

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

It will be remembered that our correspondent "Edina" published in "LIGHT" (November 15th) an automatically written communication, purporting to be a transcript of an inscription on a monument in Sherborne Church. In a subsequent number (November 29th) there appeared an article in the course of which four versions of the inscription were given. All these are different. Even a copy made from a volume of Pope's poems—Pope is the author of the epitaph—differs from the copy actually made from the tombstone. There is not much more discrepancy between the automatically written lines and the variants which were collected and printed in "LIGHT." "Edina" avows that neither he nor any of his circle were ever in Dorsetshire or at Sherborne. The possibility, therefore, of the medium's eye having ever fallen on the original inscription is excluded. The scientific contention would be that the eye had once seen this inscription and that the memory had unconsciously treasured it, and it had emerged into consciousness once more without the volition of the automatist. As the verses are printed in at least three places—Pope's poetical works, "Hutchins's History of Dorset," and "The Beauties of England and Wales"—the supposition is not excluded that the medium may have seen the verses in one of these books. But what evidence is there that the so-called scientific theory is of any real value? It has always seemed to me to be of the nature of a desperate expedient to get rid of unwelcome facts.

For these automatic writings are many and very various. Mr. Crookes records somewhere that he was once writing with planchette in company (I think) with Mrs. Crookes. At his back lay a newspaper. He put his hand behind him and covered a word with his finger without looking. He requested that the word should be written by planchette, and it was done. How does the scientific theory fit that case? I have recorded that a specified passage from an old book that I had never seen or heard of was written through my hand, the page, paragraph, and line being specified by me. I assuredly had never opened the book, which was in a top shelf of an old bookcase in front of the table at which I was writing. How does the scientific theory explain that case? I have had a very great experience of this automatic writing, and when it first came to me I took elaborate pains to test the matter so written to make sure that it was not the automatic reproduction of what was latent in my own mind. Obviously there must be much that does not lend itself to test.

But there was also much that purported to be extracts from old writers, such as Lydgate. One such extract was verified after a good deal of trouble by a friend of mine, and the evidence afforded by that verification is striking and important. The lines were accurately reproduced, but some were omitted in the course of the transcript. No omission was marked in the automatic writing and the sense was unbroken by the omission of the verses. How does the scientific explanation suit this case? I had not seen the poem from which this extract was taken. To say that I might have done so and have forgotten the fact is beside the question. I aver that I had *not* seen it; and, if I had, I must have known that I had. Moreover, on that hypothesis, my hand would have reproduced what my eye had seen, and the omitted lines would have emerged equally with the others. Why should all be so textually accurate and these few lines be left out?

But to go to the root of the matter this theory rests on a very unsubstantial basis, and does not cover the facts. The stock case of that poor servant who in delirium broke out into some Hebrew words which she had heard her master say as he was preparing his sermons—this threadbare instance has so often served to a foregone conclusion that it may be allowed to rest. What proof is there, to put the case squarely, that the eye of any person can rest unconsciously on eighteen lines of verse, with other matter, names, dates, &c., and so carry it away in the unconscious memory that it shall be reproduced in substance and even in close resemblance long after without the volition or consciousness of the writer? It seems to me that there is none at all adequate to sustain the superstructure that the scientists would build upon it. Certainly there is none that covers all the facts within our knowledge. My own books of such writings contain facts that I could by no possibility have been acquainted with by any normal means. At the time, for example, when most laboured pains brought me piece after piece of evidence of what was then my *crux*—the identity of the spirit communicating—my hand wrote out repeatedly names that I had never heard of, accompanied by facts that I cannot be conceived to have been acquainted with, such as the dates of a person's birth and death, that person's full name, and sometimes information respecting his family or his own life. Such cases are among the most precise that my records contain, and it is idle to explain them or to attempt to explain them away by those pseudo-scientific hypotheses which are at once baseless and preposterous. These facts are now too familiar, the records of them are too numerous, to allow them to be put aside. "Edina's" medium wrote a version of Pope's epitaph, which does not differ more from the original than do the existing versions amongst themselves. I again ask what evidence is there worth considering that she ever saw the lines; that she could have automatically reproduced them so nearly if she had; and, lastly, that, on the scientific showing, they would have been reproduced in this way and not textually? Contrasted with the simple explanation of the Spiritualist,

that which I reject is a very clumsy and unlikely explanation.

I have sometimes replied to correspondents who write to me wishing to be placed in communication with their departed friends that I have not the power to gratify their wishes. A very potent factor in the interest excited in some minds on the subject of Spiritualism is bereavement. The soul is stirred to its depths, the founts of affection are broken up, and the whole being is suffused with that tenderness of sympathy which opens, we know in many cases, the avenues of intercourse with the unseen world. Surely, say many who appeal to me in terms that command my attention and enlist my sincerest sympathy, surely you, who have had so much more experience of this subject than falls to the common lot, can place us in relation with those who have left us, who are not dead, you say, and who very certainly would be only too glad to send a loving word across the great gulf and minister to a sorrowing soul. I have professed with sincerest pity that I am powerless. I am too profoundly convinced of the truths of the faith that I hold to be afraid of looking those truths straight in the face. I have no key to the door that bars the entrance to our future home. I have no power to open it and to call back those who have passed through it to a state which, I trust, is better and which I know is different. I am not aware of the nature of the change that passes on the arisen spirit. I believe its continuity of consciousness to be unbroken; but I know that its manifestation on this forsaken sphere of its existence must be transitory and illusory. By that I mean that it takes on the old appearance, clothes itself in the garb of the body that it has shuffled off, and even produces in its temporary material forms the blots and blemishes that may serve for purpose of recognition. It is not my old friend that is with me; it is his counterfeit presentment made to meet my wants on the lower level of my present existence. It serves its purpose if I recognise the illusory appearance, much as a photograph of a friend in Australia might do if forwarded through the post.

I have not felt that this material evidence is of much value. I have not sought to encourage it, so far as any words of mine can avail. For I have believed that the communion of soul with soul is independent of these material accessories, and infinitely more conclusive and satisfactory. Not only have I not the power, but personally I have not the will, to seek to bring back to earth a soul that has escaped from its sorrows and trials. I know—none more fully—what a consolation it has been to many that those who have passed through the grave and gate of death have been permitted to return to their bereaved friends as ministers of consolation. Into that hallowed communion I would not for a moment intrude with question or cavil. They who are blessed by such communion are their own sufficient judges of its reality, themselves best able to appreciate and estimate its value. The most beautiful experiences that have come to us through Spiritualism have been of this order. For myself, I have had few of these, for the reason that I have not been so hardly handled by death's grasp on those near and dear to me as to need such consolation, and because my own close intercourse with the world of spirits has been largely of an impersonal nature, i.e., concerned with public work rather than with private matters. If I had, at any time, need of this consolation, I do not doubt that I should crave for it. It is the common cry of bereaved humanity. If one believes it possible to feel the touch of a vanished hand, and once more to hear, however faintly, the sound of a voice that is still, one would be callous, indeed, not to avail oneself of every means that might translate the possibility into actual fact. I repeat that such experiences in the private circle, to which

no profane experimenter ever finds access, are among the most beautiful evidences of the reality of our faith.

But I have said before—and I should certainly ask myself the question in such a case as I have speculatively referred to—that it is a question in my mind whether we do not disservice to the friends we mourn by seeking to drag them back to this lower world. Observe my words. There is an orderly manifestation that comes unbidden, though not unwelcome, a benediction that is not to be estimated in value. And there is the unwilling response to the urgent cry of a sorrow that is not a little selfish, the value of which I permit myself to question. "Thy will be done" is a heart-wrung cry that may be on a higher plane than the agonised supplication for a transient glimpse of one who is now in serener air than he breathed on earth. I have nothing to say, not a word, against that natural wish which animates those who seek communion with their "dead." I would not urge a word against such seeking. But I would not myself try—I never have tried—to bring back to earth any who did not voluntarily return to it. The only séances I would forbid, if I could, are those undertaken in a spirit of frivolity and levity. Those which are held in solemnity I would encourage. And what frame of mind can be more solemn than that which belongs to the saddened soul which seeks to lift a corner of the veil and catch if only a fleeting glimpse of one whose image has filled its earthly life, and whose lost love has left it blank and cheerless? The time to such will come when they will realise the higher truth of David's words: "I will go to him; he shall not return to me." Till they do, their efforts at reunion are such as to command my respect, if not my imitation. My own experience has been of another order, and I am unconsciously governed by it, more than I perhaps know.

What indications of law governing the return of the departed can we trace? All do not return; all cannot: not all are permitted. As there must be close *rapprochement* between medium and circle, so there must be intimate sympathy between them or some one of them and the *revenant*. The mother to her babes bereft of her loving care; the miser to his gold; the friend in fulfilment of a promise; the soul impelled by a certain community of sympathy. We have analogies in the community of sensation between twin children, and in the transference of it between two persons at a distance from each other whose souls are in close sympathy. We have it, too, in the weird community of sensation between the hypnotiser and his subject. We know that what we should, at first sight, regard as very potent causes fail to be operative while those that might be thought trivial avail. We say sometimes that those who recross that solemn threshold that divides us from the unseen come back to talk nonsense, or at best trivialities. Well, what little causes make or mar our lives! And when we come to the parting of the ways, when the depths of nature are stirred, how potent is mental anxiety and distress even in this world! What wonder that it should sometimes bridge the gulf that separates it from the next. And when combined with affection who shall measure its effect? This we see in daily life; indications of a law that operates beyond its boundaries.

This is probably a natural power common to mankind existing among them in various degrees of development. It operates, for instance, freely with all of us during bodily sleep: it is seen in another phase in the entranced medium: it is most especially active at the time of death. These rough analogies may lead us to the conclusion that the return of the departed may be affected, among other causes, by such as these:—

- (a) Mental anxiety about worldly affairs that have been left disorderly.

- (b) Affection for those left behind.
- (c) Some guardianship or mission to this earth imposed or voluntarily undertaken.
- (d) Distinct missionary work.

Lastly, haunting spirits are, I think, usually earth-bound; and, not only that, but bound apparently to a locality with which they have been associated during their life on earth. In some cases, too, they seem to be associated with warnings of special events in families, *e.g.*, death. This is not meant to be more than a very brief indication of certain laws governing apparently the return of the departed. The Society for Psychical Research has done much to explore this field of investigation.

"THE GARDEN OF DREAMS." *

A beautiful little volume whose dress is exquisite and worthy of its contents. It is dedicated to the author's close friends, Mr. and Mrs. Philip B. Marston. The illustrations, of the daintiest, are designed by H. Winthrop Peirce and engraved by John Andrew and Son, Boston, U.S.A. Mrs. Moulton is a true poet, and her verses are marked by the qualities which, in our judgment, go to make up the verse that lives. Masculine force there is none—*laus Deo*—sweetness and light are there much. Her lyrics we prefer to her sonnets, with no blame to the latter. Carving on a peach stone is at best a lamed art. Her sonnets will bear critical examination, her lyrics need no one to commend them.

One example is all that we can find place for from a very choice collection:—

IN A GARDEN.

Pale in the pallid moonlight,
 White as the rose on her breast,
 She stood in the fair Rose-garden
 With her shy young love confessed.
 The roses climbed to kiss her,
 The violets, purple and sweet,
 Breathed their despair in the fragrance
 That bathed her beautiful feet.
 She stood there, stately and slender,
 Gold hair on her shoulders shed,
 Clothed all in white, like the visions,
 When the living behold the dead.
 There, with her lover beside her,
 With life and with love she thrilled—
 What mattered the world's wide sorrow
 To her with her joy fulfilled?
 Next year in the fair Rose-garden,
 He waited alone and dumb,
 If perchance from the silent country
 The soul of the dead would come
 To comfort the living and loving
 With the ghost of a lost delight,
 And thrill into quivering welcome
 The desolate, brooding night.
 Till softly a wind from the distance
 Began to blow and blow;
 The moon bent nearer and nearer,
 And, solemn, sweet and slow,
 Came a wonderful rapture of music
 That turned to her voice at last,
 Then a cold, soft touch on his forehead,
 Like the breath of the wind that passed.
 Like the breath of the wind she touched him;
 Thin was her voice and cold;
 And something that seemed like a shadow
 Slipped through his feverish hold:
 But the voice had said, "I love you
 With my first love and my last."
 Then again that wonderful music,
 And he knew that her soul had passed.

* "The Garden of Dreams": Lyrics and Sonnets. By Louise Chandler Moulton. (Macmillan.)

SLATE WRITING WITH MR. RITA.

On Thursday last, December 4th, Mr. Rita did me the favour of sitting with me at my own house, the only other sitters being my son and his wife. We had several of the faces which commonly appear at Mr. Rita's sittings. They come out of the darkness, showing themselves by some glowing body which they carry in their hand and use it to display the face, exciting the light when they have come near enough to you, by shaking it and apparently breathing on it. But it is a very fugitive glimpse they are able to give you, although they seem very desirous of enabling you to see them. They are solid, living faces, of which they give you proof by taking your finger and making you touch their nose or cheek, and Charlie, the managing Control, who appears the oftenest, will get you to put your finger into his mouth and feel his toothless gums, and then a minute afterwards he will come with a full supply of sharp teeth. These faces hover over the table, moving from one sitter to another, but have no bodies connected with them, as Charlie often takes pains to show by taking your hand and passing it to and fro immediately under the head. They are, however, able to avail themselves of the service of hands having plenty of power, although how hands unconnected with a bodily frame can exert force remains a mystery. The faces belong to people of all kinds, male and female, dark-coloured, and white. On Thursday I had a very distinct view of a dark-coloured face of East Indian type, and also of a very white female face, muffled up about the mouth.

My chief object was to obtain writing on the inside of a pair of slates closed, and for that purpose I laid on the table a pair of hinged slates I had by me, which, when closed, fitted very exactly together all round. These I bound with a double turn of good twine round the middle quite tight, bringing the knot over the joining of the slates, and effectually sealing it there, so that it was precisely the same as if the slates had been locked together. Charlie readily agreed to try, but expressed much doubt of success. Accordingly, after the display of faces had concluded, we all sat with our hands upon the slates, and after a short time received intimation that something had been written. On lighting up, the fastening of the slates was found complete as before, the seal unbroken, and I had a good deal of difficulty in cutting them asunder. Inside, although they had not complied with a request I had written there, we found Charlie's initials, C. B. (Charles Barry), written in a strong, flowing hand, as well as an inferior signature of Jane (who was said to have been present at our sitting) on one slate, and on the other another signature of Jane and an ill-written "Good-night." When I fastened up the slates they had nothing on them except the request above mentioned.

MATTER THROUGH MATTER.

Seven or eight years ago I had a similar proof of Charlie's independence of physical obstructions. At that time Mr. Rita was sitting weekly with Captain James, as indeed he has done ever since. On the evening in question I took with me to the sitting a small pair of hinged slates which Captain James and I firmly tied up, sealing the twine where it crossed the edges of the slates; and not content with this we closed the joining of the edges all round with sealing wax, sealing it as we went along with several seals, so as to leave no orifice into the interior unclosed. There was nothing within but the usual bit of slate pencil. When this was done we sat down with the slates on the table before me. There was also on the table among other objects an old photograph of some military friend.

In the course of the sitting Charlie desired me to hold up the slates above the table. He then put a card into my hand desiring me to tear off a corner and put it into my pocket. This I did, the other part of the card being taken out of my hands. Charlie then asked me for a shilling, which I gave him, and a slight tap was heard, leading some of the sitters to suppose that the shilling had been dropped between the slates. On shaking them the rattle of something hard was heard inside that had not been there before. We then lighted up, finding the fastening of the slates untouched, with the seals unbroken, and on cutting them open we found my shilling inside, as well as the photograph which had lain on the table at the beginning of the sitting, only now it had one corner torn off. This loss was exactly supplied by the corner I had torn off the card put into my hands during the sitting, which I had kept in my pocket. I gummed it on to its place and have the photograph to this day, and no one who sees it can doubt the exactitude of the fit.

91, Gower-street.

H. WENWOOD.

JOTTINGS.

The "Sheffield and Rotherham Independent" (November 20th) has an account, of which we quote the material portion:—

Not many weeks ago there was a student at the School of Art, who was absent from the school in consequence of an attack of bronchitis. As he had been absent from the same cause on many previous occasions, nothing was thought of it; for his indisposition had always been followed by recovery and by his speedy return. So it was expected would be the case now. Certainly not the slightest idea was entertained that he was this time seriously ill; and if anyone was aware of it, that person was not one of the assistant-masters in whose class the student was. It is important to bear this in mind, for, as it seems to me, everything turns upon it. One night this assistant-master was suddenly awakened in the middle of the night. Starting up in bed he saw the form of the student standing by his bedside, and heard him say—or thought he heard him say—"I am sorry to say, Mr. ——" (for an obvious reason I do not mention the name), "I cannot do my modelling." Call it dream, vision, or what you like, this was singular; but the most astonishing part of the story remains behind. The following morning the assistant-master went to the student's house to inquire how he was. You can guess the information he obtained. Death had come to the house during the night. The student was dead. I am not quite certain as to this; but I believe the time the young man died was the exact hour when the master was awakened and saw—well, call it what you like.

Mr. W. Hardy, manager of the Sheffield Psychological Institute, informs us that he has interviewed the assistant-master referred to, and that he confirms the statement.

"The Kensington News" is devoting considerable space to letters on Spiritualism of the usual calibre. Such discussions are useful in keeping before blinking eyes a blinding subject, but they do not exercise much real influence. Conviction comes neither from Kensington nor from Highbury, not from any quarter external, but from within.

The First Division of the Supreme Court of Session of Scotland, four judges presiding, have decided that in their opinion a belief in Spiritualism is conclusive evidence of a man's incapacity to manage his worldly affairs. Very well, my lords, it is a still more conclusive evidence that he is learning to manage the more important affairs of a world to come. We can afford to wait.

We welcome the first number of the "Lyceum Banner," edited by Mr. Morse. It is, we do not doubt, wanted. It is in good hands, and will, we are assured, do good work.

Sir E. Arnold gets £5,000 for the copyright in the United States of his forthcoming "Light of the World." It will almost pay his expenses in Japan.

The "Weekly Vanguard" courteously sent to us, deals with subjects which do not come within our purview, except in a small degree. It deals—and it is easy to see from the number before us, deals well—with social, political, financial and literary subjects of the day. Financial matters especially concern it.

The "Astrologer's Magazine" for December contains the horoscope of the Duke of Edinburgh. "The illustrious native," it seems, "is entirely free to do as he will." He is, or thinks so, for his command sits lightly on his mind, and his "leaves" are many. We are glad to learn that increasing attention is being paid to Astrology.

"The Lancashire peasants, in some districts, still believe the Milky Way to be the path by which departed souls enter Heaven."—"Astrologer's Magazine."

The "Newsman" (No. 1. Price 3d.), a monthly trade magazine, sets out to give information to newsvendors, to notice new publications, and generally to give practical hints to all and sundry respecting books and papers. Will our contemporary give a practical hint to Smith and Son to put "LIGHT" on their bookstalls, and to cease to boycott? The "Newsman" is well done, and its circulation of 10,000 a month is likely to increase.

The "Phrenological Journal" (No. 5, Vol. 90) shows plenty of vigour. The "Phrenological Biography of George Combe" is concluded. That powerful and interesting man was a

great favourite with the Prince Consort as the following letter shows:—

MY DEAR MR. COMBE,—You have been several times so good as to give me a portrait of the *phrenological* conformation of our children; I take the liberty to-day of sending you Winterhalter's view of their physiognomies. May you, in looking on them sometimes, remember that their parents are very sensible of the kind interest you have taken in their welfare.

I likewise send you an illustrated catalogue of the Exhibition, knowing that you have taken a lively interest in that child of mine also. We have attempted to give the work as much as possible a scientific character; the shortness of time allowed for the completion has, however, been a great drawback.

You will be pleased to hear that the importance of Science to all industries and commercial pursuits is beginning to make itself strongly and generally felt, and may be soon publicly recognised by the establishment of institutions for its connections with those pursuits. Hoping that you are quite well, believe me always, yours truly, ALBERT.

Windsor Castle, October 29th, 1851.

The Christmas number of the "Detroit Free Press" contains two admirably illustrated stories respecting which opinions will differ. Rudyard Kipling, the idol of the hour, contributes a study of Whitechapel life. Luke Sharp sends a story of "One Day's Courtship." The former is graphic but gruesome: repulsive in its details, if true to life. We wish we had not read it. The latter is an American idyll as graceful as it is picturesque. We have seldom found in so small a space so much wholesome amusement.

The "Harbinger of Light" (October) devotes some considerable space to an account of Carl du Prel's contribution to the "Sphinx," entitled, "Die seelische Thätigkeit des Künstlers" (The Soul-activity of the Artist). "Mind independent of brain, yet shewing all the attributes of mind" is, he says, the first result of investigation, and from it he goes on "by slow but sure degrees, by a strictly scientific method of reasoning from undoubted facts, till a new heaven and a new earth are gradually opened before him, till that serene calmness of conviction, which is the indispensable condition of true happiness, becomes permanently his own."

His estimate of the importance of this infinitely ramifying subject is thus expressed:—

Where his own researches are not sufficient to establish this conviction, he has but to refer to the concurrent testimony of numerous witnesses in all parts of the civilised world deposited in thousands of volumes and an ever-increasing array of periodical literature. This literature and the number of converts to the facts and the philosophy it proclaims, counting by many millions within fifty years, are increasing at a rate unprecedented in the history of the human mind.

"Alcyone" (Springfield, U.S.A.) pursues its discussion of the whereabouts of the soul, and arrives at the conclusion that a man "does not possess a single mental attribute that is not manifested by the animals below him." A wide assertion. "It is not true that all animals are necessarily lower psychically than man." So says Dr. Lindsay in his "Mind in Lower Animals." It is a very loose assertion. A good dog is ahead of an idiot: but the highest man is over all. The Doctor should have written, "It is not true that all animals are lower than all men." Some are superior to the fag-end of our species. But that is not "Alcyone's" argument.

Ingersoll once said:—

Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.

What a pity it is that that aspiring soul is fettered! The dead do reply: the loved lips are *not* voiceless: conditions only are changed.

Carlyle was a great sinner in respect of speaking unadvisedly with his lips. He disliked the notion of being buried in Westminster Abbey, and said, "There must be a general gaol delivery of scoundrels now lying there, before any honest man's bones can rest peacefully within its walls." What does a man gain by such fustian?

Mattei is in the air. A medical correspondent, referring to the Stokes analysis of the electro-homoeopathic medicines, suggests that, if *water* is the sole constituent, Mr. Stokes should back his opinion by drinking a bottle of the fluid and see the result. We have no wish to counsel suicide.

Charles Dawbarn is reported as saying in a lecture at Summerland that "only inferior and cringing minds can ever indulge in prayer." It seems to us that this utterance, if rightly reported, is of the too common type that offends and hurts sensitive minds. We regret to read it.

"A man of free intellect thinks of nothing so little as of death; and his wisdom is not a meditation of death, but is a meditation of life." (SPINOZA.)

From the "Banner of Light":—

A Texas paper of recent date prints a notice of the presence of "Hume the famous medium," in that State. D. D. Home (or Hume, as he was called), the famous physical medium of England, passed to spirit-life some years since, and we know of no other medium by that name, "famous" or otherwise.

Mr. Colby, editor of the "Banner of Light," has passed his seventy-sixth birthday.

The "Flaming Sword," published in the year of Koresh 52, edited by Cyrus and recording doings of the Mystic Circle and the Prophet of Koresh, a broadsheet published at Chicago, is quite beyond us. There is in the number before us a sermon "written and read" (we should have said "preached") before the "Church Triumphant." So the Church Militant has been got rid of and in "Koreshians resides the hope of the world." "In you will a benighted world find a renewal of its light, its immortality, its," &c.

This is not the place to do more than draw passing attention to the strong wave of fanaticism that is passing over the world. Even the Sioux Indians execute a ghost dance in honour of their Messiah. All the prophets are at work looking out for something, and there is a general air of expectation and disquiet which indicates change.

Respecting the multitude of prophecies which are rife now as to the events in store for us between now and 1940—putting the dates roughly—Professor Elliot Ccues points out that the planet Saturn is at the bottom of the mischief, or rather that his malign influence coincides with the dates when the chief evil is foretold.

In a communication addressed to the "Religio-Philosophical Journal," the Professor states:—

In 1891, on September 22nd, Saturn being in Leo, the earth will pass from the south to the north side of Saturn's ring. There it will remain until the winter of 1905-6, when it will return to the south side, followed by the sun, Saturn being then in Aquarius. In 1921, Saturn having returned to Leo, the earth will pass again to the north side, and be soon followed by the sun. The same year (1921) the earth will again pass to the south side and back again, to remain there until 1935, when the like movements will recur, Saturn being again in Aquarius.

From the "Boston Herald" it seems that the notorious W. R. Colby is once more the victim of "exposure." Of course he is. He lives on the folly of mankind, and sometimes makes too light of it. Then the worm turns and Colby goes. That is all.

The "Review of Reviews" is largely occupied once more with "In Darkest England." Mr. Stead has naturally a predilection for that book. It is no part of our business to discuss the scheme or to offer anything but a Godspeed to any man who will grapple with a curse, a shame, and a disgrace to civilisation and Christianity. Mr. Huxley has, however, shown some cause for doubt whether the Salvation Army is an organisation best fitted for this purpose.

Mr. Stead's character sketch is "John Morley." He had exceptional opportunity for studying him, having been his assistant at the "Pall Mall Gazette" for nearly three years—a very close association—and having enjoyed other means of forming an opinion of him since. It must have been a liberal education to the perfervid Stead to face daily the

"No Dithyrambs, s'il vous plait;" "No fanaticism about vivisection, s'il vous plait" of the unemotional Morley. "He was always down on my besetting temptation to bawl when a word in an ordinary tone would have been sufficient." H'm; yes; very necessary discipline.

The contents of the "Review of Reviews" are utterly beyond our space for even brief comment. The "Review" has become under the overmastering energy and omnivorous reading of its Editor—one of the best we ever had—a monumental success.

"The New Review" has for its character study—what a mania there is for psychical vivisection!—Dr. Koch. Archdeacon Farrar devotes many pages of word-embroidery, fringe and frippery and little else, to "Darkest England." "Folios and Footlights" is as bright as ever. "The World's Desire" has mercifully come to an end. The most important and interesting paper is one that gives us "Two newly-discovered papers by De Quincey." Dr. Norman Kerr's "Ether Drinking" is a very startling article.

"The Inquirer" (November 29th) has an article on "Psychic Control over Physical Pain and Pleasure," in the course of which occurs this passage:—

Will any ethical writer or theological preacher arise who will show us by example and precept how through suffering, voluntary and involuntary, a strength of character may be gained which lifts up the spirit into sweetness and calm, and will they show us, on the other hand, how, immersed as we are in humanity's low vulgarities, it is possible to put forth a spiritual power to subdue and neutralise them? There are in the spheres of theology and of general literature many men with abundance of intellectual talent; but talent is only one of the requisites of redeeming and uplifting power. We still need the teachers who shall show us by their inward and outward life, by their speech, their manners, their bearing and behaviour, their aspirations and endeavours, how our earthly sorrows may be turned into spiritual joys, and how our earthly joys may be subdued and controlled and made subordinate to refinement and purity of a more ethereal kind.

In addition to many not yet noticed by reason of space, we have on our table the "Buddhist" (Ceylon), with an account of Exorcism of Demons in Ceylon; the "Buddhist Ray" (Santa Cruz); some "Whirlwinds," which have disturbed the rest of our papers and created confusion among them; and a number of more modest and sedate journals which space permits us only to acknowledge.

ASSEMBLY OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

On Tuesday evening next, December 16th, at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., Mr. Waite will deliver an address on "The Interior Life from the Standpoint of the Mystics." The address commences at 7.30 p.m. Mr. E. Maitland will occupy the chair.

THE BISHOP OF DURHAM AND MR. BOOTH.

These are striking words of a Bishop of the Established Church to the leader of what he must regard as a great Schismatical movement. In such words there is spirit and there is life:—

"My thoughts have been with the poor all my life, and at last I am brought face to face with the problems of social life as objects of direct practical labour. Terrible as they are, I can re-echo your words in faith and hope. Life is very different in the north and in the south. Here there is no scarcity of work, nor are the hours long, but there is grievous wretchedness. There can be no permanent improvement, I feel sure, except by the action of spiritual forces. I need not say with how much sympathy I followed the record of your loss, but God gives—may we not trust?—more than He takes. All Saints' Day is a great reality. We can, I think, feel a fellowship which is beyond time and space. No friend is more present to me than my predecessor. May God bless every endeavour to hasten His kingdom upon earth."

A LADY medium invites a lady and gentleman to her private weekly séance; no charge.—Address, Ayden, 21, Ayubee-road, Addison-road Station.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
2, DUKE STREET,
ADELPHI, W.C.

Light:

EDITED BY "M. A. (OXON.)"

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13th, 1890.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to the Editor.

"UNFATHOMED MYSTERIES."

By "M. A. (OXON.)"

"Tales From Blackwood" (No. II. of Series iii.), just published, contains "Christmas Eve on a Haunted Hulk," a story of a particularly creepy nature, already familiar to me. It is of the regular old "ebony" type, warranted to act more forcibly than a cup of strong green tea on going to bed.

There is also, in the same number, an article called "Unfathomed Mysteries," which more engages my attention. It was contributed to "Maga" as far back as May, 1883, and had escaped my notice. Some short account of the experiences detailed in it may be of interest.

In the beginning of 1880 the writer was in Boston (Mass.), and considered that it was wrong not to avail himself of the opportunity to make personal acquaintance with Spiritualism. He was directed to the office of the *Banner of Light*, and was shown a register, such as is kept at a servants' registry. What kind of medium would he like? He took several addresses at random, and finally made an appointment for the next day with "an attractive little lady of fragile and delicate appearance." Three ladies joined the party, and all started immediately after breakfast, "in the most mirthful frame of mind . . . without one thought of anything serious in the matter." "Mrs. N. W. (the medium) did not even know our names:" opportunity for getting up the facts she afterwards so accurately detailed there was none—absolutely none.

There was no pretence of bogie; no darkened room, only the simplest pretty furniture in the full sunlight of a brilliant winter's morning. A small circle was formed, the medium was entranced, and uttered an invocation which seems to have taken them all aback, "so entirely incongruous was that solemn appeal with the spirit in which we had sought the interview."

Then commenced the revelations, first to one of the ladies: then to the gentleman who had brought them. A lost love warned him—"Now, Willy (said the medium), you must not cry; for, if you do so, I cannot tell what you say"—not to trust George so thoroughly. That last investment was not good. She had been so sad to leave him. The man was profoundly astonished, and avowed that all was rightly described.

Then Mrs. N. W. turned to the writer and described "a short thick-set man; he has been an old-fashioned looking fellow ever since his boyhood." Then (says the writer) she "gave such a minute description of various physical peculiarities, so very marked as to be quite unmistakable." My brother John! No thought of him had crossed his mind in the midst of his levity. He was so different from all his stalwart brothers, and yet a mighty hunter, who had gone to Ceylon and died from pressure on the brain. The medium described him exactly. "How he does love sport! But (putting her hand to her head) how he suffered here before he died!"

I cannot give the obviously sincere and solemn words in which the writer expresses his extreme wonder at this revelation. The levity was gone now. A sister Ida came next. "Certainly, not one soul (he says) in all America knew any of the facts which Mrs. N. W. told me that day." What was it? Thought-reading? He had not had these matters in his mind. But it might have been? Well: the next event throws light on that explanation. The medium described a young man who fell on the field of Alma, and gave a name other than that which was in the writer's mind, one by which his wife alone called him. She passed on to describe a lady with him. She had an uncommon name, SEV. . . But the medium could make out no more. "I need scarcely say that the name of my eldest sister Seymour, had presented itself vividly to my mind: yet she could not make this out. Clearly not thought-reading."

Space forbids me from quoting more evidence on this particular point. But two reflections arise. Spiritualists are apt to generalise as rapidly as their critics freely dispose of their evidence. But here we have confessed levity met with the most solemn and convincing evidence of a life beyond the grave. Like, then, does not always attract like. And it is not given to all to get at once the proof that this writer secured. I am more and more convinced that there must be a magnetic rapport between medium and circle before any such evidence as this can be obtained. The most earnest desire for evidence often defeats its object, for it sets up mental conditions that are prohibitory. Here careless ease got, by its mere passivity, what a yearning, sorrowing soul might have failed to find. I am very sure that we have not mastered the conditions of successful mediumship. A. goes to a medium and comes empty away. B. follows, and the portals of the world to come fly open. Why? I have often heard from those who have visited mediums in the States, in the course of a flying visit to that land, which I have ventured to call "The Judea of Spiritualism," and have found nothing to reward them. I have known others who have been overwhelmed with matter for reflection. It is a lottery, and will be so till we solve the problem of mediumship by cautious experiment.

This particular medium, moreover, was apparently able to clairvoyantly go to any mentally specified spot, find persons thought of by the inquirer, and describe them and their surroundings.

The article concludes with a graphic account of an address at a Spiritualist meeting one Sunday in New York. It startled the writer, and he smelt a little blasphemy, or irreverence at least. My readers would probably see none. The days that were when the Bible was compiled are too like the days in which we live for the parallel to be passed by.

The narrative that I have thus rapidly noticed is one that I recommend to the attention of those who wonder whether there is "anything in Spiritualism," and still more to those who have a cut-and-dried method of explaining these mysteries.

MR. ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

At the annual meeting of the Royal Society last week, the newly established Darwin Medal, together with a grant of £100, was awarded to Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, whose fame as a co-discoverer with Darwin is thus emphasised and acknowledged in a flattering and graceful manner.

At the subsequent banquet Dr. Hopkinson, in returning thanks for the medallists, spoke in eulogistic terms of Mr. Wallace's work, and added:—"He would set him forth as an example of that chivalrous feeling which one would wish men of science should always exhibit. They all knew the story of how Wallace had worked out the theory of natural selection and was ready to publish, of how he learned that Darwin had worked it out further and worked at it earlier, and how he had postponed his own publication till Darwin had time to take the first place."

ASSEMBLY OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

On Tuesday, December 2nd, Mr. Thomas Shorter delivered an address on "Reminiscence and Re-incarnation." In the unavoidable absence of the President from continued illness, the chair was taken by Mr. Morell Theobald, Vice-President. Among those present we observed:—

Mr. T. Blyton, Miss Brinckley, Mrs. Banister, Miss Bainbridge, Mr. and Mrs. Carden, Mr. F. Clark, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Desmond Fitzgerald, Miss Marie Gifford, Mr. T. Grant, Mrs. Oswin, Mr. Paul Preyss, Mrs. Parrick, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, Mr. Roy, Mr. Thomas Shorter, Miss Shorter, Mr. Morell Theobald, Miss F. J. Theobald, Miss Rowan Vincent, Mr. H. Withall, &c., &c.

REMINISCENCE AND RE-INCARNATION.

There are two chief pillars on which the argument for Re-incarnation mainly rests. One is that it furnishes the only satisfactory explanation of moral evil and of reconciling it with Divine justice. I dealt with this contention in the address I had the honour of delivering before you last session; and although fragmentary criticisms on detached passages in it have appeared, and been replied to, yet as a whole it has not been controverted, and I, therefore, need not refer to it. The second pillar is the doctrine of Reminiscence, which I will endeavour to put before you as concisely as possible. Some of us meet persons for the first time, yet with a strange sense that we have met before; we go to places unknown to us, yet they wear the familiar look of old acquaintance; events happen in our life, and it seems to us that they are but a repetition of what has happened to us before. How are these mysterious psychical experiences to be accounted for unless they be reminiscences of a life that has gone before? We know they have not happened to us in our present life. They must, therefore, be the experience of a former one; a sudden shaft of light flashing into the darkened chambers of memory, giving a transient glimpse of a life that has been? That is Reminiscence. At the first look it certainly appears to yield a firm and substantial support to the Re-incarnation theory. Is it as solid as it is specious? or will it, like the argument from moral evil, prove a pillar of sand? If pre-existence is not the explanation what is the true, or, at least, the probable explanation of these experiences? That is the question to which I shall exclusively address myself this evening. It is the more incumbent to do so because it is the only kind of direct evidence that is offered us, and failing that, pure speculation and bare conjecture alone remain.

One consideration strikes us at the outset of our inquiry. If Re-incarnation be a universal law we might naturally expect that the memory of so great an event in our personal history would be equally universal, that we all should be able to remember and profit by the rich experiences of a life that has gone before. But, contrary to such expectation, experiences of this kind are extremely exceptional; indeed, so rare that you may pass through a long lifetime without meeting anyone who has been the subject of them. I think, however, that there can be no reasonable question, that however rarely they may happen, they sometimes occur. Not only, however, are these experiences exceptional, but they take place under conditions which are exceptional and abnormal, such as disease, nervous prostration, and bodily or mental exhaustion. Sir Walter Scott, when suffering under mental strain from protracted literary labour, relates how, when with a few old friends, he was strongly haunted by a sense of pre-existence. It seemed to him that nothing happened for the first time. The place, the company, the topics discussed, the opinions expressed, all had taken place before. The delusion was as complete as that of a mirage in the desert. Again, Dickens, in his "Notes from Italy" tells us that his first sight of Ferrara, from the balcony of his hotel, seemed to him to be but a scene that he had witnessed before in all its details, and so strong was this impression upon his

mind that he said if he had been murdered there in a former life the recollection could not have seemed to be more complete or been attended with a more emphatic chilling of the blood. What are we to say of experiences of that kind? How are we to account for them? They are not by any means novel, they are not debated for the first time in our day, nor are they peculiar to any one school of thought. They have been discussed by ancient philosophers and modern theologians. More recently they have been considered from their several points of view by the physiologist, the metaphysician, the man of science, the novelist, and the poet. Some of these, and others which I propose to lay before you, suggest themselves to my own reflection. I am the more inclined to do so because, as I noticed when addressing you last session, our friends of the Spiritist persuasion seemed to be strangely unacquainted with, or to ignore, all other theories on the subject than their own; they seemed to consider that they hold exclusive and undisputed possession of the whole field, whereas in point of fact they have only a precarious hold of one corner.

These theories may broadly be divided into two classes, the physiological and the psychical. In our composite nature, indeed, no such sharp line of demarcation can be drawn, and, perhaps, in the last analysis, all problems of our nature are psychical. But by physiological, I mean those which apparently originate in, or are dependent on, bodily conditions, and by psychical those which appear to have their rise and seat in our spiritual nature; or are impressed upon it by spiritual agency from without. In 1844 a work was published by Dr. Wigan, under the title of the "Duality of the Mind." In this work he contends that the mind is dual in its whole structure, corresponding to the duality of the brain. The two hemispheres of the brain usually act together synchronously and produce a single harmonious impression; but it is not necessarily or always so. In certain states of disease and of abnormal action each cerebral hemisphere may act separately and independently. If an impression is produced upon one hemisphere of the brain it leaves a faint impression; and when the impression is made subsequently on the whole brain the first impression will seem like the memory of a distinct event, and as it has not entered into the entire consciousness there is no time measure by which to determine its duration; as in sleep the events of a life may be crowded into a few moments. When the full impression is produced the first memory may seem not only independent but remote, and even as if it were the memory of a former life. Dr. Wigan gives an experience of his own in illustration. He was present at the funeral of Princess Charlotte. He shared in the general feeling of pain which the melancholy occurrence of her death occasioned throughout England. He had passed a sleepless night, and had been standing many hours, and was worn out with hunger, emotion, and fatigue. He would have fainted but for his interest in the scene. As the ceremony proceeded and whilst the coffin was being lowered there came over his mind a strong conviction that he had witnessed the scene with all its circumstances before; the same funeral pall, the same building, and the same company, grouped in the same way, with the same expression of features; and had heard the same "miserere," and even the same observation addressed to him by his friend, Sir George Naylor. Whatever the explanation of this may be, one thing is certain, it was not the memory of a pre-incarnate life. Such an event had no precedent, no parallel. The "miserere" of Mozart is a limiting-time mark; and to suppose that all this had exactly happened before in some pre-historic time would involve a complex of impossible absurdities. Nor does his experience stand alone. Others of a like kind might be given, and if it is evident that this is not the explanation in certain instances, it raises the presumption that it may not be so in any, although from the nature of the case it cannot be so clearly shown. The theory put forward by Dr. Wigan occasioned at the time much controversy, but even its most strenuous opponents were constrained to admit that such experiences were in all probability due to some abnormal or diseased condition of the brain and consequent derangement of its functions.

Another explanation offered is that of antenatal conditions, the influence of parentage and ancestry, or, as Herbert Spencer calls it, heredity. Pope speaks of "the tenth transmitter of a foolish face," and anyone who will inspect a long line of family portraits will be able

to ratify the truth of this principle of transmission. He will see a persistence of type in form, and face, and feature, and expression, sometimes disappearing for two or three generations, and then again reappearing. Nor is it in form and face alone. Tendencies to particular forms of disease are transmitted from generation to generation, as in gout, scrofula, consumption. And intellectual and moral qualities may be transmitted in the same way—intellectual aberration, and moral obliquity, tendencies to intemperance, kleptomania, and even homicide. This is still more marked in parentage, and especially in maternal parentage. Any intense longing or desire, concentration of mind on a particular object, a strong emotion, or a powerful impression, however induced, may communicate itself through the mother to the yet unborn child, and leave its permanent impress, not only on the plastic organism, but in the psychical nature, and eventually manifest its presence, though it may be latent for a long period, as in the case of the vitality of seeds, which may be buried in the earth for thousands of years, and yet will germinate and flower when exposed to solar light and heat. And again, as when a photographic impression has been made on a sensitive plate, it may be removed, but it is not obliterated; it is printed into the very substance of the plate, and by the application of electricity may be developed. So with regard to the ante-natal influences to which I have referred. Impressions may be produced which will lead to the development of some peculiar intellectual or moral trait: for instance, some beautiful object in nature or art, mountain scenery, a grand picture, a fine opera, a tragedy of Shakespeare. And should the child in after life be placed in similar circumstances, witness the like scenery, opera, picture, or play, not only will a like impression be produced which in itself would have no special significance, but there will be a dim haunting sense that all these things have been seen before. They will come to him faint and far, as from some distant shore of past experience, giving rise to those shadowy recollections, that obstinate questioning of sense and outward things, that vague sense of something felt like something here, of which poets speak, and which seems to be at the base of all forms of the doctrine of Pre-existence. Perhaps this may be more properly called a psycho-physiological cause than one purely physiological.

Some, not content with any physiological explanation, seek it in causes more directly connected with our spiritual nature; as, for instance, in the exercise of the soul's power of Prevision. There is a faculty of the mind which under certain conditions can project itself into the future, as in the ordinary act of memory it projects itself into the past, and distinctly, as in vision, events yet future will appear before it. A striking instance of this is related in the "Confessions of Rousseau." He tells us that once in a day-dream, or waking reverie, he clearly perceived the lady to whom he was afterwards united, though at that time she was unknown to him. Some seven or eight years afterwards he actually met the lady for the first time in the place and under the circumstances he had seen in his vision. Now, if this vision had been forgotten, the impression on his mind remaining, it would certainly have seemed reasonable and probable that his instant recognition of her was due to their having met and known each other in a former life. Our life here is dual. There is not only the life of waking consciousness, but there is the sleep or dream-life. It is to one class of experience of the latter to which I would more especially direct your attention—those which occur in visions of the night when deep sleep falleth upon men—

"When the hours of Day are numbered,
And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,"

when the sleep of the body seems to give increased activity to the spirit, when it seems liberated from the limitations of the body and enters into free space, and it may be even into the world of spirit, and brings back the knowledge and experience it has gained into waking consciousness. Tennyson in that fine poem, "The Two Voices," discusses the question of Pre-existence. He says:—

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?"

and he adds:

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

Of something felt, like something here,
Of something done, I know not where,
Such as no language may declare."

They may well be like glimpses of forgotten dreams, because that is what they literally and truly are. Some years ago, in the columns of the "Spiritualist," there was an interesting correspondence on this subject, and some very instructive examples were given. I may mention one, not, perhaps, as the most striking, or as the best, but as that which I happen best to remember. The writer tells us that he had a very vivid dream of being in a city that was new and strange to him, unlike any that he had seen. So powerful was this impression upon his mind, with all its attendant circumstances, that on waking he wrote down the dream. It remained on his mind a long time, but, as dreams will do, it gradually faded away and was forgotten. When, however, in the course of his travels, he visited Venice, he seemed to be strangely affected by a sense that he had been there before, although he knew that this was not the case. Everything seemed familiar to him—the grand palaces with their magnificent architecture, some falling to decay; there was the Bridge of Sighs over which he had passed; there was the noble square of St. Mark; every object he saw he seemed to have anticipated. What could it all mean? Suddenly the dream of fourteen years ago flashed upon his memory, and the mystery was cleared up. But had that dream entirely vanished, had it been wholly forgotten, what more natural than to have concluded that his recognition must have been due to his having been acquainted with that famous city of the sea in a former life, and that it was a memory of a place in which he had been a dweller?

There is an allied group of psychical states which must be briefly referred to in this connection. In trance and clairvoyance, as in dream-life, we pass beyond the limitations of sense, and are able to perceive and accurately describe persons and places distant and unknown. In telepathy, thought-reading and thought-transfer there is a direct communion of mind without the mediation of the senses, and in certain states of hypnotism the mind and will of the subject are dominated by a foreign mind and will, and a suggestion may be implanted only to come into the consciousness and take effect at a pre-determined time; it may be after an interval of weeks or months. In all these states on returning to normal consciousness the subject is, however, rarely sensible of what has happened; but though dormant, the impression that has been made is not dead; it may be awakened by the application of proper stimuli. If, for instance, a clairvoyant should visit a scene or meet a person described clairvoyantly, that experience will recur to memory, and if the source of that experience is unknown or forgotten, it will not uncommonly seem as if this were the recollection of a former life.

Again, there is a possible source of such peculiar psychical experience—a source of which, unfortunately, we know little, but which, if confirmed by further investigation, opens out such vast and far-reaching possibilities that the subject should not be passed over without notice—I refer to what is called psychometry. I am not aware that any systematic investigations of the subject have taken place in this country, although successful experiments have from time to time been made. In America, however, the subject has been studied for half a century by Professor Buchanan, who has given us the result of his investigations in two considerable volumes; and the late Professor Denton, of Boston, the distinguished geologist, instituted an independent series of investigations, extending over many years, with different sensitives, or, as he terms them, psychometers, and in his book, "The Soul of Things," he details more than a hundred of these experiments. From these it would appear that a small piece of limestone rock, a meteoric stone, a Roman brick, in fact any object with

which the psychometer has been placed *en rapport*, will at once bring before him a revelation of the object to which that specimen belonged, with its accompanying environment. Nature would thus seem to be a storehouse in which is recorded the history of our globe and its inhabitants. Professor Hitchcock says there is a universal photographic influence in nature which is constantly printing in indelible characters images of every surrounding object, and these it would appear unroll, as in panoramic picture, before the clairvoyant vision of the psychometric seer. We are, as it were, in the midst of an ocean ever pressing against the bark of our mortal life, all around and from behind, as it glides swiftly on through the silent sea of time toward the great eternity. These considerations are of far wider application than may at first appear. We may not become entranced, clairvoyant, or hypnotised, but we all, however unconsciously, influence each other. There is a constant commerce of thought and feeling. Some distinguished men of science have even suggested that they register themselves in the atmosphere. We say a thought is in the air; we know not "whence it cometh or whither it goeth"; it is born silently in upon the mind. The spirit inhales a thought atmosphere as our lungs breathe the common air. With all these influences around, and impinging on us in every direction, it surely would seem to be the very fatuity of ignorance and egoism to determine that, because we know not the immediate source of any impression, therefore it must be the reminiscence of our own pre-carnate personal life.

There remains to be briefly noticed one source of these psychical experiences, more subtle, potent, and ubiquitous than any other, and with which as a Spiritualist Alliance we are more immediately concerned—the influence upon thought and life of the world of departed humanity.

This supplies a key which, if rightly used, will unlock many of the deeper mysteries of our nature; but I must restrict myself to one phase of this vast subject directly bearing on our inquiry.

Swedenborg tells us, and his statement is confirmed by much present experience, that we have each an attendant or familiar spirit closely resembling us in appearance, disposition, and character, and in point of development not greatly in advance of us.

The spirit and the man are so intimately associated that what is in the memory of the man enters into that of the spirit, and the memory of the spirit enters into that of the man, and they are so intimately blended that the man knows not other than that it is his own. Now apply this to the matter in hand. The spirit has but to vividly recall a scene or incident of his earthly life, and it is straightway reflected upon the memory of the man as an object is reflected in a mirror. It seems to him to have originated in himself, to have been a veritable experience of his own; it is not an experience of his own present life, it must, therefore, be the reminiscence of a pre-incarnate life. I believe this to be the general explanation of those psychical experiences erroneously ascribed to Reminiscence and so emphatically appealed to as evidence that we individually have a plurality of terrestrial lives.

Besides these general sources of mystic memory—and I do not profess to have exhausted them—there may be others which can only be classed as accidental and personal. For instance, a recent correspondent in "LIGHT" has pointed out that the experience of Dickens, which I have referred to, may simply have been the memory of a representation of that very scene which occurs in the opera of "Lucrezia Borgia," and which he may many years before have witnessed from the balcony of a theatre. The suggestion is the more plausible and probable when we remember that Dickens was an enthusiastic playgoer, and when we remember, moreover, what his biographer tells us, that the characters of his own creation were so palpable and real to him that they seemed to appear before him in bodily form, and to haunt him in the street. Had he been a Re-incarnationist he would probably have hailed Mr. Samuel Pickwick and Mr. Ralph Nickleby as old acquaintances of a bygone generation.

My general conclusion of the whole matter is that the doctrine of Reminiscence, on which the theory of Re-incarnation is so largely dependent, is a misinterpretation of certain obscure psychical and physiological experiences, which admit of adequate and more rational and probable explanation in the operation of known, though unfamiliar, causes; and that the childish, crude, and clumsy theory of Re-incarna-

tion is superfluous. Eliminating all that has been urged that may be considered as merely speculative and doubtful, yet I submit that we are dealing with real and not imaginary causes, not with figments of fancy, but with facts of actual experience. We are not chasing phantoms in the air nor following seductive but misleading lights, luring us through bog and mire, only to find that we have been pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp, which leaves us at last floundering in the ditch. We are under the better guidance of those ancient and safer lights, Nature and Experience, and of that inductive method so fruitful in augmenting the sum of human knowledge. Leaving it, then, to the philosophers of Laputa to extract moonbeams from cucumbers, let us continue with all care and diligence to explore the arcana of our own spiritual being, having regard not only or chiefly to their speculative aspects, but to their practical issue, to the deepening of our knowledge, and more accurate thought, to their bearings on character and life, our relations, duties, and the conditions that determine our destiny in the great future that awaits us.

At the close of the address some remarks were offered by Mr. Paul Preyss, Mr. T. Blyton, and Mr. F. Clark, and the proceedings closed with a cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Shorter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Apparitions of the Living.

SIR,—The remarkable case cited last week in "Notes by the Way" has an important bearing on the whole fabric of Spiritualism; and it is to be hoped that the gentleman concerned will furnish full and minute details, without which it is impossible to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Without pretending to solve the problem I would submit one or two points that may help to throw light on it.

First of all clairvoyant descriptions at public meetings are generally vague and unreliable, and although in this case the clairvoyants correctly described the gentleman's wife and daughter, they made the mistake of supposing them to have died. This is not unusual. Clairvoyants, if not highly developed, often find it difficult to decide whether they see merely a representation of someone (living or not), or whether there is the actual presence of some person who has passed away.

The perception is, in fact, often only a psychometric reading of scenes or persons in connection with those present. So far the present case might be easily explained. But there is a greater difficulty.

The familiar forms appear materialised, as in the flesh; even the voices are recognised. Probably also they may have given what are usually called tests. I do not think that the explanation is thought projection taking objective form, because we undoubtedly have an acting living being, endowed with both will and intelligence.

Compare this phenomenon with that of doubles. The latter have been known, I believe, not only to appear, but also to do physical acts such as knocking, &c. Furthermore, they have occasionally been observed by more than one person at a time.

If we could understand how the counterfeit presentment of a living man can appear where that man is not, we should be very near the explanation of the materialised forms of living persons; though, no doubt, the phenomena are distinct.

The double usually seems to partake of the nature of an automaton, while materialised forms always appear as intelligent human beings, as much alive as any of us.

Occultists of the Theosophical school tell us that materialisations are caused by elementals taking possession of the "astral corpses" of deceased persons, and clothing them with matter derived from the medium. But in the case under consideration there was no deceased person, and, therefore, no astral corpse.

Now it is well known that flowers and other objects can be materialised, i.e., an imitation of something already existing is possible. In India, I believe, bunches of flowers have been duplicated; and in Madame Blavatsky's presence articles have been formed in exact counterpart of objects on which some person in the company had fixed his or her mind.

Suppose then that some beings at a circle—elementals, elementaries, low human spirits, or what you will—had thi

power of moulding forms and suppose them also to be able to read mental pictures. We shall then have no difficulty in comprehending that they might build up the forms of absent friends, or, perhaps, that they themselves assume those forms. If they can construct and imitate a lace shawl why not also the features of some well-known face? And, no doubt, the voice could be imitated equally well.

It is worth emphasising that no one who has seen or even read of materialisations is likely to doubt that the entities concerned are sentient intelligent beings, apparently human, and not mere automatic machines. It is not enough to say that the information given at such seances is latent in the minds of the sitters or connected in some way with the astral corpse. There is at least some being possessed of sufficient strength, will, and intelligence to utilise such information, however obtained.

This strange case may help to teach us how much the true and the false are intermixed in Spiritualism, and that we have not yet found any sure distinguishing test.

G. A. K.

SIR,—The exceedingly important story related in your "Notes" last week, and the pregnant words in the leading article on the same, "I need not point out what issues affecting a large mass of evidence as regards its interpretation are foreshadowed in these questions," will, doubtless, bring you many letters, and one must be very brief in answering your challenge. For myself I am unable to resist the conclusion, assuming the full authenticity of the fact of materialisation in view of other witnesses, that we must exercise extreme caution in deducing conclusions from the evidence in similar cases which leads us to accept the spirits of the dead as of necessity the agents in immediate contact, so to speak, with the circle where the phenomenon is experienced.

May it not still be logically held that "spirit" agency is at work, making use of materials at hand to produce objectively the mental pictures presented by the percipient? The dominating thought in the subject of your story was the wife and child, and the photographs would supply the material for manipulating the likeness of the forms, and the memory of the husband, the voice, gestures, and other characteristics, to complete the recognised presentment.

Many years ago you demonstrated the fact that masks are made by the controlling intelligences, and are manipulated to form likenesses as "tests" for such as required them. I may cite a case reported in "LIGHT" where a perfect test of identity was given. Everything was complete in all details excepting that the wrong eye was missing. That change from accuracy was apparently purposely made to allow the light to fall on the face for fuller recognition. It was the face of one who had died some eighteen months previously. It is not necessary to infer that his spirit was "present" further than that he gave the knowledge to the manipulator, who alone, perhaps, was accessible to him, and was able to effect the purpose. It would be a superstition to suppose that the spirit of the dead was, as we conceive and say, in that form.

Now, applying the experience in that instance to the case before us: in this latter we may think that an intelligence, whose craft is materialising for others who cannot command that power, made the forms, deriving them from the presence of, and helped by the photographs on, the person of Mr. A., whereas in the former case the manipulator took his instructions from the free spirit himself. I must be content with this hint, at any rate for the present. We may draw our conclusions, great or small, right or wrong, as our reason, not prejudice, direct.

M. A. I.

SIR,—As you invite interpretations of the materialisation of beings still in the flesh, as related in "LIGHT" of December 6th, may not the solution be found in the seances attended by the gentleman?

These, in the absence of special notice to the contrary, we must assume were of the usual type of public seances, viz., attended by a variety of characters, both embodied and disembodied.

The disembodied seeing the anxiety of the gentleman in connection with the photographs in his pocket, and not being of the most elevated order of spirits, personated the photographs, probably, to gratify him, and not knowing they were the photographs taken twenty-four years ago of still living beings.

The materials being ready in the atmosphere for materialisation, the personation of the photographs (mark—not the living beings twenty-four years older) was an easy matter to the spirits; and the magnetism still existing in those photographs would suggest to them sufficient of the manner appertaining to the originals to identify it with them to the gentleman.

This seems to me the simple and natural solution of the phenomenon; but it reads us a lesson—that public seances can never be entirely relied on. They certainly teach the bare fact of the presence of the disembodied, which is much, but that once learnt, investigation should go on, as you have so often taught, in the privacy and sanctity of the strictly private circle, formed of but few, and those few in perfect harmony of spirit; that spirit purified and sanctified by the highest aspirations—not of this world.

Then will investigators never have to complain of falsehood in any shape or form, for the pure in heart will attract those like unto themselves in the spirit-land, when false representation becomes impossible.

In addressing this letter to you, dear sir, I wish to seize the opportunity of expressing to you how much I sympathise with you in your long and severe illness, and how earnestly I trust you may soon be restored to health, both for your own sake and that of our cause.

"LILY."

The Double.

SIR,—Your correspondent "T. Hawkins Simpson" writes:—"I should also be greatly obliged to any one who can give me a clearly established instance of the well defined fluidic body of a person being seen at a distance from his physical body by one who had not been under mesmeric influence."

I will, if you please, answer this question, and you will observe that the account I shall write is asked for in other columns of your issue dated 6th inst., in which curiously enough Mr. Simpson's letter is published.

At 10.30 of Thursday night, July 31st, 1890, I looked at the clock in the smoking-room of the Athenæum Club, where I was playing at *ecarté*. I did so because I was anxiously debating with myself whether I should, or should not, leave the room at 11.30 p.m., which I usually do on such occasions. I decided, not without considerable inner conflict, caused by breach of habit, that I should not do so if I were a loser at 11.30. That happened, I stayed on, and slept at an hotel in Jernyn-street.

At 10.30 of that same Thursday night my wife was lying awake in bed at our house at Mottingham, which is, say, nine miles from the Athenæum Club. She had not been to sleep, she was wide awake, when, she says, she heard my footstep on the gravel road in front of the house. She heard me come to the front door, then she heard the noise of my heavy umbrella handle, which is shod with silver, striking against the panel, where I place it when I have to open the door. She heard me fumbling with my keys in an attempt to open the door. But, then, waiting some time expecting to hear me open the door and come into the house, and, failing to hear me do so, she came downstairs and said "Is that you?" She next walked to the door and said "Are you there?" Getting no answer, she called downstairs two servants. The door was opened and nobody was outside it.

At about 7.30 a.m. of August 1st, 1890, Emma Budd, a servant, came into the bedroom where my wife was, bringing with her a cup of tea. My wife, seeing the girl looking at the empty bed in which I usually sleep, and also seeing that the girl was surprised to see it had not been slept in, said, "Mr. Elliot has not been at home during the night." Emma said, "Why, I have just seen him pass by the dining-room window." My wife asked, "How was he dressed?" Emma said, "He had on his black coat, high hat, and his umbrella in his hand." Emma added that she was near the sideboard when she saw me pass the window. At 7.30 a.m. of August 1st, 1890, I was asleep in bed at the British Hotel, in Jernyn-street.

On that date I wrote to your esteemed correspondent, "C.C.M.," sending him depositions of my wife and Emma Budd, and narrating particulars pretty much as I am writing them now.

Subsequently the depositions were sent to Mr. F. W. H. Myers, of the Psychical Research Society; my wife and Emma Budd were severely cross-examined by me and questioned on lines suggested by Mr. Myers. Neither of them deviates at all from the plain accounts they have stuck to from the first. Emma says she knows it was I for I was wearing my hat on the back of my head as I always do.

Mr. Myers questioned me as to whether my wife is what is called a medium or not. I will not write on that subject just now. But I will say that my wife never sat at a séance, nor did Emma Budd. Neither of them knows anything about what is called Spiritualism. As to me, I am conscious of my ignorance of causes, and I will not load your paper with further matter of fact. I have never been mesmerised, nor has my wife, nor Emma Budd.

GILBERT ELLIOT,
December 5th, 1890. Bombay Civil Service (Retired).

"The Perfect Way."

SIR,—I have just finished reading "The Perfect Way; or, the Finding of Christ," as well as its severe criticism by Mr. Newton Crosland, and I wish, if I may be allowed, to give my own humble opinion of it also. "The Perfect Way; or, the Finding of Christ" may be looked at from many points of view. Judging by the sublime subjects it attempts to deal with, the innumerable points of suggestion, and the many glimpses of true light dispersed here and there in it, it appears as a beginning of, or an attempt at, Divine revelation. But that either the instrument through which it began to be transmitted was wrong, or it failed during the transmission, and the writers taking those few glimpses, adding previously-expounded truths, mixing up much of their own imagination, and crowding them with an amount of contradictory and meaningless phrases, created such a wonder of incomprehensibility as, if we are to take it as a revelation, needs a great many other and larger books to reveal and explain to us "The Perfect Way" itself.

But it may be looked at in another light, by which we can find the book to have a certain scope. It may be looked at as a dish fit only for certain individual tastes, who could never eat any cooking, no matter how tasty and wholesome, if it be not garnished and ornamented with a good deal of useless and tasteless sauces and called by some French name. The common-sense talk and plain truth, as taught in "M.A. (Oxon.'s)" "Spirit Teachings," would be too common for a certain class of people, but give to them a subject buried in an amount of mystical lore, throw in here and there a few foreign words that are not understood by the plebeian, and you make them enthusiastic about it. I am sure that the only way some people—and especially in England—would accept Spiritualism, would be to present it to them in some such a way as the above book presents it. They want it in some shape and words that the vulgar would not understand, for they cannot be made to at once accept the idea that they and the common people are one and the same, and have to walk the same path, and, therefore, I say that "The Perfect Way; or, the Finding of Christ" serves a certain good purpose and does not merit all Mr. Crosland's severity.

Patras, Greece. S. KAPPAEAKI.
December 1st, 1890.

Pre-existence.

SIR,—Pre-existence is a hypothesis for which much can be said. An objection which often occurs to me is the likeness of children to parents in moral and intellectual traits, and the likeness of children of the same family to one another in the same respect. "Prima facie," the likeness of children of the same family to one another, in respect to spiritual attributes, would seem to point to their common origin as spiritual beings, and, "prima facie," the likeness of parents to children, in respect to spiritual attributes, would seem to point to the conjugation of parents as that in which children, as spiritual beings, have their origin. While children resemble their parents they also differ from them; and the explanation of this difference may also lie in the fact of conjugation, the spiritual elements which children derive from one parent being modified by the spiritual elements derived from the other.

I speak tentatively only, and I would like to ask older students what reply is usually made to these objections, for I cannot think they are new, or that they have not already been replied to. In particular, since an adequate understanding of such questions can be attained only through a profound study of metaphysics, I would like to know in what way these objections would be met by a metaphysical student like your correspondent "C. C. M.," and also might I ask such of your correspondents as may be able to inform me, in what way these objections are met by spirits who

teach the doctrine of Re-incarnation—Re-incarnation implying pre-existence?

Again speaking tentatively, I can imagine a threefold answer: (1) Affinity, being a law that governs the association of human beings, may be conceived also to govern the association of spirits about to incarnate, on the one hand, with spirits already incarnated, on the other. A case in which a child shows markedly unlike to other children of the same family and to its parents may be ascribed to a spirit having incarnated for a special purpose; for spirits, like ourselves, must be considered to have the power of setting aside the law of affinity in order to accomplish various ends. (2) Even in grown-up people there is a generally recognised tendency to imitate the actions of other people; in children this tendency is much stronger; and as it is from people's actions that we generalise an idea of their characters, so it may be said that, in so far as children imitate the actions of their parents, just in such a degree do the characters of the children resemble those of the parents. (3) The faculties of a spirit, as incarnated, may be modified by the conditions of incarnation. Hence, since a child (i.e., a newly incarnated spirit) derives its physical body from its parents, this body may so modify its original faculties as to cause it to present to us in its manifested condition a general resemblance to the parents.

WM. GAY.

Appeal.

SIR,—Will you kindly announce the following sums received in answer to my appeal on behalf of Mrs. Ayers, of 45, Jubilee-street, Mile End?—Mrs. Perrin, 5s.; Mr. Boswell Stone, 3s.; Mr. Ainsworth, 5s.; Mr. Spruce, 2s.; P. P., 10s. Total, £1 5s.

Any further contributions will be duly acknowledged in this journal.

218, Jubilee-street,
Mile End-road.

W. MARSH.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor does not hold himself responsible for any opinions expressed by his Correspondents. He declines respectfully to enter into correspondence as to rejected MSS., or to answer private letters except where he is able to give specific information. He further begs to say that he cannot undertake to prepare MSS. for the press. Communications sent should be written on one side of the paper and be without interlineations and underlining of words. It is essential that they should be brief in order to secure insertion. Matter previously published can be received only for the information of the Editor. MSS. cannot be returned. All matter for publication and no business letters should be addressed to the Editor at the office of "LIGHT," and not to any other address. Communications for the Manager should be addressed separately. Short records of facts without comment are always welcome.

THE Editor begs to acknowledge, with his warmest thanks, many kind letters of inquiry. He is able to report favourably, and trusts that time and rest are doing good work.

A.G.M.—No, thank you. Hardly in our line.

C. A. P.—We have no correspondents in the West Indies.

J.O.—Thank you. The discussion of the theology of the Salvation Army is one not suitable for our columns.

A.J.P.—Many thanks. Glad to find that so far you are able to write and give an account of yourself more favourable than we might expect.

DUCHESS DE POMAR.—The letter is forwarded. Thank you for your kind words. We could easily do with a good deal more robust health, but make the best of what is available.

MR. J. BURNS, JUNR., desires to hear of a medium for physical manifestations in daylight.—Address, 15, Southampton-row, W.C.

ONE moment! What an effect it produces upon years. One moment! Virtue, crime, glory, shame, woe, rapture, rest upon moments. Death is but a moment, yet eternity is its successor.—BULWER.

EVERY one knows what is indicated by the word power, in its application to personal effectiveness. It is that subtle quality which gives life to all man's faculties, which diffuses around him an atmosphere of magnetic attraction, which endows him with penetrative influence over his fellow men, and makes him a centre of contagious vitality. The word, as it occurs here, means all that, and more—more by so much as spiritual personality transcends mere intellectual and emotional life.—REV. C. A. BERRY.

SOCIETY WORK.

CARDIFF PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—The morning class was held as usual at 11 a.m., on Sunday, and the Lyceum at 3 p.m. In the evening Mr. F. B. Chadwick (Vice-President) delivered an address upon "Personal Responsibility."

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.—On Sunday last Mr. Davies read a very able paper, after which the guides of Mrs. Smith (of Leeds) delivered an address and gave some clairvoyant descriptions. Next Sunday, Mr. Towns.—Geo. E. GUNN, Hon. Sec.

LONDON OCCULT SOCIETY, SEYMOUR CLUB, 4, BRYANSTON-PLACE, BRYANSTON-SQUARE, W.—Last Sunday Mr. Ferriman delivered an interesting lecture on his travels in the East, giving an account of many occult phenomena he had witnessed. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Vango will give clairvoyant descriptions.—A. F. TINDALL, A. Mus. T.C.L., President.

WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM, S.E.—On Sunday morning last, Mr. Yeates spoke forcibly upon "The Follies of Theosophy." In the evening Mr. R. J. Lees took for his subject "The Legitimate Authority of the Bible in Religious Matters," and delighted all present with a powerful address, broad and liberal. Next Sunday, at 11.15 a.m., Mr. J. Veitch on "Does Hypnotism explain Psychometry?" and at 7 p.m., Mr. J. A. Butcher, trance address.—J. Veitch, Sec.

KENSINGTON AND NOTTING HILL ASSOCIATION.—Mr. Percy Smyth writes from Hastings:—Will you allow me through the columns of your valuable journal to state that my connection with the Kensington and Notting Hill Spiritualist Association is severed, consequent on my having left London? Should the Spiritualists in this district wish to continue their work, they will no doubt call a meeting to elect some one in my stead. Any one wishing to address me (personally) can do so to 68, Cornwall-road, whence letters will be forwarded.

MARYLEBONE ASSOCIATION, 24, HARCOURT-STREET, W.—On Sunday last an address was given by Mr. McKenzie on "Phrenology," and he replied to several questions. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., Mr. Vango, Healing and Clairvoyance; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Mrs. Treadwell (Trance); Monday, social at 8 p.m.; Thursday, at 7.45 p.m., Mrs. Treadwell; Saturday, at 7.45 p.m., Mrs. Spring. Our children's tea party will take place on Boxing Day at 4.30 p.m. A few tickets at 9d. each for non-members.—C. WHITE, Hon. Sec.

GLASGOW.—On Sunday morning Mr. D. Duguid, in trance, was influenced by a spirit giving the name of Adam Wood, who lived in the reign of Edward I. He related part of his history, which displayed many fine characteristics, and showed that the supposed advanced thoughts of to-day were familiar to many at that time. In the evening Mr. W. Corstorphine gave a selection of choice readings, which were instructive and entertaining. The Lyceum was conducted with the usual interest. The experimental meeting on the 4th inst. was conducted by J. Griffin, who discoursed on the "Possibilities of Man as displayed in the Power of Psychometry." Several delineations were given and acknowledged to be remarkably correct.—J. GRIFFIN, Sec.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, CHEPSTOW HALL, 1, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.—On Sunday last we had Mr. Wallace and Mr. W. O. Drake to address us. The healing séance on Friday was well attended, including a large number of very urgent cases calling for relief in food as well as in healing. We have helped, as far as possible, but funds are very small. On Sunday next Mr. W. E. Long, at 11.15 a.m., and an address at 6.30 p.m. by Mr. Morell Theobald, when we hope to have a large audience. To inaugurate our new year of work, we are to have a tea gathering on Sunday, January 4th, at five o'clock. Tickets, 6d. each. A good number have joined the "Help Myself" and the benevolent fund, of which Mrs. Judd has been elected treasurer.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec.

THE SPIRITUALISTIC CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.—This society is now formed, and assistance will be given to earnest inquirers by correspondence, &c. Spiritualists are invited to become members; no subscriptions or entrance fee. Press criticisms answered. Mutual interchange of thought between Spiritualists at home and abroad. The following members will be pleased to receive papers containing attacks against Spiritualism, which will be replied to:—Mr. Percy Smyth, 68, Cornwall-road, Bayswater, W.; Mr. R. Hopton, 20, Trumpington-street, Cambridge; Mr. J. T. Audy, 28, Gower-road, East Dulwich, S.E.; Mr. W. H. Edwards, 141, Southampton-street, Camberwell; Mr. W. Turner, 11, St Mark's-road, Ealing, W. A list of members sent on receipt of stamped envelope by Mr. J. Allen, 245, Camberwell-road, London. Spare literature will also be thankfully received by Mr. Allen for distribution.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—Tuesday's and Saturday's séances were well attended, Mrs. Mason's guides again using their healing powers with great success among strangers. On Sunday evening Mr. Thomas Everitt gave us a very able discourse, explaining the scientific basis of Spiritualism. He was followed by Mr. Whitley and Mr. Astbury, who also gave very great satisfaction. Sunday next, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m. Mrs. Hawkins. Tuesdays and Saturdays, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Mason. Thursdays, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Mason; members only. Wednesdays at 1, Lawn-terrace, North End-road, West Kensington, at

8 p.m. prompt, Mrs. Mason, séance. Our Lyceum children's Christmas tea party will take place at Stephenson Hall, Cambridge-road, Hammersmith, on Monday, January 12th, 1891, to be followed by a vocal and instrumental concert in aid of the organ fund and Lyceum. Tickets 6d. each; tickets, including tea, 1s. Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by our president, Mr. Mason.—J. H. B., Sec.

"A SPIRITUALIST HALL FOR SOUTH LONDON."—SIR,—a few weeks since you were good enough to print an appeal in aid of the above object. Will you now permit me to note the response, thereto? The donations to the fund are £38, while by collections &c., we have realised nearly £10. As these amounts are mostly from the poorer class we are well satisfied, especially as we have now received promises of support from several prominent Spiritualists, and we feel assured that the readers of "LIGHT" will, after referring to the weekly record of work done by the society at Chepstow Hall, give us a practical proof of their sympathy. At meetings in aid of the fund, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, Mr. Wortley, Mr. M. Theobald, and other friends have been present, and on Sunday next the last-named gentleman will address us. The amounts quoted above are obviously insufficient, but we trust to the united exertions of our members, and to a response from sympathising Spiritualists generally, to be able to accomplish our object in the near future. Further particulars will be given and subscriptions gratefully acknowledged by W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec., South London Spiritualists' Society, 36, Kemerton-road, Loughborough Junction, S.E.

CARDIFF PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—On Sunday, November 30th, and Monday, December 1st, this society was favoured with a visit from Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten. The meetings were, by the kind permission of the Mayor, held at the Town Hall. On Sunday morning the subject of Mrs. Britten's address was "Ancient and Modern Miracles," and in the evening "The Origin and Destiny of the Human Soul," the latter being preceded by the very interesting ceremony of naming the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Brooks. On Monday evening the address consisted of replies to questions submitted by the audience. On each occasion Mrs. Britten treated her subjects in a lucid, masterful, and dignified manner, the wrapt attention of her audiences testifying to the great impression she produced. Any adequate epitome of the lectures is impossible in the space at command, but the following spontaneous testimony of a member of the local Press forcibly illustrates the foregoing remarks. He says (in reply to an invitation to attend these meetings):—"My psychological friend is right when he speaks of Mrs. Britten's high intellectual qualities. I was not in the Crown Court many minutes, but I was there quite long enough to learn to admire the purity, and the warmth, and the singular beauty of the lady's address, and the truly eloquent heights she at times attained. It was, as my correspondent suggests, an intellectual performance and a treat." We are deeply grateful to Mrs. Britten for this her first visit to Cardiff, and are sanguine that an impetus will be given to the cause here in consequence.—E. ADAMS.

ENVIRONMENTS.

'Tis well that Death should not erase us,
Has not erased those gone before;
Still, witnesses of love can trace us,
And airy arms like wind embrace us,
'Ere yet we reach the unknown shore.

We see them not, yet they have found us,
No barrier held their souls aloof,
The water, earth, and air that bound us,
Or space unlimited around us,
The very raindrops on the roof—

Are speech, and touch, and sight, and hearing
To those who throng the Ether fine;
Thus human minds, through myst'ry steering,
Have recognised loved spirits nearing,
Held converse with the things Divine!

Have known a sympathetic yearning,
To stir once more a vanished heart,
And felt it near to earth returning,
To write "All love" in colours burning,
Wherein the setting suns depart.

Have felt a soundless language teaching,
Their souls from out the spirit-throng,
The inward germs of life beseeching,
To climb with tendrils upward reaching,
The realms where Light and Growth are strong.

Have learnt the spirits' high desiring,
To teach the loved, the left, the sad,
To link all thought with God untiring,
And tuning Life to Love's sweet lyre,
Make earth and stars in Heaven glad.

And when we thus environed know it,
The lore of life when this is done,
Each common songster grows a poet,
The outer forms in beauty show it,
And we are "Clothed" as with the "Sun."

KATE BURTON.