

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

At the Royal Literary Fund dinner on April 27th Mr. A. J. Balfour made a most interesting and suggestive speech. Interesting as one might have expected it to be, but suggestive above all in that the key note was the feeling of change that is coming over all men. He spoke of the prospect of art revival, of revival in literature, and of new developments in science, but all through the address there was the idea of the old order changing, giving place to the new. The under-moving was recognised throughout. Of literature Mr. Balfour said:—

It only requires the rise of some great man of genius to mould the forces which exist in plenty around us, to utilise the instruction which we have almost in super-abundance, and to make the coming age of literature as glorious or even more glorious than any of those which preceded it.

And the words which followed these were pregnant with meaning:—

My friend, Lord Kelvin, has often talked to me of the future of science, and he has said words to me about the future of science which are parallel with the words I have quoted to you about the future of art, and with the hope which I have expressed to you with respect to literature. He has told me that to the men of science of to-day it appears as if we were trembling upon the brink of some great scientific discovery which should give to us a new view of the great forces of Nature, among which and in the midst of which we move. If this prophecy be right, and if the other forecasts to which I have alluded be right, then indeed it is true that we live in an interesting age; then indeed it is true that we may look forward to a time full of fruit for the human race—to an age which cannot be sterilised or rendered barren even by politics.

And what will that discovery be? Or rather has it not been made at least in part? Whatever it may be called, or however it may be regarded, the fact of independent consciousness we hold to have been established, an independent consciousness which may wield—which must wield—what are called the forces of Nature, but which are only the representations, in this present consciousness of ours, of active forces in that other consciousness which impinges on this. Lord Kelvin and his fellow-workers have destroyed matter as we know it, and they are waiting wondering for what will come next.

We print in another column a letter in which the writer claims for the High Celebration of the Eucharist all that is necessary for communication with the Unseen. Whether this is so or not it is certain that not only the Catholic Church, but all the churches whose ritual probably came originally from Egypt, have in their High Celebrations the attributes of the séance room, and those, when not degraded, in their best form. This subject if it can be divorced from theological controversy opens up a

wide field for investigation, for it includes the meaning of all shrines and the real reason of idolatry.

Why are great men "superstitious?" And small men not so? Mr. T. P. O'Connor in the "Weekly Sun" continues his articles on Taine, and so we are getting graphic sketches of Napoleon. He was "superstitious" and "imaginative," and full of "poetic power," this scourge of the earth, of whom it has been said that he was "perhaps the most perfect incarnation of evil the world has ever seen." "He was disposed to accept the marvellous, presentiments, and even certain mysterious communications between beings," says Taine. And Madame de Rémusat writes: "I have seen him excited by the rustling of the wind, speak enthusiastically of the roar of the sea, and sometimes inclined to believe in nocturnal apparitions," in short, leaning to certain superstitions. And, quoting Taine once more:—

Meneval notes his crossing himself involuntarily on the occasion of some great danger or the discovery of some important fact. "During the Consulate, in the evening, in a circle of ladies, he sometimes improvised and declaimed tragic 'tales,' Italian fashion, quite worthy of the story-tellers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. . . ." As to love, his letters to Josephine during the Italian campaign form one of the best examples of Italian passion, and "in most piquant contrast with the temperate and graceful elegance of his predecessor, M. de Beauharnais."

Is it not that the world's movers are always in touch with the unseen, and that the small ones, those who only seem to move it, do not even know whether there is such a thing as an Unseen?

Miss Rowan Vincent's lecture on Psychometry, illustrated as it was by experiments, deserves more than a passing notice. That some of the experiments were unsuccessful goes without saying, but that out of so few experiments there should be any successes, according to the theory of probability was far more than could be expected. That Miss Vincent, holding a ring in her hand, said that its last owner died of consumption, might of course have been a shrewd guess, but what the chances are against such a guess being right, only the ring being in evidence, we leave to the imagination of those who are fond of multiplication sums. At the same time Miss Vincent's claims are serious, and if they prove to be founded on impregnable bases the history of the world may have to be rewritten.

MRS. BESANT AT BOW.—On Monday evening last the large hall of the Bow and Bromley Institute was crowded to its utmost capacity some time previous to the hour announced for the opening of the doors. The chair was taken by Mr. George Lansbury, who at once introduced the lecturer. Mrs. Besant, who met with a very cordial reception, proceeded to deliver an address on Theosophy, which she treated from a popular standpoint. Speaking of the brotherhood of man as the basis of all religions, and the groundwork of Theosophy, she pointed out in very forcible style how the teaching operated physically, mentally, and spiritually. At the close Mrs. Besant replied to a number of questions from her audience in a clear and evidently satisfactory manner, and on the motion of the Rev. Marmaduke Hare, Vicar of Bow, seconded by Mr. Rawlings, the thanks of the meeting were unanimously accorded to Mrs. Besant for her lecture.

THE LIFE THAT IS COMING.

Some of us cannot but be aware that new springs of vitality are being discovered, and that the old meanings of the terms—youth, age, decay, and so forth—must either be done away with or receive new meanings. Under a different title (she calls it "The Modern Expression of the Oldest Philosophy") Katherine Coolidge treats of this new life, its meaning, and its origin, in the "Arena" for April. We should well like to transfer the whole of the article to the columns of "LIGHT," but some extracts must suffice:—

This vital truth is the unity of life. In it we know that one life fills all things; that there is not one principle of life for things spiritual, and another for things natural, but that the same principle acts throughout the world. Not spirit alone, but matter also, is instinct with divine life, and is thus fluid and responsive to the creative thought. We, as products of this thought, are sharers in its boundless vitality. Our health, both moral and physical, depends upon the free influx of the life current. We should not, however, seek only for external results, and the present form of this eternal law has suffered wrong by being considered as first a cure for physical ills. This should be a secondary consideration. It is the inevitable result of being spiritually receptive, but the inner receptivity is the essential thing; health is sure to follow when we feel that all forms of life are in touch with life itself.

The bounding surface between spirit and matter seems hardly to exist in the writer's mind, for we are told:—

The forms of things have no life in themselves, but live in God, and therefore spiritual power is the only strength that can avail us in whatever direction we turn. When we feel this, the health of the body becomes one with the health of the soul; and the health of the soul is the very fulness of life, constantly flowing from a never-failing source.

That this has been the teaching of the greatest thinkers throughout the ages is insisted on. The all-pervading nature of Brahm is referred to, and Plato is quoted as saying in the *Charmides*, "that the health of the soul is the first necessity in the care of the body." After a reference to Emerson we have this:—

Our highest perception of truth springs from something within us which transcends the intellect. This is the true self in each one of us, in which we are one with the universal self. It is that which knows love, and can know all things, for it is common to all things, and is present in all life. We may call its voice intuition, we may call it faith, or, better, we may call it love; but when we feel it there is no further need of words or philosophies, for we have consciously entered the stream of life and become sharers in its very essence.

This true wisdom has found expression in many ways and in all ages, especially for us in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. There we are told that in God "we live and move and have our being," and that our faith shall make us whole. Plainly are we bidden to grow as the lilies of the field, nothing doubting, nothing fearing; with perfect trust in the eternal life within us. And yet, while we profess to believe all this as religion, we do not practise it in our every-day lives. We make a fetish of the opinions of men, and, instead of living fearlessly, strong in the knowledge that we are the children of God, we toil and spin, seeking to prop up our world with artificial supports, and largely ignoring its only true support, which is the life within itself. This divinity is hidden to the eye of sense, but revealed to the eye of the spirit. Faith sees it as the divine substance which lives in all created things, and by this sight opens the doors wide to its inflowing strength. No evil can resist it, for evil is but its negation. Thus may we seek life at its source, and thus it will penetrate and uplift every visible form.

We can find no living spring in the world of sense. We all desire a richer life in mind and body. Why do we not go to the fountain of life? Is it not so simple that a child may understand that it is better to seek life at its centre than to seek it in its outward form, where, we know not why, it has, in our sight, become tainted with impurity? This impurity must appear to us while we remain blind to the presence of God in ourselves and in nature; but when, opening our eyes, we look within and beyond the world of sense, a flood of light pours in which transforms all that it touches.

It is not necessary to leave this earth to find these hidden springs of life; there is no need to mount skyward, but we doubt, and fear produces blindness; we fear, and the fear engenders pain:—

If we seek life where it is not we find its negation, and become the slave of external effects. If we follow where truth leads us, into the eternal being of God, we are filled with boundless vitality. Mind and body glow with a new life. Instead of two worlds of spirit and matter, one divine, the other strangely inharmonious, we see the true unity in which nature is the glorious expression of God.

But if this be so, how are we to reduce it to practical usefulness? The problem of good and evil at once presents itself. This problem exists only because "we try with our shifting wills to change the outer crust of things, but the change is vain, it springs from the fuller life within":—

Certainly the world's way of advancing does not give peace, does not lift the burden of sin and sorrow from the face of the earth. In our earnest attempts to lessen the evil in this life of ours we have ignored the significance of two facts. The first is that each of us lives in the world which lies within his consciousness, and the other is our own power to expand that consciousness. Not only our inner life, but our visible world as well, depends upon our seeing power. All growth, from the human point of view, is the extension of the finite consciousness, that it may contain more and more of the infinite truth, which is ever seeking an entrance.

Creation is boundless; but just as the lower organisations are blind to the greater part of their environment, so man is blind to the infinity which surrounds him, and each individual is confined within the sphere of his own consciousness. He may constantly enlarge this sphere, and so realise a greater and truer world, or he may so narrow his vision that his world seems to contract and shut him in. This is equally true of humanity as a whole; we are joined together by invisible cords, and the parts cannot separate themselves from the whole. In spite of differences, the mass of mankind is in the same stage of consciousness, and experience teaches us all to believe in an external world which differs but little in individual minds. That we all think somewhat alike, and look upon the same picture, is because our minds are one underneath their seeming division. On the high plane of truth separation has no existence; all is unity, and even in this apparently fragmentary world our finite minds are united. No man stands alone, or can wholly make his own world. Each is bound up with all. No one can live his life to himself. He is responsible for every thought which, whether it crystallise into action or not, vibrates in proportion to its force through the whole body of mankind. His mind is part of the universal mind, and his rise or fall is that of all mankind.

Our phenomenal world corresponds to the stage of development and recognition of the aggregate human mind. With clearer vision we can behold God's true world. That which with dim sight we now see reflects back to us the image of our lower selves. Thus we look at a picture which is full of beauty wherever the light shines through us, but is blurred and distorted by taking on the form and colour of our own destiny; and yet we mistake even the dark spots for the creation of God's light. As soon as we feel that we are nothing, and the light is all, the shadows vanish. We are no longer opaque, but transparent; and nature, seen in the full glow of truth which fills us, is wholly pure and spiritual. As in the old legends the ghosts and demons wither into nothingness before the sign of the cross, so now and always no unclean thing can continue to exist when the light of truth shines through it.

We do not see the great unity that underlies everything—we do not recognise the eternal reality. So, "in our blind self-consciousness we seem to tear ourselves away from life, and declare that we have power of our own, separate and underived. Hence the apparent weakness in our present idea of the world."

If we could grasp this principle of unity and get rid of the notion of two forces, of the belief in separate and necessarily discordant states, and could awake to the knowledge of our true selves, we should draw nearer to the wholeness of mind and body, until our vision so expands

that the body is transformed to our sight into its natural and divine state. We should not in this way deny the material world, but we should know that nature is the living Word of God :—

Already a beginning has been made, and many are crossing the threshold of a new life. This life means deep consecration to one end, and perfect willingness to make any sacrifice. Above all, it means great love. Then comes a constantly growing power to receive and give forth life. Weak enough at first is our hold of this power in the face of the terrible need throughout the world, but still mighty to help, because it reaches the inner life of the spirit, from which all things spring. Sooner or later, here or elsewhere, we must all become conscious of life. Why do we neglect it now, when humanity reaches out passionately for that peace which comes only of the fulness of life? Every one of us can find it; every one of us can give it forth, and receive more in the giving. The more intense our desire to help, the more does the message of life penetrate every seeming veil: strength of desire gives it wings, and carries it whithersoever our thought wills. The deeper our feeling of the actual presence of God in every breath, in every atom, the more nearly do we reach the fulfilment of all life. The greater our love, the stronger its power to fill and transform all that it touches.

Sight, love, and passionate desire to give forth in the spirit to all who hunger must break our self-made bonds, and show us our birthright. So as we open our eyes the shadow-land disappears in the light of God's presence.

MENTAL VISION.

The following suggestive remarks are taken from an article by Dr. Alexander Wilson in the "Religio-Philosophical Journal" for April 8th. He is commenting on a paragraph on Mental Vision which appeared in the "Chicago Daily News":—

We believe in "men, women, and gods." The human mind is no product or emanation of the physical structure, begotten with it and dying with it, but a living intelligence. Time is but a projection of the eternal; and the thinking faculty is always of that primal region of being. There are living essences of various and perhaps discrete degrees, constantly in communication and sometimes in *rapport* with the minds of those living in the confines of time and space. They apprehend the thought and purpose from intimate association and contact, and so may further them, arrest them, divert them into other channels. This may be done so imperceptibly that the individual imagines it to be all of his own accord. The consciousness may be, and often is, a result of disturbance, abnormality. So we may see visions, perceive voices, and have impressions which are from the world beyond us, and seem to be supernatural. I have more than once experienced this. I have also caught the impression of what was going on in another man's mind, many miles away, brought as though by the telephone. Indeed, I do suspect that this very air of our planet has telephonic qualities, if we but knew of them. Wires will not always be necessary.

Whether the Supreme Being personally thus speaks, communicates, or inspires is too deep a question to introduce here. So far as we can well comprehend, it is all by intermediaries. We may assure ourselves that we are existing in a region of mind where we interchange mental and moral conditions, unconscious thought, aye, even life itself, with a myriad of beings analogous in nature, guided sometimes by the best motives towards us, and perhaps by worse ones. We cannot live apart from them, or they from us. The world-famous microbe of modern medical invention is not more numerous, active, or capable of good and bad results. I suppose with Silesius that we are necessary to God as well as he to us. Certainly all living persons, bodied, unbodied, disembodied, are necessary each to the other.

This comes behind this peculiar faculty of "seeing with the mind's eye," that the writer alluded to from whom we took our starting point. We never think definitely of man or object, except we give corporeal form to what we think of; and if we never saw, so as to reproduce it, we create it in our own minds. If we think out the right appearance we imagine ourselves gifted or inspired; but very generally, if we ever see the person or object, we have to change our conceptions.

The Brahman sages say that the Supreme "One" created the universe by energising thought.

THE MILAN EXPERIMENTS.

II.

We continue subsection (c): "The complete raising of the table":—

In order to better observe the operation, we took away gradually all the persons placed at the table, having recognised that this circle of people was not at all necessary, either for this phenomenon or for the others, and at last one only was left with the medium, the one on her left. This person placed his foot on both Eusapia's feet and one hand on her knees. He also held the left hand of the medium with his other hand; the medium's right hand was either on the table in full view of everybody, or else it was held in the air during the rising.

As the table remained in the air during several seconds, we were able to get several photographs of the phenomenon, which had never previously been done. Three cameras were used at the same time in different parts of the room, the light being got from a magnesium lamp at a convenient moment. In this way we got twenty-one photographs, some of which are very good. For instance, on one of them (the first that was attempted) Professor Richet is seen holding one hand, the knees, and one foot of the medium, while Professor Lombroso is holding the other hand, and that the table is raised horizontally is seen by the space between the end of each leg and the end of its corresponding shadow.

In all the preceding experiments, we concentrated our attention chiefly on the careful watching of the hands and feet of the medium, and that being so, we thought we had avoided every difficulty. At the same time, we feel that we cannot pass over in silence one fact which was only noticed for the first time on the evening of October 5th, but which probably had been produced also during the preceding experiments. It is this; that all the four legs of the table could not be considered as perfectly off the ground during the rising, because at least one of them was in contact with the lower edge of the medium's gown. On that evening we noticed that a little before the rising Eusapia's dress swelled out on the left side so as to touch the nearest leg of the table.

One of us having been told off to stop this contact, the table could not rise as at other times, and the rising only took place when the observer intentionally allowed the contact to be produced. This is seen in the photographs of this experiment, and also in those where the leg of the table in question is somewhat visible at its lowest extremity.

We did not verify the amount of pressure exercised at this moment on the table by the hand of the medium, and we could not discover, on account of the short time that the table rose, what amount of influence the contact of the dress (which appeared to act sideways) could have in restraining the table.*

To avoid this contact it was proposed to try for the rising whilst the medium and her fellow experimenters remained standing, but this was unsuccessful.† We then attempted to place the medium at one of the longer sides of the table, but she opposed this, saying that it was impossible. We are, therefore, forced to declare that we have not succeeded in obtaining a perfect rising of the table with the four legs absolutely in the air free from all contact, and there are reasons for fearing that an unpleasantly similar state of things probably existed when the two legs were raised on the side of the medium.

The phenomenon of the "touching robe" exercised the minds of the experimenters a good deal. "How," says the report, "could the contact of a light fabric with the lower end of a table leg help in raising it?" Seeing that the hiding of any solid substance which might have aided the medium in raising the table, was out of the question, it is

*Foot note by M. Aksakof. I should, however, observe that at the very first séance, when the table was entirely raised in the air, the two arms and the two hands of Eusapia were spread over the table *without touching it*, at a distance of nearly five centimetres, her fists were convulsively closed, and her arms were twisted. I was much struck with the peculiarity of this experiment, and I at once noted it, for I have never seen a table raised under the same conditions. These peculiar conditions should be looked for in future experiments. Moreover, at the séance of October 15th, experimenting with the table, M. Richet kept his own hand between the two hands of Eusapia, and he assures me that, during the first rising, the hand of Eusapia scarcely touched the table, and during the second experiment she did not touch it at all.

† M. Aksakof says:—On my asking Eusapia why the rising of the table could not take place while she was standing, she answered that whilst this phenomenon was being produced, her knees and feet trembled so much that she could not stand. "Of which," she said, "you can assure yourselves by holding my knees whilst I am seated." But I had no opportunity of verifying this.]

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difficult to find an answer. If in some way the dress was used as an instrument in raising the table, surely it was quite as remarkable as that nothing at all visible should have been made use of. To raise some pounds weight by the simple contact of a silk dress, is, it seems to the ordinary mind, as strange as raising the weight without the dress.

[Written August, 1892.]

MUSIC.

By MRS. A. J. PENNY.

II.

Elisha said, "Now, bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him." (2 Book of Kings, vi. 15.)

Again, in the extreme complexities and many discords which modern harmony involves, do we not find more than a correspondence—a cause—of the growing taste for all that is recondite and mysterious? Is not the simple-hearted prose and poetry of the last century more than coincident with the sweet melodies that our predecessors sang to when very young, and to which grey heads nodded when old? Not long ago a very musical friend, to whom I had submitted this theory of sounds attracting spirits, two years before, wrote to me, saying, "I am still more and more convinced of the attractive qualities that music has for legions of those whom we do not at present see; and I find myself often judging of the quality of anything new that I hear or play, by the amount of spiritual strength I gain by it, instead of the more obvious qualities of beauty, or melody, or harmony." Imagine the contrast of spiritual influx that would be attracted by the music of Wagner compared with that of Handel or of Glück! It may be fanciful, but I am apt to attribute something of the eager, driving pressure now felt on all sides of existence, and proved alike in our pleasures and our pains, to the greatly increased number of instruments used in public concerts as well as to the growing hosts of musicians in private life. The force of a brass band for opening access for some sort of influx must be very powerful.

St. Martin, who says that "pure music is the true and only physical conductor of all science" ("Esprit de Choses," Vol. I., p. 177), reminds us also that human music is not only defective but necessarily exposes us to danger, because, so long as it is not purified by the pure word of man, it can but open the realm of the Spirit of the Universe* (and this realm is complicated and of a mixed nature), for it must pass through the astral region, which has ways that lead in two directions. (*Ibid.*, p. 185.)

Dark sayings, these, that for most readers will probably be without meaning. Let them remain for the few who will understand. And for these one glance at the future, "when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible"; then *Spiritus Mundi* will be either promoted or deposed. I only refer to this, not wishing to challenge modern disbelief in any such awful crisis as the dissolution of a planet, but as a significant intimation of sound evoking spiritual agencies proportionate to the death throes of a world. Ostinger speaks with high esteem of the musical system of J. L. Fricker, of Dettingen. In his essays on "Earthly and Heavenly Philosophy" he offers an account of this system, while admitting that "it is not so easy to understand." I have at long intervals of rest, spent much time and effort in trying to understand his *précis*, and failure has been so complete that I should not dare to refer to it if I was not almost sure of having in some lucid moments gathered this one clear conception, that Fricker believed that the octave which ends our musical scale is one of a series extending far onwards into higher worlds. In his essay on "Light and Sound," the late Mr. Joseph Severn has expressed a similar belief: "The octave which we receive from nature is not only born with us, but must have existed in all tones and in the same proportion. It is, perhaps, one of the most mysterious links with the invisible world that this property of sound exists, though we cannot tell how we get it, or how we exercise it; for in an instant we perceive a note out of tune. The octave is the most charming mystery in nature, and its form is so positive that we may fairly conclude that it exists in an unseen world, invariably the same." ("Life and Letters of J. Severn," p. 229.)

* I cannot pretend to understand this last sentence—the context anyone used to St. Martin's books will find clear enough.

So far I have dwelt on the effect of musical vibrations extending from our world; and my contention is that if these vibrations efficacy with the denizens of another, the effect of vibrations from higher spheres must be far more influential, and that it is presumable, therefore, that the music heard by these people carries out some merciful purpose. We might say, in default of any other: "The soul before yielding to that purpose heard the divine harmony; and therefore after she came into the body and heard such choric strains as retain the traces of harmony, she gave them a hearty welcome, and by means of them, called back to memory of divine harmony, and by means of it becomes united to it and receives of it as much as is possible."

If choice songs from happy spirits serve thus to revive memories of lost glories, the loosening of the soul's attachment to earth might be promoted, but Swedenborg has, I think, more satisfying suggestions to offer. He often tells of the great delight his associate spirits found in music, and, as in the following instance, how its influence appeared to restrain and soothe: "It has twice happened to me that I heard in the street music from stringed instruments which so soothed the spirits that they scarcely knew but that they were in Heaven, for they were exhilarated to such a degree to be, as it were, transported out of themselves. I perceived their delight which was abundant, and even now, while I write, that music of strings and pulsatile chords is continued. The spirits are so charmed with it that they seem hardly to breathe. Wherefore, speaking jocularly to them, I said, it was no wonder that the evil spirit that infested Saul was so changed when he heard David playing upon the harp, seeing how much they were changed; to which they replied that they were now in such a state that they could now neither think nor do anything of evil. Because the delight penetrated their interiors." ("Spiritual Diary," 1996-97.)

It is easy to imagine how far more powerful music from higher regions may be for arresting the disturbing activities of evil or foolish spirits around the bed of a sufferer, even to be separated from the external body. And for this purpose it would not be necessary for that music to reach the sensorium of the dying person. "There are," Mrs. Bloomfield Moore reminds us, "inaudible vibrations of sound, as there are invisible rays of light." *

It is interesting on this point to observe the agreement of Swedenborg and Rama Prasad. The one, speaking of the respiration of Heaven, says that it corresponded to his own respiration about as three to one (vibrations of course understood). (S. D. 3121.) The other says the vibrations of the life principle move with a certain momentum. The mind has greater velocity, and psychic matter greater still. ("Nature's Finer Forces," p. 139.) And at p. 152, *Ibid.*, "The motion of the mental vibrations is so much accelerated that they become spiritual"; and at p. 115, "It is well known that when the vibrations per second pass beyond a certain limit either way, they do not affect the tympanum."

When dying people do hear music not produced by earthly instruments, may it not be that the crisis of approaching dissolution so quickens spiritual senses as to make sounds, unheard before, perceptible?

Perhaps such music is a soft prelude to the choral exercises of which Swedenborg often makes mention; reporting that by them increasing unison of spirit is effected in souls lately released from the discords of life in the flesh. "Souls are by degrees introduced into these harmonies and agreements, so that at length they can be among the angels." (S. D., 489.) "For the harmonies of sound are a spiritual harmony." (*Ibid.*, 904.)

THERE will always be sweet and blameless souls, that with the purity of child-angels will gaze directly on the face of the Father, and know nothing of the clouds and darkness which the intellect may spread around His throne; but Religion, considered simply as one factor within a rational nature, must like all our other native powers, seek for rational expression, and thus it will generate Theology. But Religion may abide through systems of Theology may perish. And so it has been in fact. The realms of thought are strewn with the relics of failed systems, but the spirit of Religion still walks with the radiant confidence of immortal youth, and builds new shrines wherein to dwell, till these, too, have served their purpose.—PRINCIPAL DRUMMOND.

* Keeley's "Secrets," T. P. S., p. 34.

IMMATERIALITY.

By BERTRAM ST. JOHN.

There is a question which naturally arises in the mind of many a deep thinker—"How do we know that we possess a soul?" Taking this, then, as our starting point in a few words against Materialism, let us endeavour, putting aside all acknowledged inspired authority, to discover, if possible, by philosophical reasoning, some causes for the belief in the existence of an essence beyond that of the body.

In the first place, where does the Spiritualist differ from the Materialist in his beliefs? In this way—the Spiritualist believes that the emotions, perceptions, and intellectual powers are due to the workings of an existent and invisible agency which is imperishable; the Materialist believes that these are nothing more than exhibitions, in different forms, of a nervous organisation, whose centre of force is the brain. There are others who hover betwixt the two beliefs and accept a little of each—that is to say, who acknowledge the existence of a dual nature in man, but who deny the imperishability of the invisible essence, on the grounds that that which is commonly called the "soul" is nothing more nor less than another form of protoplasm—a rarefaction, as it were, of matter and which decays as such.

Let us consider the three theories—beginning with that of the Materialist. He would say "the source of all power is the brain; it is the centre of intellect, of sensation, of the emotions, the memory, and the will; our understanding, our emotions, and our will power depend entirely upon the action of the cerebrum, which is the centre of all intellect; the greater the number of divisions in the cerebrum, the greater the understanding; thus, in man, it is more deeply indented, according as he is more highly cultivated, and in the same way that of animals becomes less so as we go further down the scale of created beings. Again, sensation is due to the contact of the nerves with some outer object; the nerves communicate with the brain, which is the centre of sensation;" and so on.

Now, to a certain extent, we are forced to agree with the Materialist. We cannot entirely overlook the importance of the functions of the brain. We cannot fail to acknowledge the existence of a certain mechanism in the human body, and not only in the human body, which is capable of receiving, we will say through the nerves, the communication of sensations, emotions, affections, &c. But mark, that while I say the brain receives these communications, I do not say that they end here. For it is impossible to believe that the happiness and the misery; the knowledge and the ignorance—the flashes of glorious genius and the hopeless and apparently causeless idiocy of the inhabitants of a vast universe—are due to the chance contraction or enlargement of that pulpy mass which we call "brain." It must, itself, be merely a channel of communication, as are the nerves, to something greater. It may be the first and direct recipient of impressions, but it cannot be the final and principal one; these impressions pass on to a higher essence which rules the action of the brain itself. As a proof of this let us consider the action of the memory. We know that from the moment we are born, our body, as all other material substances from the first moments of their existence, begins to decay; for this reason we consume a certain amount of similar matter to make up for the loss of tissue; the brain, of course, decays with the rest of our material nature; therefore, impressions received by it (or rather upon it, not supposing a dual existence) must pass away also. If, then, the impressions received on the brain go no further, we could not possibly have any memory of *past* impressions. That is to say, we could have no continuance of knowledge acquired, in any form, either of persons, places, or things. There could be no such thing as the accumulation of learning by experience, for experience is only the recollection of past impressions. There must, therefore, be some impressible essence above the material frame; and, by whatever name we call it, whether soul, spirit, will, or mind, it must still be about our body or within it, existent and pre-eminent.

Some would say, however, that this may possibly be a proof in favour of an immaterial something pervading the body, but at the same time does not decide the chief point of difference between the Spiritualist and Materialist—that is, the immortality of the spirit. But it seems to me that the same proof holds good here. In the same way as I consider the brain incapable of receiving lasting impressions through the medium of the nerves on account of its continual decay,

the mere fact that we have within us an essence which is capable of *permanent* impressions proves that that essence must in itself be permanent. It is impossible to believe that that which does not decay while joined to the material body should, the moment it becomes freed from that body, become suddenly extinct like a quenched flame. And here we come to the second point of consideration—the existence or non-existence of a substance which does not decay so long as the visible frame continues in a forced state of being, but decays directly the latter is overcome by death. How can we believe that matter, in whatsoever form, is incapable, at any time, of decay? How can we reconcile the idea of the unchanging existence of this ultra-refined collection of protoplasm for a definite period with our belief in the universal impermanence of matter? It is impossible.

Before closing these few and necessarily imperfect remarks on the immateriality and immortality of the soul, I cannot refrain from saying a few words on the Buddhist and Theosophist theory of Re-incarnation or Transmigration. Personally, I cannot, for a moment, conceive the possibility of the *creation* of anything whatever, otherwise than material. That our spirits were ever *created* is to me incomprehensible; I can only believe that they have existed from time immeasurable and that they will continue to exist through time infinite; why these spirits should have been forced to dwell, wrapped in a bodily form, as now, is not a point for present discussion. At the same time, I am not capable of comprehending the pre-existence of such a vast and innumerable concourse of spirits as to allow a separate and totally unique and individual essence for each new material form. Therefore, it seems to me that the theory of Re-incarnation instead of being, as I have heard many pronounce it, an extravagant and absurd one, is, in reality, one worthy of wider consideration, one which is easy of comprehension and philosophical in its reasoning. For all religion, at its best, is but based on supposition or scientific data; therefore, why not choose that which is most logical and rational in doctrine?

ONE TRAVELLER RETURNS.

With this heading the following appears in the "Religio-Philosophical Journal" for April 15th:—

In the summer of 1891 I joined a party of five persons for a fishing excursion in Onset Bay; the wind was light, several of the party were lounging in the stern of the boat enjoying that "dolce far niente" to which the soft air seemed to invite the indolently inclined. Among the group was a lady, one of those strange, mystic natures, called clairvoyant; suddenly she seemed to stare into space with a strange set look about her eyes. "I see a spirit," she cried. "It is standing on the stern of the boat; it is a man; he seems to be connected with the theatrical profession. I should say he was an actor; he waves a handkerchief and beckons to that yacht," pointing to a black vessel just visible on the distant horizon. She then gave a description of the form, its dress, its peculiarities, and during a space of five minutes she continued to speak and describe the motion of the spirit form. Thus far the prologue—little did we think that the denouement was so near. In the meantime the distant vessel had drawn nearer and nearer until we could distinguish its name. It was the *Thespis* in the calm sea. We approached each other until we were near enough to carry on ordinary conversation. "This is the yacht *Thespis*," came over the still water. "We are a party of actors." "Have you lost any of your party since sailing?" we asked. "Unfortunately, yes," was the reply. "Colonel — was drowned last Wednesday at Hotel Pemberton; this is his yacht. He fell between the wharf and vessel and we could not save him." The vessels drifted apart. Upon reaching Boston I took pains to verify the statements received from the yacht *Thespis*. Colonel —, manager of the — Theatre, had lost his life under the circumstances related above. Did he beckon his friends that summer day from the stern of our boat? I do not hesitate to say, "Yes."

This is an actual fact as related, and members of the party are living witnesses to its truth.

R. A. FULLER.

It has ever been held the highest wisdom for a man not merely to submit to necessity—necessity will make him submit—but to know and believe well that the stern thing which necessity had ordered was the wisest, the best, the thing wanted there. To cease his frantic pretension of scanning this great God's-world in his small fraction of a brain; to know that it had verily, though deep beyond his soundings, a just law, that the soul of it was good—that his part in it was to conform to the law of the whole, and in devout silence follow that; not questioning it, obeying it as unquestionable.—CARLYLE.

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

Light:

EDITED BY "M. A. LOND."

SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1882.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 5, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. S. B. Godfrey, 5, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to the Editor.

THE COMING CHANGE.

It does not require very much penetration to see that we are living in a time of flux. The rush and turmoil of modern life are not only rush and turmoil in themselves, but they portend change, which must come, and not too long hence. In mechanical science a recognised principle is that the passage from one position of stable equilibrium to another must be through a position of unstable equilibrium, and we are passing now through a position of unstable equilibrium. The landmarks are being removed, and who shall remember the boundaries? We are all in a state of expectancy. We are not waiting for a new Messiah, we are only wondering what will happen next, and trying more or less successfully to keep our souls in peace. But nevertheless we are expecting.

The restless movement of fashion, the shifting scenes of politics, the incipience of new systems of morality, the dissatisfaction with the old forms in art, may even the breaking up of the old notions of family ties, all point to the same imminence of change. Nothing is still: even the calm beliefs and assertions of science have given way to a new and tremulous doubtfulness, which wonders almost as much as it fears, while the only steadfastness observable is to be found in that old agnosticism which knows everything because it asserts that it knows nothing.

While we have Lord Kelvin on the one hand saying that science is expecting such new developments that all our present notions of natural laws will be overthrown, we have Sir Robert Ball arguing in a half-hearted and futile way, that space is after all only a metaphysical conception or else is not of the infinite nature we supposed it to be. The currents of electricity which erstwhile went pleasantly along conducting wires, now no longer go along them, but in some strange way outside them, or through them: the electricity of twenty, nay, of ten years ago is old and almost effete. New developments are coming in everywhere, and with Lord Kelvin we are waiting what may come next.

In literature what is foremost now is not the romantic adventure of hair-breadth escapes that pleased a former generation: not the half-pious, whole earthly success of a "John Halifax"; not even the culminating splendour and worldly tranquillity of Dickens's *Roundwoods*; not even the subtle analysis of George Eliot, but a newer and more incisive psychology which lays bare the inmost, or what is at present supposed to be the inmost, meaning of our nature. In music the simple melodies are gone, or but rarely heard, and complexities that would have had no meaning for the followers of Mozart or even Beethoven, alone please ears attuned to their new combinations. Nor has this change been slow. If we look back only twenty years we shall see how immeasurable is the gap. Thought

has changed its methods equally with the things about which. And what does it all mean?

If we look carefully into this development of newness, this rapid succession of alterations, we shall find that it has been, all through, contemporaneous with a development of psychism which is of itself one of the most striking signs of change. The dull dogmatism which made the spirit and the soul things of words, while the body alone was recognised as of real importance, is passing away, and men want to know something of the other two—dimly it may be—but they want to know. Or how shall we account for the crowds flocking to hear Father Ignatius in the busy city of London at its busiest time a few days ago,—crowds so dense that the police had to keep the streets?

Yes, we are waiting, waiting for something that shall make things right, waiting, some of us but dimly, others more clearly, but all waiting for that development of the spirit which we are sure is coming. By a development of the spirit we do not mean the half mystical, pseudo-religious outpouring characteristic of the revivalists, but that more serious and important change which will demonstrate that this presentment which we call the world is but an emanation of the Spirit of God; and that is coming, and coming soon.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.—MR. TRAILL TAYLOR.

It was not to be expected that Mr. Traill Taylor's photographs would be left unchallenged. But as it is impossible to impute fraud to Mr. Taylor or his associates, the objectors are thrown back on somewhat dimmy arguments. A letter to the "Christian World" may perhaps be taken fairly well to represent the kind of argument. The letter is signed "F. Gass."

Of course we know that fraudulent spirit photographs have been plentifully sold, but because there is a large amount of falsehood in the world it does not follow that there is no truth. But let us see how Mr. Taylor is treated by this critic:—

Mr. Taylor says these forms were invisible to watchers in the room, and were, therefore, disembodied spirits.

There is no such "therefore" in Mr. Traill Taylor's address. He said:—

In the foregoing I have confined myself as closely as possible to narrating how I conducted a photographic experiment open to everyone to make, avoiding stating any hypothesis or belief of my own on the subject generally.

The writer takes exception to Mr. Taylor's statement that the figures when examined by the stereoscope were absolutely flat; because "the figures were solid enough to obscure a view of the sitting medium when they stood between him and the camera." That is, Mr. Gass knows all about solidity, and what could or could not be done by what Mr. Taylor is careful to call a "psychic entity." That there is any appearance of light and shade in the engraving as it is in the "Review of Reviews" proves nothing: even if it is there, we have Mr. Taylor's assertion that in the photograph he examined with the stereoscope the "psychic figure was absolutely flat." As to the nonsense about the clothing of the figures and the drapers' shops in Ghost-land we have nothing to say. Mr. Gass then falls foul of photographs being taken without the employment of a lens. Such a thing would be a miracle. So Mr. Gass knows what a miracle is. "To obtain a portrait on a plate, light is imperatively necessary, and to obtain an image of a figure it must be brought into focus by the lens of a camera." Of course, if these things "must" be so there is an end of the matter, but the experiment went to disprove the necessity of this "must." And what is "light"? Has Mr. Gass any knowledge of the spectrum, and could he himself "see" the actinic rays which produce the pictures on the sensitised plate?

DEATH A DELUSION;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

ON THE

BORDERLAND BETWEEN SENSE AND SOUL.

BY JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

(Continued from p. 200.)

XI.

A few years ago I had special opportunities given me for testing two well-known "mediums," with results that went far to deepen my conviction that the off-hand explanation of "trickery" did not at all cover the facts. In a large, sparsely-furnished drawing-room, alone with the "medium," and in full daylight, he sitting before me in full view, objects were lifted and music was played by no visible agency, and, on my suddenly challenging the force to lift *me*, this was done: my chair and myself were sharply lifted a slight distance from the ground. Writing was produced upon a slate while on the top of a large table. Our four hands being placed on the slate, I distinctly heard the scratching of the pencil writing line after line beneath, and, presently, the slate, which had been cleaned a few minutes before, was exposed to view, covered with writing. To guard against trickery I purchased a slate a few days after, made the tiniest possible lead pencil mark in a minute corner of it, took it at once to the same room without warning, unwrapped it at the table, dropped paper and string by my chair, put the slate on the table with a morsel of pencil underneath, and awaited results. After a short experiment or two, the test experiment was tried, and, in the end, my slate was covered with writing from top to bottom. It had not left the table for a second, and my eyes were never taken from it. The slate I still have, and the minute lead pencil mark is still visible.

I, of course, know that trick slate-writing is practised, and have read careful descriptions of how it is done, but I have never seen or heard any explanation which seemed to at all cover my experiences.

The second of the two "mediums" I mentioned had very remarkable gifts; one in particular made a deep impression upon me. Seated partly behind a thin curtain, in full light, with his arms bound behind him, and the lower part of his body visible, an arm would appear at intervals and write. On one occasion I was invited to go behind the curtain and behind the "medium" to watch. The light shining through, I could see perfectly well. I saw the arms firmly bound, put my hands upon the upper part of each arm, and looked down. Presently, I distinctly saw something like a hand and arm shivering its way from the "medium's" side. It went before the curtain, as usual, but was speedily withdrawn, and I saw it no more.

At two private interviews with this medium, I witnessed some pretty and, as I then thought, very helpful experiments. Slate writing came rather freely. Morsels of crayon of various colours were put between two slates, and when in position for writing, and in full view, I was asked to say in what order of colours the words should be written. I chose, for instance, first word blue, the next two words red, the third grey, and the rest yellow. This, or whatever it was that I selected, was done. I was asked to think of some friend who had passed away, and to write the name on a piece of paper and roll it up. This I did, quite away from the "medium"—say, Miss Hendon. The reply was written or signalled out, "Margaret is here." Now, I have a very old shyness with regard to the familiarity of calling people by their Christian names, and have often been remonstrated with about it. Miss Hendon, for instance, a very old friend, wished me to call her Margaret, but I never did. Was I foolish in thinking that this gracious and clever

message was the very one that might have come from her? I had even then persisted in calling her Miss Hendon; but, with a touch of the old remonstrance, the answer came, "Margaret is here," the name she wanted me to use! "Coincidence?" or "trick?" The "medium" hardly knew me, and I am confident, not only that he did not see me write Miss Hendon's name, but that he could not have known anything about her—a quiet lady, who had lived and died nearly two hundred miles away.

About this time, for purposes of experiment, a well-known, but not paid, "medium" came to my house for a few weeks. Nearly all the experiments occurred in the light. Those that occurred in the dark were at my request, for special experiments of my own. It may suffice to give a brief account of one of these experiments. Without any warning, one evening, I went into the dining-room and said to the "medium"; "I should be much obliged to you if you would give me a séance in my study, and, as I wish the experiment to be under hard test conditions, I should like you to come now, and alone." The request was granted, with the single remark; "And I hope you will apply every test you can think of." We left the room and went across the hall to my study. I shut and locked the door, and placed in the centre of the room, and under a gas chandelier, a small table with pencil and paper. We then sat down. I placed my two feet on the two feet of the "medium," held the "medium's" hands for an instant in my right hand, put out the light, and then held the "medium's" hands, one in each of mine. Almost immediately the sounds came and messages were signalled. Very soon I heard the pencil moving, and in a few seconds it seemed to be rapped on the floor. I laughed, and said; "You are soon at it, and are very clever. But now, if you can take the pencil to the floor, you might put it into my hand." The message was at once signalled; "Put your left hand on your knee"—that being farthest from the "medium." I then held the "medium's" two hands with my right hand, and put my left hand on my left knee. In a moment the pencil gaily tapped my boot, and rapped its way up to my knee, I distinctly feeling it. Presently it reached my hand, and began to play with it, pretending to give me the pencil and then snatching it away. At last it was gently put into my hand, and I laid it on the table. Shortly afterwards we realised the object of darkness. A rather oval object appeared, strongly luminous in itself, but, I think, emitting no particular light. It was about the size of an average ostrich egg. It moved about rapidly, and all about the room, so that I had to turn my head to see it. Presently it came to the table and struck it several times. The sound was sharp and strong. Then, rapidly moving all the time, it struck my shoulder and brushed about my face. Several times the "medium" quietly remarked; "Feel my feet with yours, and remember you are holding my hands."

Many other things of a most impressive kind occurred. At last it was signalled; "Go to the door." The "medium," still being held, we went, and both stood there quietly. The table immediately began to beat against the floor for several seconds, and ended by something like a smash, and then silence. I lit the gas. The table was there, with its top on the floor and its legs in the air. The paper which I had placed upon the table I picked up, and found that it was freely written upon, with signatures at the foot. We returned to the dining-room, and were questioned as to the extraordinary noises that had been heard all over the house. My explanation was a very simple one. We had been passive and observant: someone who was unseen had been extremely kind!

These experiences occurred during my residence in Glasgow, and it was there that I heard much of a "medium" who, it was said, painted as well in darkness

as in the light, and, in whose presence, small paintings were produced even without the intervention of his hands at all. A friend of mine, a shrewd, level-headed Scotchman, told me that in his own house he had tested this, scores of times. I lived a very anxious and busy life, and only tested it once—also in my friend's house. Many very remarkable things occurred, but the picture-painting incident was certainly very curious. From a blank business card, taken from the pocket of a gentleman present, we tore a small portion from one of the corners. This card was laid upon the table with paints and brushes, we joined hands, and the lights were put out. In a few minutes, a signal was given and, on lighting up, we found a little oil painting on the card. With one finger I tried the colour and found it quite soft and fresh. The piece of card in my pocket exactly fitted the vacant space, even to a letter, part of which was on the card and part on the fragment. My friend assured me that he had, on other occasions, taken from his pocket specimens of paper which were under consideration in connection with his business, and that these were used for drawings, &c., in the dark.

(To be continued.)

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

At a meeting of the London Spiritualist Alliance, held on the Tuesday evening of last week, Miss Rowan-Vincent gave an address on "Psychometry." In investigating Spiritualism we had, she remarked, many difficulties to contend with, and many objections were raised even by friends who had explored a little of its marvels, one of the objections being that the communications were trivial and unsatisfactory, that in its teachings there is no new philosophy, and granting that the phenomena were true, what, they exclaimed, is the use of it? Unless we had learned something more than we could obtain by other more usual means, something of use in this our present state of existence, we too were also obliged to ask ourselves the same question, namely, what is the use of it? Putting aside the first objection, which she did not intend to touch upon, which was, in fact, the least difficult to explain away, and taking the second, she believed that the philosophy to be built up out of the investigation of Spiritualism was of immense importance, as it is not only demonstrated that man continues his existence in another state of being, but it proved the spirituality of man in this, his present state of life, and also the spirituality of every object upon this plane of our existence, both animate and inanimate, pointing to the truth of that which we called matter being simply our experience of spirit. We found ourselves possessed of spiritual faculties, side by side with the physical, which seemed to run along the same line. Right as we had it was extremely imperfect. It was true that we saw, but only that which it was necessary we should see. Around us was a vast teeming world of the lower forms of life which we were quite unable to see with our own natural vision. But by the spiritual sight, called clairvoyance, imperfect and undeveloped as it was, we were at times able to see, at great distances, things which were occurring even hundreds of miles away. We had the physical faculty of hearing, but were quite unable to hear the greater part of the sound which was in the world, only hearing that which our ears were attuned to hear. But by the spiritual sense of hearing we could hear sounds unheard by any persons present, in whom the spiritual faculties had not been developed. Allied to both these, clairvoyance and clairaudience, we get the spiritual sense of touch, called psychometry. Denon spoke of Nature as a vast camera, continually taking impressions of all that occurred. These impressions might remain upon an object for an immense period of time, until, placed in the hands of a psychometrist, the impression becomes developed and understood. When we received a letter from some person signing himself in friendly terms, and written with every apparent evidence of sincerity, we were inclined to believe in him; but while he was writing he also wrote, in invisible ink, between the lines, his real condition of mind towards us, which only a psychometrist could read. It was unfortunate that we did not meet with investigators from a scientific standpoint. Of all those who had been to her with a wish to know something of psychometry, not one could be called a true investigator; they were generally actuated by a desire to know some-

thing about business, or domestic concerns, but never in any case did they approach the matter from the standpoint of science, which desired only to obtain knowledge that might be of service to the human race. What was really wanted was a scientist to test and experiment, until we could arrive at some conclusion concerning this wonderful faculty latent in man. Nature had been writing in hieroglyphics ever since the world began, but her children had not yet been able to read these. They wanted the key. Psychometry was the key with which we could turn the rusted lock of Time and roll back the heavy door upon its hinges, disclosing to man's wondering vision the vast treasures which had been stored for him by the generations which have passed away. We had all heard of thought-transference between mind and mind, but there was a far greater thought-transference, more subtle, and quite unsuspected, between age and age, between generation and generation. As the people of the almost forgotten past "thought" so do we "act" to-day, and as we "thought" so would "act" the generation which was yet to be. This thought-condition which came to us for good or ill was like a ray of light travelling through space from some brilliant star, which by the time its radiance impinged upon this planet had long burned itself out—perhaps for many thousands of years—but the vibrations caused by its presence while in life travelled on and on through the universe. Some of us read a poem and spoke of its pretty rhythm and dainty conception, but others did more than read—they listened also, listened for the heart-beat of the poet throbbing through it all; were one with him in sympathy, and understood something of the purpose which inspired his song. So must we when turning back, by the aid of psychometry, the leaves of history, do something more than read; we must listen for the great heart-beat of humanity which throbbed through every page, becoming one with them in thought, understanding something of the great thought-sphere of action they had built for us. That there are mighty possibilities in psychometry, she was assured. With it we could rifle nature's casket of her most important secrets, trace the growth of the world, the evolution of intellect and also of religion. If properly investigated and tested it would become the brightest gem the crown of science yet had won.

At the close of her address Miss Rowan-Vincent gave some experiments in psychometry from objects handed up to her by the audience. Some of these were apparently failures; some were partially successful; and others completely so.

The proceedings closed with a cordial vote of thanks to Miss Rowan-Vincent.

MRS. BESANT.

Mrs. Besant's "Autobiography" goes on in the "Weekly Sun" with increasing interest; the following extract from it, which is headed "The Keypoint of the Life," is instructive:—

Looking back to-day over my life, I see that its keynote—through all the blunders, and the blind mistakes, and clumsy follies—has been this longing for sacrifice to something felt as greater than the self. It has been so strong and so persistent that I recognise it now as a tendency brought over from a previous life and dominating the present one; and this is shown by the fact that to follow it is not the act of a deliberate and conscious will, forcing self into submission and giving up with pain something the heart desires, but the following it is a joyous springing forward along the easiest path, the "sacrifice" being the supremely attractive thing, not to make which would be to deny the deepest longings of the Soul, and to feel oneself polluted and dishonoured. And it is here that the misjudgment comes in of many generous hearts who have spoken sometimes lately so strongly in my praise. For the efforts to serve have not been painful acts of self-denial, but the yielding to an overmastering desire. We do not praise the mother who, impelled by her protecting love, feeds her crying infant and stills its wailings at her breast; rather should we blame her if she turned aside from its weeping to play with some toy. And so with all those whose ears are opened to the wailings of the great orphan Humanity; they are less to be praised for helping than they would be to be blamed if they stood aside. I now know that it is those wailings that have stirred my heart through life, and that I brought with me the ears open to hear them from previous lives of service paid to men. It was those lives that drew for the child the alluring pictures of martyrdom, breathed into the girl the passion of devotion, sent the woman out to face scoff and odium, and drove her finally into the Theosophy that rationalises sacrifice, while opening up possibilities of service beside which all other hopes grow pale.

EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

The "Literary Digest" of New York, to which we have been often indebted for matter not otherwise easily attainable, gives the following condensed article on the "Efficacy of Prayer," by Dr. Rudolf Focke in the "Preussischer Jahrbücher" for March:—

Many years ago the Professor of Philosophy in Christiania (Norway), Marcus Jacob Monrad, being in Paris, called on Renan, and as was natural with two such men, the conversation turned on various religious and philosophical subjects, and, finally, on the efficacy of prayer. Renan maintained that prayer could have only a purely subjective psychological influence; he admitted that it was well calculated to console and support, but contended that it could not possibly produce any objective results. Monrad sought to combat these views, but his mastery of French was inadequate to the discussion, so he let the matter drop. It was, however, a subject which had already engaged his attention, and in 1885 he published a work in Norwegian, "Religion, Religioner og Christendom," in which he set forth his views *in extenso*, and he now seeks to formulate his reply to Renan's objections in German.

For the benefit, however, of such as in their wisdom are disposed to smile at the idea of the efficacy of prayer, it may be as well to note at the outset that Monrad also absolutely repudiates the dogmatic teaching that the order of the universe is interrupted to confer objective benefits on the petitioner; his treatment, therefore, is not dogmatic or dependent on Scriptural texts, but philosophical, supported by logic.

He begins with the oft-reiterated question: How is the hearing of prayer reconcilable with the universal reign of law?

To this he replies that the individual man who abstracts himself from the world-system, of which he is a part, and prays for satisfaction of his sensible or egoistic cravings, prays in vain. Such a petition has nothing in common with the pure, pious prayer; it is nothing more than the passing wish of an individual to disturb the world-harmony for his personal gratification. In true prayer the petitioner grows ever more conscious of his dependence on the Absolute, rises to the realisation that this dependence is his salvation, and in the felt presence of the Absolute withholds the selfish petition for his own egoistic cravings and exclaims: "Not my will but Thine be done!" The more fully the petitioner is dominated by the idea of surrendering himself to the Divine Will, the greater is the guarantee that his prayer will be heard. Man must not seek God's aid for the attainment of an earthly object, but on the contrary must seek to place himself in the service of the Divine Will. They who pray in this wise will, although in another form, attain that real end of their prayers: the yearning and unrest of their hearts will be stilled and the "sweet peace" for which Goethe prayed will gradually take up its abode in their breasts. True prayer says always in spirit: "Give us that which will benefit us; not that which we think will benefit us." It may be objected: That is all very well, but since God's will is always done, prayer is superfluous and unnecessary; for it is, as Renan said, a purely subjective act which cannot possibly influence the order of evolution of the objective world.

"This plea," replies Monrad, "is nothing more than a repetition of the eternal tautology of scepticism, which regards subjective and objective as distinct entities, existing independently of each other." In our empirical world subjectivity and absolute objectivity are barren abstractions. Both are alike as actualities, conditioned and limited. True prayer raises the petitioner to unity with the divine order, and renders him co-operative with the objective world.

Of course it is not meant by this that the co-operation of the subject will result in changing the orderly course of natural law. Miracles are not now under discussion. But natural conditions as such, that is, apart from their relation to the subject, contribute nothing to the happiness or unhappiness of humanity. When we pray for anything we pray practically for the benefit or satisfaction which we believe the thing prayed for would insure us. If, then, the pious prayer that "God's will be done" operates to work such an inward change that the deprivation is lighter, the dread and pain of the evil stilled, and we actually begin to experience a sense of joy and consciousness that the trouble will, in some way, conduce to our benefit, may we not justly say that the prayer is heard, and the essence of what the petitioner prayed for, conceded?

The objective world also is indirectly influenced by the prayer—that is through the change wrought in the subject who

is himself an atom in the objective world-order. The world, as we see it, is the product of numerous interacting factors. It is, according to Goethe's well-known poem—"The Weaver's Masterpiece," "where one step (on the treadle) stirs a thousand threads—The ceaseless shuttle flies to and fro—The threads retreat again to meet—One stroke a thousand unions forms." If, then, under the influence of a pious prayer, human action is influenced in a certain direction, and if, further, as is equally indisputable, many of the occurrences and conditions of the outer world, especially such as affect man, may be essentially modified by human action; then every human subject is a co-operative factor, and every change in a man's inner nature involves a change in the whole order of the universe, and in the realm of spirit, of which the objective world is but an outer manifestation as it presents itself to our senses.

True, pious prayer results from precisely that mental attitude best calculated to bring our will into harmony with the higher Universal Will.

RECORDS OF PRIVATE SEANCES.

FROM NOTES TAKEN AT THE TIME OF EACH SITTING.

No. XLV.

FROM THE RECORDS OF MRS. S.

January 25th, 1875.—The gems that had been brought to the circle at a previous séance we had had set in rings and a pin. This evening we met alone and placed them all on a handkerchief in the centre of the table round which we were seated. We saw much spirit-light in the room, and liquid scent was thrown over the circle, table, and handkerchief on which the gems were placed. A cordon of light gathered round the circle. G. came and sounded his musical notes over the rings, &c.; then Sade with his seven-stringed instrument, also the three-stringed one, and lastly the "fairy bells," played over the table. All the time this was going on Mr. S. M. was in deep trance. It appeared as if the spirits were throwing a musical influence over these gems, as they had thrown a prophetic one over the ring belonging to the medium. Chom then controlled and answered questions. Afterwards Franklin spoke through Mr. S. M. He said, "All had been accomplished, and that the influence thrown around the rings was very good, and we were always to wear them."

January 31st.—This evening we met again. Mr. P. joined our circle. We had the usual manifestations of scent and music. Theophilus controlled and spoke as follows: "We will invoke the blessing of God, the All-good, All-wise, and All-merciful, and we will commit ourselves, and you to the protection of His angels, in the constant faith that He will keep both us and you always; and we will implore the protection of all those spirits of mercy, who are sent to minister to men, and on whom we must rely for help in every time of trouble. Eternal Father, shed light on those who need it; pour grace on those who can receive it; and enable all who will to hear what we have to declare to them. May the blessing of God rest upon you. We speak with difficulty, but we wish to tell you of the outpouring of divine grace, of which you are now witnessing a new expression. We have been unused for long to speak amongst men, and if we make use of strange words and expressions, it is because we are not accustomed to those of the present age. We desire to be known to you only by the name of Theophilus; this name has been given to you before. We wish to-night to speak to you from our own standpoint of knowledge respecting the expression of the Divine Will amongst men, and the progressive revelation of God from age to age. The Supreme has manifested Himself in divers forms, and through divers agencies, and those who have been the recipients of these manifestations have usually erred in thinking that the agency and the revelation had been vouchsafed to them alone. Each age has had its divine message, and each has erred in thinking its own message final. Be assured that none of these ideas are true. God has spoken, but not finally; to certain people, but not to all. You know that revelation began with Melchizedek and has been continued even until now. You know also that the Christian Church is not the only recipient of divine favour, and that another branch received a portion, and carried it into other lands. To each was given but a fragment of the whole truth of God. I come now to the days in which I myself was concerned in the revelation of that truth, which you

have in so degenerate a form. Then Judaism was fading away, even as Christianity is now, for the modern Christian has defiled his faith, has brutalised his God, and has fallen away from the simplicity of Christ. So far the two ages are parallel. In the Jewish Church you find the Pharisee and the Sadducee, the Scribe and the Herodian. The first was emburied with ritual and eaten up with pride. The second disbelieved all, but through prudential motives concealed his doubts. The third was textually troubled, and spent his life in eliminating from dry texts what he conceived to be truth. Then came the Christ, born in a manger, cradled in a stable, brought to life in a most despised province; the son of a carpenter, He was but little able to cope with the refined Pharisee. Yet you are Christians! and His faith has spread over almost the whole of the civilised world! Similarly we see amongst you, your learned men playing the part of the Sadducees, and your Churchmen that of the Pharisees, while many of your scholars are labouring over documents which will be of little value in the final issue. Ritual, and ceremonial, and creeds have so filled the thoughts of your Churchmen that they have set aside the idea of spirit that underlies them. You may believe one who is able to take a wide view of the question. The first mark of a fading faith is that lack of spirituality which leads men to give up the unseen world, and to busy themselves with the useless husks that surround it. When men are cumbered with dogmas and creeds of human invention, and leave out of view the spiritual truths that underlie them, it is clear their faith is on the wane. In such an epoch your lots are cast. God now speaks plainer than He has ever spoken, for men have hitherto failed to understand His revelations. He has spoken what is fitting, and as man has grown and developed He has spoken more plainly. The physical gave way to the intellectual, and as abstractions cannot be real objects of worship, man having done away with the old idealisations of God found himself unable to worship an idea. Hence came an age of scepticism. That which is placed before men at the present time is the acceptance or rejection of a spiritual revelation. Some will accept, others reject it, for as the Great Master said: 'Some shall go into the light of truth, and some into outer darkness.' We have felt desirous to point out the parallel in the dealings of God with one race and another, and our remarks will also apply to the times in which Brahma and Buddha taught mankind. Their teaching must now yield to the present spiritual outpouring. The past teaches us this important lesson that divine truth ever has, what man calls, a lowly origin. It has been so in all ages, and will be so now. Self dominates less, vanity and pride holding less sway. Again it teaches another lesson. As all truth has come from a low origin, so it has hitherto centred itself in a single representative; but hereafter it shall not be so, it will not run in one groove, and so become cramped and confined, but it will be given through many mediums purged of all that is individual, permeating the world and animating recipient souls. The times of exclusiveness are over, the times of open vision have arrived, when democracy rather than aristocracy shall be the leading principle. All has been prepared for the spiritual outpouring, and the duty of man at the present epoch is most important, how he will receive the most complete revolution that your world has yet seen, the breaking down of the barriers between earth and Heaven, the realisation of the old visions of angels passing between the two spheres and mingling amongst men, the conflicting of vain philosophies, and the placing before man, even while embodied, such views of truth as have never before been given to him. Your religion has lost much of its truth. When Peter said 'Silver and gold have I none' he pointed to a higher truth which has been lost sight of, for your greatest Church has been at pains to acquire a monetary position, which the Apostle so eagerly disclaimed. Spiritual influences have gone from it, and a material influence has been acquired. We have now spoken that which we have been charged to speak, and we defer to another occasion much that we might add, for we hope to renew our intercourse hereafter. May the Angel blessings be with you. May the glories of the coming reign show themselves to you, and may the blessing of the Supreme rest upon and remain with you always."

TRANSITION.—Mr. Henry Thomas Humphreys, sub-editor on the "Morning Post"—one of the early workers in the cause of Spiritualism—passed away on April 24th, at the age of sixty-nine. The body was interred, on April 28th, in the Friends' Burial Ground, at Isleworth.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents, and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.]

Spiritualism in America.

SIR,—The recent death of one of the Fox sisters has brought to mind very vividly the early days of Spiritualism. The "Rochester rappings," forty-five years ago, startled the world and made it wake from its materialistic dream. Religion was *non est*; the Church had no power to arrest the then inflowing tide of Atheism; it had sold itself to Satan, and human hope was nearly extinguished. In America, slavery, with its twin-sister, sensuality, was the exciting topic of the hour. All but a few Abolitionists had conspired to make the reign of brute force perpetual. The "raps," through the Fox girls, arrested attention; soon the interest grew, and in five years thousands rejoiced that they had proofs positive of the existence of another world than this; of the continuity of personal existence beyond the grave; of the possibility that loved ones could return and exchange congratulations as in the flesh. Such eminent men as Professor Hare, Judge Edmonds, Governor Tallmadge, Epes Sargent, Revs. J. B. Ferguson of Nashville, Tenn.; Pierpont, of Boston; Fishbough, of New York; Dale Owen, Tiffany, Stobbens, Tuttle, and others of equal celebrity, placed the seal of their approval on the verity of these "manifestations." Nearly every household had a "medium," and the interest was unabated for years. "Instruments" were developed for speaking and writing, and a literature grew from this humble beginning which was unique, and even to-day is interesting.

We note the poems of T. L. Harris; "Nature's Divine Revelations," &c., through Andrew Jackson Davis; the works of Hudson Tuttle, and the many communications published by Judge Edmonds, not to mention that grand literature finding place in the old "Spiritual Telegraph," edited by those peerless writers, Rev. William Fishbough and S. B. Brittan. For a decade from 1848 there was a sense of solemnity resting upon many faces, a confronting of a fact that neither priest nor the Church could put down. The door of the beyond stood ajar, revealing what has been since more than confirmed—that the other world is much like this. There, what we call wickedness, misery, sin, and all uncleanness find expression, as well as the true, the beautiful, and the good. It was found that the other side of life was really the cause-world from which issued the effects in this—that both worlds have this relation one to the other. For twenty years the searching light of science made discovery after discovery until the fact of Spiritualism stood out acknowledged as one of the new factors in the problems of this age. In the meantime another element was active. Commercial Spiritualism plied its unholy trade, debauching the consciences of men and women, and profaning the most sacred of all relations. It seemed for a time that fakirism and fraud would hold the field against the truth, and that Spiritualism would find an eclipse in the more than Oriental magic of the Hindus and the orgies of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. But there always comes a crisis and change in these mental movements of the race. Evolution and dissolution go together. The transition from one to the other is the danger point.

When the first cycle of Spiritualism had evolved and come to its dissolution, the "Banner of Light" and the "Religio-Philosophical Journal"—the first published in Boston and the latter in Chicago—came to the front to clear away the rubbish that the light might shine and a rational faith, based on scientific fact, might come to enlighten men and women. The "Religio-Philosophical Journal," of which Colonel John C. Bundy was the Editor, did noble work in the new advance. Under his guidance and indomitable courage and inflexible purpose the cause of true Spiritualism in America triumphed. He was unrelenting in his exposure of the false in Spiritualism, and although he made his mistakes and possibly did some injustice, he never failed to correct both, and to repair the injury done when he was convinced that he was in error. Like Stainton Moses, he "hewed to the line, let the chips fall where they may." Both are gone; but the world is wiser and better for their works.

I confess that, like many others, the death of both of these noble men was a surprise and a great shock to me. This was especially the case with Colonel Bundy. I was away on the ocean when his death occurred, and knew nothing of it for weeks afterwards. At the time of the departure of both of these two eminent men it seemed to me all was gone, both in America and in England. But the Power that rules in all

things leads the way when all seems darkest. In America we have Colonel Bundy's place filled by one who is well equipped, not for Colonel Bundy's work—for that is finished—but for that higher elevation of a true spiritual life which Spiritualism, at least in America, has been the great instrument in developing: I mean B. F. Underwood. At Colonel Bundy's death Mrs. Bundy wisely chose him as Colonel Bundy's successor as the Editor of the "Religio-Philosophical Journal."

Since the advent of Mrs. Besant in this country Theosophy has revived and is now making great efforts to propagate the "Wisdom Religion." A few weeks since Dr. Buck, of Cincinnati, one of the ablest writers on Theosophy to be found in America, wrote a long communication for the "Religio-Philosophical Journal," giving his views on Theosophy. He was especially felicitous in his praise of Mrs. Besant, her work and her teaching. In a column reply Mr. Underwood made sad havoc of Dr. Buck's position, exploding in terse but dignified language his claims—especially his claims for the Mahatmas. Theosophy received a blow from which it still staggers.

If I read the "signs of the times" correctly, the cause of Spiritualism is entering upon a new phase of its evolution. We have facts enough to formulate a science, and upon this science a philosophy, and upon this philosophy a religion. It is well, therefore, that we have men who can handle the new problems as well as to explain and modify the old. At least the appearance is that in America we have entered upon this new act in the drama. Spiritualism in America is in a hopeful state, and not only fulfils all the promises of its earlier evolution, but it will be the harbinger of that new era now dawning upon the world—where freedom, righteousness, and peace will reign.

Parkersbury,

M. C. C. CHURCH.

West Virginia, U.S.A.

Mars and Mercury.

SIR,—I have read with great interest Mr. Sinnett's letter and the confirmation he states he has received from the Master for the view that Mars and Mercury are in our planetary chain.

A question, of great interest to my mind, arises respecting the psychometric observations of Mars and Mercury to be found in that singular and carefully worded book, "The Soul of Things," by W. Denton. Three different psychometrists observed many things in Mars, and described four races of human beings. One of the moons of Mars was pointed out long before it was discovered by the astronomers.

The question, then, I should like to ask Mr. Sinnett is this: Has the Master expressed any opinion on the value of the statements about Mars and Mercury in Mr. Denton's soberly written book, a book which was very highly spoken of by Madame Blavatsky?

G—, F.T.S.

Analogy—The Butterfly and the Soul.

SIR,—Mr. Harpur asks: "Is the soul more distinct from the body than flies are from worms?" I answer decidedly, yes. The fly and the worm both belong to one and the same order of life—the physical; whereas, *ex hypothesi*, the soul is independent of the physical order to which the body belongs, and survives its imperfect physical manifestation. He adds: "And yet flies originate in worms and survive them." As a matter of fact they do not "originate" in worms, but in parental flies which deposit eggs. The law of like generating like is herein of strict application. The grub stage is only a stage in development. What Mr. Harpur calls "survival" in this case is not survival, but metamorphosis. There is no dead organised worm body, but only a skin, left when the development is complete.

There is no principle in which I believe more thoroughly, or have more studied, more frequently insisted upon, or endeavoured more faithfully to apply, in speculating on things transcendental and spiritual, than that of analogy with the physical order of experience, which, says Mr. Harpur, "C.C.M. doesn't see."* Indeed, I recognise in it our chief clue to truth. Now, physical metamorphosis has a profound and beautiful analogical use. But for the case of the butterfly to be of any use in this way to Mr. Harpur, the physical body should be metamorphosed into the soul.

C.C.M.

*The principle of analogy directs us to an identical law in different orders of existence or experience, not to a blundering confusion of different orders. I must add that I wish Mr. Harpur would try to make his misrepresentations of what I say a little less gross, even if I must not expect him to read language in its natural sense. I did not, as he affirms, say that the "whole conception" of analogy is "illogical," unless confined to things *ejusdem generis*, nor anything remotely resembling that proposition.

Spiritualism in Ritual.

SIR,—May I suggest that all the requisites for a séance of the highest Spiritualism are to be found at a High Celebration? The consecrated room, incense, lights, flowers, the true spirit of worship, the true belief in the communion of saints, are all to be found at the altars of our National Church wherever the real worship of that Church is followed up.

Let Spiritualists who are seeking their home in the heavenly places find a church that suits their individual idiosyncrasy; let them take the trouble to understand the service, to follow it out, as it leads on gradually to the climax at the consecration prayer; and if they do not find at the altar all they need and more than they ever imagined possible, I can only say there must be something wrong with themselves. There are three distinct stages in the service of the altar. The prayer "that we and all *thy whole church* (here and on the other side) may receive remission of our sins." The invocation of all the heavenly host—"Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy," &c. The Prayer of Consecration, which, according to the belief of the Catholic Church in all ages and countries, brings the Divine Presence down in blessing.

The Catholic Church has always known and practised the Higher Spiritualism from the earlier ages till now.

Y. Z.

A Peculiar Experience.

SIR,—Mr. Pelekhine's story* of the dead husband calling the living wife back to his side, in performance of the promise she had made him to stay by him until he was interred, recalls a very peculiar incident that occurred to me when my father's sister, my adopted mother, passed on to the higher life. She had adopted me when a little child at his death, and we had lived together for twenty-three years in as perfect harmony as is compatible with human life. She was a brave old lady and did not hesitate to speak of her death, and, as she had a great dread of being buried alive, often, sitting in the firelight, she would impress upon me the necessity of having a vein opened in her arm after death to make sure that she *was* dead and not in a trance, as in the case of a cousin of hers who was nearly buried alive. But as "Grandmamma" lived to the ripe age of eighty-three everyone agreed that in her case there could be no necessity to have a vein opened, but I had such a peculiar experience that after all I resolved to have a medical opinion about it.

Time after time as I stood by her coffin and took her hand in mine I was startled by feeling, and seeing, her fingers curl softly round my hand in her own old caressing way when alive. If anyone else touched the hand it remained motionless, but with me the result was always the same.

So I resolved I would go and consult our medical adviser, thinking perhaps that it was to remind me of my unfulfilled promise about him. He readily agreed to accompany me home, and if he considered it necessary he *would* open the vein.

Standing by the coffin he looked at her and exclaimed, "Oh, no, no, it is not necessary at all. She is really dead." "Will you kindly place your hand on hers?" I asked, and on his agreeing I laid his hand on hers, and her hand remained motionless as before. I then took his place and laid my hand on hers, and her fingers immediately curled round my hand. "Well," the doctor exclaimed, "it is inexplicable; I can't understand it, for she is as dead as ever anyone was in this world"; and he drew up the sleeves and showed me that decomposition had set in, for the soft white arms were discolouring. Have any of the readers of "LIGHT" had a similar experience?

I may just add that in the first experience I had of clairvoyance the medium (who was a strange lady visiting my house through the invitation of a spiritualistic visitor staying with me) was in the dining-room, and as she passed under influence at my friend's desire, she said to me in a strangely altered tone, "Give me your hand," and then she sat straight up in the chair in the peculiar upright fashion of a gentlewoman of the old school, while her fair young face elongated, and took on the features and expression of my dead darling. I gave her my hand, but instead of holding it palm to palm as people do when shaking or holding hands, her fingers curled softly round it in "Grandmamma's" peculiar caressing way, and she exclaimed in "Grandmamma's" own voice, "You darling, I do love you."

When the medium took my hand I had wished mentally to

*See "Dutch Papers," "LIGHT," April 22nd.

know if "Grandmamma" loved me as fondly in the other world where she had rejoined the husband she had adored, whose place in her life I had taken after his death, as she had done in this, and that was my answer; and could there have been a more convincing one? Not to me, certainly.

Tweed Green House,

KATE TAYLOR-ROBINSON.

Whalley Range.

P. S.—After the doctor left, and until interred, her hand still clasped mine, so it was not the unfulfilled promise, as I had thought.

Authority.

SIR,—The question is not what Theosophical books have been read by Mr. Donaldson, but what that gentleman knows of Theosophy. For any one to have even skimmed the works he mentions and then to make the statements that he has done, argues a want of understanding that is truly phenomenal. That he should have learnt nothing at the Adelphi Lodge is not surprising. When a visitor's crudities have been patiently listened to and in return he persists in interrupting everyone who seeks to put him right, and twists their words into a confirmation of his misconceptions, it is inevitable that he must go away as ignorant as he came.

In his present letter your correspondent fails to distinguish between our giving a respectful attention to teachers of approved capacity and an unconditional acceptance of their statements. I repeat, we believe nothing till its truth is demonstrated.

But what are we to say about this self-elected master misunderstanding such a phrase as "A Theosophist knows no God but the Deity within him?" Why, no one who had learned even the A B C of occultism could have puzzled for a moment over the meaning of it. That which is most constantly insisted on in Theosophy is that "All" are but manifestations of "One" and that apart from the "One" nothing can exist. But on the other hand our earth-life is a succession of states of consciousness, and we know only that of which we are conscious; consequently the "One" exists, to each, only in his own consciousness. That is, Deity in Man and the universal Be-ness are essentially identical, just as a ray of the sun is identical with the sun. But man, being finite, cannot comprehend infinity. Consequently each imagines that the limited perception of Be-ness which is present in his consciousness is the "Causeless Cause" of all things. Any such limitation Theosophy terms Maya (illusion) if it professes to be more than man's point of contact with universal, inscrutable Be-ness. No Theosophist would pretend to explain essential existence, so the quotation from Emerson is beside the mark.

ROBT. B. HOLT, F.T.S.

The Evolution of Humanity.

SIR,—I have waited a week since the appearance of Mr. Sinnett's letter in answer to mine, in the hope that some champion of "The Secret Doctrine" would take part in the discussion. As it appears we are not to be favoured with any argument from that side, I may perhaps be allowed a few words of comment.

The great fact which is brought home to one on reading Mr. Sinnett's letter is the increasing difficulty of knowing what the "Theosophic Revelation" really reveals. As long as "Esoteric Buddhism" stood alone, it was possible to refer to it as a precise statement of the Mahatmic teachings, but the appearance of "The Secret Doctrine" has totally altered the state of the case. In that work, as I showed in my previous letter, certain of the teachings in "Esoteric Buddhism" are said to be erroneous; and now Mr. Sinnett informs us that the former work "is blemished here and there by failures to cast that teaching correctly in the mould of our thought and language." Not only so, but it is marred by misquotation. Besides the one to which Mr. Sinnett now calls attention, there is the more important one about Laplace and the moons of Mars to which I referred in my previous letter. In this latter case a statement was quoted by Madame Blavatsky verbatim (as she alleged) from a letter of "the Teachers," and yet in the "Agnostic Journal" of June 28th, 1890, Mr. Mead gave a quotation (also alleged to be verbatim) from the same letter, which showed, if accurate, that Madame Blavatsky had under the name of a verbatim quotation put forward a statement which was never in the letter at all. This, of course, raises a presumption that she was equally mistaken in the other "verbatim" quotation from the same letter, to which I have

drawn attention as being in conflict with the teachings of "Esoteric Buddhism." Under such circumstances, how is the student to know what the true teaching is? Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett each say that the other misinterprets the Masters; and the former is convicted, first on the testimony of Mr. Mead (who must be taken as her representative, since he was allowed to use the Mahatma manuscripts), and now by Mr. Sinnett, of distinct misquotation. On the whole, the Theosophic revelation seems to be getting almost as involved as the Christian.

With regard to Mr. Sinnett's denial in "Esoteric Buddhism" of the "peopling" of Egypt by the Atlanteans, I must admit that this is not necessarily in conflict with his later statement as to an Atlantean "immigration" into that country.

F. W. READ.

SOCIETY WORK.

16, MELROSE-TERRACE, SHEPHERD'S BUSH-ROAD.—A Spiritualist meeting is held on Thursdays, at 3 p.m. prompt, Mr. J. M. Dale presiding, in connection with the "Busy Bees."

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E.—Meetings each Sunday, at 7 p.m. Speaker for Sunday, May 7th, Mr. J. A. Butcher.—J. RAINBOW, Hon. Sec.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST FEDERATION.—The annual meeting of the above society will be held at the rooms of the Progressive Association, Pentonville-road, on Sunday next, May 7th, at 3.30 p.m. Council meeting at 3 p.m.—A. F. TINDALL, Hon. Sec.

311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—Sunday, at 11.30 a.m., circle; at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., W. G. Coote on "Psychometry," with experiments. Wednesdays, at 8.30, circle for inquirers. On Sunday Mr. Long's control formed a healing circle for one of the members who is very unwell, and the patient received great benefit.—J. PERRY, Assist. Sec.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE.—A very happy time was spent by members and friends on Sunday afternoon on the occasion of their reunion. Miss Rowan Vincent was very good in her instructive lecture on "Psychometry." Sunday next, at 11 a.m., meeting; at 7 p.m., lecture, Mr. C. White. On the 14th and 21st, Mrs. Green, clairvoyance, &c. See bills.—C.I.H.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—On Sunday last we had a large gathering to welcome our old friend, Mr. W. Wallace, whose guides gave an eloquent discourse upon the "Old and New Spiritualism," explaining many ancient mysteries and answering numerous questions at the close. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason; Tuesday, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Mason. 58, Tavistock-crescent, Westbourne-park, W., on Saturday, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason.—J.H.B. Hon. Sec.

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL, S.E.—On Thursday Mr. H. Towns gave some illustrations of clairvoyance. On Sunday Mr. W. G. Coote gave a very interesting address on "Psychometry," with illustrations, showing how those possessed of the gift could develop it. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Dale of Stockwell, will address the meeting. On Thursday, May 11th, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Bliss. Admission by ticket only, to be obtained at the above address.—J. B., Sec.

PECKHAM RYE.—On Sunday, April 23rd, Mr. R. J. Lees delivered the first discourse of a series which he proposes to give on "The Teachings of Christ." He dealt with the branch of the subject "Christ's Teaching about God." Except for a small coterie of disturbers for disturbance sake, the lecture was received with attention. On Sunday last, he took as his theme "What Christ taught about Himself." Necessarily the question of the Divinity of Christ came up, and was discussed without the slightest acrimony, and I do not think I am taking a partial view in saying that Mr. Lees undoubtedly held his position on this question, that Jesus, while the highest manifestation of the Deity, was not the Deity Himself. The whole meeting was characterised by fairness and good feeling, and the peroration was received with acclamation. Next Sunday Mr. Lees's subject will be "Christ's Way of Salvation."—J. C.

ATHENÆUM HALL, TOTTENHAM COURT-ROAD, W.C.—A dramatic recital will be given at the above hall on Wednesday, May 10th, by Miss Eleanor Vivian and Mr. Ernest C. Mead. Vocalists, Miss Alice Everitt and Mr. C. Randolph Litchfield; pianist, Fraulein Poppmacher. To conclude with a comedietta, "The Happy Pair," by Theyre Smith. The proceeds will go in aid of the Marylebone Spiritual Association. Tickets and programmes are now ready, and can be obtained of the following members of the committee:—Mrs. Everitt, Lillian Villa, Holder's Hill, Hendon; Miss Rowan Vincent, 31, Gower-place, W.C.; Mr. A. J. Sutton, Woburn House, 12, Upper Woburn-place, W.C.; Mr. Cooper, 82, East-street, Baker-street, W.; and at the hall, 86, High-street, Marylebone. Doors open at 7.30, to commence at 8. Tickets on sale at the office of "LIGHT."