see heavens, the world of the spirits and hell, and I found familiar people everywhere, some deceased long time ago, others recently. Since that day I renounced all my mundane occupations so I can work exclusive with the



## The Spiritist Review 1859

spiritual things, to submit myself to the orders I had received. Following that it frequently happened in broad day light that having my eyes of the spirit open I could see what happened in the other world; to speak with the angels and the spirits as I do with human beings.”

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One of the fundamental points of Swedenborg's doctrine rests on what he calls the “correspondences”. In his opinion, as the spiritual world and the natural world are interconnected, like the interior and the exterior, it results that the spiritual things and the natural things constitute a unity, by influx, and that there is a correspondence between them.

That is the principle, but what is actually understood by such correspondence and influx is difficult to comprehend.

The Earth, says Swedenborg, corresponds to man. The several products which serve man's nutrition correspond to the several kinds of good and truth, as follows: the solid food to the kind of good, the liquids to the truths. The house corresponds to the will and understanding, which constitutes the mental and human.

The food corresponds to the truthfulness or the falsehood, according to the substance, color and shape that they present. The animals correspond to the affections: the useful and meek, to the good affections; the bad and noxious to the bad affections; the beautiful and docile birds to the intellectual truths; the bad and ugly to the falsities; the fish to the Sciences originated from the sensorial things; the pernicious insects to the falsities which come from the senses. The trees and bushes correspond to the several kinds of knowledge; the herbs and grass to several scientific truths. Gold corresponds to the celestial good; Silver to the spiritual truth; bronze to the natural good, etc. Thus, since the first steps of creation up to the celestial and spiritual Sun, everything is maintained, everything is linked by the influx that produces the correspondence.

The second point of his doctrine is the following: there is only one God and only one person who is Jesus Christ.

The human being, created free, according to Swedenborg, abused his freedom and reason. He fell, but the fall has been foreseen by God and should have been followed by rehabilitation, for God who is love could not leave him in the state he was found after his fall. Well, how to operate such rehabilitation? Place the individual in his primitive state would be the same as removing his free-will and thus annihilating him. He proceeded to the rehabilitation of humankind subordinating the human being to the laws of his eternal order. Then comes the fuzzy theory of the three Suns, transposed by Jehovah to approach us and demonstrate that he is the man, himself.

Swedenborg divides the world of the spirits in three different places: heavens, the intermediaries and hell, but not defining a place to them. “After death”, he says, “We enter the world of the spirits. The saints willingly go to one of the three heavens, the wicked to one of the three hells from where they will never leave.”

This desperate doctrine nulls God's mercy for it denies God's power to forgive the sinner surprised by a violent or accidental death.

Although rendering justice to the personal merit of Swedenborg as a scientist and good man, we cannot defend doctrines that are condemned by the most elemental common sense. The most interesting result, according to what we know from the spiritist phenomena, is the existence of an invisible world and the possibility of communicating with that. Swedenborg enjoyed a faculty that seemed supernatural in his time. That is why some fanatic supporters see him as an exceptional creature. In former times altars would have been raised in his honor. Those who did not believe him considered him as having an exalted brain or a charlatan. To us he was a clairvoyant medium and an intuitive writer, as there are to the thousands, faculty that is in the roll of the natural phenomena.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

He made a perfectly excusable mistake, given his inexperience regarding things of the occult world: blindly accepting everything that was dictated to him, not submitting it to the strict control of reason. Had he maturely weighed in the pros and cons he would have recognized principles incompatible with logic, however weak they were! He would not probably have fallen in the same mistakes today since he would have the means of judging and appreciating the value of the communications from beyond the grave. He would have known that they constitute a field from where not all herbs must be harvested and that common sense, given to us for a reason, must know to choose among them.

The quality attributed to the communicating spirit to him would be enough to put him on guard, particularly considering the triviality of his introduction. He did not do himself what we must do today, only accepting from his writings what it contains of rational. His mistakes must operate as a warning to the mediums that are too credulous that certain spirits try to fascinate, flattering their vanity or prejudices, through a pompous and deceiving language.

The following joke demonstrates the degree of ill-faith of Swedenborg's adversaries, who tried all opportunities to denigrate him. Queen Luisa Ulrika knew his faculties and assigned him with the task of bringing news from her brother, prince of Prussia, to whom she had sent a letter, with no response, sometime before his death, asking him for advice. Twenty-four hours later Swedenborg would have reported the Prince's answer to the Queen, in a private audience, leaving her totally convinced of the great man's power since she was absolutely sure that nobody but her deceased brother and herself knew the contents of the referred letter.

Below the explanation given to such a fact by one of his antagonists, knight Beylon, reader of the Queen:

"The Queen was considered one of main authors of the revolution attempt which took place in Sweden, in 1756, which cost the life of Count Barhé and Marshal Horn. She fell short of being blamed for the bloodshed by the party of hats.<sup>28</sup> Given the critical situation she wrote to her brother, Prince of Prussia, asking for advice and assistance. The Queen did not get an answer and, as the Prince died soon after, she never knew the reason for his silence. That is why she ordered Swedenborg to interrogate the spirit of the Prince about it. At the very moment when the message was delivered to the Queen, Senators Count T... and Count H... were present. The latter who had intercepted the brother's letter knew as well as his accomplice, Count T... why the letter had gone without an answer and both decided to take advantage of the circumstances to give their own advices to the Queen about several things. Then, in the evening, they sought the visionary and dictated the answer to him. Swedenborg, who was not very inspired, promptly accepted. The next day he rushed to the Queen and in the silence of her office he told her that the spirit of the Prince had appeared to him, assigning him with the task of announcing his displeasure, assuring her that if he had not responded to the letter it was for his disapproval of her conduct, since her imprudent policies and ambition were the cause of the bloodshed; that she was guilty before God and would have to be punished for that. He was asking her to no longer get involved with state matters, etc. Convinced by that revelation the Queen believed Swedenborg and ardently stood up in his defense."

That anecdote gave rise to a continuous polemic between Swedenborg's disciples and his detractors. A Swedish priest, called Maltheusius, who ended up mad, had published an article saying that Swedenborg, his declared enemy, had retracted before his death. The rumor spread in Holland around the autumn of 1785, leading Robert Hindmarck to establish an enquiry, demonstrating the total falsity and calumny invented by Maltheusius.

The story of Swedenborg proves that his spiritual vision had caused no harm to the exercise of his natural faculties. His eulogy, pronounced by the scholar Landel, at the Stockholm Academy of Sciences, shows how vast his erudition was and also through his speeches pronounced in the Diet 1761, we learned about his participation into the public business of the country.

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<sup>28</sup> The two struggling parties were the Hats and the Caps. The former supported an alliance with France and wanted war. (NT)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Swedenborg's doctrine made several proselytes in London, Holland and even in Paris where it gave origin to the Martinists Society, Theosophists, etc. mentioned in our October issue. It may not have been accepted by everyone with all its consequences but resulted in the propagation of the belief in the communication with the beings from beyond the grave, beliefs as a matter of fact very old, as everybody knows, but occult to the public up until now by the mysterious practices which they involved.

Swedenborg's incontestable merit, his profound knowledge and highly reputable wisdom, had great influence in the propagation of these ideas, which are more and more vulgarized these days, openly growing and, far from seeking the shadow of mystery, they appeal to reason. Despite the mistakes of his system Swedenborg is not but of one the great characters whose memory will be linked to the history of Spiritism, from which he was one of the first and most zealous pioneers.

### Swedenborg's Communication

as promised in the session of the Society, on September 16<sup>th</sup>

Society, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1859

Dear good friends and faithful believers. I wished to come here to encourage you in the path that you walk with such a great endeavor with respect to the spiritist subject. Your zeal is appreciated in the spiritual world. Move on but be aware that the obstacles will still block you for some time. Thus, as with me, you will not lack detractors. I preached Spiritism a century ago and found enemies of all kinds. I also had keen followers that supported my courage.

My spiritist moral and doctrine are not exempt of great mistakes, which I do acknowledge now. Thus, the penalties are not eternal, I see well. God is very just and good to eternally punish the creature that has not had sufficient strength to resist to the passions. Also, what I said about the world of the angels, preached in the temples, was not but an illusion of my senses. In good faith I thought I had seen it, as I said, but I was wrong. You are in the best path for you are better enlightened than we were in my time.

Carry on, but be prudent, so that your enemies do not find strong weapons against you. Watch over the space you gain daily! Thus, courage! Your future is guaranteed. Your strength is your speech in the name of reason. Do you have questions to me? I will respond now.

SWEDENBORG

1. You had the first revelation in London, 1745. Did you wish for that? Were you already involved with the theological questions?
  - I was already involved with that but in no way I wished for that revelation. It came spontaneously to me.
2. Who was the spirit that appeared to you saying that he was God Himself? Was it really God?
  - No. I believed in what he said because I saw a super human being and I was flattered.
3. Why has he taken God's name?
  - To be better obeyed.
4. Can God directly manifest to human beings?
  - God certainly could but no longer does that.
5. There was a time when God did manifest then?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Yes, in the first ages of Earth.
6. That spirit who made you write things that you now recognize wrong, did he do it in ill-faith?
    - He did not do it in ill-faith. He was mistaken himself, for he was not elevated enough. Today I see that the illusions of my own spirit and intelligence influenced him, despite anything. However, among some system errors, it is easy to acknowledge great truths.
  7. Your doctrine is founded on the correspondences. Do you still believe in those relationships that you found among things of the material world with each thing of the moral world?
    - No. It is a fiction.
  8. What do you understand by these words: God is man himself?
    - God is not man: man is an image of God.
  9. Please elaborate.
    - I say that the human being is an image of God because the intelligence, the genie that he eventually receives is an emanation of the Divine Omnipotence. He represents God on Earth by that power he exerts onto nature and by the great virtues he has the capability of acquiring.
  10. Should we consider man a part of God?
    - No. The human being is not part of Divinity. It is only his image.
  11. Could you tell us how you received the communications from the spirits? Did you write what was revealed to you like the mediums or by inspiration?
    - When I was in silence, worshiping, my spirit was in a kind of ecstasy, and I clearly saw an image before me, speaking with me, dictating what I had to write. Sometimes, my imagination mixed with all that.
  12. What should we think about the fact mentioned by Knight Beylon, with respect to the revelation you made to Queen Luisa Ulrika?
    - The revelation was true. Beylon denatured that.
  13. What is your opinion about the Spiritist Doctrine, as is today?
    - I told you that you are in a safer path than I was since your lights are generally broader. I had to fight a much greater ignorance and, in particular, against superstition.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## The Errant Soul

In the book entitled *Les Six Nouvelles*<sup>29</sup> by Maxime Ducamp, there is a touching story that we recommend to our readers. It is about an errant soul who tells her own adventures.

We don't have the honor of knowing Mr. Maxime Ducamp, who we have never met. Consequently we don't know if he used his own imagination or collected the teachings from spiritist studies. Nevertheless, he could not have been better inspired.

We can judge him from the fragment below. We will not speak about the fantastic ambience of the novel. That is an accessory without importance and purely formal.

"I am an errant, a lost soul. I wander through spaces, waiting for a body. I travel on the wings of the wind, across the blue skies, through the songs of the birds, in the pale clarities of moonshine. I am a lost soul..."

"Since the time God has separated us from Him, we lived many times on Earth, advancing from generation to generation, fearlessly leaving behind the bodies which were entrusted to us, and continuing the work of our own betterment through the existences to which we are submitted."

"When we leave this troublesome host, which serves us so badly; fecundating and renovating Earth, its origin; when we are finally free, we open our wings. God lets us know our objective. We see our preceding existences; assess our progress over the centuries; understand the punishments and awards that came our way, through the joys and pains in our lives; we see our intelligence progress from birth to birth, aspiring to the supreme state by which we will leave this inferior homeland to reach radiant planets where passions are more elevated, love more ambitions and happiness more steady, the organisms better developed, feelings more abundant, sheltering souls who, by their virtues, approached beatitude more than us."

"When God send us back again to bodies which must live a miserable life to us, we totally lose awareness of what happened before these new births. What was awake is back to sleep; no longer persists. We keep only vague reminiscences from our past experiences, cause of our sympathies, antipathies and sometimes of innate ideas."

"I will not talk about every creature that lived out of my breath, but my last existence in which I endured such a great disgrace that is the one I am going to tell the story."

"It would be difficult to define better the beginning and the objective of the reincarnation, the progression of the creatures, the plurality of the worlds and the awaiting future. Here you have now, in two words, the story of that soul."

"A young man was in love with a young lady and he was corresponded. There were obstacles opposing their union. He asked God to allow him to visit her loved one, during the sleep when his soul would be freer. His wish was granted."

"Then, his soul detaches every night, leaving behind the body in a state of complete inertia, only moving away from that when the soul returns to reclaim the body. During that time he visits his beloved one."

"He sees her, and goes unnoticed. He wants to speak with her but she doesn't listen. He notices her slightest moves, surprising her thoughts. He enjoys her happiness and saddens with her pains. Nothing is more gracious and delicate than such scenes between the young lady and the invisible soul."

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29 Librairie Nouvelle, Boulevard des Italiens

## The Spiritist Review 1859

“But oh! Weakness of the incarnate being! One day, or better, one evening, he forgets himself. Three days go by and he does not think of his body that cannot live without his soul. Suddenly he thinks of his mother who waits for him and must be uneasy for such a prolonged sleep. He rushes but it is too late. His body is dead.”

“He watches his funeral, he then consoles his mother. The desperate bride wishes to hear no more about any other union. Overwhelmed by the requests of her own mother, however, she gives in after a long resistance.”

“The errant soul forgives an infidelity which is not in her thoughts. However, to receive her caresses and no longer stay away from her he requests to incarnate as her son to be.”

If the author is not convinced of the spiritist ideas we must agree that he represents his role very well.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## The Spirit and the Juror

One of our corresponding members, a man of great knowledge who holds scientific titles that do not preclude him from believing that we have a soul that outlives the body. A soul that remains errant in space after death and can still communicate with the living ones. This is notwithstanding the fact that he is a good medium himself and entertains conversations with creatures from beyond the grave. He addresses the following letter to us:

“Dear Sir,

“You may find appropriate to accommodate the following fact in your Review:”

“Some time ago I was a juror. The court was supposed to try a young man, just coming out of adolescence, accused of having murdered an elderly lady under horrible circumstances. The accused confessed, giving details of the horrible crime with such a cold blood and cynicism that made the audience tremble.”

“It was, however, easy to predict the fact that attenuating circumstances would be presented in his favor, considering not only his age, the absolute lack of education and stimulus given by his family, but also the fact that he was led to a state of rage by injury and provocation.”

“I wanted to consult with the victim with respect to the degree of his culpability. I called her during one session by a mental evocation. She made me notice that she was present so that I offered to be at her services. Here the transcript of the conversation we had – I, through thoughts, and she in writing:

- “What do you think about your murderer?”
- “It is not me who is going to accuse him.”
- “Why?”
- “Because he was led to the crime by a man who had flirted with me fifty years ago, and as he was not reciprocated by me, he swore vengeance. After his death he maintained the desire for vengeance, taking advantage of the accused dispositions, inspiring in him the desire to kill me.”
- “How do you know that?”
- “Because he told me himself, as soon as I got to the world where I live.”
- “I understand your reservations, considering the stimulus that your murderer did not repel as he should and could. But don’t you think that the criminal inspiration, which he voluntarily obeyed, wouldn’t have the same power over him, had he not fed or entertained the feelings of envy, hatred and vengeance against you and your family, for a long time?”
- “Certainly. Without all that he would be more capable of resisting. That is why I say that the one who wanted vengeance took advantage of the young man’s dispositions. You must understand that he would not have addressed someone who would be prepared to resist.”
- “Does he enjoy his vengeance?”
- “No, since he sees that it will cost him much. Furthermore, instead of doing me harm he did me a service, allowing me to enter early in the world of the spirits, where I am happier. Thus, it was a bad action with no positive result to him.”

“Attenuating circumstances were admitted by the jury, based on the reasons indicated above, and the death penalty was ruled out.”

“A moral observation of great importance must be pointed out regarding the case above. It is necessary to conclude that man must be vigilant with respect to the slightest malevolent thought and even with respect to his feelings, however subtle they may be, since they may well attract evil and corrupted spirits, exposing oneself, weak and unarmed, to their guilty inspirations. It is an open door to evil, unaware of the danger.”

## The Spiritist Review 1859

“It was then with a profound knowledge of man and the spiritual world that Jesus said: *“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* (Mathew 5:28)

“With all due respect...

SIMON M...”



# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## Warning from Beyond the Grave

The Officer from Crimea

The *L'indépendance Belge*, which cannot be accused of excessive benevolence with respect to the spiritist beliefs, reported the following fact, reproduced by several newspapers, and that we transcribe with all reservations since we did not have the opportunity of confirming its legitimacy.

“It might be that because our imagination invents and populates a world of souls besides us and above us; be it because the world in which we live and act does actually exist, there is no doubt, at least for me, that some inexplicable accidents do take place, provoking science and challenging reason.”

“During the Crimea war, in one of those sad and slow evenings that wonderfully serve imagination, nightmare and all heavenly and worldly nostalgias, a young officer suddenly stands, leaves his tent, looks for a comrade and says:

- “I have just been visited by my cousin, Ms. T...”
- “Are you daydreaming?”
- “No. She came in, pale and smiley face, just sliding her delicate feet on the hard and rough grounds. She looked at me, after wakening me up with her sweet voice, and said: *It is taking you too long! Take care! We sometimes die at war not going to war!* I wanted to speak with her, stand up and run to her but she backed up and placing her finger on her lips she said: *Silence! Have courage and patience. We will see one another again.* Ah, my friend! She was too pale. I am sure that she is sick and that she calls me.”
- “You are crazy and daydreaming, said the friend.”
- “It may be so but what is this agitation in my heart, evoking her and making me see her?”
- “The two friends kept talking and at dawn the friend followed the visionary officer to his tent, when he suddenly shook his head and said: *There she is my friend! She is in front of my tent... She signals indicating that I have no faith or trust.*”
- “The friend saw nothing, one must say. He did what he could to animate his comrade. With sun rise and daybreak came the sufficiently serious concerns, leaving last night’s ghosts behind. However, as a precautionary measure, a letter was sent to France requesting urgent news from Ms. de T... A few days later a response letter said that Ms. de T... was gravely ill and that if the officer could have been released it was thought that his visit would have a great effect.”
- “Requesting a release at times of tough fights, perhaps on the eve of a decisive attack, justifying with sentimental fears, was something unthinkable. However, I happen to remember that the license was granted and that the officer was about to leave to France when he had another vision. It was vaporous. Ms. de T... pale and mute, slid to the interior of the tent at night, showing him the long white dress that she was dragging along. The young officer did not doubt for a moment that his fiancée was dead. He then reached for one of the guns and blew his own head.”

“In fact, in that very afternoon, at that very moment, Ms. de T... had exhaled her last breath.”

“Was that vision produced by magnetism? I don’t know. Was it madness? Be it! However, it was something that eluded the mockery of the ignorant and even more so the inconvenience of the scientists.”

“As for the authenticity of the fact, I can attest it. Interrogate the officials who spent that long winter in Crimea, and there will be plenty who will tell you about the phenomena of presentiment, visions, mirages of the homeland and relatives, similar to this one that I have just told you.”

“What should be concluded? Nothing, unless I ended my correspondence in a very lugubrious way, by making people sleep even not knowing how to magnetize.”

THÉCEL

## The Spiritist Review 1859

As we said in the beginning, we cannot attest the authenticity of the fact. What we can ensure, however, is its possibility. The confirmed examples, old and recent, of warnings from beyond the grave are so numerous that the one above has nothing of more extraordinary than the others, witnessed by so many trustworthy people.

In the old days they could seem supernatural but today when their cause is known and they are psychologically explained, thanks to the spiritist theory, there is nothing that keeps them away from the laws of nature. We will add one observation only: Had this officer known Spiritism he would know that suicide was not the path to connect to his bride, since such act may even keep them apart for longer than he would have lived on Earth. Spiritism would have told him, besides, that a glorious death in the battle field would have been more beneficial to him than that voluntary death, out of an act of weakness.

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Here another fact of warning from beyond the grave, reported by the *Gazette d'Arad* (Hungary), from November 1858:

“Two Israeli brothers from Gyek, Hungary, had gone to Grosswardein to take their two 14 year-old daughters to a boarding school. Over the following evening the other daughter of one of them, a ten-year-old girl, who stayed home, woke up alarmed, crying, and telling her mother that she had seen her father and uncle in her dream, surrounded by several peasants who wanted to harm them. In the beginning the mother gave no importance to those words. However, as she could not calm the girl down, she then decided to take her to the mayor of the local village, to whom the girl told the same story again, adding that she recognized two of their neighbors among the peasants, and that the event took place near a forest.”

“The mayor requested the two peasant’s houses to be examined, confirming that both were absent. Then, to verify the truth, he sent other emissaries in the direction indicated, finding five bodies in a grove, in the middle of a forest. The bodies were of the two fathers, the two girls and the coachman who was conducting them. The bodies were thrown onto a bonfire to become unrecognizable. The police soon initiated the investigation. The two peasants pointed by the girl were arrested at the very moment when they were trying to exchange bloody money. They confessed the crime in prison, acknowledging God’s hand for the prompt discovery of their crime.”

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## The Convulsive of Saint-Médard

PARISIAN SOCIETY, JULY 15<sup>th</sup>, 1859

News – Francois Paris, a famous deacon of Pâris, deceased in 1727 at the age of thirty-seven, was the eldest son of a Parliament Counselor. He should have naturally succeeded his father in that position but he preferred the ecclesiastic career. After his father's death he left all assets to his brother. For some time he taught catechism at St. Cosmos Parish; he took over the direction of the clergy, giving them conferences. Cardinal Noailles, to whom he was bonded, wanted to nominate him as Curate of that Pâris, but an unforeseen obstacle came up. Father Pâris was entirely dedicated to seclusion. After having experienced several hermitages he secluded himself at a house in the neighborhood of St. Marcel. He gave himself totally to the prayers, to the most rigorous penitence and manual labor. He made socks to the poor who he considered his brothers. He died in that asylum.

Father Pâris had adhered to the *Unigenitus bull*,<sup>30</sup> interposed by the four bishops. He had renovated his appeal in 1720. The opposing parties should then diversely describe it. As he had to make socks, the books he produced were mediocre. Those books gave explanations of St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians and an analysis of the epistle to the Hebrews that few people read.

His brother erected a tomb to him in the small cemetery of Saint-Médard, where the poor who were helped by the pious deacon went to pray, and some rich people who he had helped to elevate and some women who he had educated. There were healings seemingly miraculous and convulsions that were considered dangerous and ridiculous.

The local authority felt obliged to stop that spectacle, determining the closure of the cemetery on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1732. The same enthusiasts then carried out their convulsions in private houses. In the opinion of a large number of people the tomb of Deacon Pâris was the tomb of Jansenism. Some people, however, saw the hand of God in all that and associated even more to a sect that produced such wonders. There are many stories about that Deacon, which nobody would have heard from if they did not want to transform him into a thaumaturge. Below some among the strange phenomena presented by the Convulsive of Saint-Médard:

- ✓ The faculty of withstanding huge blows that human bodies should be smashed by;
- ✓ That of speaking unknown languages or forgotten by them;
- ✓ The faculty of an extraordinary development of the intelligence. The most ignorant among them improvised speeches about the grace, the evils of church, the end of the world, etc.;
- ✓ The faculty of reading the mind;
- ✓ Once in touch with the diseased, they experienced the pains exactly in the same places where the sick persons felt them. It was very frequent to hear them predicting several abnormal phenomena that should follow up the development of the diseases.

The physical insensitivity produced by the ecstasy gave place to atrocious scenes. Madness came to the point of crucifying the unfortunate victims; of making they feel every detail of the Passion of Christ.

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30 Unigenitus (named for its Latin opening words Unigenitus dei filius), in the form of a papal bull promulgated by Pope Clement XI in 1713, condemning Jansenism. There were appeals, such as those of the bishops to whom Francois Paris adhered. The two opposing parties formed in the clergy were the *appellants*, who did not accept the condemnation and the *acceptant* who accepted it. (N R)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Those victims – the fact is attested by the most authentic witnesses – demanded terrible tortures, designated among the convulsive by the name of great help.

The cure of the sick took place by the simple touch of the tomb or the dust spread around which was taken with any drink or directly applied onto the ulcers. Those cures, in large number, are attested by thousands of witnesses, many of whom are people of Science who were actually incredulous, registering the fact but not knowing what to attribute them to.

Pauline Roland

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1. Evocation of Deacon Pâris
  - I am at your service.
2. What is your current state as spirit?
  - I am errant and happy.
3. Have you had another corporeal existence after that one we know?
  - No. I am constantly busy in doing the good to human beings.
4. What was the cause of the strange phenomena that took place with the visitors to your tomb?
  - Intrigue and magnetism.

OBSERVATION: Among the observed faculties of the convulsive some are easily recognized as of magnetism and somnambulism, from which there is large number of examples. These are, among others: the physical insensitivity, the perception of thoughts, the sympathetic transmission of pain, etc. Thus, there is no doubt that the convulsive were under a kind of awake somnambulistic state, provoked by the influence mutually and unknowingly exerted on one another. They were simultaneously magnetizers and magnetized.

5. Why has a whole population been suddenly endowed by such strange faculties?
  - They communicate very easily in certain cases, and you are no stranger to the faculties of the spirits so that you don't understand that they had a great participation into all that, by sympathy to those who provoked it.
6. Have you participated directly, as a spirit?
  - Not even in the slightest.
7. Did other spirits participate?
  - Many.
8. What was their nature, in general?
  - Not very elevated.
9. Why have those cures and phenomena stopped when the local authorities opposed, closing the cemetery? Had the authorities more power than the spirits then?
  - God wanted to stop that since it had degenerated into abuse and scandal. The means employed by God to stop it was men's authority.
10. Since you have not taken part into those cures, why have they preferred your tomb to any other?

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

- Do you think that I was consulted? They chose my tomb knowingly. They exploited first my religious beliefs and then the little good I had tried to do.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

November 1859

## Observations Regarding the Word Miracle

Mr. Mathieu, mentioned in our October issue regarding the miracles, addressed the following complaint to us, promptly attended:

“Dear Sir,

“If I am not in agreement with you in all points at least I have the opportunity to comment, as you did in the latest issue of your journal. Thus, I totally agree with you regarding the word miracle.”

“Notice that if I used it in my brochure I also was careful to say on page 4: “Convinced that the word *miracle* expresses a fact produced outside the known laws of nature; a fact that escapes every human explanation, every scientific interpretation”, I then supposed to have given the word *miracle* a relative and conventional value. It seems to me, since you took the burden of criticizing me, that I was wrong.”

“In any case I count on your impartiality so that these lines, which I am honored to address to you, are welcome in your next issue. I am not upset as long as your readers know that I did not want to give to the word in question the meaning that you criticize, and that there was inability on my side or misunderstanding on yours, perhaps a bit of both.”

Yours sincerely, etc.

“Mathieu”

As we said in our article, we were perfectly convinced about the meaning given by Mr. Mathieu to the word *miracle*. Thus, our criticism did not address his opinion in any way but the use of the word, even in its most rational use. There are so many people who don't see but the surface of things and who do not take the burden of investigating them, fact that does not preclude them from judging the subject as if they knew it, and that such a denomination given to a spiritist fact could have been taken literally, in good faith by some, in ill-faith by the majority.

Our observation is as much founded as we remember having read elsewhere, in a newspaper whose name escapes us, an article in which those who enjoyed the faculty of provoking spiritist phenomena were classified, out of derision, as miracle makers, and that with respect to a very zealous adept who was convinced himself of producing them.

It is the case to recall that there is nothing more dangerous than an imprudent enemy. Our adversaries hastily throw us into ridicule without us giving them any reason for that.

# **The Spiritist Review 1859**

**November 1859**

## **WARNING**

The abundance of material does not allow us to include the Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies in this issue. We will provide it in the December number, in a supplement, together with other communications that we had to postpone for lack of space.

ALLAN KARDEC<sup>31</sup>



# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Response to Mr. Oscar Comettant

Dear Sir,

You have dedicated the publication of *Le Siècle* newspaper, of October 27<sup>th</sup> last, to the spirits and their partisans. Despite the ridicule you have cast over a problem much more serious than you think, I am pleased with the fact that by attacking the principle you have maintained the courtesy of the form, for it is not possible to say in a more candid way that we have no common sense. Thus, I will not confuse your witty article with the gross diatribes that give a sad idea of the good taste of the authors, worthy of all educated persons, adepts or not.

I do not have the habit of responding to criticism. Hence, I would have let your article pass, as done to many others, if I had not been assigned by the spirits to thank you in the first place for having given attention to them, and second to give you an advice. Please understand Sir that if it were for me I would not have done it. I do my job. That is all.

- How come! You may say – do the spirits give importance to a paper that I wrote about them? It is very kind of them.
- Certainly, because they were by your side when you wrote it. One of them who is very sympathetic to you, even tried to preclude you from using certain reflections, in his opinion not worthy of your sagacity, afraid of the criticism that you might have to face, not from the spirits with whom you hardly occupy, but from those who are aware of your knowledge. Be sure that they are everywhere; that they know everything that is said and done and that at the time of reading these words, they will be by your side, observing you. You can then say:
  - I cannot believe in the existence of these beings who inhabit space and that we cannot see.
  - Do you believe in the air that you don't see, and yet surround us?
  - That is very different. I believe in the air because although I cannot see it I can feel it; I hear its roar in the storm, resonating through the chimney of the fireplace, and I see the objects that it displaces.
  - Well then! The spirits are also heard; they also displace solid objects, lift, transport and break them.
  - Oh well, Mr. Allan Kardec! Appeal to your reason. How do you want intangible beings – supposing that they do exist, fact which I would only admit if I saw them – to have such a power? How can immaterial creatures act upon matter? That is not reasonable.
  - Do you believe in the existence of those myriads of tiny animals that rest on the palm of your hand, which can be covered to the thousands just by the tip of a needle?
  - Yes, because I don't see them with my eyes but the microscope allows me to see them.
  - However, before the invention of the microscope, if you were told that you have thousands of tiny creatures leaping from and onto your skin, that a clear single drop of water holds a whole population, that you massively absorb them with the purest air that you breathe; what would you have responded? You would have screamed against the absurd, and if you were a newspaper reporter you would have written against the tiny beings, fact which would not prevent them from existing. You admit it today because the fact is easily recognizable. Before that, however, you would have declared that it was something impossible. Then, why is it so irrational to believe that space is populated by intelligent beings that, although invisible, are not microscopic? As for myself I must confess that the idea of little beings, like homeopathic creatures, having visual, sensorial, circulatory, respiratory, etc. organs seem even more extraordinary to me.
  - I agree but still these are material beings, they are something, while your spirits, what are they? They are nothing. These are abstract, immaterial beings.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- To begin with, who told you that they are immaterial? Observation – and I here ask you to balance well this word *observation*, which does not mean *system* – observation, I was saying, demonstrates that these occult intelligences have a body, an envelope (wrapping); invisible, that is correct, but not less real. Well, it is through that semi material envelope that they act upon matter. Are the solid bodies the only ones to show a driving force? On the contrary, aren't the rarefied bodies those that show such a power in its highest degree, such as air, vapor, all gases, and electricity? Why then you deny it to the substance that constitutes the envelope of the spirits?
- I agree, but those substances are invisible and intangible in certain cases, and condensation may turn them visible and even solid. We can hold, keep and analyze them, fact that makes their existence irrefutably demonstrated.
- Well! That is a good one! You deny the spirit because you cannot place it inside a retort (distillation flask) to know if it is composed of Oxygen, Hydrogen and Nitrogen. Please tell me if before the discoveries of modern Chemistry, the composition of air, water and the properties of a number of invisible bodies were known, whose existences were even unsuspected. What would then be said to anyone who announced the wonders that we now admire? Charlatans and dreamers would have taken them. Suppose you have in your hands a book written by a scientist of those days, denying all these things, and even trying to demonstrate their impossibility. You will say: here we have a very pretentious scientist, who took the matter lightheartedly, issuing an opinion about something that he did not know enough. An abstention would have been better to keep his reputation. In one word, you would have a not so good opinion about his judgment. Well then! In a few years we will see what will be thought of those who try to demonstrate today that Spiritism is just a chimera. It is, no doubt, regrettable to certain people and to the amateurs that the spirits cannot be placed inside a flask to be observed at will. Don't you think, however, that they absolutely escape our senses! If the substance that constitutes its envelope is invisible in its natural state, it can also experience a kind of condensation, like that of the vapor, but by another cause, or to be more exact, by a molecular alteration that makes it momentarily visible and even tangible. We can then see them as we see one another, and touch them. They can grab us and leave marks in our limbs. But such a state is temporary. They can leave such state as fast as it was acquired, not as a consequence of a mechanical rarefaction, but as a result of their will, since those are intelligent beings rather than inert bodies. If the existence of the intelligent beings who populate space is demonstrated; if, as just seen, they exert influence over matter, why is it strange that they can communicate with us, transmitting their thoughts through material means?
- If the existence of those beings is proved, yes. That is where the problem is, though.
- Initially, the important thing is to demonstrate that possibility. Experience will do the rest. If that existence is not demonstrated to you, it is to me. I hear you saying, intimately: - "that is a weak argument." I agree that my personal opinion has little value, but I am not alone. Many more, before me, thought the same. I did not invent or discover the spirits. Such a belief count on millions of adepts, as much as or more intelligent than I am. Who will decide among the believers and unbelievers?
- Common sense, you will say.
- Be it. I however add that time helps us daily. But how can those who don't believe award themselves with the privilege of common sense, when the believers are mostly recruited not among the ignorant but the educated ones, whose number increases day by day? I take it from my own correspondence; by the number of foreigners who come to see me; by the distribution of our Review, which is now completing its second year and has subscribers in the five continents, in the highest echelons of society and even in the thrones. Honestly tell me if this is the march of an empty idea, of a utopia.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Attesting this capital point in your article, you say that it threatens to take the proportions of a scourge and add: "Oh! God! Didn't the human kind already have enough frivolities to impact reason, without this new doctrine which comes to take over our poor brain?"

It seems that you do not appreciate doctrines. Not everyone likes the same things. I will only say that I don't know the intellectual role to which the human being would have been reduced if, since his existence on Earth, he did not have his doctrines that made him think, moving him away from the passive state of the brute. There are, no doubt, good and bad doctrines, just and false, but it was to distinguish them that God gave us reason.

You forgot something: the precise and clear definition of what you call frivolities. There are people who define in such a way everything with which they disagree, but you have sufficient intelligence to believe that it is your exclusivity. There are other people who give such a classification to all religious ideas, who see the belief in God, in the soul and its immortality, in the future penalties and rewards as those things of pious people and to intimidate the children. I don't know your opinion about it but taking from your article someone might infer that you somehow share some of those ideas. Irrespective if you share those ideas or not, I allow myself to say, with many others, that the true scourge is in those ideas, if they spread. With materialism; with the belief that we die like the animals and that after death is the nothingness, and good has no reason to be, and the social ties no consistency. It is the sanction of selfishness. The penal law would be the only barrier to preclude the human being from exploiting others. If that is so, how can we punish a person that kills his fellow human being to take his wealth over? You will then say, because that is evil. But why is it evil? And he will respond: There is nothing after me. It is all gone. I fear nothing. I want to live the best possible here, and for that purpose I will take from those who have. Who forbids? Your law will? Your law will be right if I am caught. But if I am smarter, if I escape the law, then reason will be with me.

Then I will ask you which society could subsist under similar principles?

That reminds me of the following fact:

A gentleman who, as they say, did not believe in God or in the devil, and did not hide it, noticed that his servant was robbing him. One day he caught the man by surprise and asked:

– How dare you, scum, take what is not yours? Don't you believe in God?

The servant laughed and responded:

- Why should I believe if you don't believe yourself? Why do you have more than I do? If I were rich and you poor, who would prevent you from doing what I am doing? I was unlucky this time, and that is all. I will try to do better in the future.

That gentleman would feel happier if his servant had not taken the belief in God so frivolously. It is from that belief and the others deriving from it that man owes his true social security, much more than to the severity of the law, since the law cannot reach everything. If the belief was entrenched in everyone's hearts, there would be nothing to fear from each other. Frontally attacking that belief is the same as loosening the reins of all passions, destroying all scruples. That is what has recently taken a priest to say these sensible words, when asked about his opinion with respect to Spiritism: "Spiritism leads to the belief in something. Well, I prefer those who do believe in something to those who believe in nothing, for these don't even believe in the need for the good."

Spiritism, in fact, is the destruction of materialism. It is the patent and irrefutable proof of what certain people call futilities, as: God, the soul, a happy or unhappy future life. That scourge, as you call it, has other practical consequences. If you knew, as I do, how many times it has reestablished the calm to hearts broken by sorrow; which kind consolation it spreads over the miseries of life; how much it soothes hatred, preventing suicides and you wouldn't scoff as much.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Suppose that one of your friends tells you: "I was desperate; I was about to blow my brains out but today I know how much it would cost me and I gave up." If another tells you: "I used to envy your merit and superiority. Your success impacted my good night's rest. I wanted vengeance, to defeat you, to ruin you. I even wanted to kill you. I confess that you were in great danger. Today, however, I am a spiritist, I now understand how wrong those feelings were and I renounce them. Instead of doing you harm I came to help you." You would probably say: "There is thankfully something good in that madness."

What I am saying Sir is not to convince you or to convert you to my ideas. You have your own convictions, which are enough to you, solving all questions with respect to the future. It is then very natural that you keep them. But you have introduced me to your readers as the promoter of a scourge. Then I had to show you that it would be desirable that no scourge produced a greater evil, starting from the materialism. I count on your impartiality to transmit my answer to them. You will then say:

- But I am not materialist. One can very well not bear that opinion and still doesn't believe in the manifestations of the spirits.
- I agree. Then you are a spiritualist without being a spiritist. If I was wrong with respect to your convictions, it is because I took literally your declaration towards the end of your article. You say: "I believe in two things: in the love of people towards everything that is wonderful, even when that wonderful is absurd, and in the editor who sold me the fragment of a Sonata by Mozart for 2 francs."

If all your belief is limited to that, it seems to me to be the cousin of skepticism. But I bet that you believe in something more than in Mr. Ledoyen, who sold you a fragment of the Sonata for 2 francs. You believe in the product of your articles that, as I suppose, if I am not mistaken, you don't offer by the love of God more than Mr. Ledoyen does with his books. Every person has one's own profession. Mr. Ledoyen sells books. The writer sells prose and verses. Our poor world is not sufficiently advanced so that we can live, feed and dress for free. Perhaps one day the property owners, tailors, butchers, and bakers are sufficiently enlightened to understand that it is dishonorable to ask for money. The booksellers and writers will then be dragged by the example.

- With all that you did not give me the advice given by the spirits.
- Here it is: It is prudent that we don't speak frivolously about what we don't know. Let us imitate the wise reservation from Arago, who said with respect to the animal magnetism: "I could not approve the mystery made by the serious scientists when watching experiments of somnambulism. Doubt is a demonstration of modesty and it rarely hinders the progress of Science. We cannot say the same about incredulity. The one, who, outside the field of pure mathematics, pronounces the word impossible, indicates lack of prudence. Reservation is a duty, particularly when referring to animal organisms."

(News from Bailly)

Respectfully,

ALLAN KARDEC

# The Spiritist Review 1859

## December 1859 Effects of Prayer

One of our subscribers writes from Lausanne:

“For over fifteen years I have dedicated to what your Spiritist Science teaches today. The study of your books does nothing but reinforces such a belief. Besides, it brings me great consolations, casting a new light onto something that was darkness to me. Although I was convinced that my existence had to be multiple, I did not understand what my spirit would be in the intervals.”

“Thank you, Sir, a thousand times, for having initiated me into those great mysteries; for having showed me the only path to follow to be granted a better place in the other world. You opened my heart to hope, doubling my courage to withstand the trials of this world. I then invite you to come to help me, Sir, to examine a great truth, in which I am highly interested.”

“I am a Protestant and as such we don't pray for the dead in our church, since it is not taught in the Gospel. As you say, the spirits that you evoke frequently ask for the support of your prayers. Would they be under the influence of ideas acquired when alive, on Earth, or is it true that God takes into account the prayers by the living ones to alleviate the suffering of the dead?”

“Sir, this question is very important to me and to other comrades who married in the Catholic Church. To have a satisfactory answer I believe that it would be necessary to have the agreement of an enlightened protestant spirit, like that of one of our ministers, manifesting in your session, following one of your ecclesiastics.”

“The question is twofold: 1<sup>st</sup> – Is the prayer pleasing to the person it is directed? 2<sup>nd</sup> – Is it useful to them?”

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To begin with let us hear Re. Father Felix, in a remarkable introduction from a little book entitled “*Les morts souffrants et delaissees*”.<sup>32</sup>

“The devotion to the dead is not only an expression of a dogma and a manifestation of a belief. It is a charm of life, a consolation to the heart. In fact, what can be kinder to the heart than this devout cult that bonds us to the memory and suffering of the dead? Believe in the efficacy of prayer and good deeds to alleviate those who we lost; believe that when we cry for them, our tears can still help them; finally, believe that even in that invisible world which they inhabit they can be visited by our love, benefiting them; what a sweet, kind belief! What a consolation in such a belief to those who saw death coming through their roofs, breaking their hearts! If such a belief did not exist, says the human heart through the voice of its noblest instincts, to all those who can understand, that it would be necessary to invent it, even if it were only to bring some kindness to death and charm to our funerals. In fact, nothing transforms or changes the love that prays over the tomb or cries in the funerals, with such a devotion to the memory and suffering of the dead. That mixture of religion and pain, prayer and love, has something simultaneous of delicate and touching. The crying sadness becomes an auxiliary to the praying, piety that in turn becomes the most delicious aroma to sadness. Faith, hope and charity can never conjugate better to honor God, consoling people and transforming the relief to the dead into consolation to the living ones!”

“This smooth charm that we find in our fraternal exchange with the dead becomes even smoother when we are persuaded that God, no doubt, would not let those beloved ones entirely oblivious of the good that we do towards them. Who has never wished for a deceased father or brother to be at their side listening, when praying for them, and that they could be there to see the votes made in their favor? Who would not

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32 The suffering and neglected dead

## The Spiritist Review 1859

have said, when wiping the tears at the funeral of a lost relative or friend: If he could just hear me! When with my tears love offers prayer and sacrifice, if I could be certain that he knows it and that his love always understands mine! Yes, if I could only believe that it is not only the relief I sent that gets to him but if I could also be persuaded that God assigns one of his angels to tell him that, carrying the benefit to him, and that the relief comes from me, oh! God, you who are good to those who cry, what a balm to my ulcer! What a consolation to my pain!”

“It is true that Church does not force the belief in that our deceased loved ones effectively know, in purgatory, what we do for them here on Earth, but it does not prohibit it either; Church insinuates it, seeming to persuade us through the scope of its cult and ceremonies, as respectable and serious men of the Church are not afraid of attesting it. As a matter of fact, if the dead don't have the current and clear awareness of the prayers and the good deeds that we do in their names, it is certain that they feel their beneficial effects. Isn't that firm belief enough to the love which wishes consolation to the pain through the benefit, fertilizing the tears through sacrifice?”

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What Father Felix admits as a hypothesis the Spiritist Science admits as an incontestable truth because it provides its patent proof. In fact, we know that the spiritual world is composed of those who left their corporeal envelopes or, in other words, the souls of those who lived on Earth. Those souls or spirits, which is the same thing, populate space. They are everywhere, by our side as in the most distant places. Disentangled from the heavy and troublesome burden which retained them on the surface of the soil, now having only one ethereal, semi material envelope, they move with the speed of thought. Experience demonstrates that they can attend our appeals, but they understandably come in a more or less good will, with more or less pleasure, according to our intention. The prayer is a thought, a link between them and us. It is an appeal, a true evocation. Well, as the prayer is always a benevolent thought, efficient or not, it cannot but be pleasing to whom they are addressed.

Is it useful to them? That is another question.

Those who dispute the efficacy of the prayer say: God's designs are immutable and God does not break them under the request of humans.

That depends on the objective of the prayer, since God cannot infringe God's laws to satisfy all inconsiderate requests that we address to Him. Let us face it only from the point of view of the relief brought to the suffering souls. To begin with we affirm that admitting that the effective duration of the sufferings cannot be abbreviated, commiseration and sympathy are mitigation to the suffering. If a prisoner is condemned to spend twenty years in jail, won't he suffer a thousand times more if left alone, abandoned? However, if a charitable and compassionate soul comes to visit and encourage him, wouldn't that have the effect of breaking the chains before the period is over? Who on Earth would not find in compassion a relief to their miseries?

Can the prayers abbreviate suffering?

Spiritism responds: Yes, and demonstrates it through reason and experience. Through experience because it is the suffering souls themselves who come to confirm it, revealing the change in their situation. Through reason considering the way Spiritism sees things.

The communications we have with the beings of beyond the grave show all degrees of suffering and happiness. We then see unhappy, terribly unhappy beings and if Spiritism, according to a large number of theologians, does not admit the *fire* but as figurative, like a symbol of most pains, in short, as a *moral fire*, we must agree that the situation of some is not much better than if they were in the material fire. The state of happiness or unhappiness after death is not then just a illusion or a true ghost. But Spiritism teaches that the duration of suffering depends, up to a certain point, on the will of the spirit who can abbreviate it through the efforts employed to improve. The prayer, the real prayer, from the heart, dictated by a true charity, entices the spirit to repent; return their good feelings; clarify them; help them understand the

## The Spiritist Review 1859

happiness of their superior spirits; encourage them to do good, to become useful for the spirits can do the good and evil things. Somehow it liberates them from the lack of courage in which they are benumbed, allowing them to see light. They can then leave their quagmire through their own efforts. That is how the protective hand that reaches out can help them, abbreviating their suffering.

Our subscriber asks if the spirit who request prayers would not be under the influence of worldly ideas. We respond to this by saying that among the spirits who communicate with us there are those who have professed all cults: Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists. When asked: What can we do to help you? They answer: "Pray for me." – A prayer according to the ritual that you professed would be more useful or pleasing to you? – The ritual is the form. The prayer from the heart has no ritual."

Our readers certainly remember the evocation of the widow of Malabar, inserted in our December 1858 issue. When we said: "You ask us to pray for you but we are Christians. Would our prayers please you? She said: "There is only one God to all people."

The suffering spirits connect to those who pray for them, like the appreciative person does to her benefactor. That same widow of Malabar came several times to our meetings, uninvited. She came to get instructed, as she said. She even followed us in the streets, as we attested through a clairvoyant medium. Lemaire, the assassin, whose evocation was published in our March 1858 series, an evocation which we say, in passing, has excited the mockery vein of some skeptical, that very unfortunate, abandoned murderer, found a compassionate heart in one of our readers, who felt sorry for him. He came to visit him a few times, trying to manifest through all means and modes up until that person, having the opportunity to learn about those manifestations, knew that it was Lemaire who wanted to demonstrate his appreciation. When it was finally possible for him to express his thoughts, he said: "Thank you charitable soul! I was alone, with the remorse of my past life and you felt sorry for me. I was abandoned and you thought of me. I was in the abyss and you reached out to me. Your prayers were like a soothing balm to me. I understood the enormity of my crimes and I ask God to give me the grace of reparation through a new existence, in which I can do as much good as the evil I have done. Thank you, once more. Thank you!

To finalize, here you have the opinion of the distinguished Protestant Priest Mr. Adolph Monod, deceased on April 1856, about the effects of prayer:

"Christ said: love one another. This recommendation contains all possible means of demonstrating affection to our fellow human beings, not entering into details, however, of how to achieve that objective. If it is certain that nothing can preclude the Creator from applying the law that God is the model Himself, it is no less certain that the prayer that you address to God, in favor of the person of your interest, is to the latter a testimony that she is missed. This can effectively contribute to console her and alleviate her suffering. She is helped as long as manifesting regret, and only then, but she will always know that a sympathetic soul has sent her good thoughts. Such thought entices regret, leaving the soul in the sweet persuasion that the intersection of that soul was useful. It necessarily results in appreciation and affection towards the person who has given proof of friendship or piety. As a consequence the love recommended by Christ to human beings has grown among them. Both obeyed the law of love and the union of all beings, God's law, which must lead to unity, that it the objective of the spirit."

- You don't have anything else to add to these explanations?
- No. They contain everything.
- I thank you for bringing them.
- To me it is a reason for happiness to be able to contribute to the union of the souls, union that the good spirits endeavor to make prevail above all questions of dogma, which divide them.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## A Spirit that does not acknowledge his death

One of our subscribers from the Department of Loire, an excellent psychographic medium, writes the following with respect to several apparitions that he witnessed:

“Not willing to forget any of the facts that come to support the Spiritist Doctrine, I wish to communicate the new phenomena which I have witnessed and served as medium, and as you will recognize, are in perfect agreement with everything that you have published in your Review, with respect to the state of the spirit after separation from the body.”

“About six months ago I was receiving communications from the spirits together with a few persons when I had the idea of asking if there was any clairvoyant medium among the attendees. The spirit responded positively, indicating me and adding: “You are already one but in a small degree and only during the sleep. Later your temperament will modify in such a way that you will become an excellent clairvoyant medium, but gradually, and during the sleep only in the beginning.”

“During this year we endured the pain of losing three of our relatives. One of them, my uncle, appeared to me in my sleep, just after his death. We had a long conversation and he conducted me to his dwelling, saying that it was the last degree of the Earthly happiness. It was my intention to provide you with the description of what I had admired in that incomparable home but having consulted with my guardian spirit he said: “Your joy and happiness could influence the description of the wonderful beauties that you admired, and your imagination could create non-existing things. Wait until your spirit is soother.” I then stopped, obeying my guide, only reporting two other more positive visions. I will only mention my uncle’s last words. When I had admired what I was allowed to see, he said: “You are now returning to Earth.” I asked him to allow me to stay for a few moments more, to which he said: “No; it is five o’clock and you have to retake the course of your existence.” I immediately woke up. My clock indicated 5 am sharp.”

“My second vision was with one of the other deceased relatives in the year. He was a virtuous man, a loving, good father, and family man, good Christian, who although had been sick for a long time, died almost suddenly and perhaps unexpectedly. His face showed an indefinable, serious, sad and, at the same time, happy looks. He told me: “I atone my faults but I have a consolation: to protect my family. I still live with my wife and children inspiring them with good thoughts. Pray for me.”

“The third vision is more characteristic and I had the confirmation by a material fact. It is from the third deceased relative. He was an excellent man, but lively, passionate, imperious with the servants, and above all, attached to the material things of the world. Besides, he was skeptical, much more concerned with things of this life than with those of the future. Sometime after his death he came at night, impatiently pulling the curtains, as if willing to wake me up. Then I asked: - is that you?”

“He said:

- Yes, I came to you because you are the only person that can answer me. My wife and children left to Orleans. I wanted to join but nobody obeys me. I asked Peter to pack up for me but he cannot hear me. Nobody gives me any attention. If you just could come with me and tie the horses onto the other coach and pack up for me you would do me a great favor, for I could then join my wife in Orleans.
- But can’t you do that?
- No. I *cannot lift anything*. I changed after the sleep during my illness. I no longer know where I am. I feel like I am living a nightmare.
- Where are you coming from?
- From B...



## The Spiritist Review 1859

- From the castle?
- No! He screamed in horror, taking his hand to his forehead. I come from the cemetery.

After a gesture indicating desperation, he added:

- Look, my dear friend, ask all of our relatives to pray for me; I am very unfortunate!

He then left, disappeared and I lost sight of him. When he first came, impatiently pulling the curtains, his expression was of hallucination. When asked how he could pull the curtains since he had said that he couldn't lift anything, he bluntly said: "I used my breath."

"I learned the day after that his wife and children had actually left to Orleans."

This last apparition is remarkable, particularly by the illusion shown by certain spirits who believe that they are still alive, and that has prolonged much longer in this case than others in analogous situations. Such an illusion commonly lasts only a few days whereas he still considered himself alive after three months. As a matter of fact, the situation is identical to what we have observed a number of times. He sees everything as he did when alive. He wants to speak and is caught by surprise for not being heard. He gets involved, or thinks to be involved, with his customary businesses. The existence of the perispirit is demonstrated here in a remarkable way, abstraction made of the vision. Once he considers himself alive, he sees with a body similar to the one he left behind. He acts with that body similarly to what he would do with the other one. To him, nothing has changed. He just hasn't investigated yet the properties of his new body. He considers it dense and material as before, surprised by the fact that he cannot lift anything. Nonetheless, he finds his situation somehow strange, incomprehensible. He supposedly thinks that he is living a nightmare, taking death by the sleep. It is a mixed state between the corporeal and spiritual life, always painful and full of anxiety, which has something of both worlds. As we have said, this is what more or less frequently happens in cases of sudden death, such as those of suicide, apoplexy, execution, combat, etc.

We know that the separation between body and perispirit takes place gradually, and not suddenly. It starts before death, when this occurs due to the natural extinction of the vital forces, be it by age, illnesses or, particularly, in those people who still alive have the presentiment of their end, identifying themselves through their thoughts with the future existence, in such a way that when exhaling their last breath, the separation is more or less complete. When a lively body is caught by surprise by death, the separation starts at that very moment, taking some time to complete. While there is a link between the body and the spirit, the spirit will remain perturbed. If the spirit suddenly enters the spiritual world he will be alarmed, not promptly recognizing the situation or the properties of his new body. There is the need to move around, somehow, and that is what makes him think that he is still in this world.

Beyond the circumstances of violent death, there are others that make the link between the body and the spirit even stronger, for the illusion that we mentioned is equally observed in certain cases of natural death. That is when the person has lived much more the material than the moral life. It is understandable that his attachment to matter may retain him even longer, after death, putting off even more the idea that nothing has changed. That is the case of the person that we have just talked about.

Let us observe the difference between his situation and the other of the second relative. One still wants to control, thinks that he still need his suitcases, horses, and carriages, to meet his wife. He still doesn't know that, as a spirit, he can do it instantaneously, but his perispirit is still so materialized that finds himself submitted to all bodily needs. The other one who has lived the moral life; that had religious feelings; that had identified himself with the future life, although more suddenly surprised than the first relative, he is already detached. He says that he lives among his loved ones but he knows that he is a spirit. He speaks with his wife and children but he knows that it is through the mind. In short, he no longer has illusions whereas the first one is perturbed and anxious; his feeling of a real

## The Spiritist Review 1859

life is so real that he saw the wife and children leaving, as they really did on the very day he indicated, a fact that was ignored by the relative to whom he showed up.

Let us note also a characteristic expression that shows his position very well. Responding to the question: Where are you coming from? He answered, indicating the place where he was living. Following the question: From the castle? He answered in horror: "No. I come from the cemetery." Well, this proves one thing: because the detachment was not complete there was a kind of attraction between the spirit and the body, which led him to say that he was coming from the cemetery. But as it seems, he started to understand the truth at that point. The question itself seemed to have given him the lead, calling his attention to his remains, being that the reason why he answered in horror.

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There is large number of examples of that kind. One of the most expressive ones is that of the suicide of the Samaritan baths, reported in our June 1858 issue. Evoked a few days after his death he also asserted that he was alive, saying: "I feel the worms devouring me". As indicated in our report, it was not a memory, since he was not devoured by the worms when alive. It was then a present feeling, a kind of repercussion transmitted by the body to the spirit, through the fluidic communication still existing between them.

Such communications are not always translated in the same way, although they are always more or less painful and operate as a first punishment to those who, when alive, were strongly identified with material things.

What a difference from the calm, serenity, smooth quietness of those who die without remorse, conscious of having employed well their time on Earth; of those who were not dominated by their passions!

The transition is short and sweet, as death to them is a departure from exile, a return to the true homeland. Is there a theory in this, a system? No. It is the picture that is daily offered to us by the communications from beyond the grave, whose aspects vary infinitely, from which everyone can take a useful teaching, finding examples that can be used, as long as one takes the burden of examining them. They constitute a mirror that can be used by anyone who is not blindfolded by pride.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Doctrine of Reincarnation Among the Hindus

NOTE COMMUNICATED TO THE SOCIETY BY MR. TUG...

“It is generally thought that the Hindus only admit reincarnation as expiation and that in their opinion it only happens in animal bodies. However, the lines below, extracted from the trip of Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer, seem to demonstrate that the Hindu Indians have a more clear idea with that respect.

Mrs. Pfeiffer says:

“The girls are generally engaged when they are one year old. If the boy dies the girl is considered a widow, being then precluded from marrying. Windowing is considered to be a great unhappiness. They think that such a situation is the result of a not faultless previous life.”

Despite the undeniable importance of these last words, it must be acknowledged that there is a capital difference between the doctrine of metempsychosis of the Hindus and the doctrine admitted by the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies. Let us see what Zimmermann says about Hinduism in his “Travel Journal” (*Taschenbuch der Reisen*).

“The basis of that religion is the belief in a primary and supreme being, in the immortality of the soul, and the reward of virtue. The true and only God is called Brahm, who must not be confused with Brahma, created by God. God is the true light that is the same, eternal, blessed at all times and places. The goddess Bhavani (nature) has emanated from the immortal essence of Brahm, and a legion of 1,180 million spirits. Among those there are three semi gods or superior genies: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the trinity of the Hindus. Concord and happiness has reigned among the spirits for a long time. With time, however, a revolt exploded among them and some refused to obey. The rebels were precipitated from heavens to the abyss of darkness. Then came the metempsychosis: each plant, each creature was animated by a decayed angel. Such a belief explains the kindness of the Hindus towards the animals. They are considered their similar, thus they do not want to kill any.”

“We are led to believe that only with time everything that exists of bizarre in that badly understood religion, and falsified by the crowds, fell to the insensible charlatanism. It is enough to indicate the attributes of its main divinities to explain the current state of the religion. They admit 333 million inferior divinities: those are the goddesses of the elements, of the phenomena of nature, of arts, diseases, etc. Furthermore, there are the good and bad genies. The good ones outnumber the bad ones by three millions.”

“What is extremely remarkable”, adds Zimmermann “is that one cannot find a single image of the Supreme Being among the Hindus, who is immensely great to them. His temple is the whole Earth, they say, and He is worshiped in all forms.”

Thus, according to the Hindus, the souls were created happy and perfect and their bankruptcy resulted from a rebellion. Their incarnation in animal bodies is a punishment. According to the Spiritist Doctrine the souls were, and still are, created simple and ignorant, and it is through the successive reincarnations that they reach perfection, thanks to their efforts and to God’s mercy, the only means of achieving eternal happiness. The soul, which must progress, may however remain stationary during a more or less lengthy period, but cannot retrocede. What has been acquired in knowledge and morality the soul does not lose. If the soul does not advance it does not move back either. That is why it cannot go back to animate the creatures inferior to humanity.

Thus the metempsychosis of the Hindus is founded on the principle of degradation of the souls. Reincarnation, according to the spirits, is founded on the principle of continuous evolution. According to

## The Spiritist Review 1859

the Hindus, the soul began by perfection, achieving abjection. Perfection is the beginning; abjection is the result. According to the spirits, ignorance is the beginning; perfection is the objective and final result.

It would be superfluous to demonstrate which one of these doctrines is the most rational, which one gives the most elevated idea of God's justice and benevolence. It is then from a complete ignorance of their principles that some people confuse them.

TUG..."

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Celebrated Traveler Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer

Society, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1859

The following report was extracted from the *Second trip around the world*, by Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer, page 345:

“Since I am going to talk about very strange things, it is necessary to mention a more enigmatic event, which happened in Java a few years back, causing such commotion that it even attracted the government’s attention.”

“At the residence of Chérison there was a little house in which spirits appeared, as people said. When the night came, this event hailed inside the bedroom, in all directions, and from all places, there was siri<sup>33</sup> spitting. Both the hail and the spit fell near the persons in the room, but did not hit or harm them. As it seems, it was all directed at a particular child, who was in the room. It was so much said about this inexplicable case that the Dutch governor assigned an officer of his trust to examine the case.”

“The officer determined that serious and faithful men should stand guard around the house, blocking anyone from coming in or out. He scrupulously examined all details, took the designated child in his arms and settled in the fatal room. Early evening and as usual, the hail and *siri* started. All fell near the officer and the boy, not hitting them. Each corner, each hole was examined again. However, nothing was found. The officer could not understand it. He demanded that the stones be put together, marked and hidden in a distant place. It was all in vain. The same stones fell in the room again, at the same usual time.”

“In the end and to stop such inconceivable story, the governor ordered that the house be demolished.”

The person who collected this fact was a really superior lady, less for her instruction and talent than for her incredible energy of character. Besides that fervent curiosity and untamed courage which made her the most remarkable traveler that has ever existed, Mrs. Pfeiffer was not eccentric. She was a lady of kind and enlightened benevolence, having many times demonstrated that she was far from being superstitious. Her rule was only to tell what she had witnessed or captured from an unsuspected source (see the *Revue de Paris*, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1856 and the *Dictionnaire des Contemporains*, de Vapereau).

1. Evocation
  - I am here.
2. Are you surprised by our call and for being among us?
  - I am surprised by the speed of my journey.
3. How were you warned that we wanted to speak with you?
  - I was brought here unnoticeably.
4. However, you must have received some sort of warning.
  - I was irresistibly carried away.
5. Where were you when you were invited?
  - Close to a spirit who I have the mission to guide.

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33 A preparation that the Javanese people chew continually, giving the color of blood to the mouth and saliva.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

6. Where you aware of the distances that you have to cover to be here or have you suddenly found yourself here, without transition?
  - Suddenly.
7. Are you happy as a spirit?
  - Yes. One cannot be happier.
8. Where did you take your intense like of traveling?
  - I was a seaman in a preceding existence. The taste acquired for travelling in that existence reflected in this one, despite the sex that I selected.
9. Have the trips contributed to your progress as a spirit?
  - Yes, because I did these trips with the spirit of observation, which I lacked in the preceding existence where I only got involved with commerce and material things. That is why I thought that I could advance more in a sedentary life. But God, so good and wise in God's designs, allowed me to utilize my inclinations in favor of the progress that I requested.
10. From all nations that you have visited, which one seemed more advanced and which do you prefer? Haven't you said when alive that you placed certain tribes of the Oceania above the most civilized nations?
  - It was a wrong idea. Today I prefer France for I understand its mission and foresee its destiny.
11. What is the destiny that you foresee for France?
  - I cannot tell you its destiny but its mission is to sow progress and lights, hence the true Spiritism.
12. Why have you found the savages of Oceania more advanced than the Americans?
  - I saw serious and robust qualities in them, abstraction made of the vices of savage state, which I did not find in other places.
13. Do you confirm that fact that happened in Java, reported in one of your books?
  - I confirm it partially. The case of the marked stones that were thrown again deserves explanation. Those were similar stones, but not the same.
14. What did you attribute that phenomenon to?
  - I did not know what to attribute it to. I asked myself if the devil would not in fact exist and, hence, responding negatively. I did not go beyond that.
15. And now that you know the cause, could you tell us the origin of those stones? Were they transported or specially made by the spirits?
  - They were transported. To the spirits it was easier to bring than to collect them.
16. And where did that *siri* come from? It was made by them?
  - Yes. It was easier and even unavoidable since it would be impossible to find it already prepared.
17. What was the objective of those manifestations?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Like now, attracting attention and attesting a fact that it needed be talked about and an explanation attempted to be found.

OBSERVATION: Someone observes that such verification could not lead to any serious result among those people. One can say that there is a real result because through the report and testimony of Mrs. Pfeiffer the fact came to the knowledge of civilized nations, which comment and make conclusions about them. As a matter of fact, the Dutch were the ones called in to attest them.

18. Was there in the case a special objective, particularly referring to the child tormented by the spirits?
  - The child had a favorable influence, that is all, and personally she had not suffered a single scratch.
19. Since the spirits produced the phenomena, why have they ceased when the house was demolished?
  - They stopped because it was judged to be useless to continue, but you are not going to ask if they could have persisted.
20. We thank you for your presence and kindness in answering our questions.
  - I am entirely at your service.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Privat d'Anglemont

FIRST CONVERSATION – SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1859

In the Le Pays edition of August 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>, 1859 there is the following necrology of Privat d'Anglemont, a writer who died in the Dubois Hospital:

“His fantasies have never harmed anyone. It was only the last one that was bad and turned against him. As he came to the hospital where he ended up dying, Privat d'Anglemont decided to say that he was Anabaptist and followed the doctrine of Swedenborg. He had already said many things of the same kind during his life. This time, however, death silenced his word and he had no time to deny himself. The supreme consolation of the cross was kept away from his deathbed. His funeral entourage passed by a church but moved on. The cross did not come to welcome him at the gate of the cemetery. When the coffin was lowered in the grave Edouard Fournier pronounced touching words about that body, but did not dare to wish him but the sleep. All his friends, one by one, left surprised by the fact that he did not receive the tear-like water, which purifies. Then, after all that, let us try to raise funds to erect something on his hopeless tomb! Poor Privat! I don't entrust his less to the hands of the One who knows all miseries of the human soul, who planted forgiveness in the effusion of an affectionate heart.”

Before anything else let us make an observation about that news. Isn't that an atrocious thought, a hopeless grave that doesn't even deserve the honor of a monument? Privat's life could have been more meritorious, no doubt. There is no question about the fact that he made his mistakes, but nobody can say that he was a bad man, who did evil things, like so many others, by pleasure, under the mantle of hypocrisy. Due to the fact that he was denied the prayers of the believers, in his last moments on Earth, prayers not even said by his little charitable friends, must we believe that God condemn him forever, not leaving him with any other supreme hope but the sleep of eternity? In other words, that he is nothing more than an animal to God's eyes, he who was a man of intelligence, certainly unthoughtful about the things and favors of the world, living by chance, careless about tomorrow, but definitely a man of thought, if not a transcendent genie? If that is the case, how terrifying it must be the number of those who dive into the emptiness! The spirits unarguably give us a much more sublime idea of God, always introducing Him as ready to reach out to help the one who recognize his mistakes, to whom there is always an anchor of salvation.

1. Evocation
  - I am here my friends. What is it that you wish from me?
2. Do you have a clear idea of your current situation?
  - No. Not completely but I hope to have that soon since God, as it fortunately seems, does not wish me away from Him, despite the almost useless life I led on Earth, and later I will have a very happy position in the world of the spirits.
3. Were you immediately aware of your situation, at the time of your death?
  - I was understandably perturbed, but not as much as one might suppose. The reason being that I always liked the ethereal, the poetic, the dream-like things.
4. Could you then describe what happened to you?
  - Nothing extraordinary and different from what you already know. Useless, then, to talk about it again.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

5. Do you see things as clearly as when you were alive?
  - No. Not yet. But I will see.
6. Which impression do you have about your vision today of people and things?
  - My God! That very thing that I always thought.
7. What do you do now?
  - I do nothing. I am errant. I look for a spiritual position, not a social position; another world, another occupation. It is the natural law of things.
8. Can you transport yourself anywhere, at will?
  - No. I would be very happy. My world is limited.
9. Do you need a significant amount of time to move from a place to another?
  - Very significant.
10. When you were alive your individuality was attested through the body. Now that you no longer have a body, how do you demonstrate it?
  - Ah! That is strange! It is something that I have not thought about. It is true to say that one learns something new every day. Thank you, dear companion.
11. Well then! Considering that we called to your attention this point, think about it and answer.
  - I told you that I am limited with respect to space. But ah! I always had a lively imagination but I am also limited in my thoughts. I will respond later.
12. When you were alive what was your opinion about the state of the soul after death?
  - I assumed it immortal, which is obvious. However, shame on me, I confess that I did not believe, or at least, I was not sure about the reincarnation.
13. What was the origin of the original character that distinguished you?
  - There was no direct cause. Other people are profound, serious, and philosophical. I was joyful, lively, and original. It is a variety of character. That is all.
14. Couldn't you have, through your talent, left that bohemian life, which attached you to the material needs? I believe that you had to go without the necessary many times.
  - Very frequently. But, what do you want? I lived according to my character. Besides, I never bent before the silly conventions of the world. I did not know what begging for protection was. My principle was "art for the art".
15. What is your hope for the future?
  - I don't know yet.
16. Do you remember your existence prior to the one you have just left?
  - It was good.

OBSERVATION: Someone reminds that these last words might well be taken as an irony, much in agreement with Privat's character. He then responded spontaneously:

## The Spiritist Review 1859

– I apologize but I was not mocking you. It is true that I am a not much instructive spirit to you but, in reality, I don't want to joke about serious matters. Let us stop. I don't wish to speak any more. So long!

### SECOND CONVERSATION – SEPTEMBER 9<sup>th</sup>, 1859<sup>34</sup>

1. Evocation
    - Let us see, my friend, when are you going to stop framing all these sensible questions that I cannot respond?
  2. You certainly say that out of modesty since the intelligence that you showed in life and when responding to our questions demonstrates that your spirit is above the vulgar.
    - Flattering!
  3. No. We don't praise. We say what we think. As a matter of fact we know that praising has no meaning to the spirits. You suddenly left us during our last conversation. Could you kindly explain the reason for that?
    - The reason, in all its simplicity, is the following: You ask questions so much beyond my capacity that I feel embarrassed to answer. Then please understand my natural constraint when I remained mute.
  4. Do you have other spirits around you?
    - I see lots of them, here, there, everywhere!
  5. Have you given any thought to the question we addressed to you and that you promised to respond on another opportunity? I repeat it: when you were alive your individuality was attested through the body. Now that you no longer have a body, how do you demonstrate it? In short: how do you distinguish yourself from the other spiritual beings that you see around you?
    - If I can express what touches me, I still retained a kind of essence that gives me my individuality and leaves me in no doubt that I am me, though I am dead to the Earth. I'm still in a new world, well new to me ... (After some hesitation.) I finally found my individuality through my perispirit, which is the form that I had in this world.
- Note. We believe that this last response was whispered to him by another spirit, because its accuracy contrasts with the embarrassment suggested in the beginning.
6. Have you attended your own funerals?
    - Yes I did but I don't even know why.
  7. Which sensation has it produced on you?
    - I saw with pleasure, with real satisfaction, that I left many memories behind when I left Earth.
  8. Where did you take the idea from of calling yourself Anabaptist and Swedenborgist? Had you studied Swedenborg's doctrine?
    - It was one of my eccentricities, among others.

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<sup>34</sup> In the original one reads *quatrième*. It must be a glitch of revision given the sequence above and the dates of the sessions. (NT)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

9. What is your opinion about the short eulogy dedicated to you by the newspaper *Le Pays*?
- You confuse me if you believe that by publishing these communications in the Review it gives pleasure to those who wrote them, and then what would I say about those for whom they were written? What are beautiful phrases, nothing more than beautiful phrases?
10. Do you go back to see the places that you used to go to when alive, and also see the friends that you left behind?
- Yes, and I dare say that I still find some satisfaction in visiting those places. As for the friends, I had only a few sincere ones. Many shook hands with me, not having the courage of saying how eccentric I was, criticizing me and calling me mad behind my back.
11. Where do you intend to go after leaving us? This is not an indiscrete question but aims at our instruction.
- Where I am going to? ... Let us see! ... Ah! An excellent idea! ... I will allow myself a little enjoyment... Doing it only once will not create a habit. I will go for a stroll. I will visit a little room from which I kept pleasant memories... Yes, it is a good idea. I will spend the time by the bedside of a poor devil, a sculptor that has nothing to eat tonight... who has requested the sleep to alleviate his hunger... The one who sleeps, also dines... Poor young man! You will be okay. I will lead you through magnificent dreams.
12. Couldn't you tell us the address of that sculptor? Couldn't we help him?
- It could be an indiscrete question if I did not know the praiseworthy feeling that dictates it... I cannot answer that question.
13. Will you kindly make an essay about a subject of your choice? Your literary talent must turn it into an easy task.
- Not yet. However, you seem so kind, compassionate, that I promise to write something. I may be a bit eloquent now but I am afraid my communications may still be too worldly. Allow my soul to deperate a little. Wait until it leaves this gross still bonding envelope and I will then promise a communication. I only ask you for one thing: ask God, our sovereign Lord, to pardon me, allowing me to forget my uselessness on Earth, since each individual has a mission in this planet. Most unfortunate the one who does not accomplish it with faith and devotion! Pray! Pray! See you another time.

### (THIRD CONVERSATION)

- I have been here for a long time. I promised to say something and will do it.
- Know this, friend, that there is nothing more embarrassing than speaking like that, attacking a serious subject without an introduction. A scientist does not prepare his publications before long reflections, after having given a lot of thoughts to what he is going to talk about, his endeavor. As for myself I am afraid I have not yet found a subject worthy of you. I could not tell you but frivolities, that is why I prefer to request an adjournment of eight days, as if before a tribunal. Then, it is possible that I may have found a subject of your interest, which may instruct you.

As the medium had mentally insisted that he should say something, he added:

- My dear, I find you remarkable! No. I prefer to stay as a listener. Don't you know that there is as much instruction to me as there is to you on listening to the things that are discussed here? No, I repeat. I stay only as a listener since it is a much more instructive role to me.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

Despite your insistence I don't want to respond. You believe that it would be much more satisfying to me if it was said: "Ah! Privat d'Anglemont was evoked tonight! – Really? What did he say? – Nothing, absolutely nothing! – Thank you! I would rather have you keeping a good impression of me. Each one bears his or her own ideas.

### Spontaneous communication by Privat d'Anglemont

FOURTH CONVERSATION, SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>, 1859

Behold that Spiritism makes a great noise everywhere, behold that the newspapers give space to Spiritism; indirectly that is true, citing extraordinary facts of apparitions, rapping, etc. My ex-comrades mention the facts without comments, thus giving testimony of intelligence, since the Spiritist Doctrine should never be lightheartedly discussed or taken by a bad thing. However, they have not admitted yet the truthfulness of the medium's role. They doubt. But I rebut their objections by simply saying that they are mediums as well. All writers, great and small, are more or less mediums, since the spirits who are around them act upon their mental system, and frequently inspire the thoughts that they boast of having conceived. They certainly would not accept that I, Privat d'Anglemont, a frivolous spirit by excellence, had resolved that question. However, I only tell the truth and as proof to raise a very simple question: how can they feel, after having written for some time, in a kind of super excited, very uncommon febrile state? It is the effort of concentration, you will say. But when you are very concentrated on the observation of something, say a painting, do you also feel febrile? No, not at all! Then, there is necessarily something there. Well then, I repeat: the cause is in the kind of communication existing between the writer's brain and the spirits who surround him. Now, my dear comrades, you may bash Spiritism if that seems right to you. Mock it, laugh at it, but you are certainly teasing yourselves. You are nudging yourselves later... Do you understand?

PRIVAT D'ANGLEMONT

The medium who was the interpreter of Privat d'Anglemont at the Society had the idea of evoking him privately, maintaining with him the conversation below. It seems that he felt certain affection towards him, be it due to the fact that he was an easy instrument or just because there was sympathy between them. The medium is a rookie in the literary world, and his promising essays announce a disposition that Privat will certainly encourage with pleasure.

#### 1. Evocation

- I am here. I have been with you for some time. I expected that you would evoke me. It was me who inspired in you some good thoughts, not long ago. My dear friend, it was to console you a bit and help you to withstand with more courage the penalties of this world. Do you really think that I have not suffered more than you all imagine, you who laugh at my eccentricities? Below that armor of indifference that I always showed, how many pains and sorrows haven't I hidden? But I had a very precious quality to a scholarly man and to an artist. I had always, irrespective of the occasion, balanced my sufferings with joy. When I was going through a lot of suffering I used to joke about it, using wordplay and teasing people. How many times haven't hunger, thirst and cold knocked on my door! And how many times haven't I responded with a sound laughter! False laughter, you may say. Oh! No, my friend! I confess that I was sincere. What do you want? I always had the most lightheartedly character. I had never been bothered by the future, by the past and the present. I always lived like a true bohemian, by chance, spending five francs when I had them, and

## The Spiritist Review 1859

even when I did not. And I was not richer four days after having received my paycheck than I was on the day before.

I certainly do not wish anybody to live such a useless, incoherent and irrational life. Eccentricities are no longer of our times. That is why the new ideas progressed in such a fast pace. It is a life from which I am not absolutely proud of and that makes me ashamed sometimes. Youth must be of study. It must strengthen intelligence through work, so that one can better understand the human being and all things.

You may be disenchanted, oh! Youth, if you think that you are men or scholars. You have the key to know everything. It is up to you now to work and study. You must enter more assertively in the vast field before you, whose paths were paved by your previous studies in college. I know that the youth requires distractions, since it would otherwise be against their nature. Yet, it must not be too much for the one who has only thought of pleasures, in the spring of life, prepares terrible remorse for later. It is when experience and the worldly needs teach that the time lost cannot be recovered. The youngsters need serious readings. Many times former writers are the best ones for good thoughts out of their good thoughts. They must avoid the romances, in particular, that only excite imagination, leaving the hearts empty. Romances should not be tolerated but only as a distraction and once in a while, or to certain ladies who have nothing better to do. Get educated! Get educated! Improve the God given intelligence. That is the only price that makes it worth living.

Q – Your language scares me, my dear Privat. You presented yourself as a very witty spirit, no doubt, but not as a profound spirit, and now...

A – Stop there, young man! Stop! I appeared, or better, I communicated with all of you as a willow spirit, that is true, but the fact is that I was not completely detached from the earthly envelope and the condition of spirit had not been revealed yet in all its plenitude. Now, my friend, I am a spirit and nothing more than a spirit. I see, feel and experience like the others, and my life on Earth is like a dream to me. And what a dream! I am kind of already used to this new world, which will be my dwelling for some time.

Q – For how long do you expect to remain as a spirit and what do you do in your new existence? What are your occupations?

A – The time that I will remain as a spirit is still in God's hands and will last, I suppose, and as much as I can conceive, until God finds my soul advanced enough to incarnate in a superior region. As for my occupations, these are almost inexistent. I am still errant and that is a consequence of the kind of life I led on Earth. Thus, what seemed pleasurable to me in your world is now a punishment. Yes, it is true, I wish I had a serious occupation; I wish I could find someone who deserves my sympathy; to inspire good thoughts. But, my dear friend, we talked too much already and if you allow me, I must leave. So long! If you need me do not hesitate to call. I will come with pleasure. Courage! Be happy!

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Dirkse Lammers

SPIRITIST SOCIETY, NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859

Mr. Van B..., from The Hague, who was present at the meeting, reported the following personal fact:

“In a spiritist session which he attended in The Hague, a spirit manifested spontaneously, using the name Dirkse Lammers. He was asked about his personal details and the reason for his visit with people who did not know him and who did not call him; here is what he said about his own story:”

“I lived in 1592 when I hanged myself at the place where you gather now, in stables which used to be exactly where this house is located now. These were the circumstances: I had a dog and my lady neighbor had chickens. My dog strangled the chickens and to revenge the neighbor poisoned the dog. In my wrath, I spanked and hurt that woman. She took me to the court and I was condemned to spend three months in prison and to pay a fine of twenty-five florins. Although the sentence was light I still felt a lot of hatred towards the lawyer, Mr. X..., who had provoked it, feeding my desire for vengeance. Hence, I stalked him in an isolated path that he customarily used to go to Loosduinen, near The Hague. I then strangled him and hanged him on a tree. To give the impression of a suicide, I stuck a previously prepared piece of paper with a message in his pocket, as if written by him, saying that nobody should be accused for his death, since he had committed suicide. Since then I was persecuted by remorse for three months, finally killing myself, as I already said, at this very place where you are now. Pushed by some sort of irresistible force, I come to confess my crime in the hopes that it may bring some relief to the punishment that I suffer since then.”

“The so much detailed description caused admiration on the assembly. Notes were taken and research was carried out in the local Forum, confirming in fact that in 1592 a lawyer by the name X... had hanged himself in the path to Loosduinen.”

The spirit of Dirkse Lammers was evoked and manifested in the session of the Society on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859 in a violent way, breaking the pencils. His writing was large, nervous, almost illegible, and the medium experienced great difficulty in tracing the characters.

1. Evocation
  - I am here. What for?
2. Do you recognize here a person with whom you have communicated lately?
  - I gave sufficient demonstration of my lucidity and good will. This should be enough.
3. What was the objective of your spontaneous communication in Mr. Van B... house?
  - I don't know. I was sent there. I myself was not willing to say what I was forced to say.
4. Who forced you?
  - The force that leads us. I know nothing else about it. I was dragged, despite my will, forced to obey the spirits who had the right to be obeyed.
5. Are you upset for having attended our call?
  - Very much. This is not my place.
6. Are you happy as a spirit?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

- Nice question!
7. What can we do to please you?
    - Do you really think that you can do something that is pleasant to me?
  8. Certainly. Charity requests that we be useful whenever we can, to the spirits as well as to men. Once you are unhappy we will ask for God's mercy. We will pray for you.
    - Finally, after centuries, these are the first words of such a nature that are addressed to me. Thank you! Thank you! For God's sake, may this not be a vain promise, I beg you.



# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Family Conversations from Beyond the Grave

Michel François

SOCIETY, NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859

Michel Francois, a blacksmith who lived towards the end of the XVII century, addressed the warden of Provence, telling him that he had seen a “shadow” which had ordered him to reveal to King Louis XIV certain things considered most important and secretive. He was sent to the court in April 1697. Some say that he spoke with the King; others say that the King refused to see him. What is certain though is that instead of sending him to prison he was given money for the journey, and was exempt of the *tailles*<sup>35</sup> and other royal taxes.

1. Evocation
  - Here I am.
2. How did you know that we wanted to speak with you?
  - How can you ask such a question? Aren't you aware that you are surrounded by spirits who send for those who you want to talk to?
3. Where were you when we called you?
  - In space since I am still errant.
4. Are you surprised by the fact that you are among living persons?
  - Absolutely. I find myself many times among living persons.
5. Do you remember your existence in 1697, at the time of Louis XIV, when you were a blacksmith?
  - In a very confusing way.
6. Do you remember the revelation you had to make to the King?
  - I remember that I had a revelation to make.
7. Did you make it?
  - Yes.
8. You told him that you had seen a “shadow” that had appeared to you, commanding you to make certain revelations to the King. Who was that shadow?
  - His brother.
9. Do you want to tell his name?
  - No. You understand.
10. Was he the man designated by the name of Iron Mask?
  - Yes.

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35 A kind of toll charged in those days (NT)

## The Spiritist Review 1859

11. Now that we are far away from those days, could you tell us what was the objective of that revelation?
  - It was to inform him about his death.
12. Whose death? His brother's?
  - Of course.
13. Which impression did your revelation have on the King?
  - A mix of sadness and satisfaction. As a matter of fact, it was demonstrated by the way I was treated.
14. How did he treat you?
  - With benevolence and kindness.
15. They say that a similar thing happened to Louis XVIII. Do you know if that is true?
  - I believe there was something similar but I am not well informed.
16. Why have that spirit chosen you for such a mission, considering that you were someone obscure, instead of selecting a character from the court, who could more easily approach the King?
  - I was found in his path, endowed by the faculty which he needed, and also because someone from the court would not be able to make them believe in the revelation. They would have thought that the information had come through other means.
17. What was the objective of that revelation, considering that the King would necessarily be informed about his brother's death, before knowing it from you?
  - It was to make him think about the future life and about the fate to which he was exposed. His end was stained by actions with which he supposed to ensure a future made better by such revelation.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Spontaneous Communications at the Society

Vincent de Paul

SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – MEDIUM MR. R.

Love one another - that is the whole Divine law, through which God creates incessantly, governing the worlds. Love is the law of attraction to the living and organized beings. Attraction is the law of love to the inorganic matter.

Don't you ever forget that the spirit, whatever its level of advancement and situation, be it in an incarnation or in erraticity, the spirit is always placed between a superior who guides and improves it, and an inferior to whom it has the same duties to be accomplished.

Thus, be charitable, not only the charity which makes you take the mites from your pocket, indifferently given to the daring beggar, but go and look for the hidden miseries.

Be indulgent to the faults of your fellow human beings. Instead of neglecting ignorance and vice, educate and do moralize them. Be meek, even before the lowermost creatures, and you will have obeyed God's law.

Vincent de Paul

OBSERVATION: The spirits who are considered saints by human beings don't generally present themselves as such. Thus, St. Vincent de Paul signs simply Vincent de Paul; St. Louis signs Louis. On the contrary, those who usurp names and qualities which are not theirs, very commonly exhibit false titles, no doubt thinking that they can impose themselves more easily. However, such a mask cannot deceive whoever takes the burden of studying their language. The really superior spirits have a language whose character cannot be mistaken.

NOVEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – MEDIUM MR. R.

Union is strength. Be united and you will be strong. Spiritism has germinated; it has sowed profound roots; it will stretch its beneficent branches over the whole planet. You must become invulnerable to the darts of calumny and the dark phalanx of the ignorant, selfish and hypocritical. To get there may your relationships be presided by a reciprocal indulgence and benevolence! May your faults go unnoticed and only your virtues be noted. May the torch of the sanctified friendship unite, enlighten and warm your hearts. Thus, you will resist the impotent attacks of evil, like the unbreakable rock before the furious wave.

Vincent de Paul

SEPTEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1859 – MEDIUM MR. R.

Up until now the war has not been seen but from its material side: intestine wars, wars of people against people. You have seen in wars no more than conquests, slavery, blood, death, ruins. It is now time to consider them from a moralizing and progressive standpoint.

## **The Spiritist Review 1859**

War sows death and ideas along its path. Ideas blossom and grow. After the temper of the spiritual life, the spirit comes to fructify them. Hence, do not curse the diplomat who prepared the fight, nor the captain who led his troops to victory.

There are great fights in preparation. These are fights of good against evil, darkness against light, the spirit of progress against the stagnant ignorance. Patiently wait since your curses or praises may not change God's will. God will always know how to maintain or to keep away from the theater of the events God's instruments, according to the accomplishment or abuse of their missions, serving their personal interests by the power acquired through their successes.

You have the example of the modern Cesar and mine. I had to atone my faults through several miserable and obscure existences, and the last time I lived on Earth it was by the name of Louis IX.

Julio Cesar

### **The boy and the creek (parable)**

NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – MEDIUM MR. DID...

One day a boy came close to a creek that ran so fast that it almost had the impetuosity of a torrent. The water ran from a neighboring hill, widening as it moved through the plains. The boy examined the flow, and then he collected all sorts of stones that he could carry in his little arms. He had the blind presumption of building a levee.

Despite his efforts and his childish rage, he did not succeed.

He then gave more serious thoughts to the matter, if this can be said of a child; he moved to the higher grounds, abandoning his first attempt and wanting to build the levee near the very source of the creek. But ah! His efforts were still insufficient. He got discouraged and left crying.

It was the beautiful season still and the creek was not as fast as in the winter. It grew stronger and the boy saw that: the water ran its course in a greater furor, everything knocked down in its path, and even the unhappy boy would have been dragged along by the waters, had he gotten as close as before.

Oh! Weak man! Oh child! You who wish to build a dam, an unsurpassable obstacle to the march of truth, you are not stronger than that child and your childish will is not stronger than his little arms.

Even if you wish to knock it down at its source, truth will certainly and inevitably drag you over.

Basil

### **The three blinds (parable)**

SEPTEMBER 7<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – MEDIUM MR. DID...

A wealthy and generous man, a rare thing, found three unfortunate blind men in his way, exhausted by hunger and fatigue. He offered a golden coin to each one. The first one, blind since birth, acrimonious for his misery, did not even open his hand. He had never seen, he said, someone giving a golden coin to a blind person. That was impossible.

The second one mechanically extended his hand but he soon repelled the offer that was made. Like his friend, he thought it was an illusion or a bad taste joke. In short, the coin was also false to him.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

The third one, on the contrary, full of faith in God and intelligence, who had partially replaced the missing sense by an accurate tactile sensitivity, took the coin, touched it, stood up and praising the benefactor he left to the neighboring town, in order to acquire what was lacking in his life.

People are the blinds. Spiritism is the golden coin. Judge the tree by its fruits.

Luc

### Charles IX

SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – MEDIUM MS. H...

I asked God to allow me to be among you for a short time, to advise you to never get into religious disputes. I will not say religious' fights since the times are now much advanced for that. But this was a general disgrace over the time I lived and I could not avoid it. Fatality dragged me along and I pushed the others, those who I had to pull back. Thus, I had my punishment, in principle on Earth, cruelly atoning my crimes for three centuries.

Be meek and patient towards those who you teach. If they do not want to accept in the beginning, may they do it later, when they see your abnegation and devotement.

My friends, my brothers, it would never be too much to make such a recommendation, for there is nothing more terrible than shattering one another in the name of a clement God; in the name of a saint religion, which does not preach but mercy, goodness and charity! Instead, we kill and crush one another, forcing those who we wish to convert to a good God, as they say. Instead of believing in your words, the survivors promptly leave you, as if you were ferocious animals. Be good, I repeat, and particularly full of tolerance towards those who don't share your beliefs.

Charles IX

1. Would you have the kindness of answering some questions from us?
  - With pleasure.
2. How did you atone your faults?
  - Through remorse.
3. Did you have other corporeal existences, after the one we know about?
  - I had one. I reincarnated as a slave of two Americas. I suffered a lot. That gave me impulse in my purification.
4. What happened to your mother, Catherine de Medici?
  - She suffered also. She is now on another planet where she leads a life of devotement.
5. Could you write the story of your kingdom, as Louis IX, Louis XI and others did?
  - I could in the same way that...
6. Do you want to do that through the same medium that serves you as an interpreter now?
  - Yes, this medium can serve me but I will not start tonight since I did not come for that.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

7. We don't ask you to start today either. We hope you can do it during your breaks and the medium's, since that would be a lengthy task, which requires a certain time. Can we count on your promise?
  - I will do that. So long!

### External Communications Read at the Society

(COMMUNICATION OBTAINED BY MS. P...)

The goodness of the Lord is eternal. God does not wish the death of His dear children. But, oh man! think that it depends on you to speed up God's Kingdom on Earth, as well as to keep it away; that you are responsible for one another; and that improving yourselves you work for the regeneration of humanity. The task is huge; the responsibility weighs over each one and nobody can be excused. Embrace the glorious task you have been assigned by the Lord with ardor, but ask God to send workers to their fields because, as Jesus said, *the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few*.

But behold, we are sent as the workers of your hearts. We sow the good grain into those hearts. Be careful not to smother it. Water it with the tears of repent and joy. Repent for having lived for such a long time in a land cursed by the human wickedness, away from the only true God, adoring the false pleasures of the world, which do not leave on the bottom of the chalice but displeasure and sadness. Joy because the Lord has given you grace; because God wants to speed up the arrival of His beloved children to the paternal heart; because God wants all of you covered by the innocence of the angels, as if you had never been away from Him.

The only one who has shown you the path which will take you to that primitive glory; the only one who you cannot criticize since he has never been wrong in his teachings; the only one fair before God; finally, the only one who you must follow to please God, is Christ. Yes, Christ, your Divine Master, who you have forgotten and neglected for centuries. Love him since he incessantly asks in your favor. He wants to reach out to you.

How? Incredulity still persists! Christ's wonders cannot abate them! All wonders of creation remain impotent before these mocking spirits; over the dust that cannot extend by a single minute their miserable existence! The wise individuals who think to have all secrets of creation don't know where they come from; don't know where they are going to and still deny and challenge everything. Just because they know some of the vulgar laws of the material world, they think they can assess the immaterial world, or even, they say that there is nothing immaterial; that everything must obey those very material laws that they discovered.

But you, Christians! You know that you cannot deny our intervention without denying Christ at the same time; without denying the whole Bible since there isn't a single page where you cannot find traces of the visible world in communication with the invisible.

Now then! Tell me! Are you or are you not Christians?

REMBRAND

(ANOTHER, OBTAINED BY MR. PÊC...)

Every person has inside what you call an inner voice. It is what the spirit calls conscience, a strict judge who presides over all actions of our lives. When man is alone he listens to that conscience and balances things out in their fair value. He frequently feels ashamed of himself, acknowledging God at that time, but ignorance, a fatal counselor, impels him, tightening up his mask of pride. He shows up plentiful of vacuity, trying to deceive you by his uprightness.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

But the righteous person does not hold a proud head. He listens, taking advantage of the wise man's word. He feels that he is nothing but that God is everything. He endeavors to get educated in the book of nature. He elevates his spirit, expelling from his heart the material passions, which frequently pervert you.

A passion that drags you is a dangerous guide. Keep that in mind, my friend. Let the skeptical laugh, since his laughter will disappear. Man becomes a believer at his last moment. He then thinks of God for He is the one who never deceives. Remember that there is only one path that leads to Him: faith and love to your fellow human beings.

A family member

# The Spiritist Review 1859

## December 1859 A Former Drayman

The excellent medium, Mr. V..., is a young man generally distinguished by the purity of his relationships with the spiritual world. However, since he moved in to the rooms that he currently occupies, an inferior spirit meddles into his communications, interposing even onto his personal affairs.

As he was at Mr. Allan Kardec's house in the evening of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1859 with whom he was supposed to work, he was then blocked by that spirit who made him sketch incoherent things or totally precluded him from writing. Mr. Allan Kardec then addressed the spirit with whom he kept the following conversation:

1. Why do you come here uninvited?
  - I want to torment him.
2. Who are you? Tell us your name.
  - I will not tell.
3. What is your objective, meddling with something that is none of your business? It doesn't do you any good.
  - No, but I prevent him from obtaining good communications, and I know that it hurts him a lot.
4. Since you take pleasure out of evil things, you are a bad spirit. In the name of God I command you to leave, allowing us to work in peace.
  - Do you really think that you scare me with that strong voice?
5. If you are not scared of me you certainly are of God in whose name I speak and who can make you regret your bad actions.
  - Let us not be upset bourgeois.
6. I repeat that you are a bad spirit and once more I ask you not to preclude us from working.
  - I am what I am, it is my nature.

A superior spirit was called and asked to keep the intruder away so that the work was not interrupted; the bad spirit probably left because there was no other interruption during the remainder of the evening.

The superior spirit was questioned about the nature of that spirit, responding:

This inferior spirit is a former drayman, deceased near the medium's house. He chose the medium's room as his own, thus obsessing and tormenting him since long ago. Now that he knows that the medium must change house, following the orders of the superior spirits, he is tormented more than ever. It is another proof that the spirit does not write about something that is in his mind. You may then see that there are good things, even in the most unpleasant circumstances of life. God reveals his power through all possible means.

1. What was the character of this man, when alive?
  - He showed everything closest to the animal life. I believe that his horses had more intelligence and feelings than he did.
2. How can Mr. V... stay away from him?



## The Spiritist Review 1859

- There are two ways: the spiritual, asking for God's help; the material means, leaving the house where he lives.
- 3. Then there are really certain places haunted by the spirits?
  - Yes, spirits who are still under the influence of matter remain attached to certain places.
- 4. Can the spirits who haunt certain places make them fatally dismal, or adequate to the persons who inhabit them?
  - Who could preclude them? The dead exert influence as spirits; the living ones, as people.
- 5. Someone who was not a medium, who had never heard about the spirits and did not even believe in them, could that person suffer such an influence and be a victim of embarrassment by such spirits?
  - Undoubtedly. This happens more often than you think and explains many things.
- 6. Is there any truth in the belief that the spirits preferably inhabit ruins and abandoned houses?
  - Superstition.
- 7. The spirits will then haunt a house at the *Rue de Rivoli* in the same way that they would do to an old shack?
  - Certainly. They may be attracted to one or the other pending on the spiritual disposition of their inhabitants.

Having been evoked at the Society, the spirit of the drayman mentioned above manifested through Mr. R... by violent signs, breaking pencils, sticking them onto the paper, and by a gross, trembled, irregular and almost unreadable writing.

1. Evocation  
I am here.
2. Do you acknowledge God's power over you?  
Yes, so?
3. Why have you chosen Mr. V... bedroom and not another one?  
Because it pleases me.
4. Are you going to stay there long?  
For as long as it pleases me.
5. You don't wish to improve then?  
Will see. I have time.
6. Are you upset because we called you?  
Yes.
7. What were you doing when we called you?  
I was in the tavern.
8. You were drinking then?  
How silly! How can I drink?
9. Then, what did you mean when you said that you were in the tavern?  
I meant what I said.
10. When alive, did you mistreat your horses?  
Are you with the local police?

## The Spiritist Review 1859

11. Would you like us to pray for you?  
Would you do that?

12. Certainly. We pray for all those who suffer for we have compassion for the unfortunate and we know that God's mercy is great.  
Oh! Well, you are good people. I wish I could shake hands with you. I will try to deserve it.  
Thank you.

OBSERVATION: This conversation confirms what experience has already demonstrated many times, relatively to the influence that people may exert over the spirits, and through which they contribute to their improvement. It shows the influence of prayer.

Thus, such brute and almost untamable nature is like tamed by the thought of interest that we may show. We have numerous examples of criminals who spontaneously came to communicate with mediums who had prayed for them, giving their testimony of regret.

We will add to the observations above the following considerations, with respect to the evocation of the inferior spirits:

We have seen mediums, fairly aware of the need to keep their good relationships with beyond the grave, refusing to operate as interpreters of the inferior spirits that can be evoked. It is a misunderstood susceptibility on their side. By the fact that we evoke a vulgar spirit, and even a bad one, we will not remain under their influence. Far from that, and to the contrary, we are the ones who will dominate them. It is not like in the obsessions when they impose themselves, against our wishes. We are the ones who impose. He does not command, but obey. We are their judges and not their prey. Furthermore, we can be useful to them through our advices and prayers and they appreciate the interest that we demonstrate towards them. Reaching out to them is the practice of a good deed. Refusing to do so is lack of charity; even more, it is pride and selfishness. As a matter of fact, these inferior creatures provide us with a great teaching. It was through them that we got to know the inferior layers of the spiritual world and the fate that awaits anyone who employs their lives badly.

Let us notice, in addition, that it is almost always trembling that they come to our serious gatherings, where the good spirits dominate. They are ashamed, remaining at a distance, listening in order to be instructed. They frequently come uninvited with that objective.

Why would we then refuse to listen to them, when their regret and suffering constitute reason for edification or, at least, enlightenment?

There is nothing to fear from those communications, as long as aiming at the good. What would become of the poor injured if the doctors refused to touch their ulcers?

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>, 1859

(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes of the September 23<sup>rd</sup> session.

Introduction of Mr. S..., businessman, Knight of the Legion of Honor, as a regular member.  
Postponement of his admission to the next private session.

Multiple communications:

1<sup>st</sup> – reading of a spontaneous communication given to Mr. R... by the spirit of Dr. Olivier. This communication is remarkable for two aspects: the moral betterment of the spirit that even more recognizes the mistake of his worldly opinions and now understands his position; and in second place, the fact that his next reincarnation, whose effects he starts to feel through some perturbation, confirming the theory given about the occurrence of such phenomenon, and the phase which precedes the reincarnation as such. That perturbation, consequence of the fluidic link which begins to be established between the spirit and the body which must be animated by him, that perturbation makes the communication more difficult than in the state of complete freedom of the spirit. The medium writes more slowly, feeling his hand heavy. The spirits ideas are less clear. The perturbation, which gradually increases from conception to birth, is completed as the latter phase approaches, and does not dissipate but gradually, sometime later. It will be published with the other communications of the same spirit.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Story about the physical manifestation occurring lately in Paris, in a house of the Saint Germain neighborhood, reported by Mr. A... A piano was heard for several consecutive days, without anybody playing it. All precautions were taken to ensure that the fact was not produced by any accidental cause. Once questioned, a priest thought that it could be a lost soul claiming assistance and willing to communicate.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Assassination committed by a seven and a half year old boy, with premeditation and all aggravating circumstances. It was reported by several newspapers, demonstrating that the murderer instinct in that boy could not have been developed by education or his environment, not been able to be explained but by a state prior to the current existence.

The spirit of St. Louis was questioned about it, indicating that the spirit of the boy is close to the beginning of the human phase. He has no more than two incarnations on Earth. Before his latest incarnation he belonged to the most native maritime tribes. He wanted to be born in a more advanced world, in the hopes of progress.

When asked if education could change such a nature, St. Louis responded: “It is difficult, but possible. It would be necessary to take great precautions; surround him by good influences; develop his reason, but I am afraid the opposite happens.”

4<sup>th</sup> – Reading of the works of a young lady that begins to work as a mechanical medium. The verses were not inedited but authored by a poet who died a few years back. The level of education of the medium that wrote a large number of poems of that kind does not allow for the supposition that it is a product of her

## The Spiritist Review 1859

memory. Hence the conclusion was that the spirit brought his own productions, which were strange to the medium.

Several similar facts demonstrate that it is possible, among others the medium from the Society to whom a spirit dictated a passage written by Mr. Allan Kardec who had not yet shown it to anybody.

*Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Evocation of the black man who served as food to his companions in the shipwreck of the *Le Constant*.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Several questions and moral problems addressed to St. Louis about the preceding fact. A discuss was established about it among several members of the Society.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Three spontaneous communications were simultaneously obtained, by three different mediums: the first by Mr. R..., signed by St. Vincent de Paul; the second, by Mr. Ch..., signed by Privat d'Anglemont; the third, by Ms. H..., signed by Charles IX.

4<sup>th</sup> – Several questions addressed to Charles IX. He promises to write the story of his kingdom, following the example of Louis XI.

(These multiple communications are published).

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7<sup>th</sup>, 1859  
(PRIVATE SESSION)

Reading of the minutes of the works of the September 30<sup>th</sup> session.

Introductions and admissions:

Ms. S... and Mr. Conde de R..., navy officer, introduced as candidates to the title of regular members.

Admission of the five candidates introduced on the September 23<sup>rd</sup> session and Ms. S...

Mr. President observed, with respect to the new introduced members, that it is very important to the Society to be assured of their dispositions. It is not enough, he says, that they are adepts of Spiritism in general. It is necessary that they agree with Spiritism's viewpoint. The homogeneity of principles is a condition without which any Society could not persist. Therefore it is necessary to know the candidate's opinion so that elements of idle discussions are not allowed, which would lead to waste of time and degenerating into possible dissensions.

In no way the Society aims at an indefinite number of members. Before anything the Society aims at carrying out its duties with calm and reverence. That is why it must avoid any cause of perturbation.

Since its objective is the study of the Science, it is evident that everyone is perfectly free to discuss the controversial points, issuing their personal opinion. Another thing, however, is to give advice and arrive with systematic and preconceived ideas, in opposition to the fundamental foundations.

We gather for the study and observation and not to transform our sessions into an arena of controversies. As a matter of fact, with respect to these points we must refer to the advices we were given on several occasions by the spirits who assist us and incessantly recommend union as the essential condition for us to reach the proposed objective and obtain their support. "Union is strength", they say. Be united and you will be strong. Otherwise you take the risk of attracting frivolous spirits who will deceive you." That is why it is never too much the attention given to the persons introduced in our environment.

Designation of three new commissaries for the three next general sessions.

Several communications:

1<sup>st</sup> – Mr. Tug transmits a note about a curious fact told by Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer in the report of her trip to Java.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

2<sup>nd</sup> – Mr. Pêch... reports a personal case of spontaneous communication with the spirit of a washwoman who had the worst character. Her feelings did not change as a spirit as she continues to show a truly cynical evilness. However, the wise advices of the medium seem to exert a beneficial influence on her for her ideas change noticeably.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Mr. R... presents a piece of paper in which he received direct writing, spontaneously produced at night in his house, after having unsuccessfully asked for it during the day. As a matter of fact the paper contains only two words: God, Fénelon.

### *Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Evocation of Mrs. Ida Pfeiffer, celebrated traveler.

2<sup>nd</sup> – The three blinds, parable of St. Luke, given in a spontaneous communication.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Mr. L. G... writes from St. Petersburg saying that he is an intuitive medium and requesting the Society to obtain from a superior spirit some advices about him, in order to clarify him with respect to the nature and scope of his faculty, so that he can be guided by them. A spirit, spontaneously and without any previous questions, gives the advices that will be transmitted to Mr. G...

Mr. President informs that on request of several members who live far away, the sessions will from now on start at 8 o'clock, so that they can be finished earlier.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14<sup>th</sup> 1859  
(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes of the October 7<sup>th</sup> Session.

### *Introductions:*

Mr. A..., book seller, and Mr. de la R..., owner, are introduced as regular members. Admission postponed to the next session.

Mr. J..., income tax auditor from the Department Alto Reno, is introduced and admitted as a corresponding member.

### *Multiple Communications:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Mr. Col... discloses an excerpt from the book entitled "Ciel et Terre", by Mr. Jean Raynaud, in which the author issues ideas entirely in agreement with Spiritism and with what has recently said by a spirit about the future of France.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Count R... informs about a spontaneous communication from Savonarola, a Dominican monk, obtained in a private session. The communication is remarkable because that person, although unknown to the audience, had precisely indicated the time of his death in 1498, his age and tortures. The evocation of that spirit was considered to be instructive.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Explanation given by a spirit to Mr. P... about the role of the mediums; Mr. P... is a former Rector of the Academy and also medium. To communicate with each other the spirits do not need the word. Thought is enough to them. When willing to communicate with people they must translate their thoughts through human symbols, that is, in words. They take these words from the medium's vocabulary that they somehow use as a dictionary. That is why it is easier for the spirit to communicate in the language familiar to the medium, even being able to do it in a language unknown to the medium. However, the work would be harder, and that is why it is avoided when not needed.

4<sup>th</sup> – A fact reported by the same spirit who watches his own funeral and, for not considering himself dead, did not think that the funeral was related to him. He said: It was not me who died. Later, when he

## The Spiritist Review 1859

saw his relatives, he added: I start to believe that you might be right and it is well possible that I no longer belong to this world, but I am indifferent to that.

5<sup>th</sup> – Mr. S... reports a remarkable fact of warning from beyond the grave, reported by the *La Patrie* on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1858.

6<sup>th</sup> – Letter from Mr. Bl...de La... who, taking into account what he read in the Review about the phenomenon of separation of the soul during the sleep, asks if the Society could kindly evoke him one day, together with his daughter who died two years ago, so that he could establish with her, as a spirit, a conversation which he could not have yet as a medium.

*Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Evocation of Savonarola, proposed by Count de R...

2<sup>nd</sup> – Two spontaneous communications, obtained simultaneously, from Mr. Bl... de La... (living) and his deceased daughter, who died two years ago. This is a conversation between father and daughter.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Two spontaneous communications obtained simultaneously, first from St. Louis, by Mr. L..., and the second from Ms. Clary, by her brother.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21<sup>st</sup>, 1859

(PRIVATE SESSION)

Reading of the minutes of the October 14<sup>th</sup> session.

*Introductions and admissions:*

Mr. Lem..., a businessman, and Mr. Pâq..., doctor in law, were introduced as regular members. Ms. H... was introduced as honorary member for her contribution to the Society as a medium, promising to give even more in the future.

Admission of the two candidates introduced on the October 14<sup>th</sup> session and Ms. H...

Mr. S... proposed that in the future those willing to take part into the Society request that in writing and that a copy of the regulations be sent to them.

Reading of a letter from Mr. Th..., who makes a similar proposal, motivated by the need of only admission of persons already initiated in the objective of its works and who profess the same principles. He thinks that a written request with the signature of two referees is a greater assurance about the serious intention of the candidates than a simple verbal request.

The proposal was unanimously adopted, under the following terms:

*Every person who wishes to join the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies must make a written request to the President. Such request must be signed by two referees and report: 1<sup>st</sup> – that the candidate is aware of the regulations and is committed to abide by them; 2<sup>nd</sup> – the books about Spiritism which were read and the adhesion to the principles of the Society which are those of *The Spirits' Book*.*

Mr. President points out the inadequate behavior of two attendees admitted to the last general session, which bothered their neighbors tranquility by their conversation and improper words. With that respect he reminds the articles of the regulations regarding observers, and again invites the members of the Society to an excessive reservation with people's choices to whom admission cards are given, and particularly to absolutely avoid giving those cards to persons who are attracted by simple curiosity and also to those who, not having any previous knowledge of Spiritism, are incapable of understanding what is done at the Society. The sessions of the Society are not a spectacle. They must be attended with reverence. Those who only seek distractions must not come to find it in a serious meeting.

Mr. Th... proposes the nomination of a commission of two members, to be in charge of examining the matter of entry given to strange persons and also propose the necessary measures so as to avoid the repletion of abuse. Mr. Th... and Mr. Col... were designated to form that commission.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

### *Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Moral problems and several questions addressed to St. Louis

2<sup>nd</sup> – Mr. R... proposes the evocation of his father, from considerations of general utility and not private, presuming that some teaching may result from that.

St. Louis was interrogated about the possibility of such evocation, responding: “You can perfectly do that. However, I would observe, my friends, that such evocation would require a great tranquility of spirit. You have discussed administrative businesses at length tonight. I find it adequate to postpone it to another session since it can be very instructive.”

3<sup>rd</sup> – Mr. Leid... proposes the evocation of one of his friends who was a priest. Once questioned about it St. Louis says: “No because time is short, to begin with. Second, as a spiritual president of the Society, I don’t see any motive of instruction in such evocation. It would be preferable to make that evocation in private.”

Mr. S... requests that the title Spiritual President be mentioned in the minutes, which St. Louis gladly accepted.

(FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28<sup>th</sup>, 1859)

(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes from the October 21<sup>st</sup> session.

Introduction of five new candidates to become regular members, as follows: Mr. N..., businessman from Paris; Mrs. Emilie N..., wife of the preceding; Mrs. G..., widow from Paris; Ms. de P..., from Stockholm; Ms. L... from Stockholm.

Reading of the articles of the regulations about the observers and some news for the instruction of those persons strange to the Society, so that they may make no mistake with respect to the objective of the works.

### *Communications:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Reading of an article by Mr. Oscar Comettant about the world of the spirits, published in *Le Siècle* on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Refusal of certain passages of the article.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Reading of an article from a new newspaper entitled *Girouette*, published in Saint Etienne. The article was written with benevolence towards Spiritism.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Offer of four poems by Mr. de Porry from Marseille, author of *Uranie*, from which some fragments were read. These are: *La Captive Chrétienne*, *Les Bohémiens*, *Poltawa* and *Le Prisonnier de Caucase*. Thanks will be sent to Mr. de Porry. The works will be stored in the Society’s library.

4<sup>th</sup> – Reading of a letter from Mr. Det..., regular member, containing several observations about the role of the mediums, referring to the theory exposed during session of October 14<sup>th</sup>, about which the spirit would take his words from the medium’s vocabulary. He combats such theory, at least from an absolute standpoint, due to facts which contradict it. He requests that the issue be carefully examined. It will be included in the minutes.

5<sup>th</sup> – Reading of an article from *Revue Française*, from April 1858, page 416, in which a conversation of Beranger is reported, indicating that his opinions when alive were favorable to the spiritist ideas.

6<sup>th</sup> – Mr. President transmit Mrs. B... farewell to the Society, a regular member who left to Havana.

### *Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Proposal to evoke Mrs. Br... who has left to Havana and is sailing, so that we can obtain news.

St. Louis was enquired about it, responding: Her spirit is very worried tonight for the winds blow violently (this happened during the storms reported by the newspapers) and the instinct of conservation

## The Spiritist Review 1859

takes over her thoughts. At this point the danger is not great, but couldn't that become great? Only God knows.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Evocation of Mr. R... father, proposed on the October 21<sup>st</sup> session. As a result of this evocation it turned out that a horse rider from R..., his uncle, from whom nobody heard for fifty years, was not dead. He was living in an island, in the Meridional Oceania, where he had grown accustomed to the native customs and cultures. Because of this, he could not have sent news. It will be published.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Evocation of the King of Kanala, New Caledonia, deceased on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1858. The evocation reveals that he is a spirit of relative superiority, presenting a remarkable characteristic of great difficulty in writing, despite the medium's aptitude. He informs that his writing will improve with habit, which is confirmed by St. Louis.

4<sup>th</sup> – Evocation of *Mercure Jean*, adventurer, who appeared in Lyon in 1478 and was introduced to Louis XI. He offers clarification regarding the supernatural faculties that he supposedly had, giving curious indications about the world in which he lives now. It will be published.

(FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup>, 1859)

(PRIVATE SESSION)

Reading of the minutes from the October 28<sup>th</sup> session.

Admission of seven candidates introduced in the last two sessions.

Project presented by the commission in charge of studying the measures to be adopted for the admission of observers.

After a discussion involving several members, it was decided that the proposition be postponed and that the items of the regulations be temporarily obeyed. The members are invited to a rigorous obedience to the items that regulate the admission of observers and to absolutely abstain from giving admission cards to persons who are only curious and have no previous knowledge of the Spiritist Science.

The Society then adopts the following two measures:

1<sup>st</sup> – The observers will not be admitted to the sessions after 8:15 pm. The admission cards will state that.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Annually, at the beginning of the social year, the honorary members will be submitted to a new admission vote, so as to eliminate those who no longer show the required conditions, and that the Society decides that they should not be maintained.

The Society Treasurer presents the bi-annual balance from April 1<sup>st</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup>, as well as the demonstration of expenses. From the balance it is observed that the Society has sufficient funds to face its needs. The Society approves the balance and issues its favorable assessment.

*Multiple Communications:*

Letter from Mr. Bl...de La... responding to our own letter about the evocation of his daughter and his own. It attests a fact that confirms one of the circumstances of the evocation.

Letter from Mr. Dumas, from Setif, Algeria, regular member, sending to the Society a certain number of communications that he had received.

*Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Mr. P... and Mr. de R... call the attention to a new version about the shipwreck of the *Le Constant*, published in the *Le Siècle*. It shows that the black man killed to be eaten had not voluntarily offered for that to happen, as shown in the first report. Thus, there would be a contradiction with the words of the spirit of the black man. Mr. Col... sees no contradiction since the merit attributed to the man was confirmed by St. Louis and the man did not even take advantage of this.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Examination of a question proposed by Mr. Les..., about the surprise of the spirits after death. He thinks that since the spirit has already lived the condition of spirit, he should not be surprised. He is



## The Spiritist Review 1859

answered that the surprise is only temporary; which depends on the state of perturbation that follows death and ceases as the spirit detaches from matter, recovering the faculties of spirit.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Question about the lucid somnambulists, who confuse the spirits with the corporeal beings. The fact is confirmed and explained by St. Louis.

4<sup>th</sup> – Evocation of Urbain Grandier. As the answers are too laconic because of the medium's lack of experience, the spirit said that he would be more explicit through another interpreter. For that reason the evocation was transferred to another session.

(FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859)

(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes from the November 4<sup>th</sup> session.

Introduction of Mr. Pierre D..., sculptor from Paris, as a regular member.

*Multiple Communications:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Letter from Mr. de T..., containing very interesting facts about visual and oral manifestations which confirm the state of certain spirits who doubt their deaths. One of the referred cases offers the particularity that the spirit was still under the illusion three months after his death. This description will be published.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Facts of remarkable precision indicated by Mr. Van Br... from The Hague, of personal character. He had never heard about the spirits and their communication when, by chance and unexpectedly, he was led to a spiritist session in Dordrecht. The communications obtained in his presence were so much surprising to him as he was a stranger to that town and unknown to the members of the meeting.

He was told about his person, his position and his family, and several particularities that he was the only one to know about.

Having evoked his mother and asked, as proof of identity, if she had had many children, she answered: "Don't you know, my son, that I had eleven children?" And the spirit designated them all by their first names and date of birth.

Since then this gentleman is a strong expert and his daughter, a fourteen-year-old young lady, became a good medium, but her mediumship presents bizarre features. On most occasions she writes backwards, so that it is necessary to place the paper before a mirror in order to read what she writes. Many times, also, the table on which she writes inclines, like a drawing board, remaining in that position, balanced and without support, until she finishes.

Mr. Van Br... reports another remarkable fact of precision from a spirit that communicates spontaneously with him, by the name of Dirkse Lammers, who had hanged himself at the very place where he gave communications, under circumstances whose accuracy were confirmed.

This fact will be reported as well as the evocation that followed.

*Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Examination of a question made by Mr. Det... about the source from which the spirits get their vocabulary.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Question about the obsession of certain mediums.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Evocation of Michel Francois, the blacksmith who made a revelation to Louis XIV.

4<sup>th</sup> – Evocation of Dirkse Lammers, whose story was told before.

5<sup>th</sup> – Three spontaneous communications were obtained simultaneously. The first by Mr. R..., signed by Lamennais; the second by Mr. D...: The boy and the creek, a parable signed by St. Basil; the third one by Ms. L. J..., signed by Origen.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

6<sup>th</sup> – Ms. J..., drawing medium, spontaneously draw an admirable set of pictures, signed by the spirit of Lebrun.

All questions and communications above will be published.

(FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>, 1859)

(PRIVATE SESSION)

Reading of the minutes from the November 11<sup>th</sup> session.

Admission of Mr. Pierre D..., introduced in the last session.

### *Multiple Communications:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Reading of a spontaneous communication obtained by Mr. P..., member of the Society, dictated by the spirit of his daughter.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Details about Ms. Désiré Godu, from Hennebont, Morbihan, endowed by a remarkable mediumistic faculty. She went through all phases of mediumship. In the beginning she had the most extraordinary physical manifestations; she then became successively hearing, speaking, clairvoyant and writing medium. Today all her faculties are concentrated on the healing of illnesses that she treats following the spirits' advices. She realizes cures that would be considered miracle in former times.

The spirits announce that her faculty will develop even further. She starts to see the internal diseases through her second vision, without the somnambulistic state.

We will give more information about this notable subject in due course.

### *Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Question about Ms. Godu's faculty.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Evocation of Lamettrie.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Four communications obtained simultaneously, first by Mr. R..., signed by St. Vincent de Paul; second by Sr. Col..., signed by Plato; third by Mr. D... son, signed by Lamennais; the fourth one by Ms. H..., signed by Margaret, called Queen Margot.

(FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25<sup>th</sup>, 1859)

(GENERAL SESSION)

Reading of the minutes from the November 18<sup>th</sup> session.

### *Multiple Communications:*

Dr. Morhery gives the Society a brochure entitled *Système pratique d'organisation agricole*. Although such publication is about a subject strange to the works of the Society, it will be taken to the library and acknowledgements sent to the author.

Letter from Mr. T..., complementing information about visions and apparitions reported by him in the session of November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Letter from Count de R..., regular member, absent due to a health issue, offering to be at the Society's service so that the Society may carry out all experiments with him considered adequate, regarding the evocation of living persons.

### *Studies:*

1<sup>st</sup> – Evocation of Jardin, deceased in Nevers, who had kept the remains of his wife in a praying stool. It will be published.

## The Spiritist Review 1859

3<sup>rd</sup> – Evocation of Count de R<sup>36</sup>... This evocation has a remarkable importance by the extension of the given developments, with a perfect precision and clarity of ideas, casting a great light onto the state of the spirit separated from the body, resolving numerous psychological problems. It will be published in the January 1860 issue of the Review.

4<sup>th</sup> – Four communications obtained spontaneously, as: first, from a suffering soul, by Ms. B...; second, from the Spirit of Truth, by Mr. R...; the third from Paul, the apostle, by Mr. Col... This communication is signed in Greek. The fourth by Mr. D... son, signed by Charlet, the painter, announcing a series of communications that form a whole.

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36 Number 2 was omitted in the original.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## The Convulsionaries of Saint Médard (cont.)

(Continuation – see the November issue of the Review)

1. (To St. Vincent de Paul) – In our last session we evoked Deacon Pâris, who kindly came to us. We would like to have your personal opinion about him, as a spirit.
  - He is a spirit full of good intentions, however, more elevated morally than in other aspects.
2. Was he really oblivious, as said, to what happened by his tomb?
  - Completely.
3. Could you tell us how do you see what happened to the convulsionaries. Was it good or bad?
  - It was bad before any good. It is easy to attest it by the general impression produced by such events onto the enlightened contemporaries and their successors.
4. Pâris' answer to the following question did not seem satisfactory to us. What is your opinion?  
Question: *Had the authorities more power than the spirits then?*
  - His answer was more or less true. The facts were produced by inferior spirits and the authority stopped that by banning the promoters of that kind of dissolution.
5. Among the convulsionaries there were some who were submitted to terrible tortures. What was the result of that over the spirits, after their deaths?
  - Almost none. There was no merit in those acts without a useful result.
6. Those who were tortured seemed insensitive to pain. Were they just resigned or really insensitive?
  - Complete insensitivity.
7. What was the cause of such insensitivity?
  - A magnetic effect.
8. Couldn't moral superiority, when taken to a certain degree, annihilate their physical sensitivity?
  - That happened to some of them, predisposing them to suffer the influence of a state that had been artificially provoked in others, since charlatanism had an important role in those strange facts.
9. Once those spirits operated cures, they did a service. Then, how could they be of an inferior order?
  - Don't you see that every day? Don't you sometimes receive excellent advices and useful teachings from spirits who are not much elevated, even frivolous? Can't they try to do something good in the end, seeking a moral improvement?
10. We thank you for the explanations that you have kindly given us.
  - Always yours.

# The Spiritist Review 1859

December 1859

## Spiritist Axioms and Select Thoughts

- ✓ The good spirits approve what they think is good but do not praise in excess. Excessive praise, as everything else that indicates adulation, is a sign of inferiority from the part of the spirits.
- ✓ The good spirits do not praise any kind of prejudice, be it political or religious. They may not attack it suddenly since they know it may cause resistance. There is, however, a big difference between such an attitude that we may call oratory precaution and the absolute approval frequently given to the most false ideas, used by the obsessor spirits to gain the trust of those they wish to subjugate, exploring their weaknesses.
- ✓ There are people that show a peculiar behavior: find an idea, perfectly elaborated by someone else; the idea seems good to them, particularly useful; they then take over the idea, assume it as theirs, and finally have the illusion that they are the actual authors, even declaring that the idea was stolen from them.
- ✓ One day a man witnessed an experiment of electricity and tried to reproduce it. Since he did not have the necessary knowledge or the required instrumentation, the experiment failed. Then, not moving further or without trying to establish if the reason for the failure was his own lack of resources, he declared that electricity was inexistent and that he would write an article to demonstrate that. What should we think about the logic of such reasoning? Doesn't it look like the blind person who started writing against light and vision, since he could not see? However, this is the reasoning that we find regarding Spiritism, by someone who goes as a smart person. Be it that such a person may show intelligence but his judgment may be something else. He tries to write as a medium and because he fails he concludes that mediumship does not exist. Well, if mediumship is an illusory faculty in his opinion, then the spirits may only exist in the feeble minds. What sage advice!

ALLAN KARDEC

Note: Starting with the January 1860 issue the Spiritist Review shall enter its third year<sup>37</sup>