

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

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

"LIGHT, MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by the Editor.

WITCHCRAFT.

"The Century" publishes an article on "Witchcraft," by J. M. Buckley, who has before written on kindred subjects, such as Astrology, Divination, Faith-healing, &c. "Its baleful spell," he says, "holds four-fifths of the fifteen hundred millions of the human race fast in its slavish chains." "It is at the present time believed in by a majority of the citizens of the United States." Most of the immigrants from Europe are more or less in fear of such powers. It is rife among the Keltic races: not unknown among the English, as Shakespeare witnesses, and as their folk-lore testifies: and current among the more ignorant members of the Catholic Church. This is, at first sight, a startling statement. What does Mr. Buckley mean by Witchcraft? Quoting a sixteenth century work, he thus defines his term:—

"Besides the art magyck, sortilege, physnomye, palmestrye, alcumye, necromancye, chiromancy, geomancy, and witchery, that was taught there also." (Bale, "English Votaries.")

Magic, applied by the Greeks to the hereditary caste of priests in Persia, still stands in the East for an incongruous collection of superstitious beliefs and rites, having nothing in common except the claim of abnormal origin and effects. Astrology, divination, demonology, soothsaying, sorcery, witchcraft, necromancy, enchantment, and many other systems are sometimes included in magic, but each term is also employed separately to stand for the whole mass of confused beliefs which, outside of the sphere of recognised religion, attempt to surpass the limitations of nature. For this reason the title of a work on this subject seldom indicates its scope.

But witchcraft has been restricted by usage and civil and ecclesiastical law until it signifies a voluntary compact between the devil, the party of the first part, and a human being, male or female, wizard or witch, the party of the second part—that he, the devil, will perform whatever the person may request. The essential element in witchcraft as an offence against religion and civil law is the voluntary nature of the compact. Possession by the devil against the will, or without the consent of the subject, belongs to a radically distinct idea. The sixth chapter of Lord Coke's "Third Institute" concisely defines a witch in these words: "A witch is a person which hath conference with the devil, to consult with him to do some act." English laws in 1655 define witchcraft as "Covenant with a familiar spirit, to be punished with death."

Mr. Buckley dwells at length on the extent of the belief in witchcraft to which I have already adverted. He tells us that two or three years since a suit was brought in Pennsylvania by a man against his mother to recover damages for a dog that he charged her with killing by witchcraft. He gained his suit. Numerous witnesses swore to their belief in witchcraft, and only one said that he had never had a friend or relative who was bewitched.

He notes in various parts of the States more than fifty suits instituted recently against persons accused of witchcraft. In Russia the Metropolitan Alexis solemnly cursed the magpie "on account of the bad behaviour of the witches who have assumed its plumage." But these things are matter of common notoriety: they need not detain us. A glance may be given at the late date up to which these beliefs lingered in judicial records. For example, in "Reports of Trials for Murder by Poisoning," by Browne, barrister-at-law, and Stewart, senior assistant in the laboratory of St. Thomas's Hospital, published in 1883, there appears the case of one Dove, containing many references to a belief in witchcraft then prevalent among persons of his class. There are detailed his interviews with the "witch-man" as to the "recovery of lost cattle, removing strange noises from his house, the bewitching of his live stock, and the deaths of persons inimical to him, and the promise of the witch-man to get him out of all difficulty, which led to the murder" for which he was convicted. This was in 1885-6. There are cases in England (1846), Scotland (1845), Edinburgh (1831), Russia (man burnt as a wizard, 1827). In Maine, U.S.A., Captain Samuel Wardell hired Mrs. Leach, a witch, to secure him fair winds for his trips in the schooner "Polly," giving her a bushel of meal per trip. Numerous other authentic cases are recorded.

Whence do we get this witchcraft? The answer is that it is found to be universal amongst the uncivilised tribes of the world. It is believed in, feared as a deadly thing, and the practice of it is punished by torture and death in the most horrible forms. China, India, Japan own its sway. It hung on the skirts of Magism and Zoroastrianism. In Babylon the Magi were the scientists and philosophers of the age. In Egypt we find plentiful traces of it (Joseph's cup "whereby, indeed, he divineth"). It was current among the tribes of Canaan, with whom the Israelites, as "a peculiar people," were forbidden to have any dealings ("Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"). From the Jews came the Christians. Brought in contact with the Romans and Greeks, who had the same general beliefs and practices, saturated with the same superstitions in Asia Minor, it is not strange to find lingering remnants of a belief in magic and witchcraft in the writings of most of the ante-Nicene fathers. The source is clear enough, and, as has been stated, the statute-book of England contains a variety of enactments, civil and ecclesiastical, against witchcraft. The first New England settlers brought with them across the Atlantic the beliefs that had been formed in their minds in the old country. They were a religious and also a credulous people: with no books, no science, no culture; far removed from contact with civilisation and brought in relation only with Red Indians, whose medicine-men they regarded as wizards. The traces of witchcraft in New England up to the terrible catastrophe of 1692, *i.e.*, for some 70 years, are too numerous for me to deal with them. They may be studied in "Annals of Witchcraft in New England and Elsewhere in the United States," by

Samuel G. Drake. From a psychological point of view Dr. George Beard's "Salem Witchcraft Excitement of 1692" is interesting as the story bears on our own time in the opinion of an expert neurologist. And for abundant stories of witchcraft there is Mrs. Lynn Linton's "Witch Stories" (Chatto and Windus).

Some of these records of Mrs. Linton's are very quaint. "In July (1623) Bessie Smith, of Lesmahago, confessed to sundry unlawful doings. When people who were ill of the heart-fevers went to her for advice, instead of employing honest drugs such as every Christian understood and nauseated, she bade them kneel and ask their health 'for God's sake, for Sanct Spirit, for Sanct Aikit, for the nine maidens that died in the boor-tree in the Ladywell Bank.' The honest drugs that every Christian understood and nauseated, is exquisite as a touch. Those were the days of drugs in excess, and the dose was one that would have wrung the *dura ilia* of a rhinoceros. These confessions so-called were most of them wrung from the unfortunate victims by atrocious torture: the reign of terror was such that no one implicated in another's confession dare deny the impeachment: sometimes the hysterical contagion caused weak women to volunteer the most monstrous and obviously false accusations against themselves and others. It must have been in New England a time when the powers of evil were loosed. It is hard to realise what scenes were enacted day by day. An instance, recorded in "Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft," may give a faint idea.

Margaret Barclay, wife of Archibald Dein, of Irvine, had summoned her brother-in-law, John Dein, before the Kirk session for slander, and was not on good terms with him. When, therefore, his ship sank, and he and his men were drowned, Margaret, together with Isobel Irish and John Stewart, a wandering "spaeman," was accused of having compassed their deaths by witchcraft. The women denied the charge, but the spaeman "clearly and pounktallie confessit" his own sins and those of the women who had come to him, he said, to learn his magic arts. Isobel Irish was seized and put to the torture, under stress of which she made confession. In the night she managed to break out of prison, but fell and injured herself so that she mercifully died. The spaeman also strangled himself, "which was the best thing he could do, only it was a pity he did not do it before." It was now Margaret's turn. The torture used, said the Lords Commissioners, was "safe and gentle." They put her bare legs into a pair of stocks and laid on them iron bars, augmenting their weight one by one, till Margaret, unable to bear the pain, cried out to be released, "promising to confess the truth as they wished to have it." Released, she recanted her confession: and so to the bars again! After a time the poor thing shrieked aloud, "Tak' off! Tak' off! and befor God I will show ye the whole form!" She then confessed just whatever they chose to put into her mouth. Hopeless and half dead she assented to the most monstrous statements. In the midst of her anguish her husband entered the court. She cried to him, "All I have confessed was in agony of torture. . . false and untrue. But" (she added pathetically) "ye have been owrelangin' coming." Her prayers were of no avail. They were made to hearts made wild and wolfish by superstition; to minds made fiendish by fear; to men with nothing of humanity, save its form—with nothing of religion, save its terrors. She might as well have prayed to the fierce winds blowing round the court-house, to the rough waves lashing the barren shore! She was strangled and burnt at the stake. In her ravings she implicated one Isobel Crawford. She was seized, therefore, and similarly tortured till she confessed whatever was put into her mouth. On her way to

the stake she withdrew all she had said, her brain gave way, and they fastened to the stake a raving maniac.

These most heart-rending histories of human ignorance and brutish savagery, from which we are not separated by so many years that we can afford to withhold a shudder at the crimes of our common humanity, are worth pondering. Are such things impossible now? Under the reign of law, yes: I suppose so. But man, when the organised common sense of the community of which he is a unit is swept away, rapidly reverts to barbarism and savagery. Discipline protects him against himself; culture and education refine the brutish tendencies and subdue the lurking animal in them. But remove the restraints, stir the passions, feed the lusts, and what do we find? Let the scenes that attend on a great war testify. Let the crimes committed to-day in our great cities for greed of gold, for lust of power, for all base and mean or foul and bestial motives and impulses, bear their awful witness. For these reasons, with history behind them and woe and misery sin and sorrow beneath their feet, Spiritualists are not content with the gospel of "things as they are." In no department of the life that surrounds them are they satisfied: not with the Materialism that has no place in its system for the enduring realities of spirit; not with the bloated luxury that subordinates the soul to bodily appetites, and leaves Lazarus to rot in the gutter: not with the smooth platitudes of worn-out Shibboleths in religion: not, in briefest summing up, with any surface smoothnesses which the glib tongue may use in default of clear realisation of eternal verities, which belong to the domain of spirit, and are the prerogative of the awakened soul. To realise this in such sort as may be possible, by aid more than human, but with man's assistance too, the true Spiritualist will labour.

A POWERFUL CHARM.

Credulity and superstition are not confined to the lower classes alone in Ireland. A story told me as an actual fact by an educated lady, the daughter and sister of a clergyman, might very well be classed as an instance of both. We were discussing the subject of charms, and I was surprised to see that she believed in them herself, as did also her reverend brother. "I cannot doubt what I know to be true myself," she said; and told us the following tale, which I give in her own words—"There was a man in our village, a respectable shopkeeper, who was afflicted with an enormous tumour in his cheek. I well remember the feelings of awe and curiosity with which I used to inspect his profile in church when I was a child. He sat a few pews in front of us, and I could not resist the temptation of watching him all through the service, and looking for the grotesque effects of his enormously exaggerated cheek. His infirmity seemed to increase with years, and the poor man was a frightful object. One day not long ago I passed a man in the village street whose face I seemed to know, and yet I could not think of his name. It suddenly dawned upon me it was Mr. — without his swollen cheek! I could hardly believe my senses, and followed him into a shop on purpose to see if it really could be the man I had seen only the Sunday before, so marvellously changed in such a short time. Yes, it certainly was Mr. —. He addressed me first, saying, 'I suppose you hardly recognise me'; and he then told me how he was cured. It was by a charm! He was advised to go out the first night the new moon was visible, and, after saying 'In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' to wave a dinner-plate round his head nine times towards the new moon. He did so; and in the morning his tumour had completely disappeared!" Such was the tale told to me and implicitly believed in by an educated Irish lady.—"Chambers's Journal."

WHAT we feel and cannot compass, see and cannot fathom, believe and cannot comprehend, is as near the infinite as humanity can go, and proportionately near to the foundation of happiness.—SYDNEY DOBELL.

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SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION.

PART II.

DIVINE AND HUMAN WILL.

Thou must create a will out of thy soul and with the same go forth out of evil, wickedness, and malice into God . . . the willing spirit that will kindle thy soul, and then reach after the life and spirit of Christ, and thou wilt receive it; which will newregenerate thee with a new willing, which will abide with thee.—“Incarnation,” Part II., chap. ix., pars. 26 and 29.

The idea of anything is its soul.—“Nature’s Finer Forces,” p. 137.

It is while even the initiatory stages of conversion are precarious that one shudders to hear some modes of speech applied, such as “accepted in the beloved,” to a person still a stranger to any kind of self-denial, though cultivating a holy imagination. It is true that in Christ’s most gracious parable the father runs to meet the long-lost son while he was “yet a great way off,” but the son *had arisen*: so must the will of everyone rouse to lay hold on the righteousness of Christ because that only can avail us, which is substantiated by our own desire.*

It is the necessity of this initial action of the human will which both Universalists and Evangelicals seem to ignore. Both trust to the inevitable evolution of goodness; the one because omnipotent love wills it; the other because full assurance of salvation by faith in the completed work of the Redeemer cannot, they think, be nullified by subsequent backslidings; with regard to this last persuasion, perhaps no better answer could be given to it than the words found in Ezek. xviii. 26 and Matt. xxv. 11, 12. In one case iniquity, in the other a neglect of the conditions requisite for grace, hindered spiritual progress.

As to Universalists, I think some modifying ideas might be gained by them if the relations of a human father to his young children were attentively studied: he is comparatively omnipotent; he can alter their circumstances for weal or woe at pleasure, but he cannot—be they ever so weak—compel them to say or do what they have set their will against, for they brought in with life a force which the originator of their earthly existence cannot constrain to obedience. Tyranny can break down that force, and with it all the gladness and vigour of nature: a parent’s love withholds him from any such risk, and thus limits power. This, on a very minute scale, is an exact picture of what Boehme teaches us as to the restraint of Deific Omnipotence in winning men or devils back to their allegiance—in preventing the arrest of orderly evolution caused by their own self-will. “God,” he tells us, “cannot fight against God,” and in every immortal spirit there is a “sparkle of Deity.” If Divine love could put forth irresistible power and coerce the will of the creature, the deep sighs of its pity, which thrill here and there in both Old and New Testament, would be meaningless. Our own hearts feel them to be the utterance of sorrow and not figures of speech.

In such sentences as these the yearning expostulations of love cannot be mistaken.

“Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!”—Deut. xxxii. 29.

“Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me and Israel had walked in My ways.”—Psa. lxxxii. 13.

“Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, and walked in vanity, and are become vain? . . . Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?”—Jer. ii. 5, 31.

“O My people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me.”—Micah vi. 3.

“Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.”—Luke xiii. 34.

Having come to this point, “ye would not” yield to the will of Almighty God, there is no honest escape from reference to the unfathomable mystery of free-will; and perceiving, as I do, that no one, however wise or learned, tries to explore it without breaking thought against one or other of two opposing truths—that God is omnipotent, and that man has ability to choose or refuse what is presented to him for choice—I know that for me to pretend to throw any light on the subject would be absurd: not so to try and explain why its mystery never darkens my own intellectual

light. Every docile student of Boehme’s revelations could witness, I suppose, to having the same privilege.* For while philosophers reason about the will of man as an attribute, assigning to it in their theories more or less of intrinsic power, Boehme shows that in the last analysis it is the man himself; that by his *will* he is a creature individualised in the ocean of life; proving that a will has separated itself from the whole will of the supreme God into divisional existence; and the method of this transition from an unrealised idea to creatureliness, is given in the following words as intelligibly, perhaps, as by any number of quotations.

“The eternal word breathes forth itself into an infiniteness of plurality† and brings the plurality of knowledge into imagination, and the imagination into desire, and the desire into nature and strife, till it comes to fire . . . the fire giveth soul,”‡ (by nature here understand the first forms of nature, the astringency and mobility which strive against each other till their conflict strikes out the involved fire of an antecedent will). A yet deeper opening in the abyss was granted to Boehme, which I think Greek scholars may claim for Plato before him. He teaches that an idea or thought in the Deific mind|| originated the separated creaturely will. “The image,” he wrote, “was not a substance but a will to a substance.” Nor does he allow us to think that the mode of man’s creation was exceptional, though, as to this universe, it was the highest pitch of Divine imagination which brought into manifest life the image and likeness of God. “The centre of everything,” he asserts, “is spirit from the original of the Word.”¶ The separation or distinction in the thing is own-self will of its own self-impression, or compaction, where every spirit introduceth itself into substance according to its essential desire.”

Everything includes, of course, crystals, plants, and animals: little as we can discern the action** of a will in plants, it is indisputable; a plant has its will and makes it valid, as many a weaker growth finds to its cost.

But are we to conclude that all creaturely wills originate from ideas in the Divine wisdom, i.e., the efflux of Deity? What goes on in the passage above quoted saves us from that supposition, “the formability of bodies existeth out of the experience of the willing, where everything’s centre, as a portion of the outspoken Word, re-outspoke itself and frameth itself into separability, after the kind and manner of the Divine speaking.”††

This justifies the belief that the idea, will, and desire of inferior beings in the supersensual world may originate creatures—not immortal, as on the highest plane the “spiration of the Word created man.”‡‡ I find it help my faith in the loving-kindness of God *not* to believe that all hideous animals and more loathsome reptiles were spoken forth by Him. Look at a rhinoceros or alligator, and even some kinds of fish to feel this. The hypothesis that these embody

* To such learners it is a grief and astonishment to see all that is spent year after year in publishing sermons, snippets of devotional reading, and torrents of tracts, while works of such inestimable value as Boehme’s smaller treatises, which would cost little to reprint, cannot be obtained except in very rare copies. The answer to the third of his Theosophic Questions would appease doubts that shake the faith of thousands of people, but no one cares to reproduce what theologians discredit or despise.

† Swedenborg uses just those words in “Arcana Cœlestia,” 10,777: “No one can be compelled to good because nothing which is of compulsion inheres, for it is not his. That becomes his which is done from freedom, for what is from the will is done from freedom and the will is man himself.”

‡ “Sixth Epistle,” pars 21 and 24.

§ Perhaps a few sentences of Rama Prasad’s most instructive book may afford some glint of light on this last sentence: “At every moment of time, i.e., in every *truti*—are millions of *truti*—perfect organisms in space. The units of time and space are the same . . . every *truti* of space is a perfect organism.”—Nature’s Finer Forces,” p. 81.

|| Our minds “out of which do spring so many various thoughts, where every thought hath again a centre to a will, that so out of a conceived thought a substance may be produced. In such a manner are all spirits created out of the Eternal Mind.”—“Threefold Life,” chap. iv., pars. 30 and 31.

¶ Anyone who has seen Mrs. Watts Hughes’ “Voice Figures” will better understand how “spirit is from the original of the Word” the breath that causes the vibration of sound determines the figure—the formative idea which is the first beginning of a “will to a substance,” and the will spirit concentrating the action of the seven forms of nature in that focus (the idea) brings it to ultimatum in a denser sphere of existence.—“Voice Figures,” published by Hazell, Watson, and Viney, 1, Creed-lane, Ludgate-hill, London, E.C.

** See par. 66 of “Sixth Epistle.”

†† “Knowledge of God and of all things.”—Pars. 11 and 12. [Almost identical with Boehme’s “Sixth Epistle.”]

‡‡ Creation, which implieth chiefly a compaction and bringing down lower.—DIONYSIUS FREHER.

* Justification is effected by the blood of Christ in man; in the soul itself.—“Election,” chap. x., par. 119.

the foul ideas of minds not holy will explain St. Martin's curious saying about insects. "One need not," he says in a very striking chapter on "The Third Nature and Insects," "worry oneself as naturalists do to classify insects in the regular order of animated nature. In relation to nature they are evidently apocryphal creatures; they are excluded or cut off, so to speak, from the true family line, and the name given to them, insect from the Latin word *insecare*, alone implies what I have just shown to be their origin.* Returning from this digression to the point chiefly in view—if the will is the factor of creaturely existence, all that exists having proceeded, by however many gradations, from the One Holy Will—two deductions appear to me to be inevitable. First, that no human creature can be a manifestation of the "sum of all beings."†

For even in numbers no one can have for its product a unit of equal value.

Secondly, since every derivative fraction of the all-comprehending One, such as angel or man, is energised by the will of God [in nature] its will cannot be amenable to compulsion. To this may be objected the common fact of one human will being subdued by the force of another, and so in our own minds may one form of volition conquer another; but this is not equivalent to destroying a faculty which, if such things can be brought into comparison without profanity, would be similar to the Holy Will of God annihilating the will of a human creature. Besides, even between man and man or man and woman, where the will seems to be conquered, we may be sure that the semblance of self-interest led to the surrender: after which a kind of hypnotism prolongs defeat. Again, the hopeless slavery of habit, which seems to hold people fast to follies and vices they abhor, is often taken for proof that human will is not free. Might we not as well say that limbs have no power of movement because many are paralysed, and some can be made rigid and incapable of self-direction by mesmeric art?

I have no doubt that thousands of human beings are hypnotised by evil spirits to whose incitements they have yielded while yet free. In a very terrible degree proving the truth of the saying, "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey."‡

To conclude, honesty obliges me to confess that since I firmly believe that after slow and tremendous discipline, at last the most violently and discordant fractional will is to be brought into divine harmony, it may fairly be said, why, then, need you doubt God's ability to do now at once what by more slowly working influences is to be effected? and if that is possible must not the Holy One design and promote the discords of sin?§

If nothing already alleged prevents this inference I can only answer—by what may seem a weak evasion—that as all created beings in the strictest sense inhabit the life of the supreme source of life, it is necessarily impossible for us, minutest atoms of that life, to conceive aright of its modes of action: that, therefore, the attitude of thought prescribed by the Father of Spirits must be our nearest approach to wisdom. Now the tenor of Scripture from beginning to end is deceptive if man has not freedom of choice. Denying that freedom, we can hardly accept other Bible doctrines with any show of consistency. It is, I know, a very old-fashioned position to rest in when reason is non-plussed, but for me, the summary of wisdom recorded by Job remains most comfortably clear. "To man he said, Behold to fear God that is wisdom, and to depart from evil that is understanding."

A. J. PENNY.

MEN do here what they would be ashamed to do in Heaven, and occupy their minds with paltry objects which they think are good enough for the world. If they felt as they ought to feel, that they are living in the very presence of God, and with the eyes of angels upon them, and have begun here, or ought to have begun, the same sort of life which, under happier circumstances and with purer souls, they are to live hereafter, how many men and women would be cast out with their present style of acting, thinking, and feeling!—SYDNEY DOBELL.

* L. C. de St. Martin's "L'Esprit des Choses," p. 164, Vol. I. Boehme seems to have entertained a similar thought. "Elementary qualities at some times generate living flesh therein, as grasshoppers, flies, worms, or creeping things."—"Aurora," chap. xvii., par. 14.

† "For myself I am no more assured of my own ultimate perfecting than I am of the perfecting of every Ego in which the sum of all beings is self-manifested."—G. W. Allen's "Address to the Christo-Theosophical Society," November 17th, 1891.

‡ Rom. vi. 16.

§ See on this point "Incarnation," Part I., chap. v., pars. 132 and 133.

DAKOTA INDIAN DANCES.

To "The Banner of Light" Major Newell contributes an account of some Dakota dances. From his interesting narrative we extract the following account of the

GHOST DANCE.

I read in the papers a short time since that General Miles said the craze among the Indians had not yet died out, notwithstanding the severe drubbing the regular army gave them last winter. With such reports, and the misrepresentations that are continually being published by the leading papers throughout the States, and copied into the little "patent insides" that are put out by the million copies into every town and hamlet, does anyone wonder that public opinion is against the Indians?

The regular army has no other amusement. Its officers are educated and supported at the Government's expense; its men are fed, clothed and taken care of like any good watch-dog; both are supposed to be the guardians of our Government—to preserve "the peace," to see that the orders of Congress and the President are faithfully carried out. They have learned that the Indians have no rights which a white man is bound to respect. I shall confine my remarks to the Sioux, as it was upon them that the regular army made its attack last winter. Now that it is a thing of the past we can look back and see where the mistake was made by the white men. Knowing the facts as I did at the time the troops were sent to Rosebud and Pine Ridge agencies, I protested as best I could, but to no avail. Somebody must be killed; the regular army must have a chance to know something of the horrors of war!

A few half-starved men, women and children, with scarcely blankets and clothing to keep them from perishing from the severe cold of that latitude, moved to a part of their reservation, entirely away from any white settlements, to a place where they could worship God in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience—a right guaranteed to every man, woman and child in the United States! In this lonely and secluded spot they were attacked by the soldiers of our Government, and men, women and little children murdered in the most barbarous fashion.

There has not been one instance shown where they left their reservation, or molested any white man who was peacefully pursuing his own business.

How the officers of our Government could sit at Washington and be misled into giving such orders to the army—to pursue, kill and capture people who had done no harm—I fail to see!

Soon I expect to hear the newspapers exciting the people up to a war of general extermination against an unoffending people.

Now, what is this Ghost-Dance—or Messiah craze?

The Indians have long known that they could communicate with the so-called dead. They have prophets among them who have the God-given power of seeing, hearing and talking to those of their friends who have passed on to the higher life. For the white people to deny this they must deny the truth of the Bible. The Dakotas never transact any business of any importance without first consulting with the Great Spirit through their guardian spirits. To do this the head chiefs and the holy or "medicine men," we call them, gather in the Ghost Lodge—which is a tepee built and kept for that use alone—the same as we dedicate a building to be used as a church, or Masonic hall, or any special purpose. They gather there and sit in a circle; singing songs of praise and offering prayers to the Great Spirit to guide them in their ways. These medicine men being mediums, someone is usually soon controlled to speak—the same as the Quakers: when the spirit moves them they speak. They are mostly clairvoyant and clairaudient—speaking the thoughts that are transferred to their minds. After one has spoken, he sits down, and another is controlled. So they sit for hours and sometimes for days before they fully decide what course to pursue. Many suppose that the Indians get excited quickly; but such is not the case. They are the slowest people to "get mad" I ever saw, and the slowest to get over it! There is no more to the Indian ghost-dance than there is to a Quaker meeting. They hold these meetings sometimes every day, sometimes every week. The holy men will go the Ghost Lodge, get controlled by their spirit-guides, and answer questions at any time.

The report that some Messiah was among them would be to them as if Mrs. Ada Foye, Moses Hull, W. J. Colville, or some noted medium should come here: *we* would all turn out to hear what they had to say. The stories fabricated about the uprising of the Indians to retake their territory and kill the whites embody one of the largest newspaper "scares" ever published. The Indians have too much sense; they never dreamed of such a thing; they are perfectly powerless in the winter—no clothing except what the Government gives them, and the same as to rations. When the white people look at it rightly, the idea of an Indian outbreak of this character is too absurd to give it a moment's thought.

"Spotted Tail" once said to me: "Father, when you deal with a full-blooded Dakota, you will always find his word good; but if you deal with a half-breed, you will find it bad—they are great liars, they are like bald-headed white men."

So it is with those who are bringing in reports against the Indians. The half-breeds know they can make money by inventing stories to please the reporters of newspapers. I used to take the Chicago papers to know about the uprisings at my agency. We never heard of them at home! To be sure, the Indians, like white people, have amusements and dances in which they have much fun; but the ghost and sun-dance are religious meetings, and should be so respected.

This is Major Newell's account of another of the Dakota Dances, extracted from the same article:—

SUN-DANCE.

The sun-dance comes off every year in the full moon of the month of July—a custom that has been kept up among the Dakotas for, I expect, thousands of years. At that time they gather at some selected place where wood and water are handy; they usually put their tepees in a large circle about one mile in diameter. In the centre of this circle they put up poles about ten feet high, forming another circle about four hundred feet in diameter—sometimes smaller, according to the crowd gathered. An awning is fixed up with poles covered with blankets and tepee cloths, to protect them from the sun and rain. In the centre of this circle they place the holy tree.

The cutting of the holy tree is quite an event with the Dakotas. The tree selected is usually about ten or twelve inches in diameter at the base, and about thirty feet high. It is selected by the holy men the day before it is cut.

An Indian girl about eighteen years old, who is yet a maid, is selected to cut the tree down, as they would not allow any man to do such a thing. Should a young man insist in doing such work, the women would vote him a disgrace to the tribe, and present him with a dress and tell him to wear it, as he was no man, only a squaw.

The Indian girl so selected is supposed to give her whole life to the cause of the Great Spirit. She becomes like the sisters in our convents. They go about helping the sick, and are supported by the charities of others. The whole tribe then encamped gather around this tree, in places where they can witness the ceremony, as we would to witness the laying of a corner stone of some public building. Four medicine-men usually take a seat near the base of the tree, and sing songs and offer prayers to the Great Spirit. Then the girl—attired in a beautiful buckskin dress, trimmed with beads and the eye-teeth of elk—comes forward, armed with an axe.

These teeth, I would remark parenthetically, are worth at least one dollar each. I have seen a dress with over four hundred of those teeth on; when we pay four hundred dollars for a dress for a white woman we think it very fine. The Indian women value their dresses in like manner with their white sisters.

The girl likewise wore two pairs of ear-rings in each ear; one pair hung to a hole in the top of her ear—the other from the bottom, the same as worn by white women. The earrings were made of small shells and extended down to her waist. When she chopped the tree, they flew around at every stroke of the axe. Finally, she took them off; then she soon had the tree down. As it fell, a great shout went up from the multitude there assembled. A waggon was brought and the tree loaded on and started for the centre of the circle, some two miles away.

Then the excitement begins. The last dance I saw I think there were at least between three thousand and four thousand

men, women, boys and girls on ponies, dressed in their best, as we would dress on holidays. As the waggon moved they set up a yell, and all started for this circle. I have heard the rebel yell, as their victorious lines of battle were beating us back, step by step, and I have heard the loud cheer of the boys in blue as we drove the enemy from their strongholds, but I never heard such a yelling and stampede of horses as I saw and heard then.

The object is to drive all evil spirits away from the place where the holy tree is to be set up.

When the crowd reaches this circle, they all ride in a circle around it, shouting like a revival preacher trying to stir up a crowd of white people.

The tree is escorted to its place by the holy men walking along by the side of the waggon. When they arrive at the destination it is unloaded, and set up in the centre of the circle.

The next day at noon the services begin. The candidates are prepared by fasting and prayer for thirty-six hours.

It has always been represented to the white people that this service was performed by young men who were just passing from the boyhood state to be a young man—which means with them to be a *soldier* and *hunter*: that they go through this pain and torture which I shall describe, to show their friends that they are brave, and can suffer pain without flinching.

This is a great mistake.

The real object of their blood-offering is this: Suppose an Indian has a sick wife or child; all is done that is possible to save them from death, and they pray to the Great Spirit that if he will restore their loved ones to health, they will at the next annual gathering of the people (in the full moon of the month of July) make a blood-offering; or should a woman or man get lost in a snow-storm on the prairie, they pray to God to save their lives and restore them to their friends, and they will make the blood-offering; or should a scourge or disease get among their horses, they ask God to stop it, and they will make the blood-offering.

After fasting thirty-six hours, so that the system is free from all food, and the spiritual elements of the body gain the control over the material, the active participants are dressed in holiday attire, which consists of a shirt over the shoulders, the breech-cloth and leggings, with a blanket tied around the waist, hanging down to their feet; their hair is trimmed with eagle feathers; they have a small whistle made of bone which they blow. They usually come on in groups of three or four, under the charge of a holy man. When the holy man prays, they stand looking at the sun, blowing their whistles, so as to call God's special attention to what is going on—the same as our churches ring their bells and play on big organs, and the Salvation Army assaults the air with its brass bands: they all want God to understand they mean business. When the hour comes to make the blood-offering, one will walk up to the tree and bare his breast and back; the medicine-man will take up a pinch of the skin, run a sharp knife through, put a stick through the hole, tie a thong of rawhide to it, then on this thong of rawhide fasten a bull's head—sometimes one and sometimes two from the breast and two from the back, all four heads hanging half-way to the ground. They jump up and down until the skin tears out from the weight of the heads. I have seen the skin stretch out six inches before it would tear. Another would be cut in like manner, and a rope passed over a limb of the holy tree; the man would then be drawn up clear of the ground, and there hang until the flesh tore out. Another, cut in like manner, would have the rope tied to a horse, who would soon pull loose. Others in different ways—the women making their offering of flesh and blood by coming up to the holy tree, where they bare their arms, and have from one to six pieces of flesh about the size of a five cent piece cut out by the medicine-men. They never flinch while this is being done, believing that God is satisfied of the sincerity of their vow by their offering of flesh and blood. These pieces of flesh are deposited in the bark of this holy tree.

If this sun-dance—so-called—is only to show the bravery of the young men, why do the *women* undergo these same tortures?

It will be seen by this that the sun-dance—so-called—is an annual religious festival. It may be a relic of barbarism; but how much are we in advance of them that *we* shall say by force of arms that they must not practise it?

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["M. A. (OXON.) "]

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The question of spirit-identity has been raised in our columns in several recent communications, more especially in the articles contributed by "Edina," and particularly in the series dealing with messages that purport to come from Charles Dickens. We have printed at length our correspondent's own account, together with a specimen of the messages received. The medium, it will be remembered, occupies a position unique among psychics. She is deaf and dumb, and the range of her interests is greatly curtailed by her affliction. She is not versed in ordinary literature, and has no knowledge of works so commonly read as those of the late Charles Dickens. Her reading is confined to very simple magazines, such as "Good Words," "The Sunday at Home," and the like.

Her father describes the usual method employed in her automatic writing. "She puts the (note-)book on the top of a chest of drawers in her room, and which (i.e., the chest of drawers) is situated at least ten feet from the gas-jet, and with her back to the light, in such a position that she cannot see what she is writing." She pens the messages, standing in that way, as they come.

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The medium's clairvoyant faculty enabled her at once to recognise a portrait of Dickens as identical with her communicator. He was dressed differently, but the face was the same. The handwriting of the messages, a specimen of which we have inspected, bears no resemblance to the Dickens' handwriting, abundance of which is to be seen in the Forster collection at the South Kensington Museum; nor is the signature like the novelist's elaborate autograph. This, however, causes us no surprise. The cases in which the autograph or handwriting of a particular person who

professes to be communicating is reproduced through the hand of the medium are very rare. We have had such cases within our own experience, facsimiles of autographs having been produced when we were unaware of their peculiarities, but we repeat that such cases are rare. Perhaps the best-known cases are those published by the late Baron Guldenstubbé, whose book will be familiar to most of our readers, and can be consulted in our library. As a rule, in cases of automatic writing, where any attempt is made to vary from the usual handwriting of the medium, a characteristic script is selected at first and adhered to afterwards, so that a particular communicator can be known by his writing, as another is by his rap or knock on table or floor at a séance. In verifiable cases there is usually no resemblance or identity between this automatic script and the handwriting of the individual during his earth-life. The absence, therefore, of any marked similarity between the known handwriting of Dickens and that in which these alleged messages are given presents to us a difficulty.

The mechanical difficulties that conceivably and almost necessarily lie in the way of receiving precise communications from the other world are obviously great. Our ignorance of the conditions under which any communication is possible precludes more than a guess. We have already used the illustration of printers' errors, and have suggested that as the messages come so they must remain, for we have no one here to "correct the proof." There is also on our side that fruitful source of error, undeveloped or imperfectly developed mediumship. There are also the constantly varying conditions which exercise so powerful an influence over results. An electrical atmosphere, a sultry air, a fresh element in the circle, passing sickness, mental worry on the part of the medium—who does not know what potent influence such causes exercise over these delicate experiments?

Then, what causes of error may there not be on the other side? Through what various "mediums" of intelligence may not a message have passed before its transmission? We are led to believe that not every spirit can communicate directly with earth. As we have to avail ourselves of certain psychical organisations for our purpose, so we believe it is with those who desire to speak with earth. And, if this be so, what changes may a message undergo before it is fairly started on its way to meet with fresh difficulties as it reaches us? There is a well-known children's game, which is played by, say, half a dozen persons seated round a drawing-room table. A whispers a short story to B; B repeats it from memory to C; and so on till F returns the story to the original narrator, A, who recites it and the first version for the benefit of the company. How changed in its passage from mouth to mouth! Some details blurred, some omitted, some travestied; incidents added, here a gloss, there an opinion, all is different. The fable seems to us to be not inapplicable to the subject under discussion. Of the difficulties of transmission we know nothing; only this we know that if the message has been sent through various minds it must have been greatly changed in the process.

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In all that has been hitherto said we have been concerned with the form of the messages. It is when we come to the spirit that we arrive at the real touchstone. These spiritual things are spiritually discerned. We believe implicitly that there is many a message that comes home and commends itself to the heart of the person for whom it was intended that will not stand dissection and cold analysis. The identification of the communicator belongs to another region than that of form. The evidence is of another order than that which commends itself to the semi-materialists who would apply to the science of Psychics the canons of evidence that they have found serviceable in Physical science. Evidence of this order appeals to the heart rather than to the head; to intuition rather than to logic.

In such cases there is usually a definite reason traceable for the attempt to communicate. The affections are involved; there is a wrong to remedy; or there is a warning to be given or some word of comfort to be spoken. There is a reasonable motive, and the message is in accord with it. In the best cases no element of doubt enters. The witness of truth is speaking, and the verification is from within.

If these considerations are based on sound reason, as they are on long and varied experience, we think that the Dickens' messages fail of verification. They do not fulfil any of the necessary requirements. They are deficient in adequate motive: they are not worthy in form of the great novelist: they are destitute of the spirit which we should expect from him.

What, then, are we to conclude? The hypothesis of personation is easy enough of suggestion, but ponderously difficult of application. Why, in the midst of many messages which *do* satisfy those most concerned and, therefore, best able to judge, should a bad jest be intruded? What was there in the conditions under which these messages were received so different from those under which, "Edina" tells us, "very beautiful and most affecting stanzas describing a death-scene in our home" were given from the same alleged source? "So true, so sacred, and so powerful as at once to convince us that we were *en rapport* with someone far above the usual run of our correspondents from the other side." What is the explanation?

Whatever it may be, our thanks and those of all students of these mysteries are due to "Edina" for the frank and straightforward simplicity with which he has laid before us a problem that involves many interesting points for discussion.

DEMISE OF MRS. DE MORGAN.

As we go to press we learn that an old Spiritualist, Mrs. De Morgan, has succumbed to the recent deplorable severity of weather. Congestion of the lungs, complicated with bronchitis, terminated the earth-life of our friend. She was born in 1808.

MR. SPURGEON'S PUBLICATIONS.

We have received from the publishers (Passmore and Alabaster, 4, Paternoster-buildings) the January part of "The Sword and Trowel": an "Illustrated Text Almanack": a Sheet Almanack: and two sermons, one for the first Sunday in the New Year. This is the first that Mr. Spurgeon has been able personally to revise since his long and painful illness. There needs no word to commend to his admirers what Mr. Spurgeon puts forth. We hope there needs no expression of admiration for his undying zeal and outspoken bravery in defence of what he holds to be truth. It is not necessary for one to agree with his views in order to pay a tribute of respect to his long labours and to his high character. When the story of that life comes to be written it will be one of the most instructive and remarkable records that the world possesses. We are sure that all will join us in a hearty wish for Mr. Spurgeon's recovery of such measure of strength as may be permitted to a body so long and so heavily taxed by his self-denying exertions.

SPIRIT IDENTITY.

THE CASE OF CHARLES DICKENS.

PART II.

By "EDINA."

The fourth communication received from the person designating himself Charles Dickens extends to four pages of the note-book. The handwriting and signature are the same as in the first three messages. It is headed in very small letters, "The Bill," and on looking at it I discovered it was a partial reproduction of the last portion of Mr. Dickens's well-known Christmas story of "The Holly Tree Inn"; but a good many paragraphs are wanting. As written, however, the story appeared quite coherent and showed no gaps.

As to this message and the one which preceded it, as mentioned in my former article, I have to state that the medium has never read either the one story or the other, and she saw them for the first time after the messages were written. The volume in which they appear is an odd one of Christmas stories which was lying away in a closet among some books and pamphlets. Further, it was absolutely impossible for the medium to reproduce in our presence four pages of manuscript, without having the original printed story before her. Her usual mode of writing is as follows: She puts the book on the top of a chest of drawers in her room, and which is situated at least ten feet from the gas jet, and with her back to the light, and in such a position that she cannot see what she is writing, pens the messages as they come.

The question here occurs: Why has this communicator, if he be the veritable Charles Dickens, taken the trouble to reproduce, or rather to condense and rewrite, two old Christmas tales, instead of giving us something new? To me it is inexplicable; but all I can say is my daughter did not copy or condense them, but was the unconscious instrument of their production.

The communicator again fixed Monday evening, November 9th, for his next message, but on that evening the medium was otherwise engaged till pretty late, but about ten p.m., on sitting down she took up a china cup and stated she distinctly saw Dickens's face in the bottom of it. He spoke to her and said he could not write much on this occasion, and then came the following message (handwriting and signature same as formerly):—

"I am sorry I cannot get the power to dwell over a story to-night, considering the hour, but I appeared to you in the cup. I will write you a nice one that will interest you to-morrow night, and there is another author wishing to write too, but your guardian has just informed me that you are not strong enough just now for many spiritual duties, but my story to-morrow will not give you a long trial. I am so fond of story writing. When I give you my last one I will give you a biography of myself. Look you sharp to-morrow."

"To-morrow" brought another message (handwriting and signature as before). It extended to two pages of the note-book, and was a simple, but very comprehensive narrative of the life of Abraham Lincoln from his birth in 1809 till his assassination by Wilkes Booth in 1865. The dates and leading incidents are all correct, except the date of his re-election as President, which I find was in 1864, not 1865, as stated in the written message. Looking at this message as it stands, I am strongly of opinion that it is original, and not a copy; but, as there are so many narratives of the life of "honest old Abe," who can tell? All I can say is that my daughter could not and did not compose this narrative; indeed, she tells us that she never heard of Abraham Lincoln, who died before she was born. This message was written in the same manner and in the same obscure light as the former ones. At its close the communicator indicated a desire to write again on Friday or Saturday (November 13th or 14th). On the night of Saturday, November 14th, another message was written. It consists of a short sketch of a tame leveret. It was written much in the style of a child's story, and though simply and coherently told, one cannot conscientiously say that it shows any indication of the power and genius of Mr. Dickens. The handwriting and signature are the same as formerly. On this occasion the communicator did not, as on previous times, say when he would again write; and we are still without the biographical details promised. Should

any further communication come from this source it will be duly sent you. Meantime, copies of some of the messages are herewith sent for your consideration, and for publication (if deemed necessary) as an appendix to the narrative now given.

Summing up the whole matter, so far as the messages are concerned, I could not conscientiously say the identity is proved by the internal evidence. As to the handwriting I cannot speak, never having seen any specimens of the caligraphy of the great English novelist.* I, however, herewith forward to you a page of the note-book for comparison or inspection, although I do not think it likely that it will resemble the caligraphy of the late Charles Dickens. It is, as you will observe, small and peculiar in character.

There is, therefore, only the identification of the photograph to go on, and there we are shut up to the alternative of believing or disbelieving the medium. She is most emphatic as to its being the photograph of the person she has seen in her room and in other parts of the house on several occasions, and who represented himself to be Charles Dickens. Her "inner vision" has hitherto been so good that to our minds the identity is more than probable; but I would not, the messages standing as they are, put it higher than probability. If the communicator be Dickens, is it too much to be desired that he will still furnish the details he has promised regarding his life and work? Rightly or wrongly, if it is he, I connect his visit to us with the communication we got from Professor Wilson, who wrote a message, the contents of which appeared in "LIGHT" last year. Professor Wilson's son-in-law was the late Sheriff Gordon, of Edinburgh, and the sheriff was on earth one of Mr. Dickens's closest friends. May it not be that, if Professor Wilson was able to communicate through our medium, he had met with the great novelist on "the other side," and also brought him to our home to write us the messages we have got? That is my theory on the subject—founded, of course, entirely on the identity being proved by the photograph; but it is a theory and nothing more.

I have only to add that the poetry on the death scene in our home has not been sent—it is too sacred for publication. The messages sent are given *verbatim*, and in the order in which they came. You will observe that in the first line of the last message there is a misplacement of words, "The children of mine a neighbour," which should be read, "The children of a neighbour of mine"; but I have just copied it as it was written.

P. S.—Since the foregoing articles were penned, the communicator has written a short message (handwriting, &c., as before), saying that as my daughter has not been well (which is the fact) he had refrained, by orders of her "control," from troubling her, but would shortly write her a story.

In order to present the case for opinion in the fullest and completest manner, we append a *verbatim* copy of some messages purporting to come from Charles Dickens. They are copied by our correspondent from his daughter's note-book. It must be reiterated that they are printed solely for the purpose of enabling our readers to form and offer some opinion on the problems that at once suggest themselves. That material for opinion is now complete.

No. 1.—OCTOBER 18TH, 1891.

I am very glad, Miss —, to come to communicate with you. I have got my first power to come to-night, and on Wednesday I wrote you some poetry and some sketches. I have tried for a long time, but failed three times to get the strongest power, so I am at liberty to do so now. I sympathise with your loss of hearing. I understand the Deaf and Dumb, their feelings too, and used to converse with one in my days at C—(rest of word illegible). It's a nice thing you can read the family's lips a (illegible word) of any books in your library. You don't care much for them; but your choice of works to read is poetry. I wish you would go to the Mound at G— (name of a shopkeeper) and inquire for him. I saw him, a little tot, in his cot; he now carries on a bookseller's shop in the Mound. It is a thriving business, and he is a brother of your friend, Miss G— (name and

address correctly given). You could only go and say you called to see his business, and as a friend of his sister's.

Spiritualism is a wonderful thing. I understand them to be spirits of the dead. I wrote several books about ghosts, which some of my friends narrated, and I took up my pen and wrote some queer stories about them. I feel so nice coming down to dear old Edinburgh, and write you. I must finish this just now, and on Wednesday my piece of poetry will be written, so fare thee well.

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 2, written on WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21ST, was a piece of poetry descriptive of the death of our child.

No. 3.—OCTOBER 24TH, 1891.

I am glad now, as I promised you I would write some stories. The one I write this afternoon is a simple one. I mean to give you details of my life on Wednesday or Thursday and let you know what I had done that you are all such an anxious-minded family to know people's affairs; so I will begin my story.

C. D.

Once upon a time, a good many years ago, there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey, and was to seem (sic) very long when he began it and very short when he got half way through. He travelled along a rather dark path for some little time without meeting anything, until at last he came to a beautiful child, so he said to the child, "What do you do here?" and the child said, "I am always at play; come and play with me. So he played with the child the whole day long, and they were very merry; the sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, and the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely. But one day suddenly the traveller lost the child; he called to him over and over again, but got no answer, so he went upon his road and went on for a little while without meeting anything, till at last he came to a handsome boy, so he said to the boy, "What do you do here?" and the boy said, "I am always learning, come and learn with me." So he learned with that boy about Jupiter and Juno, and the Greeks, and the Romans, and I don't know what, and learned more than I can tell, or he either, for he soon forgot a great deal of it. But they were not always learning, for they had the merriest games that ever were played; they played cricket and all games at ball. Still, one day in the midst of all these pleasures the traveller lost the boy as he did the child, and after calling on him in vain went on upon his journey. So he went on for a little while without seeing anything, till at last he came to a young man, so he said to the young man, "What do you do here?" and the young man said, "I am always in love; come and love with me." So he went away with that young man, and presently they came to one of the prettiest girls that ever was seen; just like Fanny in that corner there; and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's, and she laughed and coloured just as Fanny does while I am talking about her, so the young man fell in love directly, just as somebody I won't mention the first time he came here did with Fanny. They were engaged to be married at Christmas time, very soon, all exactly like somebody I won't mention and Fanny. But the traveller lost them one day as he had lost the same of his friends, and after calling on them to come back, which they never did, he went on upon his journey. So he went on for a little while without seeing anything, until he came to a middle-aged gentleman. He said to the gentleman, "What are you doing here?" His answer was, "I am always busy; come and be busy with me." So he began to be very busy with that gentleman, and they both went through the [word illegible], and there were so many partings as they came to a dark avenue and were pressing onward on their journey without looking down, when a lady arrayed in white stopped them. "My husband," said the lady, "I am called." They listened, and they heard a voice a long way down the avenue. It was the voice of his first child, who had said, "I am going to Heaven," and the voice cried again, "Mother!" Then the mother, who was already drawn into the dark shade of the avenue, and moving away with her arms round his neck and kissing him, and said, "My dearest, I am summoned; I must go," and she was gone, and the traveller and him (sic) were alone together, tears streaming down the gentleman's face, having seen the spirit forms of his wife and child. The traveller was

* It bears no sort of resemblance to the curious script of Dickens which can be seen at the South Kensington Museum.—ED. "LIGHT."

medium, and, of course, let the ones he met see the forms unknown to them, which made one think they were still living. So my simple story ends. CHARLES DICKENS.

Dear Miss —, I am sorry to have kept you so long, but you say you are not tired, so I am finished, Wednesday and Thursday. Thanks. C. D.

NO. 4.—NOVEMBER 8TH, 1891.

This was an abbreviated version of the last chapter of the "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn." It is too long for transcription, but it is condensed very much like the previous sketch, "The Child's Story."

NO. 5.—NOVEMBER 10TH.

One of the greatest men in recent times was a man called Abraham Lincoln, who began life as a boatman and rail-splitter, and died President of the United States, which it will be useful for you to know. He was born in Kentucky, 1809, in a log cabin, without window, door, or floor. His father was a roving, thriftless man of great physical strength; but unable to read or write. His mother was able to sign her name, though she could not undertake to write a letter. One peculiar lesson she taught her boy, that he should beware of the great evil of strong drink; and young Abe, as he was called, never forgot this lesson. His schooldays hardly amounted to twelve months. His first schoolmaster could only teach reading, and his second was able to add writing, but he remained about a few weeks at either school. When about nine years Lincoln lost his mother. It was in connection with this sad event that the boy wrote his first letter, and great was his father's joy at seeing his son's production, as it was the first letter ever written by any of the family. He spoke of it to his neighbours, and was looked on as a prodigy. His father married again; his second wife brought a great stock of furniture. She did her duty nobly to her step-children. She was sadly disappointed at the miserable home to which she was brought. She induced her husband to put windows and doors in his cabin, and to lay down a floor. A few weeks Abe attended the (or his) last school. Mr. Crawford understood him well to write essays (sic). The first was "Cruelty to Animals." In 1850 the family removed to Illinois, and settled on a farm, for the fencing of which Lincoln split the rails. In all the occupations in which Lincoln afterwards engaged he was the same honest man, and persevering, too. As soldier, surveyor, and postman he always did his best, and could always be trusted. In this way he gradually rose to a position of influence in the State of Illinois, and at last, in 1846, he was elected a member of Congress. He was President in the United States in 1860. He was elected again in 1864. While he was attending the theatre at Washington a man, John Wilkes Booth, entered his private box and shot him dead through the back of the head, and Lincoln never spoke again, and was much mourned through the land. My story is done.

Saturday or Friday.

CHARLES DICKENS.

NO. 5.—NOVEMBER 14TH, 1891.

The children of mine a neighbour [an obvious transposition], had a leveret given them for a plaything. It was at that time three months old. Understanding how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily agreed that their father should ask me to accept it. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present, and in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I took charge of three of them, and called them by name, Puss, Tiney and Bess. Presently Puss would get familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up and to carry him about in my arms, and he has more than once fallen asleep upon my knee. I always brought the beasts into my parlour after supper, when they would frisk and bound and play a thousand tricks and gambols, in which Puss, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always the foremost. Bess died young. Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of a fall on his loins. Puss is still living, and has completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay nor even of age, except that he has grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without

observing that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel, that had never seen a hare, to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no trace of fear. There is, therefore, it would seem, no natural hatred between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it. They eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly. Now I am finished with my story to-night.

CHARLES DICKENS.

CAMILLE FLAMMARION.

Our readers will peruse with interest the subjoined account of the great French Astronomer and Spiritualist, for which we are indebted to the "Echo." They will smile at the denial that he is a Spiritualist. How many times have our readers had an opportunity of reading the following expression of Flammarion's conviction!

I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction, based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated "magnetic," "somnambule," "mediumic," and others not yet explained by science to be "impossible" is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind be not biassed by pre-conceived opinions, nor his mental vision blinded by that opposite kind of illusion, unhappily too common in the learned world, which consists in imagining that the laws of Nature are already known to us, and that everything which appears to overstep the limit of our present formulas is impossible—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.

The writer in the "Echo" comes a day too late with his naive denial of well-known facts. The biography, however, is interesting. Slightly abridged, we give it with all due acknowledgments.

Camille Flammarion, ex-Imperial astronomer, physicist, picturesque writer, and man of imagination, belongs to a type of person which only the modern world, with its many-sided spirit, its endless doubts, questionings, and aspirations, could possibly have produced. A Camille Flammarion of the eighteenth century would have been even more out of harmony with the thought and speculative imaginings of his time than an Abelard or a Giordano Bruno was with those of his day. Camille Flammarion's life has not been what is called eventful. His history is mainly the history of a mind—a mind of great native strength, stored with the science of the age, bearing the very hue and colour of the age, and gifted, if not exactly with the power of original discovery, at any rate with the power of presenting accepted discoveries in a new and singularly vivid light.

Next February our brilliant writer and scientist will complete his fiftieth year; so that he is still, or almost, what the French call *un jeune homme*. He was born in 1842, at Montigny le Roi, in the Department of Haute Marne, almost within sight, so to speak, of the frontier of what is now the German region of Alsace-Lorraine. Like another famous Frenchman, who was a country boy born and bred—viz., Renan—the future man of science was, it is said, intended by his excellent and pious parents to be a priest of the Church of Rome; and the priests converted him the other way, just as they have converted many sincere and religious souls before and since. After studying for some years in the Ecclesiastical Seminary of Langres, he proceeded to a similar institution in Paris. The change from the quiet of Langres and the hilly scenes of Eastern France to the turmoil of the gay capital exercised a profound impression upon the boy's sensitive, brooding mind. If his friends really hoped that young Camille would take kindly to the priesthood, they must have been grievously disappointed. He was religious, certainly; but not in the ecclesiastical sense. Young as he was when he shook the dust ecclesiastic from off his feet, the orthodox religion repelled him. It offended his reason and his moral sense. Flammarion was in his seventeenth year when, forsaking the ecclesiastical seminary, he became a student in the Imperial Observatory. He studied his mathematics and astronomy with enthusiastic devotion. His

superiors quickly discerned in the young student and assistant the indications of a rare genius. When just twenty years old he was entrusted with the editorship of the scientific paper, *Cosmos*—a post which, in three years more, led to the post of science editor for the *Sécle*. Flammarion at this time began public lectures in astronomy, and won an almost unique reputation for his power of putting things in the clearest, the simplest, and most attractive way. As a popular expounder of science, orally, and by written speech, Camille Flammarion may be compared—though only in some respects—to Huxley or Tyndall. The two Englishmen are masters of an admirable literary style. So is the Frenchman. They are first-rate lecturers. So, as already said, is their French fellow-worker. But, on the other hand, M. Flammarion's style is pervaded by an emotional glow, and possesses certain imaginative qualities in which the style of Mr. Tyndall and that of Mr. Huxley are deficient. As all the world knows, Professor Tyndall is himself an example of the use of the imagination in science, a subject upon which he has written so eloquently. But the Englishman's imaginative flights are tame in comparison with the Frenchman's. To express it in another way, the Frenchman is a poet, using prose as the vehicle of his thoughts and emotions, and the exact data of science as his subject-matter.

As the best example of Flammarion's method of treating rigidly scientific data imaginatively, take his scientific romance, "*Urania*," an admirable English translation of which, by Augusta Rice Stetson, has lately been published by Messrs. Chatto and Windus. For the story of the student's wanderings through the universe, under the guidance of *Urania*, the Muse of Astronomy, I must refer the reader to the book itself. Theosophists and Spiritualists who read "*Urania*" for the first time, and who know nothing of its author beforehand, will, perhaps, toss up their caps and claim him for one of themselves. Indeed, many years have passed since Parisian Spiritualists said, "He is one of us." He is not one of them at all—that is to say, he has little or nothing in common with the ordinary ruck of people who call themselves Spiritualists, though he is a Spiritualist in the ideal sense of the word. His theory of the universe is the very antipodes of materialism. If to believe and say that there are psychological powers which, though undiscovered, are constantly producing effects independently of what are called laws of matter, be Spiritualism, then Camille Flammarion is a Spiritualist. But he is no dogmatist. In reality he does not so much assert as suggest. He is constantly imagining how things *may* be, not dogmatically averring that they are thus and thus. And in every case he starts from acknowledged scientific data as his firm basis. As an example of his way of putting things, take what he says about solidity. Now, everybody knows, or ought to know, that the atoms of which objects are composed *do not touch each other*. What to the outward eye seems to be solidity is an illusion.

"Speaking absolutely," says our author, "solidity does not exist. Take up a heavy iron cannon-ball; this ball is composed of invisible molecules, which do not touch each other. The continuity which the surface seems to have, and the apparent solidity of the ball, are, then, pure illusions. To the mind which would analyse it, its inner structure is *an eddying swarm of little gnats*, like those darting about in the air on a summer day. . . . We are in a house, all these walls, these floors, these carpets, this furniture, the marble mantelpiece are also composed of particles which do not touch each other; and all the particles which constitute these objects are in constant motion, circulating around each other." [The italicising of some words in the foregoing quotation is mine.] The fact that the molecules of the human body do not touch each other, but that, like the molecules of a bar of iron, or a stone, or a tree, they are in a constant state of oscillation (produced by their attractions and repulsions), suggests to M. Flammarion the comparison of the soul, in its ever-changing body, to one sitting by the side of a stream, which, though to outward seeming always the same, never is. "Each globule of our blood is a world, and we have five millions per cubic millimètre. Constantly, without let or hindrance, in our arteries and veins, in our flesh—in our brain, all circulates, all moves, all hurries along in a vital whirl as rapid, proportionately, as that of the heavenly bodies." Camille Flammarion has done more than most of his scientific countrymen, not merely to "popularise" science, but to make use of it as an instrument for awaken-

ing and cultivating the imaginative, the poetic side of human nature—its religious side, in the comprehensive sense of the adjective. He conceives that his special science, astronomy, is more powerful for that purpose than any other branch of knowledge. Some years ago he won the Monthyon prize for his *L'Astronomie Populaire*, a work which has legions of readers. A kindred work in our own language is Sir Robert Ball's "*Story of the Heavens*,"* published by Messrs. Cassell and Co. Flammarion's book on the plurality of worlds has passed through fifteen editions. In another book, on "*Imaginary Worlds and Ideal Worlds*," he deals with his favourite topic—that the ideal is the real, and that what appears to sense to be real is only illusory. "*The Wonders of the Heavens*" has been one of his most successful books. He has also written an account of his balloon ascents, undertaken for the purpose of studying aerial temperatures. Some of his experiences as an air voyager have, no doubt, inspired one of the best descriptions in "*Urania*." M. Flammarion entertains rather a contempt for your mere *littérateur*. He is rather of the philosopher's opinion, who said that science was "God Almighty's literature." Like so many of the highest and rarest minds of the age, he regards with mingled disgust and loathing the indifference of the social herd to the things of the mind—to everything outside the range of materialistic advantage. But perhaps he is here a little hard upon society. The things of the mind excite an interest in these days which a generation ago was simply non-existent. That this is so is proved by the public welcome accorded to Flammarion's own achievements.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"Correcting the Proof."

SIR,—You say in "*LIGHT*," January 2nd, and "Jottings, paragraph fourth, that "a spirit message must go, with all its defects, just as we have understood, or misunderstood it; there being no one to correct the proof down here." I may venture to assert that the communicator himself will probably do so if requested.

On one occasion a message came to me from behind the veil (nobody being present but myself and a young medium) which we spelt out as follows: "I am never fond of sorrow." Feeling sure there was some error of transmission, I asked, "Is that right?" The answer was "No." And on being requested to make it right the communicator repeated the sentence thus: "I am now free from sorrow."

It seems to me, therefore, that if a single letter is mistaken in transmission the whole sentence becomes muddled, but that the communicator himself may always be asked to "correct the proof."

M. B.

An Unsympathetic Watch.

SIR,—My acquaintance with occult literature fails to call to my mind any instance of erratic behaviour on the part of a watch such as I am about to relate to you. Clocks have, of course, been known to act, or rather not to act, in a peculiar manner. Such clocks, however, generally belonged to the *genus* grandfather, stood at the tops of staircases, and, by mysteriously refusing to continue their exertions, acquired reputations for being uncanny. However, to my own incident which has to do with a watch and not a clock.

At 6 p.m., 29th ult., I sat down to write a letter to a brother inviting him to join us at dinner on the eve of the 31st, New Year's Eve. Before commencing to write, my wife asked me the time, there being no clock in the room in which we were sitting. I replied—five minutes to six. I then wrote the letter. In it I made use of a figure of speech—the clock of harmony. I said that with his assistance and that of other relations to be present at the time, I hoped we should be able to "wind up the clock of harmony," &c. I finished the letter and remained talking with my wife. At what seemed the usual time our servant wished us good night and went to bed. I looked at my watch and found the time 7.30. I inquired the reason of the servant going so early to bed. My wife said it was not early. This gave rise to an altercation between us. I maintained that my watch could not be wrong, although confessing to myself that the evening seemed of the usual length. We subsequently found the time to have been about 9 p.m., the

* See also an article by Sir Robert Ball in the current number of "*The Fortnightly Review*" on "*The New Astronomy*."—*Ed.* "*LIGHT*."

servant's usual bedtime. The watch therefore stopped when I wrote the letter containing the convivial suggestion that we should wind up the "clock of harmony," resuming its ordinary timekeeping, after a rest of an hour and a-half.

We regarded the incident as an omen of evil, which the event justified, inasmuch as the "clock of harmony" was not wound up with the anticipated amount of pleasure and cheerfulness.

I may say that the watch is of the best class, has been worn by me during the past twelve years without having given any offence in the way of neglect of duty. Since the peculiar stoppage it has worked satisfactorily. There was nothing wrong with regard to the winding.

Brislington.

AGITATO.

"The Sirens of Brittany."

SIR.—Through the kindness and courtesy of Captain James, an old and esteemed authority on "Mesmerism" and "Spiritualism," I have been recently admitted into the "inner circle" of his small and select weekly séances, at which Mr. Rita, that excellent medium, regularly attends, together with such earnest Spiritualists as Dr. and Mrs. Park-Allen, Mrs. Wodgwood, and a few other serious friends, including two well-known medical men, who also attend as sitters.

Under such excellent auspices I have naturally become a firm believer in the reality of the marvellous phenomena and remarkable manifestations from the invisible world, which I have, from time to time, been privileged to witness; but I must fain admit that, although I am now a thorough convert to the truths and power of those "unseen forces" which daily surround the earthly life of each and all of us, it cannot be expected that, as a mere Neophyte, I can have yet attained any deep knowledge of occultism; still I am constrained to say that I have had sufficient evidence of "hidden mysteries" to cause me to feel that I am, in my closing years, entering upon an evolutionary stage in the advance of knowledge, and I have a yearning for more light.

The publication of "Real Ghost Stories," by Mr. Stead, in the Christmas number of "Review of Reviews," and the "Twelve Ghost Stories" which appear in the Christmas number of the "Whitehall Review," written by such distinguished authors as Lady Egerton, Lady Grove, Miss C. E. Gladstone, and other well-known writers, is undoubtedly an important departure in the field of general literature, and is evidently the dawn of quite a "new era" in the "book world," a circumstance which will assuredly do much to induce the ordinary and thoughtless novel reader of purely mundane subjects to take a deeper interest in higher and more serious reading. Spiritualism, under such influences, must consequently make great and rapid progress in the future, and it would seem that we are on the eve of a remarkable spiritual movement to benefit the human race. Will you, therefore, kindly allow me to call the attention of your numerous readers to a story of thrilling interest which appeared in the Bath Society paper, "The Bladud,"* of December 23rd, 1891, from the pen of the Vicomtesse de Montfleuri, and entitled "The Sirens of Brittany," in which story, founded on facts, the weird incidents and Spiritualistic phenomena are given with great power and freshness? As, I am informed, this is the young lady's first literary effort, we may reasonably look forward to further contributions of a similar nature from her talented pen, and which would doubtless prove most interesting to all Spiritualists and earnest thinkers.

F. S. DUMARESQ DE CARTERET BISSEON (Captain),
Fulham. Author of "Our Schools and Colleges."
January 4th, 1892.

BOUND VOLUMES OF "LIGHT."

We have for sale at our office a copy of Vol. II. (now out of print and not procurable in the way of trade); two copies of Vol. III. (also out of print); and one of Vol. V., the property of a subscriber. Early application is desirable. Vols. II. and III., price £2 each; Vol. V., price £1 10s.

THE visionary world in which children pass so many happy hours is round us too, if we could only see it; but our eyes are holden, by the cares of this world, perhaps.—JOHN RUSKIN.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES RECEIVED.

- "The Cosmopolitan." Price 1s. [An illustrated monthly of a high class, published at Fifth-avenue, Broadway, New York. Paper, type, and illustrations all good.]
- "Psycho-Therapeutics; or Treatment by Hypnotism and Suggestion" By C. LLOYD TUCKER, M.D. (Third edition, revised, and enlarged. 1891. Price 6s. Balliere, Tindall, and Cox.)
- "The Fleet Street Review," No. 1. Price 2d. 125, Fleet-street, E.C. [A 32 pp. illustrated magazine, indifferently got up, but of fair value for the price charged. Whether there is room for such a venture, time alone can show.]
- "The Sword and the Trowel," "Spurgeon's Illustrated Almanack," "Gratitude for Deliverance from the Grave," being a sermon intended for reading in his absence, by C. H. SPURGEON. (Passmore and Alabaster, 4, Paternoster Buildings.)
- "The Coming Day." By J. PAGE HOPPS. Price 3d. (Williams and Norgate). [The chief articles are a very outspoken one on "The Bible and Womankind"; "An Ideal Faith for the Coming Day," and "A Day with Oliver Wendell Holmes."]
- "Scribner." (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.) Price 1s. [Fully maintains its excellence as an illustrated magazine. The most interesting articles are: "The Comédie Française and the Odéon" (with many drawings); "A Day with the Egyptian Donkey Boys"; "Bokhara Revisited"; "Bayreuth Revisited"; "Some Unpublished Correspondence of Washington Allston," and a charming paper on "American Illustration of To-day." The illustrations have a quality of their own rather off the usual lines.]
- "The New Review." Price 1s. (Longmans.) [The chief articles are the first three chapters of an unpublished novel by Carlyle (*Ecciterum* this tiresome philosopher of old clothes, whose novel no one would read but for his name); the Duke of Marlborough on "Merry England" (the *raison d'être* of the misnamed article being "the Duke" and not the value of what he writes); the Duchess of Rutland on "Intemperance," and, far best of all, Camille Flammarion on "Inter-Astral Communication" (only he gave a far better account of the same subject in the "Arena"). A duke, a duchess, Madame Adam, Carlyle! Mr. Grove is getting on and bids fair to rival Mr. Knowles in exploiting names as against brains.]
- "The Century" (T. Fisher Unwin.) Price 1s. 4d. [An excellent portrait of Gounod, and an article of "Reminiscences," by himself. Other notable papers are "The Jews in New York"; "Alligator Hunters of Louisiana"; "Witchcraft" (elsewhere noticed), and "General Coster's Last Battle," by one of his troop-commanders. "Dolce Far Niente" (W. H. Low) is a charming study of the work of a very versatile painter. Rudyard Kipling and Wolcott Balestier continue their serial, "The Naulahka." Thomas Bailey Aldrich's poetical "Interludes" are very worthy of his reputation. How dainty is this!]

TRANSFORMATION.

Through a chance fissure of the churchyard wall
A sweet-breathed vine thrusts out a vagrant spray,
At whose slim end a snow-white blossom droops
Full to the dewy redness of a rose
That reaches up on tiptoe for the kiss.
Not them the wren disturbs, nor the blue bee
That buzzes homeward with his load of sweets;
And thus they linger, flowery lip to lip,
Heedless of all, in rapturous mute embrace.
Some necromancy here! These two, I think,
Were once unhappy lovers upon earth.]

FASTING AND POISON.

Succi, "the fasting man of the Nubian desert," is anxious to try another feat of fasting. He is willing, says the "Graphic," to undertake to swim twice or three times a day for thirty days, and during that period to partake of absolutely no nourishment whatever. If this does not suffice to establish his undivided claim to the championship, he will, on the thirtieth day, provided anyone else can be found to undertake the same task, partake of a poison in sufficient quantity to kill any forty ordinary men. That the poison sufficient to kill forty ordinary men will only be meat to himself M. Succi clearly believes, for he speaks of further experiments—experiments which will show to men of science that his feats are accomplished by means of a supernatural force which he maintains to be pure Spiritualism.—"Echo."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A CORRESPONDENT asks for the address of Miss Robinson, a trance medium, resident in Willesden. Can any of our readers supply the information?

CONSTANT READER.—Hypnotism is supposed to be a self induced state not dependent on any effluence from the operator. Mesmerism is said to be caused by the transmission of some magnetic power from the mesmeriser to the subject. The term Hypnotism is now almost universally used by the modern school of investigators, the theory of transmission being discredited. Braid was the originator of the Hypnotic as against the Mesmeric theory.

SOCIETY WORK.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH. PROGRESSIVE LYCEUM SECOND ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TEA PARTY.—May we appeal to the generous friends of our cause for help in the above object? Funds urgently needed. Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by the conductor, Mr. Mason, 14, Orchard-road.—J. H. B., Hon. Sec.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—On Sunday last we had a good meeting, and Mrs. Mason's guides delivered a deeply interesting discourse upon Phrenology, with examinations and good clairvoyance. Sunday, at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., séance; Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason; Saturdays, at 8 p.m., select circle. Sunday, January 17th, Mr. Astbury. Mrs. Ashton Bingham will gladly welcome investigators at her séances at 17, Maiden-lane, Covent Garden, W.C., on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. prompt, Mrs. Mason medium.—J. H. B., Hon. Sec.

WINCHESTER HALL, 33, HIGH-STREET, PECKHAM.—Mrs. J. M. Smith again took our platform on Sunday. Two subjects selected by the audience, "God as a Personality" and "A Mother's Love," were ably dealt with. Having had the honour to preside at several meetings, it affords me pleasure to testify to the accurate clairvoyance given, to the general satisfaction of all present. Fathers, mothers, and friends gone before were vividly described as well as places and incidents. Altogether Mrs. Smith deserves our grateful thanks. Sunday next, morning at 11.15, clairvoyance, &c.; evening at 7, Mrs. Bliss.—J. T. AUDY

ATHENÆUM HALL, 73, TOTTENHAM COURT-ROAD.—Mr. Tindall's concert on Tuesday last at the above hall was a great success. The room was well filled. Mr. A. Maltby's dissolving views of the "Life of Gordon" formed an attractive feature, and composed the first part of the programme. In the second part Miss Marickma and Miss Jessie Dixon gained well-merited applause. Mr. Anthony Evans gave three recitations in an artistic manner, and Mr. Rechab Tandy sang Mr. Tindall's new patriotic song, "Be True to the Flag," which obtained an enthusiastic encore. The concert was patronised by many prominent Conservatives, amongst whom this song is very popular.—A. F. T.

MARYLEBONE SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE, W.—After our quarterly tea, in which many friends participated, the secretary read the balance-sheet of Harcourt-street premises, showing that we left there owing our treasurer £1 13s. 2d., this deficiency being made up during the evening. Including cost of chairs, fitting, and furnishing, we are now some £10 to the bad, but hope, with increased opportunities, soon to tide over our crisis. The president, Mr. Everitt, and Messrs. Drake, Whitley, Wortley, Hunt, and Ennals, delivered short and interesting addresses. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss Rowen Vincent, "My Experiences in Spiritualism"; Thursday, at 7.45 p.m., Mrs. Perrin; Saturday, at 7.45 p.m., Mrs. Treadwell.—C. WHITE and R. MILLIGAN.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST FEDERATION, ATHENÆUM HALL, 73, TOTTENHAM COURT-ROAD.—Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., we commence our second course of lectures. Mr. Shorter will deliver an address on "Spiritualism Defended against Theosophy." Previous to this I shall read a short statement as to the future work of the Federation in connection with these lectures. The second Spiritual Liturgy will be read, and the chair will be taken by Desmond Fitzgerald, Esq. We hope all our old friends will sustain us in this effort to keep open a Central Hall for Spiritualism, and to maintain a free platform where all spiritual students, however diverse their views, may obtain a hearing.—A. F. TINDALL, Hon. Sec., 4, Portland-terrace, N.W.

SOUTH LONDON SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, 311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—We opened the New Year under happy auspices, our Watch Night service combining spiritual exercises and social pleasure. *En séance* we saw the birth of 1892, after which ample justice was meted out to an excellent supper provided by our members. The rooms were tastefully decorated, and, lighted by Chinese lanterns, produced a very pretty effect. A programme of songs, games, and dances occupied our attention during the small hours, when the friends separated, having spent a happy time. On Tuesday next we hold another "Social," when friends will be welcomed at 8.30 p.m. On Sunday, January 10th, the half-yearly general meeting of the Society will be held at 8.30 p.m. At 7 o'clock an address on "Mediumship" from a spirit's point of view. Thursday evenings inquirers are invited to attend.—W. E. LONG, Hon. Sec.

FOREST HILL, 23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD.—On Tuesday, December 29th, we had a séance, with Mrs. Smith as medium. Tests were given to each of the fourteen persons who composed the circle. This is one of the best séances ever held at Forest Hill. On Wednesday, December 30th, we had a concert and social evening, all present expressing themselves as highly delighted with the entertainment provided for them. On Sunday last, Rev. Dr. Young, who was to have taken our platform, was unable to do so, he being laid up with influenza. Mr. Lees very kindly came to our assistance, and gave us one of those eloquent addresses which he is so well able to deliver. "The Bible" was the subject, and much useful information was given us. Sunday, January 10th, at 7 p.m., Mr. Fraser.—H. W. BRUNNER, Sec.

THOUGHTS ON TIME AND ETERNITY.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS.

The purer life draws nigher
Every year;
And its morning star climbs higher
Every year;
And earth's hold on us grows slighter,
And the heavy burdens lighter,
And the dawn immortal brighter,
Every year.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

The dead abide with us! Though, stark and cold,
Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still;
They have forged our chains of being for good and ill,
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold;
Our perishable bodies are the mould
In which their strong imperishable will
Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil
Hath given incorporate thro' dim time untold
Vibrations infinite of life in death,
As a star's travelling light survives its star.
So may we hold our lives that when dead we are,
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
They shall not drag us to their judgment bar,
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

—ANON.

MY BOY.

I cannot make him dead!
His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study chair;
Yet when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes—he is not there!

I walk my parlour floor,
And, through the open door,
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair;
I'm stepping towards the hall,
To give the boy a call,
And then bethink me that—he is not there!

I thread the crowded street,
A satchell'd lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes and coloured hair;
And, as he's running by,
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that—he is not there!

When at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer!
Whate'er I may be saying,
I am, in spirit, praying
For our boy's spirit, though—he is not there!

Not there? Where, then, is he?
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that he used to wear,
The grave, that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked—he is not there!

He lives!—in all the past
He lives: nor, to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair;
In dreams I see him now,
And on his angel brow
I see it written, "Thou shalt see me there!"

—ANON.

COURAGE.

There are those who, bending supple knees,
Live for no end, except to please,
Rising to fame by mean degrees;
But creep not thou with these.

They have their due reward; they bend
Their lives to an unworthy end;
On empty aims the toil expend
Which had secured a friend.

But be not thou as those whose mind
Is to the passing hour confined;
Let no ignoble fetters bind
Thy soul as free as wind.

Stand upright, speak thy thought, declare
The truth thou hast, that all may share;
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere:
They only live who dare.

—LEWIS MORRIS.