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MRS. PIPER, THE MEDIUM.

THE last number of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* contains a statement to the effect that the present writer does not pay 'the slightest attention to psychical research à la English Society;' he 'taboos it throughout, but has never even read the reports and their experiments in telepathy.' If this information were obtained by telepathy it does not increase my confidence in that method of communication. It is exactly the thirteen volumes issued by the Society for Psychical Research that seem to me to prove the trivial character of the evidence for the heterogeneous mass of material taken under the wing of the Society.

The present number of the *Proceedings* seems to me, however, of some interest in that it concludes or continues an account of the séances

of Mrs. Piper, under the title, 'A Further Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance,' on which subject Dr. Richard Hodgson has now contributed over 600 pages. The case of Mrs. Piper is of interest, because Professor James has said :

"If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you musn't seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white. My own white crow is Mrs. Piper. In the trances of this medium, I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes and ears and wits." (SCIENCE, N. S., III., 884.)

It is Professor James who gives dignity and authority to psychical research in America, and if he has selected a crucial case it deserves consideration. The difficulty has been that proving innumerable mediums to be frauds does not disprove the possibility (though it greatly reduces the likelihood) of one medium being genuine. But here we have the 'white crow' selected by Professor James from all the piebald crows exhibited by the Society.

I find, among the great number of names and initials whose séances with Mrs. Piper are reported, five and only five well-known men of science. The following are the concluding sentences of their reports :

These elements of truth were, however, so buried in masses of incoherent matter and positive errors as to matters in which she tried to give information that the sense of her failure on the whole is far stronger with me.

Even as to the fact of her being in a trance at all my impression is not strong, despite the fact that I came fully expecting to be convinced on that point.

My state of mind, therefore, is almost the same that it was before the sitting, *i. e.*, a condition of willing approach to any evidence on either side of the question at issue; I am only disappointed that she did not give me more data for forming a positive opinion. I am fully aware, however, that one such sitting has very little negative weight, considering the variations which this sort of phenomena are subject to.

J. MARK BALDWIN.

I was struck by a sort of insane cunning in the groping of the woman after something intangible.

It did not seem to me that she simulated a trance state. She was apparently, as far as I could judge, in some abnormal condition.

I could not discover that she hit upon anything that was connected with the handkerchief.

JOHN TROWBRIDGE.

Let me say that I have no firm mind about the matter. I am curiously and yet absolutely uninterested in it for the reason that I don't see how I can exclude the hypothesis of fraud, and, until that can be excluded, no advance can be made.

When I took the medium's hand, I had my usual experience with them, a few preposterous compliments concerning the clearness of my understanding, and nothing more.

N. S. SHALER.

Since writing the foregoing, I have gone over the notes in detail, making a memorandum of successes and failures. I am surprised to see how little is true. Nearly every approach to truth is at once vitiated by erroneous additions or developments.

J. M. PEIRCE.

On re-reading your notes I find absolutely nothing of value. None of the incidents are correct, and none of the very vague things hinted at are true, nor have they any kind or sort of relation to my life, nor is there one name correctly given.

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

Truly, "we have piped unto you, but ye have not danced."

J. MCK. C.

SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

A Text-Book of Zoology. By T. JEFFERY PARKER, D.Sc., F.R.S., Professor of Biology in the University of Otago, Dunedin, N. Z., and WILLIAM A. HASWELL, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., Professor of Biology in the University of Sydney, N. S. W. London, Macmillan & Co.; New York, The Macmillan Co. 1897. 8vo. Pp. xxxv + 779 (Vol. I.) + xx + 683 (Vol. II.). Price, \$10.50.

Parker and Haswell's long awaited text-book will be welcomed with pleasure and even with gratitude that so admirable a work has been placed within the reach of teachers and students of zoology, but we cannot repress a feeling of sadness that its gifted senior author did not live to see the fruit of the immense labor that he must have bestowed upon it. It was to be expected that the author of the 'Elementary Biology' and of the 'Zootomy' would produce a work on zoology of high merit. This expectation has not been disappointed and Professors

Parker and Haswell have given us a book which is sure to take and long continue to hold a leading place among manuals of zoology.

The book shows throughout the influence of Parker's long experience as student, teacher and author, in the teaching of elementary biology by the method usually associated with the name of Huxley, whose demonstrator he was between the years 1872 and 1880. Huxley's method was distinguished especially by the prominence given to the 'type' system, by the stress laid upon physiological and morphological considerations as opposed to the *minutiæ* of botanical and zoological classification, and by the effort to treat plants and animals, as far as possible, as only two aspects of one fundamental series of phenomena. It has often been criticised—sometimes justly, sometimes through a misconception of Huxley's theory of biological teaching or a lack of acquaintance with the conditions of its practical application; it has been variously modified to meet special needs and conditions, but there can be no question as to the great stimulus that it gave to biological studies or the vast improvement it has effected in the teaching of botany and zoology in the strict sense.

The precise relation of elementary biology to the subsequent study of zoology or botany has not thus far found very definite expression in the text-books. Parker and Haswell's book is so arranged as to follow naturally after such an elementary course, but despite its bulk it is also skilfully adapted to the needs of the beginner who has not had the advantage of the preparatory work. The book takes its point of departure from a brief account of *Amœba*, which is prefaced to a general introductory study of animal cells, tissues and organs and some of the more important facts of animal physiology. This introduction has wisely been made as brief as possible, and the principal discussion of general questions has been deferred to the end of the book, where will be found excellent chapters on distribution, the 'philosophy' and history of zoology, heredity, evolution and the like. In the systematic treatment of the groups, forming the main body of the book, the type system is consistently followed throughout. While fully aware of the limitations and drawbacks of