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Convent of the Sacred Heart

TIMARU

The Annual Spiritual Retreat for Ladies

Will begin at 7 p.m. on Monday, the 4th day of January, 1909, and will end on the morning of Saturday, the 9th day of January.

The Retreat will be Preached by a Jesuit Father.

Ladies desirous of making the Retreat are invited to lodge at the Convent, where they will find every accommodation.

Application should be made as soon as possible to the Reverend Mother Superior.

Convent of the Sacred Heart

ISLAND BAY, WELLINGTON.

The Annual Spiritual Retreat for Ladies

Will Begin at 7 p.m. on SATURDAY, the 9th day of January, 1909, and will End on the Morning of THURSDAY, the 14th day of January.

The Retreat will be preached by the Rev. Father Forster, S.J.

By applying in time to the Reverend Mother Superior, Ladies wishing to make the Retreat can remain at the Convent, where they will find every accommodation.

GARRISON HALL,
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1908.

Christian Brothers' Grand

ANNUAL ENTERTAINMENT

—AND—

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES

POPULAR PRICES - 2 - and 1/-.

Doors Open 7.15 p.m.—Commence 7.45 p.m.

BIRTH

McLEAN.—On December 5, at Waikaitia, the wife of Angus W. McLean, of a daughter (still-born).

DEATH

McCORMACK.—On December 3, at his home, Governor's Terrace, Rimu, Westland, Michael McCormack, native of County Clare; aged 73 years. Fortified by the rites of the Church. R.I.P.

IN MEMORIAM

McCHESNEY.—In ever loving memory of James McChesney, who died at Arthur's Point, December 14, 1905. R.I.P.

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY DECEMBER 17, 1908.

FRAUDULENT SPIRITISTIC 'MANIFESTATIONS'



SHAKESPEARE'S expression, 'a quicksand of deceit,' is, to our mind, a fair general description of the phenomena of mediumistic spiritism. We gave, in sufficient detail, our reasons for this belief in a series of editorial articles written by us in 1907. Sundry questions put to us since our remarks, in our last issue, on 'A Spiritistic Fraud' move us to say that we have a keen sense of the clashing errors and absurdities of those who vainly try to reduce spiritism to an ordered system of teaching. We are, moreover, fully conscious of the mental and moral dangers that threaten men and women—especially those of a morbid, credulous, imaginative, or neurotic temperament—who allow themselves to be brought within the influence of this insidious superstition. Nay, we hold that even men of otherwise strong personality and force of character run no slight risks in dabbling in a business so saturated with imposture, unless they have taken the saving precaution of securing an all-round practical knowledge of the thousand and one sleights and wiles and tricks and stratagems and dodges and 'hanky-panky' artifices with which the mediumistic profession is wont to hoodwink and victimise those to whom conjuring is an unknown art.

For Catholics, it seems to us a crowning misfortune that not so much as a solitary one of the many of our co-religionists who are accepted as authorities on spiritism, has taken the trouble to acquire a working acquaintance with even the A B C of the conjuring artifices with which all but the tiniest fraction of one per cent. of those occultist 'manifestations' are brought about. The result is, complete inability on their part to judge soberly, scientifically, and with authority as to the powers and limits of charlatany and conjuring in the production of so-called spiritistic phenomena. Side by side with this crowning initial disability, we find, on their part, a general and very deplorable degree of credulity, an indiscriminating acceptance of appearances at par value, and a dogmatic attribution of the preternatural to large classes of phenomena which illusionists produce—nay, at times far surpass—every day by the sleights and ruses of their art. Nor are Catholic writers alone in these errors of judgment. Even in cases where men of such eminence as Professor Crookes were concerned, investigation has—for the same lack of knowledge of the conjurer's art—been generally carried on by methods that were unscientific, although associated with scientific principles and conducted by scientific men. We need only refer to the galvanometer test on the medium, Mrs. Fay, and Bishop's famous spiritistic ring illusion, which made such an impression upon Professors Crookes, Ramsay, and Buchanan, Lord Kelvin, and numbers of others of the foremost scientists of the day. These were considered, and are still cited as, crowning tests of the occult nature of the 'manifestations' that occurred. Yet they can be produced any day by a first-class conjurer, such as were those who performed them under supposedly scientific test conditions. And, for real ingenuity, they have not been surpassed, so far as we are aware, by any proven 'manifestation' by professional mediums since their day.

The typical spiritistic séance represents (as we amply demonstrated in our June-July issues of 1907) a great confidence trick. The mediums usually take elaborate precautions against too prying eyes or hands; they display

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