Mrs Fox and their two daughters, living at Hydeville (Wayne), New York, were much disturbed by unexplained knockings. At length Kate Fox discovered that the cause of the sounds was intelligent and would make raps as re­quested, and, communication being established, the rapper professed to be the spirit of a murdered pedlar. An in­vestigation into the matter seemed to show that none of the Fox family were concerned in producing the rappings; but the evidence that they were not concerned is insuffi­cient, although similar noises had been noticed occasionally in the house before they lived there. It was, however, at Rochester, where the two Fox girls soon afterwards went to live with a married sister (Mrs Fish) that modern spirit­ualism assumed its present form, and that communication was, as it was believed, established with lost relatives and deceased eminent men. The presence of certain “mediums” was required to form the link between the worlds of the living and of the dead, and Kate Fox and her sister were the first mediums. Spiritualists do not as yet claim to know what special qualities in mediums enable spirits thus to make use of them. The earliest communications were car­ried on by means of “ raps,” or, as Mr Crookes calls them, “ percussive sounds.” It was agreed that one rap should mean “ no ” and three “ yes,” while more complicated mess­ages were—and are—obtained in other ways, such as calling over or pointing to letters of the alphabet, when raps occur at the required letters.

The idea of communicating with the departed was natur­ally attractive even to the merely curious, still more to those who were mourning for lost friends, and most of all to those who believed that this was the commencement of a new revelation. The first two causes have attracted many inquirers; but it is the last that chiefly gives to modern spiritualism its religious aspect. Many came to witness the new wonder, and the excitement and interest spread rapidly. “Spirit-circles” were formed in several families, and other mediums discovered, exhibiting pheno­mena of various kinds (see below). The interest in mes­merism and the phenomena of hypnotic trance, which was widely diffused at this time both in America and Europe (see Magnetism, Animal, vol. xv. p. 277 *sq.),* was favour­able to the new idea. Information about other worlds and from higher intelligences was thought to be obtained from persons who could be put into the sleep-waking state, of whom Andrew Jackson Davis was in America the most prominent example. His work, *Nature's Divine Revela­tions* (New York, 1847), was alleged to have been dictated in “ clairvoyant ” trance. Many reputed “ clairvoyants ” developed into mediums. The movement spread like an epidemic. There is very little evidence to show that it arose anywhere spontaneously@@1; but those who sat with the Foxes were often found to become mediums them­selves and then in their turn developed mediumship in others. The mere reading of accounts of seances seemed to develop the peculiar susceptibility in some persons, while others, who became mediums ultimately, did so only after prolonged and patient waiting.

There seems to have been little practical interest in spiritualism in Europe till Mrs Hayden, a professional medium from Boston, came over in 1852. It spread like wildfire within a few months of her arrival,—its first de­velopment being in the form of a mania for table-turning, which seems to have prevailed all over Europe in 1853.

Daniel Dunglas Home, the next medium of importance who appeared in London, came over from America in 1855. But it was at Keighley in Yorkshire that spiritual­ism as a religious movement first made any mark in Eng­land, and it was there that the first English spiritualistic periodical, the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph,* was started in 1855. The extent to which the movement has spread and the present number of spiritualists are very difficult to estimate. Vague calculations have from time to time been attempted : in 1867 one spiritualist estimated the number in America at 11,000,000 or two-fifths of the population, and another has held 3,000,000 to be an ex­treme estimate (see *Spiritual Magazine* for 1867). The periodicals devoted to spiritualism may perhaps be taken to indicate the present state of the movement. There are in England two weekly newspapers, *Light* and *The Medium and Daybreak* ; one of these has advertisements of Sunday meetings in sixty different towns and in eighty different rooms. The spiritualistic journals outside Great Britain number about 100, though probably only about a quarter of these are of any importance. Of these 30 are in English (26 published in America and 4 in the Australian colonies), 15 to 20 in French, and 6 in German. But nearly 40 are published in Spanish in Spain and South America. Private circles which meet regularly are believed to be numerous in England ; and there are numerous public and semi-public trance-speaking and clairvoyant mediums, especially among the miners in the north.

In the present article it is impossible to give an ex­haustive catalogue of the phenomena and modes of com­munication of modern spiritualism. Many have not now appeared for the first time in history, though it is difficult to suppose any historical connexion between the new de­velopments and the old. Perhaps the most striking paral­lelism is that between the proceedings at modern seances and those connected with the later Greek oracles.@@2 The greater part of the phenomena may be divided into two classes. To the first and earliest developed class belong what may be called the physical phenomena of spiritual­ism,—those, namely, which, if correctly observed and due neither to conscious or unconscious trickery nor to hallu­cination on the part of the observers, exhibit a force hitherto unknown to science, acting in the physical world otherwise than through the brain or muscles of the medium. The earliest of these phenomena were the raps already spoken of and other sounds occurring without apparent physical cause, and the similarly mysterious movements of furni­ture and other objects ; and these were shortly followed by the ringing of bells and playing of musical instruments. Later followed the appearance of lights; quasi-human voices ; musical sounds, produced, it is supposed, without instruments; the “ materialization ” or presence in material form of what seem to be human hands and faces, and ultimately of complete figures, alleged to be not those of any person present, and sometimes claimed by witnesses as deceased relatives ; “ psychography,” or “ direct writing and drawing,” asserted to be done without human inter­vention; “ spirit-photography,” or photographing of human and other forms invisible to all but specially endowed seers ; unfastening of cords and bonds ; elongation of the medium’s body ; handling of red-hot coals ; and the ap­parent passage of solids through solids without disinte­gration. The phenomena observed at Tedworth belong to this class. Somewhat similar was the Cock Lane ghost in 1762.@@3 A practice of causing heavily loaded tables to rise by “ magic ” seems to have existed among the German Jews in the 17th century.@@4 Kerner records movements

@@@1 It is possible that the family of Dr Phelps were unaware of the “ Rochester knockings ” when the disturbances began in his house at Stratford, Connecticut, in 1850 (see Capron’s Modern Spiritualism, its Facts, &c.) ; but these disturbances, as recorded, have a closer re­semblance to the ordinary occurrences at a spiritualistic seance than those which took place at Tedworth in 1661 (see Glanvill's Sadducismus Triumphatus) and at Slawensik in 1806 (see Kerner’s Seherin von Prevorst), aud others too numerous to mention.

@@@2 See Essays Classical, by F. W. H. Myers, 1883.

@@@3 See Gentleman's Magazine, 1762.

@@@4 Von Harless, Aegyptische Mysterien, 1856, pp. 130-132.