

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

No. 932—VOL. XVIII.

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CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way	561	Our Amusing Critics	569
Mr. Jesse Francis Shepard	563	T. L. Harris on Christian Science	570
Address by Professor Falcomer	563	Warning Voices	570
Braidism or Hypnotism	565	Churchmen and Spiritualists	570
Witches and Saints	566	Open Letter to the S.P.R.	571
Case of Professor Wilson	567	The Press and Spiritualism	571
Questions answered by 'Tien'	567	Water Divining	572

NOTES BY THE WAY.

We do not think the verdict of 'manslaughter' against Miss Lyon and Mrs. Mills will stand, though prejudice in the matter, backed by want of knowledge, is very strong. The coroner and his jury were undisguisedly prejudiced; the former passionately so, but undoubtedly sincere, and fatally so. There is no prejudice so dangerous as an entirely sincere one. That breeds fanatics on the one hand and persecutors on the other. It lit the fires of Smithfield, and set up the cross on Calvary.

In saying this, we are not by any means thick and thin supporters of Mrs. Mills. That lady certainly did her best, of course unconsciously, to madden the ancient Briton in the jury box, but she also is evidently sincere,—as dangerously sincere as the coroner; only she probably knows something about Mental Science, and he does not.

The curious thing is that in branding Mrs. Mills' faith as nonsensical and murderous, the coroner and his jury branded scriptural and evangelical Christianity as nonsensical and murderous, also; for scriptural and evangelical Christianity are both committed to the divine and supernatural power of faith and prayer. The Mental Scientist may yet get the conventional Christian into a very pretty hole.

On other grounds, we warn the ancient Briton in the jury box or on the judgment seat that he may get himself into difficulties if he is over-confident that the person who proposes to cure by suggestion or by faith is talking nonsense. Suggestion is a tremendous force, power, or influence—call it what we will;—and it can heal and does. For all we know, faith, assurance, calm trust and the absence of worry may lift the inner and real self into a higher region, where the potent forces can act. We have, at this moment, under consideration, a very curious case which seems to suggest this, and which also seems to suggest that serene courage and resolute self-disregarding work are curative.

But, as we say, we are not going to hurry or worry ourselves over this matter. We only set out to warn our rather obstinate ancient Britons, with their animal standards, their gross tests, and their respect for pills.

By the way, the palm for depressing folly may be given to a certain Ethel Jonson who writes on the subject in 'The Daily Chronicle,' and who wants to know how 'the working force' of 'the Divine Intelligence' can be 'meted out at so much an hour or so much a week.' She had better go and ask the nearest clergyman who persuades to trust in God, or who 'ministers to a mind diseased.' Do

not people need to be taught and helped to believe in and to trust themselves to this 'working force'? and is not the teacher and helper worth at least a guinea a week? Ethel Jonson evidently knows nothing about the matter; and the wonder is that she did not see it. Her misreading of the whole thing is so very palpable.

Occasionally we get refreshed with the hope that spiritual ideas are making their way even into the preserves of the bishops; and then, alas! something is sure to happen to show us the Egyptian darkness that still lingers in high places. The Bishop of London, addressing about a thousand doctors in St. Paul's Cathedral, solemnly told them that a great biologist had declared that if there were a resurrection it must be a resurrection of the body, as it was impossible to conceive of the body and spirit existing without one another. And the poor bishop seems to believe that, for he said that the conception of soul or spirit cannot be realised apart from the body, and that the marks of the doctor's skill (or blundering!) would be carried into eternity. There was a time, said the bishop, when science rather mocked at the possibility of a resurrection of the mortal frame, but that is now changed.

Is it not truly deplorable? Can we not send a missionary or two to carry at least the elements of our Gospel to these heathen in foreign parts?

We have received from Messrs. D. Appleton and Co. (New York) a copy of the fourth edition of Mr. E. P. Powell's great work, 'Our Heredity from God: Lectures on Evolution' The value of this book lies in its entire modernness, while its charm resides in the freshness of its outlooks and the grace of its style. The careful reader will now and then wonder what is becoming of 'God,' but he will perhaps make the happy discovery that we can so reconstruct the idea of God as to satisfy the most modern mind.

The book is strictly scientific and philosophic. Its object is to make the common earth secure for the feet of Faith, and it does it: but it does not end with earth. Its haven is the skies. Temperately and very cautiously, but firmly enough, Mr. Powell leads us to the Borderland, and gently prophesies of things to come, but with this warning:—

On no account must we learn to think of two universes as any way distinct, or existing otherwise than as the phases of the absolute Unity. The dual conception of the universe must be tolerated only as we tolerate the dual conception of man. Man is not a double or complex, composed of body and soul, but a substantial unit. The universe is not two-fold, but one. On no other ground must we build.

Colonel Oleott, in a late number of 'The Theosophist,' gives a very curious explanation of what we, in his opinion, ignorantly regard as mere idolatry, or wood and stone worship. He is giving an account of an Address by him at Kumbakonam, and says:—

There were many college men present who had no clear conception of the actual process by which a mere block of

stone, metal or wood, carved into a certain conventional shape, is changed into a sort of psychic dynamo, soaked with human aura, and efficacious for the production of psychological and physiological effects upon sensitive worshippers. The process is called in Sanskrit *Prana pratishtha*—the focalising of auric power (*prana*), and is intensely interesting to the amateur of mesmerism. Without going into details, it will suffice to say that the image goes through a process which extends over forty days, and includes the withdrawing from the image of all innate impurities and the subsequent imbuing, or saturating of it with a purified human magnetism, *i. e.*, aura. Then to fix this supply, as it were, it is customary for the officiating adept, or chief Brahmin, to prepare, or have engraved on a sheet of copper, a geometrical symbol, called *chakram*, into which a magic power is imparted by the concentration of the trained Will. This copper-plate is placed under the image when fixed in its place and there left, so long as the temple stands. Now, the wiser and purer the adept-consecrator the more real, effective and permanent the infusion of *prana* into the image, and the more carefully the *chakram* is prepared and placed, the more lasting its efficacy as a storage-battery of divine power. One sees, from all this, that the good Bishop Heber was more or less silly in saying:—

‘The Heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone.’

In point of fact, neither is the Heathen blind, nor does he bow down to wood and stone: quite the contrary, and the average Missionary is the real blind one, since he knows nothing at all about the Powers, symbols, customs or ceremonies which he reviles.

‘Immortality,’ edited by J. C. F. Grumbine, promises well, but its readers need to be seasoned thinkers. It is at present almost exclusively devoted to clairvoyance. An acute note on the disputed question whether a hypnotic can be induced to accept suggestions to act against its will, contains the following useful meeting-place:—

A recent editorial in the ‘Times-Herald’ of Chicago (August 7th, 1898), in quoting the inductions of some expert medical testimony upon the question of the undue influence of the hypnotist upon a subject, maintained that it was sufficiently shown that a person in a hypnotic trance could not be influenced to do anything he did not wish to do, and that if the person was unwilling to accept suggestions no power of the hypnotist could compel him to do so. The case at issue was that of Dr. Kingsbury and Mrs. Howard.

The invalidity of the above argument arises from the very affirmations. While it is true in most cases that a subject will not do anything against his will, it is also true that he will do whatever the hypnotist adroitly suggests, with the consent of his will. A network of minor and important conditions intervene to win the subject’s confidence; once that is obtained, the will of the subject and that of the hypnotist sufficiently and harmoniously blend. The lapses from the normal to the induced consciousness, in which there is apparently an absolute forgetfulness of direct evidence and recollection of her real self, is a trick of the mind, which makes hypnotism a most interesting, fascinating and perplexing study. How far the real self enters into and blends with the hypnotic self, how deep and rare the induced action of the hypnosis and hypnotist extends, how impotent the normal will becomes when suggestion operates, and how automatically it plays when the keyboard of the mind and heart are touched by the expert operator, are problems in practical psychology still open to investigation and experiment.

Mr. E. D. Girdlestone, a well-known Agnostic who still claims to be an Agnostic, says, in ‘The Literary Guide’:

In referring to myself as an Agnostic, in the sense of ‘ignorant’ of certain subjects—*e.g.*, the existence and the nature of a deity—I did not mean to include the question of a future life. That question is, as it seems to me, settled in the affirmative as a question of science; and, as it also seems to me, after careful examination of most of the evidence, *pro* and *con*, of a high-class sort, is settled on grounds quite strong enough to support even a hypothesis as incredible *a priori* as is that of spirit survival. I do not, indeed, see how a person can go through the ‘Proceedings’ of the Society for Psychical Research without coming to this conclusion. Nor have I heard of a single person who has thoroughly studied the evidence at present before the world, and yet still maintains that there is no future life; though, no doubt, some such students are still suspending their judgment. Fifty years ago there was not evidence enough to satisfy scientific thinkers, but since that time such a mass of new evidence—much of it, too, of a new sort—has been

collected, sifted, and tested that even men like Wallace and Crookes, and Dr. R. Hodgson and Mr. F. Myers, have become believers.

This is decidedly a sign of the times, and a rather novel one,—but just the one for which we have been looking. There is a good deal in it.

‘The Church Gazette’ is as industrious as ever in making the Creeds of the Church mean just what it pleases. A writer in a late number confessed that the so-called ‘Apostles’ Creed’ kept him out of the Church, especially the clauses concerning the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of the body. Respecting this last, the editor merely says: ‘Assuming any resurrection, there must be some kind of body; such, for instance, as believers in Spiritualism are said to contend for.’ Really now! And will it do, when one says, ‘I believe in the resurrection of the body,’ to mean ‘I do not believe in the resurrection of the body: I believe in the resurrection of the spirit’?

The Rev. J. B. Heard, M.A., Hulsean Lecturer, Bath, writing in ‘The Church Gazette,’ puts at the judgment-bar two ‘untruths’ (it is his own word). The first ‘untruth’ is, ‘that death ushers the soul immediately and finally into the supreme condition which awaits the souls of men; so that at death the souls of good men pass at once into heaven, while the souls of bad men pass at once into hell—in other words, that the final and irrevocable severance between the just and the unjust takes place at death.’ The second ‘untruth’ is ‘that there are but two classes of those who pass hence, and are no more seen—classes sharply distinguished, clearly outlined, on the one hand, of those who, at death, go straight to heaven, and, on the other hand, of those who, at death, go to the place of final torment.’

This is refreshing from such a quarter. Mr. Heard advocates the purely rational and spiritual view.

The bright and scholarly little article in ‘The Humanitarian,’ to which we elsewhere refer, explains why witches were more common and more dreaded than wizards.

Craft must be used. And the Devil secured souls, whether he went forth to entrap his victims as a goat, or a cat, or ‘a proper gentleman with a hazel beard.’ Women became his ministrants easily, sooner or later. Why? A king took it upon himself to answer the momentous question, and, because a king had written it, the glib explanation was accepted, more especially as it was founded on the vulgar dogma. Indeed, James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England, the pompous magio-maniac, has much blood upon his hands. Looking back on him and on his monstrous publication, the ‘Demonologie,’ one merely wonders that his spouse, Anne of Denmark, did not give the lie to him, or that some sensible, braw gudewife was not there to scratch his eyes out for thus explaining the preponderance of witches over wizards: ‘The reason is casie, for as that sex is frailler than man is, so is it easie to be entrapp’d in the grosse snares of the devil, as was over-well proved to be true by the serpent deceiving of Eva at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sex sensine (since).’

A late number of the ‘Journal of Practical Metaphysics’ contains a specially thoughtful Paper on ‘War from the Metaphysical Standpoint,’ by Henry Wood. The causes of the absurd popularity of militarism are set forth, and its possible uses hinted at. Mr. Wood holds that ‘the incident of war does not in the least invalidate the unbounded beneficence of law, nor the absoluteness of the ALL GOOD.’ ‘It is,’ he says, ‘one of the great “growing pains” of the transition from the Adamic to the Christly consciousness.’ We must believe it, but it is not easy.

We do not like to use the word ‘ignorant,’ to describe a critic or a scorner, but we find we often have to do it.

We never did it with a clearer conscience than in this Note. 'The New Orthodoxy' contains an article on Indian Magic in which the writer says, 'there can be no possible reason for doubting that the high-caste fakirs, or magicians, of Northern India, have discovered certain natural laws of which we in the West are still ignorant, and that they have succeeded in overcoming forces of nature which are still to us insurmountable.' Then he adds: 'That there is anything supernatural in their power I would be the last to concede, for I have spent my life in combating the delusions of supernaturalism, and the so-called manifestations of Spiritualism.'

We call that ignorant. It is one of the marks of Modern Spiritualism that it combats supernaturalism. All occult laws it regards as perfectly natural, as this writer would have known if he had read 'LIGHT.'

MR. JESSE FRANCIS SHEPARD.

Some of our readers will be interested in learning that Mr. Jesse Francis Shepard, the musical medium, is again in London, and a correspondent sends us a long account of a performance, 'said to be under spirit control,' which Mr. Shepard gave on the evening of the 6th inst., in a private house in the West End of London. When Mr. Shepard gave his musical séances here in 1894 they were reported so fully in the pages of 'LIGHT' that it is quite unnecessary to describe them again at any length; but there were some few incidents, mentioned by our correspondent as having occurred at the recent séance, which may perhaps be deemed worthy of record. He says that during the performance 'spirit lights' were seen in various parts of the room, not only by Mr. Shepard, but also by Miss MacCreddie and several other persons; that Mr. Shepard declared that he could see spirit forms present, two of which he recognised as Beethoven and Mozart, and that another, a lady, stood beside him at the piano; and that three voices—a basso-profundo, a contralto, and a high and singularly sweet soprano—could be distinctly heard, the soprano coming, Mr. Shepard believes, from the spirit form, the lady, who stood at his left hand. Our correspondent adds, in conclusion:—

Whether the music was produced by spirit agency or not I cannot say, but incidentally the presence of spirits was satisfactorily proved;—or was it a wonderful coincidence?

A young lady of a very sceptical turn of mind was one of those present, and she had lately been receiving messages by automatic writing from intelligences calling themselves her spirit guardians. This lady was far more inclined to credit her 'sub-conscious self' (whatever that may be) with these communications than to ascribe them to spirit agency. She was, however, rather startled when Mr. Shepard called out, 'I see a spirit form standing behind Miss Z.; and now I see "Elizabeth" written over her head;—now a man comes to join her and I get his name as "William."'

If there is nothing in it, it is at least a curious coincidence that 'Elizabeth' and 'William' are the names previously claimed by the 'spirit guardians,' while Mr. Shepard had never seen or heard of Miss Z. before.

The most convincing proof, however, was the last—and it came through Miss MacCreddie. That lady had seen many spirit forms during the evening, and after the performance, and when in another room, she was describing one, a lady, whom she had particularly noticed. Our host, who is a widower, thought he recognised the description, and, to make sure, asked Miss MacCreddie to return to the music-room and see if she could pick out from a number of photographs which stood about, that of the spirit she had seen. On doing so, she, without the slightest hesitation, pointed out the photograph of our host's deceased wife. It would seem by this that she who long ago had passed over was still present—that she is alive and not dead, but has simply gone before!

EVERY human being has an invisible side to him, which is practically the ghost of himself. In earth life a man chooses associates out of whom he gets the most satisfaction. The ghost of himself does just the same. So the world of ghosts is for each of us very much what we make it. And the behaviour of our ghostly friends is practically just what our behaviour would be under their conditions and surroundings.—CHARLES DAWBARN.

SEANCES FOR SOMNAMBULISTIC AND MEDIUMISTIC PHENOMENA.

BY M.—T. FALCONE,
Of Alessandria, Piedmont,

Licenziato dalle Sezioni Magistrale e Consolare della R. Scuola Superiore di Venezia.

Professore titolare di scienze giuridiche nel R. Istituto Tecnico di Alessandria Già nominato Console onorario di Hawaii.

Translation of Address written for the International Congress of Spiritualists, held in London on June 19-24, 1898.

(Continued from page 556.)

Not believing that the unknown Ego really possessed the qualities which he claimed, I cunningly addressed a few questions to him with the secret desire to unmask him. On this he spoke to me as follows:—

'You must have patience and sincerity. Put your hand on your conscience and you will recognise that you do not act uprightly—to deceive like this! If you wish me to assist you be loyal and sincere, else you will not see me any more.'

'Pray also. Any form of prayer is good. Be sincere and deceive no one. It is very wrong. . . . You know that I love you, but if you do not act according to the divine precepts, I must leave you.'

'Science is a great thing, and of use to mankind, but frankness and sincerity ennoble the soul and lead it on to perfection. If you do not apply perfect candour to this study, I will not help you any more. Remember my words, they are those of a true friend, who has been your companion and who regrets to find you so untrue. Think that I loved you well in life, and that I fain would see you perfect on earth, that you may become a noble spirit in our world, in which is true happiness that cannot be described, because mortals could not understand; yet it exists. Amend yourself; then you will see the realisation of what I told you,—the triumph of Spiritism for your own good and the good of those you love.'

'Good-bye. Follow the advice of your faithful friend. Good-bye until to-morrow.'

(c) 'Until to-morrow,' said our mentor, at our second reunion; and so, on the morrow, we met again. But we had hardly begun the third séance when we had to stop on account of some visitors entering. They perceived what had been our occupation, and so the conversation naturally ran on the subject of Spiritism. I am, however, not going to relate the conversation—better not.

The next evening the Countess and myself sat down to our séance without so much as mentioning these persons. I began by asking the so-called spirits to let us hear something about their occupations, whereupon one of them transmitted the following answer:—

'I did not come yesterday because there were non-believers here who scoffed at everything. Woe to those who will not believe; who have the light and who push it from them! But do not fear, I will assist you. Forgive them, and persevere in your endeavours.'

'The spirits worship God, obey Him, serve Him. They have missions on earth. Do not scrutinise these things; believe and pray.'

'To those who look into Spiritism sincerely, with the purpose of learning and improving themselves and others, it is a great blessing; but to those who examine its facts in a spirit of curiosity and levity, it will, on the contrary, be a disadvantage, moral and intellectual, because they raise doubts which it is impossible for mortals to solve.'

'Be steadfast and of unswerving will, then I shall be able to assist and enlighten you, and, with God's help, even in a material way. Be good, be active, be brave in the battle of life. God loves those who do not stoop under adversity. There is one amongst you who is gifted with such a valiant temper. Join steadfastness of purpose to prayer and charity, and you will attain perfection.'

The phenomena which I had observed during the two series of our sittings offered not merely an opportunity of studying somnambulistic and mediumistic faculties. Looked at to-day by the light of other manifestations obtained since, and by ulterior studies, the messages psychically written by the Countess B. appear more and more convincing and make it all clearer to my understanding.

When I began my first researches, based on somnambulism,

I used myself to ask the questions of the invisible agent. Sometimes I wrote them out after careful forethought at home or anywhere else. Eight sittings out of eighteen were prepared in this manner. In some cases there were only a few, in some others as many as twenty questions; but whatever their purport, the mysterious influence answered always so as to satisfy, or at any rate to greatly surprise.

(d) Amongst the numerous oral questions which I put at the fifth séance were the following: Is it advisable to have a particular director to conduct the séances? Should he always formulate the questions? What ought I to do to become a medium? Ought mediums to live in society or isolated? Is it advisable to seek physical experiences? What is their use?

These questions were answered in the following way:—

'God bless you, my dear brothers. I shall only reply to a few questions. The medium is yet but a novice in Spiritism and could not resist the fatigue which it would occasion. It is too much for her as it is.

'To become a writing medium you must practise much; you will then obtain the answers you desire. I am afraid of tiring the medium, so must not keep her writing too long.

'Well-chosen society does not harm those who wish to devote themselves to us, but be careful of false friends and light company. Be merry and of good cheer. Do not seek isolation. On this subject, however, you must consult your own judgment, for the interior voice never deceives.

'Physical experiences are useful, but hardly attainable for two persons alone—not for a long time, at least.

'Let me recommend again daily practice earnestly conducted, and you will have good results.

'It is advisable to have a director at the sittings, who formulates the questions; as far as possible it ought to be always the same. This, however, should not prevent other assistants from asking some questions if so inclined. The first requisites are earnestness, harmony, and perseverance. Let there be few assistants but well chosen. Beware of sceptical, ironical minds who ridicule and despise your doings behind your back. Have patience with all, be earnest and sincere, and God will bless you, and permit us to come and assist you.

'Do not fear bad spirits, but if one happens to come between you, have compassion on him, pray for him.

'I must leave you now, dear friends; to-morrow I will return.'

(e) Many questions were addressed to the unknown intelligence during the ensuing week, but I shall repeat only those to which answers were given. They were the following:—

Are you the same who always joins our séances? If so, why, in the second message, did you qualify yourself as being Giovanni? I do not know you by that name. Was it humility on your part to call yourself a noble and devoted spirit? In studying Spiritism, is it advisable to let theory precede practice? What is the astral body (perisprit)? Are you all equal in intelligence? Can you disintegrate and re-integrate matter? How is the medium? Would there be any danger for her if she were entranced during the communication?

The last question was asked because I was in constant apprehension on account of the Countess's health. Then also I desired to know what other phenomena might be obtained if sleep were induced, and if there could come harm to her through some violent control. Being myself yet new in these matters, I thought it safe to inquire beforehand.

'Do not be uneasy on account of the medium. Her state is much more satisfactory than yesterday, though she is still somewhat weak. She must not be overworked. She requires distraction so as to recover her equilibrium.

'Do not think me proud if I called myself by the name of a good and noble spirit. I maintain my words, but I do so only to assure you of the presence of one who will never give you any but good advice.

'The medium has a great tendency to sleep, and will succeed in it; you must learn how to act if the case occurs.

'Theory had better precede practice. Read and study and then go to work and teach those who know less than yourself.

'True, my name is unknown, but on the first night I did not manifest; it was your friend, though I was present, and with great good sense you noticed what seemed to you a contradiction. I am the special guide of the medium; I have been her protector for many years.

'You do not seem to heed much my words, for you do not practise psychical writing. If you wish for a result you must write often though not long at a time; often, and with perseverance.

'I cannot answer your question on the astral body, as it would tire the medium.

'Yet I will say that our intelligence is not dependent on our greater or smaller moral superiority. Intelligence can be applied to bad ends as well as to noble ones. From our language you can gather whether we are good as well as intelligent. And yet bad spirits often take the appearance of good ones so as to deceive with more facility. For this reason an intelligent Spiritist will weigh the good against the evil and be careful with whom he deals.

'You may soon obtain physical phenomena, but in the dark.

'Certainly, we can disintegrate matter, yet after much time and prayer.

'Charity constitutes the very basis of Spiritism. Extend a helping hand to all, give good advice and sympathy; be patient, and seek to make proselytes for the common welfare. Our aim is to become perfect and to rest in the bosom of God. Once there our mission is at an end (!); others will rise to take our place to teach mortals to be virtuous and good and happy.

'Understand my words and act up to them, as I sincerely hope you may do. I must leave you until to-morrow; it is God's will. Good-bye. God's blessing be on you.

GIOVANNI.

At the ninth séance, which was the last of the first series, I repeated some of my questions, and put a few others. The impulse to sleep was gradually increasing with the Countess, and whilst in the somnambulant state her own consciousness disappeared, to be replaced by those mysterious intelligences. She transmitted in this séance the following message:—

'DEAR FRIENDS,—I am unable myself to communicate at length with you, as the medium will soon fall into sleep, and I do not consider it prudent to manifest, since you are still so new to Spiritism.

'Your questions require extensive answers, but you must be content with the few words which I am allowed to say to you. These questions have been asked before in other words, but the substance is the same. If you read what has been written previously on the subject, you will be enlightened. You will have luminous phenomena, in the dark of course; do not be afraid, but pray.

'Our occupations consist in trying to improve humanity. The conversations which we prefer are those treating of moral subjects, because on those themes we can best offer you advice. In the present age, in which materialism so generally prevails, and in which whatever is great and holy is ridiculed and trodden under foot, what can be of greater benefit to mankind than the advice of true friends? Like unto you, they have lived; they remember the passions and struggles of earth, under which all more or less labour and suffer. Assisted by us you will find the path of life less difficult to travel. Do not imitate the sceptics of the age, who treat everything high and noble with contempt. Later they will see where the truth lay. On the other side of the tomb they will regret the false doctrines they spread and will expiate their wicked actions.

'Dear friends, be cautious in your words, cautious in taking up new doctrines, which might mislead you. Be steadfast in your principles, unchangeable in your faith. You will then have divine peace, which is a balm to the soul. This is true happiness, such as is enjoyed in our world by those who have deserved it. Good-bye.'

The message ending here, I asked *mentally* how many they were, and if Giovanni was present or some other friend? The answer came promptly and clearly:

'There are two of us—Giovanni and myself.'

(To be continued.)

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A meeting of Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall (entrance from Piccadilly), at 7 for 7.30 p.m., on Friday, December 2nd, when the friends present will be invited to narrate, briefly, the particulars of any

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

of an abnormal character, the record of which may possibly be of service to students of psychical phenomena and philosophy.

In accordance with Rule XV. of the Articles of Association, the subscriptions of Members and Associates elected after October 1st will be taken up for the remainder of the present year and the whole of 1899.

BRAIDISM OR HYPNOTISM.*

BY DR. DURAND DE GROS.

FIRST MOVEMENT: INDUCED SENSITIVENESS.

In a recent article in the 'Revue de l'Hypnotisme' Dr. Liébeault, the originator and head of the Nancy school, recognises that modern research is leading to the confirmation of the teachings advanced by Dr. Durand in his lectures and works published as far back as 1855 and 1860.

Dr. Liébeault points out that the so-called secondary state, or artificially induced sleep state, is identical with that induced in mental concentration. It should be recognised that this position was first presented by Dr. Durand in this work in 1860. He says therein that suspension of activity in thinking, and the fixing or concentration of attention on one point and idea, interfere with the normal nervous circulation and entail a congestion of the nervous energy in the grey vesicular (condensor) cells of the brain. This state he terms hypotaxie (receptive condition).

The nervous energy thus ceases to follow its usual peripheric course, and external relations become suspended. If while in the externally passive state, so induced, an impression is conveyed by any of the senses, the stored-up nervous energy concentrates thereon, producing an excessively intensified reaction. Insensibility then becomes replaced by hyperæsthesia; inertness by catalepsy, tetanus, &c. When these fluctuating, alternate, and contrary nervous states so induced come to be directed and concentrated on a given centre, or inhibited therefrom, then functional modifications may be produced at will. And not only organic modifications, but sensorial and mental hallucinations. Objective perceptions occur in the sensorium apart from normal sense relations. Sensation may be inhibited, transferred, or intensified. Intellectual and moral faculties may also be inhibited or stimulated; ecstasy may be produced. In fact, the character may be transformed.

Very great advantages accrue to surgery, to therapeutics, to physiology and psychology, to moral education, from the application of these properties inherent in Braidism, which, it will be seen, bring the means of stimulating or retarding the organic functions or modifying them apart from the use of drugs, and of determining certain transcendent powers of the soul, and raising it above the necessities of the organism.

Dr. Durand points out that the real factor in the fixing of the eyes on a given point as advocated by Braid, is mental concentration, as it implies the fixing of the mind on one idea. (People whose reflective powers carry indomitable activity, as also those of weak intellectual ability and will, cannot effect this.) The mind becomes subjected in this way to an exclusively sustained, uniform, monotonous sensation. This mono-ideistic inactivity arrests the regular diffusion of the nervous energy into the sensor-motor nerves, and induces a diminution of sensibility as well as torpidity of thinking, such as accompanies sleep, in which the innervation of the sensory nerves being suspended, these cease to convey impressions from the outer world.

In fact, activity of thinking is as much a condition of the regular innervation of sensory nerves, as sensibility is the condition of mental activity. This is evidenced in the fact that anaesthesia is accompanied by mental disorder and hysteria, while idiots are more or less anæsthetic, and the repose of the sensor-motor organs and torpidity of thinking is symptomatic of sleep.

This suspension of mental activity, entailing concurrent congestion of the nervous energy in the brain, can be induced by the sustaining of any simple, uniform sensation, whether visual, auditive, or muscular. Fixing the vision upon a bright spot and restricting mental attention to the

subjective image thereof, entails a uniform excitation or sensation, exclusively maintained while the field of expansion in attention is concentrated upon a restricted centre; on one idea, intensifying the reaction. The fascination induced by staring at eyes is similar in its effect; as also staring at a crystal, at ink, at a magic mirror, at a bright, rippling stream of water. The mothers in Brittany, from a similar cause, suspend a bright ball above the child in its cradle.

But a similar effect may be induced by a rhythmical, monotonously repeating sound. Thus nurses hypnotise children audibly by monotonous, rhythmic lullabies, and muscularly by regular oscillations of the cradle. The regular, monotonous noise and shaking of a railway train produces a similar effect.

Dr. Durand points out that many of the rites exercised by mystical sects, and which are supposed to develop a specially religious ecstasy entailing 'union with God,' consist in the utilisation of the psychological process above explained. The Yogi who fixes his gaze and mind on a given spot in space, on the tip of his nose, or on his navel, is following the same process as the subject who is made to fix his eyes and thought on a cork fastened on to his forehead, on a revolving mirror, on a nail, on a bright spot on a dull card, or on a coin in his hand. The monotonous, incessant repetition of sacred words, such as A-U-M, and of unintelligible, barbarous magical formulae, are skilfully conceived practices, cleverly used to throw the subject's reason asleep and tie his soul with the fetters of a blind faith.

The incantations by savages for the purpose of 'charming' are always of a rhythmic character, hypnotising through the eye and the ear. The wheel-like motion of turning dervishes; the rhythmic muscular bending of the body, accompanied by monotonous howling of sacred words, by the howling dervishes; the more violent rites practised by the Arab sect of Aissawahs, are similar in character, and entail an ecstatic delirium, accompanied by superficial and profound anaesthesia.

The state of religious ecstasy such as that of St. Theresa; the thaumaturgic ecstasy of the Brahmins and Buddhists, in which the soul is supposed to be raised into the supreme beatitude of Nirvana, are constituted by this induced physiological condition of hyper-excitation, in which normal faculties may be exalted to unknown degrees, accompanied by the strangest effects of anaesthesia, hyperæsthesia, and ecstasy.

(Note by 'QUESTOR VITE' to follow.)

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Owing to the re-arrangement of the books, and the preparation of a new catalogue, it will be necessary to close the Library for the circulation of books until the end of the present month. The books will be again available on December 1st.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

'Suggestive Therapeutics.' Edited by SYDNEY FLOWER, LL.D. Chicago, U.S.A.: The Psychic Publishing Co., Times-Herald Building. Price 10 cents.

'Expression,' a Journal of Mind and Thought, for November. London: W. Isacke, 211, Edgware-road, W. Price 6d.

'The Perfect Faith,' for November. Denver, Colorado, U.S.A.: Box 908. Price 10 cents.

'The Literary Digest.' New York, U.S.A.: Messrs. Funk and Wagnalls, 30, Lafayette-place. Price 10 cents.

'The Coming Light,' for November. California, U.S.A.: 621, O'Farrell-street, San Francisco. Price 10 cents.

'Homeland,' a new home magazine, for November. London: 4, Bouverie-street, Fleet-street. Price 1d. Contains an interview with and portrait of Cheiro, the Palmist.

'Holloway's Almanac and Family Friend' also 'Holloway's School Companion.' London: Thomas Holloway, 78, New Oxford-street, W.C. Price 1d., post free.

'Das ausserkörperliche Wirken des lebenden Menschen und der Spiritismus.' Vier Vorträge gehalten in der 'Wissenschaftlichen Vereinigung Sphinx in Berlin.' Von Max Rahn. Verlag von Franz C. Mickl in Münster i. W. Bohlweg 7. Price 2½ marks.

* 'Cours de Braidisme.' Paris: Alcan.

† People who are naturally very impressionable cease to be influenceable when under strong mental preoccupation, i.e., concentration. Digestion similarly entails cessation of susceptibility from the fact of the nervous energy being temporarily concentrated on these functions. One in thirty-five people is constitutionally hypotaxic; neuropathic. They present the same pathological condition habitually as a congenital idiosyncrasy, apart from any artificial preparation. People of nervous temperament are easily susceptible to hypotaxic influence, while people of flippant, egotistical and exaggeratedly sceptical tendency are difficult to influence.

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

WITCHES AND SAINTS.

Two subjects press for re-consideration in the light of modern knowledge:—Witchcraft and Saintship. These have far too long been tossed about from the two extremes of superstition and scorn, by the hands of sanctified credulity and unsanctified contempt. It is time to be discriminating, reasonable, just. A late writer, to whom we shall, on another occasion, refer, says that there is more than one saint to whom 'restitution' is due. He is right; but, if the saints deserve restitution, what of the sinners? The saints have been very well taken care of, on the whole, and we confess our inclination is to reserve our white-washing for the people the saints were sometimes severe enough to roll over, starve, or burn. To-day, then, we vote for attention to the witches.

In the light of the psychological and spiritual knowledge of to-day, it is now quite possible to feel our way back to the awful days when thousands of poor creatures were destroyed as witches; and, with the help of modern mediumship, to explain phenomena which maddened our ancestors with ignorant terror.

Mr. Allen Putnam long ago grappled with the subject, from this standpoint, in relation to the so-called witchcraft of New England, in a work whose value increases every year; and a late writer in 'The Humanitarian' did good service in setting forth the almost incredible folly and cruelty of the English people and their rulers, less than 300 years ago. It is almost beyond belief that in England and Scotland alone the number of witch-burnings rose to 70,000.

Of course, real mediumship was deeply involved in it, and, of course also, mediumship and malignity might often go together, giving real cause for fear, and probably justifying some sort of legal interference; but ignorance and blind terror were undoubtedly the provoking causes of the diabolical mania which led to, perhaps, the most disgusting persecution ever known. The terrorism was, in effect, itself a form of possession or obsession; and a right reading of the circumstances would probably land us in the old conclusion that the populace, the preachers and the judges were the real victims of the devil, if any devil were concerned in the matter at all; for nothing that was ever recorded of the evil deeds of the 'witches' came anywhere near the devilish ferocity of their persecutors,—a ferocity which was only tempered by lucid intervals of imbecility. The writer of the article in 'The Humanitarian' cites the following out of many of the impish cruelties of these persecutors:—

It was in the fifteenth century that Europe really began to suffer the fury of the witch epidemic. The mischief was clinched by the issue of a bull of Innocent VIII. in 1484.

Five years later, under the Pope's special sanction, a *coterie* of learned writers issued a tremendous work in three parts, called the Witch-Hammer. The result did not belie the title. The thing may be summed up as refinedly fanatical, stupendously inhuman, gloriously self-sufficient. It sanctioned every imaginable horror and injustice; it practically stated that an accusation from the fondest or fondest lips held good, and that no definite cause for committal need be shown; it deprecated the employment of a counsel for the accused, and discussed elaborately the nature of the torture to be employed, and the signs to be observed. Briefly, the whole character of this diabolical work under the direction of a smug Pontiff, is displayed in the assertion that it was advisable to promise a witch life if she would make full confession, though the judge was in no way bound by this promise. I dare not count the names of those who fell into the snare, only to find themselves at the stake.

The unique devilry of this was, of course, the abominable deceit of it. God only knows how many poor creatures would concoct a confession in order to escape, only to be caught in the trap, and condemned on the strength of a confession that was a justifiable lie. But, apart from this special treachery, torture of many kinds, by fire, water, flogging—any kind of torture—was resorted to in order to extract a confession. Of a truth, we urgently need at revision of the whole infamy, with the prospect of tardy 'restitution' to at least the memories of the victims of so much ignorance, imbecility, and cruelty.

It is a common delusion that these 'witches' were harridans and hags. This was by no means the case. The first victims of the awful New England persecutions were respectable young girls who used to amuse themselves with palmistry and ghost stories; and, as the records and family traditions show, some of the 'witches' were the brightest women of the little town of Salem. In our own country, heresy, an over-strongly developed democratic temperament, or opposition to certain clerical or ruling personages, was often sufficient to set on foot the convenient and terrible charge of witchcraft. 'The Humanitarian' cites the case of Dame Alice Kytcher, of Kilkenny, one of many ladies, 'both beautiful and powerful,' who were charged with witchcraft. 'The truth was that the good lady was wealthy, and the Church scented rich booty which a nice little *auto-de-fé* would clap into the Church's purse, for a witch's goods were confiscate. Further, Dame Alice had enemies among her kith and kin, for she had been four times married, and her various step-children were none too glad at her right to the family heirlooms.' She was accused of 'neglecting the practices of the Church, of an unholy liaison with a demon called Robert Artison, of sacrificing live animals to the devil, of having bewitched, beguiled and infatuated her first three husbands so that their goods came to her "to the perpetual impoverishment of their sons and heirs," and of practising her magic medicines on her fourth spouse, with evil intent.'

It is easy to see what a frightful engine of terror this charge of witchcraft put into the hands of the envious, the grasping and the unscrupulous. Luckily for Dame Alice, she was just one too many for her merciless harriers, though she secured safety only by flight.

We repeat, however, that real mediumship was deeply involved in the matter, and, mediumship not being understood, it readily enough excited suspicion and terror, and was easily referred to the devil—who seems to have been a great deal more believed in than God—as is the case sometimes now. This ignorance and terror, and their ugly inferences, found a terribly potent backing in the verse in the Book of Exodus (xxii. 18), 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'; and the unseen world alone will reveal the amount of malignity and blind cruelty for which this little verse of 'Holy Writ' is responsible.

The moral is obvious. We have still amongst us, though of course in a milder or, let us say, in a less dangerous form, the old ignorance, and the old inference; and, as we have lately seen, we have even had the cold-blooded sig-

gation that certain old laws against witchcraft might well be brought out as engines for the battering of Spiritualists. We have only one reply to that: If the discredited spiritual descendants of the ignorant and brutal old persecutors want to try an experiment, we will meet them more than half way. We should like nothing better than an object-lesson which would show to the world what a combination of ancient savagery and modern stupidity can do.

THE CASE OF PROFESSOR WILSON.

By 'AN OLD CORRESPONDENT.'

In 'LIGHT' of August 27th, 1898, I submitted a narrative regarding a message purporting to have been written automatically through the hand of a young lady, a relative of mine, in the summer of 1890, and gave details of its subsequent verification through my having obtained, through a friend, a copy of Mrs. Gordon's life of Wilson (Christopher North), published in 1892. Details were also given of the re-appearance of the person representing himself as 'Christopher North' to the same lady when she was in Edinburgh in July of the present year, and on which latter occasion he took her to the house in which he had lived when in earth life, situated in Gloucester-place there, and pointed out the small medallion which set forth the fact that 'Christopher North had lived and died there.' I also mentioned that on the occasion on which her hand was controlled in 1890, she had not seen the spirit form who had done so; and that she had failed to identify the portrait of Wilson there shown by me to her, and which was shown at the beginning of the volume.

On the second occasion, viz., in July last, she of course saw the spiritual personage, who then for the first time represented himself under his *nom de plume* of Christopher North. As, however, the young lady was resident in Lancashire at the time the article was written, I was then unable to verify the likeness. On her return home, however, I resolved to test the matter further; and, through the kindness of a friend who has access to a large library belonging to a literary institute of which I am not a member, procured a copy of the book in question (Mrs. Gordon's 'Life of Christopher North.') To-day (October 27th) I had an excellent opportunity of testing the young lady's recollection of her ghostly visitor of July, 1898, as, when she was sitting with us at tea, I suddenly, and without any premonition, placed the portrait before her, with name and everything else covered up, when she at once cried out, 'That is Christopher North. I am quite certain that it is his face, although he had his hat on when he took me, when in Edinburgh, to Gloucester-place.' She also then for the first time informed me that since her return from Lancashire, viz., in the first week of October, the same personage had again come to her in her room, just as she was going out, and talked for a short time with her, giving her some of his early reminiscences of the street in which he had lived, which, he said, was at the time that he first stayed in it quite in the country, and not surrounded by a number of streets as it is at present. Nothing particular occurred, she said, going to prove identity, and he suddenly disappeared; but she was perfectly certain that the person depicted in the engraved portrait in the book was the same individual whom she had met in the street in July last, and who also again appeared to her in the beginning of October. There I must leave the matter, with the contention that the last link in the chain of evidence of identity appears to me complete. That the young lady in question ever knew or heard of Christopher North before 1898 is, to my mind, impossible.

The message of 1890 was written entirely as emanating from John Wilson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; and the personage who came to the lady in July, 1898, for the first time gave her his literary *nom de plume* of Christopher North, and this, in my judgment, goes to make the evidence of identity cumulative and more entitled to credit.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

The London Spiritualist Alliance held the first meeting of the current session on Friday evening, the 4th inst., in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall, when Mr. J. J. MORSE replied to writing questions from the audience.

MR. E. DAWSON ROGERS, the President of the Alliance, occupied the chair, and there was a large attendance.

The PRESIDENT, in the course of some introductory remarks, welcomed the company in the name of the Council of the Alliance, after which he proceeded to read the questions submitted. The first of these ran as follows:—

'In the opinion of "Tien" (Mr. Morse's control) has the human spirit any existence prior to its earth life, or does conception originate the human spirit?'

In reply, the control said: 'The human spirit, as an individualisation in its human form of the Divine Existence, has necessarily always had an existence as part of that Divine Existence; but we do not know of any existence for that human spirit as an independent, self-conscious, or personal entity previous to its manifestation in the human embodiment.'

The PRESIDENT, in propounding the next question, stated that it was contained in a letter he had received from France. The writer of this letter called attention to the fact that Mr. Morse's controls denied the doctrine of reincarnation, while the controls of another celebrated medium—Mr. Colville—asserted, even as a matter of experience, the truth of the doctrine. The inquirer wished to learn how 'Tien' reconciled the conflicting views.

In reply, the control said: 'We do not feel under any necessity to attempt a reconciliation. We simply state facts as they are known to us and as they appeal to our experience. Outside of that we have nothing to do with the observations of any other person, save only those which are based on fact and experience. Our knowledge and experience run entirely contrary to this much-mooted doctrine of reincarnation. We have had considerable experience; we have investigated the matter on both sides of the line, and have found no evidence in support of it. That is our position—we have nothing to do with the position of any other person. We are, of course, ready at any time to offer our experiences in connection with the subject, but as to attempting a reconciliation of differences, it would simply be a waste of time.'

QUESTION: 'Would it be possible for me to cultivate clairvoyance, and what would be the best method to adopt?'

In a very lengthy reply to this question, which the control considered in its general aspects, and (necessarily) without specific reference to the individual making the inquiry, it was stated that the possibility of clairvoyance is latent in every human being, but that the amount of active development depended on a variety of causes—constitutional peculiarities, pre-natal influences, &c. Supposing that an individual were pre-natally disposed and constitutionally biased in the direction of the faculty, it would be possible to develop it; but in cases where clairvoyance promised to become a useful function, there were usually spontaneous indications of it. As an example of this, the control instanced the second sight of the Scottish Highlanders and the incipient clairvoyance occasionally manifested by children. In the latter case the growth of the faculty was generally checked by older persons, and the children being taught to look upon their experiences as fanciful and absurd, the clairvoyant power, being thus quenched, seldom or never reappeared in later life. Assuming, however, certain spontaneous manifestations of latent clairvoyance in a given person, what were the best methods to develop the power? Very much depended upon the form which it was desired that the clairvoyance should take. The experimenter might take the cultivation of the faculty in his own hands, and thereby develop it in a form in which it would be under his own particular personal direction. He might, on the other hand, take the course of subjecting himself to mesmeric influence, and develop the faculty by these means; or, again, he could associate himself with a circle of Spiritualists, and have the faculty cultivated by spirit people on the other side. Each of these three courses had its advantages and peculiarities, and the choice of one or the other depended on the line of development which the would-be clairvoyant desired to pursue. If he took the

training of the faculty into his own hands, then he had to face the fact that he had little or no experience to guide him, and he would as a result be liable to errors and mistakes—there might even be just a little risk. If he submitted himself to the influence of a mesmerist, there were possible dangers to be considered in regard to the moral and spiritual character of the operator. Great care was needed in this regard, since it is a matter of importance in the development of spiritual gifts that the individual shall be surrounded by the best possible conditions of spiritual life. A similar consideration applied to the development of clairvoyance in the spirit circle.

Dealing with the first method, the purely personal one, the control said that one of the simplest ways in which to develop latent clairvoyance was to sit quiet and secluded in a room in a subdued light, and then, turning his face from the light, the experimenter was to gaze intently at some object either placed on a stand or a table or held in his hand. If, while doing this, he pre-determined that he would desire to see some particular thing, or to visualise some recollection of the past, and found, after a few trials, that he could bring this object or scene before the inward eye, then he might be reasonably sure that the clairvoyant faculty to that extent might be cultivated satisfactorily. When the experimenter found that the progress of this subjective vision was proceeding satisfactorily, he might then try the experiment of clairvoyantly 'penetrating' some article and discovering the contents. An envelope containing a sentence, a book the title of which was unknown to the experimenter, might be employed for this purpose. Then, making notes of the impressions he received, he might examine the article chosen, and verify the nature of the results. Another method was for the experimenter to take a glass, containing water, or to hold a bright coin in his hand, and then, concentrating his gaze on the object chosen, to quietly subdue himself to whatever vision or impression might cross his mind.

Dealing next with the development which is assisted by mesmerism, or hypnotism, the control said that the necessary degree of sensitiveness in the organism was of course a prerequisite. Under the influence of the operator the subject fell asleep, and then, when a sufficient depth of sleep had been compelled, the subject, so to speak, 'woke up' interiorly. In this state a degree of inner sensibility, of inner sight and sense, was unfolded that in its acuteness far surpassed what was experienced in the external waking life. Some clairvoyants were, under these conditions, able to travel to distant places and describe what they saw. Other clairvoyants were utterly incapable of doing this, but under the control of the mesmerist they could see into the human body, describe its diseases or derangements, and frequently suggest remedial agents, thereby assisting the medical man to restore health. Some clairvoyants could see within closed receptacles, read sentences within the pages of closed books, and in a variety of ways prove the possession of this so-called abnormal vision. Clairvoyance of this kind was apt to be somewhat exhausting, depleting the body of brain and nerve power, so that it was generally too tiring to be long continued, and in the great majority of cases it did not promote the self-reliance of the individual and assist him to develop his will power. As a consequence, if the experiments were long continued deterioration was apt to set in and the subject might perhaps become the victim in the end. Much depended, as already stated, on the physical, moral, and spiritual character of the operator, and very great care was always needed in this regard.

In considering the last method, the development of the clairvoyant faculty under spiritual influence, the control said that in this case a great degree of sensitiveness was required. A person who was sensitive to spirit control was sensitive also to physical influences, and as a consequence the moral and spiritual character of the sitters composing the circle became a question of much importance to the developing clairvoyant. Often, however, it happened that the person who sought development became at first subject to great perturbation and distress, and left the circle with a conviction that something was wrong and that it would be unwise to carry the experiment any further. All these disagreeable

sensations, however, simply meant that the psychical conditions of the subject were being stirred up, and more or less of psychical disturbance, with its consequent reactions, inevitably ensued. By persevering, however, a harmonious condition would eventually be established, the psychical conditions of the developing clairvoyant would be brought into harmonious relationship with those of the rest of the circle, and the operating spirits enabled to commence their work, which was very similar in character to that of the human mesmerist who operated on the mortal side.

In conclusion, the control referred to the faculty of clairvoyance as demonstrating the existence of a spiritual organ of vision, part of a 'subjective organisation.' It was to be remembered that the acting agent was always the same, whether acting through the physical body normally, or conjointly through the physical and spiritual. The conscious entity was at work in both cases, and all that the development of the clairvoyant faculty implied was that the man was able to use, under certain conditions, both sets of faculties instead of, under what is called the normal condition, one set of faculties only. While it was quite correct to say that the human individual could cultivate these interior faculties for himself without appealing to outside agencies, yet when spirit people co-operated with him the clairvoyant power might be made to apply to a much wider series of experiences, and to develop itself in various directions. In fact, under wise spirit direction there was scarcely any limit to the possibilities of clairvoyance.

The next question again brought up the subject of re-embodiment: 'Have you ever known a spirit to reincarnate?'

REPLY: 'Our first reply virtually covered this question. No: we have known a great many spirits who have waited to be reincarnated, and they are still waiting!'

From 'A Christian inquirer' came the question: 'Did Jesus die to atone for original sin, and do we escape the consequences of our moral transgressions on account of His sacrifice?'

REPLY: 'We regret that we are quite unable to answer the question in a way that would be likely to satisfy the requirements of our questioner. In the first place, we are unable to say that we believe in original sin, in the inherited depravity of man. Secondly, we are unable to say (and this is a matter of observation and experience) that you can escape the consequences of moral transgression. We feel compelled, too, to add here that God's laws are absolute, and attain their ends in every case in the regions of physics, morality, and spirituality, and in every case where you attempt (for no one can succeed) to break the laws of God in any department of the universe, God triumphs and you succumb.'

An inquirer, who was apparently desirous of obtaining a test, wished to know if 'Tien' was able to remember his native tongue (Chinese), and if so, desired that he would repeat the numbers up to ten in that language. The control replied: 'We have already said on many previous occasions that we are unable to pronounce words or express ideas in our native language through the organism of this medium.'

Next followed a question couched in the following terms: 'What is the therapeutic value of sunlight concentrated or focussed through coloured glass, as by Babbitt's system?'

REPLY: 'That there is a certain positive therapeutic value in the rays of the sun transmitted direct, or by the aid of intervening substances, on the human body, there can be no question, and the theory of it is extremely simple. The human organisation is an agglomeration of atoms and molecules. So long as the various parts associate in harmonious vibration, local or general, the condition known as health is present. Wherever any disturbance of atom or molecule takes place, then the other condition of ill-health—*disease*—naturally ensues. Whatever agent helps to restore the local harmony and overcome the discord makes for the health of the human body. It is a known fact in physics that light has a direct physical value, and that as a force it is capable of direct physical action. Now, if the transmission of sunlight through a coloured medium can effect a certain molecular change in the tissues of the human organism, it is conceivable that it may aid in restoring the particular portion thus dealt with from a state of disease to one of

healthy action. And if we associate with this a very profound conviction in the mind of the patient that Nature is being materially assisted in her work, a quite remarkable and rapid recovery may be effected. But to say that this particular form of treatment could be advantageously used in every form of human disease would be to make a statement which we are not prepared to advance.

QUESTION: 'Is it possible for you to visit the sun and to state authoritatively whether it is a planet similar to the earth or a ball of fire? Is it inhabited?'

ANSWER: 'We have never personally visited that particular luminary, but we have it from those who claim to know concerning it that it is not inhabited, that even spirits cannot dwell upon its surface, and that it is simply what it stands to be—a vast globe surrounded with an envelope of what is called fire, and fulfilling a physical function with regard to the planetary system by which it is surrounded.'

(To be concluded.)

OUR AMUSING CRITICS.

By 'AN OLD INVESTIGATOR.'

NO. II.

The great aim of science is, or ought to be, the discovery of that which is true. Science ought to devote itself to unearthing, as it were, those laws of Nature which, from their very simplicity, escape the notice of those who, from being but feebly gifted with intelligence, or having the whole of their time and thoughts occupied in winning their daily bread, are unable to become acquainted, by their own endeavours, with that which is true.

When a man puts himself forward as a teacher, or writer, of science, he has a grave responsibility. He is presenting to his pupils mental food, which should be sound, wholesome, and above all *true*. Before a man presumes to write on a subject, he ought first to consider well, whether he has fully and thoroughly examined the subject impartially; whether, before he has examined it, he has divested himself of all the prejudices, produced by preconceived opinions, and false teaching; whether he is mentally competent to give a positive opinion on the matter; and whether he is as sure of the accuracy of his statements as is the geometer, who affirms that the two sides of a plane triangle, are greater than the third side. If a man saturated with prejudices, and preconceived *opinions*, utterly regardless of facts, which he terms delusions, or tricks, fully convinced that he knows everything, and in order to endeavour to convince others that he is infallible, substitutes offensive terms, instead of arguments, against those with whom he does not agree, he becomes,—we will leave to the reader to decide what term should be used.

Dr. Andrew Wilson, to whom we referred in our former article under this title, seems to be afflicted with a very sad mental complaint immediately he writes about those subtle phenomena, which seem beyond his comprehension, and are certainly outside of his personal experience. The indications of this mental complaint are, that the Doctor believes he is competent to instruct Sir William Crookes how subtle laws of Nature ought to be investigated. This is the way:

Insist that certain conditions, which you yourself formulate, shall be rigidly observed; and put down as tricks, mere theory, or conjuring, any results which occur when your conditions are not complied with.

This, according to Dr. Andrew Wilson, is what every scientific man ought to do.

Adopt this recommendation as regards photography. Insist that the sensitive plate be fully exposed to the light, before it is even placed in the camera. To permit a photographic 'dodger' to take the plate into a dark room in order to develop it is a proceeding 'that' (according to Dr. Andrew Wilson's evident opinion) 'no scientific man, chary of his reputation as an observer of phenomena, could possibly accept.'

All this is certainly amusing. The complete self-confidence, is only equalled by a display of ignorance, as to how really difficult problems in Nature, and the laws which govern these, *must* be investigated in order to arrive at truth.

Dr. Andrew Wilson does not stand alone as regards the peculiar views he puts forward, and which he terms scientific. He belongs to a school of thought, specimens of which have existed in all ages as obstructionists and who

'Stand
Locked together hand in hand,
Each one leading, as he is led,
The same bare ground they tread;
Or, like fairies, dancing a fantastic round,
But never change their motion, or their ground.'

We may fairly attribute to mental defects such proceedings as the above. When, however, we find that, in order to persuade outsiders, men pervert and misrepresent facts, and make malicious misstatements about dead men, when the most superficial inquiry would have shown them that what they were writing was untrue, it is not easy to find a polite term suitable to be applied to such individuals.

Shortly after the late Mr. D. D. Home made the acquaintance of Mrs. Lyon, he consulted his old friends, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, as to a proposal made by Mrs. Lyon, to adopt him as a son, and to settle on him a large sum of money.

As we were well acquainted with the Halls and with D. D. Home, we were asked to meet two or three other friends, at the Halls' and discuss the question. Not once or twice, but at least half-a-dozen times we met; Mrs. Lyon on three occasions being present. She stated before us all that she had no real friends, that she had a great affection for Home, and wished to adopt him as a son, and settle on him a sum of money, which should render him well off for life.

At that time Home was independent. He did not take any money for séances; he was always a welcome guest of the Emperor of the French, of the Emperor of Russia, of the Queen of Holland, and of the leading aristocracy in England.

We all concluded that it was not an entirely unusual thing for an old lady to take a fancy to some young person, and adopt this person, as a son, or daughter; and eventually Home, putting himself entirely in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall and other friends, consented to Mrs. Lyon's request. Home was adopted as a son, and Mrs. Lyon settled on him a large sum of money.

Twice after this adoption, we saw, and conversed with Mrs. Lyon, during more than an hour; she, in answer to our inquiry, stated that she had never in her life been so happy as she had been since Daniel Home had been adopted as her son.

Suddenly a change occurred, and Home again consulted the Halls. Mrs. Lyon had told Home that she was not contented with the conditions of mother and son, but wished to marry him. To this Home objected; then Mrs. Lyon turned on him, with all the maliciousness of a woman scorned. Home refused to give up the money in consequence of being threatened, because, as he wisely said, if he did so, people might accuse him of having swindled the woman out of the money. He preferred a public trial to clear his character and gave up the money, which it is very doubtful whether he could have been compelled to do.

These in brief are the facts connected with the 'Home v. Lyon' case, and any person desirous of knowing the real facts could easily have ascertained them, either by inquiry from those still living, or from the book 'Incidents in my Life.'—'D. D. Home.'

Now let us see how Dr. Andrew Wilson puts the case before the public in his article referred to. He writes: 'Prior to this Daniel had suggested that he should replace the spirit as a second husband of the lady (Mrs. Lyon); but this alliance not finding favour in Mrs. Lyon's sight, Home cleverly shifted his ground, and proposed adoption in place of matrimony.'

Had Dr. Wilson stated the opposite of what he has stated, then he would have been very near the truth.

We are bound to assume that Dr. A. Wilson, calling himself a man of science, and writing for certain papers articles on so-called science, has at heart the cause of truth, and writes what he conscientiously believes to be true. On this assumption, we consider him a most unfortunate man.

From some peculiar defect, he is influenced by unsound ideas. He seems to be possessed with the belief that if he terms those whose experience has been greater than his, and

who consequently do not accept his assertions, 'tricksters,' 'dodgers,' and unprincipled swindlers, he has proved himself a very clever man, and all who differ from him absolute fools.

This style of clap-trap partakes too much of the character of the learned counsel in the case of 'Bardel v. Pickwick,' to mislead any except the most ignorant.

It is amusing, as showing to what mean subterfuges men are obliged to descend, in order to make out a case against the facts, which have been proved to occur in connection with the phenomena termed spiritual.

Whilst we cannot help being amused at the pompous assumption of infallible knowledge claimed by this profound doctor, yet we owe him a debt of gratitude. He has shown us why so few men who belong to his school, have succeeded in gaining any knowledge of the phenomena referred to, viz., because they are under the delusion that it is scientific to arbitrarily fix the conditions under which the phenomena must occur. Apply this rule to almost any recognised phenomena, and you fail to obtain results.

Secondly, those who have been fortunate enough to witness, and test, the phenomena thousands of times, realise the fact, that if all that can be urged against their experience is nothing stronger than such nonsense, misrepresentations, and abuse as those penned by Dr. Andrew Wilson and others of the same school, then the mantle of real scientific investigation and *evolution of truth* has fallen on the so-called Spiritualist, and has deserted the self-sufficient, superficial, so-called scientist.

T. L. HARRIS ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

'Christian Science'—so-called on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, because it contains no 'Christianity' and still less 'science'—has been of late brought before the public in a very unfavourable light: two deaths having occurred under it. These are by no means the only failures that have come under my notice.

The following letter, dated December 27th, 1891, was written by Mr. Harris to a gentleman in Australia, who asked advice regarding treatment for chronic bronchitis, also concerning 'faith-cures' and 'mind-cures.'

'Look earnestly towards the Lord Christ; invoke, in that earnestness, vibrations of the Divine energising current into the right arm. As the arm becomes energetic, positive, the fingers may begin to be polarised. Then commence with the hand, and apply a vigorous massage treatment; pressing, drawing out from the throat and adjoining regions the diseased magnetisms that tend to lodge there in the nervous and vascular system, and to make breeding places for the bacilli that generate the bronchial disease. You will also find it needful, as you begin to realise that the process is beginning to take effect, to extend the treatment over the face, about the eyes, and especially the nasal organs. After this the treatment will extend to the lower brain, and the back part of the neck. You will find in the operation that every little while the hand and fingers will feel clogged. This will be because you have drawn the diseased magnetism into the hand. You will then throw this off by vigorous striking out of the arms, with force, as if fencing or throwing a ball, till the hand feels relieved again. When this is done, commence with the left hand, as you have done from the right. This is an introduction to the treatment that we know as 'cure by demagnetisation.' It is in reality a casting out or expellation of the death germs that infest the organism and that are the cause of all disease. As to frequency, apply the treatment as often as you have a feeling to do so; and as, in answer to the uplift to the Lord, a vibrative energy is imparted to the arm. It is possible that you may find yourself, after a while, extending the treatment all over the body, wherever you are conscious of any local oppression. The treatment, however, is only effectual as you grow in grace from day to day. The danger to be apprehended from making use of faith-healers, mind-curers, &c., is very great; though there are amongst them excellent people, and there are instances of remarkable cures. It is always dangerous to take into the organism currents of energy that are invariably surcharged latently from the occult spiritual qualities of such persons; the danger is of becoming subjected occultly to them; especially as it was admitted to me the other day, by one of the leading experts in this method of healing, that *three-fourths of the apparent cures are the result of hypnotism practised in a secret way*. I have very generally found that the homeopathic remedies *skillfully and conscientiously applied*, serve as assistants to the

cure by demagnetisation; and therefore recommend them to you. If the *right remedy* is found, the infinitesimals excite, and then derange, the action of the bacteria, and disturb them in their nests; hence they are more easily drawn out, as the diseased magnetism into which they congregate is expelled.

In his opinion as to the dangers of hypnotism, Mr. Harris is at one with Madame Blavatsky.

There is doubtless truth in the theory that the mind acts on the body; or to speak more scientifically, that spirit acts upon matter: but it requires a person spiritually advanced, an Adept in fact, to bring this about. As the coroner said, in substance, the other day, 'The trouble with you Christian Scientists is that you think you are equal to Christ—and you are not.'

The warning given by Mr. Harris against absorbing the spheres of these 'healers' is needed. To judge from the 'hatred, malice, and uncharitableness,' not to add falsehood, uttered in print by two whom I could name, I would as soon take into my system the virus of the plague; or perhaps sooner, as we know of a prophylactic against the plague, but the spiritual virus would be more difficult to meet.

'Christian Scientists,' contrary to the practice of Mr. Harris, permit no medicinal treatment to their patients. I presume they think that though their system may overcome the disease, it would be no match for the doctor's drugs!

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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.

Warning Voices.

SIR,—I lately had a letter from a niece of mine, telling me that a daughter of hers had had a warning, during the night, not to go bathing with a friend the next morning, which she had engaged to do. So her daughter refrained from keeping the engagement. It is well she did so, for her friend, who bathed alone, and who is a fine swimmer, was carried away by the tide, and was only saved, after struggling twenty-five minutes, by a boatman, when she was in an exhausted state. My niece added, that as her daughter is in delicate health, however well she could swim, she had not strength to have fought against the currents as her stronger friend did. This occurred at Biarritz.

In answer to my niece's letter, I told her a story of her own father (my brother) as he told it to me himself. He was a Commander in the Navy. Here are his details: 'One night, when in command of a ship, I was awake from my sleep by a voice which said: "Get up, get up, and go on deck." I did not heed it and went to sleep again. I was awake a second time in the same way. Again I did not heed the words and went to sleep. A third time I was again awake by like words, and something pulled me by the sleeve. I rushed on deck, peered through the darkness, and saw that we were running right on a cliff. I had only time to cry "About ship!" and we were saved. A boy, who had been mending sails, had put the needles on the binnacle and thus we were driven out of our course.'

In answer to the letter of my niece about her daughter, I asked her if she had ever heard her father tell that story. 'Yes,' she replied, 'often.' Clairaudience sometimes runs in families.

W. R. T.

Churchmen and Spiritualists.

SIR,—I feel constrained to write to your paper (to which I am a subscriber) to express the pleasure which the perusal of the letter signed 'English Catholic' has given me. I earnestly hope the writer will let us hear more from him.

It is very painful to me, who am at once a Christian, a Catholic, and a Spiritualist, to see such headings as 'Spiritualism *versus* Christianity,' &c., though it does not in any way detract from my belief in the reality of spirit communion, and only serves to show the importance of St. John's advice, 'Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they be of God.'

Those who come to me tell me that the doctrines of

the Church Catholic are true with one great exception, eternal punishment. They reprove me for any neglect of attendance at the services of my Church, and above all insist on the importance of the Holy Eucharist.

Their teaching explains and confirms that of the Church, the Communion of Saints, the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, &c. It seems to me that to some unhappy persons lying spirits come who would fain draw souls away from Christ, and so retard their progress.

I have given up one spiritualist journal because, though it contains much that is interesting, its general tendency is so decidedly anti-Christian. It seems to me that we, who have good reason to believe in spirit communion, and are at the same time Christian and Catholic, should avow our faith, and I heartily thank 'English Catholic' for his interesting and instructive letter, feeling that I cannot do better than follow his example and sign myself

ANOTHER ENGLISH CATHOLIC.

The 'Open Letter to the Society for Psychical Research.'

SIR,—May I be allowed space for a brief reply to the concluding paragraphs of the letter by Mr. Charles Dawbarn, in your issue of November 12th? I would point out that the Society for Psychical Research did analyse the replies of 'Hunnur Stafford' to scientific questions, to which Mr. Dawbarn refers, and found them worthless. The 'Journal' of the Society for August, 1885, contains a letter from Mr. F. W. H. Myers, in reply to one from Mr. G. D. Haughton, in which Mr. Myers said:—

'I heartily concur with Mr. Haughton in desiring an immediate and thorough investigation by members of our Society of any spiritualistic phenomena which may be accessible to us. . . . I have known Mr. Barkas since January, 1875, and, through his introduction, sat with this medium [Mrs. d'Esperance] on October 16th, 17th, and 18th, 1875. I have also studied all her printed answers. I consider the case curious and interesting, and I am not surprised at Mr. Barkas' view of it; but unfortunately, the gross want of comprehension of the subjects inquired about, and the palpable blunders which the replies contain, seem to me to preclude us from regarding the case as affording evidence of the guidance of a scientific spirit.'

A subsequent number of the 'Journal,' November, 1885, contains a letter from Mr. T. P. Barkas on the same subject, a brief reply by Mr. Myers, and a Report by Mr. G. B. Mathews, on the answers given by Mrs. d'Esperance to a series of questions on scientific subjects, carefully analysing a number of her replies. Mr. Mathews, who is a Senior Wrangler and a Professor of Mathematics, states his conclusion thus:—

'My opinion is that they [the answers] exhibit just that amount of knowledge, or rather of complicated ignorance, which would probably be acquired by a person of limited education, but fairly good verbal memory, after reading an old-fashioned treatise on acoustics, and supplementing the perusal by a hasty glance or two at some more modern popular text-book.'

Your readers will see that the Society for Psychical Research was not neglectful of that alleged opportunity for obtaining 'intelligence from the unseen.' The Society is ready and anxious now, as it has ever been, in the words of Mr. Myers over thirteen years ago, for a 'thorough investigation of any spiritualistic phenomena which may be accessible.'

EDWARD T. BENNETT,

Assistant Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research.

19, Buckingham-street, London, W.C.

Repressive Laws.

SIR,—'Ben-Ben' in your current issue invites me further to indicate what might be styled remedies for the state of things known to be associated with the higher forms of Spiritualism. I am reminded here of the aphorism which says that a child may construct a question unanswerable by the philosopher. No doubt, in the wisdom of our predecessors, legal restraints were really imperative to control the gigantic charlatanries of the sixteenth century—largely augmented by the reactionary conditions of Puritanism. Correlative with studies of occult science in our advanced culture, our wheat fields of thought may be accompanied by huge undergrowths of tares.

In the vast mediumistic field explored by students, we have met with hosts of psychics exhibiting tendencies of an unspiritual class, who, by egotistical and inflated publicity, are eagerly determined to place their gifts upon the market at appraised values, open at any time or season to promote 'deals' betwixt the living and the dead. The latter appeal is very popular amongst our American cousins, and is to some extent in operation even in many parts of Great Britain. I should, therefore, judge that when, in such cases, spiritual morals descend to zero, some legal dictation may not only be safe but sanative. I cannot doubt in the slightest the possibilities of scientific prophecy, holding such to be a distinct factor in the warp and woof of life, organic and inorganic, and visible through the ages, like a golden chain; but as in historic times, the prophets of 'Baal' are too often predominant, their unspiritual ears being unattuned to those higher vibrations so lucidly unfolded by Professor Crookes. Hence in our experiences the prophets fail us. We have been misled, and many of us lose faith in any spiritual guidance. I have no interest or desire to pronounce sweeping stigmas upon any special class, but unless controlled promptly and even crushed, some sort of cleavage may be imperative. Surely we would not wish to lose the small modicum of ethical and spiritual influence still extant in this great movement of ours—to construct which has involved the wading through 'Redans' of suffering almost inconceivable to the present generation of Spiritualists. We must never ground our flag in the interests of shameless charlatanries; rather would I hope that, despite such unfortunate conditions, by direct illumination, holy discipline, faithful service, and a fervid spiritual preparation, we may possibly be impinging upon an incoming flood-tide of deific and spiritual revival, seeing 'the promise is to us and our children for ever.'

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

W. H. ROBINSON.

The Press and Spiritualism.

SIR,—I am pleased to see that a Fellow of the Institute of Journalists has sent you a reply to 'An Old Correspondent,' whose statement of the relations of the Press to Spiritualism was, I think, scarcely accurate. As another Fellow of the Institute I should like to endorse all that 'F.J.I.' has said on the subject. He has hit the mark when he says that it is what the journalist sees of the inner workings of religiosity 'behind the scenes,' that scares him off from what appears to him but a new religious sect, if not a mere superstition. I entirely demur to the statement of 'An Old Correspondent,' that pressmen have not brains enough to grapple with and understand spiritual truth. Pressmen, as a rule, are above the average of their fellow men in intellectual power; their profession naturally leads to the abnormal development of their powers, both of observation and reflection. But it is only too true that they have not time for the proper study of the subject. They have to hurry too much over their work, and their work is selected and proportioned—I do not say inspired—by a superior. Generally, one man has the control of a large staff on a daily paper, with power to say what shall, or shall not, find a place in its columns; and thus the appearance or non-appearance of matter relating to Spiritualism may be the result of the will of a single individual which a dozen or a score of men under his supervision cannot alter. This autocrat of the newspaper office, be he chief reporter or sub-editor, is guided in his selection by the relative importance of events in the eyes of the public, and exercises his judgment accordingly. He is generally a man of wide views and considerable capacity; but, while open to notice novelties, he declines to become a propagandist, and a thing must be 'taken up' by the public before he will admit it to prominence in the columns under his charge.

This indicates the direction in which Spiritualists ought to work with a view to getting public recognition, and the attention given by the Press to the Jubilee proceedings, both in London and Glasgow, shows that the goal is not very far off. But we must show that we have impressed a considerable section of the thinking and reading public. We must be more 'in evidence'; and when there is 'a good thing' on we should see that the secular Press are kept informed of

the fact. If it should be some unusually good test or wonderful phenomenon, let it be communicated to the principal daily and weekly Press of the town or district. If it be a conference, or a public gathering of more than usual importance, let it be announced by advertisement in the leading newspapers. It is not to be expected that these will take regular notice of weekly meetings, but many a good bit of clairvoyance or psychometry could be treated so as to make a readable paragraph which few newspapers would refuse.

One point before I close. Spiritualists are too much inclined to adopt the attitude of the 'fretful porcupine' towards the Press. Like 'An Old Correspondent,' they owe it 'a grudge,' because of past misdeeds. Now I do not attempt to justify the misrepresentations of weak and foolish men who, when sent to report on a matter they do not understand, being previously prejudiced against it, as many are, proceed to caricature it; but it does no good to keep these silly effusions too long in the mental view. If they can be replied to at the time, it ought to be done; if not, let them pass. I have heard a leader of the movement, who has been a regular contributor to the spiritualist papers, say, 'I have never been in the habit of contributing to the secular Press.' The query naturally suggests itself, Why? If we cannot get editorial notices, or even news paragraphs, there is always the column open for Letters to the Editor; and if Spiritualists were alive to their duty they would have a pretty large share of the discussion that takes place in that quarter on every conceivable subject. There is no respectable journal that would refuse admission to contributions of that kind; and every week there are events transpiring that could be made the topic for discussion with a view to 'trotting out' the truths of Spiritualism before the general public, which are at present, in a sense, 'wrapped up in a napkin,' in the literature read only by Spiritualists or those making special inquiry with regard to it. I am far from disparaging our spiritualist papers. They have a mission of their own, and I value them, as well as the more permanent forms of spiritualist literature; but if we want to get our views of truth on to the broad ocean of journalistic literature, we must embark on the craft that is ready to our hands, and go in the part of the ship that is open to us. We may not be able to claim a cabin passage in an ocean liner just yet—we shall by-and-by. But there is no reason why in the meantime we should not go 'steering'; and if there is no steamship in the port, let us take the first sailing vessel.

ANOTHER F.J.I.

WATER DIVINING.—AUDITOR'S DECISION REVERSED.

We learn from the 'Leighton Buzzard Reporter' that the Local Government Board have written stating that the appeal against the disallowance and surcharge of the sum of £13 8s. 7d. made by Mr. W. A. Casson, as District Auditor, had been considered. The sum in question appeared to have been paid to Mr. L. Gataker, who claimed to be an expert water-finder, for his services and expenses in visiting the district and indicating where supplies of water could be procured for the use of the inhabitants. The auditor disallowed the payment on the ground that Mr. Gataker's claim to be able to discover subterranean sources of water was such a pretence as constituted an indictable offence, and that his claim was practically an attempt at imposition. The Board did not consider that it had been proved that Mr. Gataker committed an indictable offence; or that, if he did so, the members of the District Council were aware that his pretences were illegal. The Board considered the action of the District Council as unwise, but it did not appear to them, having regard to the recommendations the Council received as to Mr. Gataker's capabilities, that the Council could be considered as having acted with such recklessness that the disallowance and surcharge could be confirmed. In the circumstances the Board reversed the disallowance and surcharge.

The animal kingdom is not without reason and intellect, and in many of its arts, such as swimming, flying, &c., even superior to man; but the Spirit of God is far superior to the reasoning intellect, and by means of this spirituality man may rise above the animal plane. Therefore, there is a great difference between the external and the internal man; for the intellectuality of the former perishes, while the wisdom of the latter remains.—PARACELSUS.

SOCIETY WORK.

ISLINGTON SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, WELLINGTON HALL, UPPER-STREET, ISLINGTON.—On Sunday last Mr. Willis gave a reading, 'German Lourdes, or Healing in the Fatherland.' Mrs. Brencley's subject was 'Christian Science and Healing.' Mrs. Brencley gave clairvoyance. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. Brencley will deal with 'Joan of Arc'; Thursday, at 8 p.m., circle for members only; medium, Mrs. Brencley.—C. D. CATTO.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—On Sunday last Mr. Sherwood gave his first address on 'Animal Magnetism,' illustrating the same by placing a lady in mesmeric trance. At the close of the address Mr. Sherwood demonstrated to what good use the power might be employed by removing the pain of three persons who were present. A good audience listened with great interest, and we are looking forward to Mr. Sherwood's next visit. Sunday next, at 6.45 p.m., Mr. J. A. White, clairvoyance.—OSCAR HUDSON, Hon. Sec.

STOKE NEWINGTON SPIRITUAL SOCIETY, BLANCHE HALL, 99, WISBADEN-ROAD, STOKE NEWINGTON-ROAD, N.—Miss Findlay kindly conducted our circle on Monday, the 7th inst., and the members expressed great pleasure at the tests given by this medium. On Sunday, our President ('Evangel') gave an excellent address on a pamphlet sent by an unknown person to the secretary: 'Spiritualism: Is it of God?' Madame Cope contributed two solos with her accustomed ability. We have great pleasure in thanking this lady for her services. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss MacCreadie will give clairvoyance. On Monday, at 51, Bouverie-road, at 8 p.m., circle for members; medium, Miss Findlay. 'LIGHT' on sale after the meetings.—A. CLEGG, Hon. Sec.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' MISSION, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—The work of our Mission was never more prosperous than at present. On Sunday last we had ten inquirers who joined as Associates for the purpose of studying the subject of Spiritualism. At our evening meeting Mr. W. E. Long gave an address full of interest on 'Peculiar People, and Others.' Mr. Beel presided, and Miss Earl gave a zither solo. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., public circle, door closed at 11.15; at 3 p.m., children's Lyceum; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. Long's subject will be 'Spiritualist: From Quaker to Shaker'; at 8 p.m., members' circle. On Monday next, at 7.30 p.m., debate between Mr. W. E. Long and the Rev. A. J. Waldron, on 'Immortality of Man—Christian or Spiritualist, Which?'—VERA.

HENLEY HALL, HENLEY-STREET, BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—On Sunday last our anniversary services were all that could be desired. The President's brief address was much appreciated. Mr. Adams followed with a characteristic address full of wit and apt illustration. Mr. Boddington dealt with the 'Differences between Governments Spiritual and Material.' He drew the inference that Governments, from the smallest type of organisation to the largest, needed spiritualising before true worth and ability would take its rightful place among men. Solos by Mrs. Gould and Mr. H. Boddington. At our members' meeting the following officers were elected: Mrs. H. Boddington, president; Mr. Stebbens, treasurer; Miss Pierpoint, musical director and Press secretary; Mr. W. Boddington, members' secretary; Mrs. Murrell, Provident Fund secretary; Mr. Adams, literature agent; general secretary, H. Boddington, 99, Bridge-road, Battersea, to whom future communications should be made. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mrs. Boddington and Mr. Adams. Thursday, at 8.30 p.m., members' circle. Friday, at 8 p.m., discussion, opened by Mr. Stebbens, 'Davenport Brothers.' Saturday evenings, at 8 p.m., members' and friends' social evening.—H.B.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday evening last a crowded audience warmly welcomed Miss MacCreadie, who once again showed how eminently fitted she is to exercise her spiritual gifts from the public platform, in addition to her most successful work as a private medium. After the rendering of a solo ('Light in Darkness,' Cowen) by Mrs. Mason, and some opportune remarks by the President, and Miss MacCreadie's Indian control 'Sunshine,' this same spirit-friend, through her medium's organism, gave twenty-three clairvoyant descriptions, nineteen of which were fully recognised, bringing conviction to the minds of many friends present, and arousing deep interest in the subject of Spiritualism amongst numerous inquirers. Although the workers of the Marylebone Association had on this, as on many previous occasions, all 'their work cut out' to sustain the necessary arrangements made, the kindly co-operation of all present assisted much towards the great success of the meeting. Many people were unable to obtain admittance, every seat being occupied ere the meeting commenced. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. James Robertson, of Glasgow, will be the speaker, and a full attendance is anticipated. Doors open at 6.30 p.m.—C.H.W. and L.H.

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL FEDERATION.—The National Propaganda Committee invite applications for assistance in Mission work from societies wanting aid for that purpose in their districts; or from district committees already established; or from new or declining societies. Speakers and mediums willing to render assistance in propaganda work for the National Federation will also oblige by communicating with the Propaganda Committee at once.—Address, Jas. Swindlehurst, 159, Hammond-street, Preston.

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ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment. If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct sances, and what to expect. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestation. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful sance.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over, but not in contact with, it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let someone take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated, at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restriction on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer.

Lastly, try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

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