

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

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

"LIGHT, MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

There are many things on my table, and I can act only as a literary "Cook" in drawing my readers' attention to what seems to me to deserve it. Mr. Dawbarn sends me an eighteen-page pamphlet, of which the title seems to me the worst part. "The Science of Spirit Return" is a valuable contribution to the study of that which concerns a man much more than the material surroundings among which he lives. It is a transitory age, and we are making what a subsequent age will probably expound as Gospel. That is the way in which accretions of belief are got together. It is well to think sometimes how very little we do towards the moulding of these beliefs. A belief is in the air, like a germ, and we take it, like a fever, and write of it and talk about it and spread it and popularise it till it becomes common property. And then somebody starts up and says that he has discovered this piece of truth, and that all are indebted to him for the illumination. Whereas we are not indebted to him at all, but to beings who get very little credit for their inspiration. I may, however, say, as a purely human critic, that Mr. Dawbarn says wisely and well what he has to say.

"Darkness and Light in the Land of Egypt" is a brief pamphlet by Colonel Fraser, which purports to be "an indication to antiquity of invisible sources of energy in the physical universe." An indication to antiquity of what is published for the instruction of the present age may reasonably be held to be perplexing. And the Colonel is undoubtedly bewildering. He illustrates the Egyptian plague of darkness by "covering the interior of a model cardboard house with luminous paint" and then gravely tells us that "causes of a far different nature that reside in sulphurate of barium must have produced Egyptian darkness." It must, indeed, have been odd—that darkness—for "they did not see man another, and they did not rise a man from his place three days." (*sic.*) And then we are referred to "such vedic writings as those of the late Clerk Maxwell, which suggest nearly as much as they tell." It may be, but I suggest that Clerk Maxwell was not consciously "vedic," whatever that may mean. And what may this mean? "When we move a limb or change our place, the transit (*sic.*) is not effected by letting the particles of ethereal medium penetrate through the interstices of the matter in our frame, or whisking them aside as if moving in smoke." It is wonderful all this, and would be outside of our notice were it not that it pretends in some way to criticise and explain what we are concerned with. For that reason I think I am justified in calling this pamphlet sheer midsummer madness. Perhaps I should not have taken

up space that might be better used by breaking this butterfly on the wheel of my criticism: but it must be remembered that I and those who think with me are sure to get the credit of this precious rubbish. So I disavow it at once.

Mr. Page Hopps in the "Coming Day" has a word on Mr. Gladstone and the Messianic Psalms. He describes it as "a somewhat curious study." He thinks that he finds in it the dominant characteristics of Mr. Gladstone, "absolute sincerity, acute intellectual subtlety, and devout spiritual sensibility." That is psychological and comes within my ken. It is unquestionably a very subtle mind, one so subtle as to resort to devices that some people misunderstand. I am sure that it is sincere—and I am *not* sure that sincerity is any virtue, for it means a belief in the idea of the hour. Sincerity, if it is to mean a persistence in an idea, may be a vice. What men mean by saying that persons should be sincere is only, after all, a request that they should not puzzle them by subtlety. The lower we get into our consciousness the more subtle we must become. And the more we think the more we must regard "economy" of thought. For the superficial views of the busy world are as little truthful as, let us say, the ordinary views of a Fellow of the Royal Society about anything outside of his own groove. Mr. Gladstone, I believe, wears the largest hat in London. Whereupon there is room to ponder. Of one thing one may be safely sure: an intellect more versatile has never puzzled and entranced men of any generation. One need not meddle with politics, which are slippery and elusive, to pay tribute to a great man. His criticism of the Psalms is the point just now. It is astonishing, and raises in my mind a query whether the same method would be applied in diplomacy. Surely we do not know what the various writers of the Psalms may have meant, and surely it is mis-spent time to read our ideas into them as they have come down to us.

*Litera scripta manet.* Mrs. Phillips might, perhaps, wish it otherwise when she reads at leisure what she seems to have written in haste. Criticism is superfluous, but Laurence Oliphant and his malefic shade, Harris, are in the air now, and so, in the course of my work, I have read what a whole-souled worshipper has to say about a very imperfect idol. Justice has already been done to Mr. Harris in the notice of Mrs. Oliphant's book which has appeared in "LIGHT"—perhaps more than justice. But this adulatory article—I hardly know how fitly to describe it, with its scraps of Scripture and its assumptions in respect of a man whom the writer regards from a point of view that I do not occupy—is so curious that I wonder who may be the Editor of the "National Review," and what is his sense of responsibility in printing contributions sent to him. There is nothing in the article that merits serious rejoinder, but I must say that the allusion to Ananias is unfortunate. And I may add that there is nothing in what Mrs. Phillips has thought it incumbent on her to write that will "rescue the name of an honest, earnest, God-loving seer"—*i.e.*, Harris—from just and not emotional criticism of his acts.



It is perhaps not inopportune to point out that the mere humbug, pure and simple, is a person easily reckoned with. He has his tongue in his cheek, and, sooner or later, people see it. But the really dangerous person is he or she—usually it is *she*—who persuades herself into a belief that rests only on cloudland. The picturesque pirouettes that do duty for argument are so airy that they elude the grasp of an ordinary man. The various standpoints of what passes for argument are so mixed up that one feels as though one had been handling a kaleidoscope. There are, no doubt, courtesies due to women (I hope I call them by a right name) who write: but it is, perhaps, not irrelevant to remind them that it is the matter written and not the person writing that is really important. I sometimes think that women, greatly daring, are trying to make the most of both worlds, the world of the past and that strange new world into which they are prying. The two will not work together: so at least I think; but, if anybody can reconcile the incompatible, no doubt there must be “a woman in the case.” None the less, I deprecate emotional ink shed. And it is permissible to say, I think, that in this age of superficialism, in which fugitive magazine articles have taken the place of more sober and well-considered thought, we are apt to get the scum of the seething pot without any of its nutritive contents. Bubble and froth fairly describes most of the articles that tease one month by month. They are idle, quite unfructuous, and they liberate an amount of emotional craze that would be preferably suppressed. There is in the writers no sense of responsibility. They have none, once the Editorial cheque is paid over. And what an arid waste it is, let the sample of the Oliphant-Harris discussion testify. Here is Mrs. Phillips in the “National Review” telling us what? Just her private notions of Harris. There is no attempt at discrimination: no judicial tone: the pot has been put on to boil, and the scum rises to the top. So it is with our politics: so it is in danger of being with what we still call our religion. The grave danger of a new age, in which sensitiveness is indefinitely increased, is Emotionalism. By all manner of means let us avoid *that*. A bad judgment founded on bad arguments is bad enough, but an emotional opinion founded on no argument is much worse, and lest I should be thought to carp against a writer who expresses an opinion with which I disagree, and that profoundly, I hasten to say that I preferably read opinions with which I disagree. I find them a wholesome mental tonic.

#### TELEPATHY.

In the “National Review” Dr. Courtenay gives this story. Dr. Courtenay writes of “Telepathy,” and quotes the following extraordinary story which was told him by a lady well known to him:—

On the night of March 13th, 1879, I was going to a dinner party at Admiral —'s. While dressing for the same, through the doorway of my room which led into my husband's dressing-room, I distinctly saw a white hand wave to and fro twice. I went into the room, and found no one was there, or *had* been there, as the door on the other side was closed; and on inquiring I found no one had been upstairs. While dressing nothing further occurred, but on arriving at Admiral —'s a strange feeling of sadness came over me. I could eat no dinner; nor afterwards, when we had some music, could I sing well. All the time I felt *some one* or *something* was near me. We went home, and about eleven o'clock, or perhaps half-past, I commenced undressing. I distinctly felt some one touching my hair, as if they, or he, or she, were undoing it. I was very frightened and told my husband so. He laughed at me. When saying my prayers, on praying as I always did for the recovery of a sick friend, instead of, as usual, asking God to make him well, all I could say was “O God, put him out of his misery.” I got into bed, and something lay beside me. I told my husband, who, though he laughed at me, pitied my nervousness, and took me into his arms; but still whatever was there remained by me and a voice, the voice of my friend, distinctly said, “Good-bye, Sis” (which he used to call me). Whether I fell asleep then or not I don't know, but I distinctly felt a kiss on my cheek, and I saw my friend, who told me “he had left me some money, but that he wanted it to be left differently, but had had no time to alter it.” A livid line was across his face. I woke crying. About (I think) five days after, a letter was brought to me with a deep black border. I felt what it meant. It was to tell me of the death of my friend —, who had passed away at half-past ten p.m., March 13th. The letter proceeded to tell me he had left me some money, but that the writer (his brother) was too ill and upset to give me any further particulars, or tell me of any messages he had sent me, only that his brother “had died murmuring my name.”

#### LETTERS ON “LIGHT.”\*

SECOND SERIES.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

X.

BE TRUE TO THE BASIS OF EVOLUTION YOU CHOSE.

(Chiefly on Sex in Lineage. Travesty of Sex in Incarnation.)

As a contribution to our study, I will remind how Swedenborg tells of angels being dual, man and woman; their form so interspaced that he could not always distinguish whether it was a man or a woman; of his seeing the man as the outer sometimes; at others the reverse. This description seems to me incomplete.

One day (July, 1890) I was observing scenes in the spiritual world, which led me to see Twin-Souls at work; they were No Lineage; to the woman the commission had been entrusted; the man helped her. Souls standing thus to each other could never have been the inventors of “woman's inferiority,” surely? Recalling other incidents witnessed in the Unseen, I felt justified in saying this is the rule; and similarly when a commission is given to Twin-Souls of Correct Lineage, it is given to the man, and the woman helps him. Observation seems to show me that No Lineage tend to their normal standard in all things; but Correct Lineage have been much more abnormalised by their success in the Free Fight for existence; and their tendency to degrade woman may be due to this rather than to any normal theory.

I offer the following considerations, arranged in what seems to me their self-interpreting sequence: (1) Correct Lineage elected (IV., V.) to grow through Forms to ideas; (2) often tends to stop short at the Form and omit progressing to the idea, or to repudiate it; (3) “out of sight, out of mind” is no bad description of their characteristic behaviour. (4) In the spiritual world, I have observed that the man is the one to whom the commission, &c., is entrusted, who appears as acting. On earth, the same is formulated by assuming man is always the responsible one. (5) All the Great Wicked have been of Correct Lineage (IV.) (many of them are not known by names on earth; or are greatly honoured as earth's benefactors); (6) they have been chiefly male spirits but always teach woman's inferiority (the phrases range from vituperation to chivalrous compliments). (7) Correct Lineage has been victor in the struggle for existence on all planes of life connected with this earth (IV., V.); (8) and thus controlled all instruments of record (writing, language, &c.); (9) in teaching woman's inferiority, writers may be recording a wicked idea they love; or inspired from the Wicked Unseen, consciously or unconsciously; or merely recording what is believed to be a fact of nature; or an impression based upon memories in the sub-conscious mind, materialised and made untrue by the process. (10) This process is for many souls a series of statements as follow: We won; we believe in the superiority of the male principle; we shall do our best to exhibit woman as a creature inferior, dangerous, damnable; epithets may be supplied according to the school of thought (?) whether theological or worldly-sensual; but on no account omit the ever-popular description, “Woman is charming as a relief and contrast to man's rugged strength; woman when alone and independent is unnaturally placed; she should only appear in the background as man's inspirer.” The confusions in this description are derived from two half-suppressed facts: (i.) Woman is the interior in the Twain-one life of Correct Lineage as visible on the psychic plane, and as such is man's inspirer and doubtless happy and appreciated. (ii.) The Woman Lineage (No Lineage) is “dangerous” to Correct Lineage because its coming to the front would exhibit the wrongs done by its repression to Humanity at large. But if Correct Lineage are not all wicked—and far from this, at least half are distinctly well intentioned—how comes it that they have wrought so much harm? (a) The Great Wicked led them (b) through the occult force of Lineage (c), which works almost irresistibly as an attractive or driving power for them, thus giving union and strength; (d) No Lineage is not thus interiorly bound; when its souls act together it is from conviction or un-

\* The first series appeared on Jan. 24, 31; Feb. 14, 21; Mar. 21, 28; where all terms were explained which are now used. Second series: May 30; June 13, 27.



disturbed attraction. But Lineage will hold Correct Lineage together in the teeth of almost every separating influence. All this would explain why the "improvement of society," "social reconstruction," "the woman question," "the peace question" are declared to be "so dreadfully unpopular." Efforts of that sort "rub society the wrong way" for far deeper reasons than mere inertia, selfishness, and "possession is nine points of the law" will ever account for. It is possible to explain the appearance of Modern Spiritualism or the struggle of poor against rich by one set of reasons, and then find they leave that of woman against man unexplained. Yet all are patent facts, the world over; and so are the facts that many gentle, refined men would like to set things right; while many selfish, short-sighted women see their way to succeed better in the present unwholesome struggle than they would on a more genuine footing. With knowledge of Lineage, &c., all these modern efforts seem plainly accounted for. The desire of Correct Lineage for mastery brought about the struggle between the Lineages; this was partly about the expression of sex on the material plane; their victory brought in its train certain great errors: Might is Right; if people do not succeed it must be their own fault (applied to explain the failure of No Lineage on so many occasions to make their mark in a world artificially rendered unsuitable to them); Providence or "God" favours the good; therefore success proves you are good; woman is inferior to man. These errors when duly combined will be found to account for all our religious and social agonies; while the methods of fraud or presenting appearances for realities, of hypocrisy or winning people by saying the opposite to your real meaning are unsparingly employed.

How is it that such fallacies and frauds are not seen through? There is the occult force of Lineage already explained. Then self-interest accounts for much moral blindness; but more is accounted for by the intellectual law that to apprehend we need contrast—a saying warped into "we must do evil if we would learn what good is." Now the contrast required was the spectacle of No Lineage working out its ways of being; it has not been afforded. We ought to be able to detect the poison of exclusiveness in all infringements of humanity's solidarity: sex, money, rank, secret societies, even modified into "Professions."

And now let us see how far all this governs travesty of sex. Since there are so many advantages in being a man, do men ever travesty their sex? There are men-souls who incarnate as women for education's sake; for punishment or education consequent upon cruelty to, or contempt for, woman's lot; for a mission, to give a hearty energetic tone to woman's demands; for the sake of drawing near to the Twin, ministering to or aiding the life on earth, personal Karma indicating travesty as the best method; for the sake of maintenance without physical labour (this only in wealthy ranks). There are women-souls who incarnate as men for all the above reasons, *mutatis mutandis*. There are beautiful lives led in travesty of sex, free from "failure"; but do not look for psychic display of the best sort, or indeed any from them. This was more fully explained in VIII. and IX.

Among both Lineages nowadays, there is travesty of sex prompted by wish to help or hinder the present woman movement the world over; and the "women" bitterest or most insidious in their endeavours to oppose it, are men-souls of Correct Lineage incarnated as women for this very purpose. Compared to their venomous hostility, the opposition of the unroused woman-soul is harmless indeed. A large number of the most successful male Jesuits and other priests are women souls (Correct Lineage). About travesty of sex, as about desertion of the basis of your evolution in Lineage (IX.) and zodiacal sign (VIII.), you must look for the motive. The person may be admirable, and happy to a certain extent; but as said (IX.), rarely fortunate in marriage or love-affairs. The best marriages are where "he" is really a man and "she" is really a woman. The claim that woman is a human being is regarded by friend and foe as quite a modern one, a product of our wonderful century; even when they agree in a description of how woman does stand on this earth, they think it quite a new discovery, notwithstanding learned books on the Matriarchate (Karl Pearson) and Mother's right (Bachofen's *Mutterrecht*), showing that our present male supremacy has not prevailed always. Attempts to alter woman's position are called by the foe "dangerous revolutionary moves"; by the friend of the woman movement "hopeful signs of human evolution." How truly speak both

friends and foes! Revolution it is; for it is a turning of the wheel]back upon those who have given it impetus too long. Evolution it is; for it is giving fair play to forces long repressed; allowing nature's own evidence, so long falsified, held back and misrepresented, to tell its own story in sight of Seen and Unseen.

Spiritualists cannot afford to ignore these considerations. 1848 witnessed a great impetus to communication with the Unseen, and also the formulated demand for woman's political equality with man, "no taxation without representation"; Elizabeth Cady Stanton demanded this at Seneca Falls, N.Y.; since then the demand has spread from land to land. The ordinary "Philistine" hates Spiritualism and the woman question; often sees them connected but does not know why, except that both are ridiculous in his eyes. Some "Materialists" work for woman's freedom; some Spiritualists hate it. There is not much time to spend in thus hitting our best friends in the eye; as the common enemy of all good delights to see us do.

Spiritualism is a No Lineage movement, and as such is a protest against the old caste religions which restricted communication with the Unseen and confused it by pompous pretensions. Against all such revivals let us be on our guard.

### ARE THERE OBJECTIVE APPARITIONS? I

This article, by Alfred Russel Wallace, was briefly noticed a few weeks ago in "LIGHT." It appeared in the January number of the "Arena." Anything written upon Spiritualism or kindred subjects by a man of such great talent and experience must be more than ordinarily worthy of perusal, and I regret that the publication in which the paper appears will be seen by few in England who take an interest in psychical phenomena, as it is published in America, besides being too high priced to be generally attainable. I propose to make a few extracts from the article which, I think, cannot fail to interest those readers of "LIGHT" who are unable to obtain the "Arena."

The object of Mr. Wallace's essay is to prove the *objectivity* of many cases of apparitions, as well as of other spiritual manifestations or phenomena, in contradistinction to the theories so persistently advocated by the Society for Psychical Research that such apparitions are almost entirely to be accounted for by subjective hallucination or by telepathy.

Mr. Wallace commences by recognising with gratitude the work done by the Society for Psychical Research both in England and America, in collecting such a vast number of cases of psychical phenomena, the evidence for which they thoroughly sift and examine before allowing an account of them to appear in their "Proceedings." But he deprecates their method of discussing all the classes of phenomena separately by themselves, without correlating them with other kindred phenomena. Still, the mere fact of bringing such subjects prominently before the public must advance the cause of truth, and stimulate personal interest and inquiry into matters of such deep moment.

Mr. Wallace writes:—

The number of men eminent in literature, art, or science who have joined the society and have contributed to its "Proceedings" has given the objects of its inquiry a position and status they did not previously possess, while the earnestness, the thoroughness, the literary skill, and philosophical acumen with which the evidence has been presented to the world has compelled assent to the proposition that the several classes of apparitions known as doubles, phantasms of the living or dead, spectral lights, voices, musical sounds, and the various physical effects which occur in haunted houses, are real and not very uncommon phenomena, well worthy of earnest study, and only doubtful as regards the interpretation put upon them. . . . The only explanation of the various classes of apparitions suggested by the more prominent working members of the society is that they are hallucinations due to the telepathic action of one mind upon another. These writers have, as they state they felt bound to do, strained the theory of telepathy to its utmost limits, in order to account for the more important of the phenomena which they have themselves set forth; and the chief difference of opinion now seems to be whether all the facts can be explained as primarily due to telepathic impressions from a living agent—a view maintained by Mr. Podmore—or whether the spirits of the dead are in some cases the agents, as Mr. Myers thinks may be the case. But in order to give this telepathic theory even a show of probability, it is necessary to exclude or to explain away a number of the most interesting and



suggestive facts collected by the society, and also to leave out of consideration whole classes of phenomena which are altogether at variance with the hypothesis adopted.

In reading several numbers of the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," with which I have been favoured by the kindness of one of the members, I have been almost amused by the desperate efforts made by the writers to adapt their telepathic theory to all the facts they have collected, and when they find this impossible, they take refuge in another of their pet theories, the action of the "unconscious secondary self," a marvellous personage, who appears to be capable of supporting any number of characters, imitating exactly their handwritings and modes of expression, as well as being conversant with the smallest details of their lives. Only do the aforesaid writers admit of the possibility of the communicating intelligence being other than this secondary self or some telepathic influence emanating from members of the circle when some bald fact is stated which cannot by any possibility be known to anyone present, and which, therefore, it is most difficult to corroborate, though this has frequently been done.

Mr. Wallace next proceeds to enumerate those phenomena which he thinks distinctly suggest or afford direct proof of the objectivity of apparitions. These he classes under five heads, as follows:—

(1) Collective hallucinations, or the perception of the same phantasmal sights or sounds by two or more persons at once.

(2) Phantasms seen to occupy different points in space, by different persons, corresponding to their apparent motion; or the persistence of the phantasm in one spot, notwithstanding the observer changes his position.

(3) The effects of phantasms upon domestic animals.

(4) The physical effects apparently produced by phantasms, or connected with their appearance.

(5) The fact that phantasms, whether visible or invisible to persons present, can be and have been photographed.

Mr. Wallace then proceeds to give numerous examples of each of these groups of cases. Those included in the first four categories are almost entirely selected from the published "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research" and from "Phantasms of the Living," and are therefore cases which have been thoroughly examined into and sifted by experts, who have spared no trouble in the work. The fifth class of phenomena, that of transcendental photography, has not yet received attention at the hands of the society, and the account which Mr. Wallace gives of it is compiled from well authenticated sources, and in many cases from facts within his own knowledge. Having myself some practical and satisfactory experience of this phase of spiritual phenomena, I have read Mr. Wallace's account of it with special interest, and do not think it will be waste of time on my part to copy it *in extenso* for the benefit of those who have not an opportunity of seeing the original, as I do not wish to spoil my copy by cutting out portions of it.

It runs as follows:—

(5) *Phantasms can be photographed, and are, therefore, objective realities.*

It is common to sneer at what are called "spirit photographs," because imitations of some of them can be so easily produced; but a little consideration will show that this very facility of imitation renders it equally easy to guard against imposture, since the modes by which the imitation is effected are so well known. At all events, it will be admitted that an experienced photographer who supplies the plates and sees the whole of the operations performed, or even performs them himself, cannot be so deceived. This test has been applied over and over again, and there is no possible escape from the conclusion that phantasms, whether visible or invisible to those present, can be and have been photographed. A brief treatment of the evidence in support of this assertion will now be given.

The first person through whom spirit photographs were obtained was a New York photographer named Mumler, who, in 1869, was arrested and tried for obtaining money by trickery and imposture, but who, after a long trial, was acquitted, because no proof of imposture or attempt at imposture was given. A professional photographer, Mr. W. H. Slee, of Poughkeepsie, watched the whole process of taking the pictures, and though there was nothing unusual in Mumler's procedure, shadowy forms appeared on the plates. Mumler afterwards visited this witness's gallery, bringing with him no materials whatever, yet the same results were produced. Mr. J. Gurney, a New York photographer, of twenty-eight years' experience, gave evidence that, after close examination, no

trickery whatever could be detected in Mumler's process. Yet a third photographer, Mr. W. W. Silver, of Brooklyn, gave evidence to the same effect. He frequently went through a whole process himself, using his own camera and materials, yet when Mumler was present, and simply placed his hand on the camera during the exposure, additional forms besides that of the sitter appeared on the plates. Here we have the sworn testimony in a court of law of three experts, who had every possible means of detecting imposture, if imposture there were; yet they all declared that there was and could be no imposture.\*

It would be easy to give a score or more of cases in which persons of reputation have stated in print that they have obtained recognisable photographs of deceased friends when they themselves were quite unknown to the photographer, and even when no photograph or picture of the deceased person existed. In all such cases, however, the objection is made that the figures are more or less shadowy and that the supposed likeness may be imaginary. I, therefore, prefer to give only the evidence of experts as to the appearance on the plate of other figures besides those of the visible sitters. Perhaps the most remarkable cases of experiments ever made on this subject are those carried on during three years by the late Mr. John Beattie, of Clifton, a retired photographer of twenty years' experience, and Dr. Thomson, M.D. (Edin.), a retired physician, who had practised photography as an amateur for twenty-five years. These two gentlemen performed all the photographic work themselves, sitting with a medium who was not a photographer. They took hundreds of pictures, in series of three, taken consecutively at intervals of a few seconds; and the results are the more remarkable and the less open to any possible suspicion because there is not in the whole series what is commonly termed a spirit photograph—that is, a shadowy likeness of any deceased person—but all are more or less rudimental, exhibiting various patches of light undergoing definite changes of form, sometimes culminating in undefined human forms, or medallion-like heads, or star-like luminosities. In no case was there any known cause for the production of these figures. I possess a set of these remarkable photographs, thirty-two in number, given me by Mr. Beattie, and I was personally acquainted with Dr. Thomson, who confirmed Mr. Beattie's statements as to the conditions and circumstances under which they were taken. Here we have a thorough scientific investigation undertaken by two well-trained experts, with no possibility of their being imposed upon; and they demonstrate the fact that phantasmal figures and luminosities quite invisible to ordinary observers can yet reflect or emit actinic rays, so as to impress their forms and changes of form upon an ordinary photographic plate. An additional proof of this extraordinary phenomenon is, that frequently, and in the latter experiments always, the medium spontaneously described what he saw, and the picture taken at that moment always exhibited the same kind of figure. In one of the pictures the medium is shown among the sitters gazing intently and pointing with his hand. While doing so he exclaimed: "What a bright light up there! Can you not see it?" And the picture shows the bright light in the place to which his gaze and pointing hand are directed.

Very important, as confirming these results, are the experiments of the late Mr. Thomas Slater, the optician (of Euston-road, London), who obtained second figures on his plate when only his own family were present, and in one case when he was perfectly alone; and of Mr. R. Williams, M.A., of Hayward's Heath; of Mr. Trail Taylor, the editor of the "British Journal of Photography"; and of many other professional or amateur photographers, who all agreed that with everything under their own control, phantasmal figures, besides those of the sitter, appeared on the plates without any apparent or conceivable mechanical or chemical cause.

In the cases hitherto given, the phantasms or figures photographed have been invisible to all present except the mediums, and sometimes even to them; but we have also examples of the photographing of a visible form or apparition in the presence of a medium. A very successful photograph of a spirit-form which appeared under strict test conditions, with Miss Cook as the medium, was taken by Mr. Harrison, then editor of the "Spiritualist" newspaper. An engraving from this photograph appears as a frontispiece to Epes Sargent's "Proof Palpable of Immortality," with an account of the conditions under which it was taken, signed by the five persons present. Later on Mr. Crookes obtained numerous photographs (more than forty in all) in his own laboratory with the same medium; and had every opportunity of ascertaining that the phantom, which appeared and disappeared under conditions which rendered doubt impossible, was no human being, and was very different in all physical characteristics from the medium.

This long series of photographic experiments and tests, of which the briefest abstract only has been given, has been hitherto not even alluded to by the investigators of the Society for Psychical Research. But they cannot much

\* A report of the trial appeared in the *New York Times* of April 22nd 1869, and in many other papers.



longer continue to ignore it, because they have entered on the task of collecting the *whole* of the evidence for psychical phenomena, and of fairly estimating the weight of each of the group under which that evidence falls. Now I submit that this photographic evidence is superior in quality to any that they have hitherto collected, and for two reasons. In the first place, it is experimental evidence, and experiment is rarely possible in the higher psychical phenomena; in the second place, it is the evidence of experts in an operation, the whole details of which are perfectly familiar to them. And, I further submit, this evidence can no longer be ignored, because it is evidence that goes to the very root of the whole inquiry and affords the most complete and crucial test in the problem of subjectivity or objectivity of apparitions. What is the use of elaborate arguments to show that all the phenomena are to be explained by the various effects of telepathy, and that there is no evidence of the existence of objective apparitions occupying definite positions in space, when the camera and the sensitive plate have again and again proved that such objective phantasms do exist? Such arguments, founded on a small portion only of the facts, remind one of that literary *jeu d'esprit*: "Historic doubts as to the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte"; and to those who are acquainted with the whole range of the phenomena to be explained are about equally convincing.

I have now very briefly summarised and discussed the various classes of evidence which demonstrate the objectivity of many apparitions. The several groups of facts, while strong in themselves, gain greatly in strength by the support they give to each other. On the theory of objective reality all are harmonious and consistent. On the theory of hallucination, some require elaborate and unsupported theories for their explanation, while the great bulk are totally inexplicable, and have, therefore, to be ignored or set aside, or explained away. Collective hallucinations (so-called) are admitted to be frequent. That phantasms often behave like objective realities, in relation to material objects and to different persons, is also admitted. This is as it should be if they are objective, but it is hardly explicable on the subjective or telepathic theory. The behaviour of animals in the presence of phantasms, the evidence for which is as good as that for their appearance to men and women, is what we might expect if they are abnormal realities, but involve enormous difficulties on any other theory. The physical effects produced by phantasms (visible or invisible) afford a crucial test of objectivity, and are far too numerous and too well attested to be ignored or explained away. And, finally, comes the test of objectivity afforded by the photographic camera in the hands of experts and physicists of the first rank, rendering any escape from this conclusion simply impossible. "V."

## IMMORTALITY AND HEAVEN.

BY THOMAS SHORTER.

Is man immortal? We unhesitatingly answer Yes. Our instincts do not deceive us. God has implanted them in our nature, and the universal instinct of man points to immortality. There is no fact in science that contradicts it, but many which suggest and illustrate it. The return of those who once lived on earth is direct proof of it. Scripture and history furnish many examples of this. After his death Samuel appeared to Saul, Moses and Elias conversed with Jesus, Who Himself, after His death, appeared to and conversed with His disciples; and this fact is generally insisted on by Christian writers and preachers as the very foundation of their faith and hope. St. John had spiritual visions and revelations, and the angel who showed him these things said, "I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren the prophets." Socrates had his guardian spirit. It was under spiritual counsel and guidance that Joan of Arc achieved the deliverance of her country. Swedenborg for many years held daily converse with spirits, and gave some striking proofs of it. Wesley relates many instances of spirit-return and of the agency of spirits in the affairs of men. Dr. Johnson writes: "That the dead are seen no more I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which, perhaps, prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience could render credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears." And again, speaking of this belief, he says "it seems to have been grafted in the

human mind by the Creator." In our own day, especially in England and America, spiritual intercourse is widely prevalent; and after the closest investigation, and from personal experience, its truth has been attested by many men of the highest literary and scientific reputation. Why, then, doubt that man survives the death of his body? The body is not the man, but only his mortal tenement. It is true the spirit and the body are intimately blended, they act and react upon each other, but the spirit, unlike the body, gives no sign of mortality; while the present imperfect, and at best but partial, unfoldment of its powers points to the need of a future life for their full and harmonious development. Its moral and intellectual faculties, their several qualities, operations, and products bear no trace of physical causation; they cannot be grouped with the known properties of matter, nor expressed in terms of matter, and can be compared only by way of contrast. So unlike are they, that, as Professor Tyndall remarks, "the passage from matter to thought is inconceivable." If, as we are assured by the highest authorities in science, matter is indestructible, can we for a moment believe that spirit, which infinitely transcends it, which alone understands and controls it, can cease to be?

It is incredible, especially to those who believe in the moral government of the world, that there should be the utter waste, the speedy and fatal blight of pure affection, of noble and ever ripening faculty, of strenuous effort, of high hope and aspiration, which this extinction would imply. No, the self-devotion of the patriot and the martyr, and the unobtrusive virtues of those who in a humbler sphere strive to fulfil the primal duties of life and to exercise the sweet charities that soothe, and heal, and bless, are not destined to go down and be lost for ever in the darkness of an eternal night. The labours and sacrifices of the gifted and the good may often seem barren of result, or bear only scanty fruit; but in the great eternity their works follow them, and the harvest is fully gathered. The mistaken judgments of men, the miscarriage of human justice, the inequalities of nature and of opportunity, need and find, in that final court of appeal, correction and redress.

The component atoms of the corporeal structure are always changing; old atoms are replaced by new ones, till all of what was once the body has been changed. In a long lifetime a man has many successive bodies, yet he preserves his identity. He knows that he is still the same, though he is constantly and unconsciously weaving for himself a new corporeal vesture. The real man is the spirit that builds up and preserves the bodily form, that amid all its changes abides unchanged, and survives its dissolution and decay. The physical organism is but the instrument through which it operates, the medium of its communication, and which relates it to the material world, where it is placed in training for the higher life. When that education is completed, and the purposes of its earthly life are fulfilled, the effete body is laid aside like a worn-out garment no longer needed, and the free spirit in a spiritual body is a citizen of the spirit-world. It goes to the home it has prepared for itself by its past life, and to the society corresponding to its ruling affections, whether good or evil. The sinner is not suddenly and miraculously transformed into a saint merely by being liberated from the body. What he was before death, that he is after it; he is still subject to the same spiritual laws, which are independent of material conditions. It is not belief or opinion but character that determines individual destiny. The life here shapes the life hereafter. The Kingdoms of Heaven and Hell are within. Their place is not in the astronomical but in the moral universe. Heaven is the life of God in the soul of man, and Hell the burning fire of his own evil passions; and these are independent of time and place. We may enter into Heaven here and now. Blessed are the humble and the just, the peace-maker, the merciful, and the pure in heart; they have entered into the peace of God—the true Heaven, the true eternal life of the immortal spirit.

### "BETRAYEST THOU THE SON OF MAN WITH A KISS?"

To live in Thy dear Presence day by day,  
To note Thy gracious words and loving deeds  
That ministered to man's unceasing needs,  
To taste the holy sop that Thou didst pray  
Thy "friends," remembering Thee, would eat alway  
In unity of spirit; sowing seeds  
Of love and wisdom in the soul that feeds  
On Thee. To do all this, and yet—betray!  
And with a kiss! Ah, Lord! Reflecting back  
Thy tenderness so guilelessly and free!  
Oh! human hearts—not Judas only—lack  
We sense or what—? that thus we often see,  
While living in God's light and on His track,  
We—kissing—can betray and traitors be!

BERYL.



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## Light:

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

SATURDAY, JULY 11th, 1891.

**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.

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### CAMILLE FLAMMARION ON SPIRITUALISM.

#### PART II.

The "Arena" (July) contains the closing part of M. Flammarion's able article on "The Unknown."\* Our previous notice is to be consulted, if a perusal of the "Arena" is impossible by those who would follow the argument. What we present now is only a summary, with some comments, of an argument which was, unfortunately, though necessarily, divided. As it concludes it becomes more and more apparent that M. Flammarion touches only the fringe of a large area of experience, which has been indefinitely extended since his own first acquaintance with it. His early experiences, which led to the publication of his "Urania," were remarkable enough to impress the remainder of his life. Accordingly he speaks with no faltering accents in the avowal of his convictions. "The search for truth is" (he says) "the prime object of men's intellectual existence." We have need only of a superficial acquaintance with history to remark at once that "jesting Pilate's" query, "What is truth?" has never yet been answered. M. Flammarion, therefore, contributes from his store of experience some facts and some deductions from them as contributions to the solution of one phase of this ever-present question. His deductions are more important than his facts. For the rôle of the psychical chiffonier is more adequately filled. Such experiments as M. Flammarion cites may be capped without trouble by a very superficial student of recent hypnotic records: and for avouched records in the wider range of Psychics, Florence Marryat's just published volume—"There is no Death"—would considerably astonish him.

It is, after all, not facts that one wants from a man of the eminence of M. Flammarion: one wants to know what he has made of them. And the value of what he has written seems to us to lie in the caution and care with which he has set forth his conclusions. The Society for Psychical Research has done its best work on the same lines. It has hooked on the phenomena—or rather, some of the phenomena of Spiritualism—to that ascertained and exact knowledge which we call Science.

\* The first part of M. Flammarion's article appeared in the "Arena" for June, and was noticed in "LIGHT" of June 13th.

M. Flammarion, man of science before all, contributes from quite another field of exploration some conclusions which, we do not doubt, the Society for Psychical Research will appreciate. M. Flammarion must have started on his investigations as a Spiritualist, and he has never abandoned that attitude of mind. The Society, with which he has these affinities, has never done any work in the true field of research occupied by the Spiritualist. M. Flammarion has gone no further in many years than is marked by his "Urania." The Spiritualist of to-day outstrips him, but has not deviated from the line that he marked out. The Psychical Researcher has adopted methods which serve admirably to verify facts already known and quite sufficiently verified already, but which do not advance the Spiritualist much. The eminent astronomer contributes conclusions from his investigations which are more important than those which we have learned as yet from the Society for Psychical Research.

The present instalment of an important paper is concerned at its opening with communications made through the table, which messages M. Flammarion considers to be a continuation or reflex of the thought of the person who elicits them. "The table speaks to us in our own language, giving back our own ideas within the limits of our own knowledge." That is one of the statements that we must dissent from. It is indeed true that the ordinary frivolities of the promiscuous circle may be a pale reflection of the vapid minds that elicit them. But there are many communications of which this cannot be said. Messages have been repeatedly given which convey knowledge beyond that which is the conscious or unconscious possession of the inquirer,—i.e., facts of which he is ignorant, and facts which he never knew. Messages have also been given which are the reverse of what the inquirer would have written or spelt out. Messages have been given demonstrating the survival of mind, memory, and affection beyond the tomb. And messages have been given through the mediumship of persons of education and culture, who are fitted to judge of the value of thoughts so received, under circumstances which preclude the normal employment of their own minds in their origination. It is not exact to write as M. Flammarion does on this subject. He deals only with the commonplaces of communications: there are others which are not to be accounted for by "nervous impetus" transferred from an inquirer to a table at which he sits. M. Flammarion has "failed to establish the identity of a stranger spirit unknown to the persons present." One can but regret that he has not been so fortunate as many others: and perhaps it is permissible to inquire what evidence he would consider sufficient to establish identity in a given case.

We do not follow M. Flammarion into his instances of the cases known to him where spirit messages reflected the views of the sitter. It does not concern us to deny that this may be, and often is, the case: but M. Flammarion must address himself to an estimate of the cases where such explanation is of no avail. The "physical auto-suggestion" theory equally with the unconscious mental action theory must be dismissed as inadequate to cover all the known facts. M. Flammarion does not require to be told that any theory propounded must satisfy that indispensable condition before it can win its way to acceptance.

The influence of mind on mind is illustrated by a number of stories, all good, but not better than or so good as those which the French hypnotists have made familiar to us. We no longer express surprise at the fact that unspoken ideas can be conveyed from mind to mind; of the phenomena of suggestion and telepathy we have a surfeit. Nor do M. Flammarion's ghosts detain us. They have a strong family likeness to others of our acquaintance. It is his theory, his explanation that we make for with keen interest. What has he to say?



Two elements exist in the universe—Force and Matter. To these we may add a third, Intelligence. (No chemical combination has yet produced an idea.) Force directs: Matter obeys. Force is invisible; so is Matter. (If this is startling, we may say that reference is made to atoms and molecules which are invisible.) Matter, therefore, is in its essence, invisible. We behold only transitory forms of its manifestation. Matter to us is the consequent of our unceasing receptivity to sensations. Force is the actuality, all else is sensation.

The human soul, furthermore, is a principle of force. "Thought is a dynamic act." Like all forces, psychical force is Protean in the modes of its manifestation. It can act within the human system in which it is generated: it can also affect a table with which that system is in contact and temporarily animate it. The table becomes, for practical purposes, an extension of that human system.

M. Flammarion here as elsewhere does not take note of the undoubted cases where no contact occurs and yet the same phenomena are presented. It is important to note that tables are levitated without any contact, and that the phenomena described by M. Flammarion are independent of physical contact in many cases. Without labouring this point we may point to its bearing on the argument.

The writer goes on to notice the action of mind on mind, and illustrates what he says by the fact that a sound emitted a few yards from a piano will cause vibration in such strings as are in harmony with the sound. Also that a wire near one that is transmitting a telegraphic despatch will be influenced by induction. This leads him to the telephone. There vocal velocity, which is measurable, becomes electric velocity, which is instantaneous. The voice is not transmitted: "on reaching its destination the current again transforms itself into sound through its encounter with a medium, an environment like that at its starting point." Even the connecting wire is not indispensable.

If brain be in sympathy with brain one may secure the transference of thought without difficulty, the "dynamic tone" of the receiver being in unison with that of the transmitter. "It requires but one step more for the admission that psychical manifestations may be established between an inhabitant of Mars and an inhabitant of the earth."

*Cui bono?* Did Galvani measure the possibilities of the convulsions of his frogs? "What is the use of a new-born baby?"

*Voilà tout.* It will be seen that our scientific philosopher does not go too far. It is not our province to point out how much farther an enlarged experience would have enabled him to go.

THE work of the world cannot be done by moderate men, neither by men of very wide or deep insight. The more moderate we become under the combined influence of age and experience, the first of which modifies the activity and the second widens the area both of knowledge and sympathy, the more we are imperceptibly withdrawn into that central region around which, as in a whirl, the affairs of the world boil and bubble. Such persons, however, though without visible activity, are not without work. It is they who sow the seeds out of which spring first modes of thought, and then the activities of the world. All events by which the progress of the world is effected, spring from the silent operation of these central forces. They are the virtues which impregnate the powers of the outer life. All great movements and discoveries have owed their origin to the almost imperceptible working of simple minds impregnating more active natures immediately around them. Of these operations the outer world knows nothing; from it, therefore, they receive no homage, they derive no comfort, they draw no strength, they reap no reward. They are the centres of the civilisation of the universe; their strength, their honour, their comfort, and their exceeding great reward is from within, for they are themselves external to centres more interior than themselves, whereunto they are more and more being drawn in.—A.A.W.

## JOTTINGS.

We see with unfeigned pleasure that a deputation of proprietors and publishers of newspapers and periodicals has interviewed the Postmaster-General as to the transmission of newspapers, periodicals, &c., through the Post Office. We have more than once had difficulty with the G.P.O. official as to the registration of "LIGHT." It did not contain enough news, forsooth! Why, as we said at the time, we will undertake to say that *all* its contents were news to him. This restriction should be at once swept away. If, as public carriers, the Post Office can carry the "Queen," the "Field," and other such bulky newspapers, surely it can carry "LIGHT" without making a yearly trouble to us on the matter.

Mr. Stead told the Postmaster-General that the American P.O. carries the "Review of Reviews" from New York to San Francisco for a halfpenny, but the English P.O. charged twopence halfpenny to send it from the office of publication, on the Embankment, to Westminster. He had to pay one shilling postage on it—price sixpence, or rather fourpence halfpenny—to Australia. Comment is needless. How can London be what it ought to be, the literary centre of the British Empire, with such vexatious restrictions?

The Postmaster-General expressed a desire "to cement an alliance between the Press and the P.O. which they must all wish to see exist in this country." We are glad to hear it; the means of doing this are simple and easy to the last degree.

The "Sheffield Daily Telegraph," in referring to what is locally known as the Ilkeston Tragedy—one Mrs. Aldred tried to drown herself in a canal after throwing her child into the water, because she was under suspicion of stealing a watch—mentions a dream. Mrs. Aldred's sister dreamt that something like what did occur would take place. Her dream was that Mrs. Aldred was drowned in the canal opposite the Ilkeston Park Farm, which is exactly where the woman was rescued. So impressed was the sister by this dream that she said she would like to see Mrs. Aldred in her grave before she herself died. As a matter of fact the sister died last Christmas.

The mantle of the departed prophetess:—

Mrs. Besant announces that she will not be able to present herself as a candidate at the coming School Board election. The death of my honoured friend and chief, Madame Blavatsky (she writes), throws on me heavy additional work in connection with the Theosophical movement, and believing, as I do, that in the progress of that movement lies the hope of a better religious, moral, and social order than we have to-day, I elect to leave the more popular work in other hands and devote myself wholly to the less understood and less attractive duty of pressing the claims of a spiritual philosophy on a public largely dominated by materialism.

News of Laurence Oliphant's Haifa colony:—

The Rev. Mr. Haskett Smith will soon appear in the character of a mystic novelist, or novelist of mysticism. His "Romance of Mount Carmel," as the title is called, will be published by Messrs. Blackwood and Sons. The romance will contain, among other things, a picture of the life of the late Mr. Laurence Oliphant's sect at Haifa in the Lebanon. Mr. Smith was one of Laurence Oliphant's converts, and now, it appears, he is at the head of the Haifite community.—"Echo."

The book has since appeared.

A peculiar chain of events was brought to light in a Kansas divorce case, in which a man petitioned for a separation on the ground of his wife's insanity. It appeared that the judge who granted the divorce issued the marriage licence to the petitioner, performed the ceremony, presided at the trial to establish the insanity of the wife, and finally, acting as the judge *pro tem.* of the District Court, issued the decree of divorce.

Mr. Robert Buchanan tells the following in the "Echo":—

A young Scotchman, some years younger than myself, came to stay with me—Charles Gibbon, since well-known as a story-writer. He was an earnest, open-hearted boy, and we lived together in great mutual happiness. We worked hard, indeed (for literature is never liberally paid), and more than once sat writing, without going to bed, for a fortnight at a stretch. One night he awakened up, and



found me crying. "What is the matter?" he asked. "David Gray is dead," I answered, though I had had no word of my friend for over a week. The next post from Scotland brought me the news of David's death. "God has love, and I have faith!" were almost his last words.

The "New York Sunday Mercury" has the following:—

Have animals another life? That is a question often asked by people who have pets. The wife of a German landscape painter declared that after her favourite roebuck died, although at some distance from her, she heard the animal bounding up the stairs, as he was accustomed to do in the early morning, to be fed with milk at the door of the chamber of his mistress. The Prince of Solms-Braunfels, who related this to Mrs. Howitt Watts, says the lady always believed that the spirit of her roebuck had come to bid her adieu. A scientific German gentleman, Dr. Justinus Kerner, gives an account of the spirit of a greyhound seen at the time of its death. The Prince of Solms also related the case of a seeress who described accurately the spirit of a horse that she had never seen during his life here and the spirit of a pet skylark that belonged to a departed brother of the Prince. Mrs. Howitt Watts writes of a servant maid, a great sensitive, who was accustomed to see the spirits of cats and a dog, and speaks of a lady who saw the spirit of a pet canary at Dietenheim that died there and came and sang at her window.

And then it breaks into verse:—

#### DOVES IN THE SPIRIT-LAND.

Last night as I sank to slumber,  
In the depths of my downy bed,  
There came to my moonlit chamber  
A friend who had long been dead.  
He parted the silken curtains,  
And he took me by the hand,  
And led me over the river,  
And into the spirit-land.

Oh, there it was always summer,  
And there it was never night,  
The lilies never were broken,  
And roses suffered no blight:  
And there by a rainbow fountain,  
That sprang from the silver sand,  
I found, with their necks entwining,  
My doves—in the spirit-land.

They sat on a bunch of blossoms  
As white and as pure as they,  
And their feathers were jewelled over  
With drops of the diamond spray.  
But soon they flew up together,  
And my brow was gently fanned  
With their beautiful pinions, flashing  
In the sun of the spirit-land.

They settled on either shoulder  
And I heard them coo again  
As they used to coo in the morning  
When I scattered the golden grain;  
And then—I woke in my slumber  
But I felt that I had spanned  
The ocean of space and taken  
A glimpse of the spirit-land.

Away with the creeds that tell me  
My doves are doomed to the sod,  
That my snow-white pets were soulless  
And barred from the gates of God;  
For there by the rainbow fountain  
That leaps from the silent sand,  
I know that they wait to welcome  
My soul to the spirit-land.

MINNIE IRVING.

There is a Bill before the Illinois Legislature now, which is actively promoted by Colonel Bundy, which is creating some commotion. Its aim is to prevent fraudulent materialisation phenomena; and its chief provision runs thus:—

Every person who for profit or gain or in anticipation thereof for the purpose of presenting what is commonly known as spirit materialisation, shall personate the spirit of a deceased person, or who shall by trick, device, or mechanical contrivance present anything to represent the spirit of a deceased person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and upon conviction shall be subject to a fine of not less than 100dol., nor more than 300dol., or confined in the county gaol not less than three months nor more than six months, or both, in the discretion of the court.

It has passed the Senate and now awaits approval by the other House.

"The Inter Ocean" opines that chicane, deception and fraud are rampant amongst American mediums; that the

tricksters almost always escape punishment, and that their frauds discredit honest folk. It considers it unbelievable that any honest Spiritualist "with average powers of ratiocination and a fair share of moral sense should oppose the Bill." "In the interests of science, of public morals, of justice, in the interests of a large and respectable body of Spiritualists and Psychical Researchers, it is hoped the Bill will become law."

We are not disposed to criticise. It is abundantly certain that fraudulent exhibitions for gain should be stopped, and that any public exhibitions of materialisation phenomena should be held under carefully guarded conditions. Our own course in England is well-known, and was sufficient to wipe out much disgrace that was gathering round dark séances and cabinet séances held for gain. We are not sure whether this proposed legislation does not go too far. It seems conceivable to us that it may put into the hands of avowed foes a weapon that they will not be slow to use. Fraud must go: but as to means to be used for an end so entirely necessary we do not feel sure.

There is some pretty reading in the Chicago papers about this same Bill, but we do not know how one man "dressed right up to the height of fashion, cross-barred trousers, yellow topped shoes, and a big diamond planted in the lower left-hand section of a new spring tie," materially advanced matters. If it be not treason we should say that much conspicuous nonsense was talked by gentlemen with or without spring ties who neglected the point at issue. Are people cheated under circumstances of exceptional atrocity? Yes. Are the surroundings of these frauds such as to secure them practical immunity in their nefarious trade? Yes. Then let a stopper be put on them.

"The Phrenological Journal and Science of Health" gives prominence to a notice of Count Von Moltke. The "Notable" man is William Black, of whom a good portrait is given. Professor Sizer shies at Spiritualism, and wants to know what "basis we have for a belief in the immortality of the soul after the death of the body." None, worthy Professor, but that of faith. Immortality and Survival after Death are not equivalent terms. If you will not regard Spiritualism in the discovery of your "basis," you may as well select a blind person, furnish him with a first-rate telescope, and proceed to take notes of what he sees.

Vol. IV.—No. 7 of "Theosophical Siftings" gives Dr. Franz Hartmann's views on "The Kingdom of Light and the Secret of Love"; and Katharine Hillard's on "Evolution and the Monad."

"The Theosophist" (Bombay) has obituary notices of Madame Blavatsky; a review of Dr. Franz Hartmann on Jacob Boehme; and more about Obeah. We learn that Colonel Olcott is on his way to London from Australia, and that a general convention of the Theosophical Society will be held in London in July, when delegates will gather from all quarters of the globe.

"The Comet" is the organ of the Burke Debating Club and is published at Waterford. The first number contains an article on "Psycho-physiological Phenomena and Divination," in the course of which occurs the following fortune-telling story:—

An English journalist of good connections was in Paris in the seventies; he visited a medium, and merely as a test of ability he asked, "Am I married?" "No," said the medium, "but you are engaged to be married." "Can you tell me where my fiancée is at present?" "Yes," came the answer, "I see her riding across a green country beside an old man of military appearance." "Wrong," said the Englishman, "English women don't ride on Sundays; but can you tell me when my marriage will take place?" "You will not marry the lady I have seen," said the medium, "but you will marry a lady who will die suddenly." "This is getting interesting," said the Englishman, "can you tell me if I shall marry again?" "Yes," said the medium, "and your second wife will die a sudden and horrible death." On inquiry it turned out that the young lady had been staying in the country, and had, as a matter of fact, ridden with her father to visit an aunt on the Sunday in question; the projected marriage was broken off, but the predicted marriage and sudden death took place, and the hero of the



prediction is again married; his present wife, who may be said to live 'neath the shadow of the sword of Damocles, has never heard of the gruesome prophecy, and for the sake of her peace of mind, I hope she never will.

No 1, Vol. VI., of Mrs. Richmond's "Spiritual Sermons" is on the subject of "The True Spiritual Easter." There is some loose statement on the part of the controlling spirit. When did the "British Association of Science" appoint a committee to investigate Spiritualism? What is the "Psychological Department of the British Association of Science" that "discusses freely Spiritualism and all kindred subjects" and is "presided over by an intelligent man who knows that Spiritualism is true—i.e., Alfred R. Wallace"? In all such comments accuracy is of the first and last importance.

"The Lyceum Banner" (June) prospers under Mr. Morse's editorship. It is bright, interesting, well suited to its readers, and the original promise is fully maintained.

"The American Spectator," published by the Arena Publishing Company, Boston, U.S., is conducted by the editor of the "Arena." Professor Rodes Buchanan is much in evidence in the number that has reached us. He seizes the opportunity of Madame Blavatsky's death to attack her and Colonel Olcott. "An admiring reader of my writings, and I supposed him a sound thinker until he fell in with Madame Blavatsky." Naive Professor! "It would be difficult to find a match for Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott." Yes: it would.

"Better Way," please attend! The Spiritualistic Press does not include ten papers in England, four of which only are named, one dead long ago—"The Spiritualist." These lists should be accurate if given at all, otherwise they are misleading. This is by no means the only blunder.

Mr. Ward Beecher once said:—

"Mr. Ingersoll could not draw a score of men, if before the minds of every one of his listeners there should come the fair form of the mother, of the sainted wife, of the self-denying sister, of the sweetness of some life lapsed and gone. If this could be brought to the minds of men all diatribes, all criticism would be of no avail."

True, and, if we read him aright, he would not want to draw men to a false belief. It is because he has not so convinced himself that he says what he does. Mr. Beecher did not convince him. Let some one else try; he is worth the trouble.

An interesting item:—

I Bulwer (writes S.C. Hall) was a Spiritualist long before Spiritualism became an accepted term, which only began with the Rochester knockings, in 1848. I dined with him when he was living at Craven Cottage on the banks of the Thames. Broughham was of the party. We were to meet Alexis, then a lad known as a clairvoyant. When the bell rang, Bulwer, accompanied by two or three of his friends, left the room to receive him. In the hall was the card tray. Bulwer took from it a dozen or so of cards and placed them in his pocket. After dinner Alexis went into a trance. Bulwer placed his hand in his pocket and before withdrawing it asked whose card he held; the answer, after a brief pause, was given correctly. The experiment was repeated at least a dozen times—always correctly. Alexis was a French boy who had been but a few days in England. The cards were all those of Englishmen. Clairvoyance was a term that probably most of the guests there heard for the first time.—"New York Sun."

The Yeovil Board of Guardians have been in perplexity as the following extract shows:—

THE DIVINING ROD.—At the last meeting of the Yeovil Board of Guardians, the Stoke Parochial Committee reported that they had engaged the services of Mr. Scott Lawrence, the "water expert," and they had resolved to make a test by boring for water in the parish on the spots indicated by him. Colonel Harbin, who presided, asked if Mr. Lawrence was "the gentleman who went about with a hazel tree"; to which Mr. B. S. Hebditch (the Stoke Guardian) replied that he was, and expressed confidence in him. The committee desired the authority to sanction the payment of Mr. Lawrence's fee of £4 4s.; but the chairman doubted if the auditor would pass it. The Rev. C. T. Hoskins, of North Perrott, said that he had had considerable experience in the matter, and could bear testimony to the correctness of the theory. He gave several instances of water being found through the use of the divining rod. The Board decided to sanction the payment of the fee.

Mr. Edward Maitland is writing for the "Agnostic Journal" a series of papers explanatory of Occidental Occultism as distinguished from Oriental Esoterism and Theosophy. The first instalment appeared June 27th. It is entitled "The Bible's own Account of Itself."

Mr. Maitland thus states his position:—

To state the case in short: the Bible was written by mystics for mystics, and from the mystical standpoint; and it has been interpreted by materialists for materialists, and from the materialistic standpoint. And, whereas from the latter and false standpoint it deserves the worst that its foes have said of it, from the former and true standpoint it contains a system of thought and rule of life founded in the nature itself of existence, verifiable by human faculty, and such as by their observance to enable man to turn his existence to the utmost account in the long run, by making of himself the best that he has it in him to be. Such is the thesis to the establishment of which these chapters will be devoted.

Hereon the following is apposite:—

Theologians no longer speak with authority. They are content to suggest and to deprecate hasty contradiction. Those who believed on trust have passed into uncertainty. Those who uphold orthodoxy cannot agree on what ground to defend it. . . . Doctrines once fixed as a rock are now fluid as water.—FROUDE.

"The Astrologer's Magazine" reminds us that the faithful, as represented by "Professor" Wilson, have once more fallen on evil days. The hunters after "subtle devices" have not scorned to take a leaf out of the enemy's book. The police set a trap for the "Professor." They "dugged a pit" for the Astrologer and unfortunately have not "fallen into the midst of it themselves."

Why cannot these gentry leave the prophets alone? Or, if "there is money in it"—as we suppose there is, or they would not meddle—why cannot they go for higher game? Here is a magazine, for example, which is well got up, intelligently written and openly published, which prophesies astrologically over the Fife baby, "I do not think the child will be reared," and goes on to hint that if it is reared, the mother is likely to "make a bad recovery" and have a "short life." Moreover, "in this nativity the nerves are very weak, the stomach, bowels and loins affected," and, in brief, the poor child must be pronounced rickety.

Now if the devil entered into Wilson and instructed him in "subtle devices by Palmistry or otherwise"—"otherwise" in his case—what a legion must there be possessing the audacious astrologer who thus prophesies evil of principalities in the person of the little Fife! The whole principle of persecuting people for their beliefs is an interference with the liberty of the subject of mediæval and inquisitorial character, and is a blinking anachronism or worse now.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"REJECTED."—Agreed, so far as one can agree to what one knows so little of. We suggest that an address be given to which a detailed letter can be sent. It is impossible to deal in this column with all that is necessary to a clear understanding on both sides. What you specify would cost more than the sum named. These details, however, would come before our business agent. If wished, the editor will deal personally with the matter, and meet your wishes as far as may be possible. To that end give an address to which a letter may be sent. There is in every issue a standing notice of the cost of advertising. But we suggest once more that this method of communication between us is tiresome. Give an address to which we can write, and that will simplify matters, for details must be gone into, and this column is not suitable. It is a mistake to put us to the trouble that you do. I do not want to hurt you or cause you annoyance, and if you wish us to pay heed to you you must remember that there are certain conditions *sine quibus non*. We will send a letter to the office if you will fetch or send for it: but this scrappy mode of correspondence is quite impossible and cannot be continued. All the various points touched on in your long letters can only be treated by your giving us an address to which a private letter may be sent. There can be no reason other than mere mystery-making for refusal to give us your name. If you refused, then you must not wonder that you are "Rejected." But we hope better things. We really desire to come into relations with you: but you make it needlessly hard.



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS AT BRADFORD.

Pursuant to a resolution passed at the National Conference of Spiritualists, held in Manchester during July last year, and in accordance with an announcement thereof in "LIGHT" and the "Two Worlds," a national conference of Spiritualists assembled, on Sunday last, the 5th inst., in the Prince's Theatre, Bradford, Yorks.

Representatives were present from forty-two societies and towns, i.e., Armley, Bacup, Batley, Batley Carr, Blackburn, Beeston, Bolton (two societies), Bradford (five societies), Brighouse, Burnley (two societies), Colne, Couwns, Darwen, Heckmondwike (two societies), Heywood, Huddersfield, Keighley, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Macclesfield, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nottingham, North Eastern Federation, Oldham, Parkgate, Sheffield, Slaithwaite, Sowerby Bridge, and West Vale.

The business of the day extended over three sessions—morning, afternoon and evening respectively. The two first meetings were business meetings, the final one being a public meeting, representative of Spiritualism in general.

The morning meeting commenced at 10.30 by the hon. sec. of the Conference Executive Committee, Mr. J. B. Fetlow, calling attention to a letter received from Mr. John Lamont, of Liverpool, the President elect, intimating that, in consequence of complete prostration, as a result of a severe attack of influenza, he was quite unable to attend the Conference and carry out the duties of his office. He delegated his position to Mr. S. S. Chiswell, subject to the Conference accepting his suggestion, and that intimation being at once accepted by the delegates present, Mr. Chiswell was duly installed as the President of the day. The meeting was then opened in form by all joining in singing, "The world has much of beautiful," followed by an impressive Invocation offered by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten.

The PRESIDENT then proceeded to welcome all present to their second Conference, and expressed his pleasure and surprise at seeing the very large gathering that had assembled. Our cause was an upward one. We were growing, and new methods were imperatively needed to meet the new inspirations that were pouring in upon us. We were to unite for freedom. The objects of the meeting were to put into permanent form a National Federation of Spiritualists, and evidently they were all alive to the importance of the steps to be taken that day. Their numbers far exceeded his anticipations. He paid a feeling tribute to Mr. John Lamont, deeply regretting that gentleman's unavoidable absence, and trusted he might be speedily restored to health and assume again the active duties he was so well qualified to fulfil.

The HON. SECRETARY (Mr. J. B. Tetlow) then read the minutes of the last Conference, and these, on the motion of Mr. Knight, Bolton, seconded by Mr. Alfred Kitson, Batley Carr, were duly confirmed. At the time the secretary's report was made up thirty societies and fifty-four delegates had been entered upon his list.

The HON. TREASURER (Mr. F. Tomlinson) then presented his report, by which it was shown that he had received for the Manchester Conference £35 2s. 7d., and had expended £21 18s., and had a balance in hand of £13 4s. 7d. On the motion of Mr. Hepworth, Leeds, seconded by Mr. Coles, Colne, the report was adopted.

At this point Mrs. Britten rose, and begged to introduce to the Conference a distinguished visitor from Australia, Mr. H. Junor Browne, who was accorded a most enthusiastic welcome. Mr. Browne made a few remarks, in acknowledgment of the honour paid him, and Mr. J. J. Morae moved a resolution of fraternal greeting to the Australian Spiritualists, through Mr. Browne, which was seconded by Mr. P. Lee, Rochdale, and supported by Mr. J. Armitage, Dewsbury, and Mr. H. A. Kersey, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and carried by acclamation upon being put to the vote.

MR. INMAN, Sheffield, proposed, and Mr. E. W. Wallis seconded, that all present be invited to take part in the proceedings, and vote thereon. This was unanimously agreed to.

MR. W. JOHNSON, Hyde, then took up the duty of introducing the proposed constitution, as printed in the agenda paper, the main points of which were as follows: It was decided to call it the Spiritualists' National Federation; the objects were defined as: An annual movable conference; the

uniting of Spiritualist societies and Spiritualists in a Federal Union; the printing, publishing, and distribution of literature suitable for general and special purposes; the engaging in missionary work to extend the cause in new districts and revive it where it has lapsed, and, on the direct request of societies, to afford such aid as the circumstances call for and the means of the Federation permit; to keep a roll of mediums and speakers, societies and secretaries. With regard to membership it was agreed that: Membership in this Federation shall be composed of: 1. Societies; 2. Associates. Societies may become affiliated with the Federation, subject to the approval of the Executive, by applying to the secretary. Societies shall be represented at the annual conference by their duly elected delegates, in the proportion of one delegate to fifty members or part thereof. Said delegates shall elect the officers and participate in the deliberations of the conference, in conjunction with the associate members. Associate members can be enrolled upon the recommendation of two recognised Spiritualists, subject to the action of the Executive, and shall be entitled to vote at the annual conference.

The management of the Federation was provided for by the following rules:—

The officers of this Federation shall be a Secretary and Treasurer, to be elected annually. The Conference shall elect a General Executive Committee, of fifteen persons, eight to retire the first year, and seven in the following year.

Retiring members shall be eligible for re-election. The General Executive Committee shall only be elected from the delegates appointed by societies and the associate members of the Federation. The said committee shall elect its own chairman at each of its meetings.

The finances shall be raised as follows: Societies shall, on joining the Federation, contribute a sum of not less than one penny per member per annum. Members of affiliated societies may become associates of this Federation on payment (in advance) of half-a-crown per annum. Associates, not members of affiliated societies, shall, on joining the Federation, pay a minimum annual subscription (in advance) of five shillings. Donations, in aid of the Federation's work, will be thankfully received. Further funds shall be raised, as needed, by any other methods the annual conference shall decide.

The remaining regulations were of the kind customary to such organisations, referring to auditors, procedure, debate and revision. In summarising the matter it must not be understood that the constitution was a mere cut and dried affair, mechanically voted upon. On the contrary, each point was fully, and at times warmly, debated, therefore the results arrived at really represent the consensus of opinion reached after due and careful debate. The consideration of the constitution extended half-way through the afternoon session, so that the formal resolutions, eight in number, could not all be dealt with, three only being proceeded with, they were as follows:—

Moved by MRS. E. H. BRITTEN (Manchester) "That in view of the great demand now being made for the highest possible order of platform teaching and speaking at the Sunday spiritual meetings, societies are earnestly advised to engage no speaker whose qualifications for the important office of rostrum teacher have not been fully endorsed by public opinion, or by the report of some members of the society engaging the speaker in question. Also, a strong protest is hereby entered against the delusive and injurious practice of sending glowing reports to the papers by the secretaries of Spiritualist societies of ill-qualified speakers."

MRS. BRITTEN said, in offering this resolution, we, as Spiritualists, are not only the hope, but we are the strength, of the world. We must, we are in duty bound to, do our best to present our glorious gospel to the best advantage. But at times our best was marred for want of a properly attuned instrument. Her spirit-guides assured her that the better was the instrument the closer it was in tune with the spirit friends, the clearer and sweeter would be the music. She felt, on the eve of her retirement, after thirty years of work, that she could honestly propose this resolution, and ask their most careful consideration of its purport.

MR. PETER LEE (Rochdale), in seconding the resolution, urged that those who set out to teach must know what and how to teach, and, therefore, were bound to prepare themselves for their position and its duties.



Mr. EDWARD HARTLEY (Bradford, St. James's) moved as an amendment that the resolution be dropped entirely. He looked upon it as an insult to all secretaries and mediums. Some may be and are uneducated and ungrammatical, but they are useful, nevertheless.

Mr. LINDLEY (Bradford, Walton-street) seconded the amendment.

Mr. W. JOHNSON (Hyde) as an old worker sympathised with the resolution. We were not catering for ignorance. We are in the midst of a great battle. We must keep up with the times, and our teachers must do so as well. He was constantly hearing appeals for the best class of work and culture in our teachers. We want brains and education.

Mr. W. H. ROBINSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne) urged that every medium filled a place. Some had come with a call, and served us nobly; while others had come without a call, and it were better that they remain at home, for domestic service in the home circle.

Mr. INMAN (Sheffield) supported the resolution, and after Mrs. Britten had replied, the resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority.

The next resolution was moved by

Mr. S. S. CHISWELL (Liverpool), and was to the effect "That in this age, when education is so easily attainable, the promotion of a special school for the training of platform speakers, as frequently suggested, is unnecessary, and, in the present status of the cause, inexpedient. All candidates for the Spiritual Rostrum are strongly urged to prepare themselves for the better fulfilment of their duties by judicious reading, study, and elocutionary practice." In presenting the resolution he pointed out that education did not cease on our leaving school. He had been learning ever since. He was a Lyceum worker. That made increased demands on his abilities. He felt the more all improved themselves the better would be the service rendered the world, in whatever position we might be placed in.

Mr. SWINDLEHURST (Preston) pleaded for culture, fitness, and character. These were all necessary. We must live on Monday what we teach and preach on Sunday. After a few remarks from Mr. Morse and Mr. Lee, the resolution was adopted.

The final resolution dealt with was moved by Mr. J. J. MORSE, and was as follows: "That societies be urged to establish in connection with their other work a weekly conference, both as a means of public propagandism and as affording young mediums and inexperienced speakers opportunities of practice and a means of accomplishing them in the art of public speaking." Mr. Morse briefly and forcibly pointed out the advantage of the course suggested. Mr. SWINDLEHURST seconded the resolution, and after Mr. Armitage and Mr. Tetlow had supported, it was unanimously adopted.

On the motion of Mr. H. A. KERSEY, seconded by Mr. W. H. ROBINSON, the Executive was re-elected for the ensuing year, with the addition of Mr. Hepworth, Leeds.

Mr. W. JOHNSON proposed, and Mr. COLES (Colne) seconded that Mr. S. S. Chiswell be the president of the conference next year, and the proposition was adopted with enthusiasm.

On the matter of the place of meeting for the next year's conference, it was unanimously agreed to accept the joint invitation of the Burnley Societies (*i.e.*, Hammerton-street and Robinson-street), and the date was fixed for Sunday, July 3rd, 1892. This ended the official work of the day, upwards of twelve hundred visitors being present at the forenoon and afternoon meetings.

At six p.m. a great public meeting was held, at which an audience of upwards of two thousand five hundred people assembled. Excellent addresses were delivered by Mrs. Britten, Mr. H. Junor Browne, Mrs. and Mr. Wallis, Mr. Armitage, and others, including Mr. J. J. Morse, who introduced a matter which evoked the utmost enthusiasm, being an effort, that he had privately engaged in, towards creating a testimonial to Mrs. Britten upon her impending retirement from platform work. He desired a fund of £1,000, stated that he had secured some £200 in promises, but now asked for a committee to be formed to give the matter its proper stand and due importance.

On the motion of Mr. KERSEY, seconded by Mr. TETLOW, the Federation Executive were appointed a committee with power to add to their number, and Mr. Morse was requested to accept the office of secretary.

The day's proceedings were eminently successful in every respect, the aggregate attendance of the three meetings making the largest assembly of Spiritualists ever gathered together in one day in this country. J. J. MORSE.

## WHERE MATERIALISM FAILS.

LECTURE BY MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

Under the auspices of the London Federation of Spiritualists, on Friday, 3rd inst., Mrs. Annie Besant delivered a lecture on "Where Materialism Fails," at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, W. Mr. Rodgers occupied the chair. Materialism, she observed, could very well be defended by its advocates, as by it more than one-half of the problems met in life could be answered. So long as physical sciences and elements were dealt with it sufficed. Then, after a time, question after question was encountered to which, figuratively speaking, there was a dead wall put up by the intellectual theory thus followed. There were great classes of facts and phenomena left entirely out of the range of the materialistic plane of thought. Personally, throughout the whole of her career as a materialist, she had always been content to wait where evidence of proof was not forthcoming. When, however, there were found or were said to exist facts that threw new light on the mysteries of life it was only rational for due inquiry to be made, to see whether the phenomena bore out the constructions placed upon them. It was disheartening to think that the whole conflict of evolution, the waste of life, intelligence, ruin of happiness, all was to end in nothing; and that the earth which was evolved in nebulous fire should to nebulous fire return. Every thinking mind would always be engaged in endeavouring to find a solution for these and kindred thoughts. In investigating certain classes of phenomena she found that she must extend her researches beyond the ordinary materialistic range. Her inquiries had led her not to Spiritualism but to Theosophy, a philosophy that gave her a basis for science and morals that she had been unable to find in other schools of thought. Accordingly, she should speak from the theosophical view of where materialism failed. There was the undoubted intellectual eminence of the scientific men who had investigated the subject of Spiritualism—Alfred Russell Wallace, Professor Crookes, and Professor Zöllner—men who in every other branch of material science were regarded as accurate observers and faithful recorders—had carefully inquired into and were convinced of the reality of Spiritualistic phenomena. Yet the observations of these men in that direction were either utterly ignored or covertly ridiculed by their scientific compeers. For another instance, take the subject of hypnotism now being so extensively investigated by men of science. Hypnotism itself was not new. It had changed only in name and in the manner of inquiry. It was remarkable in what careful and exact fashion experiments were at the present time being made, and in what minute detail the results of the experiments were recorded. In France they were carried out under the most severe test conditions. All possibility of deception, unconscious or otherwise, on the part of the patient was prevented. The experiments of Charcot and other professors of the Continental hospitals destroyed to her belief the theory that mind was nothing more than the vibration of nervous cells in particular organisms. In those experiments of the French and German professors the greatest energy of thought was manifested by the subject when in trance, so deep that the body was reduced to the lowest possible point of vitality and was quite insusceptible to external influences except at the will of the operator. There was no materialistic explanation of these phenomena. The French professors had declined to formulate a theory. For herself she was content to put those facts into direct opposition to the ordinary hypothesis of the materialists that thought was the production of matter. Those hypnotic tests had shown the highest demonstration of intellectuality to occur when the mind was practically divorced from the body. Rather, therefore, than the old theory that matter and force produced life, it should, in her opinion, be said that life produced force and matter. When it was noticed how the definition of life had constantly broken down and was continually being widened to enclose more and more of nature, to take in one so-called kingdom after another. Then it was the question arose whether life was not after all universal, and the objects around them only visible garments of that life. Along the old line of thought answer was not possible to afford solution of these ever deepening problems of life. Was it after all so irrational that when before them were seen avenues of knowledge greater than were dreamt of in the old days they should not press forward? Surely almost at the commencement of the twentieth century the lesson of tolerance might have been learned. The history of humanity showed how every new truth had been met. In these days though it was with sneers, not with the fire and stake, that revenge was taken. After all truth was many-sided, and it was neither right nor rational to meet those who gloried in a new truth as if they were committing a crime; if they erred their blunder was sufficient punishment.

At the conclusion of the lecture a vote of thanks was passed by acclamation to Mrs. Besant.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

## Omens: A Suggestion.

SIR,—It has often occurred to me that omens are not by any means always baseless superstition. A very large number of people firmly believe in them. The flight of a magpie, or crow, is taken as a serious warning by some people; there are many who will not sit down one of thirteen to dinner, &c., &c. No one can reasonably contend that there is any direct relation between omens of this class, and the events they are supposed to portend. But, nevertheless, with respect to persons who hold firm opinions concerning such being really sent as signs of future events, there appears to me to be an explanation other than that of rank folly.

If there be any truth in my suggested explanation, omens have been a mode of communication between the spirit-world, and tribes, and races of inferior, ignorant, and therefore superstitious men. They have been a means of keeping up a consciousness of the unseen powers that govern the earth, in the minds of such peoples. That omens are frequently followed by the event they are supposed to foretell is indisputable. But it would be ridiculous to suppose that every time a bird flies in a peculiar manner, it portends a given kind of occurrence.

The spirit-world has been in the habit of warning man in the flesh, as one of its natural labours. To men unable to hear the voice of spirit-guides, or to feel the impression of the guardian's thought, leading him this way or that, a more physical method of warning would be a better way of keeping alive within him ideas of supersensuous beings. And for this purpose omens, no doubt, would serve exceedingly well—working thus. A superstitious man is brought up to believe that certain signs in nature are significant of certain events. Now those signs may occur hundreds of times, without ever being followed by the expected sequel. But as man passes through the world with his eyes usually half open, and his sense of observation generally half asleep, it follows that he does not notice more than a very small proportion of the phenomena going on around him. And further towards those things that he does get a glimpse of, and towards many that he momentarily notes as facts, he directs no attention, no thought, and consequently they fade from his memory at once. The result of this is that a man notices but a very small proportion of those occurrences which he has learned to look upon as portents; and further, that he attributes ominous prognostication to but very few of those he does notice. Some of these latter signs, or indications come true. The way in which it works is, I suggest, as follows. A spirit-guardian wishing to influence his charge, to do, or not to do, some particular action; or wishing him to go, or to abstain from going to some particular place, draws the attention of the man to some one of the many natural occurrences, that he (the spirit) knows the man looks upon as an augury favourable to the spirit's desires. Having struck that attention, and stirred the superstitious nature of the individual, the latter falls in with the indications of the portent and the spirit gains his point. After which, every now and then, the man may perceive the danger he avoided by obeying an omen, or perhaps it may be positive advantage gained, thus strengthening, or rather keeping up, the belief which otherwise would wane. The effect of an omen being verified once would be more powerful in maintaining the superstition than many failures in undoing it.

The lower the race of men, the greater is their belief in these phenomena; and what we meet with in every-day life is but the remains of our own period of existence on a lower step of the evolutionary ladder. As intellectual powers increase omens of this class retire into the night of negation, swinging like a pendulum from acceptance, to the other extreme of rejection. Between these poles the true explanation will probably in time be found. 1st M.B. (Lond.)

## SOCIETY WORK.

KING'S CROSS SOCIETY, COPENHAGEN HALL, 184, COPENHAGEN-STREET.—Rev. Dr. Young will lecture upon "The Uses and Dangers of Spiritualism," on Sunday next; commence 6.45 p.m. The announcement of this lecture for last week was an error.—S. T. RODGER.

24, HARCOURT-STREET, MARYLEBONE.—Mr. Allan Montgomery delivered an instructive lecture on "Mesmerism," its origin and progress, where it differed from hypnotism, illustrated by numerous cartoons. Next Sunday, at 11, Mr. T. Pursey; at 7, Mr. Hopcroft. Thursday, 7.45, Mr. Hopcroft. Saturday, 7.45, Mrs. Hawkins.—C. WHITE.

311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—Much to our regret Mrs. Stanley was unavoidably absent on Sunday last. Several spirit friends addressed the meeting, urging us to greater efforts in our work of propaganda. Sunday, July 12th, services at 11.15 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7 p.m. Address and healing every Thursday, at 8.30 p.m.—A. L. WARD, 59, Trinity-square, Borough, S.E., Sec.

MARYLEBONE ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS, 211, HARCOURT-STREET.—A special and important general meeting of the members will be held on Tuesday, July 14th, at eight o'clock, at the above rooms, for the purpose of receiving the report of the Provisional Committee, considering the suggested constitution and rules, the election of Executive Committee, and other important business.—C. WHITE, Sec.

PECKHAM RYE.—Last Sunday Mr. Lees lectured upon "Evil and Sin: What are They?" This was the first constructive lecture of his course upon "God and His Gospel to Man," showing what the teachings of Spiritualism were upon this great question. He showed that God was responsible for the evil as well as the good, and that evil was but a lower form of good; the good which we have left behind us, and which has become by our advance unutilitarian. Sin he defined as the selection of what we know is not right or best. An attentive audience attended, and the criticism was fair throughout. Subject for next Sunday, at 3.15, "The Ministry of Angels."

OPEN-AIR SPIRITUAL MISSION, HYDE PARK (NEAR MARBLE ARCH).—Last Sunday, although the weather was somewhat threatening, we held our meeting as usual, and its feature was a debate upon "The Philosophy of Spiritualism" with a materialist, Messrs. W. O. Drake and J. Veitch being the speakers. Great interest was manifested by the listeners, who were glad to procure some of our free literature at the close. Next Sunday, as usual, weather permitting, a debate; Mr. J. Veitch v. C. Cohen, materialist. Friends are requested to rally round and help us by bringing and distributing literature.—PERCY SMYTH, 34, Cornwall-road, Bayswater, W.

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.—Sunday, July 5th, the Rev. Dr. F. R. Young occupied our platform. After singing and prayer the doctor read Matt. ix, and then gave an excellent address from "Christ's Cure of the Leper." Many practical lessons were taught us by the speaker, who showed that the "I will, be thou clean" of Jesus corresponded with modern Spiritualism, showing that at the present time healing power was given to many, but there must be the willingness of the healer and the afflicted. All were urged to follow in the good way as shown in the life of Jesus, to do all the possible good while here on this plane. Sunday, July 12th, Mr. Robson, 7 p.m. Thursday, Mrs. Bliss, séance, 8 p.m. Saturday, developing circle, 8 p.m.—H. W. BRUNKER, Sec.

PECKHAM SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, 33, HIGH-STREET, S.E.—Sunday evening service, Mr. Lees took for the subject of his discourse "The Parable of the Lost Sheep"; exceedingly good. On Monday, founders' meeting. Mr. Veitch having resigned, Mr. Hawes, a very active worker, was elected secretary *pro tem*. Several new members were nominated and approved. We are glad to report progress; the financial statement for three months, the time we have held entire possession of premises and hall, also paying off a deficit and £7 odd for chairs, &c., shows a balance of cash in hand, £1 6s. 3d. There is no members' subscription, a system we have found works satisfactorily. Sunday next, Mr. Everitt and friends, at 7 p.m.; at 11 a.m., open. Friday, 8 p.m., healing.—J. T. AUDY, President.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HALL, CARDIFF.—JUNE 28TH.—We were privileged to listen to two of the finest orations we remember hearing from the controls of Mr. J. J. Morse. The subjects, "Spiritualism and its Philosophy," in the morning, and "Spiritualism, its Science," in the evening, formed a unique and comprehensive summary of Spiritualism, theoretically and practically. The controls deprecated the non-progressive attitude of so many calling themselves Spiritualists, who follow after the phenomena to the almost utter disregard of the philosophy of Spiritualism, likening them to the man who expends all his time and energy upon the foundations of a building with regard to, and making no efforts towards, rearing the superstructure. Again, to those who glibly demand to be shown the phenomena *when and how* they require it, they pointed out that it would be quite as *rational* to expect the chemist to demonstrate his branch of science with the tools of the mathematician, or the mathematician his with hammer and chisel of the sculptor, as to expect a presentation of the phenomena called *spiritual* by any other than its appropriate methods and conditions. It is impossible to do anything like justice to the discourses in the space at command, and it must suffice now to say that out of a vast amount of logical and sequential matter, both argumentative and explanatory, the evening lecture was specially noteworthy for the way in which the *modus operandi* for the production of the phenomena was stated; the controls claimed that not only in the realm of individualised human life, but throughout all nature, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, there is a "point of contact," or "nexus," forming a bridge, so to speak, between the higher developments of the physical state and the lower developments of the spiritual state, which, under the appropriate conditions, make possible an interchange between the two, and that this fact is entitled to, and should rank with, any of the other phenomena in nature which come under our cognisance. The meetings were well attended, the one in the evening being crowded. The visit terminated on Monday night with replies to questions submitted by the audience and which were dealt with in a masterly manner, although the bulk of the questions were not of a nature to afford the controls much scope for the exercise of their capabilities.