

# Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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## CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way .....	1	1894 .....	6
Immortality .....	2	Rev. Minot J. Savage .....	7
How it is Done .....	2	The Higher Ego .....	7
Saints and Mediums .....	3	Mrs. Besant's Autobiography .....	9
The Sadness of Development .....	4	Case of Stigmatisation .....	11
The Artist and the Ghost .....	5	Letters to the Editor .....	11-12

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Ghosts generally must be grateful to Mr. Andrew Lang for the notice he is bringing to bear upon them. He is talking about them everywhere. One would almost think that he also has his unconfessed "Julia," who is prompting him in ever so delicate a fashion to talk about her and her friends. We, too, are much obliged to Mr. Lang, for he has driven another nail into the coffin of common-sense in his paper on "Ghosts up to Date," in the current number of "Blackwood's Magazine." Mr. Lang talks in that airy way which is perhaps best suited for his purpose. He begins by saying that there is not much use in trying to answer the question, "Do you believe in ghosts?" until the word "ghost" is itself defined. This leads to an instructive series of paragraphs in which "ghosts" are shown to be different for different people, from the very material ghost of the old-fashioned story books up to the hallucinations of the Psychological Research Society.

What Mr. Lang insists on most is the uniformity of the phenomena:—

In other provinces of the abnormal, such as spirit-rappings, and noisy hauntings, the early phenomena, since 856 (when a rapping goblin disturbed a convent, as we read in the Chronicles of Richard of Fulda), have been very much akin to modern "spiritualistic manifestations." This uniformity is, indeed, at once monotonous and interesting, proving either the reality of strange occurrences, or unanimity in imposture or in imagination. All this agreement of evidence—in fact, all the evidence—is habitually neglected by the sceptic, who pronounces an opinion in complete ignorance of the subject. It is by no means necessary that everyone should study the topic; but an opinion founded on confessed and contemptuous nescience is of no more value as regards apparitions than as regards chemistry or Biblical criticism.

This is good argument, and puts one aspect of the case in a very clear and concise form. And Mr. Lang goes on to say what twenty years ago would have been held almost as a social sin, that "even common-sense may err, when it pronounces a verdict based on ignorance." As to the appearances coinciding with death and other crises, Mr. Lang says they are too numerous to be fortuitous.

Telepathy, it is argued, does not cover the whole ground; dogs and horses see ghosts *before* the man or woman suspects the presence of anything unusual. This disposes of the notion that the horse becomes frightened in sympathy with its master's fear. The thing required to prove that a ghost is a real *bonâ fide* ghost is that it should while visible do something which only an embodied entity is supposed to be able to do:—

Hallucinations (which are all in one's eye) cannot draw curtains, or open doors, or pick up books, or tuck in bed-

clothes, or cause thumps—not real thumps, hallucinatory thumps are different. Consequently, if the stories are true, *some apparitions are ghosts*, real objective entities, filling space. The senses of a hallucinated person may be deceived as to touch, and as to feeling the breath of a phantasm (a likely story), as well as in sight and hearing. But a visible ghost which produces changes in the visible world cannot be a hallucination. On the other hand, a Dr. Binns, quoted by Mr. Charles Beecher, tells us of "a gentleman who, in a dream, pushed against a door in a distant house, so that those in the room were scarcely able to resist the pressure." Now, if this rather staggering anecdote be true, the spirit of a living man, being able to affect matter, is also, so to speak, material, and is an actual entity, an astral body.

On the whole Mr. Lang concludes that "if the evidence is worth anything there are real objective ghosts, and there are also telepathic hallucinations." Referring to Mr. Podmore's theories, Mr. Lang says:—

Mr. Podmore takes the guilt off the spectral gingerbread in a very ruthless manner. For example, a lady rents a house. She is at once disturbed by footsteps in her room and on the stairs, by heavy thumps, and all the regular noises. "Rats, or wind, or some other real noise," says the philosopher. Then she sees a pale woman in black; then she hears of a recent suicide in the house. Then she leaves. The phantasm, we are asked to believe, is a hallucination suggested by the noises. A year later some ladies with children take the house; they know nothing of the late tenant. They instantly hear moans, voices crying, "Oh, do forgive me!" thumps, trappings, heavy boxes rolled about. They see "dreadful white faces," a man with freckles, a figure in brown, their beds are moved, "a beautiful hand" is visible—in fact, they have "manifestations" till they leave the house, after finding that the police can do nothing. And all this is caused, on Mr. Podmore's theory, by the earlier tenant, at a distance, thinking over the bad times she has had.

This puts the Podmorian philosophy very neatly.

M. Alfred Erny, writing from Paris, wishes to know what ground there is for certain remarks made in "LIGHT" of December 16th, in which the region just outside this state of existence is said to be not altogether perfect, seeing that many people think there can be nothing worse than this earth. Retort might easily be made by asking for the reasons which support this last supposition. Surely, if evil be confined to this earth only, we can eradicate it by comparatively simple means; but does not the experience of everyone who has the smallest insight into the world beyond tell him that the powers which urge him to do wrong are always about him? What else is the meaning of the word "temptation"? Who are the tempters? To live in the belief that all must be better when the change comes is as disastrous as to live without any faith in a future life at all. To the spiritual man there is a fight always going on, and with whom does the fighting take place, if not with the unseen adversaries?

The "St. James's Gazette" for December 30th has the following:—

The London Thirteen Club is to hold its New Year's Dinner on January 13th. Mr. W. H. Blanch, of Camberwell, who has

been elected president of the club for 1894, is the original promoter of an organised protest against popular superstition which led to the formation of the Thirteen Club some four years ago. Mr. Harry Furniss, one of the honorary members of the club, will preside at this dinner, which is announced to take place at the Holborn Restaurant and in Room No. 13. The members and their friends will occupy thirteen tables, with thirteen at each table. Peacock feathers will abound, whilst the knives and forks will be crossed, and any quantity of salt will be spilt. During the evening the toastmaster, instead of informing the assembled company that the chairman will be happy to take wine with them, will vary this stereotyped declaration by announcing that the chairman will be happy to spill salt with them. The club salt-cellars, it is stated, are coffin-shaped, while the "dim religious light" obtainable from skull-shaped lamps will light up the banqueting hall, before entering which the company will pass under the club ladder.

This is very amusing, very strong-minded, and very full of common-sense, without any doubt. But what do these people suppose they will do by it all? They may succeed where there has been no belief in these omens in fortifying the unbelievers in their lack of faith, but will they affect those to whom all these things are significant? As was pointed out recently in "LIGHT," omens are only omens according as they are believed in. Friday, which is an unlucky day for some, is a lucky day for others. The convenience which attaches to sailing on Friday has done away with the "superstition" in the case of certain lines of ocean-going steamers. But if Friday is an unlucky day for a particular individual, he won't sail by such a line if he can help it.

### IMMORTALITY.

We extract the following from an article in the "Religio-Philosophical Journal":—

A friend asks: "What, in your opinion, is the strongest proof of the immortality of the soul? On what ground can one affirm the most reasonably the probability that the life commenced here will endure for ever?"

Thinkers will answer this question from different points of view. There are those who, not distinguishing between future life and immortality, will say that the manifestation of those that have passed to spirit-life is the strongest proof of immortality, but, as we pointed out in an article some weeks ago, the fact of continuance after physical dissolution does not prove that continuance will be for ever. There are those who hold that the strongest proof of immortality of the soul is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are people who still believe that He rose bodily, "the firstfruits of them that slept," and that His resurrection was the promise of the resurrection and immortality of every human being; but the belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus depends upon narratives, the genuineness and authenticity of which have been questioned by some of the greatest scholars of the world, and have been discredited by many. The view held by more rationalised Christians that Jesus rose spiritually and not physically is certainly more in harmony with the conception of the essential spiritual nature of man; but there are multitudes who cannot be satisfied of the immortal life with no other basis than that of the alleged physical or spiritual resurrection of a being who lived nearly two thousand years ago, in an age of general superstition, when the scientific spirit and method were scarcely known, and when similar miraculous stories were related of many personages.

Our reply to the question the friend asks is this: that the doctrine of the immortality of man finds its strongest warrant and support in the fact that the universe is a cosmos, that there has been a gradual development and improvement of conditions through millions of years, that there are indications that the universe at some time in the remote future will return to the elements and that all evidences of progress, so far as they will be presented by the material globe itself, will be obliterated; that, therefore, if there is not something permanent, as the result of all these millions of years of progressive development, then the struggle through centuries and æons, with all the suffering it has involved, would seem to be utterly without meaning.

### HOW IT IS DONE.

We do not know whether the "Freethinker" has much of a circulation, but we suppose some people do read it, and, after the manner of their kind who patronise such papers, show their freedom of thought by reading nothing else. Hence such rubbish as this:—

Mr. A. Roterberg, an inventor of conjurers' tricks, says: "The spirit medium has a great advantage over the conjurer, for while the latter usually gives his performance before a large audience, with the glare of the footlights upon him, the medium has but a limited number of sitters, usually not more than one. Added to this is the fact that while the audience of the conjurer know that they are being deceived and are on the alert to discover the method, the sitter with the medium is open to conviction, and the ordinary individual is quite willing to be deceived, and gets mad when you tell him otherwise. If he believes in the phenomena of slate-writing, he goes to the so-called medium in a 'passive condition' that makes it all the more possible to gull him. If the investigator proves too sharp, the medium can fall back on 'inharmonious conditions.'"

When asked about Slade, and if he thought Professor Zöllner was deceived in his experiments, Mr. Roterberg remarked: "I do not hesitate to say that I could explain every trick Slade produced in the way of slate-writing that I ever heard of, and that each could be produced by trickery. Whether Slade used trickery or not, I do not say, but he had no need to call upon any other power. Slade was a remarkably quick and clever performer, and was very expert in the use of his feet. Those who know him say that he never wore socks on his toes, and during a séance slipped off his shoes, and had the use of his toes to perform many things while his hands were placed on the table."

Most of the Spiritist medium tricks, says Mr. Roterberg, are so simple that a regular conjurer would consider them beneath his notice.

"Slate-writing is done in different ways, but it involves sleight-of-hand, a knowledge of chemistry, and of a few simple laws of physics. The tricks that succeed best are the boldest ones. The more common method is by the use of prepared slates that are dexterously changed for the sitters. There are different ways of preparing the slates, but the same principle is involved—affinity of chemicals—the universal law of attraction between certain elements. Of course the desirable thing was to find a chemical that would appear and disappear as required. One method is by writing with a gold or quill pen in a solution made by dissolving pure zinc shavings in muriatic acid. The writing, when dry, will resemble writing done with a slate-pencil. The sitter is allowed to wash the slate, and when he is convinced it is perfectly clean the slate is put under the table, the sitter holds it by one hand and the medium with one of his, and in the due course of time the writing appears."

It would have been interesting to see Slade get that ring on to the table leg by using his toes, even without the socks. To the uninitiated, too, how well it all sounds—"a knowledge of chemistry, and of a few simple laws of physics." What, may one ask, is the simple law of physics which has made the "sound" of writing in a closed slate, one hand of the medium being held by the observer, and the other being under the slate, pressing "upwards" against a table in the full light of a lamp? Suppose we allow that the "muriatic acid and zinc shavings" did the writing in a language unknown to the medium, what simple physical law helped out the "sounds"? There are frauds, no doubt, and in the case of slate writing more, perhaps, than in any other phenomenon, but it is not all fraud, nor is it all explicable by the exhibition of pseudo-learned trash.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"QUESTOR VITE."—Held over through press of matter.

SPEECH is but broken light upon the depth of the unspoken.—GEORGE ELIOT.

Two men please God—who serves Him with all his heart because he knows Him, who seeks Him with all his heart because he knows Him not.—PANIN.

## SAINTS AND MEDIUMS

By C. A. PARRY, B.A.

## V. ST. FRANCESCA OF ROME.\*

We now approach the record of a singularly beautiful life, cast in one of the most troubled epochs that history makes known to us. Francesca, daughter of Paul Bussa, was born in Rome in 1384, in the papacy of Urban VI. Both her parents had connections among the powerful aristocratic families of Rome; thus, both by birth and by her marriage with a noble eminent both by family and fortune, she belonged to the higher strata of society.

Young Francesca showed her vocation for the religious life at an almost incredibly early age. Her mother was a very devout woman; and the child's only pleasure seemed to be to accompany her in her exercises, or to steal away into solitude to pray or read religious books or repeat hymns. "At six years," we are told, "the practices of the saints were already familiar to her. She had left off eating meat, eggs, or sweets of any sort, and lived on vegetables and bread. The necessity of eating at all seemed irksome to her, and she drank nothing but water." This precocious piety, which strikes an English mind as astonishing and revoltingly unnatural, was much less strange in an age when religion filled and absorbed daily life in a way wholly unknown, and almost inconceivable, to nineteenth-century Protestants, and when the tendency to religious observances became almost an instinct. It is impossible that the deep meaning underlying asceticism could have entered the mind of so young a child; but here, as throughout her life, Francesca appears to us as one wholly guided by a higher will, the true nature of which became clear to her later on.

At the age of twelve she was married to a wealthy young noble, Lorenzo Ponziano. She had already decided to become a nun; and she referred the matter to her confessor, Antonio Savello, who urged her to consent, representing that this surrender of her dearest desire for the highest life she could conceive was itself an act of sacrifice whose merit in the eyes of God would be proportioned to its difficulty. After a hard struggle with herself, she yielded to her parents' wishes. In her new home, the young bride found a helpful friend in Vanozza, the wife of an elder brother of Lorenzo, who shared her devout inclinations. She continued faithful to all her former habits of piety, and attended Communion with such devotion "that all who saw her at the altar, absorbed in adoration, foresaw that God would ere long bestow extraordinary graces on her soul." Meanwhile, she fulfilled the necessary duties of her station, and sought only to conceal the austerity of her life. So singular a character in one so young could not, however, escape censorious tongues, and there were plenty of friends of the family, no doubt, who did what they could to make Francesca's life bitter for her, and to persuade her husband to put a stop to her eccentricities. But meanwhile Lorenzo had studied his young wife, and come to his own conclusions. "She was much too precious to him, too perfect in his sight, her whole life bore too visibly the stamp of God's dealings with her, for him to dream of interfering with the course she had taken." On the contrary, he regarded her with an affectionate respect which all shared who knew her intimately.

The happiness of the Ponziano family was interrupted by a sudden and dangerous illness of our saint. No remedies gave her any relief; she was unable to retain any nourishment and her strength daily declined. But when on the verge of death, we are told, she recovered in a sudden and miraculous manner. "It was the eve of the festival of St. Alexis—that noble Roman penitent—who passed so many years at the threshold of his own palace, unpitied, unrecognised by his own relations, who went in and out and stopped not to question the silent, lonely, patient beggar, who lay there with his face hid in a poor cloak, finding peace in the midst of bitterness."

The Ponziani had all withdrawn to rest for a few hours; the women who attended on the dying Francesca had fallen asleep. She was lying notionless, after sharp suffering. The whole city was wrapt in slumber; not a sound marred the stillness of the hour—that stillness so trying to those who watch and suffer. Suddenly on the darkness of the room a light broke, bright as day. In the midst stood a radiant figure, majestic in form and gracious in countenance. He wore a pilgrim's robe, but it

shone like burnished gold. Drawing near the bed, he said: "I am Alexis, and am sent from God to inquire of thee if thou chooseth to be healed?" Thrice he repeated the words; then the dying one faintly murmured: "I have no choice but the good pleasure of God. Be it done unto me according to His will. For myself, I would prefer to die and for my soul to fly to Him at once; but I accept all at His hands, be it life, be it death." "Life, then, it is to be; for He chooses thou shalt remain in the world to glorify His name." With these words he spread his mantle over Francesca and disappeared, leaving her perfectly recovered.

"Confounded at this extraordinary favour, Francesca rose in haste and, prostrate on the floor, made a silent, fervent thanksgiving; then, without awaking her nurses, slipped out and went to the bedside of her friend and sister. Putting her arm round her neck and her cheek against hers, she exclaimed:—'*Vanozza cara! Vanozza mia!*' The bewildered Vanozza, suddenly waked, could not believe her senses. Then Francesca, sitting on her bed, related her vision and instantaneous recovery, and, as the light was beginning to break into the room, she added eagerly: 'The day is come; let us not delay a moment but haste with me to Santa Maria Nuova and then to the church of St. Alexis. I must venerate his relics and return him my thanks before others learn what God has done for me.'

Francesca's family received her back as one risen from the dead, and marked henceforward with the miraculous stamp of sanctity; and for herself, her illness and recovery seem to have brought about a deepening of her spiritual life, and, as has been noticed in the cases of several mediums, a marked unfoldment of the psychic faculty. "From this time forward," we are told, "Francesca avoided all unnecessary conversations, and became habitually silent, though there was no moroseness in this silence. Vanozza inquired one day what was the reason of this, and she answered: 'God expects more of us than heretofore'; and then she proposed a still stricter mode of life than they had yet adopted. Vanozza willingly assented, and they agreed to give up all useless amusements, fashionable drives and diversions, and to devote to prayer and good works the hours thus withdrawn from the service of the world." "They arranged for themselves a place of retreat, whither they could withdraw to pray at any hour of the day or night. This was not easy in a palace inhabited by a large family and numerous servants; but in a sort of cave at an end of the garden, and in a little unoccupied garret, they established two oratories and furnished them with objects of devotion and instruments of penance. These two little cells became their comfort and delight; whenever household duties or their religious observances out of doors left them liberty, they would retire to them. At night, they often spent whole hours in prayer in the upper chamber, and the first dawn often found them at their orisons. The hours still unemployed were devoted to works of charity. Almost every day they went to the hospital of San Spirito and nursed the sick with kindest attention." "Francesca was at this time very anxious to lay aside the insignia of wealth and rank and to dress as simply as the poor she so loved; but her director Antonio Savello negatived this, fearing it would annoy her husband or might savour of affectation. Their fasts and abstinences became more rigid than ever; but were carried on with such simplicity and absence of display that the very persons who habitually took their meals with them scarcely remarked their mortifications. Disciplines and other bodily penances of a very severe nature were by this time habitual to Francesca, and she persevered in them to the end of her life." Such a course of life has perils and hardships of its own, quite apart from the weaknesses of the flesh or the sneers of men: namely, the revelation of the powers that work for evil in the world beyond; not the "malice of Satan," but the host of men-created demons from our sorrowful planet of expiation; a "Power of Darkness" whose reality will not be denied by any one whose spiritual perceptions have been opened. Here, of course, we find it attributed to the old orthodox Devil who, chafing especially at seeing that several noble ladies of Rome were beginning to emulate the virtues of our saint, thought fit to apply (much overworked as he must otherwise have been) for a special permit to torment Francesca.

"He was allowed to throw temptations in her way, to cause her strange suffering, to persecute her by fearful manifestations of his visible presence, to haunt her under various shapes, some seductive, others repulsive and terrific; but he was not permitted to deceive or injure the faithful servant of God, who for every trial of the sort received some divine compensation, for

\* "Life of St. Frances of Rome." By LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON. (London: Burns and Oates.)

every vision of diabolical horror was allowed a glimpse into the world of glory; and to whom at a later period was appointed a heavenly guardian to defend her against the violence of her infernal foe."

"The first time he appeared to her in visible form he was under the guise of an old hermit; his intention was, by some artful words, to inspire Francesca with aversion for that hidden life which she practised so zealously in the midst of the world. He was shown into a large room, where the family was assembled. No sooner had Francesca set her eyes on him than she was supernaturally enlightened as to his character; and, suddenly changing colour, she rose and left the room. Vanozza followed in alarm, and found her in the oratory, kneeling before the crucifix and as pale as death. She asked the cause of her emotion; Francesca simply desired her to return and request Lorenzo to dismiss the hermit. As soon as he had departed, she re-appeared, as serene as usual; and to no one but her confessor did she mention the circumstance. Yet it was a most awful moment, that first initiation into the supernatural world, that first contact with the powers of darkness, that opening of the visible war between her and the great enemy. No wonder she was habitually silent; her soul must have lived in very close communion with the invisible world, and the presence of God must have been realised in an extraordinary degree by one whose spiritual discernment was so miraculously keen. . . ."

"One day Vanozza and she were in their garden oratory and conversing on the life the early fathers were wont to lead in the deserts, and of the happiness of thus living exclusively for communion with God, away from the distracting cares of the world. They went on picturing the manner in which they would have divided their time under similar circumstances, and together made out a complete rule of life. Vanozza, absorbed in the subject, exclaimed: 'But what should we have to eat, sister?' Francesca replied: 'We should search for fruits in the desert; and God could surely not let us seek in vain.' As she spoke they rose to go indoors, when from a tree which grew out of a ruined wall there fell at her feet a ripe quince of the largest size, and another such was lying in Vanozza's path. The sisters looked at each other in silent astonishment; for it was April, and nothing but a miracle could have brought these apples to maturity at this unwonted season. The fruits were divided among the family, who wondered at the marvels that seemed continually to attend the steps of Francesca. She was profoundly grateful for such favours, but probably marvelled less than others at their occurrence. The simplicity of her faith, her total abstraction from worldly thoughts, her continual study of the Scriptures and the lives of the saints, must have familiarised her mind with such ideas.

"About this time also a supernatural favour of the most extraordinary nature was vouchsafed to Francesca. Her guardian angel, who was one day to accompany her, not by an invisible presence only, as in the case of all Christians, but, by a rare privilege, in a form always visible to her spiritual sight, now began to reveal himself to her by the most watchful observance of her conduct. At all times and places, by day and night, her slightest faults were noticed and punished by this still invisible but now evidently present monitor. At the least imperfection in her conduct, before she had time to accuse and condemn herself, she felt the blow of a mysterious hand, the warning of an ever-attentive guardian; and the sound of that mysterious chastisement was audible to others also. Great was the astonishment of those who could thus discern something of God's dealings with this chosen soul. Once, when through human respect she had abstained from interrupting a very frivolous and useless conversation, the blow inflicted was so severe that she bore the mark of it for several days.

"Such a rapid advance in holiness was the result of this supernatural tuition that Satan now attempted to seduce her by the wildest of his artifices, his favourite sin, 'the pride that apes humility.' So many miracles wrought in her favour, such strange revelations of God's peculiar love for her soul, awakened in Francesca's mind, or rather the devil suggested, the thought that it might be better to conceal them from her director, or at least some of them; accordingly, at her next confession, she refrained from mentioning the signal grace that had been vouchsafed her. At the very instant, she was thrown prostrate on the ground, and recognised the hand of her heavenly monitor, who warned her thus of the grievous error into which she was falling. With intense contrition she confessed the false humility which had beguiled her into a dangerous reserve, revealed to him the whole of God's dealings with her soul,

and explained what had just taken place. Don Antonio heard her with astonishment and gratitude, and said: 'You have just escaped a great danger, my daughter. By your mistaken silence you were complying with the suggestions of Satan, who, under the semblance of humility, sought to awaken in you a secret pride. You would have been led by degrees to overestimate these supernatural favours, to deem them not merely means of grace, but rewards due to your merits; to despise those to whom God does not grant them, and to give yourself up to extravagant and unauthorised austerities in order to secure their continuance and to distinguish yourself in your own and others' sight. I should have forbidden you to practise them; you would have been tempted to renounce my guidance, to take one confessor after another till you found one weak or blind enough to approve your self-will; and then the arch-enemy would have made you the prey of his delusions, till at last you might have fallen from one error into another and made shipwreck of your faith. Such has been the downward course of many a soul that has begun by yielding to a false humility, the offspring of pride, and has ended in sin and perdition.'"

### THE SADNESS OF DEVELOPMENT.

In the "Humanitarian" for January—a very good number—Sir James Crichton Browne deals with "Biology and Ethics," in a paper which was originally read by him at Sheffield. Sir James begins by showing how the medical profession is fighting against the "survival of the fittest" in the old sense of the expression, and in some degree helping towards the deterioration of the species. "Great numbers of weakly infants, who would formerly have perished in their infancy, are now reared to a weakly maturity and enabled to propagate their weakness, whilst they take part in the life battle on terms made unduly favourable to them by the commiseration that their weakness demands," and, says Sir James, "this fact ought not to be lost sight of when we are congratulating ourselves on our greatly diminished death-rate." An observation of immense import, for, as is shown in the paper, neurotic affections are on the increase. A sound mind in a sound body means also a better vehicle for the spirit which guides that sound mind.

The writer goes on to treat of the moral development, out of which this care for others has grown, and shows how there is a much more widely spread pabulum of love and affection in the world than might be expected. "It is impossible to doubt that in the action of the walrus or tiger in desperately defending its young, even when wounded and suffering, and at the expense of its own life, there is an element of disinterested love." From that Sir James proceeds to the foundation of the family and the moral obligations which the family produces; and then he says this:—

The evolution of morality in all its stages is controlled by inducements and penalties which are called sanctions, and which are physical, social, legal, or religious in their nature, but which all appeal to one endowment of living beings, and that is sentiency. There is no good or evil in the unconscious cosmos, but in the evolution of living beings there arises—where, when, how, we know not, for beginnings and endings are alike hidden from us—sentiency, or the capability of feeling pleasure and pain. Some vague consciousness is perhaps co-extensive with life itself, but we can only speak with confidence of a psychical state like sentiency, when a central nervous system has been definitely established; but, whatever its beginning, sentiency, when established, becomes the steersman of future evolution.

Here, notwithstanding the ability and breadth of thought exhibited in the paper, we think the author has gone a little far. The assumption that the "cosmos" is unconscious is immediately followed by the assertion that "the evolution of living beings there arises," and "sentiency" is the result.

That is, the "conscious" is a result of the "unconscious;" we know *that*, even though the "when and how" are not known to us and the "beginnings and endings" are hidden from us." Also, is it not an assumption that

this "sentiency" always becomes the "steersman of the future evolution"? Moreover, who or what is it that hides these things from us?

But what has this "sentiency," which comes out of the "unconscious," done for us? Surely there can be no more dreadful picture of the present state of society than the following:—

Pessimism or pessimistic tendencies are widely diffused, and many thoughtful persons in these days, surveying the misery that exists under the sun, echo the opinion of Schopenhauer that it would have been much better if that luminary had never been able to evoke the phenomena of life on the earth. The old faiths have lost their hold. Life is no longer a probation, but an end in itself, and the passion for wealth possesses the poor human soul. Society is almost destitute of real gladness, but is permeated by ostentation and jealousy. Art is lugubrious, literature uninspiring, poetry neglected, enthusiasm discredited, and science, whilst adding largely to material possessions, has no spiritual consolation to offer. Little wonder, then, that melancholy abounds, and that *envie* is epidemic. The type of insanity has changed, and our asylums contain far fewer raving exuberant maniacs than they used to, but a far larger number of miserable melancholics; and outside our asylums, as general medical practitioners well know, there is an enormous amount of melancholy of a morbid nature, which falls short of actual insanity, and is perhaps capable of concealment from friends and acquaintances, but which embitters existence and converts its best fruits into dust and ashes. Phrenalgia or the neuralgia of the mind, hypochondriasis in its protean forms, and neurasthenia, with which dejection is so often associated, are widely disseminated and our finest intellects seem to be most prone to succumb to these. Suicides increase in numbers year by year portentously, and have risen in England and Wales from a rate of 65·2 per million living in the five years 1861-65 to a rate of 79·4 per million living in the five years 1886-90, the main increase having been in urban districts, where the mean annual rate is 81·6 per million, against 65·0 per million in rural districts. The consumption of anodynes or pain-killers of all kinds grows apace, and amongst anodynes we must include not only stimulants, narcotics, and neurotics, but many of the amusements in which we wallow, and the incessant locomotion and globe-trotting on which we expend so much time and money. Men plunge into dissipation or rush restlessly about in order to forget or alleviate the pangs of "the malady of thought."

Referring then to the speculations of Mr. Pearson, in which that able writer predicts that in the course of evolution we must come to a dead-levelism which is as bad as universal death, Sir James says:—"For my own part I cannot help hoping, seeing that history is full of surprises, that something will happen before his conjectures are fulfilled and we again become without form and void." "Something will happen," and what is that something? Is not this the new form of hoping for the coming of the Messiah? Perhaps so; for just at the close of the paper we are told that

Our work convinces us that man, to a large extent, controls his own destiny, and may, if he will, rise out of the prevailing pessimism and climb to heights of sentiency not yet attained. Playing a man's part we come to see that suffering is an accident and not the substance of life; that evil is a shadow, haunting certain portions of a pathway that is everywhere pervaded by a kindly light."

The Messiah is the development of man's spiritual nature, the climbing to heights of sentiency not yet attained. Yes, "something will happen" and this is the something. It is pleasant to find men like Sir James Crichton Browne taking up the cudgels to fight the pessimism that is ever brooding over us.

NOT only does every vision of God proceed from the same spiritual longing, but behind the varying visions some central thoughts appear. Thus, every thought of God supposes that He is above us in power, that we depend upon Him, and that, in some way, He can do us good. These three central universal thoughts may be mixed with baser matter, but there they are, from Juggernaut to Jesus, from Baal to Father, from Jehovah to "the Altogether Beautiful of the Universe"; and here we find the thought of the universal God.—JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

## THE ARTIST AND THE GHOST.

Sir Charles Isham sends the following:—

The account which appeared in "LIGHT" of December 23rd of the ghost seen by Mr. Reginald Easton, the noted miniature artist, and as reported in Frith's "Reminiscences," is correct so far as it goes, but the most important points have been omitted.

The following is the account as it was told me by Mr. Easton himself.

Menai Bridge, December 24th, 1893. C. E. ISHAM.

Mr. Easton was staying at Thurstaston Hall, Cheshire, in July, 1872, when he was awoke about three o'clock in the morning after his arrival by hearing and seeing what appeared to be a lady moving about the room. He told her she had made a mistake. After a little while she left, glancing at him as she passed. Mr. Easton mentioned this next day, when the owner, Mr. Glyn, apologised for having inadvertently given him the room, as in that month a figure answering to his description had been frequently seen there, but his room should be changed. Mr. Easton, with great credit to himself, begged to be allowed to remain where he was, in hopes of having further opportunity to observe more leisurely a phenomenon to him as new as it was interesting. His excellent intention was rewarded. He remained there for the next six nights, when the same form, on each morning, at about the same hour appeared to emerge from towards the door, which Mr. E. had secured by lock. The figure remained a quarter of an hour or more, during which time Mr. E. availed himself of the opportunity given by the morning light of making a water colour drawing of six or seven inches on a rough bit of paper for which he has been offered £50. The figure appeared as if having a desperate struggle; it did not take much notice of the artist, who also avoided touching it. The room and old window are accurately drawn; also the foot of the bed, which conceals the lower portion of the figure, is seen in front. The mouth is represented open, but was not always so seen. The whole has a most dreadful appearance. Cabinet photos are, or were, to be had of Messrs. Debenham, 158, Regent-street; price 2s. 6d.

The owner of the house partially revealed a sad story of a member of the family (I believe she was called the wicked Mrs. Leigh) who died in the room in 1792, after having confessed to the murder of the child heir, through which she obtained possession of the property and ruined it. The room is now closed up, and the house has been let. The form had been seen by fifty or sixty persons, and as none of the servants would enter the room during Mr. Easton's visit it was necessary to secure the services of a person in the neighbourhood to make the bed.

I submitted the above account to Mr. Easton for correction. The following is his reply:—

35, Ledbury-road, Bayswater.

DEAR SIR CHARLES,—I think your written account very good, but you have forgotten to name that immediately one of the family looked at my drawing she exclaimed: "If you had copied the features from the original picture in one of the other houses it could not have been more like." I painted the drawing principally while the apparition was passing before me.—Believe me to be, yours faithfully, REGINALD EASTON.

P.S.—Mr. E. died in 1892, aged 85.

## A WARSAW SPIRITUALIST SENSATION.

The following is going the round of the Press:—

A singular "spiritualistic" manifestation is reported from Warsaw. A medium named Palladino gets some one to tie him to a chair in a lighted room, and is instantly lifted by an unseen agency on to a table. A professor of Warsaw University, feeling incredulous, asked to be admitted to the séance, in order that he might, if possible, convict the performer of trickery. A performance was arranged, at which the proceedings began with a dark séance. All of a sudden, as the professor sat in eager expectation, he received a terrific blow on the nose. Covered with blood, he was helped into a cab and taken home. The matter is expected to be heard of again in the law courts.

THE dominions which the spirit conquers for itself among unrealities become a thousand times more real than the earth whereon they stamp their feet, saying, "This is solid and substantial; this may be called a fact."—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

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

## Light:

EDITED BY "M. A., LOND."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6th, 1894.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, London, W.C. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, London, W.C., and not to the Editor.

1894.

Last week we looked back to find what hope there was for the future. This week we look forward in anticipation of what that hope may bring.

Never, perhaps, in recent times has the general outlook been more gloomy, that is, if one pierces a little below the surface. The attitude of all men, except such as know nothing beyond their own selfish gratification, is one of painful expectancy. On the Exchange, in the Senate, in the pulpit, all is sadness—all is apprehension. There is a prevalent feeling that the old landmarks are disappearing and that the road is no longer plotted out. The conventional systems which have grown out of experience are beginning to be no longer of any account, and new systems of conduct are not at present clearly defined, if even they exist at all. Men are thinking more broadly, certainly, but more indefinitely. The world is crying out in its hunger for food, and it is given a syllabub, when it is not presented with the ashes of a dead superstition. The crisis is serious, for it is real.

Nor are the causes difficult to discover. The spiritual part of man's nature has been ignored. The feeble thing which has done duty for religion has failed, founded as it was upon false assumptions, and having failed, men know not where to turn for hope. Science tells them that everything must come to a dead level of hopeless mediocrity, where aspirations cannot exist because aspirations will not be wanted, and that nothing can exist which is not wanted. And the Churches try to balance this with visionary beliefs in unsubstantial creeds. In the world there is no hope, and the rest is a dream.

Here, then, comes in the chance of those who know that there is a life beyond, a life dependent on this, and that actions are not to be measured by their apparent and unreal effects, but by their unseen and real results. We know that this life, if led properly—if its cares, its troubles, its pains, its joys, are rightly appreciated, has no ultimate end in a pitiless mediocrity, but in a great increase of the happiness which comes to those who understand; for the increase of permanent good is that which is brought about by right action, and this is a very different thing from the joylessness of a mechanical and hopeless evolution.

The world, however, does not see this. It—where it has any notion at all beyond the general feeling of prevalent discomfort—has still a vague belief in a hazy heaven, and, perhaps through its intellectual inertia as much as through anything else, it refuses to accept any proof of a clearer and more reasonable state of matters. That this hazy heaven is a thing of codices and collated manuscripts is not within its ken. Science, which is called in at every moment for all other purposes, is ignored when it might be asked to demonstrate the existence of a state which is not this.

Hence there is a wide field of work for the coming year. Not, perhaps, in the way of proselytising, but in the quiet demonstration wherever it is possible that there

is reasonable ground for anticipating something which is not of the vague nature usually accepted; that the shadows through which men are passing are there because they cannot see the realities which produce these shadows but that if they gave half the thought they give to the clearing away of the difficulties they seem to encounter to the investigation of the proofs, in their abundance, of the existence of another world which impinges on this, these difficulties would be seen as the things they really are.

It is too much to hope that all this will be accomplished in this year of grace 1894, but there, perhaps, has never been a time when men's hearts have so failed them for fear, and so there never has been a time when they should be so glad to receive the knowledge that waits only for their acceptance.

### LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

We again remind our readers that Mr. Richard Harte has kindly consented to give an address to the members and friends of the Alliance, at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, at 7 o'clock on Monday evening next, on "The Proper Function of Spiritualism."

### CONVERSAZIONE.

A Conversazione of the members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held on Monday evening, January 22nd, in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, Regent-street, when Mr. F. W. H. Myers will read, and offer some remarks upon, an unpublished manuscript by Mr. W. Stainton Moses, on "The Identity of Spirit." No ticket will admit more than one person, whether member or visitor; and in the case of visitors the ticket must bear the name of the person using it, and also the name of the member by whom he is introduced.

### A SHORT WAY WITH THE GHOSTS.

The "Literary Digest" gives a piece of translation from "Die Flamme" of Berlin, which is very amusing. It would appear that even in Berlin there are some people whose information is curiously scanty. Some of the passages are very droll:—

Superstition holds an all-powerful sway over a large part of the human race, and ghosts, uncanny apparitions, are regarded as realities, especially by children and those who never die—the fools.

The country people take especially good care that the belief in ghosts shall not vanish. They tell of the appearance of the dead, and even the most courageous are frightened at the howling of the winds, the cry of a bird, or the uncertain shadows of the moon. Although we may laugh at this fear, because we know that no ghost ever was proof against a thorough investigation, we quite understand it. The churchyard explains it all—the churchyard, with its uncanny solitude, its unsavoury contents; and it is natural for the ignorant to believe that the dead come forth from their graves.

Those whom we once saw in the beauty of vigorous life are here given over to a mode of destruction which causes indefinable horror to the ignorant. As long as the body is slowly wasting away in the ground, it will be difficult to overcome the fear of ghosts, for there is a belief that the body may assist the spirit or ghost in appearing to us.

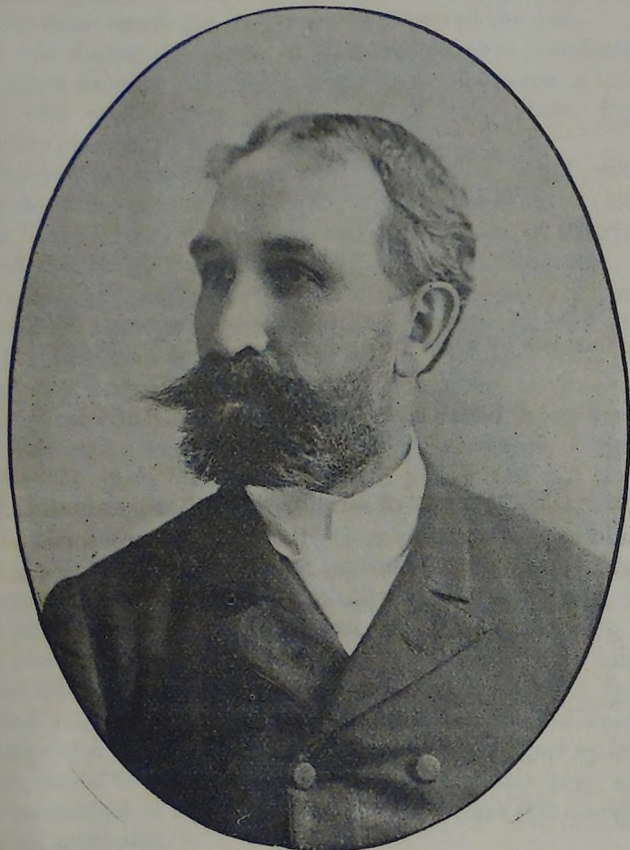
The bright and cheerful columbarium, with its urns open to view, is materially opposed to the churchyard. There is nothing to mystify us in the columbarium, nothing dark, nothing sinister. Those pure ashes do, indeed, speak to us of the shortness of life, but not accompanied by those horrors which are associated with decomposition in the grave. We may imagine hundreds of thousands of urns around us, containing the last unchanged and unchangeable vestiges of our departed friends; these artistic vessels cannot be made to force horrid apparitions upon our imagination. Even the most ignorant understands that fire is purifying, and it will not be difficult to create the belief that everything wicked has been destroyed by the cleansing flame.

Superstitious persons are able to imagine an apparition of a horrid skeleton half clothed in flesh, shrouded in a tattered, mouldering cloth, because this corresponds with the actual state and appearance of the body in the grave. But it is impossible to conjure up such an apparition from the little heap of ashes caused by fire.

"The bright and cheerful columbarium" is distinctly good.

## THE REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE.

A man like Minot J. Savage is more possible, and it may be more appreciated, in America than in England. Despite all the apparent socialistic and democratic tendencies of the day, we are essentially a conservative people, especially in matters of religion. If a man breaks away from the special sect in which he has been brought up and in whose services he has been ordained to minister, he may be admired for his courage, and some people may follow him into the wilderness, but he is nevertheless an "outsider." If he is daring enough to utter and teach heterodoxy while still remaining in the church—whatever that church may be—his honesty becomes a matter of doubt, and "loaves and fishes" are hinted at. In one or other of these categories Mr. Minot Savage would have found himself had he been an Englishman; but as he is an American, notwithstanding the fact of his daring to think for himself he is at the head of the liberal clergy in America, the legitimate successor and representative of Theodore Parker in that position.



REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE.

(From a photograph by G. Waldon Smith, Boston, Mass.)

Minot Savage was born at Norridgewock, in the State of Maine, in 1841, of good New England stock. After the usual preparation he entered the Congregational ministry. Here he soon found that his love of truth was incompatible with his belief in some of the tenets of orthodox Congregationalism; notably, the doctrine of everlasting punishment shocked his innate sense of justice. The struggle inevitable to a strong man ensued, the result being that he quitted Congregationalism and accepted a Unitarian pulpit. In 1874 we therefore find him presiding over the Church of the Unity in Boston.

A mind like that of Minot Savage, taking cognisance more or less of all the currents of thought circulating in the world, could not be content with pulpit utterances only, though those utterances themselves are full of suggestion often presented in terms of rare beauty and pathos; such a man must find work outside; and so it has been. Psychological research has naturally found in Mr. Savage a devoted worker. We have often given extracts from, and summaries of, some of the results of that work as they have appeared in the "Arena" and other American journals. Always maintaining an attitude of judicial suspense, there has never been absent a generous recognition of the work done by others with whose conclusions he may not agree. For

eighteen years these investigations have been carried on. The outcome of this protracted inquiry has recently been published under the title, "Psychics, Facts and Theories."

Mr. Savage was not one of the least important persons present at the Chicago Congress, a position to which he was entitled not only for his work, but because he had been one of the most earnest members of the old American Society for Psychological Research, now the American branch of the English society.

## THE HIGHER EGO, &amp;c.

Mr. Charles Strange has at last succeeded in doing what the Press, the pulpit, numberless committees, associations, and thousands of persons, severally and singly, have utterly failed to accomplish, during a forty-five years' ceaseless warfare directed against Spiritualism: namely, resolved it all into "suggestion," "telepathy," and such "assumption" as I, Emma Britten, have been guilty of, when I presumed to say that the uncounted millions of America, Australia, and Europe, including Kings, Princes, professors, lawyers, doctors, and every grade of life and class, from the highest to the lowest, of many lands, have been convinced of spiritual communion through every conceivable variety of test fact, rendered through both physical and psychical phenomena. How very much obliged these same countless millions ought to be to Mr. Strange! even though his superlatively wise explanations must resolve the aforesaid millions of so-called Spiritualists either into fools who did not know enough to prove what they believed or knaves who entered into a world-wide conspiracy to delude all nations.

Before Mr. Strange can consistently call for an expression of humanity's gratitude, however, for his marvellous unveiling, I must beg permission of the courteous Editor of "LIGHT" to add to my former "hopeless tangle of facts and deductions" a few corrections of statements on the part of my critic, which must be cleared up before humble I (for one) and deluded believers the world over, can recognise Mr. Charles Strange as their deliverer from what he denominates "the hopeless tangle of facts and deductions" called "Spiritualism":—

Mrs. Britten refers us to the evidence of some thirty or forty years ago, which, though it may have constituted what was understood as evidence at that period, is in the light of to-day absolutely worthless as possessing any evidential value, because since that time our knowledge and lines of thought have extended. We now know the possibilities of "telepathy" and "suggestion," which during the early days of Spiritualism were in one sense of the term unknown. Moreover, in those early days people were not so critical or exact in their methods as they are now, and being confronted by what was apparently an array of miraculous occurrences they at once jumped to the conclusion that their source was equally miraculous.

In referring to the evidence of thirty or forty years ago, I beg most distinctly to state, I did not forget the very "superior intelligence" which prevails at the present day, of which Mr. Strange is, in his own person, the distinguished representative; nor did I forget that I have yet to find a dozen persons of mind, sense, or reputation who under that "superior intelligence" of the present day have renounced their erroneous belief in Spiritualism. Besides this, I beg to add, and I am in a position to prove the fact by statistics, that, despite that same "superior intelligence," the acceptance of Spiritualism proper has been growing every day, and is growing still.

As to the assertion—I should say assumption—that in the early days of the movement people were not as critical or exact in their methods as they are now, and "jumped at conclusions," &c., &c., I simply, but emphatically, deny its truth, and can only excuse such an allegation on the ground that Mr. Strange has not deigned to read the publications of such antique writers as the Howitts, the Halls, Thomas Shorter, Benjamin Coleman, Stainton Moses, the "Dialectical Society's Reports," the early experiences of such men as Judge Edmonds, Professor Hare, and even my own ponderous volumes of "Modern American Spiritualism" and "Nineteenth Century Miracles," to say nothing of the less dark-ages literature of Robert Dale Owen, H. Junor Browne, Epes Sargent, Alfred Russel Wallace, Crookes, and about five or six hundred different Spiritual papers, published in different languages and different countries of the earth week by week. To descend from generalities, however, and the thousands of volumes and periodicals in which the nature of the tests given and the modes of investigation practised are minutely

described, I assert, and can summon hosts of witnesses to prove, that the modes of early investigation into alleged spiritual communications were far more searching, critical, and generally crucial than they are now. In the early days there was not the slightest tendency to believe in spirit communion; on the contrary, the generality of the investigators approached the subject, as I did myself, for the express purpose of exposing what seemed to a materialistic and priest-ridden age a most barefaced and impious system of frauds, put forth under the name of Spiritualism. I have sat again and yet again with Judge Edmonds, and none who ever witnessed his keen, crucial methods of examining every physical movement or sound, and testing every communication, would any longer marvel to find that grand jurist renouncing fortune and station as Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States sooner than deny the absolutely proven fact of spirit communion. I myself was born a medium; have seen what the superstitious called "ghosts" and "visions," and heard voices of invisible people from infancy—yet in the crass ignorance in which Theology kept the popular mind, I could, and did, believe in demons and spectres, &c., &c., but repudiated the idea of Spiritualism as taught and practised by Spiritualists.

Entering upon the investigation only to expose it, I was equally animated by antagonism and scepticism, and I soon found my associates investigating after a fashion utterly unknown in these highly enlightened days. Physical mediums were bound and fettered beyond the possibility of deception. Tests through rapping, writing, and all sorts of methods were repudiated, unless proven by subsequent examinations. Prophecies of future events were given, which invariably came true. Facts were noted, unknown to all present; descriptions of spirits, visions, &c., were given by strangers, often by children. Diseases were discovered among the sitters, and cured, by directions from Indian spirits. My own life, like that of many others, was saved by the spirits, who could communicate with us, again and again! Good Mr. Strange, and Psychical Researchers generally, I insist that the knowledge of the future—of distant events—and matters unknown to any of the sitters in spirit circles were given in the proportion of a hundred to one, in the early investigations, as compared with the careless, apathetic, and indifferent attempts at investigation of the present day. Mr. Strange says:—

Then we must not overlook the fact that it is an imperative necessity to make a distinction between facts and inferences, and also that that which to-day constitutes evidence may in the wider knowledge of to-morrow no longer be considered as such.

Again, Mrs. Britten speaks about "tests" such as "names, dates, and incidents utterly unknown to anyone present" (I presume Mrs. Britten means unknown to anyone present except the individual to whom these dates, &c., appealed as "tests"). Can the mention of mere facts under the conditions as stated above be held as a conclusive proof that the communicating intelligence is what it professes to be—viz., a spirit of the dead? I think not, for in the face of the evidence in favour of thought-transference and telepathy it rather points to these conclusions than otherwise.

To all this I say emphatically, No! Those may be, and too often are, the methods of this very enlightened decade; they were not so, I insist, and I can, and will, bring, if necessary, at least one thousand living witnesses to prove they were not our methods in the antique days of from thirty to forty years ago. I shrink painfully from offering personal testimony to that of which I write; but as I regard the statements of spirits concerning the life hereafter (statements utterly opposed to the theological teachings of the last thousand years) as the only hope of reducing the awful reign of crime and wrong that now prevails on earth, so, in deep and soul-felt anxiety and earnestness, I have searched the wide world over to try if these spiritual statements are to be relied on, only incidentally remarking that the spirits' descriptions of the life hereafter are in themselves a direct evidence that it is not the thought-transference, belief, or telepathy of one of the earlier theological or materialistic investigators.

I—who have received the same class of communications from separate sources all over the world and through thousands of others besides my own mediumship—venture to say in deep earnestness to merely careless, apathetic believers in the phenomena, or would-be scientific, carping critics, who try to refer those phenomena to human causes, that during the last two years I have been engaged in collecting from the most authentic sources the histories, lives, and fortunes of several

hundreds of the antique forty years ago investigators as well as those of the present day. In all these, the tests, proofs, and evidences, such at least as I have recorded after careful research, are far beyond "telepathy," "mind-reading," inference, or suggestion.

They are wonderful and thrilling, it is true, but multitudes of the witnesses are still living, and in such positions of reliability as even the great spiritual detective, Mr. Charles Strange, cannot discredit. With the slavish theological world or the materialistic portion of it, whose motto might well be, "What I don't know cannot be true," combined against us, our poor writers on Spiritualism have been obliged, at any sacrifice, to publish their own works. My present resources in this direction are utterly exhausted; consequently, it is unlikely in my waning lifetime that I can publish my wonderful and unanswerable "Spiritualists' Encyclopædia" of undeniable fact and testimony to this cold, apathetic age. But I shall leave it to another and a better generation, and therein will be found in characters of burning truth, with no initial names or veiled personalities, that many hundreds of the bravest, best, and well-known workers have been captured by the spirit world and compelled to go forth and do its bidding; that their lives have been saved, as

mine has, scores of times, by spirit guardianship, prophetic warnings, and wise counsels; that the accounts of the life hereafter are totally different to any that have been heretofore given; and in themselves are too new, strange, and incredible, to the ordinary class of believers or non-believers, ever to have originated in "suggestion," "telepathy," or easy credulity, from any of the recipients.

This "Encyclopædia" is, I know, one that no unprejudiced or common-sense readers will peruse without recognising that the power that sustained the poor human workers amidst trial, obloquy, temptation, and toil, was something more than mortal; that its vast consensus of proof proceeded from the source which it ever claimed for itself—namely, the spirits of the so-called dead, who are still alive, and in a higher and better state of existence, proving those conditions of life hereafter against which the anathema of the priest, the scorn of the Press, or the gabble about "higher Ego," "telepathy," &c., &c., falls harmless into disrepute.

It may be that some extracts from the above-named wonderful record I shall offer to the intelligent conductors of your able journal, as an offset against the trashy, schoolboy tales of fiction which fill up some of those papers which ought to be devoted to nobler purposes; meantime I conclude this long article, first, by alleging that the mightiest of all knowledge which man can receive is a correct and graphic account of whither he is bound hereafter, and how to prepare for it here; and this, I again insist, and by ten thousand witnesses can prove, is only to be truly attained through Spiritualism.



As a single representative case of the kind of test by which during, and all through, the last forty-five years, Spiritualists, all over the world, have been convinced, I quote the following case, well known to many still living witnesses, although related to me by the chief actor in the scene (the late Professor Robert Hare, of Philadelphia) many years ago. Dr. Hare investigated Spiritualism, like countless others, only for the purpose of exposing what he determined, on *a priori* grounds, to be profound humbug. After long months of searching and investigation he came to the conclusion that the phenomena testified to the discovery of a hitherto unknown force, whilst the intelligence received was all derived from mind, or thought-transference, now claimed as a modern discovery, and christened "telepathy."

To baffle this, the Professor invented a sort of tipping dial, the movements of which were actuated by physical mediums, whilst an alphabetical plate with a pointer moved by medium power was turned away from the side of the table where the medium sat, who had thus not the slightest power of directing the pointer to the letter, and who consequently never saw nor knew what the communications were that were spelt out. Thus, though it was the medium's power that influenced the dial, her mind could not control the word spelt, neither could the witnesses direct the force which moved the dial.

It was during the series of experiments thus conducted that a spirit claiming to be the Professor's first-born son, a little fellow who passed away at the age of two years, kept constantly pressing in with communications.

Although the communicator now insisted that he had grown to manhood, he continued to spell out his name as "Little Tarley"—the lisping child's rendering of his name of Charley, alleging that he gave this for the purposes of identification.

On a certain day when the dial was working bravely under the hand of a strong physical medium "Little Tarley" purported to communicate: "Well, 'Little Tarley,'" said the Professor, "if it be indeed you, and you seem to know so much, tell me what it is I carry in a certain parcel in my vest."

"You carry, wrapped up in faded yellow paper, father," spelt out the spirit, "a still more faded yellow lace veil taken from my dead face as I lay in my little coffin."

"Little Tarley," said the Professor mockingly, "you don't know much, I find; I don't carry anything of the sort." Then turning to the several persons sitting around the circle, the great scientist said, gravely: "You see, friends, the work of these pretended spirit communications when there is no mind to read from. In my vest I carry a little shoe; I took it from my dead child's foot, before the coffin was closed. For nearly a quarter of a century I have kept it carefully wrapped up in a drawer, sacred to my first-born, along with his little toys, and other mementoes of my lost darling; now see what this mocking so-called spirit says."

As he spoke he took from his vest a parcel, and unfolded one after the other a number of faded, yellow paper wrappings, until he came at last to an enclosure of a *yellow lace veil*, in a paper which the dead mother had inscribed as taken from her little one's dead face!

The Professor had mistaken the package, but the Spirit had not.

EMMA H. BRITTEN.

THE SPIRITUALISTS' INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.  
—Information and assistance given to inquirers into Spiritualism. Literature on the subject and list of members will be sent on receipt of stamped envelope by any of the following International Committee:—America, Mrs. M. R. Palmer, 3101, North Broad-street, Philadelphia; Australia, Mr. H. Junor Brown, "The Grand Hotel," Melbourne; France, P. G. Leymarie, 1, Rue Chabonais, Paris; Germany, E. Schlochauer, 1, Monbijou-place, Berlin, N.; Holland, F. W. H. Van Straaten, Apeldoorn, Middellaan, 682; India, Mr. T. Hatton, State Cotton Mills, Baroda; New Zealand, Mr. Graham, Huntley, Waikato; Norway, B. Torestonsen, Advocate, Christiania; Russia, Etienne Geispitz, Grande Belozerski, No. 7, Lod. 6, St. Petersburg; England, J. Allen, Hon. Sec., 13, Berkley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park, Essex; or, W. C. Robson, French correspondent, 166, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne.—The Manor Park branch will hold the following meetings at 13, Berkley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park:—Sundays, 11 a.m., for inquirers and students, and the last Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m., reception for inquirers. Also each Friday, at 9 p.m., prompt, for Spiritualists only, the study of Spiritualism. And at 1, Winifred-road, Manor Park, the first Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m., reception for inquirers. Also each Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m., inquirers' meeting.—J. A.

## MRS. BESANT'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.\*

This is a fascinating book, and though we recognise much of it as having already appeared in the "Weekly Sun," yet the charm is still there, and is even increased, so much better is it to tell a story in a continuous form than in the spasmodic paragraphs of a weekly journal. The journey from Evangelical orthodoxy through materialism to the new Theosophy is a strange one and its history has been admirably done.

Reference has already been made in "LIGHT" to certain passages in the autobiography, and to them we must refer our readers. The matter which concerns us most is the curious and very sudden step made by Mrs. Besant—not from agnosticism to Theosophy—the chasm which separates "not knowing" from "knowing" is not very wide—but from positive "unbelief" to "unchallenging belief." For this is what was done.

It is true that from 1886 onwards Mrs. Besant, being of an active nature, had noticed the current which was setting in the direction of the new psychology. She had, indeed, investigated Spiritualism and was not satisfied with the Spiritualistic hypothesis, and had finally convinced herself that there was some hidden thing, some hidden power, and resolved to seek until she found—yet the "conversion" was as startling as it was sudden.

The account of this change we give in Mrs. Besant's own words. It is to be understood that she had been asked by Mr. Stead to review "The Secret Doctrine" for him:—

Home I carried my burden and sat me down to read. As I turned over page after page the interest became absorbing; but how familiar it seemed; how my mind leapt forward to presage the conclusions; how natural it was, how coherent, how subtle, and yet how intelligible! I was dazzled, blinded by the light in which disjointed facts were seen as parts of a mighty whole, and all my puzzles, riddles, problems, seemed to disappear. The effect was partially illusory in one sense, in that they all had to be slowly unravelled later, the brain gradually assimilating that which the swift intuition had grasped as truth. But the light had been seen, and in that flash of illumination I knew that the weary search was over and the very Truth was found.

Now, this finding of the "very Truth" is of the exact nature of "conversion." In another form we meet with it constantly in religious tracts and biographies. Storm-tossed and weary, the excited sinner at last finds "peace," and henceforth knows that he too has found the "very truth," it may be in the materialistic creed of the conventicle, or it may be in the sensuous certainties of Catholicism. But henceforth there is no doubt, the "very truth" has been found. And the parallel goes on. Mrs. Besant met Madame Blavatsky as a result of her review of "The Secret Doctrine." There was some natural reluctance, of course, in leaving one "very truth" for another "very truth"; and so, breaking with her old friends, therefore, Mrs. Besant went again to Madame Blavatsky:—

H. P. Blavatsky looked at me piercingly for a moment. "Have you read the report about me of the Society for Psychical Research?" "No; I never heard of it so far as I know." "Go and read it, and if, after reading it, you come back—well." And nothing more would she say on the subject, but branched off to her experiences in many lands.

I borrowed a copy of the Report, read and re-read it. Quickly I saw how slender was the foundation on which the imposing structure was built; the continual assumptions on which conclusions were based; the incredible character of the allegations; and—most damning fact of all—the foul source from which the evidence was derived. Everything turned on the veracity of the Coulombs, and they were self-stamped as partners in the alleged frauds.

Here follows one of the most amazing passages ever written, and remember that it is written by a woman who had fought for years for the right of private judgment:—

Could I put such against the frank, fearless nature that I had caught a glimpse of, against the proud fiery truthfulness that shone at me from the clear blue eyes, honest and fearless as those of a noble child?

No reasoning here—simple surrender, that is all. But the account goes on:—

Was the writer of "The Secret Doctrine" this miserable impostor, this accomplice of tricksters, this foul and loathsome deceiver, this conjurer with trap-door and sliding panels? I laughed aloud at the absurdity and flung the Report aside with the righteous scorn of an honest nature that knew its own kin when it met them, and shrank from the foulness of a lie.

\* "Annie Besant." An Autobiography. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893.)

It is hardly necessary to say that Mrs. Besant immediately joined the Theosophical Society. H.P.B. soon afterwards put her hand on Mrs. Besant's head and said, "You are a noble woman. May Master bless you." This occurred on the 10th of May 1889.

Now, we have no desire to enter into the Coulomb controversy. It is the reasons given for Mrs. Besant's change of front that are so remarkable. There is a word sometimes used of late to describe an act of fascination where "fascinated" would not be strong enough, and that is "psychologised." Mrs. Besant was undoubtedly "psychologised" by H.P.B. and that was what was quite likely to happen. No one can read the delightful opening chapters of this autobiography without being struck by the spiritual sensitiveness developed in the child Annie. That sensitiveness never left the girl nor the woman, who was ready, notwithstanding all her apparent revolt from it, to accept authority the moment it was impressed on her by a will stronger than her own.

#### A CASE OF STIGMATISATION.

In connection with the comparison between saints and mediums and with reference to the stigmatisation of St. Francis, it is interesting to learn that there is at the present time a genuine example of this phenomenon in the person of Anna Henle, a girl twenty-two years of age, living at Aichstetten in Würtemberg. Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden went there on purpose to investigate the matter, and communicated the result of his interesting visit to the "Sphinx." Being introduced to the family by a friend, he was specially fortunate in being allowed opportunities of seeing and speaking to the girl undisturbed, and he found all that he had heard of her to be true, and the truth to be still more wonderful than anything that he had heard of her.

She was thirteen years old when she first fell into a state of ecstasy, speaking for three hours in a way she could not have learnt in the village school; she is the daughter of humble parents, her father being a baker and day labourer. She was only recalled to consciousness by the priest, who addressed her in Latin, whereupon she declared she had been fetched away by an angel, had been in Paradise, and Christ had spoken to her and through her. It was at that time foretold that after three years she would be stigmatised, and in 1887 accordingly this was fulfilled, as Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden heard at the time. Anna Henle lies now almost the whole day in a state of ecstasy, from eight in the morning till late in the afternoon, and on Fridays and holy days, when the ecstasy is intensified, till late in the evening, often till ten or eleven at night. Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden was taken to her room by her mother and their mutual friend, and found her alone, lying in bed. It was a Friday, and on that day she always lives through, in a supernatural manner, the whole Passion of Christ as it is described in the Gospels. It was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. From twelve o'clock to three she suffers all the death agony of a crucifixion; it was a very painful sight; from her gestures and from the "Words from the Cross," which she uttered, one could follow what was passing in her soul. Not till three o'clock, when she said "It is finished" and was at peace, did Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden notice how beautiful her face was. He took advantage of the short time of rest (representing the hanging dead upon the Cross) to look at the stigmata on Anna's feet. Both feet and hands were bandaged across with narrow strips of folded linen. The wounds on the feet were only on the top, not under the soles, whilst those on the hands were only on the palms. Some watery fluid and but little fresh blood had issued from the wounds, which, in the Doctor's opinion, would have long since festered had they been artificially made and kept open for years. Soon followed the "Descent from the Cross." Whilst Anna lay there perfectly still, stiff, almost cataleptic, three loud knocks were suddenly heard in the room apparently near the bed, as though somebody were knocking an iron nail out of a wooden beam with a heavy hammer. After this the body of the ecstatic moved a little again, and after another interval her body rolled over from side to side as though it were being swathed in a long cloth (such as an Eastern gravecloth) by persons unseen. Especially remarkable was the Communion, which followed at four o'clock, when she receives the Sacrament in a supernatural manner. "Being prepared for what was now to happen," says Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, "I had previously satisfied myself, with the help of a lamp, while Anna's mouth during the death agony was repeatedly wide open for long at a time, that it was

perfectly empty, both over and under the tongue, and I did not let her out of my sight afterwards. As she now opened her mouth in a convulsion, there suddenly appeared on her tongue a whitish mass which looked like a large wafer, about four centimetres in diameter, and bore the usual I.H.S. stamped upon it. This soon curled up, and, mixing with the saliva, became a lump. She held her mouth open, and after five to ten minutes the lump of wafer transformed itself before my eyes into a bleeding piece of flesh, out of which the blood flowed in such quantities that it partly streamed from the mouth and had to be staunched by her mother with cotton wool. The ecstasy was uninterrupted, only intensified, and reached its highest point when, after another five or ten minutes, she swallowed the piece of flesh whole with evident effort. Shortly after receiving the Sacrament, Anna raised herself in bed and said that Jesus was offering her the chalice, and that she was permitted to dip her finger tips in it. As she made this gesture, it began to drip from her fingers so that I quickly held my hand under them and caught this fluid. I convinced myself that it could not possibly be perspiration, both from the quantity and because her stigmatised hands were wrapped up in linen all but the tips of the fingers."

Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden speaks in the highest terms of the spirituality and beautiful character of the girl, and it is largely owing to the spiritual atmosphere which he felt pervading the place that his opinion of the remarkable occurrences is such a favourable one.

#### 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.]

##### An Explanation.

SIR,—It has been pointed out to me, by my excellent friend Mr. Edward Maitland, that a passage in my address published in last week's "LIGHT" may admit of misconstruction. The passage is the following:—

The "Thou God seest me" of the frightened worshipper is transformed into a "great cloud of witnesses."—"LIGHT," p. 622.

This, it is suggested, may be taken to mean that there is no God, He being superseded by the cloud of witnesses. It is, I hope, hardly necessary to say that that was not my meaning. What I wished to impress upon my audience was that the vague fear of an Omniscient but Anthropomorphic God was altered into the real knowledge that we are never alone. The existence of the Eternal Spirit of all things was not in question at all.

W. PAICE.

##### Astrology.

SIR,—The Zodiac is divided, arbitrarily I take it, into twelve equal signs or sections of 30deg. each, and each of these signs is said to affect or to govern certain parts of the earth. Again, the signs are distributed or allotted to the planets, but as there are more signs than planets some planets have two signs allotted to them. Will some of your readers kindly inform me—

(a) How the connection between the individual signs and the various parts of the earth said to be governed by them is ascertained; and (b) on what grounds the signs are allotted to the respective planets?

NEOPHYTE.

##### "An Alternative View of Re-incarnation."

SIR,—Under the above heading, in your issue of November 11th, there appears a very excellent article, and which to many advanced thinkers in our movement appears to be a very reasonable theory for the explanation of what many Theosophists (I am a Christo-, or Western, Theosophist) believe is literally a succession of retrogressive Re-incarnations, or an entire reversal of the ordinary course of nature. Spirit, soul, or intelligence when passing through its unfoldment or evolution at any epochs or stages has to clothe itself with matter in various forms and qualities at each protean stage, the material of every successive development being more refined or sublimated than the previous one, according to the digestive or assimilative apparatus of each form of being, mineral, vegetable, and animal. Minerals, although having no digestive apparatus, nevertheless do gradually change by chemical disintegration and affinity, which is, I think, analogous to digestive assimilation. Whether Re-incarnation be true or not, it appears to be very difficult of verification, and whether or not it is so makes very little difference to me, for it

would seem that each Ego (soul) recollects absolutely nothing of its existence, until it reaches the age of reason or intelligence.

The great thing that each one anxious to spread the truth of spirit intercourse should strive for is to convince people that there is post-mortem existence. This once accepted as scientifically demonstrated would give the Church a far more powerful lever with which to work on the minds of its members. Such workers and thinkers as "C.C.M." and Edward Maitland I greatly admire and respect, but in spite of all their erudite letters on Re-incarnation I fail to see that they have in any way proved their theory. I fully believe in the evolution of soul, spirit, or intelligence through the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human, kingdoms, thence onward through the new birth, death, through the spiritual or supermundane realms until it is lost to us in the infinitude of space. Spiritualists, Theosophists, and Occultists are much about the same; therefore let us sink petty differences and work with one aim to spread the glad tidings of immortality.

Cape Town. BERKS T. HUTCHINSON, D.D.S., L.D.S.

#### An Epidemic of Suicides.

SIR,—Evidently your readers do not intend to enter into controversy with an outsider. I will ask permission, therefore, simply to record the fact that after careful investigation of Clairaudience I consider that some of its forms are due to "psychic inter-action," and that no true progress can be made either in the practical treatment of mental diseases nor in that branch of Spiritualism investigated in Clairaudience until we have learned to differentiate subjective from objective causation. Meanwhile, I wish to endorse the claim made for the Theosophic Adepts, "that they have the power to send voices."

It constitutes a dangerous menace to our liberties and lives; this one fact. "Clairaudience a natural phenomenon," will compel medicine to take up the whole question of spirit entities. It otherwise bars the way to all real work in mental diseases.

J. BARKER SMITH, L.R.C.P. (Lond.)

#### "The Mystery of Ancient Egypt."

SIR,—While admiring the diligent research and ingenuity of Mr. W. Marsham Adams, to whose article under the above title you refer in the current issue of "LIGHT," I beg to point out what I cannot help regarding as the fundamental fallacy of that gentleman's position. It may appear somewhat startling, but is really a commonplace to students of Egyptology, to say that there is no such thing as a "Book of the Dead," *i.e.*, in the sense in which we speak of "The Bible," or "The Koran." The papyri which we call "Books of the Dead" differ in the widest manner as to their contents and method of arrangement. Chapters are omitted, inserted, and repeated as the fancy of the scribe and the wealth of the deceased dictate. It is convenient to class all these papyri together under the name "Book of the Dead," because they deal with the experiences of the deceased in his life in the "divine under-world," and are, in fact, intended to teach him how to pass through the perils of that world unscathed, and finally to dwell "in the presence of Osiris, like the followers of Horus, for ever." And, of course, any two copies will be almost sure to contain several identical chapters. But if there was no fixed number of chapters which a papyrus must contain, and no fixed order for those chapters, the work could not have had an organic unity, and if it had no organic unity, could not have been embodied in a definite series of chambers in the Great Pyramid.

But a more important question remains. What particular copy of the "Book of the Dead" is it with which the Great Pyramid is supposed to have such a wonderful correspondence? It is that known as the Papyrus of Turin; and a few words as to this copy will enable us to see more clearly the inherent weakness of Mr. Adams's argument. It happens to be the longest copy of the "Book of the Dead" known, consisting of the unusual number of 165 chapters. It is well preserved throughout, and is written in a clear hand—not by any means a common merit in papyri. These facts, together with a mistaken idea as to its extreme antiquity, caused it to receive the attention of the great Champollion and afterwards of Lepsius. The latter published a *fac simile* of it in 1842, just before starting on that famous expedition to Egypt to which we owe the twelve great volumes of the "Denkmäler." Being published, it naturally became for Egyptologists the standard copy. But was it so to the Egyptians? It is quite certain that it was not. It belongs to

the Saite recension, so named from the Saite or Twenty-sixth Dynasty (B.C. 666-527), and cannot be a day older than that dynasty, while, in all probability, it is much more recent. In this recension the order of the chapters was for the first time fixed, and many of those found in it do not occur at all in the earlier Theban recension.

It can, moreover, be shown from an examination of the Turin Papyrus itself that its chapters are not logically related to each other in the precise order in which they are written. Many chapters are mere repetitions of earlier ones, and even where they are not so the same idea is constantly repeated in different forms. The great subject of the "Book of the Dead" is the *per em hru*, or, *coming forth in the day*, *i.e.*, triumphing with the sun-god, Osiris or Ra. (That such is its meaning, and not "Way of Illumination," as Mr. Adams has it, could be amply demonstrated did space allow.) Now, in the first sixteen chapters, which are clearly marked off from the rest in the Turin copy, this process is complete; and further on we meet, on more than one occasion, with a "*per em hru* in one chapter." Again, the last three chapters are distinctly separated from the body of the work by being said to form a book "behind the *per em hru*." I must not take up your space by pursuing this question further. I have said enough to show that the Turin copy of the "Book of the Dead" is a compilation of chapters belonging to various periods of Egyptian history, and was not attempted to be put in order earlier than B.C. 666. And yet Mr. Adams exactly asks us to believe that the whole of this work, new and old, in the order in which it now stands, was "masonified" in the Great Pyramid of Khufu (B.C. 3733-3700)!

F. W. READ.

#### The "Higher Ego."

SIR,—Mr. Charles Strange in last week's issue seems to introduce logic chopping for the purpose of destruction rather than of the elucidation of truth. His theory, based upon the discovery of fresh ideas, which he illogically assumes will account for certain inconvenient results, may in psychology imply no relative connection to the phenomenal recordings of Mrs. Britten in your issue of December 9th. Scientific investigators proceed by observation and experiment. Induction with them cannot be assumption, but the necessary facts of consciousness and generalities which constitute exact science. Is Mr. Strange a medium himself? Has he in his hours of retirement listened to the "still small voice"? or been intromitted into association with ministering men and woman? If dogmatism and finality are excusable at all, the conditions indicated are really necessary, but let us even occupy the higher ground of Kant, who maintained that experience alone cannot account for all knowledge, "as there exist conditions, forms, categories, which are necessary that *experience itself may be possible*." Now briefly let me test the statements of Mrs. Britten by the philosophers:—

Induction leads from the particular to the universal; it suggests the ranging of particular cases together like troops in files. The complete induction is the only strictly scientific induction.—UBERWEG.

The essential service rendered by Bacon to science was his basing generalities on a patient collection and accurate comparison of facts.—BAIN.

When the investigator has hit upon the appropriate conception, he then colligates the facts to bind these into a unity.—IBID.

Given events obey certain unknown laws; we have to discover the laws obeyed. Induction is the deciphering of the hidden meaning.—JEVONS.

There are such things as parallel cases that what happens once will, under a sufficient degree of similarity of circumstance, happen again, and not only again but as often as the same circumstances occur.—MILL.

This principle is involved in the words of the Wise Man:—"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done." In nature there is nothing insulated; the same causes produce the same effects.—FLEMING.

In conclusion, Esser observes that there exist four rules as tests:—

1st. Induction is certain in proportion to the number and diversity of the objects observed. 2nd. In proportion to the accuracy with which the observation and comparison have been conducted. 3rd. In proportion as the agreement of the objects is clear and precise. 4th. In proportion as it has been thoroughly explored.

Not only the world-wide collection of facts and experiences of Mrs. Britten, but the myriads of facts by myriads of trained

investigators in all portions of the globe, long since classified patiently, and placed in the category of certainty, prove distinctly that a bridge of light intertwines the world of matter and the world of Spirit.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

W. H. ROBINSON.

Emmette Coleman and the Theosophical Society.

SIR,—“R.C., F.T.S.” writes a letter which might seem to outsiders very unsatisfactory. He will no doubt thank a fellow F.T.S. (not a member of the “Esoteric Section”) for giving him an opportunity of explaining himself on the following points:—

Has he any authority for saying that no such three “papers of instructions” as he mentions were issued by the heads of the Esoteric Section? If so, what authority?

If three such papers were not issued, were two, or one?

If no such papers were issued, were any papers bearing on the subject issued?

When he has answered these questions he may try his hand at this one:—

Were or were not Messrs. Edge and Old “suspended” from the Esoteric Section for publishing a certain footnote in the “Theosophist” of July last?

Mr. Judge had stated in “Lucifer”:—“As to ‘Master’s seal,’ about which you put me the question, I do not know. Whether he has a seal or uses one is something on which I am ignorant.” Whereon Messrs. Edge and Old observe:—“In regard to this statement we can only remark that Mr. Judge’s memory must be seriously defective. We must therefore remind him that a very important step in connection with the reorganisation of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society was taken after the death of H.P.B. on the authority of a certain message, purporting to come from one of the Mahatmas, and which bore, as Mr. Judge will now remember, a seal-impression, said by him to be that of ‘the Master.’ No doubt Mr. Judge will take the opportunity of either rectifying his statement or of showing how his acting upon authority of ‘the Master’s’ seal at one time, and professing ignorance of it at another, may be regarded as consistent.”

I am not sure that “suspended” is the proper technical term, so I will add “or otherwise disciplined” to my question.

It is a truly Roman Catholic way of dealing with heresy to punish the asker of a question instead of answering it. But day by day the “Esoteric Section” is going further from the original path of the Theosophical Society, and becoming in every way more questionable—at least, as it seems to yours,

R.H., F.T.S.

Maya and the “Riddle of the Universe.”

SIR,—In the “Riddle of the Universe,” on p. 299, Mr. Fawcett says, in alluding to the metaphysic of Sankara:—“We have first to note the sorry makeshift of a solution by positing an inexplicable surd Maya alongside of the One Reality Brahman.” I am not concerned here to defend either Sankara’s metaphysic or the Adwaitee Vedantists, but taking Maya (illusion), as we define it in Theosophy, namely, as belonging to all that is conditioned, it seems to me that this philosophical truth is very much in evidence even in Mr. Fawcett’s own deductions. Let us, for instance, take the Subject or Ego. According to him everything which we see and know is a revelation of that Subject. For instance, an object is perceived as a state of consciousness of the Subject itself, and the character of this perception is due to the individuality of the Subject perceiving. Thus, to take his illustration, a man who is short-sighted and a man who is long-sighted looking at the same table from the same distance will see it differently. Yet the table is the same for one and for the other. In his own words, the objective real reveals itself in differing shapes for different human percipients, and “the familiar world which surrounds us may be a totally different place for other animals.” What is this but a clear affirmation that Maya is ubiquitous? For what is true for one percipient must evidently be false for another, what is true for man must evidently be non-existent for those other animals who see differently. Each view in fact is only relatively true, and relative Truth is to Truth what Maya or Illusion is to the Reality. If we follow out the idea of the Subject as given by Mr. Fawcett we see how this relation comes about. It is because each relative Truth is a revelation of the Subject, but a revelation which conditions it, and by doing so converts the Subject which is thus revealed into an appearance or Maya. Am I right in saying that what we call Maya Mr. Fawcett calls the “cradle of Reality”? If so, I cordially agree with him, for it is only by the conditioned that the unconditioned learns to know itself.

THOS. WILLIAMS, F.T.S.

## SOCIETY WORK.

102, CAMBERWELL-ROAD. — On Sunday next Mrs. Ashton Bingham will take the meeting for Mrs. Clark. Recitation, “Words and Deeds,” by Mrs. Bingham. Address, the subject to be chosen.—E.B.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD’S BUSH, W.—At our service on Sunday last short but instructive addresses were delivered by the inspirers of Mr. Wyndoe, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Drake, upon “Jesus, His Life and His Teachings.” Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Humphries; investigators welcomed. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason.—J.H.B., Hon. Sec.

311, CAMBERWELL-ROAD. — Wednesday, meeting for inquirers, at 8.15 p.m. Sunday, séance, at 11.30 a.m.; address, “Doctrine of Demons,” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 9th, Temperance branch; subject, “Should Mediums be Total Abstinents?” at 8.15 p.m. General meeting (half-yearly), January 14th, at 8.30 p.m.—C. M. PAYNE, Hon. Sec.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86 HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE, W.—We had a very pleasant time on Sunday evening. Mr. Wallace, the respected pioneer medium, gave a very excellent address and was followed by Miss Rowan Vincent whose remarks were greatly appreciated. Our energetic worker, Mr. J. Edwards (treasurer), concluded the meeting with some appropriate suggestions. Next Sunday evening, January 7th, at 7, Mr. J. J. Morse on “Human Duties versus Heavenly Joys.” Clairvoyance at the close by Miss McCreadie.—L.H.R.

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN’S HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E.—On Sunday last Mr. J. Veitch reviewed the past year, ably dealing with many social and political questions. He contended that the grand question of religious toleration would be realised in the very near future. Referring to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, he showed that Christians are beginning to see that all religions stand upon the same basis, and that each has its own value to those who adopt it with sincerity. The present liberality of thought is tending towards Spiritualism, and our fresh successes encourage us to press forward in the coming year. Speaker for next Sunday, Mr. H. J. Leader (of Plymouth).—J. RAINBOW, Sec.

LONDON OCCULT SOCIETY.—A meeting will shortly be held to reorganise the London Occult Society. This society since 1885 has been doing a good work. We have held many sessions of Sunday lectures, but our present purpose is to institute practical experiments conducted according to scientific methods. The reason I have not started Sunday lectures this winter is that we have been engaged in such experiments, and I am pleased to say that we have had good results. Some of our records are now in the hands of the S.P.R. But we wish to enlarge our operations, and I am willing to give my services one evening per week free to members to give sittings at their own homes, and if any lady or gentleman could lend me the use of a room, my spirit guide desires to give a series of trance discourses on Occultism and Esoteric Religion. These I wish to give in private and not in a public hall. Friends who wish for further information or to join us will please address the secretary, 15, Lanark-villas, Maida Vale, W., by letter.—A. F. TYNDALL, A.T.C.L., President.

23, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL.—FLORAL BAPTISM.—New Year’s Eve, though ushering in the young year with its customary frost and fog, was nevertheless the occasion of an auspicious event in the annals of the South London Spiritualists. A goodly assemblage of friends from all quarters arrived (many to an excellent tea) and by seven o’clock the rooms were packed. Despite the sparseness of flowers at this season, there was a charming display, mingled with trails of ivy, which decorated the niches and walls. The platform presented a pretty appearance, white blossoms standing out conspicuously, the whole surmounted by a tastefully built christening cake, bearing an inscription, and presented to the little one by Mrs. Bliss, who, in company with the father, Mr. J. J. Vango, conducted the interesting ceremony. Suitable hymns were sung, and one of Mr. Vango’s guides (Mrs. Main, great grandmother of the child) opened the service with a few suitable words, after which the control of Mrs. Bliss, taking the babe in arms, gave to it the spiritual name of “Snowdrop,” followed by the material one by which the world will know it. Flowers were placed upon the child, and a consecration prayer offered. Other controls followed, speaking eloquently of the “great cause” and predicting that this event was but the prelude to many others which would be as holy and as binding as that of any in the Christian churches. Another, speaking through Mr. Vango, dwelt upon the institution of “Spiritual Funerals,” (to all true Spiritualists a most necessary function), which met with a hearty response from the whole congregation. At the close of the ceremony an excellently designed certificate was given by Mr. Archibald Gray, upon which all present affixed their signatures. We have now to record five years of successful spiritual work, and only want our numbers to swell, and more workers in the field. Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Duggan; Thursday, circle.—L.C.

OUR lives, not merely in some points or relations, but in all points and relations, must be near to God.