DR. CARPENTER AND PSYCHIC FORCE.

MR. ALFRED R. WALLACE, President of the Entomological Society, has favoured us with the following copy of a letter sent to the *Daily Telegraph*, but not published by that journal:—

SIR,—In the report of Dr. Carpenter's lecture at Chelsea (given in your issue of Saturday last), there occurs a passage so extraordinary and so entirely misleading, that I must beg you, in the interests of truth, to allow me to make a few remarks upon it. Dr. Carpenter is stated to have said that he would grapple with Mr. Crookes' "Psychic Force;" and, in attempting to do so, exhibited an experiment intended to show (and which his audience must have believed really did show) that Mr. Crookes was ignorant of the merest rudiments of mechanics, and was deluded by an experiment, the fallacy of which an intelligent schoolboy could have pointed out. Dr. Carpenter, it *is said*, exhibited a glass of water poised against an equal weight upon a balance, and showed, that by dipping a finger in the water—that is, by *pressing* with a force exactly equal to the weight of the water displaced by the immersed finger—you increased the weight on that side of the balance. Now, unless the audience were intended to believe that Mr. Crookes was ignorant of this childishly simple fact; and further, that it completely accounted for the result of his experiment, for what purpose was this experiment shown? Yet if this *is* what it was intended to prove, then it becomes absolutely certain that Dr. Carpenter could never have read Mr. Crookes's account of his experiments given in October last in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* (for he would certainly not wilfully misrepresent the experiment), and was therefore in complete ignorance of what he was attempting to disprove. For, will it be believed, Mr. Crookes expressly states that, "*dipping the hand to the fullest extent into the water does not produce the least appreciable action on the balance*," the reason of which is sufficiently clear, for his woodcut shows, and his description tells us, that the vessel of water was not placed on the scale of a balance at all, but on a board *exactly over its fulcrum* or point of support at one end, while the distant end was suspended from a balance. Yet this balance showed a force of more than *one pound* exerted on it, when Mr. Home merely dipped the tips of the fingers of one hand in the water! Dr. Carpenter is an "eminent man of science" and a fellow of the Royal Society; yet if your reporter has correctly stated his mode of criticising the experiments of another F.R.S., we may be excused for not placing implicit confidence in the "two eminent men of science," who are said by Dr. Carpenter to have reported Mr. Crookes's facts "good for nothing." ALFRED R. WALLACE."

DR. CARPENTER CALLED TO ACCOUNT.

MR. B. COLEMAN has sent us the following correspondence for publication. Mr. Coleman speaks strongly and warmly. It is natural that he who has worked so faithfully, and fought such hard battles on behalf of Spiritualism in the days of its greatest unpopularity, should be annoyed that Dr. Carpenter, at this late hour, cannot bring any rational objections or practical knowledge to bear on a subject, about which he talks so much to the uninformed.

Upper Norwood, Jan. 22, 1872.

W. B. CARPENTER, ESQ., M.D., F.R.S.

SIR,—I venture to intrude upon you for the purpose of saying what you did not give me the opportunity of saying in your presence at Chelsea, on Friday evening last, where I and others had gone to hear a lecture from you, announced as "A Scientific inquiry into the Phenomena of Spiritualism."

After listening for two hours and ten minutes to a discourse on mesmerism and clairvoyance, with old anecdotes, interspersed with a number of scientific axioms which no one disputes, I felt greatly disappointed to find that you hardly touched upon the phenomena of Spiritualism, unless the remarks you made at the close of your discourse on "table turning," and on Mr. Crookes's experiments, in what he calls "psychic force," can be so considered.

I had read the very extraordinary article attributed to your pen in the *Quarterly Review* of October last, and also your acknowledged published lecture upon "Epidemic Delusions," and I had come to Chelsea prepared to answer some of the fallacies to which you have given such free currency. Knowing this, as I have reason to believe, you studiously avoided a repetition of them, and I should not, therefore, have found occasion to say then what I desire to say now, viz.—that the article in the *Quarterly* contains a tissue of false reasoning, false inferences, and assertions, written in a tone of assumed superiority of judgment over all other men, that stamps the writer of it as an egotist.

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You, sir, were reminded during your address on Friday evening, that the experiment you showed to prove Mr. Crookes's unscientific conduct, was not fairly stated. You took no notice of this, but accepted the applause which followed your illustration. I have since made enquiries upon that point, and incredible as it may seem, you are accused of having made a deliberate misstatement to the prejudice of Mr. Crookes.

Let me remind you that on the "common ground" of truth-seekers, all men of character may stand. You cannot play the part of a "free lance" in science, nor fling stones and run away to avoid consequences, with impunity. You *must* justify yourself or fall.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

B. COLEMAN.

University of London, Burlington-gardens, W.
January 23, 1872.

SIR,—As the letter which you have thought proper to address to me leaves me to suppose that you intend to make a public attack upon my character for honesty, I think it worth while to inform you—

1. That I accepted the invitation of the Chelsea Society *on the express condition that there should be no discussion.*

2. That Mr. Gannell having written to me stating your wish to be allowed to speak at the close of my lecture, I told him, *in writing*, that I must adhere to my conditions.

3. That your appearance on the platform, therefore, was a *breach* of the understanding *previously arrived at*, while my departure was *in accordance* with it, as you can ascertain, if you choose, from Mr. Gannell.

4. That so far from having been "labouring" to prejudice Mr. Crookes, at the Royal Society, *I did not even know of his having sent in a second paper, until after it had been rejected by the Council.* This rejection took place on Thursday afternoon, and I heard of it, and the grounds of it, from Professor Stokes and Sir Charles Wheatstone at the evening meeting. What I stated as to Mr. Crookes's experiment with the balance was *on their authority*, as I shall be prepared to prove, if the correctness of that statement is impugned.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, W. B. CARPENTER.

B. Coleman, Esq.

Upper Norwood, Jan. 24, 1872.

DR. W. B. CARPENTER, F.R.S.

SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 23rd inst., and I beg to say if, in any remarks of mine, I have done you injustice, I am ready at once to withdraw them, and to apologise. But let us see how the case stands. You are the writer of the article in the *Quarterly* upon "Spiritualism and its recent converts." Had you confined yourself to a repetition of long exploded theories, you might have enjoyed unchallenged any advantages you could derive in pocket, or in reputation, by such a great trespass upon the credulity of the uninitiated.

But when, to maintain your fallacies and one-sided statements, you step out of your way to depreciate the characters of your co-workers in science who, in special inquiries, have left you far behind, you must expect to be called to sharp account for conduct so unworthy of one holding your position in the scientific world, with the ready ear of the public at your command.

When, too, you go further, and tell men like myself that we are not qualified to judge of plain matters of fact made patent to our senses, because, forsooth, we are deficient in scientific training! you insult our practical common sense, and earn our contempt for your scientific nonsense.

With regard to the meeting at Chelsea, whatever conditions you may have made to avoid a discussion, I was expressly invited to be there, and "no breach of the understanding" was made, as *I did not appear on the platform until you had concluded*, and then only with the consent of the audience, to whom the question was put from the chair.

It appears to me an act of cowardice to go about the country repeating the same fallacies, and closing every avenue to an opponent. Depend upon it, *sir*, you have done too much or too little in this controversy, and that you cannot allow such grievances as you have caused to remain without justifying your conduct, or palliating them.—I am, *sir*, your obedient servant,

B. COLEMAN.

DR. EDMUNDS AND THE DIALECTICAL REPORT.

WE have received from Mr. R. Hannah, of Craven House, Queen's Elm, Brompton, S.W., copies of some very lively and interesting letters which have passed between himself and Dr. James Edmunds, of Fitzroy-square, but we publish only the bare facts of the case, because we cannot spare space for the correspondence which must inevitably flow from the printing of some personalities, which in the letters before us are unusually smart. In letter No. 1, Mr. Hannah quotes the following extract from the letter of Dr. Edmunds in the *Spiritualist*, of January 15th :—"It ought to be known that one of the most reliable and careful members of the committee seceded" (from No. 3 sub-committee) "in consequence of having to make a charge of cheating against one of the persons present at its first meeting." Mr. Hannah said that he held a sort of official position on the sub-committee, that he was ignorant of the circumstance mentioned, so asked Dr. Edmunds for the name of the "careful member." In letter No. 2, Dr. Edmunds gives the name of the member; we will call him "Mr. Dash." In letter No. 3, Mr. Hannah says that Mr. Dash never was a member of the sub-committee, and never attended one of its meetings, therefore must be the wrong man. He wished to know the right one. In letter No. 4, Dr. Edmunds says the circumstance occurred in Mr. "Blank's" committee, which he mistook for committee No. 3, because the numbers of the committees had been altered in the official report. Letters Nos. 5 and 6 contain some amusing personal remarks. In letter No. 7, Mr. Hannah gives the following extract from a letter from Mr. Dash, the "reliable and careful member :"—"What Dr. Edmunds refers to I cannot say, unless to the unfortunate misunderstanding which arose out of the incorrect report of some observations of mine made on my way home after the first and only meeting I attended at Mr. Blank's. I made no accusation of intentional deception. I have great respect for that gentleman, and I am pleased to think his feeling was altered by my explanations." Thus "the reliable and careful member" denies the statement made by Dr. Edmunds. Mr. Hannah asks for the publication of these particulars, in justice to the five or six gentlemen present at the aforesaid meeting of the sub-committee, respecting which the charge of cheating had been made. No. 7 is the last letter enclosed to us, and is dated February 5th, 1872. Cannot all the little differences which have arisen, more especially from the too aggressive article by Dr. Edmunds, in the report, be forgotten, and all the members of the Dialectical Society take up the further investigation of Spiritualism at the point where they left off?

Since the foregoing was in type we have received a letter from Dr. Edmunds. In the first part of the letter he simply repeats the facts, so we have but to quote the last part of his letter giving the explanation. He says—

"I have inquired of the member who thus seceded, or rather caused the break up of the whole sub-committee, and he wishes not to impute intentional cheating. He is, however, clearly convinced that one or both of two persons who were then present produced motions of the table by muscular action, which was to him beyond question. The chief of that sub-committee wrote most angry letters to the hon. sec. at the time, charging the member in question with having made 'a most insulting charge of trickery against ——.' The matter came before me privately at the time as chairman of the committee, but the breach was irreparable, and the sub-committee broke up. The documents are still in existence, but unless issue be taken as to my *bona fides* in mentioning the matter, there can be no necessity for further reference to them."

Mrs. Edmunds and Mrs. Guppy flatly contradict each other about an invitation. As the subject is merely a personal one, and of no public interest, we sought to get rid of the discussion, but Dr. Edmunds claims that as Mrs. Edmunds has been attacked she has a right to reply, though Dr. Edmunds has already spoken for her, and had the last word with Mr. Guppy. However, we print it, that there may be no charge of want of a fair hearing, and it is no use anybody sending us anything more about these personal matters; they waste space, and are not of public interest. Here is the letter:—

To the Editor of The Spiritualist.

SIR,—I must ask your permission to state that the story about myself which is published in *The Spiritualist* at page 202, and repeated at page 221, is a fabrication from beginning to end, and that it is as unpardonable in the character of its representations as it is in regard to the falsity of its facts.

Several years since I was in the company of my friend Mrs. Cooper of Sydenham-hill, when she made a brief and casual call at 45, Great Marlborough-street, in order to see Mrs. Guppy, then Miss Nicholl. Mrs. Guppy then made some extraordinary statements, and said she would come some evening to a *séance*; in consequence of this I afterwards called on Mrs. Guppy and asked her to give a *séance* to some friends at my house, and she kindly did so. The date of that *séance* was November 27th, 1867. There were present the Editor of the *Westminster Review*, a gentleman connected with one of the New York journals who was then in London, the governess of my children, and other friends. Dr. Edmunds was not present, as he was unexpectedly called to Colchester, and did not get back till early next morning. Mrs. Guppy afterwards favoured me with a call; she also invited me to be present at a *séance* at Great Marlborough-street, this I attended; it sdate was March 4th, 1868. Dr. Edmunds did not accompany me. I had no further communication with Mrs. Guppy until I went to Great Marlborough-street, with Dr. Edmunds, on May 28th, 1868. I believe that Dr. Edmunds had never before that evening seen either Mr. or Mrs. Guppy, nor had any communication with them. The account of that *séance*, as given at pages 64 to 67 of the Report, is in my opinion a *fair one*; I distinctly remember the pencil drawing of an angel being discovered on the paper.

As this is my first, and will be my last communication, I beg of you to excuse me for repeating that the whole story is a fabrication.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

LOUISA EDMUNDS.

4, Fitzroy-square, January 1872.

P. S.—I find from my diary that the first *séance* at our house with Mrs. Marshall, which is described at pages 60 and 61 of the report took place on Saturday July 13th, 1867, which was some months *before* instead of *after* the Davenport *séance*.

MESSRS. HERNE AND WILLIAMS'S MEDIUMSHIP.—Several ladies and other friends, who think it right that Messrs. Herne and Williams should be well supported in carrying on their arduous work as public mediums, have kindly resolved to assist in getting up a social meeting of Spiritualists for their benefit, on Saturday, February 24th, at their rooms, 61, Lamb's Conduit-street; admission three shillings and sixpence each. Visitors will be received at five p.m.; tea on the table at six; a little amateur singing and music at seven o'clock, followed by light refreshments, after which there will be a *séance*. Those who intend to be present are requested to send word to that effect to Messrs. Herne and Williams a few days in advance, that the necessary accommodation may be provided. There are two *séances*, with a tea between, every Saturday evening—charge half-a-crown—doors open at a quarter past six; and no admittance after a quarter to seven o'clock to the first *séance*. All these Saturday evening social gatherings are for Spiritualists only, to secure harmony and good *séances* free from interruption.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER.—Mr. Varley has something to say in another column on the efficacy of praying for a miracle, or change in the laws of health which govern the life of man. Changing the subject from the efficacy of prayer upon a person at a distance, there is no doubt that Spiritualism proves that prayer has a powerful influence upon the supplicant himself, when the prayer is sincere. The mental and spiritual condition of a medium allows spirits of a corresponding order of mind to get near him, and we have known occasional instances where mediums, when in a bad or passionate state of mind, have been much plagued by malicious spirits of a low order, from whose acts the higher spirits were unable then to get near enough to protect them. Prayer will usually get rid of these influences at once, because by its means the medium raises his own spiritual state, causing the power over him of bad spirits to decline, and of good ones to increase. All this is in obedience to spiritual laws, and we hope to have room to publish plenty of facts before long, to prove what is here asserted. We have never seen a case in Spiritualism, where prayer has done any good to another person at a distance from the supplicant, unless the two persons had been placed *en rapport* by means of some of the methods known to experienced Spiritualists. A pure and good life tends largely to protect a man from physical disease; and there are spiritual as well as physiological reasons for this.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.—On Monday, Feb. 5th, at a meeting of the Anthropological Institute, at 4, St. Martin's-place, Trafalgar-square, Dr. R. S. Charnock, F.S.A., presided. Mr. G. Harris (Vice-president) read a paper on "The Transmission of Hereditary Qualities," in which he admitted that very little was known on the subject; he suggested that there might be waves of influence in families, whereby certain mental and bodily powers reached a maximum in the family, and then fell again. Dr. R. King said that there is no doubt that some of the characteristics or features of remote ancestors will suddenly reappear in children, several generations being slipped over. When a black marries into a white family, the black colour may sleep for several generations, but it is then sure to show itself more or less; it is scarcely ever eradicated. Dr. Collyer said that two-and-a-half years ago he was engaged in the principal lunatic asylum in the United States, at Worcester, Massachusetts, and it was there found that insanity was propagated, though not always in the same phase, and a generation might pass without its showing itself; it invariably appears in the third or fourth generation, and more particularly is this the case with regard to idiotcy. A man named Hawkins was an idiot; two children in his family of twelve had the disease, but in the next generation nearly all the children were idiots. Mr. J. W. Jackson said that families build up races, so that the study of families, and their mental, physical, and moral changes, would tend to give information on changes in races. Mr. George St. Clair said that his physical characteristics were derived from his mother. Captain Burton (the African traveller) said that a census was required, including many thousands of cases, before much could be known about the transmission of hereditary qualities. Mr. Charlesworth pointed out how intellect was hereditary in some families. One instance was shown in the case of the Taylors of Norwich, where the children came to London, and all of them distinguished themselves. The Coleholds of Ipswich had thirteen children of marvellous intellectual acquirements. He also cited the instance of the Napiers. Mr. Hughes said that there was no "tidal wave" of faculties in races; the strongest held their own and came to the front, and he thought that it was the same with families. The President said that Gall had stated that when the physical constitution is transmitted from the parent to the child, then the intellectual faculties go with it, but he thought that Gall was wrong. Mr. Harris called attention to a book on *Hereditary Genius*, by Mr. F. Galton, F.R.S. A paper by Dr. Carter Blake and Dr. Charnock on "The Wallons" was then read, and the proceedings closed.