of spiritism of which the investigator will duly make a mental note. In the first places, spiritistic phenomena have grown by slow degrees from the crude mediumistic rappings that drew such mixed attention to the Fox family in the American village of Hydesville in 1847. The 'spirits' of spiritism seem to learn (as Scotsmen are said to jest) 'wi' deeficulty.' Their methods of communication evolved by slow and crudely inartistic methods from the elementary bangs of 1847, through turning the tables and frisky chairs, to the planchette and slate-writing that our young generation remember. And at length, from the graphological or writing stage, there came the 'visible' spiritism—the 'materialisation' of 'spirit forms' of the mighty (and unmighty) ones of our earth, who alike sullied the majesty of death by talking inane fustian and washy slipslop in mediums' frowzy dens. And last of all came the 'spirit photograph.' The professional medium is the regular channel of these varied forms of communication with the disembodied dead. It so happens that he (or she) is often a conjuror—sometimes clumsy, sometimes clever and versed in all the sleights that deceive and bewilder those that are unacquainted with the recondite arts of the modern illusionist or prestidigitateur. But there are important and significant differences between the methods of the professional illusionist and those of the professional spirit medium. They will be set forth in general terms in the next following paragraphs.

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(1) The bona-fide 'professor' of sleight-of-hand does not claim (except, at most, by way of obvious and smiling jest) any occult power. He does not pretend to perform his illusions through any preternatural or abnormal influence. And his audience, never dream of ascribing even his most bewildering 'effects' to any but a natural cause. The medium claims the preternatural power of evoking spirits from the vasty deep of death,

> 'Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
> And airy tongues that syllable men's names.'

His seances are not entertainments, not exhibitions of natural skill. They are not even cautious and scientific researches into the occult; they are merely (if we may use the term in this connection) the acts of worship of a sect, with their dropping fire of hymns, etc., to fill the voids between 'manifestation' and 'manifestation.' (3) The conjuror's entertainment is from beginning to end a challenge to the intelligence of his audience. The more alert they are, the more intent to guess 'how it is done,' the better pleased is the 'professor.' Next to empty benches he fears most the languid attention, the dozing intellect that never silently probes him with sharp 'hows' and 'whys,' and the wits that go a-wool-gathering. These things rob his illusions of the snap and 'go' and sparkle that complete their mere mechanical perfection, and constitute their artistic success. This, however, is not the sort of audience that the typical medium desires. His seances are frequented chiefly by an elect coterie of the credulous, the emotional, and the more or less dilettante dabblers in the occult. And they go not there in the spirit or with the intent of the critic or the investigator. Of the medium's average audience, a few may be of the expectant curious; but the great bulk of them will be full and unsuspecting believers. Many of these will be there intent upon some vague idea of religious worship; many for the purpose of communing with shadows from Beyond; and here and there among them may be some bereaved souls hoping to hear (if perchance they may) a message from loved ones who have gone before. (4) The stage or drawing-room illusionist has no need to appeal to the religious sentiments or the domestic affections of his audience, or to any consideration beyond the limits of his art. The professional (and, we may add, money-seeking) spirit medium appeals both to the religious sentiments and the domestic affections, and the ready emotions of his generally emotional and believing circle. Music, hymn, exhortation, semi-darkness, the tension of expectancy of weird contact with the preternatural—all these and other arts are used with the skill that comes of long practice to induce the 'harmonious' atmosphere, the uncritical emotionalism that are supposed to be most favorable to 'manifestations' by spirits from the great world of the dead.

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(5) The 'doctor' or 'professor' of the clever and harmless modern 'white magic' performs his feats on an open, fully-lighted stage, and clothed in the ordinary tight-fitting evening dress of our time. The spirit medium produces his (or her) "manifestations' under conditions that could not for a moment be tolerated even by the indulgent audiences that witness the efforts of the crude, unready amateur presenting with quivering voice and fingers his first stage illusion. As usually presented, the spiritistic seance leaves a thousand obvious loopholes for fraud and trickery and 'hanky-panky.' This does not, of course, necessarily imply that the trail of the serpent of deception is over absolutely the whole field of spiritistic 'manifestations'. But it does point to the necessity of prudent reserve and a reasonable scepticism in regard to stories of alleged 'manifestations' (of which more in due time), and of a strict investigation of the conditions under which they are said to have arisen. We shall in our next issue briefly set forth the conditions under which the phenomena of spiritism usually take place For this purpose we shall describe the methods of a medium who is still before the public, who is stated to have been 'of world-wide celebrity' in the circles of the occultist cult, and whom Mr. Stead described in the "Review of Reviews' for January, 1892, as 'the one person in the United Kingdom of undoubted materialising faculty and undoubted character, who could almost always secure the presence of phenomena, and who had never been detected in a trick of any kind'. We refer to Mrs. Mellon, whose exposure by Mr. T. S. Henry and others in Sydney on October 12, 1894, and whose subsequent hopeless failure to secure the presence of any spiritistic phenomena whatsoever under easy test conditions, constituted one of the liveliest sensations that have shaken the Australian press for many a year.

Notes

Pig or Christian?

In his interesting book of confidences ('Between Ourselves'), Max O'Rell remarks that even the pigs are happy in France. So far as this world's happiness is concerned, under the Clemenceau regime it is vastly more comfortable to be a French pig than a French Christian.

The 'Outlook'

We seldom omit a weekly perusal of our esteemed local contemporary, the 'Outlook,' the Presbyterian-Methodist-Congregationalist organ of New Zealand. Through all the varying fortunes through which it has passed since our acquaintance with it first began, it has preserved the dignity, the self-respect, and the spirit of fairness and charity towards other faiths, that became bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh as it grew up under the fostering care of our friend, the gentle, scholarly, and broadminded Dr. Waddell. Judging, however, by the Christchurch 'Press' of last week, the 'Outlook' has been passing through the waters of tribulation—through the waves of adverse comment that ever buffet those who conduct religious papers—now rising higher, now falling lower, but never, never still. The religious editor never knows the 'great calm' that once fell upon the waters of Galilee till he has laid down