

answer the same in a forthcoming number. The editor, belonging to the large class of doubters, has expressed his views on the subject in an article entitled "Spirit or Ghost," which appeared in the April *Monist*.—*Ed.*]

CHARITY.

BY THE HON. C. C. BONNEY.

Of all the angels sent us from the throne
 Of the Divine, the loveliest one is known
 By the sweet name of Charity. Her face
 Filled with the beauty of celestial grace,
 Turns from the splendors of the rich and strong,
 To seek the lowliest in sorrow's throng,
 And change their tears and wretchedness and pain
 To peace and joy. She asks no other gain
 Than the delight of making others blest
 With food and shelter, raiment, work and rest,
 Virtue and peace, pure lives and worthy deeds,
 And all the graces that the great world needs.

A SPIRITUALISTIC SEANCE.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

As an inquirer into the phenomena of Spiritualism, I was naturally interested in the article in *The Open Court* of December, 1901, written by Lieut.-Col. Gardner—"An Evening with the Spiritualists."

The account of a *séance* at Boston brought to my mind an incident which—occurring within my own experience, a few years ago—has led me to regard a great deal of present-day "Spiritualism" as about the lowest form of "Materialism" to which mankind can descend.

I was invited one evening to a *séance* in one of our New Zealand towns: about twenty persons were present (male and female, say half and half). The meeting was presided over by an individual known to the others as "Brother" Jones, who opened the proceedings by requesting "Brother" Fish to oblige the company with a prayer. Brother Fish's abilities in this direction were extraordinary indeed: he addressed Omnipotence with a fervor and unctuousness which would have done credit to a Salvation Army officer or Latter Day Saint; and at the same time gave utterance to a caricature of the "Lord's Prayer" which (could it only have been reported) would have been worthy of a prominent place in the French "Comic Bible," or the "Annals of Blasphemy." The prayer concluded, Brother Fish was invited to sing a hymn; upon which that personification of piety led the congregation in a strictly original version of "Abide with Me"; I say "strictly original," because though he knew the tune well enough, his knowledge of the words was limited to "Abide with me, fast falls the even tide," which he adapted to the tune, with consummate solemnity, from beginning to end: the effect of this "exercise" upon myself was more ridiculous than sublime. This part of the proceedings being over, Brother Jones stated that, the regular medium being absent, their friend Brother Bell would give an "inspired" address; and Brother Bell having

gone off into a "trance" (under the influence of another infliction of "Abide with me"), proceeded "inspirationally" thus :

"Jab; Jab; Jab; Yah; Yah; Yah; Yabababba;
 "Bok; Bo—o—ak; Bok; Bok; Bokbokbok;
 "A—a—a—ah! U—u—u—u—uh!"

Then silence for a few seconds; followed by several long sighs, and most dismal groans.

Then, very quickly :

"Jabyab; Jabyab. Bokbokbokbokbok!
 "Oo—oo—oo—oo—oo—oo—oo—oo—oo!" (like a long howl).

And so on; the same repeated *ad libitum* for more than half an hour.

While this "speaking with tongues" proceeded, the company—who were sitting in pitch darkness—preserved silence; but when Brother Bell's "control" had concluded his discourse, a loud hum of conversation ensued, the burden of which was a desire to know what was the *language* of this long and entertaining address. My acknowledgment of some slight acquaintance with French, Italian, and German appeared to lead to a general agreement that it could be neither of these; and finally a "sister," who was evidently laboring under an attack of intense hysterical excitement, shrieked out :

"Oh, dear brethren, it was Persian! Persian! A—a— ah!
 (A piercing scream here.)
 "The spirit of the Lord hath been poured richly upon us!"

The company generally having apparently accepted (without any debate) the lady's "inspired" utterance, and agreed that the language was Persian, order was restored; and Brother Jones having announced that poor Brother Bell was terribly "torn," this noisy "intelligence" was helped out of him by means of a repetition of "Abide with me."

Brother Bell, having received the congratulations of his friends, volunteered a second "trance" address; and another—but milder—"spirit" having been sung into him, with the help of "Abide with me," he proceeded, after a few preliminary grunts and snorts, to edify the company with a very long and vapid sermon about nothing. When this was over, Brother Jones asked for questions; and I made so bold as to request the spirit to give us the meaning of the "Persian" address; after taking a little time for consideration, the reply was given that "the spirit did not think it proper that any explanation should be given."

After relieving Brother Bell of the second spirit by means of a final application of "Abide with me," the company dispersed, with mutual congratulations upon the amount of "psychic power" generated during the sitting. Before leaving I shook hands with Brother Bell and asked him how he felt; he replied that the "great volume of odic force generated" had made a new man of him, and that in future he intended to sit "only for healing."

Spiritualism of this type has more devotees in the English-speaking world than is generally supposed, nor is it limited only to the uneducated and simple; I am acquainted with people in most walks of life—doctors, lawyers, tradesmen, laborers, even clergymen—who are making, or playing at making, a religion of it; and yet with such barbarism flourishing in our midst we are sending away thousands of pounds every year for the conversion of Chinamen, Mahometans, and Hindoos.

No wonder the Mormons (who have the sense to regard such proceedings as

little better than devil-worship) find these Colonies a promising field for their missions, and feel that in taking their converts away to Utah and Idaho they are but obeying the commandments of the Lord, in dividing the sheep from the goats.

W. H. TRIMBLE.

DUNEDIN, New Zealand, March 10, 1902.

FROM THE ADI GRANTH, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF THE
SIKHS.

BY E. MARTINENGO-CESARESCO.

Be kind! Make this thy mosque—a fabric vast and fair;
Be true! Make this thy carpet, spread five times for prayer;
Be just! When art thou this, thy lawful meat thou hast;
Be good! In this behold thy God-appointed fast.

Thy cleansing rite a heart that no lustration needs,
Thy rosary a crown of self-forgetful deeds.¹

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE BEGINNING OF POETRY. By *Francis B. Gummere*, Professor of English in Haverford College. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1901. Pages, x, 483.

Professor Gummere has given us in this book a very interesting study. One can scarcely refrain from smiling, however, on reading his opening sentence, that it is his object "neither to *defend* poetry nor to account for it;" as though to *defend* the effusions of the muse were something that was *per se* incriminating. Yet poetry has not been without its detractors. Peacock, Plato, and Mahomet, *tres nobiles fratres*, have vilified it; Selden, in his *Table Talk*, Pascal, Newton, Lefebvre, Bentham, and Renan have been among its scoffers; and even Shakespeare had his fling at the art. But most horrible of all is the arraignment of Goethe, who, in answer to the question, "Who is driving poetry from off the face of the earth?" pertinently replied: "The poets." A defence, therefore, even after Professor Gummere's admissions, would seem to be slightly necessary.

But Professor Gummere's purpose has been different: it is "to use the evidence of ethnology in connection with the progress of poetry itself, as one can trace it in the growth or decay of its elements. . . . The elements of poetry, in the sense here indicated, and combined with sociological considerations, have," he says, "never been studied for the purpose of determining poetic evolution; and in this study lie both the intention of the present book and whatever modest achievement its writer can hope to attain." He considers rhythm as the essential fact of poetry; he finds also that poetry is communal and social in its origin, and artistic and individual in its outcome. The author has well summarised his conclusions. After remarking that we may think of poetry in its beginnings as rude to a degree, yet nobly rude and full of promise, he says: "Circling in the common dance, moving and singing in the consent of common labor, the makers of earliest poetry put into

¹ "The sounds not beaten by human hands are always sounding" (in the ears of the true worshipper).

² These *unbeaten sounds* are said to sound in the *daswa duar* as a sign that the personality is merged in the Supreme, by continually hearing these supernatural sounds (*om, om*).¹

Note to text, by Dr. Ernest Trumpp (Translation of the *Adi Granth*. 1877).