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RULES

For P. Hazard,

TO BE OBSERVED WHEN FORMING

St. Denis Hotel, New York,

Nov. 5th 1870.

SPIRITUAL CIRCLES.

BY EMMA HARDINGE.

BOSTON:
WILLIAM WHITE AND COMPANY,
BANNER OF LIGHT OFFICE,

158 Washington Street.

NEW-YORK AGENTS — THE AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY,

119 Nassau Street.

1870.

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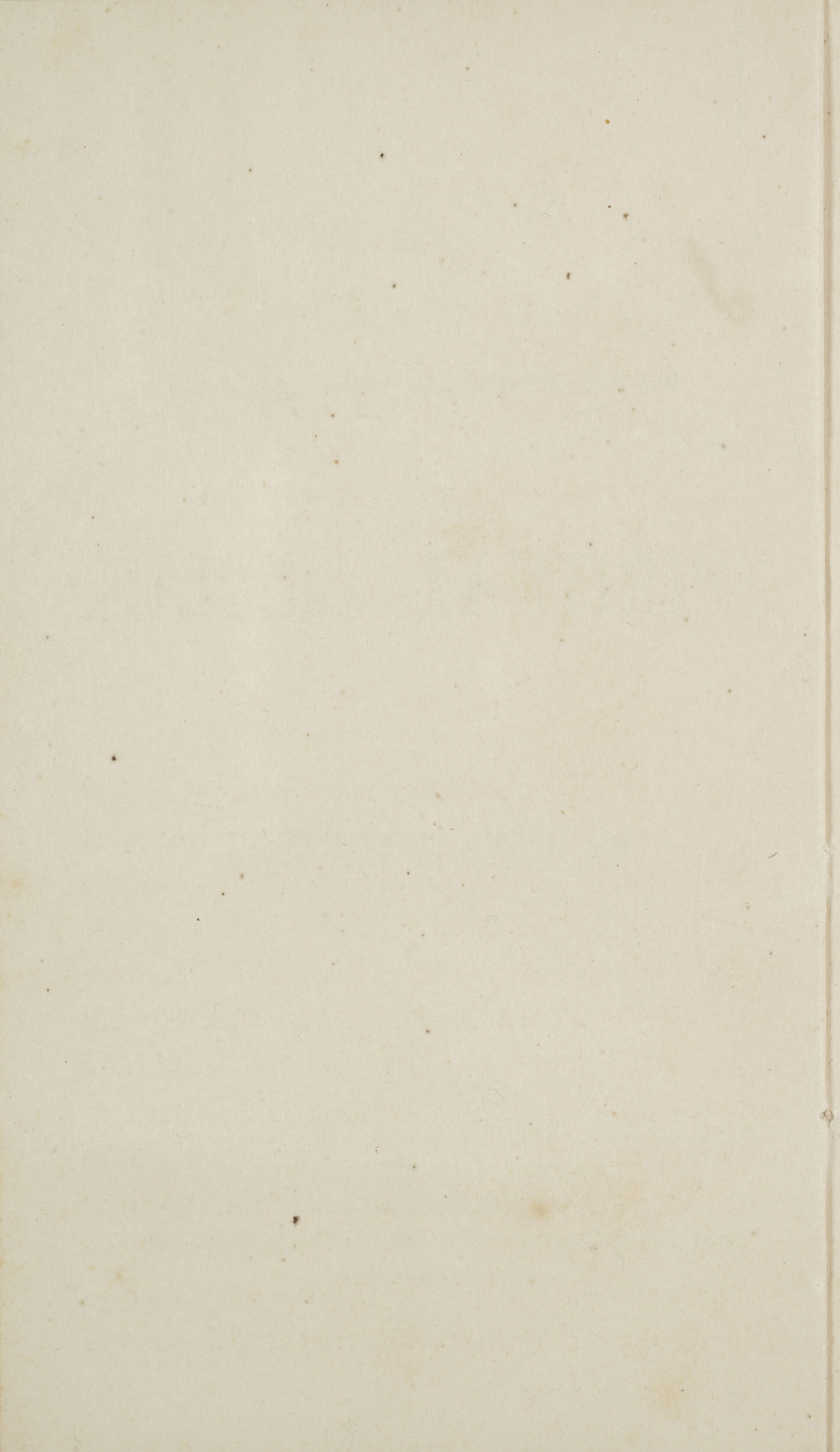
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SPIRITUAL CIRCLES.

THE spirit-circle is the assembling-together of a given number of persons for the purpose of seeking communion with the spirits who have passed away from earth into the higher world of souls. The chief advantage of such an assembly is the mutual impartation and reception of the combined magnetisms of the assemblage. These in combination form a force stronger than that of an isolated subject: first, enabling spirits to commune with greater power; next, developing the latent gifts of mediumship in such members of the circle as are

thus endowed; and, finally, promoting that harmonious and social spirit of fraternal intercourse which is one of the especial aims of the spirit's mission.

The first conditions to be observed relate to the persons who compose the circle. These should be, as far as possible, of opposite temperaments, as positive and negative in disposition, whether male or female; also of moral characters, pure minds, and not marked by repulsive points of either physical or mental condition. The physical temperaments should contrast with each other; but no person suffering from decidedly chronic disease, or of very debilitated *physique*, should be present at any circle, unless it is formed expressly for healing purposes. I would recommend the number of the circle never to be less than three, nor more than twelve.

The use growing out of the association of differing temperaments is to form a battery on the principle of electricity or galvanism, composed of positive and negative elements, the sum of which should be unequal. No person of a very strongly posi-

tive temperament or disposition should be present, as any such magnetic spheres emanating from the circle will overpower that of the spirits, who must always be positive to the circle in order to produce phenomena. It is not desirable to have more than two already well-developed mediums in a circle; mediums always absorbing the magnetism of the rest of the party: hence, when there are too many present, the force, being divided, can not operate successfully with any.

OF TEMPERATURE.

Never let the apartment be overheated, or even close. As an unusual amount of magnetism is liberated at a circle, the room is always warmer than ordinary, and should be well ventilated. *Avoid strong light*, which, by producing excessive motion in the atmosphere, disturbs the manifestations. A very subdued light is the most favorable for any manifestations of a magnetic character, especially for spiritual magnetism.

OF THE POSITIONS TO BE OBSERVED.

If the circle is one which meets together periodically, and is composed of the same persons, let them always occupy the same seats (unless changed under spiritual direction), and sit (as the most favorable of all positions) round a table, their hands laid on it, with palms downwards. It is believed that the wood, when charged, becomes a conductor, without the necessity of holding or touching hands. I should always suggest the propriety of employing a table as a conductor, especially as all tables in household use are more or less magnetically charged already. If flowers or fruit are in the room, see that they are just freshly gathered, otherwise remove them; also avoid sitting in a room with many minerals, metals, or glasses. These all injuriously affect sensitives, of whom mediums are the type.

I recommend the *séance* to be opened either with prayer or music, vocal or instrumental; after which, subdued, quiet, and harmonizing conversation is better than wearisome silence: but let the conversation

be always directed toward the purpose of the gathering, and never sink into discussion, or rise to emphasis; let it be gentle, quiet, and spiritual, until phenomena begin to be manifest. Always have a slate, or pen, pencil, and paper on the table, so as not to be obliged to rise to procure them. Especially avoid all entering or quitting the room, moving about, irrelevant conversation, or disturbances within or without the circle, room, after the *séance* has once commenced.

The spirits are far more punctual to seasons, faithful to promise, and periodical in action, than mortals. Endeavor, then, to fix your circle at a convenient hour, when you will be least interrupted, and do not fail in your appointments. Do not admit unpunctual, late comers; nor, if possible, suffer the air of the room to be disturbed in *any way* after the sitting commences. Nothing but necessity, indisposition, or *impressions* (to be hereafter described) should warrant the least disturbance of the sitting, WHICH SHOULD NEVER *exceed two hours*, unless an extension of time be solicited of the spirits. Let the *séance* always extend to one hour,

even if no results are obtained: it sometimes requires all that time for spirits to form their battery of the materials furnished. Let it be also remembered that all circles are experimental: hence no one should be discouraged if phenomena are not produced at the first few sittings. Stay with the same circle for six sittings: if no phenomena are then produced (provided all the above conditions are observed), you may be sure you are not rightly assimilated to each other, you do not form the requisite combinations, or neutralize each other. In that case, break up, and let that circle of members meet with other persons; that is, change one, two, or three persons of your circle for others, and so on, until you succeed.

A well-developed test-medium may sit without injury for any person, or any description of character or temperament; but a circle sitting for mutual development should never admit persons addicted to bad habits, criminals, sensualists, strongly positive persons of any kind, whether rude, skeptical, violent tempered, or dogmatical. An humble, candid, inquiring spirit, unpreju-

diced, and receptive of truth, is the only proper frame of mind in which to sit for phenomena, the delicate magnetism of which is shaped, tempered, and made or marred as much by *mental* as physical conditions. When once any of the circle can communicate freely and conclusively with spirits, *the spirits* can and will take charge of and regulate the future movements of the circle.

OF IMPRESSIONS.

Impressions are the voices of spirits speaking to our spirits, or else the monitions of the spirit within us, and should always be respected and followed out, unless (which is very rare) suggestive of actual wrong in act or word. At the opening of the circle, one or more of the members are often impressed to change seats with others. One or more are impressed with the desire to withdraw; or a strong feeling of repulsion to some member of the circle makes it painful to remain there. Let any or all of these impressions be faithfully regarded, and, at commencing, pledge to each other the prom-

ise that no offense shall be taken by following out impressions.

If a strong impression to write, speak, sing, dance, or gesticulate, possess any mind present, follow it out faithfully. It has a meaning, if you can not at first realize it. Never feel hurt in your own person, nor ridicule your neighbors, for any failures to express, or at first discover, the meaning of the spirit impressing you.

Spirit-control is often deficient, and at first almost always imperfect. But, by often yielding to it, your organism becomes more flexible, and the spirit more experienced; and practice in control is absolutely necessary for spirits as well as mortals. If dark and evil-disposed spirits manifest to you, *never drive them away*, but always strive to elevate them, and treat them as you would mortals under similar circumstances. Do not always attribute falsehoods to "lying spirits" or deceiving mediums. Many mistakes occur in the communion of which you can not always be aware.

Strive for truth, but rebuke error gently; and do not always attribute it to design, but

rather to mistake in so difficult and experimental a stage of the communion as mortals at present enjoy with spirits.

Unless strictly charged by spirits to do otherwise, do not continue to hold sittings with the same parties for more than a twelvemonth. After that time, if not before, fresh elements of magnetism are absolutely essential. Some of the original circle should withdraw, and others take their place.

All persons are subject to spirit-influence and spiritual guidance and control; but not all can so externalize this power as to use it consciously, or as what is significantly called a "*medium*:" and, finally, let it ever be remembered, that, except in the case of "trance-speakers," no medium can ever hope successfully to exercise his or her gift in a large or promiscuous assembly; while trance-speakers, no less than mediums for any other gift, can never be influenced by spirits far beyond *their own normal* capacity in the MATTER of the intelligence rendered; the magnetism of the spirit and the spirit-circle being but a quickening fire, which

inspires the brain, stimulates the faculties, and, like a hot-house process on plants, forces into abnormal prominence dormant or latent powers of mind, but *creates nothing*. Even in the case of merely automatic speakers, writers, rapping, tipping, and other forms of test-mediums, the intelligence or idea of the spirit is always measurably shaped by the capacity and idiosyncrasies of the medium. All spirit-power is thus limited in expression by the organism through which it works; and spirits may control, inspire, and influence the human mind, but do not change or re-create it.

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
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
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