

# Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

No. 680.—VOL. XIV. [Registered as a Newspaper] SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 1894. [Registered as a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.

## CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way .....	25	Mr. Harte's Address .....	30
The Thirteen Club .....	26	The Proper Function of Spiritual-	31
A "Spirit-Teaching" .....	27	ism .....	31
A Letter of Stainton Moses .....	28	Religion of the Ancient Chinese ..	34
The Ascent of Life .....	28	Foreign Papers .....	35
A Book on Hypnotism .....	29	Letters to the Editor .....	35-6

## NOTES BY THE WAY.

The "Times" of January 10th contains the usual short summary of scientific work done in the previous year. Speaking of Physiology, it says:—

The work done in Physiology during the past year has been characterised by elaboration of detail and by persevering attempts to supply the missing links in the chain of knowledge rather than by the formulation of startling theories or the announcement of brilliant discoveries. It is becoming more and more evident that the mechanical and physical explanations of vital phenomena which seemed entirely satisfactory not so very many years ago are only partial truths, and must be modified by and subordinated to the mysterious condition that we call life. On all hands the interdependence of the various parts of the living organism and the complexity of even the apparently simplest vital processes are being more clearly recognised, and, as a result, elaborate researches are being made into the minute structure and chemical composition of the organs and tissues of the body, with the view of determining the conditions of vital action, and to learn the chemical composition of tissues, how they are built up and into what simple substances they are resolved, when they are the seat of living phenomena.

The confession contained in this paragraph is a very remarkable one; though, in the face of recent research, that confession was bound to come. One has only to compare the present state of thought with regard to life, and all that is meant by life, with what was prevalent twenty years ago, to recognise how the mighty structure of a supposed impregnable finality has crumbled into dust.

But if man, as we know him, is a bundle of orderly arranged vitalities, of vitalities almost innumerable, we must go a step onward and at once recognise that such a man, as we know him, or think we know him, is not the real man at all; it is the directing agent which keeps all these vitalities in order that is the real man—at present that is—for we may still have to go on and eventually have to split up this second self. But that being so, "there is no death" becomes a truism, the lapsing vitalities do not destroy their director as they fall away, they do not even die themselves. The director, call it soul or what you will, remains.

And this leads to other considerations, of importance to Spiritualists. Spiritualists, like other people, have generally taken the body to be the abode of the spirit, which spirit escapes at death and may, or may not, be incarnated again. In these columns, however, it has been frequently urged that what we call the body is a presentment of the spirit. How it could be so, it has always been difficult to say, especially as our ordinary words are but symbols expressive of external impressions. But here we have,

at any rate in part, both a corroboration and an explanation. The spirit of man—thereby meaning, without going further, all the more ethereal part of him—presents itself on the so-called material plane in terms of an orderly arrangement of vitalities, this arrangement conveying the impression of a body to other men.

These things being so, there can be nothing in nature which is unimportant to such a being. All things, both open and hidden, must be of interest to an entity which gathers the material of its mundane existence out of the general life of the universe. Hence the old alchemy, both ancient and modern astrology, palmistry, whatever, indeed, can throw any light, however small it may be, on our lives, must be welcomed by man when he becomes the student of himself. Some, for whom one has much respect, seem to think that Spiritualism has demonstrated its one central fact and there is an end of it. But that is not so. There is no more finality in Spiritualism than in anything else. For instance, if this theory of the building up of the human body out of innumerable other lives be the true one, the meaning of both incarnation and re-incarnation assumes a new character. And who shall say that the macrocosm of the universe may not find its counterpart in the microcosm of each man, or that the manager of such a congeries of lives may not register or even predicate their behaviour on so delicate and subtle an instrument as the human hand?

The following is taken from Prothero's "Life of Dean Stanley," and is interesting as showing the attitude of the Dean towards Spiritualism in its then development:—

Into the question of modern Spiritualism I have not entered. But it seems to me that people somewhat complicate the matter by regarding it from a religious side. It may be that particular persons—perhaps all people in some degree—are endowed with a sort of magnetic power which causes, or enables them to cause, these impressions, which is no more preternatural or religious than the power of music, or scent, or poetry, and any other natural though extraordinary gift. The only point of view from which it is theologically interesting is that it may have been the outward human or natural instrument through which in former times revelations from a higher moral world were made.

We extract this from the London "Figaro" for January 4th:—

The following, from the secretary of the Des Moines Equaliser Co., Iowa, is surely worth reproducing:—

Des Moines, Iowa,  
December 19th, 1893.

Editor "Figaro," London, England.

DEAR SIR,—You make great sport of Mr. Stead, and doing so expose your lack of intuition. He has only discovered that which millions—not thousands—of others have learned, *i.e.* that mental forces are as persistent as other forms of energy (or matter); and in proclaiming the truth has caused to vibrate harmonious chords in the hearts of many, here and elsewhere. Little do you comprehend his power.

The names, Stainton Moses (Editor of "LIGHT," a little journal published in your town—a paper you probably have



never heard of)—and W. T. Stead, will be cherished when "Figaro" is forgotten.

If Agnostic, or Materialist, you should be modest and content yourself with knowing not; if "orthodox," hide your ignorance of the fact that all the so-called "miracles" recorded in the Bible, Vedas, and other "sacred writings" are taking place right under your nose, ay, even in London town. In your insularity you forget, seemingly, that the journalistic world of London does not engulf the universe.

"The truth shall make ye free."

Yours truly, JAS. T. H. GREEN.

Whatever may be the value of this letter in other respects, it shows that "LIGHT" travels a good deal.

### THE THIRTEEN CLUB.

We have already referred to this club. Its annual dinner took place on Saturday, the 13th, in Room 13 of the Holborn Restaurant, Mr. Harry Furniss presiding. The club is founded for the purpose of breaking down certain superstitions. An account of the dinner as given in the "Times" is very amusing. There are obviously many ways in which men can make themselves ridiculous.

The organiser of the dinner was not able to make the 13th fall on a Friday, but, says the "Times":—

Everything else that could well be done to shock the minds of the timorous was done. A large number of the members and guests had acted on a suggestion that they should wear bright green neckties, which proved a novel accompaniment to evening dress; and all of them on arrival were presented with a "button-hole" in the form of a small Japanese skeleton, with the addition, in some instances, of an imitation coffin-lid, to form a background. The signal that dinner was ready was given by the throwing down on the floor, in the assembly room, of a large piece of looking-glass, the smashing of which into scores of fragments was evidently regarded without the slightest trepidation by the onlookers. Then the chairman of the evening, Mr. Harry Furniss, followed by the guests, went into the dining-room; but in order to do this every one had first to pass under a ladder, thus acquiring still another instalment of "bad luck." In the dining-room every table was arranged with 13 seats, and, as several expected guests did not put in an appearance (one well-known writer sent word that at the last moment his courage had failed him, while others pleaded that their wives would not let them come), the vacant seats were filled by some of the waiters, who were turned into diners and sat with the company so as to make up the desired number of 13 in each instance. In the laying of the tables a free rein had been given to the fancies of the club. It need hardly be said that all the knives were crossed. That was only to be expected; but it was rather startling to find fairy lights casting their pleasant glow from the top of life-size skulls, modelled in plaster of Paris. Then before every guest there stood a salt-cellar, also made of plaster of Paris, in the form of a coffin, with a tombstone attached, the latter having on one side a skull and cross-bones, surmounted by the word "Salt," and on the other a printed paper, bearing the following words underneath another skull and cross-bones:—"To the Memory of many Senseless Superstitions Killed by the London Thirteen Club. 1894." The salt spoons had been made in the form of sextons' spades. Every guest, too, found before him a peacock's feather, and also a small circular mirror set in a slight frame of lead, the purpose of which was ascertained later on. Here and there on the tables, standing against the candelabra, were Japanese skeletons, as large as good-sized dolls, holding fans, bottles, and other things in their hands. Behind the chairman a brass peacock spread out a voluminous tail of real feathers, and against the fireplace was displayed a "creepy" looking picture on green paper, representing a witch, with a cauldron placed over a fire, and a black cat prowling around, while over them, in gleaming letters, were the words, "Life would be intolerable but for its Superstitions."

The design of the *menu*, which was attributed to "Lika Joko," was well worthy of the artistic powers of the chairman of the evening. It represented a most attractive young witch sweeping through the clouds on a besom, underneath being such objects as an owl, a spider, a horse shoe, an overturned salt cellar, a pair of knives crossed, a crowing cock, a wild cat, and a hideous imp running under a ladder. The *menu* was printed

on bright red cardboard. The names of the dishes (thirteen in number) were in keeping with the design. They were as follows: Potages—*langue de serpent*, *cochon effrayé*; poisson—*pieuvre sauce vendredi*, *escaquer sauce treize*; entrées—*côte-lettes de veau à la pleine lune*, *poulets au chat noir*, *jambon sauce diabolotin*; rôtis—*mouton sauce corbeau*, *bœuf sauce fer à cheval*; entremets—*poudin au spectre*, *crapauds gélés*, *meringues à l'échelle*, *compote sorcière*. To give a still further air of realism to the feast the viands thus so curiously named were, as far as possible, served by cross-eyed waiters; though it seems that the number of such individuals obtainable had been found insufficient to allow of every table in the room being so favoured.

The "Times" is responsible for the French in the *menu*.

Then the chairman "asked first those on his right, and then those on his left, to do him the honour, not to drink wine, but to spill salt with him; and this was done, the salt being lifted by means of the sextons' spades out of the coffin salt-cellars, and then thrown on the table." Later on:—

The chairman proposed "Enemies of superstitious ignorance and humbug, we drink success to the Thirteen Club." In doing so he expressed sympathy with their still "suffering superstitious friends" outside, and spoke of various foolish delusions which still controlled, and seriously controlled, the ordinary actions of men and women. Among other things he mentioned that it would be considered very unlucky to send a knife to Lord Salisbury unless one received a coin in return, yet people could send the sharpest hatchet to Mr. Gladstone, and they would be delighted if they had a postcard in acknowledgment. From Mr. Oscar Wilde, he mentioned, the following letter had been received: "I have to thank the members of your club for their kind invitation, for which convey to them, I beg you, my sincere thanks. But I love superstitions. They are the colour element of thought and imagination. They are the opponents of common-sense. Common-sense is the enemy of romance. The aim of your society seems to be dreadful. Leave us some unreality. Do not make us too offensively sane. I love dining out, but with a society with so wicked an object as yours I cannot dine. I regret it. I am sure you will all be charming, but I could not come, though 13 is a lucky number."

This is reasonable on the part of Mr. Oscar Wilde; the worship of the great god "Common-sense" is obviously becoming grotesque. After a speech from the president of the club, the chairman "expressed his desire to 'shiver looking-glasses' with the company, whereupon the looking-glasses previously referred to were picked up and smashed to pieces with anything that might be handy":—

Shortly after this Mr. Furniss rose again and said: "I beg to present the chairman of each table with a pocket-knife, on the distinct understanding that he does not give me anything in return." These presentations having taken place, one of the company asked the chairman if he would dispel a horrible superstition which had arisen in his quarter of the room—that the knives had been made in Germany. To this Mr. Furniss replied amid general laughter, "I know these knives; they come frae Sheffield."

A variety of other toasts followed; a subscription was made on behalf of the Peckham and Old Kent-road Pension Society (one of the objects of the club besides the crying down of superstitions being to "assist those who have fallen by the way"); and a number of songs were given by a choir, chief among them being one specially composed for the occasion by Mr. Blanch, entitled "The Superstitious Man," set to music by Mr. G. Le Brun, and sold at the appropriate price of thirteen pence. The singing of "The National Anthem" brought the proceedings to a close, and the members and guests proceeded to remove and carry away the plaster of Paris skulls, the coffin salt-cellars, the skeletons, the peacock feathers, and other movables belonging to the club, as mementoes of the occasion.

One thing this dinner has certainly done, it has collected together in a small compass a catalogue of most of the minor "superstitions" which are still prevalent. But what one would very much like to know is, how many of those who sat down to dinner would care to let his wife or daughter set sail, say to Australia, on Friday, the 13th of any month, in a ship called the "Skull," with a captain named Coffin. He would probably say it was unpleasant but he would not be superstitious. Certainly not!



## A "SPIRIT-TEACHING."

The following "spirit-teaching" was given by "Imperator" at Mrs. Macdougall Gregory's in January, 1873, Mr. Stainton Moses being the medium. It will be seen to give a somewhat different interpretation of the vapid utterances of spirits claiming great names than that usually accepted:—

We are glad and thankful to convey to you, friends, a message from the Most High—to be permitted to be to you a Harbinger from God of a brighter light which shall eventually illuminate the world. For this I am sent from the higher Spheres, from the footstool of the Almighty, to influence this medium; and when my work has been accomplished I shall return with joy to those still higher spheres from which no spirit again returns to earth. Until his earth-life is complete I am deputed, in company with other guardians and ministers, to attend him, and to inspire his thoughts. Know ye—know ye—how solemn a thing it is to commune thus with those who have passed from earth-life many hundreds of years, as ye count time! Know ye how that we are to you the links between the now and the hereafter, denizens of a sphere to which ye are travelling, bearers of a Revelation of the secrets of that unknown land, and of its unknown inhabitants! To those who can and will receive it, how solemnising our message! To those to whom it is given, how great the responsibility! Know ye how great the discretion, the wisdom required of you! Know ye how an idle word, or careless deed, may mar, or at least may retard, the plans of the Almighty; how ye are indeed fellow-workers with Him and His Holy Angels! How vast then your privileges; how vast your responsibility! Know ye—nay, how should ye know now! But hereafter ye shall know that it is to those alone whom He has chosen that He has confided his secrets. We would we could assist you more, and guide you in the way wherein ye should go. Much we can do, much we are daily enabled to effect for good, but we are, even as ye, groping in the dark till an open communication be established and set up between the Beatified and the denizens of earth. Eternal Father, hasten the season! Meanwhile ye too may facilitate our work for God and man by a consistent unfolding to those who may be able to receive them of the grand truths made known by us. Ours is the task to instruct, to elevate, to ennoble; yours to receive in honesty and humility the Divine seed, to allow it to take root in the soil of a faithful heart, and to make the children crying after truth and light partakers of your blessedness. Great the caution necessary. It is not given to all, or even to many, to stand forth as the Avant-couriers of the coming truth, and proclaim it to mankind. Nor to many is it given to cast off the trammels of superstition, the swaddling-clothes of infancy, and receive the deposit of the truth.

There is much in the formless chaos that enshrouds the truth of the hereafter that is unintelligible to you. It must needs be so. There is much in the early phases of a great and undeveloped movement that must seem rude and shocking to a cultivated intellect. We would not speak harshly of any who are inclined to speak disparagingly of spirit manifestations in their present stage. This is to be expected. Were men more ready, all that is now so perplexing might be wrought in the light of day, in the full blaze of the noonday sun. But this would be to throw pearls before those who would trample them underfoot. We dare not work our miracles with power. We dare not, we are not allowed to go further. And much that is strange and contradictory in our communications must be attributed to false notions and to errors on both sides. We, like yourselves, are liable to error, and often we find that we have made mistakes. We have honestly believed that we are communicating with our earth friends, and have only found out our error afterwards. We have marvelled at the questions put, and our replies have seemed doubtless idle or untrue. It has been caused by simple error. And you too have wondered, doubtless often, that the communications given by the spirits of your illustrious departed have been so crude and worthless, so little worthy the great names they bore on earth. It has been a stumbling block to many that names which they have been accustomed to hold in reverence have been linked to messages which their intellects cannot respect. This, too, is natural but arises from misconception. For what is man? Verily, he is but the vehicle of Inspiration. And what is intellectual worth? What but the transmission, pure and

unadulterated, of the thoughts originated in the mind by the Inspiration of spirit-ministers. The highest and noblest intellects which ye reverence were but the means by which God made known to man that portion of his mind which he saw fit. All that they did of great and noble was but the influence of the guardian angel. The medium is selected for special qualities, but they are not those which ye are wont to hold in reverence. The suitable instrument is chosen and to him is confided the deposit of Revelation. His is not the glory, nor does the faithful servant claim it. He is the vehicle, the honoured instrument, of Divine Revelation, honoured amongst angels, but not as amongst men. He is honoured with us as God's medium; the chosen recipient of the Divine message. So it was with John Baptist, so in days more ancient with Elijah and Elisha. In proportion as the work is rightly done, does the medium derive benefit, and become fitted to be in his turn the messenger of God to man in the future. The vessel is impregnated with the perfume it has contained, and is nobler for the use it has subserved; worthy of honour from men and angels as a casket which has worthily enshrined the Jewel of Divine Truth. But if there be impurity, or falsity, or cowardice, or idleness in the selected Instrument; or if he be unduly puffed up by that which is given to him, if he arrogate to himself the glory that belongs to God alone, if there be time-serving or pride or impure motive, then, so far from being benefited by the service for which he has been selected, he is so much the worse for the abuse of his opportunities. It is the unalterable law of God—great privileges, great responsibilities. It has ever been so. And he who has great opportunities of good and fails to use, or wrongly uses, them in wilful sin, on him rests the curse of the servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not. He sinks as surely as the other rose. The talent is withdrawn, the favour of God no longer ennoble him, and he becomes morally and intellectually deteriorated. He has violated the law of God which declares for all time that his servants shall do him honour, and themselves be benefited by the service which He imposes on them. He has cast away privilege, and behold! a curse instead of a blessing rests upon him. So that should such an one return to the earth sphere, the communications through him will necessarily be of a lower order than you would expect from his reputation whilst in earth-life. Aye, intellectually and morally worse. For no gift of God can be misused without moral deterioration ensuing. Intellectual and moral gifts are correlative. No man can leave his intellectual gifts uncultivated without becoming intellectually and morally worse. No man can give way to immoral and impure habits without becoming mentally as well as morally worse.

So, friends, you may see how it is that the high intellectual ability which has been in very truth a scintillation from the Divine mind has been degraded by sensuality, by pride, by folly, until the soul sinks, and is no longer the pure and holy thing it was. Such an one gravitates to the spheres even as the pure and noble rise to the society of the Beatified. On earth he spoke not his own words, but the words of Him who sent him—the word of Inspiration. But the Spirit of the Lord has been withdrawn, and now he speaks the congenial utterances of the society to which he has been drawn. With us as with you, like attracts like. The soul has fitted itself for its future state, and must accept the consequences. The soul born into the world with great opportunities at its disposal—the recipient of angelic influence, the vehicle of Divine Inspiration, the Depository of the Spirit of the Most High—cannot rest in one position: either it progresses towards light or retrogrades towards darkness. That retrogressive soul is in perilous state. It has cut itself off from the foundations of light; it has withdrawn itself from angel guidance, and too often has ceased to believe in the influence of God's ministering angels; and by force of association, the evil which it has chosen becomes congenial, whilst the good rejected becomes distasteful. Aspirations after good are quenched and the downward course is rapid, and too frequently terminates in an almost hopeless darkness.

Thank God, the converse is true. The soul that has been weighed down by the body, that has struggled after purity and truth in spite of much temptation, rises and soars when the clog is removed. In the mysterious providence of God it has been decreed that every soul carries with it aspirations after Him, the source of all that is good. These aspirations are frequently obscured by corporeal influence, even as the blessed



sun-light is intercepted by the mists and fogs of earth. But these aspirations never die unless, alas! they have been so persistently quenched that the flickering ember dies out. But this is rare, and must be the deliberate voluntary act of the intelligence, the conscious choice of evil in preference to good, the utter rejection of angel guidance. Take the lowly, simple, child-like soul which has been pure in spite of associations of impurity, which has yearned for light amidst the gloom of earth, which has ever fixed its aspirations upon God; release that soul from the bonds of the body, and it rises with angel escort to its congenial sphere. Ye cannot hold it back. It flies to its home, to its heaven, and to its God.

We have endeavoured to put before you these salient points of Divine teaching in the hope that they may be beneficial. Farewell. May He, the all-holy, all-wise, all-pure God, lead you up to the Fount of Truth and Love—even to His own Throne. May He pour into your faithful hearts the spirit of truth and righteousness and peace. May His holy angels guard and guide you here, and hereafter receive you into the spheres of bliss.—IMPERATOR SERVUS DEI.

### A LETTER OF STAINTON MOSES.

In the "Theosophist" Colonel Olcott has finished his attempt at showing that Madame Blavatsky and Stainton Moses were inspired by the same Intelligence. Into that discussion we do not wish to enter; it can be easily seen in the journal referred to. Incidentally, however, there is introduced a letter from Stainton Moses, which we reprint here. It is necessary, however, to correct an error which has somehow crept in with regard to our late friend. He was never a "professor." The "lectures" were lessons given to a class of boys in University College School, London. With this proviso we give the letter, with Colonel Olcott's introductory words:—

S. M. wrote us a most interesting account of what sometimes happened to him in his professorial line of duty. I now quote from his letter of September 4th, 1876, from Loch Inver, Sutherlandshire: it is about the self individuality, the Ego. He says:—

I have followed out the train of thought myself of late. Myself, what is it? I do things one day, and especially say things, of which I have no remembrance. I find myself absorbed in thought in the evening, and go to bed with no lecture for the morrow prepared. In the morning I get up, go about my work as usual, lecture a little more fluently than usual, do all my business, converse with my friends, and yet know absolutely nothing of what I have done. One person alone, who knows me very intimately, can tell by a far-off look in the eyes that I am in an abnormal state. The notes of my lectures so delivered—as I read them in the books of those who attend my lectures—read to me precise, accurate, clear, and fit into their place exactly. My friends find me absent, short in manner, brusque and rude of speech. Else there is no difference. When I 'come to myself' I know nothing of what has taken place, but sometimes memory recurs to me, and I gradually recollect. This is becoming a very much more frequent thing with me, so that I hardly know when I am (what I call) my proper self, and when I am the vehicle of another intelligence. My spirit friends give hints, but do not say much. I am beginnings however, to realise far more than I once could how completely, a man may be a "gas-pipe"—a mere vehicle for another spirit. Is it possible that a man may lead the life I do, and have no Individuality at all? I lead three distinct lives, and I often think that each is separate. Is it possible for a man, to ordinary eyes a common human being, to be a vehicle for Intelligences from above, and to have no separate personality [used here a synonym for individuality.—O.]? Can it be that my spirit may be away, learning perhaps, leading a separate spiritual life, whilst my body is going about and is animated by other Intelligences? Can it be that instruction is so ministered to my soul, and that growth in knowledge becomes manifest to me as now and again I return from my spirit life and occupy my body again? And is it possible that I may one day become conscious of these wanderings, and lead a conscious spiritual existence alongside of my corporeal existence?

Once or twice—once very lately in the Isle of Wight—my interior dormant faculties awoke, and I lost the external alto-

gether. For a day and a night I lived in another world, while dimly conscious of material surroundings. I saw my friends, the house, the room, the landscape, but dimly. I talked, and walked, and went about as usual, but through all, and far more clearly, I saw my spiritual surroundings, the friends I know so well, and many I had never seen before. The scene was clearer than the material landscape, yet blended with it in a certain way. I did not wish to talk. I was content to look and live amongst such surroundings. It was as I have heard Swedenborg's visions described.

### THE ASCENT OF LIFE.

In the "Arena" for December there is the first of a series of papers by Stinson Jarvis with the above title. So far it is an account of various hypnotic experiments, which, according to the writer, prove that man is now entering on a new phase of development. Among the preliminary remarks we get this excellent paragraph:—

He who knows of no soul has a right to demand that its existence be proved. But, in the ordinary course of nature, soul (meaning its sympathies and range) is only appreciable by soul. The difficulty has been to make soul appreciable to intellect. This can, to some limited extent, be done. The existence of the soul, and also some of its powers, can be proved with all the certainty which science requires. For the material intellect to understand, when unassisted, the range, sympathies, and peculiarities of a higher plane of nature is not to be expected. It would be like expecting a fish to understand an amphibian. The amphibian, being partly fish, might explain as best he could, but his land experiences must remain a complete blank to the fish, except in the form of almost incredible hearsay.

Of one clairvoyante Mr. Stinson Jarvis tells the following:—

With her, in her extreme purity and refinement, the reliance on soul intuitions seemed to be an every-day occurrence; though, apparently, she thought no more of it than I would of taking an umbrella with me when the atmosphere promised rain. For instance, several times when I was proceeding towards her home to make an unexpected call I have met her on the way. When I spoke of the meeting being lucky, she saw no element of chance about it. She would say, "I knew you were coming, so I put on my hat to come out and meet you."

"But how did you know?" I would ask.

"I cannot explain. It came to me that you were just crossing——Square, and that you were coming to call. I knew just because I knew!"

On which these pertinent observations are made:—

Now, these last words, which thousands of men have heard from thousands of women, contain the truth of the soul knowledge. She "knew just because she knew." This is the kind of statement that science abominates, and which makes men look blankly interrogative, and which women appreciate. Unless their animal nature has been built up till their souls are, as it were, walled in, women use their soul knowledge more frequently than they use their teeth for eating. It is so simple, so correct, so entirely independent of education; it makes so many who are called common women so beautiful.

After narrating some remarkable experiments in clairvoyance, which, though in all probability true, would be none the worse for a little more accuracy of detail, the writer observes:—

The next question which arises is this: Is the soul, when acquiring knowledge at a distance, projected through space by the will of the actuator? Or is it a faculty, unexplained, for "knowing simply because it knows," similar to that which we were taught to regard as the omniscience possessed by the Deity? In other words: Does the faculty travel, or is it continuously resident in the patient? Some results of my experiments seem to answer affirmatively to the first question, and others to the latter. The abilities suggested in the second question would, if present, dispense with those referred to in the first. There were several peculiarities which suggested that the seeing quality travelled. For instance, when great distances were required to be overcome there was always a delay of one, two, three, or perhaps more minutes, during which the patient would be apparently making efforts of her own. During these times



she would converse in a contemplative sort of way: "No, I don't see him [or her]. I can only see faces, strange faces, many of them—strange shapes intermingling." At this period of search the patient often expressed her doubt and inability. Then, suddenly, she would say, "Oh, yes, now I see her." And from that moment all doubt ended, and the person searched for was described with certainty, rapidity, and precision.

Now, notwithstanding all the writer says about his scientific proof of the existence of a soul, the above passage shows that the ways of science are so far not used by him. Had he truly recognised the soul as a separate entity he would not have talked about the "seeing faculty" and its travelling powers. This is simply to apply ordinary material arguments to what is not material. A separate seeing faculty as such has not been shown by him to exist. Using a new term is not of much use without an explanation of that term. But, as it stands, the method employed looks very like that of applying the spatial limitations of our general knowledge to what is independent of those limitations. However, there is more to come, and that "more" we await with interest.

### A BOOK ON HYPNOTISM.\*

#### FIRST NOTICE.

Mr. Vincent's book is one of considerable value. It is carefully written, and approaches the subject of hypnotism in a calm and judicial spirit. This is saying much, for books on subjects so abstruse, and so beyond the ordinary experiences of men, are not always conceived on these lines.

Mr. Vincent begins with a short but very readable and fair account of the science through its various stages, from quackery and imposture, accompanied, nevertheless, all the time by real phenomena, up to the present, when its scientific importance is at last beginning to be acknowledged. And here it is very interesting to note how little England did in the matter at first. The native conservatism of the race stands out in marked contrast with the wild enthusiasm of our more excitable neighbours. And yet it is to an Englishman, Braid of Manchester, that the beginning of a reasonable appreciation of the value and importance of hypnotism is due. Up to the time of Braid, the phenomena produced by Mesmer and others were generally said to be the effect of magnetism; to Braid, indeed, is due the new term "Hypnotism."

Braid found that verbal suggestion was sufficient to produce hallucination, but he had not reached the theory of suggestion, which has been so wonderfully developed in more recent times by Dr. Liébault, of Nancy. Yet Braid still believed in the old phrenology, which mapped out the skull as if it were a geographical puzzle:—

By pressing on the phrenological "organs," he found he could induce the emotions belonging to each; thus, by pressing on the "organ of veneration," the subject would kneel in the attitude of prayer; if the "organ of acquisitiveness" were touched, the subject would steal, and so forth.

We know now that these so-called "organs" have not necessarily any portion of the brain corresponding to the presumed characteristics supposed to belong to them, the brain not generally filling up the skull-cap, but the Nancy theory of suggestion gives a full explanation. Braid was right in his facts, wrong in his interpretation of them. The work of the Psychical Research Society receives due praise, though the author says that the records of that society's work "can hardly be considered convincing, having regard to all the circumstances," and, indeed, that the Society has not yet claimed that its experiments can be considered as at all conclusive; which is sufficiently obvious from the fact that it is now organising a new set of experiments.

In order to explain the meaning of hypnosis, Mr. Vincent predicates of the human mind:—

1.—That the logical faculty of the brain is chiefly the result of training and education.

2.—That this logical faculty, even in the spheres where it should be most used, is always modified by the senses of emotion and affection; whilst, in the predisposition towards certain modes of thought and action, heredity plays an important part.

Here, by the way, it is not a little instructive to note how the cut-and-dried science known as Political Economy has almost disappeared from the scene, owing to the non-observance of this second proposition. The hard and fast deductions of logic are, according to Mr. Vincent, constantly being put aside, and so "the belief or disbelief of any proposition is an act in which the logical and the emotional are combined, but the cause of such intellectual action is purely emotional." That any thoughts are purely logical is denied, or said to be at least improbable, and the same may be said of the emotional action. Nothing can be produced by the human mind which is "purely reasonable, emotional, or ideational." And this is a right conclusion, because of the "complex action of the brain, in virtue of which an impression received by a single sense is converted, by the persistent tendency of the brain to harmonise all its perceptions and emotions, into an impression received and endorsed by the whole of the reasoning and perceptive faculties."

The author, having propounded these propositions, paves the way to a larger appreciation of mental action than the ordinary barren psychology would allow; a psychology which, because it does not acknowledge the second of the propositions, is bewildered in the face of, and so largely ignores the facts of, hypnotism.

The preliminary investigation is continued by an inquiry into the meaning of the "dreaming state," and a fairly successful attempt is made to show that the ordinary dreaming condition is the same in kind as that produced by hypnotism, instances being given where it was obvious that suggestion affected the dreaming subject. But this is not enough, there must something obtainable from the waking state, and here Mr. Vincent gives a valuable and careful account of some of the various ways in which the mind influences the body. Some of the instances given are such as are within the knowledge of most people, and the writer of this article can add one more. He was lying in a state of great physical prostration—indeed, only just passing out of a crisis in which life was struggling with death. Bronchitis of a very severe kind had hardly left him, the delirium of some days was hardly gone. Suddenly there came apparently so terrible a pain about the region of the heart that he thought his last hour was nearly come. Nothing would stay it. The doctor was sent for, and the patient was told that there could not be any pain, for all was going on well. The pain ceased, and assured convalescence began. This and numberless other instances show the value of "suggestion," even in the waking state.

Many instances of the influence of mind on body are given, and the hysterical conditions produced by such preaching as that of John Wesley are insisted on, conditions brought about by the suspension of the proper functions of the rational centres. In this category, also, Shakerism is placed. Suggestion is the key to it all.

THERE may be those beings, thinking beings, near or surrounding us, which we do not perceive, which we cannot imagine; we know very little, but we know enough to hope for the immortality, the individual immortality, of the better part of man.—SIR H. DAVY.

THE only conclusive evidence of a man's sincerity is that he gives himself for a principle. Words, money, all things else, are comparatively easy to give away; but when a man makes a gift of his daily life and practice, it is plain that the truth, whatever it may be, has taken possession of him.

\* "The Elements of Hypnotism." By R. HARRY VINCENT. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., Limited, Paternoster House, Charing Cross-road. 1893.) May also be had from the office of "LIGHT," 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. Price 6s.



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

#### NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post-free to any address, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, and should invariably be crossed "— & Co." All orders for papers and for advertisements, and all remittances, should be addressed to "The Manager" and not to the Editor.

#### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, London, and all Booksellers.

#### ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

Five lines and under 3s. One inch, 5s. Column, £2 2s. Page, £4. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

## Light:

EDITED BY "M. A., LOND."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20th, 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.

#### MR. HARTE'S ADDRESS.

The paper read by Mr. Harte before the London Spiritualist Alliance on January 8th, and which is printed in the current number of "LIGHT," is very important. It takes up clear issues and points out distinctly certain things which seriously needed pointing out. That Spiritualism is neither a Religion nor a Philosophy was shown by Mr. Harte with considerable ingenuity, and though we may take some exception to his apparently necessary conclusion that therefore Spiritualism is a Science, Mr. Harte's argument tends to place Spiritualism in a more tangible, and therefore a more tenable, position than it has yet held. Spiritualism, according to Mr. Harte, is the science "which investigates the invisible universe." This, however, is a long way beyond the mere determination of spirit return which satisfied its pioneers, and, to a certain extent, even contradicts the assertion made by Mr. Harte himself at the beginning of his paper, where he says of Spiritualism that "man's *post-mortem* life is its first and chief consideration . . . and forms almost the whole subject-matter of investigation." We accept this larger definition, which is, if we mistake not, the one Mr. Harte would prefer.

Starting from the definition, that Spiritualism is the science which investigates the unseen universe, the vastness of its scope is at once apparent, and the utter impossibility presents itself to the thinking man of being able to do anything further than as yet to pick up a few pebbles on the shore of the ocean outside. He may some day build ships to sail about that mighty sea, but not yet.

Now if we follow Mr. Harte, and allow that Spiritualism has this vast field for its operations, it follows that the science must be broken up into subdivisions. In the dawn of modern science we used to hear of such things as Natural History and Natural Philosophy; of the latter we sometimes unfortunately hear even now. Natural History gave way to Zoology, Physiology, Botany, each again subdividing; and then there came Biology in all its ramifications. From Natural Philosophy in like manner have grown Mechanics, Heat, Electricity, and so on, each of which produces its own burden of study, though all are parts of one mighty whole. So out of Spiritualism there must grow separate branches of research. The generalities of the past must give way to particular work, for if the scientific method is to be adopted it is only by the collection and collation of facts that general rules can be established.

So far we are with Mr. Harte, whose address from this point of view is admirable. On one point, however, we must with all respect differ from him. It is possible not only to have a Science but also a Philosophy of the same thing. And it is submitted that this is pre-eminently so with Spiritualism.

Political economy was for a time a science. Experiment had shown that there was an apparent law of supply and demand. There were laws founded on statistics, and many other fine things. But one day a wave of emotion swept over the land, and then it was found that men were not to be totted up like stars or even sheep, and this hard and unbending science merged into the wide sea of speculative philosophy. This happened with regard to men; what, then, must we expect when we have to do with intelligences whose capacities we do not know or dream of? We may observe, and observe for ever, and be none the wiser for all our observations, unless we recognise that there are intelligent beings in the Unseen to whom our scientific methods are not adapted, but with whom our philosophy, in its speculations and spiritual development, may bring us into closer *rapprochement* than tabulated observations, however excellent they may be.

Yet are we grateful to Mr. Harte. He has let daylight in on the position, and that daylight shows us the dust that had been accumulating, which dust must now be swept away.

#### DR. A. T. MYERS.

It is with much regret that we hear of the death of Dr. Myers, the brother of Mr. F. W. H. Myers. We offer to Mr. Myers and his family our very sincere sympathy. Dr. Myers was a conscientious and earnest worker in the field of Psychical Research.

#### CONVERSAZIONE.

A Conversazione of the members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held on Monday evening next, 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."

#### A BUDDHIST FABLE.

Once the Bodhisât was born in the family of a powerful Brahmin. When he grew up, he became an Isi (ascetic), and retired with five hundred other Isis into the mountain fastnesses. A terrible drought came, and the animals of the mountains suffered great thirst. One of the pious monks cut down a tree, formed it into a trough, and filled it with water from the well. Many of the animals came, so that the monk had no time to look for fruit. But the animals said to each other: "He giveth us drink and suffereth himself to go without food. Come, let us bring him of the best the woods contain. Let each one of us, when he comes to drink, bring as much fruit as he can find." Thenceforward the animals brought so much fruit that it filled two hundred and fifty waggons, and the food given to one man was sufficient to feed the whole five hundred, and yet there was some left over. When the Bodhisât saw this, he said: "Let a man do his best, and flee from idleness: Behold the result of labour, for there is fruit in plenty."—"Indische Taal en Volkenkunde," Batavia, Java.

#### THE TOMB AND THE ROSE.

The Tomb said to the Rose,  
"With the dews thy leaves enclose  
What dost thou, Love's own flower?"  
The Rose said to the Tomb,  
"Tell me what is the doom  
Of hosts thy depths devour?"  
Said the Rose, "Of every drop  
That in my blooms doth stop  
Sweet perfume I distil."  
Said the Tomb, "I make the souls  
My dreaded reign controls  
Angels that heaven fill."—VICTOR HUGO.



## THE PROPER FUNCTION OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY RICHARD HARTE, F.T.S.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF  
THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, 2, DUKE-STREET,  
ADELPHI, ON THE EVENING OF MONDAY, THE 8TH INST.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I wish to submit to your criticism and judgment some ideas that present themselves forcibly to my mind with reference to the proper function of Spiritualism, and, regarded in that light, I trust that what I may have to say will not appear to this representative assembly of Spiritualists to savour of presumption.

There are few Spiritualists who would not answer an inquiry about the function of Spiritualism by declaring that its function is to prove to mankind by actual, tangible, incontrovertible evidence that man is immortal, or at the very least, that he has a conscious and conditioned existence after death. Nevertheless, if you ask those who are so ready to make this reply, to explain to you the manner in which Spiritualism performs this function, you at once encounter a diversity of opinion—a diversity which may be described by saying that some people regard Spiritualism as a Religion, others look upon it as a Philosophy, while a third party considers it to be more of the nature of a Science. Now, Religion, Philosophy, and Science perform different functions in the world, and it is necessary to determine to which of the three Spiritualism properly belongs before we can tell what its legitimate function really is, and in what manner it can perform it.

If we look for the reason of this difference of opinion, we find, on the very threshold of the question, a natural obstacle to unity among Spiritualists, an obstacle to unity from which, it may be remarked, Theosophy also suffers; namely, that Spiritualism is recruited from both the religious and the freethought camps. Those entering it from these opposite directions hardly ever quite lose their early bias and previous habits of thought; and they bring with them into Spiritualism a quantity of their old intellectual baggage. The consequence is that a complete cleavage remains visible all the time between the religious and philosophical elements in Spiritualism, and between those Spiritualists who incline respectively to the one view of Spiritualism or the other. Now, both Religion and Philosophy profess to give an interpretation of the Cosmos. They occupy the same ground, and each claims the right to the whole ground. In both of them, the future destiny of man—although allowed to be of the greatest possible interest and importance—is but a secondary consideration, a side issue logically, since it is determined by inference from large generalisations or assumptions concerning the Universe as a whole, and concerning the Power that animates and regulates it. In Spiritualism, on the contrary, the question of man's *post-mortem* life is the first and chief consideration. It is the starting point of theory, and forms almost the whole subject-matter of investigation. The one characteristic and distinguishing feature of Spiritualism is the belief that those who have passed away from this earth-life can and do return to communicate with those still in the flesh, and that this intercourse is natural, and fraught with pleasure and benefit to both sides; and this obviously is not a belief from which alone, however true it may be, any religious or philosophical system naturally flows, or can be made logically to follow. It is true, indeed, that the most ancient form of Religion is believed by many authorities to have been Ancestor Worship; which was, no doubt, a kind of Spiritualism that must be called a religion. But I need hardly say that no Spiritualist would now dream of returning to that early form of idolatry, which is natural only in a stage of mental development that the world has long since outgrown. At present Spiritualism might almost be described as Transcendental Anthropology; and it is certainly not in the sense of any crude and idolatrous worship of the spirits that Spiritualism is ever called a religion now.

When we examine the ideas of those who profess to regard Spiritualism as a Religion, or as a Philosophy, we find the belief in the actuality of communion with the spirit world always fused with religious and philosophical ideas and theories drawn from other sources; and although the result of this fusion may be a spiritual religion or a spiritual philosophy, there is nothing distinctively Spiritualistic in these, except the belief that the departed can and do return to communicate with those in earth life. We find, on further examination, that the conceptions

with which the characteristic datum of Spiritualism is fused are generally those of Christianity.

A considerable body of Spiritualists call themselves "Christian Spiritualists," and beyond these there are great numbers who are still professedly in their Churches, but who are not much less Spiritualists than the Christian Spiritualists themselves. These people are negatively Christian, rather than positively Spiritualistic; for what are called "the truths of Spiritualism" are negative in their expression and in their action as far as they concern the old religions. "There is no angry God," "There is no place of eternal torment," "There is no Vicarious Atonement"; any form of religious belief which will survive the intrusion of these and similar ideas, and which includes the doctrine of Spirit Intercourse, may be considered a form of Spiritualism. Now, a little consideration will show that this fusion of Spiritualism with different forms of religious preconception does not prove that Spiritualism is in itself a religion, or even necessarily of a religious nature.

Hitherto Spiritualism has spread in the Churches as an "underground" movement; for the clergy have been its avowed enemies. It has, therefore, not had the opportunity, even had it the power, of developing as a confessed and independent creed; for much of its energy, which might have been expended in self-assertion, has gone to neutralise the worst of the Christian dogmas. It is only of late that the clergy have ventured to make friends with Spiritualism; but the movement in that direction is growing rapidly, and at present some of America's most noted "pulpit orators," and a few of our own advanced preachers, are apparently beginning to suspect that what they have hitherto taken to be an adulterant of their religion is really a purifier; and, as you know, they are now openly advocating a vague belief in the return of the so-called dead. Their half-hearted advocacy of Spiritualism, however, is accompanied by the injunction to "try the spirits, if they be of God," which means that they accept only those communications that coincide with their own preconceptions. Now the clergy are beginning to make friends with Spiritualism, because they have ceased to fear it; and having ceased to fear it, their instinctive tendency to injure it has changed into a natural desire to make use of it.

The reason why the clergy have ceased to fear Spiritualism is as significant as it is obvious, and throws much light on the question whether Spiritualism is a religion. Some twenty-five or thirty years ago, as some here will remember, Spiritualists believed themselves to be in a fair way to obtain a new and complete revelation concerning things spiritual, including the future destiny of man; for the idea that the "loved ones" could be mistaken about the facts of the other world, or that the communicating intelligences would deceive, had not then entered the minds of Spiritualists. By-and-bye, discrepancies and contradictions in what the spirits said began reluctantly to be noticed; and the identity of the spirits became a point that had to be verified before accepting the words of the invisibles as true statements of facts; for, even if those words might still be taken to be true statements of the opinions of the communicating intelligences themselves, it seemed clearly advisable to hesitate before accepting what those intelligences said in matters which might be beyond their ken. On this point everyone is now advised to satisfy himself; but, unfortunately, owing to the as yet undefined possibilities of "telepathy," there is at present no certain test of the identity of the spirits, and no test at all, that I, at least, know of, that they are accurately informed about the subject of their discourse; and, as the formation of an independent opinion on these points is difficult and thankless, belief about them is to a large extent a matter of chance influences, geographical position, or partisanship; and we see that even now Spiritualists are divided into almost hostile camps upon the basic question of re-incarnation. Thousands of genuine phenomenal communications, purporting to come from human spirits, confidently assert the truth of re-incarnation; and thousands of other communications, apparently equally authentic and equally authoritative, as vehemently deny it.

We are still so deeply imbued with the old theological idea that when we pass at death from our present state of ignorance we shall suddenly become quasi-omniscient, that it seems to us natural that those who are in the spirit world should know the truth about re-incarnation; but on reflection we perceive that probably no such enormous extension of knowledge as we are apt to fancy occurs at death, and that, therefore, there is no *a priori* reason that those in the next stage of existence should



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

#### NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post-free to any address, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, and should invariably be crossed "— & Co." All orders for papers and for advertisements, and all remittances, should be addressed to "The Manager" and not to the Editor.

#### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, London, and all Booksellers.

#### ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

Five lines and under 3s. One inch, 5s. Column, £2 2s. Page, £4. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

## Light:

EDITED BY "M.A., LOND."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20th, 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.

### MR. HARTE'S ADDRESS.

The paper read by Mr. Harte before the London Spiritualist Alliance on January 8th, and which is printed in the current number of "LIGHT," is very important. It takes up clear issues and points out distinctly certain things which seriously needed pointing out. That Spiritualism is neither a Religion nor a Philosophy was shown by Mr. Harte with considerable ingenuity, and though we may take some exception to his apparently necessary conclusion that therefore Spiritualism is a Science, Mr. Harte's argument tends to place Spiritualism in a more tangible, and therefore a more tenable, position than it has yet held. Spiritualism, according to Mr. Harte, is the science "which investigates the invisible universe." This, however, is a long way beyond the mere determination of spirit return which satisfied its pioneers, and, to a certain extent, even contradicts the assertion made by Mr. Harte himself at the beginning of his paper, where he says of Spiritualism that "man's *post-mortem* life is its first and chief consideration . . . and forms almost the whole subject-matter of investigation." We accept this larger definition, which is, if we mistake not, the one Mr. Harte would prefer.

Starting from the definition, that Spiritualism is the science which investigates the unseen universe, the vastness of its scope is at once apparent, and the utter impossibility presents itself to the thinking man of being able to do anything further than as yet to pick up a few pebbles on the shore of the ocean outside. He may some day build ships to sail about that mighty sea, but not yet.

Now if we follow Mr. Harte, and allow that Spiritualism has this vast field for its operations, it follows that the science must be broken up into subdivisions. In the dawn of modern science we used to hear of such things as Natural History and Natural Philosophy; of the latter we sometimes unfortunately hear even now. Natural History gave way to Zoology, Physiology, Botany, each again subdividing; and then there came Biology in all its ramifications. From Natural Philosophy in like manner have grown Mechanics, Heat, Electricity, and so on, each of which produces its own burden of study, though all are parts of one mighty whole. So out of Spiritualism there must grow separate branches of research. The generalities of the past must give way to particular work, for if the scientific method is to be adopted it is only by the collection and collation of facts that general rules can be established.

So far we are with Mr. Harte, whose address from this point of view is admirable. On one point, however, we must with all respect differ from him. It is possible not only to have a Science but also a Philosophy of the same thing. And it is submitted that this is pre-eminently so with Spiritualism.

Political economy was for a time a science. Experiment had shown that there was an apparent law of supply and demand. There were laws founded on statistics, and many other fine things. But one day a wave of emotion swept over the land, and then it was found that men were not to be totted up like stars or even sheep, and this hard and unbending science merged into the wide sea of speculative philosophy. This happened with regard to men; what, then, must we expect when we have to do with intelligences whose capacities we do not know or dream of? We may observe, and observe for ever, and be none the wiser for all our observations, unless we recognise that there are intelligent beings in the Unseen to whom our scientific methods are not adapted, but with whom our philosophy, in its speculations and spiritual development, may bring us into closer *rapport* than tabulated observations, however excellent they may be.

Yet are we grateful to Mr. Harte. He has let daylight in on the position, and that daylight shows us the dust that had been accumulating, which dust must now be swept away.

### DR. A. T. MYERS.

It is with much regret that we hear of the death of Dr. Myers, the brother of Mr. F. W. H. Myers. We offer to Mr. Myers and his family our very sincere sympathy. Dr. Myers was a conscientious and earnest worker in the field of Psychical Research.

### CONVERSAZIONE.

A Conversazione of the members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held on Monday evening next, 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."

### A BUDDHIST FABLE.

Once the Bodhisât was born in the family of a powerful Brahmin. When he grew up, he became an Isi (ascetic), and retired with five hundred other Isis into the mountain fastnesses. A terrible drought came, and the animals of the mountains suffered great thirst. One of the pious monks cut down a tree, formed it into a trough, and filled it with water from the well. Many of the animals came, so that the monk had no time to look for fruit. But the animals said to each other: "He giveth us drink and suffereth himself to go without food. Come, let us bring him of the best the woods contain. Let each one of us, when he comes to drink, bring as much fruit as he can find." Thenceforward the animals brought so much fruit that it filled two hundred and fifty waggons, and the food given to one man was sufficient to feed the whole five hundred, and yet there was some left over. When the Bodhisât saw this, he said: "Let a man do his best, and flee from idleness: Behold the result of labour, for there is fruit in plenty."—"Indische Taal en Volkenkunde," Batavia, Java.

### THE TOMB AND THE ROSE.

The Tomb said to the Rose,  
"With the dews thy leaves enclose  
What dost thou, Love's own flower?"  
The Rose said to the Tomb,  
"Tell me what is the doom  
Of hosts thy depths devour?"  
Said the Rose, "Of every drop  
That in my blooms doth stop  
Sweet perfume I distil."  
Said the Tomb, "I make the souls  
My dreaded reign controls  
Angels that heaven fill."—VICTOR HUGO.



## THE PROPER FUNCTION OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY RICHARD HARTE, F.T.S.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF  
THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, 2, DUKE-STREET,  
ADELPHI, ON THE EVENING OF MONDAY, THE 8TH INST.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I wish to submit to your criticism and judgment some ideas that present themselves forcibly to my mind with reference to the proper function of Spiritualism, and, regarded in that light, I trust that what I may have to say will not appear to this representative assembly of Spiritualists to savour of presumption.

There are few Spiritualists who would not answer an inquiry about the function of Spiritualism by declaring that its function is to prove to mankind by actual, tangible, incontrovertible evidence that man is immortal, or at the very least, that he has a conscious and conditioned existence after death. Nevertheless, if you ask those who are so ready to make this reply, to explain to you the manner in which Spiritualism performs this function, you at once encounter a diversity of opinion—a diversity which may be described by saying that some people regard Spiritualism as a Religion, others look upon it as a Philosophy, while a third party considers it to be more of the nature of a Science. Now, Religion, Philosophy, and Science perform different functions in the world, and it is necessary to determine to which of the three Spiritualism properly belongs before we can tell what its legitimate function really is, and in what manner it can perform it.

If we look for the reason of this difference of opinion, we find, on the very threshold of the question, a natural obstacle to unity among Spiritualists, an obstacle to unity from which, it may be remarked, Theosophy also suffers; namely, that Spiritualism is recruited from both the religious and the freethought camps. Those entering it from these opposite directions hardly ever quite lose their early bias and previous habits of thought; and they bring with them into Spiritualism a quantity of their old intellectual baggage. The consequence is that a complete fusion of parties does not take place; and a line of possible cleavage remains visible all the time between the religious and philosophical elements in Spiritualism, and between those Spiritualists who incline respectively to the one view of Spiritualism or the other. Now, both Religion and Philosophy profess to give an interpretation of the Cosmos. They occupy the same ground, and each claims the right to the whole ground. In both of them, the future destiny of man—although allowed to be of the greatest possible interest and importance—is but a secondary consideration, a side issue logically, since it is determined by inference from large generalisations or assumptions concerning the Universe as a whole, and concerning the Power that animates and regulates it. In Spiritualism, on the contrary, the question of man's *post-mortem* life is the first and chief consideration. It is the starting point of theory, and forms almost the whole subject-matter of investigation. The one characteristic and distinguishing feature of Spiritualism is the belief that those who have passed away from this earth-life can and do return to communicate with those still in the flesh, and that this intercourse is natural, and fraught with pleasure and benefit to both sides; and this obviously is not a belief from which alone, however true it may be, any religious or philosophical system naturally flows, or can be made logically to follow. It is true, indeed, that the most ancient form of Religion is believed by many authorities to have been Ancestor Worship; which was, no doubt, a kind of Spiritualism that must be called a religion. But I need hardly say that no Spiritualist would now dream of returning to that early form of idolatry, which is natural only in a stage of mental development that the world has long since outgrown. At present Spiritualism might almost be described as Transcendental Anthropology; and it is certainly not in the sense of any crude and idolatrous worship of the spirits that Spiritualism is ever called a religion now.

When we examine the ideas of those who profess to regard Spiritualism as a Religion, or as a Philosophy, we find the belief in the actuality of communion with the spirit world always fused with religious and philosophical ideas and theories drawn from other sources; and although the result of this fusion may be a spiritual religion or a spiritual philosophy, there is nothing distinctively Spiritualistic in these, except the belief that the departed can and do return to communicate with those in earth life. We find, on further examination, that the conceptions

with which the characteristic datum of Spiritualism is fused are generally those of Christianity.

A considerable body of Spiritualists call themselves "Christian Spiritualists," and beyond these there are great numbers who are still professedly in their Churches, but who are not much less Spiritualists than the Christian Spiritualists themselves. These people are negatively Christian, rather than positively Spiritualistic; for what are called "the truths of Spiritualism" are negative in their expression and in their action as far as they concern the old religions. "There is no angry God," "There is no place of eternal torment," "There is no Vicarious Atonement"; any form of religious belief which will survive the intrusion of these and similar ideas, and which includes the doctrine of Spirit Intercourse, may be considered a form of Spiritualism. Now, a little consideration will show that this fusion of Spiritualism with different forms of religious preconception does not prove that Spiritualism is in itself a religion, or even necessarily of a religious nature.

Hitherto Spiritualism has spread in the Churches as an "underground" movement; for the clergy have been its avowed enemies. It has, therefore, not had the opportunity, even had it the power, of developing as a confessed and independent creed; for much of its energy, which might have been expended in self-assertion, has gone to neutralise the worst of the Christian dogmas. It is only of late that the clergy have ventured to make friends with Spiritualism; but the movement in that direction is growing rapidly, and at present some of America's most noted "pulpit orators," and a few of our own advanced preachers, are apparently beginning to suspect that what they have hitherto taken to be an adulterant of their religion is really a purifier; and, as you know, they are now openly advocating a vague belief in the return of the so-called dead. Their half-hearted advocacy of Spiritualism, however, is accompanied by the injunction to "try the spirits, if they be of God," which means that they accept only those communications that coincide with their own preconceptions. Now the clergy are beginning to make friends with Spiritualism, because they have ceased to fear it; and having ceased to fear it, their instinctive tendency to injure it has changed into a natural desire to make use of it.

The reason why the clergy have ceased to fear Spiritualism is as significant as it is obvious, and throws much light on the question whether Spiritualism is a religion. Some twenty-five or thirty years ago, as some here will remember, Spiritualists believed themselves to be in a fair way to obtain a new and complete revelation concerning things spiritual, including the future destiny of man; for the idea that the "loved ones" could be mistaken about the facts of the other world, or that the communicating intelligences would deceive, had not then entered the minds of Spiritualists. By-and-bye, discrepancies and contradictions in what the spirits said began reluctantly to be noticed; and the identity of the spirits became a point that had to be verified before accepting the words of the invisibles as true statements of facts; for, even if those words might still be taken to be true statements of the opinions of the communicating intelligences themselves, it seemed clearly advisable to hesitate before accepting what those intelligences said in matters which might be beyond their ken. On this point everyone is now advised to satisfy himself; but, unfortunately, owing to the as yet undefined possibilities of "telepathy," there is at present no certain test of the identity of the spirits, and no test at all, that I, at least, know of, that they are accurately informed about the subject of their discourse; and, as the formation of an independent opinion on these points is difficult and thankless, belief about them is to a large extent a matter of chance influences, geographical position, or partisanship; and we see that even now Spiritualists are divided into almost hostile camps upon the basic question of re-incarnation. Thousands of genuine phenomenal communications, purporting to come from human spirits, confidently assert the truth of re-incarnation; and thousands of other communications, apparently equally authentic and equally authoritative, as vehemently deny it.

We are still so deeply imbued with the old theological idea that when we pass at death from our present state of ignorance we shall suddenly become quasi-omniscient, that it seems to us natural that those who are in the spirit world should know the truth about re-incarnation; but on reflection we perceive that probably no such enormous extension of knowledge as we are apt to fancy occurs at death, and that, therefore, there is no *a priori* reason that those in the next stage of existence should



know any better what will happen to them when they pass beyond that stage than that we should know what will happen to us when we die. On the contrary, our present ignorance of our future affords a strong presumption for a similar ignorance on the part of the spirits. If the spirits have no real knowledge on this point all that they can give us is their opinions; and if spirits retain much of their earthly character we need not be surprised if they assert those opinions as confidently as if they were proven facts. Now, it would be a foolish thing to deny that Smith and Brown are real men because Smith is quite sure that when he dies there is an end of him, while Brown is perfectly convinced that he will have an orchestra-stall in Paradise; and, even so, it seems to me illogical to conclude that a difference of opinion among the spirits about re-incarnation weakens the evidence for their real existence; or, that is, disproves that they lead lives as actually real to themselves as the lives of Smith and Brown on earth are to them. But there can, I think, be no doubt that the difference of opinion among the inhabitants of the spirit world on a point which is, philosophically speaking, so elementary and yet so vital as re-incarnation, is sufficient to destroy confidence in the mere *dicta* of the spirits with regard to anything that must be thought to lie beyond their actual experiences; and, if this be so, it is vain to look to them for any authoritative exposition of the deeper mysteries of existence, such as the great problems with which Philosophy occupies itself, and which Religion has always undertaken to solve off-hand.

The clergy have perceived that it is for these reasons impossible to found a new religion to be called "Spiritualism," in the same way in which the old religions were founded—namely, upon authoritative revelations from "on high," that is to say, coming, or purporting to come, from the invisibles themselves. When the clergy saw that Spiritualism was not going to seriously compete with their own religion as a revealed system, they breathed freely again, and recovering their courage and their astuteness, they began to look around for mediums whose controls showed a theological bias of a serviceable kind; and, if I am not mistaken, the Churches will soon do their utmost to absorb Spiritualism into themselves, for they are beginning to enfold it already in a boa-constrictor-like embrace. The Catholic Church, as yet, luckily, I think, for Spiritualism, refuses to have anything to do with the spirits, except to call them very bad names; but its policy has always been to monopolise spiritual phenomena, and a combination of Catholicism and Spiritualism seems to me not impossible in the future, if the Church of Rome at any time should think it politic.

We may, I think, say with tolerable certainty, therefore, that Spiritualism founded its claim to be considered a Religion upon its supposed or promised revelation concerning the other world, in matters with which religion deals—namely, in regard to the divine government of the world, the character of the Godhead, and the nature and ultimate destiny of the soul—and that, as far as it concerns these larger questions, the early expectations of reliable information have not been fulfilled, for the revelations of the spirits concerning them are not now considered trustworthy by intelligent Spiritualists themselves. Moreover, although Spiritualists are numerous, and are growing fast in number, still there is nothing sufficiently distinctive in their beliefs to differentiate Spiritualism practically from the Churches, or from other systems of philosophical opinion. Instead of crystallising out into a distinctive religious or philosophical sect, Spiritualism has become a living and rejuvenating force in the Churches, and in modern thought generally. On the one hand the Churches are beginning to show a disposition to fall back upon the phenomena of the séance-room for a proof of a continued existence after death; and, on the other hand, we find that the most ambitious, and in some respects the most remarkable, re-statement of the old religio-philosophical theory of the universe—namely, modern Theosophy—sprang originally out of Spiritualism, and is chiefly indebted to the phenomena of Spiritualism for any attention it has as yet received from the world. Take out of modern Christianity the speculative elements concerning the future life that are distinctly Spiritualistic, such as the idea of progressive development after death, and you have little left except a miscellaneous collection of discredited dogmas; take out of Theosophy the phenomenal element, which distinctly belongs to Spiritualism, and all you have left is an ancient and extremely ingenious, but almost wholly conjectural, system of the Cosmos, which is then utterly without the authoritative character that the phenomenal element is claimed to give it.

Now, since there is nothing that practically differentiates Spiritualism from the religious and philosophical systems with which it has become fused—since it has no large cosmic generalisations of its own, which will unify our knowledge, and interpret our experience, either on religious or on philosophic lines—it does not seem to me that Spiritualism can legitimately be considered as, either *de facto* or *de jure*, a Religion or a Philosophy. But if we remember that the work which Spiritualism has done in breaking up men's prejudices, enlarging their conceptions, and changing their opinions, is an outcome of the facts that it has brought to light in hitherto neglected or forbidden fields of knowledge; and when we remember further that these facts are the results of intelligent observation, and of investigations of a purely experimental nature, I do not think that we can hesitate to class Spiritualism among the sciences; for these, its characteristic methods, are those of Science. It is by experimentally bringing to light facts from which important inferences can be drawn, that Science has overturned the erroneous theories of the past, and established demonstrable truths in their stead, and that is precisely what Spiritualism has done, and is doing, in one cosmically subordinate, but humanly speaking transcendently important, field of knowledge—namely, the future life of man. The abandonment of the claim that Spiritualism is in the old sense of the word a revelation seems to me to be, on the one hand, but the obligatory surrender of an untenable position; while, on the other hand, it is the necessary preliminary to the assertion of the claim that Spiritualism is a revelation in the new and truly scientific meaning of that term; for if Spiritualism be neither a Religion nor a Philosophy, it must be considered a Science; a science capable of throwing a "search-light" on both religions and philosophies that enables us to judge of their value.

There are two kinds of revelation. Even Christian theologians allow that God is revealed in Nature as well as in their Bible. In other words, we can learn the truth by observation and inference as well as through the authoritative assertions of those who profess to know. Although our belief in Spiritualism as a revelation in the latter sense may go, our belief in it as a revelation in the former sense cannot be shaken as long as the phenomena remain and we are intelligent enough to draw correct inferences from them. The former kind of revelation—the revelation from fact and inference—is scientific and provisional; the latter kind of revelation—by the supposed authority of some teacher—is theological and final; and there is this immense difference between the two: that theological revelations are accepted on the strength of assertion, and become impressed on the mind by a process that exactly resembles hypnotic suggestion; while the revelations of science, being made through inference from observed fact, are matters of reason which enter the mind through the understanding. Not only, therefore, are revelations of the theological kind liable to consist of merely verbally correct propositions that convey no real meaning, but, as I may remind you, a falsehood can be impressed hypnotically on the mind just as easily as a truth, and is then held just as tenaciously, and never afterwards allowed to be questioned, or considered in need of verification. There is, therefore, no guarantee whatever that beliefs arising from a revelation of the theological kind are true, unless the gratuitous assumption beforehand of the infallibility of the revealer be accepted as a guarantee, in which case plausibility puts on the appearance of proof. A revelation from facts, on the contrary, remains open to correction by further knowledge, and is accepted as actually true only so far as it is verified. The former kind of revelation kills further inquiry, the latter kind of revelation stimulates it. The revelation from fact and inference is therefore the only one that can be relied on to give us knowledge of actualities. It is by this kind of revelation that modern science has revealed to us a universe of which the ancients knew nothing, and which universe the old theological revelations, and the theories built on those old revelations, are quite incompetent to interpret or to explain. It is by means of this same kind of revelation—the revelation from fact and inference—that Spiritualism has done the great work it has already done; and it is by it only that Spiritualism can accomplish the still greater work that lies before it.

Let us now try to form a little more definite conception of the true function of Spiritualism, regarded, as I think it must be, as a Science. It is evident that before the phenomena of the universe can be interpreted they must to some small extent be known; and as all revealed religions are attempts to interpret the Cosmos as known to those who institute those



religions, revelations are always found to be limited and conditioned by the knowledge and ideas current at the time they were obtained. The peculiarity of this century is that during its course the new facts have completely out-grown the old theories; and in no department of knowledge is this the case more than in religion. In all branches of secular knowledge, when serious inquiry into the phenomena of nature began, it was found absolutely necessary for progress to ignore old theories, and to set to work, independently of authority and of fancy, to accumulate facts in the new fields which the telescope, the microscope, and other helps to knowledge had opened up. It was found that not only did the attempt to force the new facts into the old theories cause those facts to be misconceived and misrepresented, through a desire to secure conformity with preconceptions, but also that many of the new facts were on their very face obviously subversive of the old theories.

Now, Spiritualism has done for us in psychic matters much the same thing that the great discoveries and inventions of Science have done for us in regard to material things—it has put into our hands the means for investigating a new realm of nature, and it has put into our heads the desire to avail ourselves of these means. This new realm is not, indeed, one whose presence was hitherto unsuspected, like those revealed by the telescope and microscope, but a realm which had been seized upon by priests and priesthoods, and exploited by them for their own benefit, all intrusion on it by seekers after knowledge, who were not members of the priestly caste, being repelled with merciless cruelty. In the subjects with which Spiritualism deals, the new facts have also outgrown the old theories; insomuch that instead of the old theories explaining the new facts, the new facts account for the existence of the old theories; and by explaining the misconceptions through which they arose, the new facts make any further belief in the authoritativeness of those old theories impossible. More than this: by bringing the fact of spirit intercourse into the field of practical experiment, Spiritualism has virtually made the establishment of a new revelation of the theological kind henceforth impossible; for we cannot imagine any form of authoritative revelation, whether by God, or angel, or Mahatma, that will not have to submit to be judged by the canons of trustworthiness, which it is the manifest function of Spiritualism as a science to institute; and it is sufficiently obvious that a revealer who has to present satisfactory credentials before being believed possesses authority not in the religious but in the scientific sense. Spiritualism, in fact, enables us to go behind the scenes and see how religions are made up and put upon the stage. It deals with the same commodities with which theology has made its fortune, only it deals with them, I think, both more intelligently and more honestly. In the séance room to-day, the same kind of phenomena occur which in various ages have been attributed to the action of God and devil, imp and angel; and the key to these manifestations must, when found, prove to be a pass-key to all miracles and wonders. Without Spiritualism to explain them, the religions of mankind are incomprehensible farragoes and colossal stupidities, and the mystical speculations of some of the world's brightest minds are no better than veiled lunacy; with Spiritualism, all is explained, and even, in a certain sense, justified.

If Spiritualism be of the nature of a Science, and if its function be to investigate the laws of spirit intercourse, and to formulate a knowledge of the invisible world and of its inhabitants—as seems to me to be the conclusion to which the considerations I have endeavoured to lay before you lead—then it becomes of interest to consider how it can best perform that function. In the first place, it is necessary to bear in mind that the invisible region and its inhabitants are a department of nature as completely phenomenal as that in which we find our present lives contained. The human mind is not so constituted as to be able to take cognisance of the *noumena* or realities that underlie the phenomenal universe; and to suppose that the study of the spiritual region will give us a knowledge of these realities or *noumena* which lie beyond our power of conception is a contradiction in terms. Both Religion and Philosophy start with the declaration that the Power that underlies the manifested universe is unknowable, and both of them attempt to comprehend the Power which they in the same breath declare to be incomprehensible. Science does not make that palpable blunder, and Spiritualism, if it is to claim any scientific authority, must avoid it also. What we have left, when we eliminate from our knowledge all theories that have been spun in the imagination, are facts, and inferences from those facts, either

particular or general; and it seems to me that Spiritualism cannot by any possibility transcend those limits, although it can indefinitely extend them, and can include in our knowledge of the universe generalisations from an extended experience which will suffice for all our intellectual and emotional cravings for knowledge of the invisible world. If we still long for more, we may rest assured that it is fancy, and not fact, that will “fill the aching void.”

Since we cannot draw inferences unless we first have the facts to draw them from, it is evident that facts are the all-important things. Still, notwithstanding the immense number of recorded phenomena, so little do we as yet know about the real facts of the invisible world, and so few are the reliable inferences that as yet we can draw from these, that there exists the greatest difference of opinion, even among Spiritualists, concerning the significance of the phenomena themselves. Some maintain that all the phenomena of the *séance*-room are produced by human spirits; others declare that they are occasionally, or generally, if not always, the work of demons, or “elementals,” or “shells,” or of the “astral self” of the medium; but there is no established test, nor any recognised principle for judging in the matter; and although almost all are certain of the truth of their own opinions, everyone is obliged to confess that no one knows anything certain about it. No doubt it is a delightfully simple and convenient way of solving the problem to say, as some Spiritualists do, that Jesus was a medium, and the magicians were mediums, and the theurgists were mediums, and the sorcerers were mediums, and the Prophets were mediums, and the witches were mediums, and the initiated priests of antiquity were mediums; but both the means employed and the results obtained by these various classes of wonder-workers differed from those of our mediums and from one another, and I see no *a priori* reason for believing that they all dealt with the same class of invisibles; and if all wonder-workers are mediums, then the name “medium” has at present no determinate significance.

Again, there does not seem to be any *a priori* reason for supposing that the entities who appear in our *séance*-rooms—claiming to be the “spirits” of our departed friends, and giving very strong proof that they are so—are the same entities that appeared to the ancients as gods and messengers of gods, to the early Christians as saints and angels, to the mediæval theologians as devils and imps, to the Fire Philosophers as sylphs, undines, gnomes, and salamanders, to country folk in all ages as fairies, elves, and so forth, and in the East as Devas, Devatas, or Rishis, or else as Affrites, Rackshashas, Gandharvas, and the thousand-and-one elemental creatures of which Eastern occultism tells. It is, I think, much more in accordance with the analogies of nature, and therefore much more probable, that in the “Fourth Dimension,” or however the unknown region may be named, there exist, in addition to disembodied humans, an immense number of different kinds of entities, any of which is liable to manifest in our world when the conditions that enable it to do so are furnished.

You see that I claim for Spiritualism, as I conceive it, a very important function in the world—namely, the investigation of the invisible universe. The performance of that function, in fact, is what constitutes Spiritualism; and the acceptance of it entails a heavy, though very honourable, responsibility. Thus conceived, Spiritualism is a Science, and we must remember that what has made Science great is its thoroughness, and that to be thorough it is necessary to be dispassionate and fearless. If Spiritualism is to perform its high function, it must follow the example of the physical sciences in respect to fearlessness and dispassion, as well as in attaching a prime importance to facts. It was because the early Spiritualists took advantage of the all-important power of demonstrating by experiment the truth of their assertion, that intercourse with the invisibles is possible, that Spiritualism grew as it did at first, giving a promise of adult health and strength that I do not think has been fulfilled. In America, where every form of Spiritualism is much stronger than elsewhere, Spiritualists are more alive than we are to the importance of practical research; for the experience of forty-five years in that country has shown that if almost any family party will sit with their hands upon a small table and their minds in a receptive or passive condition—not necessarily a believing one—they are pretty sure, if they persevere, to get some phenomenon, if even it be a trifling one, that will prove to them the real existence of the world of the invisibles, and show them that its inhabitants have power to communicate with mortals. It



seems to me that the present feeble condition of the Spiritualistic movement, as compared with the promise of strength it gave at first, is due to the neglect and depreciation of the phenomena which have become fashionable of late years, and to the substituting of moralising and sentimentalising for observation and experiment in the séance-room. Anyone can sentimentalise and moralise, and these are not the points on the strength of which Spiritualism can claim, or is likely to command, the attention of the world; nor are they the means whereby Spiritualism can perform its function of scientific instructor to mankind in a branch of knowledge at once the most interesting and the most recondite.

The consequence of this neglect of its obvious responsibilities and duties as a revealer of truths in its own particular field is that Spiritualism has been to a large extent emptied of its content. Its religious force—as a living belief in a happy after-life for man, and consequently as a vindication of the goodness of Providence—has been stolen by the Churches, and is being used by them as a flame to re-kindle the fires of their altars; and the function of practical investigation, which pre-eminently belongs to Spiritualism if any function does so, has begun to be fearlessly and thoroughly performed by Societies for Psychical Research, and by the schools of Hypnotism and "Magic." Spiritualism is in my opinion the legitimate heir to the ancient occult wisdom of the East; but its inheritance has been usurped by the latter-day theosophists, who, apparently in the old priestly spirit, now try to warn and frighten free and unpledged inquirers away from the field of which they claim a monopoly. Thus robbed of its content, deprived of its duties, and relieved of its responsibilities, what can Spiritualism be but bloodless and boneless, nerveless and spiritless? The astonishing thing is that it shows the vitality it does.

If we ask why the practical or experimental side of Spiritualism has been neglected—why, in fact, it has failed to perform its primary function of investigation—we are answered from every side that the intercourse with the invisibles is fraught with danger. Now, if this danger exists, it is a serious thing for those who actually undertake the practical exploration of the unknown region—just as the cannibalistic propensities of savages are serious things for those who seek to extend our knowledge of geography, or the instability of nitrogen compounds is a serious thing for those devotees of Science who study explosives. But even if this danger be real, it has to be faced if Spiritualism is to be true to its great mission; for the refusal to face it is tantamount to a permanent relinquishment to superstition of the whole territory which it is the duty of Spiritualism as a science to reclaim from priestly nescience and charlatanism. But is that danger real? When we look for the original source of the warnings of danger, we find that they are the echoes of the maledictions cast by priests on heads of unorthodox and unauthorised intruders into their preserves. Whether danger exists or not, it is certain that these monopolists would have raised the danger-cry. But of what is the dreaded danger said to consist? It is asserted that intercourse with the invisibles leads to "immorality" and insanity; but that this is so, nothing but an extended experience can prove; for at present experience is all against it. Were it true, Spiritualists would form a criminal and lunatic class, clearly marked off from the virtuous and the sane; but such is certainly not the case. It may be true that like attracts like in spirit intercourse, as in human intercourse, but who would prohibit human intercourse because the world is, unfortunately, full of bad characters? There is probably this unavoidable risk; but any other danger from spirit intercourse has not been proved, and until it is proved the assertion of such danger ought, in my opinion, to be regarded as gross exaggeration, if not downright lying, on the part of those who have theories or practices that will not bear the light of investigation—the interested statements of monopolists which have been thoughtlessly repeated by timid and imaginative Spiritualists, much to the detriment of Spiritualism.

There remains one very important point to which I wish to call your attention. If Spiritualism be a Science, and the fearless, dispassionate, and thoroughgoing methods of Science be those proper to it, it is no less necessary for Spiritualism to follow the example of Science in another way also. You know that Science took its birth in the observation of exceptional phenomena, and that it was only by seeking to account for those exceptional phenomena in another way than the primitive one of the arbitrary will of God and Devil that a conception arose in men's minds of the existence all around us of continuously acting, uniform, and all-pervading forces; and, moreover, that

it was only when this idea of a law-abiding universe had become habitual that it was recognised that the real function of Science was not to account for the abnormal, but to explain the normal; and that it is impossible to explain the exceptions to law unless we understand the usual and regular working of law. Now, hitherto research into the occult, at least in the West, has been almost wholly confined to the exceptional. But the suspicion is beginning to arise in some quarters that occult or spiritual influences are playing upon us all the time, as a part of our normal and natural condition of existence; and that there is not an action of our lives, and perhaps not even a thought, that is absolutely free from some degree of suggestion from the invisible world. This is but an ancient religio-philosophical idea revived in a scientific form; and it is this supposed fact of normal inter-relation with the invisibles that gives Spiritualism its supreme importance, and seems to me to more than justify any possible danger, or any probable sacrifice, entailed by as thorough an investigation of the invisible region whence those influences come as it is in our power to make.

In conclusion I have only to say this—and, however little you may agree with the reasoning by which I have reached this conclusion, I hope you will endorse the conclusion itself—Spiritualism should spread its mantle over all the robbers that have emptied it of so much of its content, and forgive them their trespasses. There is now no other way to get back its stolen property than by making common cause with the robbers; and by so doing Spiritualism may also hope to convert those robbers to the way of grace. Let Spiritualists accumulate facts, collate, co-ordinate, and classify them, and help all those, whether professedly Spiritualists or not, who are trying to do the same; and let Spiritualists endeavour to enter into the ideas of those who, either in ancient or in modern times, have formed theories of the invisible region, in order to understand those ideas and theories, and to judge of their value. If Spiritualism does this, it will soon find that its enemies have become, not only its friends, but *itself*. Spiritualism then will have recovered its content, and will thus be master of the situation.

## THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT CHINESE.

The following is from a recent number of the "Literary Digest":—

The popular religion of the Chinese has been the subject of numerous writings, but scarcely anything has been written regarding the religious beliefs of those races who peopled the country before the introduction of Buddhism. Professor C. de Harlez, of the University of Louvain, Belgium, contributes a most instructive article on the subject to "The New World," for December. It is generally believed that the people established on the banks of the Houang Ho, in the twenty-third century before Christ, came from Central Asia, and that they had a very advanced civilisation, both from a moral and political point of view. But they were surrounded on all sides by tribes whose language they did not understand. These early Chinese were, however, not slow to enter into relations with distant countries, and an expedition of the Emperor Mu Wang to Central Asia brought them into contact with Bactriana and Assyria. About 600 B. C. numerous vessels came to visit the ports of the Empire and brought there, together with precious freight, the missionaries of the religion of the stars, of fire, and of the stellar gods and their myths. Still later, the Buddhists introduced into China several of the Indian Devas, and especially the belief in the infernal regions, and their sombre divinities. In the meantime, the Chinese had received the teaching of their two greatest philosophers, Confucius and Lao-tze, whose doctrines exercised a decisive influence upon the religious beliefs of their fellow-citizens. The first teacher, in re-establishing the ancient usages, considerably weakened the faith of the people in a personal God; the second teacher, in creating the system of "Tao," under a Brahmanic influence, opened the way to all kinds of innovations, and gave rise, though involuntarily, to that polytheistic and superstitious character which dishonours the Chinese religion to-day. But the beliefs of the earliest races of China were of the simplest kind. They believed in one personal God, the sovereign over heaven and mankind, and the master of empires, although the books of the Chinese do not tell us that they regarded God as the creator of the world. They do not seem to have been concerned with the origin of things. This God they called "supreme emperor" or "Shangti."



and considered his position in heaven similar to that of the Sovereign-master on earth. They believed, likewise, in spirits of an intellectual nature inhabiting heaven or earth, and in charge of the different elements. These spirits, they said, watched over the moral law, and observed the actions of men, penetrating even to the depths of the hearts, seeing everything, even the invisible, and aiding in the recompense of the good and the punishment of the wicked. It was not fear that gave rise to the conception of the divinity among these ancient people, for they represented God to themselves with all the traits of a good and compassionate father, and in their eyes the Emperor, who represented the divinity, should be to them the "Fa Mu," or the "father-mother," of his people. It was gratitude which inspired their early conceptions of God, and their offerings and sacrifices were those of gratitude rather than those of propitiation.

## GLEANINGS FROM THE FOREIGN PRESS.

### A PREMONITION.

The Dutch "Sphinx," which has just completed its first volume, and whose success seems to be an accomplished fact, has among others an interesting article from the German by Dr. Carl du Prel, and one on Magnetism, as a basis of physiology, by the Editor. It quotes what appears to be a well authenticated case of premonition. In Berlin an old couple named Gärtner had two sons, one of whom was in business, and while on a journey had stayed at Halle. While there he had a curious feeling on a Saturday evening regarding his mother. He had to telegraph asking about her health. He did not receive the reply sent to him, and he anxiously returned by the first available train to Berlin. When he arrived there and went to his father's house he found the old lady quite well, but his brother told him of a similar feeling having been experienced by himself. His parents were at supper when he arrived, and after waiting and chatting half-an-hour he departed for his own home. Ten minutes later a messenger followed him with the news that his mother, whom he had left quite well, had been suddenly stricken and was dead.

### MRS. D'ESPERANCE IN FINLAND.

Professor Max Seiling, of the Polytechnic in Helsingfors, gives an account of some séances with this lady in that town. Mrs. d'Esperance favoured the circle of inquirers there with eight sittings, of which one-half were held in an apartment hired for the purpose, and the other half in private houses. In what, for the sake of distinction, might be called the public séances, about two dozen sitters took part, while in those of a semi-private character the number of those who assisted did not exceed fifteen. In the first-named the conditions were not very favourable. The meetings were composed almost exclusively of persons wholly unknown to the medium, and to whom she was equally unknown—except, of course, by reputation—and although everyone present enjoyed the privilege of questioning Mrs. d'Esperance in the fullest manner conceivable, they did not in return respond to her earnest requests for "singing" except in a weak and perfunctory fashion. In addition to this drawback the opinions of the sceptical were frequently volunteered in forms of expression which could not always be called refined. This lady must possess not only considerable courage but a large spirit of forbearance to be enabled to face these crude outbursts of egotism on the part of people who are invited to observe, without money and without price, some of the extraordinary phenomena which attend her mediumship. Three of the semi-private séances were held in Professor Seiling's own house, and of these the following general account is taken from his report in "Die Uebersinnliche Welt." At the request of Mrs. d'Esperance and the spirits—with whom communication was maintained by means of raps—the lighting of the hired apartment had been so weak that those sitting farthest from the medium—who was placed in front of a cabinet—must have experienced considerable difficulty in seeing her. On the other hand, those nearest her found it to be almost always sufficient to enable them to recognise her. Speaking generally, they observed the same phenomena and phantoms as characterised the Berlin séances, although the former were comparatively less numerous, and the latter mostly so shy and timorous that they either only showed themselves in the cabinet when the curtain was drawn aside, or, at the farthest, manifested only two or three feet in front of it. To the appearances which, according to the Professor's judgment, could

not possibly originate with the medium, belonged those which he saw while he simultaneously perceived the presence of that lady in her place, and especially those forms which—or who—possessed altogether different bodily dimensions, such as little children and some gigantic shapes, as well as that which, before all their eyes, gradually developed in front of the cabinet from a luminous body about the size of a plate. On one occasion a child emerged from a small cloud which came from the upper part of the cabinet and moved along some distance horizontally, finally sinking to the floor. It repeatedly happened that two forms were concurrently visible, and the Professor emphasises this circumstance for the consideration of sceptics. All suspicion of trick is excluded from his own mind. Three of the séances occurred in his own house, and since his acquaintance with Mrs. d'Esperance he has recognised in her the traits of a high-minded and good-hearted woman. He asserts that there was no illusion whatever about these forms. They were realities. They shook hands with several people, and one child-shape, after knocking a matchbox from an adjoining table, gave a light tap on the hand of one lady, embraced and kissed another, and kissed General S. on the brow and cheek. Several of the forms shook hands with the Professor himself, although somewhat coyly, and he naturally grasped the fingers held out to him. He states that they were quite human-like, two of the hands being rather cold and other two fairly warm. His wife's hands were also heartily shaken by a masculine shape whose fingers are described as large, fleshy, and quite warm, and the reality of these existences was brought home to Professor Seiling in another practical way. He was sitting in the immediate vicinity of the medium, and therefore in front of the cabinet, not dreaming that he could in this position impede in any degree the progress of an apparition making its way from the opening of the curtain, as he supposed that "matter," including of course that of his own body, was no hindrance to them. This does not, however, appear to be always the case. For a time he had heard sounds as if someone was busy with the curtains, and at last he was rather roughly hustled on his right shoulder—the shoulder furthest from the medium—and in such fashion as to make him understand that he was in the path of someone who was coming. He drew aside, and immediately received by way of thanks the outstretched hand of a perfectly developed shape standing in the space between the now parted hangings. After he had grasped and felt this hand it was withdrawn. Another striking incident which he relates is that of a child-shape observed by him to creep up into a lady's lap. Its little hands were cold and emaciated.

## 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,—In your issue of January 6th, you attribute to me opinions which are not mine—(1) That evil is confined to earth. (2) That the next world is necessarily a perfect one.

I think exactly the contrary.

Paris.

ALFRED ERNY.

January 19th, 1894.

### The Higher Ego.

SIR,—May I courteously obtrude a last word upon your correspondent, Mr. Charles Strange? Emerson in his Essay on Swedenborg wisely says:—"Our instincts teach that the problem of essence must take precedence of all others." From universal portents I am sure we are now verging not alone on the discovery of soul, but perhaps towards a higher fact—the *Culture of Soul*—and an inter-communion with arcana more perfect still. As the microscope has discovered the bioplasts so as certainly will the higher attributes of soul navigate unexplored currents of human consciousness. Mr. S. sets small value by "phenomena," or even methods of logic, in search of occult truths. Nevertheless, this severely scientific age demands definitions and inductions. Are not such the clear guide-posts to axiomatic results? If such fail, in Mr. Strange's opinion, the only resort is to obtain the golden key—experimental knowledge; but a new difficulty confronts us here. We can neither translate nor interfuse our abnormal absorptions—the conveyance of such reciprocations can only command ordinary credence, such as obtains in business or



social life. Am I inaccurate in stating that our souls' repository, dowered often with light supernal, is generally individualistic, and not racial? In every case, however, preparation precedes attainment, and, profoundest mystery of all, these twin factors are contingent upon primary conditions, which we may term organic fitness. This in Spiritualism, let me impress upon Mr. Strange, is the real Rubicon which must be crossed ere dogmatism can obtain. Reasoning in default of the more perfect knowledge lies in the rear of necessary scientific accuracy.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

W. H. ROBINSON.

#### Spirit Photographs, &c.

SIR,—The production of photographic portraits by spirit-power without the employment of a camera, as testified by Mr. Glendinning, is not altogether new. During my residence in Boston, U.S., I occasionally met a gentleman who belonged to the spiritual brotherhood. He was an artist, and was credited with painting very fine full-sized portraits in oil of deceased persons whom he had never seen, whose likenesses were recognised by friends and considered excellent as works of art. One day I asked him how he managed to get these likenesses—whether he was spiritually impressed or whether he worked from a photograph. He told me in reply that he went to Mrs. Boothby, a materialising medium, taking with him a small sheet of glass, and when "John King" emerged from the cabinet he handed the glass to the spirit-form, which gently waved it in the air for a short time and then handed it back. On the glass was visible a portrait, which the artist now intently gazed upon as long as it lasted. In the course of a few minutes it faded away. He then returned home, and from recollection and by the aid of spirit impression was enabled to reproduce in a very successful manner the portrait he had seen, in an enlarged form. Of course I cannot guarantee the truth of this, but as my informant was an earnest and devoted Spiritualist, and could have had no object in deceiving me, I see no reason to doubt the fact, especially as analogous phenomena have occurred in our English experience.

I occasionally attended Mrs. Boothby's sésances, and was well assured of the genuineness of her mediumship, very remarkable phenomena taking place. On entering the cabinet, the medium was hardly out of sight before a figure in white appeared, and spirit-forms would walk to the further end of the room between the company, who were seated on each side of it, leaving a passage in the middle. The spirits were accustomed to talk and sing in very loud voices, and hold conversation with the company.

While I am writing I may mention a circumstance that has just occurred, which is in the nature of a coincidence. I have had several of these in the course of my life, which I may some day make a note of. Yesterday I had been reading in the "Banner of Light" an article on Servetus, showing how he suffered martyrdom at the hands of John Calvin. It occurred to me that this article would be of interest to an old friend who holds the office of deacon in our principal Calvinistic tabernacle. He is very much concerned about my Spiritual proclivities, and whenever we meet they always become the subject of conversation. Through being away from home and other causes, I had not seen this disciple of Calvin for some time—about two years, I should judge. About midday, yesterday, I posted the said "Banner" to my friend, and about five o'clock was surprised to hear his name announced as a visitor. I thought he had called in consequence of my sending him the paper, but I found his object was to get me to read a pamphlet, entitled, "Eternity," which, as it was in its twenty-fifth thousand, was evidently regarded as an important publication by the faithful of his denomination. The author is "A Banker." I thanked him and told him I would look at it. I then asked him if he had received anything from me, and he said he had not. I told him that most likely he would find something when he got home. How are these coincidences to be explained? The chances are very many against their happening fortuitously.

Eastbourne.

ROBERT COOPER.

So sometimes comes to soul and sense

The feeling which is evidence

That very near about us lies

The realm of spiritual mysteries.—WHITTIER.

MAN must be to a certain degree the artificer of his own happiness. The tools and materials may be put into his hands by the bounty of Providence, but the workmanship must be his own.—CUMBERLAND.

## SOCIETY WORK.

[Correspondents who send us notices of the work of the Societies with which they are associated will oblige by writing as distinctly as possible and by appending their signatures to their communications. Inattention to these requirements often compels us to reject their contributions. No notice received later than the first post on Tuesday is sure of admission.]

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—At our service on Sunday, many strangers were present. Mr. R. W. Cable gave an account of the great success of Spiritualism in the North of England, followed by very successful Psychometry. Sunday at 7 p.m., open circle, with organ recitals; inquirers invited. Tuesday at 8 p.m., sésance, Mrs. Mason; January 28th, Mrs. Spring.—J. H. B., Hon. Sec.

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN'S HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E.—Meetings free, every Sunday at 7 o'clock; Fridays at 7.30 for Inquirers, and at 8.30 for Members. On Sunday last we had an experience meeting, when several members gave their testimonies. Many strangers were among the audience, and the interest evinced by them was particularly noticeable by their staying behind to ask questions. These services are, to our minds, amongst the best institutions connected with a society.—J. RAINBOW, Hon. Sec.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE, W.—On Sunday evening last Mrs. May Mozart, although suffering from a weak throat, answered many written questions from a crowded audience, her replies giving general satisfaction. We thank Mrs. Mozart very much for so kindly giving her services to our Association. Next Sunday evening, January 21st, at 7 p.m., Mr. Wallace (the pioneer medium) will relate some of his many experiences. We hope for a full hall on this occasion. On Sunday evening, January 28th, Mr. W. T. Cooper. February 4th, Mr. J. J. Morse.—L.H.R.

311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—At the half-yearly general meeting of the South London Spiritualists, the work during the past half-year was shown to have been well sustained. Our increase in membership has been twenty. Cash balance has increased from £9 to £30. The following were elected officers of the mission for the ensuing half-year:—Messrs. Long, Partner, Payne, H. and R. Boddington, Warden, Coleman, and Jerry; Mesdames Ryder, Sherwood, M. Mackay, and Crump. On Sunday, February 11th, the new premises of the South London Spiritualists' Mission, at Camberwell Green, will be opened, when many well-known mediums and leading Spiritualists will attend and take part in the proceedings. Full particulars next week. Will our friends please note that no further meetings will be held at 311, Camberwell New-road, and that pending the opening above announced, our usual meetings will be suspended?—C. M. PAYNE, Hon. Sec.

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 Chabanais, 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.

## THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

2, DUKE-STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

This Society of Spiritualists, founded for the purpose, primarily, of uniting those who share a common faith, and then of giving information respecting that faith to those who seek for it, occupies Chambers at the above address. There will be found an extensive Library of works especially attractive to Spiritualists, the various Journals of Spiritualism published in this and other countries; and opportunities of converse with friends like-minded. The Alliance holds periodical meetings at which papers on interesting phases of the subject are read, and discussion is invited. Donations solicited.

Minimum Annual Subscription of Members and Associates, One Guinea, payable in advance, and on the 1st January in each year. Further particulars may be obtained from B. D. GODFREY, Librarian, on the premises.