

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Professor W. F. Barrett has issued, we are afraid we can hardly say published, a pamphlet on 'Necromancy and Ancient Magic in its Relation to Modern Spiritualism.' It is slightly conservative, without being at all hindering in its orthodoxy, and is much too scholarly to be in any respect narrow. He thinks that the Hebrew commands against 'necromancy' were wise, and applauds the 'virile, far-seeing' Hebrew prophets for their splendid protests against any dark practice that threatened the weakening of personality, the surrender of sense and responsibility, and reliance upon God.

The pamphlet is crowded with curiously enlightening facts, comments and criticisms, chiefly bearing upon the relation of Spiritualism and 'Necromancy' to the Old Testament. The case of 'the witch of Endor,' for instance, is considered from various points of view, and then dismissed with the pregnant remark, 'The whole account is interesting, as showing to what a remote period in history we can trace spiritualistic phenomena similar to those going on at the present day.'

While maintaining that the ancient prohibition of spirit intercourse was wise at a time when the tendency was in every way to exaggerate it and abuse it, Professor Barrett thinks that the ancient prophets would now rebuke us for 'the forgetfulness of unseen realities which characterises human thought and action.' 'Reason has been exalted until it has become unreason, and God and a future life have faded out of view.' 'We can well believe, therefore,' he says, 'that what were once prohibitions to a people prone to superstition, who saw an omen in every mystery, and a god in every grove, would now become invitations to a scoffing and agnostic generation, whose eyes are blinded to that transcendental world which enwraps and ultimately absorbs us all.'

We began by suggesting a regret that this pamphlet can hardly be said to be published. Copies, however, can be had from the office of 'LIGHT' at the price of sixpence each; or post free sixpence halfpenny.

The London correspondent of the 'Sydney Morning Herald' is not known at Duke-street, but we fully appreciate his sympathetic reference to the throbbing spiritual atmosphere in which we are all living, moving, and having our being just now. He says:—

Just now science is getting so near the plane of magic, what with Edison's unexpected admission of a Divine force and our increasing gifts of healing, clairvoyance, tongues, and prophetic vision, that even the man in the street sees that the 'occult' is only the unstudied, the foreign, the outlandish, the *uncouth*; and when this becomes common property, *couth*, known, and, finally, a cult, there will no longer be anything sinister in what are simply new scientific avenues. Even the new *flourescent* phenomena are indirectly leading up to new aspects of Christianity, and many students are holding their breath in expectancy.

We are glad to hear it, and hope that this suspended breathing will not last too long. It is not at all necessary

that these 'students' should get excited; we only ask for quiet and patient consideration.

Mr. Garbett has sent us his curious tract on 'Bishop Butler's Predictions, referring to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's Times.' There are in it indications of great industry and some scholarship, but we fail to be interested in the old-world Biblical puzzle with which it deals (Rev. xiii. 18). Mr. Garbett, however, seems very anxious, so much so that he wishes us to believe that 'Allah, our God, killed' Dean Alford, or 'struck Alford dead,' because he made a muddle of this passage. In like manner, the Bishops are called 'Satan's own,' or 'Fathers in Satan'; and, because Dean Farrar and six other scholars hit upon the same explanation at about the same time, we are invited to see that the Devil's personality is proved, otherwise how could they have all thought of it together? It is all very pitiful, and only shows how necessary it is not to excite one's self over these things; and to avoid being over positive, especially over things occult.

M. Paul d'Enjoy contributes to the 'Revue Scientifique' some useful information concerning the occult beliefs and practices of certain Indo-Chinese races and tribes. The Annamites and the Cambodians are, for instance, keen believers in the presence of spirits, chiefly injurious or unfriendly. The good spirits they believe to be far away, alike untouched and unregarding. The evil earth-spirits produce sickness, especially slow diseases which amuse them. They are specially moved by jealousy, and parents often give their children hateful names, even names of diseases, instead of the pretty names of which they are so fond, in order to avert the jealousy of the evil beings. But these evil spirits are open to influence, either of bribery or abuse. During an epidemic of cholera, the people construct a raft of banana trees, decorate it with incense candles, and place on it quantities of fruit and other food. This, with prayers and benedictions, they launch upon the swift-running river, hoping that the cholera-spirit will be bribed to go with it for the sake of the homage and the food.

Another plan is to menace and browbeat generally. This is done through a professional magician who, by various horrible proceedings, leads the evil spirit to fear he has to deal with someone more malignant than itself, and then it is probably glad to go away.

Where there is so much smoke there is fire, but one of the main uses of Spiritualism is to reduce these farragoes of fear and superstition to order; and especially to show the true way to overcome all evil, without and within.

In Max Müller's 'Fortnightly Review' Article on 'Coincidences,' there is a knowing little remark which we commend to our critics. Referring to certain 'critical scholars,' he says, 'If they are sceptical, they are so in order to arrive at truth, not in order to say, What is truth?' In other words, the bias of the genuine critic is a bias in favour of bringing out the truth, not in favour of

shelving it. Criticism ought to measure anxiety to get at the thing which is, not desire to prove that everything which seems to be true can be proved to be false. In short, the critic's negative ought to be only the emphasis of his affirmative. We ask for no more.

'The Lyceum Banner' for September is a lively number of a lively little caterer for young folks; perhaps somewhat goody-goody both in matter and style, but all wholesome and not unattractive. The 'Synopsis for Lesson plan' is a noticeable departure from the old-fashioned lines. Mrs. Kate Taylor Robinson's page on 'What the poets teach the children' is a capital notion.

THE GREAT NEED OF SPIRITUALISM TO-DAY.

By ARTHUR LOVELL, Author of 'Ars Vivendi,' &c.

At the present time knowledge is advancing by leaps and bounds, and on all sides there are indications of a new era of freedom and daring of thought being inaugurated in the history of Man. A well-known scientific man some time ago said we were now asking questions which, half a century since, sounded to the scientist extravagant and nonsensical, and to the theologian impious and blasphemous. To-day, even the most enthusiastic student can hardly complain of the slow rate of the progress of thought. There is quite a ferment of new and daring ideas, not only in the mind of the advanced thinker, but also of the general mass of civilised mankind. People are no longer content with saying, 'My father and my grandfather held such and such a belief, and what was good enough for them is good enough for me.' The universal cry now is, 'No more vague, loose, disjointed notions about this or that! Let us have precision of thought; let us see, if possible, how the fact stands. We don't want to believe what is not a fact, what on the face of it is absurd. We neither want superstition nor credulity; neither the haughty pride of scepticism nor the inordinate self-esteem of fanaticism.' That, I believe, represents the mental yearning of the average thinking man and woman of the present day, and that is the only attitude worthy of any being with the slightest pretence to reasoning capacity. For, after all said and done, what possible interest has any rational creature in the propagation of a non-fact?

Bearing this point continually in mind, we shall, in the course of our development, escape many snares and pitfalls into which we are very liable to fall when we come in sight of new facts, or what are alleged to be facts. It is the constant ignoring of this point which has landed many a scientific man in the most grotesque absurdities. As an example, the late Professor Huxley might be cited on one side, as one of the finest types of the genuine man of science, and on the other side as one of the finest types of the blind, unreasoning fetish-worshipper. In a certain region of thought there was no greater authority, while away from that region his authority was altogether misleading. This is not a mere dogmatic assertion, but a fact which can be demonstrated from the very nature of 'Science.'

If we ask what is Science, the reply is that it is classified or systematised knowledge of certain phenomena. The 'scientific' man, strictly defined, is the man who has precise, well-defined thoughts on such and such questions. Take, for example, the objects we see in the sky—the sun, moon, and stars. Instead of vague, dreamy ideas as to their position, nature, &c., the 'scientific' man aims at getting hold of facts about them, what they are, how far away, &c. This is the 'science' of Astronomy. And so on with the other sciences, each one of which deals with a certain department of Nature to the exclusion of other departments. The more exact and well-defined our knowledge of the sequence of events in these departments, the more scientific we are. So far so good.

But what happens if we step out of these departments into another department or sphere? Suppose the astronomer said to the physiologist, 'The laws I have found out in my sphere are the only laws of the universe. You must not talk of vital laws, or of digestion, assimilation, and other organic processes. They do not exist.' The physiologist would naturally retort, 'You may be a good astronomer, but you are a bad physiologist. You are scientific in your own sphere, but you are totally unscientific in mine.'

But, asks the man of science, 'Who in his senses would say such a thing as that?' Yet that is the very thing men of science themselves have been saying, and they have been saying it so persistently that those who have been thinking that a mistake has been made hardly care to say it aloud for fear of the dreadful reputation of being 'unscientific.' What nonsense! What hypocrisy! The very essence of 'science' is knowledge, not abstract theory, much less preconceived opinion. To assume towards a fact, or alleged fact, an attitude of hostility, of bigoted opposition, is to render a man who is 'scientific' on certain points, *ipso facto* unscientific so far as that fact is concerned, for he transmutes himself from the clear-headed, living searcher after truth to the dead formalist who, failing to squeeze into his barren theory all the facts that confront him, breaks out into passion like Proetophantasmist, in 'Faust':—

Cursed devils—how they murder
All attempts at keeping order:
All in vain it is to prove
To spirits by what laws they move;
Mocking at all regulation,
Ridiculing demonstration,

See them onward still advancing,
I thought that, by my labours brightened,
The world for this was too enlightened.
These devils—they rise, and in derision
Of all I say, still cross my vision.
What! beings that have no existence
To mock each law of time and distance.
Still here! with all the noise of Babel,
These dreams of a forgotten fable!

My comments—what are they? The cavils
Of a sour cynic on his travels,
A passing stranger's jealous spite.

The last three lines will describe exactly the attitude of many a 'scientific' man towards the higher laws of the Universe. It cannot be too much impressed upon the mind what such an attitude means—*total want of the scientific spirit, i.e., the spirit of calm, dispassionate inquiry after actual facts.* To argue that because a man knows chemistry or geology, he knows what will take place when half-a-dozen people sit in certain psychical conditions round a table, is to be unscientific. Of course, he *may* know, but it is not because he is master of chemistry or geology. This is quite another 'science.' We can know one without knowing the other. To say that a man is a Spiritualist no more incapacitates him for precision of thought, such as is meant by exact science, than to say that a man is an astronomer or geologist. On this point there is great confusion of thought, and to this confusion is due the reproach of being 'unscientific' should a well-known investigator of natural phenomena turn to the unseen realm. In the interests of 'science,' this bugbear should be thrust aside without delay, for of all the departments of investigation not one so imperatively demands exactness and precision of thought as the 'spiritual' realm. The greatest mistake possible is to think that the Spiritualist need not trouble himself or herself with accurate and clean-cut ideas. The danger of loose and vague ideas is enormous, and the great need of the Spiritualism of to-day is to insist upon 'exact science,' to take nothing for granted, but to investigate everything in a calm spirit, and steer clear of superstition and credulity. By proceeding on these lines, the Spiritualist will eventually succeed in bringing the spiritual domain within the category of a science as exact and precise as the realm of the astronomer. He will demonstrate the conditions essential to successful investigation with as much authority as the chemist lays down the conditions essential to the study of chemistry. There will then be no longer the anomaly of the physical scientist attempting to bring to the consideration of Spiritualism a mental condition totally incompatible with science; nor will the undisciplined thinker rush in where angels would often fear to tread.

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LIMITED.—Copies of the Memorandum and Articles of Association may be obtained from the office of the Alliance, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, London, W.C., price 1s. The Memorandum sets forth in detail the purposes and objects of the society, with the names of the signatories; and the Articles prescribe the necessary rules and regulations for its conduct, including the election of members and associates, council, and officers.

AN INSTRUCTIVE STORY OF OBSESSION.

(Continued from page 388.)

One day Varia recommenced to complain of a feeling of sadness and also of spite, when instantly someone manifested angrily, saying: 'I am lodged in this Varka [a disparaging form of Varia]. I have been forced in, they tell me, so that, through her eyes, I might see a little light! I want no one, and love no one! I dislike everyone!'

It was Boussinkof. From that day he profited on all occasions to dispute with me, and as my views differed from his, he grew angry and stamped his foot. 'Take care of yourself! We are able to crush you all!' he said, threateningly; but I replied, tranquilly, 'I am not afraid of any of you.' Then he twisted the face of the little machine, and staring at me, said, 'We are all damned! I will not believe you. God will never forgive us. You think yourself more cunning than I am. Go! I am strong. I am not alone; a new comrade helps me, Terence! John took him as a pupil, and here he is with me. He has succeeded in raising envy in Varka; it seems to her as if the others had more than she has. He keeps repeating it to her. I am foolish, though, to disclose all this to you,' Boussinkof added, in a milder voice.

My disputes with Boussinkof continued. He told me he could not see me clearly, but could hear me well. One day he exclaimed, 'What a worthless fellow I am,' and looking at a painting of a saint, he burst into tears.

These kind of spirits had a very bad influence on Varia, and as if on purpose Federovna annoyed her in her way, saying she thought so much of herself. Consequently Varia wanted to leave me as she did not wish Federovna to fall into wrong on her account. One day when Varia had been very depressed her face put on a tender look and Boussinkof spoke, but in quite a different manner: 'Do not lose courage or forget that we follow you! Only we often fall and it is thus we have done badly with Terence! Let us pray!' And kneeling, with tears in his eyes, he pronounced the following words: 'My God, give me and all my comrades the power to understand you, and to strengthen ourselves in our good resolves! We advance with feeble steps from darkness into light. Sustain us, oh! Lord of our souls!'

The last words escaped like a cry from the mouth of the little machine. After that Boussinkof rose and said to me: 'That is the first time I have prayed sincerely.'

'If you saw John now,' added Boussinkof, 'how beautiful he has become! I follow in his steps; but the five hundred dark spirits I have spoken about attach themselves to me. They push me, tempt me, and draw me back. However, I am now firm and do not totter; my superiors help me in that.'

It would take up too much time to mention all the spirits who spoke through Varia; I will only give the more interesting ones.

Dion related that he left the earth at thirty-one years of age, and had left there a wife and children. He tries to learn attentively and progresses thus. He was gentle and amiable, but was not capable of doing good. He said one day: 'I was attracted to you at the séance with K. We were looking for a teacher and found one in John.'

'Why has not John spoken for such a time? I am anxious to see him again,' I said. At these words Varia's face, which expressed goodness and amiability, at once put on an anxious look. 'John is much occupied. He is doing good wherever he can. He will only speak when indispensable. Try to love me; it will make me happy to feel you do not consider me as a stranger. It will give me more power,' said Dion, gently and enthusiastically.

One day I was in much trouble, and standing near the window in deep thought, when Varia approached me with cautious steps, and making grimaces said, in an unknown voice: 'Do not lose courage. Do not ruin our plans. All will come right. Above all do not be downcast, and pray for Florus and Dion. It is John who wishes you to be told this.'

'And he himself, where is he?' I asked.

'He continues his instruction. He is preparing himself, and for that he must progress. He will undergo—to use your language—an examination, and is much occupied.'

Towards the end of the autumn Varia said to me, 'It appears that John has gone. He came to bid me adieu. "However, I will watch over you," he said, "and help you in

everything gratefully, because in suffering for me you have aided me greatly. Occasionally I will manifest myself in a way different from what I have done in the past, and you will always be able to recognise my voice from those of the other spirits you hear. I will observe and rejoice in any progress you make. Repeat this to your earthly protectress."

'So your John has gone,' I said. 'Do you know I regret it?'

Varia replied: 'And I also; for he exercised a good influence over me, and led me to be kind to everyone. Florus gives me strength and courage. Dion inspires me with charity.'

Boussinkof manifested for some time. Once he said to me: 'What a nice business! Here am I, an excellent cabinet-maker, obliged to leave my trade to learn new things. They tell me, *learn patience; you want it!*—and here am I practising patience, and I work on firmly at it, only I cannot entirely succeed.'

'What is John doing?' I asked.

'Our dear John, our chief and teacher, passed successfully the examination he was preparing for. He is now very high! He no longer undergoes temptation, as we do who are around you.'

During the last two years someone calling himself Eugène, a doctor while on earth, manifested himself. At the beginning of this time I was very ill, and the doctor could not make out what was the matter with me. Suddenly Varia, who slept in my room, exclaimed in a firm and authoritative voice: 'The essential thing is not to be alarmed—not to give up to the illness. It is caused by the blood being too thin. The nerves are fatigued. *It borders on paralysis. Repose!*' (The winter had been a very agitated one for me.)

These words awoke me, and I asked in a low voice, 'Who spoke?' The answer given was: 'Doctor Eugène.' I asked many more questions but got no reply. The next day another doctor came to see me, and he, when defining my malady, repeated the same words that the invisible doctor had used.

Last winter Eugène prescribed a remedy for one of my young relatives, A., who had suffered for years from a skin disease on her face. I had not seen her for some years, and was shocked at the progress it had made. 'Why do you not take care of yourself?' I asked her.

'If you only knew all I have done for it!' she replied. 'I have consulted the best doctors, but to no purpose. A celebrated medical man at Vienna prescribed friction with something that resembled sand. My skin was excoriated, but no good was done. What makes me suffer most is an intolerable irritation which prevents me from sleeping!'

Our meeting had taken place in the room of an hotel. Suddenly, from behind the wall, Varia's voice was heard, but with an intonation which was not natural to her. 'External and internal use of mercury—Dr. Eugène,' was said in a calm and firm voice.

'How much for a dose?' I asked.

'Apply to an earthly doctor, he will fix the amount best. If she has confidence, let her try it. We are permitted to assuage her sufferings since she has supported them patiently.'

At first A. did not consider the advice of the invisible one of any importance and continued to try all sorts of remedies. But, at last she resolved to ask her doctor to prescribe mercury for her. Doctor B., with bad grace, and only out of condescension to a rich patient, prescribed frictions with it; as to internal use he point blank refused, saying, 'It is nonsense.' Then A., following the advice of someone, began to take homœopathic mercury. *A week later the irritation had disappeared and the face became gradually cleansed.* This fact is known by many people in our neighbourhood.

Last summer I had a visit from young V., who was much interested in mediumship and magnetism. Varia, who is very sensitive, must have, perhaps, felt that V. was very sympathetic to her. At any rate the two séances, *with a man who was a complete stranger to her, as he was to me,* were most successful. This is what took place.

First of all Varia, after a few passes, went to sleep; a result I had not obtained for a long time. After a time her face put on quite a new expression.

'Let me see! Why are you occupying yourselves with such useless matters? A brain of that value (pointing to Varia's head) expending its powers in such absurdities! Is it sensible of you, let me ask, to address imaginary beings—spirits—putting questions to them? Let me speak. I can explain things better than they can. Only listen to me!' (The actions performed by the little machine were inimitable.)

'But you yourself are only a spirit now,' I said, interrupting the invisible joker, who burst into a fit of laughter.

'I a spirit! That is too much. How can I be a spirit when I am a professor? I occupy lodgings. I teach French and dancing,' he answered, still laughing.

'You may have occupied yourself with those things when on earth. But now you are in another world.'

'What nonsense! I will never believe I am a spirit. I am on earth.'

'That is to say, you do not yet understand that the earth is nothing to you.'

'What is the matter with you? You are simply a fool. You, madam, may have been all very well in your youth—but now you are tiresome.'

'But reflect that now you no longer need to sleep or to eat as formerly.'

Opening his eyes wide and gesticulating, he replied, 'But just consider whether I have the time to sleep! I spend the nights in dancing! And to eat, one must have money, and, for some reason I do not understand, they have ceased to pay me.'

'Try to recollect if something extraordinary ever happened to you? Recall your recollections.'

'Nothing extraordinary except, one day, I was lying down in the garden, in the full sunshine, for a short sleep. Then was it a blow I received which woke me up? Everything about me was changed. I could not find my friends! They ceased to pay me!' And the face put on a look of surprise.

At another séance the same spirit, who gave the name of Theodore, came again.

'Tell me,' I said, 'if you now understand that you are no longer on earth?'

At these words Theodore's face became sad: 'Yes! yes! They tell me I led a dissipated life, that I committed many faults, that I ought to pray. But tell me, I beg of you, what did I do that was so bad?' he added, bowing his head in anguish.

Then suddenly the little machine got up and walked, tottering, towards some sacred image. With eyes raised to heaven Theodore whispered something quickly, but I could only catch these words (in French), often repeated: '*My God! My God! Have pity,*' whilst the hand made the sign of the Cross, after the manner of the Catholics, from left to right. After that Varia remained alone.

During these last years Varia's intelligence progressed greatly under the constant influence of the spirits. . . . From being a girl easily moved to tears, she has become courageous and energetic. Her mind turns towards philosophy. This is not, of course, noticed by everyone, but for me, who know all the turn of her thoughts, her intelligence is striking. She is able to sound the depth of soul of each person. She devotes herself to others whenever good advice or material help is required. She remains very thin, but her health is stronger. Though very religious, it does not prevent her from taking part in her comrades' amusements, and from pleasing by her quickness and repartees. In one word, it may be said that under the influence of the invisible ones, *Varia has become a living being instead of the half-dead creature she formerly was.* John does not speak, and one cannot tell if he will ever manifest through her again. But she sometimes hears him.

'You on earth and I here—we walk hand in hand. You are my joy when you act and think right! To be sure, you cannot yet, on account of your earthly position, completely sympathise with what makes the joy of my soul, but you will understand it when you come to us, because, even while on earth, you have a presentiment that there exists a happiness much higher than any earthly joys.' This is what John told her last spring.

(Conclusion.)

NEW YORK, U.S.A.—'LIGHT' may be obtained from Messrs. Brentado, 31, Union-square.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION.—The Cork correspondent of the '*Lancet*' mentions a remarkable case of suspended animation at Little Island. He says the case is thoroughly vouched for. A child of four years of age contracted typhoid fever, and was to all ordinary appearances dead. The time of the funeral was appointed, and friends were actually on the way to attend it. When the supposed corpse was about to be removed from the bed to the coffin signs of animation were exhibited. The services of the medical man were again requisitioned, and the child, opportunely rescued from such a terrible death, is now progressing satisfactorily.

WHENCE COMES THE RAIN?

Little boys and girls are taught that rain is a natural thing, the causes of which are perfectly understood by men of science. They are told that the heat of the sun causes evaporation from the ocean, and that the water going up into the air in the form of invisible vapour condenses into clouds when it meets colder air or different electrical conditions, and that these gradually cause the microscopically small drops of which the clouds are composed, to further condense into larger ones, until they become too big and heavy to float in the air any longer, and consequently fall in the shape of rain. The fallen rain is seen to run off in streams and rivers to the sea again, thus completing a circle, or 'cycle' which is constantly repeated.

The ancient idea of the cause of the rain was that it came from 'above the firmament', being measured out to the earth by the arbitrary action of the gods. When men were good the rain fell 'in due season', and the harvests were plentiful; when men were wicked, the rain was withheld, and famine ensued—unless, indeed, they were very, very wicked, in which case the gods sent so much rain that almost everyone was drowned. The prayers in the churches for or against rain are now almost the only relic in civilised countries of that once universal idea—an idea which is so completely at variance with the now well understood facts of Nature.

It is therefore a little startling to find that the old theory of the rain has been revived, to all appearance, by our Theosophists. We say 'to all appearance,' not because there is any ambiguity about their words, but because it is possible that there may be some hidden meaning in the teaching of our Theosophists which is not obvious to the 'untrained' intellect. In one of her lectures (delivered just a year ago, and published soon afterwards), Mrs. Besant alludes to the 'continual turning of the wheel of life, in which each living being takes and gives,' a giving and taking which Mrs. Besant brings under the head of 'Sacrifices.' She quotes the '*Bhagavad Gita*' to show how the rain comes into the circle of causes and effects, being, in fact, a *quid pro quo*—men giving sustenance to the gods, who in return send rain. The '*Lord's Song*' says: 'From food creatures become; from rain is the production of food; rain proceedeth from sacrifice; sacrifice arises out of action.' Mrs. Besant tells us to 'notice how thoroughly there is carried out this alchemical idea, the changing always of one thing into the other; the food changes into beings, but in order that the food might be, the rain has to be changed into food; in order that the rain might fall, sacrifice had been offered to the gods. Then the gods nourish.' She then goes on to explain that the sacrifice to be efficacious must be performed according to the proper rites by the priests; in which case 'that sacrifice thus performed regulated many of these forces in Nature, which working upon the earth bring forth food for men.'

That is pretty plain speaking, but this theory of rain is stated in perfectly unequivocal language in the official '*Indian Section Gazette*' the '*Prasnottara*,' for July last. We read in an article on 'The Law of Sacrifice':—

In this particular case of *homa* the force is set free in the form of vapours and gases, and goes directly for the support and nourishment of the class of Devas who distribute rain. The rainfall of a district is thus regulated and thus it comes in right seasons. As this sacrifice is made these particular Devas are nourished, and, answering back, return to earth, in the form of rain, only that which man has sacrificed to them recognising his own obligations.

We are aware that the leaders of the Theosophical Society are averse to entering into any explanations with outsiders, and generally, we have noticed, permit some irresponsible 'brother' to reply to comments made in the Press. Perhaps those leaders are prudent; they know their own business best. There are instances, however, in which self-respect and the desire to retain the respect of others should conquer the fear of being 'drawn into a controversy', and in which, we cannot help thinking, those who are responsible for the teachings now being put forward under the name of 'Theosophy' ought to explain their position. 'LIGHT' does not desire to entrap Mrs. Besant into a controversy, but it is probable that our readers would be much interested to know authoritatively what theory of the rain Theosophy really teaches—the scientific theory, or the theological one; and if both, how it manages to reconcile them.

'SO-CALLED EXPOSURES.'

Mr. Robert Cooper, in his article in last week's 'LIGHT,' has replied to some extent to 'Xyzed's' query about 'scientific tests' for materialised forms. Mr. Cooper cites the complete disappearance of Mrs. Compton, which is an extreme case of a phenomenon that has been frequently observed, namely, that the matter or substance that composes the medium goes, in some unexplained way, to form the materialised 'spirit.' I have myself on two occasions been allowed to remain in the cabinet of a materialising medium while the form materialised and went out, and on both occasions I felt the medium shrink up to at least half his normal size when the materialisation occurred, and felt him recover his usual dimensions when the form returned to the cabinet and dematerialised. There is no doubt in my mind about the reality of this sudden shrinkage, which was sufficiently startling the first time I felt it. In this case, I may add, I was previously somewhat sceptical about the phenomena; but, in addition to this collapse of the medium, I had the testimony of the other sitters that several forms came out while I was holding the shrunken medium ('all skin and bone' apparently); and, as it was a physical impossibility for any accomplices to be hidden in the cabinet, I had to believe in the genuineness of the medium, notwithstanding some suspicious features in the séance. I merely give this as an instance in which a commonsense, rather than scientific, test set my doubts at rest; whereas the grabbing of the form certainly would not have done so, however it might have turned out. For remark, it is 'heads I win, tails you lose' with the grabbers—when the form dematerialises in their grasp they say the medium struggled free and escaped into the cabinet.

As to 'scientific' tests, there is no patent method about them, for they consist simply in the careful and thorough application of appropriate commonsense tests such as we use in ordinary matters. If a block of transparent substance melts when heat is applied, we conclude that it is ice; when it remains solid, we say it must be glass or crystal. In the same way if a form dematerialises 'into the floor,' we conclude that it is *not* the medium, trap-doors and mirrors having been previously eliminated. I don't suppose that there is a single one of the mediums that have been exposed by grabbers who could not bring hundreds of trustworthy witnesses to testify that they have seen the forms at their séances go down through the floor, or out through the walls. Still, these mediums were on some particular occasion found in the arms of the grabbers, when those gentlemen caught one of the manifesting forms. The scientific method demands that some explanation be sought which covers both of these cases; and it is found, I think, in the hypothesis that, when the shock of the seizure occurs, either the part of the substance of the medium which is outside the cabinet and appearing as the materialised spirit, suddenly returns to the medium, in which case the grabbers 'fail to hold the medium'; or the part of the substance of the medium that is in the cabinet suddenly flies out to join the form outside, in which case the grabbers triumphantly proclaim the medium a fraud.

This hypothesis has often been put forward, and it is supported by such experiences as mine above stated; and in the absence of a better theory, it deserves to be seriously considered; and, if we wish to follow the scientific method, we should suspend our judgments about the honesty of mediums who have been grabbed until we have been able to verify it. Again, science weighs and measures with care and accuracy; and if the medium is short and fat, and the spirit is long and thin, or if the medium is a heavy elderly man, and the form is that of a light young girl, I fancy the most orthodox and exact science would confirm the commonsense conclusion that the medium and the form could not possibly be the same person. These measurements and weighings have often been carefully made by perfectly competent men, but those data are not thought much of, because they were not collected by professional 'scientists,' which is just as if it was thought that no one could add up two and two but a professor of mathematics.

Then, there is no proposition more scientific than that an incompressible body one foot in diameter will not pass through an aperture an inch across. And similarly, if the medium be securely enclosed in a cage made of wire netting, and the forms pass freely through that wire netting—a test that is said to have been in several instances successfully applied in America—science would surely endorse the verdict of common sense that the medium cannot possibly be the form.

Then, again, the tests of identity which are applied to written communications are perfectly valid in the case of materialised forms; and if anyone were to cross-examine a materialised form about family matters of which the medium could have no cognisance, it would be surely a more satisfactory and a more scientific test than grabbing. But the fact is that the grabbers want to convict, not to find out the truth of the matter. Before they set out to do the grabbing, they have already concluded that the medium they are going to grab is a fraud, or, as sane men, they certainly would not have recourse to that extreme measure, which, if they found a 'spirit' in their grasp, would cover them with confusion, and show their stupidity and brutality in its true light.

But there is an occasion on which grabbing is perfectly justifiable and even scientific; and that is when it is done with the consent of the spirits, and by arrangement beforehand. I have read of such cases, and the narratives say that the form was seen and felt to dematerialise while being firmly grasped by the person who held it. If our grabbers were really anxious to expose fraud, if, indeed, they were simply honest investigators, this is the form that their grabbing would take; but I have seen something of the grabber and his ways, and I believe him to be of a very different stamp.

I do not think that there is much real difference between 'Xyzed's' ideas and mine, and I certainly have no more desire than he has to encourage fraud; but with regard to 'doubtful inquirers' I must say that I think their doubts should be a reason why they should *refrain* from grabbing. Their doubts are no reason why they should be excused for taking the law into their own hands, and 'mob law' at that. If I were to treat a man as if he were a scoundrel because I doubted his honesty, I could hardly plead my doubts as a bar to his knocking me down. But I think that if sitters completely foreswore grabbing, all public mediums who refused to submit to tests such as those I have alluded to, ought certainly 'to consider themselves grabbed,' and be so regarded by the public.

RICHARD HARTE.

MR. ALFRED R. WALLACE, F.R.S., IN THE 'ECHO.'

Growing out of some recent correspondence on the subject of Spiritualism, in the 'Echo,' Mr. Alfred R. Wallace is represented in last Saturday's issue of that paper by a long letter which is awarded the distinction of large type. Mr. Wallace deals efficiently with the various carping objections raised by adverse critics, which include the editor of the 'Echo' himself. In the course of his remarks Mr. Wallace says: 'What they [Spiritualists] ask is that disbelievers should suspend their judgment, and not accept second or third hand statements to the prejudice of Spiritualism, while they reject even first-hand testimony in its favour.' That ancient bogey, the Seybert Commission having been alluded to, Mr. Wallace gives the real facts of the case; and in conclusion, dealing with the old objection that psychical manifestations should be produced with the same ease and publicity as chemical or electrical experiments, he says:—

The phenomena in the one case [electricity] depend only on the physical conditions, and can, therefore, when those conditions are learnt, be repeated at will; the other depends also upon psychical and, at present, only partially understood conditions, and on the capacities and wills of unembodied intelligences over whom we have no control, but whose powers in producing phenomena are affected both by our physical and mental idiosyncrasies, and also by the meteorological and their physical surroundings. The phenomena themselves are, therefore, not under our control, although, under favourable circumstances, they are produced with such abundance, and under such absolute test conditions, as to satisfy every inquirer who witnesses them.

The weight and significance of this letter will be recognised with satisfaction by our readers generally, and cannot fail to have a good effect upon the general public. It forms a curious commentary on the recent assertion of the 'Echo' (in an editorial note) to the effect that witnesses for Spiritualism 'belong to the past.'

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.—'LIGHT' may be obtained from Mr. W. H. Terry, Austral Building, Collins-street East.

LOVE is a strength outlasting human weakness, a fire that burns after the flesh has fallen to ashes, a life that conquers death and crowns itself with immortality!—T. TILTON.

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EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.
Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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

JOIN THE ALLIANCE!

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE is, at the present moment, in the position of a confident and active merchant who, believing that he has a good article and that the world needs it (though as yet it does not know it), challenges the world to look his way and judge. But the Alliance, like the merchant, is in the end dependent upon the goodwill or the good sense of the public. The good cause, like the good article, must attract those who like it, or it will become 'stale, flat, and unprofitable.' Shakespeare makes Hamlet say that God gave us not our 'capability and godlike reason' 'to fust in us unused'; nor has He given us our insights and hopes, to lie dormant and 'to fust in us unused.'

Here, then, is the old question, 'What will he do with it?' The instrument is there; the material has arrived; the need is even urgent; what shall we do? In a city like London, the Alliance is almost an absurdity. There must be thousands who are in immediate sympathy with it: there must be thousands of others who are open to conviction and ready to be influenced. Cannot we who thoroughly believe in it do something, before we pass on, to put our great cause worthily before the public?

A few days ago, an ardent Spiritualist said to us: 'I felt a little nonplussed lately when a lady friend said to me, "What then are you Spiritualists doing? You see what our Church of England is doing. Look at our schools, our missions, our sick societies, our nursing institutions, and our charities. Tell me one thing that you do." I hardly knew what to say in reply.' Perhaps not: but it does not follow that Spiritualists are doing nothing because they have no organised benevolences. Still, it was not entirely a pleasant question to have to face.

But it was an unfair question. The Established Church is a highly organised institution, enormously manned, strongly endowed, and with all the help of fashion and wealth and vast numbers to back it up. Small wonder is it that it can do much; and, truly, we have an impression that what it does is almost contemptible in comparison with its duty and its means. If the question were asked of us,—'Well, and what are you Spiritualists doing?' we should be tempted to say,—'Trying to wrest from you and the like of you the right to exist. The Church of Jesus Christ's day killed him, the grandest and divinest Spiritualist that ever lived; and the Church of to-day gives but little quarter to his humble followers. Yes; first of all, we are winning the right to exist and to work. When that is done, you will see. If ever we get

a hundredth part of the wealth of your Church you will hear of us to some purpose.'

We do not profess to be satisfied with what we are doing: we are, indeed, profoundly dissatisfied with it. Getting the right to exist is a poor programme, and a rather selfish one also: we would much rather be helping others to exist. But we must do the first thing first, and the first thing is to 'get up our strength,' as the doctors say. Well then, we say, 'Join the Alliance!' We want at least 500 members. Why not? There are 5,000 who ought to be members. And we say frankly that it is not rightly a question of *quid pro quo*. The Alliance, to those who can benefit by them, DOES offer advantages which are not dear even as market value: but that is not the point. We want sympathisers and backers to become Members, for the uses (to us and the world) of sympathy and backing. Those who cannot be pillars inside may be buttresses outside; and the one may be as helpful as the other. We want holding up, and we want something to hold up. We have already indicated a practical policy, and set forth exactly what we propose, and now can only wait for the results.

In the meantime, it may be useful to point out that membership in the Alliance carries with it no responsibility beyond the humble sum of ten shillings. There are no shares. The Society is strictly limited by guarantee: and, if the Alliance came to an end, dromned in debts and bereft of friends (let us suppose anything as wild and impossible as that), the whole extent of any one person's guarantee or liability is that sum of ten shillings. The yearly subscription remains, as of old, one guinea. It may also be useful to draw special attention to the new class of adherent, called, in the Articles of Association, an 'Associate.' The subscription for an Associate is only half-a-guinea annually. Associates have all the privileges of the Reading-room and Libraries, and are entitled to attend all meetings of the Society, but not to vote. The Alliance, while hoping to largely increase the number of its Members, believes that many who have hitherto hesitated will see their way to joining as Associates. Even only one hundred such adherents would greatly benefit the Society: and, in putting this view of it, referring more to the Society than to the individual, we do not hesitate to suggest to friends in all parts of the world that, on the basis of Associates, they would help on the cause by joining as Associates. It is really every Spiritualist's interest that there should be a strong London Society.

For the present we can say no more, except that there is a tide in our favour just now, and that if we miss it we, as Brutus said, may, 'all the voyage of our life be bound in shallows and in miseries.'

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY.

'Edina's' interesting narrative of the recent experiments in psychic photography, with Mr. David Duguid as the medium, will be continued in our next issue. We hope at the same time to illustrate the record with a new portrait of the so-called 'Cyprian priestess,' which has been obtained in the course of this series of experiments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—The treasurer of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, begs to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of £2 2s. from Mrs. Stanhope Speer, and £1 1s. from Mrs. Swanston, towards the cost of Incorporation.

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.—A lady and gentleman (Spiritualists) intend holding some semi-private sésances for materialisation and physical phenomena, at their own house in Brixton, during the autumn and winter months. A fully-developed medium will attend each sésance, of which due notice will be given in 'LIGHT' the week previous. The first will be held early in October. Spiritualists wishing to obtain tickets will kindly communicate in the first place with Manager, 17, Winstanley-road, Brixton Hill, S.W.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

BY AUTOMATIC WRITING THROUGH THE HAND OF
W. STANTON MOSES.

THIRD SERIES.

[Mr. F. W. H. Myers having kindly sent me, by permission of the executors of Mr. Stainton Moses, three volumes of automatic writing given through his mediumship, I wish to preface the third series of 'Teachings' by saying that as much of the matter which has now come into my possession has already appeared in 'Spirit Teachings,' 'Spirit Identity,' and in former numbers of 'LIGHT,' the messages I am now deciphering will necessarily, in places, be disconnected in order to avoid needless repetition. Furthermore, absolute continuity is impossible, as the messages are written in so small a hand that even with the aid of a magnifying glass I cannot decipher all the passages, and the peculiarity of some of the writing adds to the difficulty.—
M. SPEER.]

No. XXXVIII.

SHANKLIN, SEPTEMBER 14TH, 1873.

I want to ask about the scent. It caused one of us great pain by being thrown into the eyes, and it spoils everything in the room.

I, Emperor, salute thee, friend, in the name of the Supreme. We have grieved much that an accident should have caused pain to one of our friends. We need not say that it was far from our wish that any pain or loss should be caused by our means. In his earnest desire to secure a good manifestation of the lights on which he is now experimenting, Mentor was less careful than he might have been at another time. He is desirous to complete his experiments before your return to your home, both because the air here is more favourable to him, and also because your work will not permit him to operate upon you so freely, even if it be possible for us to permit such experiments at all. The scent is a necessary pre-requisite for his experiments, and he will hereafter be careful that it is not brought into contact with the circle. You may rely on this. Moreover, on the occasion in question a superabundance of power had been generated by rubbing your hands, and this caused the manifestation to be of a more violent nature. We are anxious to remove from your minds any idea that carelessness or malevolence on the part of the manifesting spirits could be allowed, or that the accident which we deplore will recur.

Malevolence no one ever thought of, and we implicitly believe all that you say. Two points strike me. How does the rubbing generate force? And why is scent necessary?

The rubbing generates a form of electricity which is serviceable for our manifestations, and especially for purposes of materialisation, since small particles of matter become dislodged. It should be done with care. Scent is introduced in order to modify and temper the atmospheric conditions from time to time. It also acts upon the mental condition of the circle, harmonising their minds and introducing pleasing sensations to them. It would be well on your return to your usual room to procure some musical element. Moreover, you should procure frankincense or myrrh. This would aid us. When you feel the waves of cool air laden with pleasant odours, or the shower of scent, it is the work of the manifesting spirits trying to improve atmospheric or mental conditions. But there is no necessity that the scent should be in a liquid form, save that it has been pleasing to you.

Thank you. We have had a number of pearls lately. Are they made by Mentor or only brought?

They are not really pearls, only they simulate the appearance. They are brought one by one for a reason, viz., that you may watch and treasure them and realise more, by the way in which they appear before your vision, the variety of the means by which spirits operate. It

would be easier to place them on the table whilst the circle is in séance, but we prefer to show them to you singly and by degrees.

Where do they come from?

You will be told when the time is ripe both the source from which they come and the end for which they are given. For the present we withhold the answer.

Do you wish us to meet to-night?

We shall be glad to meet you in circle to-night. We have somewhat to say to you. The exalted intelligences who have been permitted to manifest to you have commissioned me to write for you a prayer which we have composed for you as the expression of the wishes and aspirations of our spirits, and as a fitting model for the frame of mind in which you should join us in approaching the Great God. It is well that you attune your devotions to the adoration of the angels:—

Eternal Father, Supreme, All-mighty Lord! pour down on these Thy waiting children the spirit of Thy love, that they may be in harmony with Thee and with Thy holy angels and ministering spirits. Grant them, Thou God of Truth, the spirit to follow on even to the end the pursuit of Truth, which comes from Thee, and is of Thee.

Unchanging, Eternal Lord! grant them the spirit of zeal and earnestness, that they may with unwavering purpose reach onward and upward to Thee, the Fountain of Eternal Light. Thou Pure spirit! keep them unspotted and unstained. Cleanse their thoughts, purify their motives, elevate their desires.

Spirit of Wisdom! make them to grow in wisdom and in knowledge; and still to thirst for more.

God of all graces! shower on them the plenitude of those gifts which Thou seest to be profitable for them. Eradicate error, strengthen love of truth, inspire knowledge, infuse charity, and increase progression, that each in some sort may join with us Thy ministering angels and spirits in the harmonious anthem of ceaseless praise.

Glory and honour and adoration be to Thee, Supreme, All-loving, All-holy God.

+ I. S. D.

+ RECTOR, AND MANY OTHERS.

These spirits have been concerned with others in composing for you the prayer which I have written. Meditate upon it, and use it as a model for your own devotions. Ye know little of prayer as we know.

The Supreme keep you.

+ I. S. D.

May I inquire of what nature is your ritual and worship in the higher spheres?

The Chief is gone now, and will not be able to reply to you. But as he returns to-night you can ask from him information then. I do not myself take up the subject because it falls more readily in with his sphere of instruction. Exalted influence has been around you to-day. May that which the wise and good spirits are enabled to do be profitable to you.

I trust so. It seems overpowering to converse with such. May I ask who wrote the prayer?

The inspiration came chiefly from '—'; but the actual words were the language of the Chief. He, too, wrote it through your hand by means of Rector as being most accustomed so to do.

By means of Rector. Is it then not Emperor's handwriting?

No, friend, the Chief very rarely writes. Rector acts for him. The Chief affixes his signature. The actual handwriting is that of Rector. But cease now. The teaching of

DOCTOR.

No. XXXIX.

SHANKLIN, SEPTEMBER 16TH.

Can I have any information about the disturbed séance last evening?

The Chief was absent unavoidably, being engaged in work which admitted of no delay. He was unable to be

with you; and the disturbed condition of your mother reacted very strongly on you. She was suffering mental anguish, and her thoughts were very forcibly directed to you. Some of us were with her, and the others manifested according to their ability. The darkness of the room to your vision was caused by the disturbed mental state which the most strenuous efforts of the attendant spirits were directed to overcome.

Who was with her?

Some of the spirits of love went on the mission which is congenial to them, to soothe sorrow, assuage grief, and to minister consolation.

Can you so minister to those who know nothing of you?

The intimate connection with you enabled us to operate. We are able usually to reach anyone who is in strong sympathy with you. Ignorance, save when it is wilful, is no bar. And we do not counsel, as you know, ill-considered attempts to force on those who know not of our work a premature acquaintance with it. The ignorance will be remedied hereafter.

I am thankful at any rate that you could help her. Is she ill?

The separation has shocked her, and she is in sorrow rather than in sickness.

Can you do anything to help?

Yes; we can help much in consequence of her mind dwelling so constantly on you. We are thankful to be of service to your mother.

I am very grateful. Was that John Dec last night?

Yes; he has returned for a while. He will be of service to us.

Why was Grocyn so melancholy?

The conditions of which we have spoken affected him. It will be so more and more as you become more and more sensitive to spirit influence. Your guides and attendants will be able to express more fully, and to symbolise more accurately, the feelings and mental states of those in communion and sympathy with you. That should not be to you a cause for alarm, but for joy.

Oh, yes. Only we did not know. Is the Chief likely to come to-night?

Yes, friend, I am with you even now, and will join your circle and converse with you. I was delayed by a conference of spirits at which my presence was necessary, and was unable to be with you last night.

May I ask what was the meeting?

It was one of our usual meetings for prayer and praise and adoration of the All-Wise. We meet thus when we need support from mutual counsel and from the efflux of spirit influence from those who are yet higher and wiser than ourselves.

Do you wish to give us any directions, or to say anything relative to our meeting to-night?

You may well prepare the room by a little purification. Burn the myrrh, and meet as near your appointed time as you can. Let your bodies be in comfort, and your minds passive. It is also an assistance if you prepare yourselves to ask such information as you may desire.

But I can't, you know, in trance. I will tell the others.

You may prepare beforehand so that I may give the information you require.

But will that interfere at all by putting the subject into my brain?

In no degree, friend. We have no difficulty with your mind when you are entranced. It is only when in your waking state that want of passivity comes in.

But I mean more than that. If I have been thinking of a subject would not my brain be filled with ideas which might come out or interfere?

Assuredly not when in the trance. Moreover, you would only prepare questions on subjects on which you are ignorant, or on which you desire further information. You need form no notions unless you will. Nay, in my communings with you, which are most frequent, your mind is active, yet your ideas do not hamper me. You need have no fear; your own thoughts have no power to operate against me. When they are in accord with my teaching they will remain undisturbed. But when, as is frequent, they are erroneous, I shall endeavour to amend and improve, or even to eradicate them.

Then you have no belief in unconscious cerebration?

In this case, none. Cerebration is not unconscious, or conscious, in such a case, seeing that it does not exist. Your mental faculties are then absolutely under my control, and do not act at all.

Then is my spirit always dormant when I am in trance?

Always; save when we have on two occasions availed ourselves of the opportunity to allow it independent action.

Shall you ever be able to communicate through me when I am in the conscious state?

We could readily do so were it desirable. But for the present we prefer the old method, which secures us from interruption by your mind, and which conveys more forcibly to the circle the idea of spirit power. But the trance is unnecessary, save as a precaution.

Could you act on me by impression?

We already do so frequently. We do propose eventually to develop you more completely as an Inspirational Medium. But the really important communications will continue to be given in this form, by writing, as being more permanent. Moreover, we can operate upon you more perfectly when you are completely alone, in consequence of your being so sensitive to external and mental influences. We give up much power to Mentor now for the short time before you recommence your work; then we shall communicate again more regularly by writing.

What do you mean exactly by Inspirational Mediumship?

We mean the suggesting to the mind the thought which is not framed in words. It is the highest form of communion, only practicable when the whole being is permeable by spirit control. We do suggest thoughts frequently, and direct the steps and guide the path, when none save God and we know it. But we mean more by developed inspirational mediumship. In such cases converse with spirits is maintained mentally, and words are not necessary; even as in our higher states we have no voice nor language, but spirit is cognisant of spirit, and intercourse is perfect and complete. But cease now; we converse too long. The good God guide you.

+ I. S. D.

THE MENTAL CURE.

Horatio W. Dresser has, in 'The Arena,' a sensible paper on 'The Mental Cure in its Relation to Modern Thought.' He pleads for modesty and discrimination, on the part of those who believe in the mental cure. The movement, he says, was not 'exclusive and self-sufficient' when it began. Its originator did not propose to set up a complete panacea for all ills, but 'to establish a science of health and happiness which, based on a just psychology and on a rational interpretation of human life, should enable men and women in all the walks of life to lead sounder and better lives.' The extremists, Mr. Dresser thinks, do harm to the cause by insisting that disease is only opinion; and that saying 'I am well' will make one so.

A CORRESPONDENT calls attention to the fact that the few beautiful lines which we quoted last week from the 'Literary World' were written by Robert Browning, and may be found in his 'Abt Vogler.'

'THE GROWTH OF THE SOUL.'*

After some ten years Mr. Sinnett has startled the world with another sensational book. 'Esoteric Buddhism' created a stir, not so much by reason of the theory of the universe put forward therein, although that was startling enough, as on account of the positive assertion it contained, as a matter for which the author personally vouched, that there exist at present upon earth men who possess a knowledge far transcending that of the most advanced of our scientists and specialists, who manifest a super-human wisdom, and who exercise powers over matter of the kind which we previously imagined to be a monopoly of the Magician in a Fairy Tale. 'The Growth of the Soul,' Mr. Sinnett's new work, is not likely to give the reading public so delightful a thrill as did 'Esoteric Buddhism'; not because its contents are much less sensational, but because the world has so far waited in vain for any corroboration of Mr. Sinnett's first series of extraordinary assertions, and has, moreover, learned a good deal in the meantime about the marvellous power of 'Suggestion' and 'Auto-suggestion' for making people talk confidently about things of which they really know extremely little. Nevertheless, from whatever point of view 'The Growth of the Soul' be regarded, it is a remarkable book; and it would be doing an even greater injustice to ourselves than to its author to refuse to seriously examine it.

In his 'Introduction' Mr. Sinnett says:—

The guidance under which I began to write on these subjects ten years ago has never been inactive in my life from that time till now, and the information on which 'Esoteric Buddhism' was written has been expanded and deepened in a great variety of ways.

The result thereof is the present volume, which, in so far as it confirms former teachings, represents the peculiar line of thought characteristic of the particular Mahatma that has taken Mr. Sinnett for a Chela. It is not in this teaching, however, that the 'sensation' now lies, but in the claim which the author puts forward that a number of Theosophists have progressed so far as to be able to visit 'the other world' at will, and that they constantly do so:—

That other world from which, in the old phrase, no traveller returns, has been found accessible to travellers who are going backwards and forwards constantly, and in saying this I am leaving entirely out of account communications from the 'next world' purporting to come from those who have gone to it finally.

It is, we believe, since Madame Blavatsky's death that Theosophy has openly taken its place among religions; and it must now be regarded with much interest by students of religious development, as affording an example of a religion in the actual process of formation. Mr. Sinnett makes no mystery about this process of growth:—

Theosophical teaching has expanded during the last twelve years till it now constitutes a vast coherent statement concerning human evolution, the conditions of existence that await humanity on supra-physical planes of Nature, and the methods by which it is possible to acquire faculties of usefulness far exceeding those in possession of ordinary humanity at the present day.

As they have expanded, theosophical teachings have, by means of fresh revelations, been brought into more accord with each other, inasmuch that, like other theosophical writers, Mr. Sinnett constantly proclaims the wonderful 'consistency,' 'coherence,' 'sweet reasonableness,' &c., of Theosophy. These qualities, admirable though they be, are more properly the cardinal virtues of a work of fiction, for verification is the most important consideration when we have to deal with matters of fact. But Theosophy is confessedly weak in verification; and even as regards consistency, something still remains to be desired. For instance, Mr. Sinnett now reaffirms Koot Hoomi's teaching, that the planets Mercury and Mars belong to the 'Earth chain,' whereas Mahatma Morya, through Madame Blavatsky, maintained that they do not. One would imagine that 'Masters of Wisdom' would not contradict each other about such an elementary and yet so important a matter of fact; more especially as the question involves the whole theory of 'chains of globes,' since, as Madame Blavatsky explained, according to that theory only one globe at a time could possibly

be visible, since only one globe, the one we happen to be at the moment inhabiting, is made of matter of which our senses can take cognisance. To such discrepancies in the 'teachings' as this Mr. Sinnett seems to allude when he says:—

Such variations of conception, however, in regard to the meaning of occult teaching as bearing on remote problems of cosmology and on departments of natural science beyond the range of physical exactitude, are of no consequence in reference to the general value of the theosophical revelation at large.

In this, however, we totally disagree with him; for, apart from whatever plausibility Theosophy gets from its 'consistency,' &c., it rests ultimately on the *ipse dixit* of mysterious 'Teachers'; and when Mahatmas contradict each other on fundamental points of fact and theory, it seems to us that this contradiction is of immense 'consequence in reference to the general value of the theosophical revelation at large':—

The 'Growth of the Soul' is divided into seventeen chapters, the first of which is 'Introductory.'

We agree with the author that:—

People who are quite untouched by the growing belief that there is an unseen world around us, with which human consciousness is in some sort of relationship independently of the senses, are already left in the rear of anything that deserves to be called advanced thought.

The question, however, is whether Theosophists have not 'advanced' a little too fast and too far; for we are told that:—

Part of the teaching Theosophists have received shows us that, granting certain conditions of preparedness on the part of persons still on the ordinary level of evolution, well directed efforts to that end will lead to the awakening of interior faculties, by means of which such persons are able to cognize and communicate with adept teachers, clairvoyantly. . . . That is the state of the case for many modern Theosophists in Europe, not to speak of those in India, where pupils of the Adepts, in a position to visit them out of the body, are more often encountered. The whole subject, for them, has been lifted right out of the position in which it rested on the testimony of the first promoters of the theosophical movement.

Mr. Sinnett, in corroboration, then describes the psychic condition of eight anonymous 'students,' designating them by the letters of the alphabet. For instance:—

B. is 'dead' as regards the body in which I knew him. Being a regular disciple, his post-mortem adventures do not follow the normal course. C. knew him while living in India, and sees him still from time to time in the astral body with the Masters. C. is an advanced disciple, as much at home on the astral plane, and as fully reminiscent of all that happens to him there, as though the matters dealt with were yesterday's doings in the flesh. On the astral plane he constantly sees D., E., F., and H., all of whom know him and know one another on this plane of life, discuss what takes place when with the Masters, after returning to their normal condition, and are in all respects themselves completely in their mutual relations on the higher plane.

It is impossible to understand, not merely this 'expansion' of the theosophical doctrine, but the present attitude of the Theosophists towards others who believe in 'an unseen world around us,' unless we take particular notice of that very pregnant admission by Mr. Sinnett, and are at pains to understand its full significance, namely, that 'The whole subject, for them (the visionaries and those who accept their visions as *the truth*), has been lifted right out of the position in which it stood when it rested on the testimony of the first promoters of the theosophical movement.' Theosophy stood at first on the testimony of Madame Blavatsky alone, for Colonel Olcott's share was never very much more than that of organiser of the movement, and shining example of steadfast belief, a function which, compared with that of Madame Blavatsky, was like the function of the leader of the orchestra compared with that of the composer of the music. Theosophy has now, if we may accept Mr. Sinnett's assurance, been 'lifted right out of that position,' and rests on the testimony of certain 'students' who have 'awakened their interior faculties.' Before we examine the superstructure that has been raised on this new basis, it is necessary to form some opinion of the solidity of that basis itself.

(To be continued.)

* 'The Growth of the Soul'; a sequel to 'Esoteric Buddhism.' By A. P. SINNETT, Vice-President of the Theosophical Society. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896. Price 6s. net.

CLAIRVOYANCE, OR MIND-READING.

Personal testimony has its value, yet it is but the opinion of one fallible individual. Let me add mine to that of 'Vir.' Like 'Vir,' I also may call myself an old Spiritualist, having studied occultism in its multifarious manifestations for many years, rather to the detriment of other subjects. The conviction has been forced upon my mind that 'Spiritualism will never be strong till it ceases to be a faith and becomes a strictly scientific inquiry.' I do not deny it may be a great aid to faith, especially to a certain order of mind, but so may other natural facts which we do not dream of incorporating into our religious aspirations. Why, then, do so with subtle, obscure, and psychical phenomena?

I am equally in agreement with 'Vir' in his view of the platform performances of Mr. Slater, *et hoc genus omne*, and although clairvoyance is a fact of psychology and but slightly connected with mind-reading, yet ninety-nine hundredths of platform delineations are, in my opinion, invariably the latter. Thoughts become things on the Astral—creations—and the imaginative faculty images the thought form in the astral light surrounding the thinker, which the mind-reader delineates for the delectation of the audience as spirit forms of friends who have passed the border.

Progress is impossible so long as error is cherished because it is pleasant.

J. H. MITCHNER, F.R.A.S.

Your correspondent 'Vir' remarks: 'I may have been unfortunate, but as yet I have seen no clairvoyance which was not obviously mind-reading.' Most decidedly he is unfortunate; for my experience, derived from a highly-endowed clairvoyante, places its action independent of mind-reading beyond the possibility of doubt. She has given me information by this means of things which I could not have found out for myself, and which never entered my mind.

I very much question whether there is such a thing as mind-reading in the sense in which it is ordinarily understood. I believe that this form of phenomena is the result of the influence of a spirit inspiring with the same ideas two minds which are *en rapport*. A curious incident which happened some years ago may throw some light on this question.

A sceptical friend of mine, hearing of the manifestations we were having at my home, wished for once to join our circle. He was admitted. There were four of us at the table, including the medium. The table immediately began to tilt, and I noticed that our visitor did not influence its movements; he placed the tips of his fingers gently on the table, and allowed it to slip backwards and forwards under his touch. We asked the name of the spirit who wished to communicate with us, and it was spelt out by tilts indicating the letters selected as we pronounced them, 'The Ghost of Venus.' The answer seemed to us so singular and unsatisfactory that we debated whether we should continue the séance. Our visitor settled the matter for us by breaking up the circle and observing with firm and judicial gravity, 'I willed that that message should be given. The result is exactly what I expected. The mystery is solved. These manifestations are the work of will-power on the part of someone present at a séance, and disembodied spirits have nothing to do with them.'

Our friend was mistaken. The mystery was not solved as he gaily and positively imagined; for we subsequently ascertained that the same spirit which dictated to the mind of my friend the idea of the 'Ghost of Venus' also gave a concrete expression to it through the tilting of the table. Both the subjective thought and the objective manifestation proceeded from the same spiritual source and presence, availing itself of the atmosphere of the medium to accomplish a fantastic and undeveloped embarrassing result.

NEWTON CROSLAND.

The answer so 'easily given' by 'Vir' to Mr. Tubbs's remarks on Mr. Slater's predictions has such an important bearing on spiritistic phenomena of the non-physical order that it is to be hoped some other experienced Spiritualist will bring forward instances which 'Vir's' theory will not cover. Mr. Slater, according to your contributor, is only a mind-reader, his communicating spirits and their predictions being simply the thought or mind emanations from another person. If this sweeping theory is well-founded, are not the majority of Spiritualists, asking for bread, being fed with stones? 'Vir' says he has seen no clairvoyance which was not obviously

mind-reading. It would be interesting to know what sort of phenomena led him to become a Spiritualist.

It may in this connection be worth while to record a test I prepared for Mr. Slater, which I thought would dispose of the mind-reading theory. I asked a friend to ask another friend to put something in a box and cover it up, without saying to the other what was enclosed. I took the box and enclosure (of course not knowing what it was) to one of Mr. Slater's meetings. In due course he took it up, and after holding it for a time laid it down with evident pique saying he did not do the Maskelyne and Cook sort of things. He told me afterwards that 'they gave him nothing.' At the same meeting he showed his knowledge of the contents of sealed envelopes. But in these cases the knowledge was previously in the minds of other persons present.

F. P.

Your correspondent 'Bidston' invites testimony to prove that clairvoyance is *not* invariably the result of mind-reading, while he admits that it very often may be so. In the following instance I do not think the charge of 'mind-reading' can possibly be imputed. Mrs. Wilkins, clairvoyante, was visited by my sister in April, 1895, before she (my sister) or any of us had heard of my brother's death, which, however, had taken place about a fortnight previously, on March 23rd. Mrs. Wilkins was a complete stranger to my sister, and ignorant even of her name. She, however, instantly told her that a young man, a near relative, had recently 'passed over,' and described our brother's appearance exactly. My sister (though much struck by the description) did not seriously connect it with our brother, as she believed him to be alive and well, and therefore declared that she had *not* lost any relative answering to the description given. Mrs. Wilkins, however, insisted that she was right, and stated that she saw him enter the room with my sister, and that he was standing beside her at that moment, and proceeded to describe him with a minuteness that left no doubt as to his identity. Though feeling rather uneasy, my sister and I dismissed the subject from our minds, with the comfortable assurance that there was probably no truth in it. However, a short time afterwards we received the news of his death, and knew to our cost that the clairvoyante had not been mistaken. In this case it is obvious that 'mind-reading' was out of the question, and it must have been *bonâ-fide* 'clairvoyance' which acquainted this stranger with a fact of which those whom it most concerned were ignorant.

M. B. BADELEY.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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

Spiritualism and 'Orthodoxy.'

SIR,—I was present on a recent Sunday evening, by chance or mischance, at the service in a certain City church and heard the one-sided and unfair presentation of Spiritualism with which we are usually favoured when that topic is touched on from the 'orthodox' pulpit. To do the preacher justice, he certainly gave Spiritualism the credit—at its best—of being 'an earnest and sincere effort to lift the veil from the unseen, and to obtain some tangible evidence of the life to come.' But he went on to say that, even supposing such evidence were possible by communication with the other world, it would be absolutely useless, both as a consolation and as an incentive to the spiritual life, because no lifting of the veil would reveal the existence of God. The moral he drew was—that the efforts of Spiritualists are futile, and their attempts to lift the veil to be condemned. The preacher based this assumption on the words of Christ in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' Now, it seems to me that to use those words as an argument against Spiritualism, and to ignore two vital and all-embracing facts, is not only unfair but dishonest. In the first place, the whole Bible, from beginning to end, is a constant lifting of the veil from the unseen, and in the second, we have Christ's example as a guide. When He passed away from His disciples, He was not content to leave them to the cold comfort of 'Moses and the prophets,' but, by the supreme raising of the veil for all time, He appeared to them again and again in His spiritual body. He well knew that suffering humanity needs this uplifting of the veil from time to time.

It is not long since I heard the following well-informed utterance from a pulpit in the north of England. 'Some years ago,' said the preacher, 'we had among us a body of people calling themselves Spiritualists, but they have long since passed into deserved oblivion, and their very existence is almost forgotten.' Comment is, indeed, superfluous, but I sometimes fancy that that most interesting character, Pontius Pilate, must have been a very attentive listener to the 'orthodox' expounders of his religion, because he was in such a hopelessly bewildered condition as to what constitutes Truth!

M. C. P.

Mr. Slater's Predictions.

SIR,—In the interest of 'Truth,' concerning which your correspondent 'Fairplay' appears so anxious to bring the other side-light to justify the 'absent maligned one,' Mr. Slater, I would ask him, in 'fair-play,' to point to any part of my letter which maligns the absent one. Not only is every word used by me strictly courteous and consistent with the truth, but can also be verified by many who heard Mr. Slater make the prediction.

Mr. Slater gave a very incorrect view of the case at the Cavendish Rooms, if 'Fairplay' correctly reported him; and if he did not, of which he appears doubtful, then, in 'fair-play,' he should not make statements he cannot verify. There is no mistake whatever. Mr. Slater stated, spontaneously and most positively, that a letter would be received from my son of a most encouraging nature within fourteen days. The word 'surprise' was not used. This can be verified by many of my friends. He also stated that it would contain the news that my son had gone to Newcastle; this astonished us much, for nothing was more foreign to our thoughts. This prediction has been utterly falsified.

Your correspondent 'Vera' also reads my letter with 'great surprise.' Where does the 'great surprise' come in? Is it in the truthful statement of facts? If not, where?

I may just say, that it was only natural for a lady who had written a polite letter to a gentleman, to expect a reply, especially where she had shown Mr. Slater so much hospitality during his stay in Birmingham. In 'fair-play' this would not necessitate the employment of half-a-dozen secretaries.

If any reply is given to the above, may I ask 'Fairplay' and 'Vera' to sign their proper names, or to remain silent?

Birmingham.

GEORGE TUBBS.

SIR,—Neither 'Fairplay' nor 'Vega' can know any of the facts of the case relative to the prediction made to Miss Tubbs. I do, and many others also, as well as the chairman of the meeting where the prediction was made with 'such an air of infallibility.'

The facts, as related by Mr. Tubbs, are entirely consistent with the truth, and are stated in a spirit of fairness and equity.

Such predictions made in public, without substantial grounds, are capable of doing great harm to Spiritualism, especially in a place like Birmingham, where they are particularly unwelcome to friends, who have had such hard work to maintain their ground in the face of strong opposition, without giving the enemy good ground to confirm them in their scepticism.

If Mr. Slater confined himself to tests and dropped out these speculative predictions, which are so often found to be baseless, he would be doing better work and be the more welcome the next time he comes to Birmingham.

'Vega' says 'it is almost impossible for a sensitive to transport himself back into conditions transpiring some weeks previously, and thus obtain explanations of predictions.' The time was only two weeks. 'Fairplay' states that 'Mr. Slater gave a full explanation at the Cavendish Rooms of the incident.' Who is right? 'Vega' or 'Fairplay'?

I can say, if 'Fairplay' correctly reports Mr. Slater, then Mr. Slater speaks without sufficient thought, for the facts are quite misrepresented by him. Another instance of falsified prediction by Mr. Slater has come under my notice. How many others are there of which we hear nothing?

I think Mr. Tubbs has done good service by calling attention to failures such as this; the name our opponents give it is imposture.

In defence of Spiritualism, Spiritualists should be true to themselves and their cause by being the first to make public all failure, as well as all success. From this your correspondent, who hides himself under the misnomer of 'Fairplay,' might learn a useful and much-needed lesson.

Birmingham.

J. HANDS.

Spirit Robes.

SIR,—I would like to know the opinion on this subject of some of your readers who are scientifically inclined.

I can understand why spirits should appear as if clothed, in order to be identified; but when spirits who are represented as having quitted the 'form of clay,' say, a century or more ago, visualise themselves to the clairvoyant or otherwise in artificial garb, my reason refuses to digest.

We of the earth-plane clothe ourselves (1) to protect our bodies from cold, heat, and other injury; (2) for adornment; and (3) from a hereditary conceit that 'the Image of God' is not good enough for exhibition.

Now I fail to see how any of those three reasons can hold good on the other side of Borderland.

1. Spirits who can penetrate solid matter, and through whom solid matter can be passed without injury, obviously are not liable to injury through contact, nor can they be affected by cold or heat; nor, if they could be so affected, would their supposed habiliment be proof against such injury.

2. As to adornment either as a matter of taste or distinction, it can surely be laid aside by 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' I cannot accept Voysey's theory that spirit has no form. Rather would I agree with Pascal that 'la Nature est une Image de la Grâce'; but the more I try to analyse this latter theory the more difficult do I find it to believe that spirits fabricate and wear, of necessity, a covering representative of clothing—even including, as we must, our own instinct to manufacture, and its result, as phenomena of Nature.

3. It is a libel on our higher reason to attribute to highly developed spirits a conceit similar to our so-called 'modesty.'

'In native nakedness adorned' is more than a poet's fancy. It is an ideal to which evolution tends; and the story of the embarrassment of Adam and Eve when they realized that they were naked (whether literally true or not, it does not matter) points to a moral that is beginning to find voice among the more advanced thinkers of our day.

Glasgow.

JOHN CAMPBELL.

Spiritism and Spiritualism.

SIR,—The passage quoted from 'The Life of Anna Kingsford,' and your pithy and apposite remarks thereon, strike a chord which has been, and is now, neglected by the main body of Spiritualism. There is almost an apologetic attitude assumed when the soft impeachment of being a Spiritualist is admitted in certain circles. And when the 'exposure' of such-and-such a medium is mentioned, there is a faint fluttering of the heart, as if Spiritualism itself is put on its trial and found wanting. How weak and foolish a thought! All the great thinkers that have yet appeared on this globe are Spiritualists in the best and real sense of the word; that is to say, their teaching has been that will, thought, or spirit—the different words express the same thing—is the only reality in the universe, and that what is called 'matter' is merely variety of form of this reality, and consequently that form is continually changed and moulded by spirit. Not to mention the doctrine of Jesus Christ, we have on our side Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, Emerson, than whom no names stand higher in the estimation of the human race. It would be easy to cull from their writings and sayings thoughts that will serve as watchwords of Spiritualism for all time.

Why, then, have Spiritualists, as a main body, contented themselves with remaining so much on the defensive? Why have they not, armed as they are with the teaching of the great men of the race, as well as by incontrovertible experience of actual facts, gone forth in a solid phalanx and attacked the gross materialism which is so rampant now in the pulpit, in the Press, in literature, and in science? The answer is that the Materialists are making so much noise that they have frightened timid people into submission, for human nature has a great deal of fear in its composition. But this should continue no longer. As Spiritualists we must, in the interests of humanity, assume a more forward and aggressive attitude, and deal with all the burning questions of the day boldly and fearlessly from our standpoint, because it is only from the higher platform of Spiritualism that the various problems that are now presenting themselves for solution can be satisfactorily settled. To be anti-this or anti-that is not enough. To dispel darkness we must bring the light to bear upon it. Many societies and associations that are aiming at reforms are merely fighting in the dark, hitting about wildly and furiously; whereas, by accepting

