

Light:

A Journal devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity, both Here and Hereafter.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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Transmission Abroad.]

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LIGHT:

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE HIGHEST INTERESTS OF HUMANITY BOTH
HERE AND HEREAFTER.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

Published every Saturday

BY THE

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There is a large class of people who believe in a world which they call "the present," and who assert that no knowledge of any other is attainable.

There is another large class of people who believe also in a world they call "the next," and who also assert that no other knowledge of it is attainable than that which has been handed down to them.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1881.

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THE LULL IN PHENOMENAL SPIRITUALISM.

No. IV.

Lessons of the Past, and Work of the Future.

We have now pointed out a few of the causes that seem to us to account for our present position. We are free to confess that we have slid rapidly, as over rotten ice, in our dealing with some of them. It is not that we desire to ignore anything; we wish to be perfectly frank. But we cannot mend what is broken, and prefer rather to point a moral for future guidance than to dwell with iteration on what is past. Spiritualism has progressed so rapidly, has grown to such stature in so short a time, that it would be strange indeed if its development had been without rebuke. We shall hardly lay ourselves open to the charge of hyperbolic statement if we say that no movement that the world has yet known has sprung from such small beginnings, and has so rapidly developed its influence upon mankind. It is but the re-appearance of what underlies all religious systems, the nineteenth century analogue of what has repeatedly in times past influenced humanity. A long course of Materialism had left men in a state little fit to recognise the action of Spirit. When it came it was needful to demonstrate its action on the planes of thought to which they were accustomed. The spiritual senses were dead, or sleeping—hence the phenomenal manifestation of Spirit-power.

This has by no means been the only or even the chief method of its presentation; but it was the first, and it is the one with which we are now concerned. It is that also which appeals chiefly to the inquirer. Hence it is important to deal with it in any review of the past, or any forecast of the future. During the three generations last past a vast mass of evidence has been accumulated. Of this some is valueless on account of the loose methods of recording to which we have previously adverted. But a very large proportion is full of interest and value to the student of Spiritualism. The old *Spiritual Magazine* enshrines the best and most serviceable records that we are acquainted with. It was admirably conducted, and its pages are full of interest to any one who would master the subject with which it deals. *Human Nature*, taking a wider field, and dealing with subjects outside of Spiritualism pure and proper, contains, nevertheless, a mass of fact that is of permanent value. We need not say that *The Spiritualist* and *The Medium* are replete with useful matter. For a long time they were the receptacles of all that was recorded in this country, and in their pages is to be found a record of the last decade of Spiritualism.

Those who furnished this record—the last generation of prominent Spiritualists—have, many of them, been transferred to another sphere of activity, or have ceased to energise in this. The early numbers of the *Spiritual Magazine* are filled with the contributions of those who are now numbered with the majority, or who have lapsed into private life, leaving to younger and untried men the honourable task of handing on the courier-fire. It is a season when we may fitly pause, review the past, and take counsel for the future. What has been done, what ought now to be attempted?

We have said enough to shew what in our judgment is being wrongly done in the present. The past, for good or evil, is done with. We can but gather up its lessons, and strive to learn wisdom from its teachings. But for the future it rests with

us, to a large extent, to utilise the experience of the past. We may ignore it, if we please, to our own cost; but its written lessons are at our service. We have repeatedly been struck with the way in which investigators put aside the experience of those who have preceded them. Admitting that this is due largely to the character of many of the records, it is still a remarkable fact that men deal in this way with the guide-books, so to say, that are at their service.

We have no doubt that this is attributable in no small degree to the fact that the literature of Spiritualism is so unsystematised. It is weary reading, and there is no pioneer to guide the inquirer through its mazes. No attempt has been made to reduce its facts to order, or to lay down any laws by which investigation may be simplified. A crude and undigested mass, little inviting, and in many aspects repulsive, repels the investigator. Now is the time to remedy this fault. A lull in the evolution of the phenomena invites attention to what has already been done. The mind is withdrawn from present occurrences and can afford to devote itself to the records of the past.

But few attempts have been made at classification, and those that have been projected have never been completed. In the year 1851, the Cambridge Ghost Club published a circular, to which the distinguished name of Brooke Foss Westcott is appended, inviting records of phenomena for classification. The original document may be found by the curious in the first volume of the *Spiritual Magazine* and in an appendix to Dale Owen's "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World" (p. 378). We do not know, we should be much interested to learn, whether that invitation was at all responded to, and whether the club carried out its intentions in the way of classification. It was the earliest venture we know of, and it may well be that materials in sufficient quantity were not then forthcoming.

In *Human Nature*, of 1876-7, a considerable attempt was made to deal in an orderly manner with what the author called the *Transcendental Action of Spirit*. This is another phase of the subject, but it may be noted as a clear and successful attempt to reduce to order various records of the action of Spirit on the plane of matter. The series of papers by M. A. (Oxon), to which we allude, seems to supply a want which we have always felt in such books as Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature" and Spicer's "Sights and Sounds." These latter are undigested and unsystematised records; what is wanted is a rationale and a plan.

In the same magazine we remember the same writer printed a series of papers dealing with the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, which remain incomplete. These, so far as they go, deal in orderly method with the author's personal experiences. Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., classified his own investigations in a paper which was of the nature of an index or introduction to a work which has not seen the light. Mr. Wallace has published in his essay in the *Fortnightly Review*, since reprinted, an exact and very valuable *résumé* of the evidences on which we rely. But it remains that the mass of evidence, the records of phenomena—we say nothing now of the *philosophy* of the subject, for we are not dealing with it—should be reduced to order, and arranged scientifically. The time is ripe for it, the occasion is suitable, there is leisure and opportunity. Who will undertake the onerous but most useful task?

This, it seems to us, is a work that would be of infinite value to a coming generation. Perhaps, also, a dispassionate history of Modern Spiritualism is a work that would be of hardly less utility. One by one the generation of those who saw the inception of Modern Spiritualism is being gathered into the Silent Land. William Howitt is gone, Benjamin Coleman too, and others whom we need not particularise. Is there no one who remains who will devote the years that are left to a work that younger men cannot perform?

For it is unavoidable that impressions now fresh should fade, and, if not fixed, much that is to us vivid and full of interest will be to future generations as an idle tale; a mere shadowy outline with blurred details that have lost their clearness of definition.

SERJEANT COX'S "MECHANISM OF MAN."

Address delivered by Mr. Frank Podmore B.A. (Oxon), before the British National Association of Spiritualists, Monday, March 21st.

(Continued from page 91.)

This, then, is the doctrine which is to be the champion of a too unscientific and much-worsted theology in its encounter with triumphant materialism! With what words shall we welcome it? It is not my intention here to discuss the truth, or probable truth, of the theory. There is too great a lack of definite external proof, or, in its default, of precise scientific analogy for that. Let us, assuming the hypothesis, content ourselves with taking note of certain obvious characteristics and consequences.

And first it is clear that, whatever else he may have done, Serjeant Cox has not succeeded in proving the immortality of the soul: hardly even its survival of the body; but if that, at least not much more than that. For granting that that ethereal body survives this other material one, how are we to prove, how even conceive that it is, therefore, imperishable? Is not all probability the other way? Having been begun, or if not begun, at least developed and perfected in time, is it likely that it should endure independent of time? To me, indeed, it seems tolerably certain that this ethereal body, which Mr. Cox calls soul, must be ultimately disintegrated. Such ultimate disintegration befalls every other compound of which we know; every organic, or growing compound, the more speedily. We know this of the frames of men, and of animals, and of trees, and all living things. We know it, too, of those higher organisms called social or bodies politic. Nations, like men, are born, grow to their lusty and insolent prime, and at the last perish; as Assyria and Egypt have perished; as the Aztec empire, as Greece and Rome, have perished. The very suns and planets began in primeval fire-maelström, which, cooling gradually, concentered, and separated into concentric measured orbits, and are running now their race; and the end of these too, we know, is already written. And the soul of man being, like this earthly body, of a composite nature—compounded, indeed, of corresponding molecular and independent particles—is it not in every sense likely that the combination must, sooner or later, fall to pieces? And where then is our conscious, willing, loving man, unless he have other and still more ethereal bodies, in indefinite succession, to serve his turn? And having these, how prove the succession, which is what we certainly require, not an indefinite, but an *infinite* one? Have we not good reason for fear, to borrow a hint of Plato's in the *Phædo*, that, having worn out many bodies, and having suffered many births and deaths, the man himself must perish at the last? It seems, then, that when, leaving the sure mountain heights of metaphysics, we come down, and take up mortal weapons, and do battle with men in the plains below, we are in sore danger, having even won the battle, of losing our old impregnable fastnesses.

But, so far is he from proving the immortality of the soul, Mr. Cox has not even proved the existence of a soul at all. For what is the idea, or cluster of ideas, commonly represented by the word soul? It is used synonymously with spirit, to denote the supposed eternal, incorruptible, and God-like element in man, in contrast with his transient, corruptible, animal body. And this soul is thought to bear as little resemblance to our body, as printed symbols bear to the utterance of the human voice; or, to borrow again a Platonic saying, as the shadows on a wall bear to the things which cast the shadows. It is used in this sense habitually, though not invariably, in the English version of the books of the New Testament, as in the passage "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It is so used commonly in theological and metaphysical controversies, and it is certainly so used in ordinary discourse. It is used, apparently, in this sense in a passage often quoted from Mr. Tennyson's "In Memoriam":

"Eternal form shall still divide
The Eternal Soul from all beside."

Swedenborgians and Spiritualists say, however, that this is an incorrect use of the term. They distinguish between spirit, *spiritus*, *pneuma*, the God-like element in man; and soul, *anima*, *psyche*, the organised structure, common to man with the rest of the animal creation, which mediates between that and the body. They appeal to the constant use of the word in the translation of the Old Testament Books, as in "the soul of a beast;" to the distinction drawn in one of Paul's Epistles between the "spiritual" and the "psychic;" and to various other testimonies and usages now sufficiently familiar. The distinction may be a sound one. The speech of the vulgar, and even philosophic or theological disquisitions, are not always careful to preserve distinctions which should be preserved. And there was the less likelihood of such a distinction being observed when, in the general and apparently hopeless ignorance of the whole subject, there seemed to be no need for it. But however that may be, the matter is not one with which we are much concerned at the present. For Mr. Cox does not leave us in any doubt upon the point. Again and again throughout his book

he expressly, and in set terms, declares that he uses the two words as synonymous; that when he speaks of "soul" he means also all that is supposed to be included in the term "spirit." There need, then, be no ambiguity here. When Mr. Cox tells us that the soul of man is a refined body, because it must be that or nothing, he means to tell us, if words have any meaning at all, that having explored to the uttermost the whole moral, mental, and spiritual nature of man, he is able to find or to conceive in it nothing beyond a certain extended and composite structure, which is only not to be called material, and is only supposed to be immortal, because its substance is more refined than what is known as matter, and, moreover, is not subject to the law of gravitation. And that he is not here misrepresented—that this, and this only, is what he intends to say, and does actually succeed in saying—is further apparent from his use of the word psychology. Mr. Cox explains in his preface that his work is intended to be a popular introduction to the study of psychology, and this aim is constantly alluded to throughout the book. But he never once gives any hint, he apparently has himself no suspicion that he is using the word psychology in any other than its accepted sense. He might well have said: "The word psychology has been warped from its true meaning; *Psyche*, the Greek word from which it is derived, signifies a material or quasi-material substance, which resides in, and is moulded to the shape of our present bodies, but survives their dissolution. And this, after death, constitutes the body, or outward symbol of the man. I intend, therefore, in my treatise to restore the word psychology to its true meaning as a kind of super-terrestrial physiology." He might have said this; but he has not said so. He implies, and apparently believes, that he is employing the word in the signification assigned to it by the usage of the whole civilised world.

Now psychology, by universal consent, whether that usage is justified by its etymology or not, signifies the science of mind. It deals with the phenomena of consciousness, with sensations, ideas, emotions, desires, volitions, their genesis, sequences, reproductions and combinations. It discusses such questions as the origin of our conceptions of relation and identity; it shews, or attempts to shew, how from an observed uniformity of sequences is derived our notion of causation. In later writers, it analyses our conceptions of space-relations into certain muscular and certain visual ideas (remembered sensations) concentered, possibly, round a nucleus of unconscious impressions derived from the semi-circular canals. It proves how—or, perhaps, how not—the conviction: "It is my duty" has grown from the simple feeling: "It is my interest," conjoined with the nobler feeling: "It will help this or that, whom I love," and how, in its present form, "I ought," there are combined with these other feelings vague reminiscences of impelling fear, fear of tribal chief, fear of other men's violence, fear of law. It shews how the mere feeling of an animal want has clothed itself with the best elements of our human nature—love of beauty, love of sympathy, love of noble doing and of noble suffering—until we have, as outcome of it all, such lofty reverence as of Dante for his Beatrice, or such tender human devotion as of Thomas Carlyle and his life's helpmate. The study of psychology first definitely emerged from the dominion of the scholastic theology, and of the still earlier metaphysics of Greece, and assumed the rank of a distinct science, under the guidance of Hobbes and Locke. The latter philosopher, freeing himself from all the bondage of traditional methods, was the first definitely to propose an examination of the human mind strictly as an object of natural history. Locke was followed by Berkeley and Hume. After Hume, came, in Great Britain, Reid and Hartley, Dugald Stewart, the elder and the younger Mill; and in our times, Mr. Herbert Spencer and countless lesser lights, such as Professor Bain and the late Mr. G. H. Lewes. It may be, as Hegel, or at least Hegel's English expounders have asserted, that the science of psychology under its present professors is mistaken in its methods and futile in its teachings; that it is the bastard offspring of a mere phenomenal science, misbegotten of a spurious metaphysics; and that for a man to construct a science out of the observation of his own mind, or any other, is as hopeless a task as for him to attempt, by jumping down his own throat, to study his internal anatomy. It is true, that some writers, and especially such physiologists as Ferrier, Bastian and Maudsley—not to speak of the Germans—have given some cause for the supposition that psychology is, after all, a more highly-developed physiology, beginning at the wrong end. But however erroneous may be its present methods, and however much it may be degraded by some of its professed students, it none the less claims to be a distinct science, having, as its subject matter, states of feeling, and their laws, and is no more to be confounded with physiology, because physiological methods and physiological facts have been employed in the study of it, than is the science of sciences, metaphysics, to be confounded with mathematics, because certain metaphysicians have from time to time attempted to apply mathematical formulæ to its elucidation.

But Mr. Cox does not understand this. He sees probably that psychologists treat of the senses; but he does not see that what they treat of is not of the senses as bodily organs, but only as the supposed source or occasion of feeling. We leave to the physiologist to examine the mechanical structure of the

eye; we, as psychologists, are concerned only with our seeing as a mental phenomenon. It is true that the mental fact goes with—corresponds, as we may say, to—certain chemical and mechanical facts. But that is not to say that the first fact is, or depends on, the other. Clearly not; for the one thing of which we are indubitably certain is the fact of our *seeing*; of the chemical and mechanical phenomena—of the thing which, we say, is *seen*, and of the eye, which, we say, *sees* it, we are by no means certain. It is Materialism which is in danger of being overthrown, and which must stand on the defensive, if it stand at all. And to pretend that the brain, or indeed any possible collocation of any conceivable molecules, which is itself but the figment of mind, makes, or is antecedent to, that mind, is as if we should say that the web makes the spider, that the pipkin makes the potter, or a garment the wearer of it. But Mr. Cox appears to think that if we can shew will and consciousness to be associated, not with the movements of visible molecular mechanism, but with some rarer and finer molecules, which are not visible, that will and consciousness are explained, and there is an end of the matter. Your physiologist, when asked to account for some heroic deed, say the rescue of a woman from drowning at the risk of the rescuer's life, will, perhaps, explain it after this fashion. Some picture of the woman in the water is impressed, through the ethereal vibrations, on the retina, and creates chemical disturbance there. This chemical disturbance is conveyed, current-wise, along the optic nerve to the brain, and there causes explosions, also chemical, in certain accustomed combinations of cells—the whole rationale of the process consisting in the combination of cells having only got to be through custom. These cells again communicate a current—i.e., chemical action, knocking down successive unstable molecules, like toy soldiers placed in a row—to the outgoing nerves, and these again cause disruption of certain explosive nitrogenous materials in the muscles, and consequent contraction—and the woman is saved. Well, if that were put forward as a full and perfect explanation of the matter—of courage, strength, endurance, human love, and all the rest of it—Serjeant Cox would say, and say rightly, that it was the utterance of a Materialist. But if you suppose your exploding cells and your chemical action to be in a second and ethereal body, the man who asserts this is “on the side of the angels.” As if true or false were only a question of degree, and you could confute the conclusions of Materialism by *doubling* its premises. Plainly, there never was Materialism more narrow, gross, and sensuous than this so-called Psychology of Mr. Serjeant Cox.

(To be continued.)

THE QUESTION OF PURITY

I find myself criticised in a friendly way by writers in recent numbers of “LIGHT,” and its readers may expect some reply. “E. T. B.” thinks it will be admitted that a man who abstains from flesh, wine, tobacco, &c., may be more unspiritual as to his eating than one who uses these articles. Of course, I admit that one may be intemperate in the purest forms of food. What I contend for is that with temperance there is still room for choice of quality. I am loth to allow that bad things in moderation are quite so nice as good things.

“G. F. G.” will not allow that a flesh diet is gross feeding, or that foods can be separated into two distinct categories—pure and impure.

It is necessary to define “pure” and “purity.” Pure is clean, unsoiled, unmixed. To purify is to make clean. Purge and purgatory are derivations. Purity of mind and heart have from the earliest times been connected with purity of the physical life. The body is purified by exercises, and ascetics are those who by certain exercises try to drive out their impurities.

Health has an intimate relation to purity. Cleanliness, we read, is akin to godliness. Carlyle, speaking to the young man who chose him Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, said that *heilig*, German for holy, was also the German word for health. In Scottish it is *hale*, in English wholeness, or holiness.

I think it must be admitted that a diet composed of flesh, brandy or beer, and tobacco is not so pure or healthy as one composed of bread, fruit, and vegetables. All dead flesh tends to corruption. It is often diseased, and its use as food favours the production of certain diseases, which fruits may be used to cure. Intoxicants of all kinds tend to impurity and disease. It seems probable that both beef and brandy are unfavourable to a pure and high spiritual condition, and it is certain that in all places and times spiritual development has been connected with physical purity. The ceremonial law of Moses regulated the selection and preparation of food with washings, purifications, and other sanitary conditions.

The doctrines of the Pythagoreans became those of the early Christians. I cannot remember one instance of a person considered holy, canonised, for example, as a saint, working miracles, &c., who was not what is called an ascetic, and who did not teach some degree of asceticism as a condition of spirituality.

“S. F. H.” admits that “perchance” (why not by law or principle?) “in the remote future—and everything seems to point to such a conclusion—flesh-eating and intoxicants will be

abandoned.” Then why may not those who are somewhat in the advance of progress hasten the time? Why wait for a remote future to do what a great many find to be best in the actual present? Is it necessary that I should eat flesh, drink beer, and smoke tobacco until men by common consent abandon them? Better, I think, for those who find the benefit of what I consider purer and more healthful habits of living to adopt them at once, or at the earliest convenient period.

It is not that I am intolerant in these matters. A long course of flesh eating by many ancestors may have converted some into really carnivorous animals. Monkeys might probably be taught to live on flesh—possibly horses or elephants—and thereby made like tigers or wolves. Opium, hashish, tobacco and alcohol have their own delights. Let those enjoy them who will. Still I must believe that there is a better way for those who can adopt it, and that the human brain and nerves, fed upon the purer nutriment drawn directly from the vegetable kingdom instead of being taken at second hand in animal flesh with its putrefaction, impurities, and free from the debilitating effects of stimulants and narcotics, are in a condition most favourable to spiritual influences. The mediums whom I have known who have fallen into bad habits of eating and drinking, have either lost their power, or had low and unsatisfactory forms of manifestation. I have known four mediums of great power destroyed by drink, and several others much injured in the character of their manifestations. What scandals have we not had from gluttonous and drunken clergymen! On the other hand, the finest, the most wonderful manifestations I have ever seen were where the mediums and all who attended the *séances* were living in what I consider the purest, and therefore the most healthful manner, with the daily bath and abstinence from flesh, intoxicants and narcotics.

Considering simply physical health, which is the basis of our spiritual life, I have been struck with two examples. In the Eastern war, the Turkish soldiers, practically vegetarians and teetotallers, astonished English surgeons by the ease and rapidity with which they recovered from the most terrible wounds and operations, without inflammation, gangrene, or other incidents of military hospitals. Sir William Gull, in his testimony before the House of Lords' Committee, tells of a big beef-eating, beer-drinking drayman taken to Guy's Hospital for some slight injury, dying almost immediately, and his body swelling into a round ball, which the students punctured to let out the gas, which they set on fire until they had fourteen burning jets on the poor drayman's corpse.

These are extreme cases, but they illustrate my principle. I believe that bodily purity, which we call health, is a condition of the finest spiritual development and communion. Pure food makes pure blood—pure blood builds up a healthy body. This is the doctrine I have taught for many years, and it is the teaching of the most intelligent Spirits with whom I have been permitted to converse. I attribute my own almost perfect health for half a century, without one day's disabling illness, to the measure of fidelity with which I have lived upon what I consider a pure and healthy diet, and in other hygienic habits and conditions.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

Your correspondent “G. F. G.” takes exception to the term “gross feeding,” as applied to the practice of flesh eating. No one would think of finding fault with a lion or a tiger because he ate meat; but should an ox or a sheep take to the practice, no one would hesitate to call the individual so transgressing a gross feeder. Now if the human frame, as is apparently the case, was no more intended by nature to be supported by the eating of flesh than that of an ox or a sheep, the practice may be described as “gross” without impropriety, though it may have the sanction of 20 generations.

“G. F. G.” seems to acknowledge that vegetarianism is an improvement on flesh eating, and calls it “the diet of the future.” If it is so, why should we not do all in our power to hasten its general adoption? There is one way in which we may advance the cause without much difficulty, if we cannot altogether adopt the practice ourselves, viz.:—by abstaining from giving meat to our children.

D. J.

It was the saying of an old divine that a ceremony duly instituted is a chain of gold around the neck of faith; but if in the wish to make it co-essential and consubstantial, you draw it closer and closer, it may strangle the faith it was meant to deck and designate.—COLERIDGE.

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their séances.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

At the Fortnightly Discussion Meeting to be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Monday evening next, Madame de Steiger will read a paper on "Art and the Supernatural."

We see with pleasure that Mr. Eglinton has arrived in Boston, U.S.A., and has held a successful séance on the evening of March 7th, at the house of Mrs. Andrew Bigelow, under the auspices of that lady and the proprietors of the *Banner of Light*. The phenomena were of the kind usually witnessed in the presence of this medium. Our contemporary note as "a salient and satisfactory feature of the alternate light and dark séance, that the medium, himself entranced, would be frequently brought out among the people, being quickly followed at his exit by the appearance of a form at the opened curtain." Mr. Eglinton will remain in Boston for some little time, and is staying at the St. James's Hotel, Suite 205.

The recurrence of certain numbers in connection with certain lives offers a curious subject for research. The number 9 would seem to rule the lives of the late and present Czars. Alexander II. was born in 1818 (two nines), and was murdered in 1881 (two nines), aged 63—again a multiple of nine. Alexander III. was born in 1845 (two nines), and came to the throne in 1881 (two nines), aged 36—another multiple of nine. We have heard that such recurrences are not uncommon, and we believe that some who regard omens with attention draw conclusions from certain numbers favourable or adverse to the lives of those in whom they are found to recur. Perhaps some of our readers can give other instances.

The highly-important letter addressed by Dr. Maurice Davies to the Archbishop of Canterbury deserves all attention from those who may not be able to coincide in every detail of its statements and conclusions. It is the letter of an ordained clergyman of the National Church to its chief minister, pleading for some tolerance for opinions that, albeit they were notes of the Primitive Church, find little favour now-a-days with orthodox Churchmen as a body. It is well that the Archbishop should be reminded that Spiritualism is *not merely co-extensive with table-turning*, and that it has its religious side which reproduces with faithful accuracy much that the Lord taught His followers to expect when He lived with them during the forty days that intervened between His Resurrection and Ascension.

Spiritualism does not, indeed, land a man of necessity on the platform of pure Christianity. Dr. Davies makes no such claim, though he cites cases, or one at least, to shew that there is nothing incompatible in a belief in Spiritualism with complete acceptance of the creed of Evangelical Christianity. He claims for the Spiritualist that "Atheism cannot co-exist with those opinions classed together under the name" he bears. It may be so; usually it is so. The demonstration of existence, apart from a physical body, is apt to render the acceptance of a much more extensive belief comparatively easy. The mind that has, by this method, become emancipated from the shackles of a debasing materialism, is tenderly disposed to the broad tenets of

a belief which it has seen to be right in the one great point of man's survival after physical death. And so it comes to pass that rigid methods of demonstration are not exacted, and few are very careful to define their position with precision. In Dr. Davies's own words, "Spiritualism may make men believe in God," as it *has* made them; and that is enough. The path by which each travels may be left to his own choice. We have known Spiritualists of every conceivable type of theological opinion, from those in whom it is apparently almost imperceptible to those of whom Dr. Davies speaks. And we are clear that it is well that such should be the case. We can conceive of the existence of philosophical Spiritualists who do not take note of theology at all: and we can even conceive a robust Agnostic who, while accepting thoroughly the demonstrated facts of Spiritualism, would sturdily refuse to correlate them at all with what to him is still "the unknown God." And we at least are not prepared to condemn what seems so reasonable a position, any more than we make objection to the wanderer from the faith of his fathers, who is only too glad to recur to his early creed *per saltum* when the great obstacle has been removed. There is room for all.

Spiritualism, we observe, is about to engage the attention of the next Church Congress, to be held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, under the presidency of the Bishop of Durham. The programme of papers to be read includes among its subjects, "Relations of the Church to Deviations from Christianity: (a) Infidelity—(b) Secularism—(c) Spiritualism." It is news to us that Spiritualism is a "deviation from Christianity." From what form of Christianity? From that, we presume, of the writer of the paper; for the Church of England, of which he is a member, already includes within itself various schools of thought, who would find it extremely hard to define their several positions so as to hit upon any platform from which discord and dissension should be excluded. These several schools, however, would probably agree in the general acceptance of the Bible as their rule of life and standard of faith. They may be recommended to study its Spiritualism in the interval that will elapse before the Congress is held. They will find there much that is to the point that may previously have escaped notice. Scenes in which appears a Name, the holiest in their faith, when duly pondered may throw some light on the question how far the Spiritualism of to-day is a deviation from the Christianity of Christ.

The duty of the Church to Spiritualism! It is high time that it be defined by those who have so long neglected it. It has been too long the custom for the Church to anathematise anything which originates beyond its own borders, or seems to contravene any of its own tenets. The Catholic Church has been consistent in refusing to countenance any Spiritualism except that which is produced within its pale. The lives of the saints are full of records that may be exactly paralleled by occurrences in the Spiritualism of to-day. But these were holy men, and Spiritualists have "deviated from Christianity"! The Protestant Church, less consistent, regards the whole matter as diabolic, and will not even meddle with it in the way of investigation. It is *a priori* condemned, and preachers, with rare exceptions, content themselves with fulminating against it as "a sign of the times." Their duty, we make bold to say, is to recognise in modern Spiritualism a continuance of that Spiritual intervention with our world which signalled the days when Christ trod this earth, and which they might reasonably expect to recur in "these latter days" when they look for His reappearing.

When they have studied Spiritualism in their Bibles, and compared the records they find there with those contained in our own pages with steady frequency, they may profitably inquire how far their own Christianity answers the tests prescribed by the Founder of their Faith, and how far "the signs that shall follow them that believe" are found among Spiritualists. They will need to look long at home before they find any manifestation of them, but a very slight search will discover their presence among those who are said to "have deviated from Christianity," but who are, in reality, a closer copy of the Primitive Church before its faith had been adulterated than any section of believers in Christ that can now be found.

It is among Spiritualists that "the signs that shall follow them that believe" are to be sought for with most chance of success. It is Spiritualists who best understand and appreciate

some of the events recorded during the mystic period of the Forty Days, and who can enter most completely into the motive that pervades the whole life of the Man Christ Jesus. It is they who can most thoroughly comprehend many facts recorded in the Bible, which to those who are not able, as they are, to parallel them by events in their own experience, must for ever remain matters of blind faith or secret doubt. It is they who, by the liberty with which their experience has made them free, are best able to discriminate between Divine Truth and human dogma, and to reject the latter as an unwarranted addition to the former.

We believe that the Religious Tract Society is responsible for what appears in the *Leisure Hour*. Does the Religious Tract Society think it a part of its religious duty to bear false witness against the large and increasing body of people who believe in the possibility of Spirit communion? The April number of *Leisure Hour* contains another of Washington Irving Bishop's effusions, professedly in exposure of Spiritualism, but in reality on the art of the professional conjuror. Mr. Bishop explains some of the methods of escaping from bonds and sacks, and would have his readers believe that such clumsy contrivances are a complete explanation of spiritual manifestations. All candid investigators know better, and the editor of *Leisure Hour* would know better too, if he would devote a leisure hour to honest inquiry. But then he could not allow his correspondent to flavour his articles with spicy abuse of Spiritualists—and it is the abuse that gives interest to these pretended exposures. The Religious Tract Society should be above this sort of thing, and should hesitate before it allowed one of its publications to be the vehicle for slandering a body which includes men and women of the highest rank—social, literary, and scientific.

The "Great Spiritualist Case," as the newspapers put it—meaning thereby the trial of Mrs. Fletcher on the charge of using false pretences to defraud Mrs. Hart Davies, and also of pretending to exercise witchcraft and sorcery—will be the next nine days' wonder. And what then? Why simply this—that, be the issue what it may, it will be found that Spiritualism has been neither "killed" nor "scotched," but has received new life and energy from the increased public attention. We hear that amongst the witnesses who will be called to testify to the truth of the "phenomena" are Mr. Crookes, Mr. Cromwell Varley, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Mr. H. D. Jencken, Mr. S. C. Hall, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, the Earl of Dunraven, and many others, whose evidence, if accepted by the Court, will go very far towards convincing all unprejudiced minds that Spiritualists are not necessarily either fools or knaves, and that "there must be something in it after all."

By the way, the newspapers have—unwittingly, no doubt—been creating a prejudice against the defendants by representing that they had all absconded, and that only one of them had been caught. The truth is that none of them absconded; that they were all in America when the writs were issued; and that Mrs. Fletcher came back to England of her own free will, with the full knowledge that she would be arrested on her arrival. Monday next is fixed for the commencement of the trial, which will in all probability extend over several days. Mr. Montagu Williams and Mr. Snagg will conduct the case for the prosecution; and Mr. Addison, Q.C., with Mr. Bealey, will appear for the defence.

If the *Daily News* values its reputation for ability and fairness it must be the editor's business at once to look after the writer of the subjoined paragraph:—

"Under the name of *Light*, the Spiritualists have lately established a new weekly organ devoted, as the sub-title informs us 'to the highest interests of humanity.' From the latest number we gather that 're-incarnation' is among the burning topics of Spiritualist circles at this time. We also learn that nearly all the present believers are of opinion that the Pythagorean process came to an end in their own persons between 1875 and the present year. The doctrine, it seems, includes that of 'the interchangeableness of the sexes'—the re-incarnationists holding, we are told, that there was nothing to prevent Queen Elizabeth becoming Charles Dickens."

The topic of Re-Incarnation is so far from being "burning" that it chances to be noticed in "*LIGHT*" for the first time, in consequence of a paper having been read on the subject before the B.N.A.S. Moreover, the columns of our contemporaries might be searched throughout without finding, during

the last 10 years, more than a rare allusion to the belief, which is by no means general among English Spiritualists.

The information misused by our contemporary was evidently drawn from a letter written for the purpose of exposing some of the fallacies of the Re-Incarnationists. It is from this source that the *reductio ad absurdum* gravely quoted is drawn. "G. W., M.D.," was poking fun—the paraphrast of the *Daily News* took it all for gospel, swallowed it, and saw his way to a little mild chaff. If this is his method, his editor may be trusted to look after him. Meantime we can see the joke, but it is not quite what our friend intended. The laughter comes in on the other side. But why cannot even the *Daily News* treat Spiritualism fairly?

The newspapers have a good deal to say on our subject from week to week, and what we read is not always pleasant. It is good, therefore, to note in the *Sporting and Dramatic News* of last week an account, well and clearly put, of a séance in which a case of identity seems clearly made out. It is no better and no worse than others of regular occurrence. But it is clearly recited, and will reach a new audience in our contemporary's pages.

The March number of *Psychische Studien* contains a report of some extraordinary stone-throwing on the 17th of November last, at the house of a gentleman named Batternay, living at Klopotiva, Siebenbürgens. The account is accompanied by a ground plan of the house and its surrounding gardens, &c., to prove the impossibility of any trickery in the matter. The persons concerned are not Spiritualists, and their wonder at the occurrences is consequently all the greater. Pieces of hard earth and stones came on different occasions against the kitchen window, smashing and scattering the glass in all directions; but instead of passing through the fracture, the missiles invariably remained outside, falling on the window-sill. Similar missiles fell from the solid ceiling of the room in a most unaccountable manner, and were subsequently re-projected from the kitchen floor in other directions by an invisible force in broad daylight. In one instance a stone was projected from the kitchen floor into an adjoining room, striking a bottle on the sideboard, breaking it, and, strange to say, remaining stuck, so to speak, in the fracture it had made. A singular feature was that in all instances the projectiles appeared to be carried instead of propelled through the atmosphere. All the phenomena occurred under circumstances entirely precluding the idea of their having been caused by mortal hands; such at least is the opinion of all the eye-witnesses, people of position, who have nothing to gain by concealing the truth.

THE LAWS OF SPIRIT COMMUNION.

To the Editor of "*LIGHT*."

SIR,—I must ask space in your columns to claim the entire sympathy of "T. W. G.," who wrote last week under the above heading.

If I had tried to express the objects aimed at by the Guild of the Holy Spirit I could not have summarised them so neatly and concisely as "T. W. G." has done when he names his *desiderata* as the attainment of "harmony of intellect, moral life and emotions, with sound bodily health." Of course, I cannot guarantee the last requirement in all my circle; but I can only say that the majority of the members are, like myself, "sound in wind and limb," and that we attach just as much importance to moral and intellectual as to "emotional" qualifications. The services in which we engage are intended to secure harmony in all these respects; and no doubt to that fact we owe the result that our devotional séances have not been "insipid."—Yours, &c.,

THE FOUNDER OF THE GUILD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A New York paper reports that the Earl of Caithness died at an hotel in that city on Monday.

How can we, from the antiquity or occasional non-appearance of an experience—for instance, an electrical or somnambulistic phenomenon—decide against its possibility? A fact can be proved only from positive appearances, for negative are a logical contradiction. Do we know the conditions of such an apparition? Many years and generations pass away, and no great genius appears. Will you, therefore, deny the existence of genius? May there not be Sabbath-day children, who alone have eyes and perceptions for Spirits?—JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

A CHALLENGE TO SPIRITUALISTS AND MEDIUMS.

We have received the following important letter from Dr. Robert Wyld of Edinburgh—a brother of Dr. Geo. Wyld, who is so well known and esteemed amongst a large circle of London Spiritualists.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have for several years, in the face of much obloquy and scorning on the part of learned friends, maintained the transcendent importance of the facts of Spiritualism, provided only their verity could be established. To the philosopher, the Christian, and the man of ordinary intelligence, I hold they should be supremely interesting, as affording, if not absolute proof, at least strong confirmation of the duality of mind and matter. If there are men who feel no interest in the solution of such questions I hold it must be attributed either to prejudice, or to the possession of an imperfectly-developed nature.

Some years ago I threw myself, with enthusiasm, into the investigation of Spiritualism. I spent a fortnight in London, applying myself unremittingly, and I may say night and day, to the subject. I came in contact, not only with the best professional mediums, but also with many highly respectable, and I believe, perfectly honest private supporters of the movement. I saw much—I believed little—I had proof of nothing. I had too little time at my disposal to bring so tough a subject to a conclusion; besides, I had the disadvantage of being single-handed, while surrounded by a crowd of believing enthusiasts.

Since my London trip I have not been entirely idle. I have seen the little that could be seen in Edinburgh and Glasgow. I have read the best books and the leading weekly journals published in London. But more than this; for fully a year, whenever I heard of any simple physical phenomenon being exhibited in London, which I judged could be easily subjected to testing proof, I was in the habit of writing and obtaining insertion in the Spiritualistic organ of the day of a distinct proposal on my part to subject such phenomenon to a test, and to go to London to witness the experiment, and if satisfied to pay the medium £50 to £100. I regret to say that none of my proposals on this line were ever accepted.

The effect of this upon me was that I, for some years, ceased to take any active interest in the subject of Spiritualism; in fact, I have generally concluded it to be founded on simple credulity and fraud. Friends have, however, lately induced me to read two important works—a translation of Professor Zöllner's "Transcendental Physics," and the still more recent work of the lately deceased Mr. Epes Sargent, of Boston, "The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism." It is impossible to read these works without great interest—here are men of scientific and literary culture attesting as facts, what set the ordinary laws of physics at defiance; and these facts, if facts they be, are generally clearly and distinctly stated. Such being the case I step forward to make one further effort to solve, to my own satisfaction, the question of Spiritualism.

The power of obtaining writing by spiritual means between two slates, which have been marked for identification, and then brought into the experimenting room by the investigator, tied and cross tied and sealed, or fixed with double iron clamps, is attested perhaps more frequently than any other phenomenon. We can conceive no experiment more interesting, or more satisfying than this one to the inquirer; for the gentlemen who witnessed it generally declare, that they either held the slates all the time in their hands, or they say that they never allowed them to pass for a moment out of their sight. This is attested as having been exhibited under Mr. Slade's mediumship, again and again, and under that of several of the mediums in London since Mr. Slade left.

Now, sir, in such a matter as this, for me at least, seeing alone is believing, and my proposal, therefore, is this—Let two or more of the best London mediums devote themselves specially to this phenomenon of slate writing. It is evident that, if it can be witnessed by those who take an interest in the subject, and who will not grudge a little time in making their inquiries, a very great step will be made in one of the most doubted, but most important questions of the day, and hundreds I have no doubt will go to London to have their minds set at rest.

I make the above suggestion because I observe that Mr. Epes Sargent again and again charges the public with wilful and obstinate scepticism, "*seeing they have it in their power at any time to witness the truth which they ignorantly deny.*"

Now, sir, I trust you will give insertion to this letter in your journal, and that the honest sceptic may soon have an opportunity of having a proof *yea or nay*. If Spiritualism cannot be maintained by visible proof, let it, I say, go to the wall, as a delusion and a fraud; but, if it can be established by any one single fact such as the one I propose, then let us wish it God-speed.

I beg the Spiritualists, however, to strive to establish *one spiritual fact*, and not to scramble with their readers over countless series of useless, because unprovable marvels, as has been their habit to do.

ROBERT S. WYLD, F.R.S.E., LL.D.

Edinburgh, 25th March, 1881.

Dr. Robert Wyld has a sound scientific position in Edinburgh, and his conversion to our cause would be very desirable, but

what does his proposal amount to? Simply to this, that "with him *seeing* only is believing." He believes that men like Crookes, Varley, Wallace, Epes Sargent, Zöllner, M.A. (Oxon), Massey, and his own brother, with thousands of other critical and scientific inquirers, are all deceived as to slate writing, but that he, if he had the opportunity of testing the phenomena, could not be deceived!

Suppose a slate-writer equal to Slade were to appear in London, and convince, as Slade did, ninety-nine in every hundred witnesses, would Dr. Robert Wyld be convinced on testimony? Certainly not. But suppose he came himself to London to test the medium, and suppose it so happened that, owing to illness, or the state of the weather, or the obdurate and manifest scepticism of the investigator, the medium for one week failed? Then Dr. Robert Wyld would return to Edinburgh to denounce the whole of Spiritualism as a fraud.

But suppose that he got writing in his own slate tied and held by himself? He might then believe, but would he be able to convince one single sceptic in Edinburgh? Certainly not one. Therefore what Dr. Robert Wyld asks is this, That the whole efforts of the Spiritualists of London should be devoted to the effort to convert himself.

The proposal that one or more mediums should devote themselves as a speciality to slate writing is good. We have often urged this, that just as there are specialists in medicine and in science, so there should be in mediumship.

Eglinton of late years is reported to have produced much slate writing, and the facts were duly recorded. Why, we would ask, did Dr. Robert Wyld miss the opportunity of investigating? He did miss it, and now Eglinton has gone to America!

Dr. Robert Wyld informs us he once spent *two weeks* in London investigating Spiritualism and was not convinced. His brother, Dr. George Wyld, in his "Theosophy," informs us he has expended *forty years* in the investigation of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and Spiritualism, and is convinced absolutely. Which of the two is the better witness? It is true Dr. Robert Wyld has frequently and publicly offered £50 to £100 to any medium who would write one short sentence for him in a closed slate, and that the reward has never been claimed. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that spiritual phenomena, like true poetry, cannot be had to order at all times, but come like higher inspirations by fits and starts. Still, we may hope that our esteemed correspondent will yet obtain the evidence which he, no doubt, earnestly and honestly desires to secure.

THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.*

This is one of the many books called into being by a desire to counteract "a growing materialistic philosophy which is striving to abolish all belief in spiritual beings or a life after death." It is, in fact, a collection of essays, evidencing much patient thought, considerable originality, and a thoroughness of grasp that makes them pleasant and profitable reading. They deal with such subjects as—The Philosophy of Evil and Suffering—The Place and Function of Conscience—Religion and Dogma—The Divine and Human Elements in Christianity—The Philosophy of Inspiration—and Spiritualism.

The introduction of the latter subject into such company would seem to have offended some of our author's critics, for in a preface to the second issue of his book he takes occasion to administer the following well-deserved rebuke: "The phenomena of Spiritualism are either true or false. A question of fact is here raised, which it is simply absurd to attempt to settle on *a priori* grounds, especially in face of the overwhelming evidence in its favour. The opinion of non-investigating opponents is scientifically worthless. On the other hand, out of the large number of intelligent men who have carefully investigated these phenomena and become convinced of their genuineness, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find one who has renounced his belief in their reality. This of itself is a sufficient reply to those who presume to settle the question without knowledge. If true, the significance of Spiritualism is undeniably great. By its light religious history must be read anew. Ancient testimonies to so-called miraculous or supernatural occurrences, otherwise hard to be received, are brought within the region of the possible. The supernatural of the past finds its explanation in present-day manifestations, and man's hopes of a future are sustained and strengthened by evidences amounting almost to demonstration.

* A Forecast of the Religion of the Future. W. W. Clark, London: Trubner.

Thus, at a time when creeds are crumbling beneath their own weight, when a belief in the supernatural is treated with derision by many men of science and culture, and the chilly weight of a cold materialism is spreading across the face of society—at such a time the facts of Spiritualism stand forth a living protest against indifferentism, atheism, despair!”

These are brave and true words, with a genuine ring about them that is typical of the whole book. The author thinks for himself, and is not frightened by any Frankenstein of thought that he creates. An ever-present realisation of the truth of Spiritualism pervades the book, and is especially brought to bear with telling effect on the discussion of the questions of inspiration and revelation, and of the Divine and human elements in Christianity.

“If there is such a thing,” he says, “as trustworthy testimony at all, and if there is evidence on which we deem it right to send our fellow-creatures to the hulks or to the scaffold, then, indeed, must the phenomena of modern Spiritualism be accepted as facts, and if so, their identity with much of the Spiritualism of the Bible cannot fail to be perceived.” In mesmeric phenomena he sees a clue to a theory of inspiration which he puts forward as “the only one capable of affording a rational and consistent explanation of historical religion.” He quotes with approval the remarks made in “Spirit Teachings” (*Spiritualist*, November 6th, 1874), and considers that the theory there elaborated by communicating Spirits is the true one. This accounts, as he believes, for the admixture of human error with Divine truth, the mind of the medium adulterating the revealed message, or the ideas which transcend the powers of human apprehension being imperfectly understood. This he illustrates from the more mystical books of the Old Testament, the Apocalypse, and the trance visions of Swedenborg.

“The position I take with respect to ‘specially revealed’ religions is that they are natural evolutions of theological views and conceptions, arising out of humanity’s progressive aspirations towards Light. In these aspirations, which are divine inspirations—the factors of universal religion—man is brought *en rapport* with the supersensual world, and into communion, consciously or unconsciously, with the spirits of those who have gone on before, and who, under certain unknown conditions, are enabled to manifest their presence, and convey to mortals the sympathy and wisdom of a higher sphere.”

In the infancy of the race such communications were attributed to the gods, and all revelation was thought to come direct from Deity—just as all prayer was thought to find its way to the ear of the Supreme and cause his personal intervention. That this is a consistent view of the methods whereby we know that the world of spirit acts on our own there can be no doubt in the mind of any thoughtful Spiritualist. We must refer our readers to the elaborate disquisition comprised between pp. 146 and 179 for an argument of cogent, logical force, marshalled with admirable clearness, and enriched with much apposite illustration.

The author draws his illumination from the same source in discussing the character of Jesus Christ. It is as a Spiritualist that he dilates on “the almost superhuman sensitiveness He displayed to the sorrows and sufferings of mankind; the keen appreciation of the transitoriness of things temporal, and the realities of the spiritual world, and the utter ignoring of self that others might be benefited.” The key-note of His character was Love; and as “the embodiment of unselfishness, purity, and love represents man’s highest idea of God, so Jesus represents man’s most advanced thought of Deity.” He is, as we prefer to say, the best manifestation of the inconceivable Supreme that man has found.

We have no space to attempt any summary of the author’s views as set forth in his essay on Psychism and Spiritualism. They are necessarily fragmentary, and a very wide subject suffers inevitably from compression. The views set forth in Serjeant Cox’s “Mechanism of Man,” M. A. (Oxon’s) “Spirit Identity,” and Mr. Crookes’ essays, are commended and argumentatively illustrated. To those who are unacquainted with the subject these pages will be serviceable; for ourselves, we have perused with deeper interest certain other portions to which we have above alluded.

But the value of this collection of essays is that it will be read in the future, as it has been in the past, by persons who know nothing of Spiritualism beyond the sort of knowledge, or half-knowledge, of some aspects of it that do not dispose them to further acquaintance. Here they will find it propounded as a great fact, a potent and far-reaching truth, which alone can explain many of the mysteries of life, which

throws a much needed light on the pages of God’s revealed Book, and which comes in these latter days to man, in his extremity of doubt, as the comforter and consoler that tells him of a better life when this is done with.

Viewed from this point the book is one of great value to Spiritualism—one which all intelligent Spiritualists should welcome, and do their best to circulate among inquiring minds.

OBJECTIONS TO RE-INCARNATION.

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—In common with your correspondent, Dr. G. W., I see objections to the doctrine of Re-Incarnation which I think have never been met.

Miss Arundale says that “sex is an accident of physical organisation.” But, surely this is contrary to the nature of things. If sex is a mere physical accident, it has nothing to do with the spirit; when, therefore, the physical body is put off, sex ought to cease. Yet those who communicate with us come as men and women, just the same as in earth-life. But, that sex is in the spirit, and thence in the body, is according to the analogy of all nature. The female spirit is essentially distinct from that of the male and remains so to eternity, for true marriage is perpetual. The female has different modes of perception, and is adapted to a different class of duties. Swedenborg has beautifully shewn how she is complementary to the spiritual constitution of the man. I must hold, therefore, that if a spirit is ever re-incarnated, it must be according to the sex inherent in the spirit. Personal identity, too, requires this.

Our good friend, Signor Damiani, mentions in one of his tracts that Pythagoras distinctly remembered once being a frog! This is quite as probable as that a man should reappear as a woman, but both are equally impossible in the nature of things. “Every seed has his own body.” The seed of a rose can never grow up a tulip, nor can that of a geranium develope into a wall-flower. The spiritual principle of the seed gathers material particles in a form according to its essence. A male germ can only evolve a male form. A female germ can only produce a female organism. To suppose that a human spirit could ever take the form of a frog would be as absurd as to imagine that a human pair could produce a horse or a crocodile.

For these reasons I must think there cannot be “a law of justice which necessitates that a return to humanity should be regardless of sex.” Such a statement is entirely gratuitous. I am quite aware that Spirits have been known to assert all these anomalies; but I am equally certain that they speak falsely, perhaps to amuse themselves at our expense. Like your correspondent Dr. G. W., I believe Swedenborg’s statements are quite trustworthy.

March 27th, 1881.

S. C.

SIR,—I was not present at the reading of Miss Arundale’s paper, and therefore do not know what was said by those who took part in the discussion; but it appears to me that one of the chief arguments of the Re-Incarnationists is based on the fact of the inequality of the various conditions and stages of advancement among Spirits in the flesh; and the apparent injustice of such an arrangement is attempted to be got rid of by supposing that every Spirit has to go through the same course of training. The inequality, however, is still present, and all the arguments in the world cannot abolish it. I suppose that even Re-Incarnationists will admit that there are different rates of progress among Spirits; and for the equality to be perfect every Spirit should be equally advanced throughout eternity. Inequality exists throughout nature, and life would be very uninteresting without it. And where is the injustice? Is it unjust to give a prize to the winner in an athletic contest, because his physical organisation, over the construction of which he has had no control, has enabled him to gain the victory over others who have worked equally hard? Or, is it unjust to give a reward to the most proficient at a mathematical examination, for instance, because others have not the mental capacity necessary for success?

There may or may not be some truth in the doctrine of Re-Incarnation, but on two points we are all agreed, viz.:—Progress, and the fact of our having to bear the consequences of our actions; and I think if we bear these in mind, we need not trouble our heads much about the special mode of Progression.

D. J.

HACKNEY.

The friends who formed the Hackney Spiritual Evidence Society have made some little change in the name of their society, and henceforth it will be known as the "Hackney Primitive Christian Mission." "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," so the Spiritualism of our Hackney friends will be as good as ever, although the work will be carried on under a new name. Frankly, I confess I think it better to stick to the old, abused, and oft misunderstood name of Spiritualism; it seems after all to be the term we are best known by, and our distinctive characteristics are to a great extent more understood by it than by any other term. Still we are all workers for truth, and each has his own ideas of how he can best serve the cause. On Sunday last the inaugural meeting, under the changed title, was held, opening with the very material manifestation of a tea party. After tea, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all assembled, we sang a few hymns, and listened to two or three solos, very admirably rendered by young lady friends. Mr. Williams read a chapter from the New Testament, and afterwards, in a brief speech, stated the objects and hopes of the Society—viz., to unfold the truth that the Spirit communion of the early days of Christianity had not left us, and to follow in as humble a way as we could in the footsteps of the great exemplar Christ. There was a practical, as well as an earnest, tone about the address which left no doubt that much good work for truth will be done in a quiet way. We then arranged for a séance, but, doubtless, owing to the great number of new comers and the crowded state of the room, there was no manifestation of a marked character.

G. W.

LADBROKE HALL.

On Sunday last Mr. W. Howell gave an address upon "Social Evils, and how to remedy them," the subject being chosen by the audience. Active preparations are being made for a commemorative tea party to be held on Good Friday, to celebrate the thirty-third anniversary of the advent of Modern Spiritualism.

CARDIFF.

At the weekly meeting, on Sunday evening last, Messrs. M. Williams and G. Sadler read accounts of persecutions, wars, &c., which they attributed to Christianity. An opposite position was taken by other members of the Society, who believed Christianity had accomplished a grand mission, which Spiritualism would continue on a comprehensive basis. Mr. Haines occupied the chair.

DALTON-IN-FURNESS.

AN APPEAL TO THE BENEVOLENT.—Mr. John Rogers, hon. sec. of the Spiritual Investigation Society, Dalton-in-Furness, writes us on behalf of Mr. W. Proctor, the blind medium, who, for seven years past, has given his services as a trance medium without fee or reward in the Barrow-in-Furness district. Mr. Proctor until nine months ago was enabled to support himself by following an employment, which he then lost. Since that time he has been, until very recently, supported by his parents. Lately, however, from change of circumstances, his parents have been, and are still, unable to maintain him, and the Dalton friends, though doing all they can, being but few in number, appeal to the friends of Spiritualism for further assistance, without which they must lose the services of one who carried on his work as medium in the face of much local persecution, in consequence of his withdrawal from the position of local preacher among the Primitive Methodists when he became a Spiritualist. We are privately informed from other sources, that the appeal is a genuine one, and if any reader desires to assist the object in question, communications directed to the office of "LIGHT" will be promptly forwarded to the proper quarter.

DARLINGTON.

In making my weekly report from this town I must begin by saying that I have a strong impression that "LIGHT" will soon become a very popular paper here. I can, I think, with every confidence predict a success for our Lyceum, as our little band are very enthusiastic in their labours, and our members, though increasing slowly, are of the genuine sort. We have several mediums developing very satisfactorily. In one materialisation séance our medium was brought out by two Spirit friends in front of the audience. On Sunday last Mr. Scott, of this town, addressed a crowded audience in the Secular and Temperance Hall of West Auckland. The discourse was a decided success.

ALFRED C. CLARK.

MIDLAND DISTRICT COMMITTEE.

The quarterly conference of the above committee was held at Walsall on March 20th, when the report of last quarter's labours was read and adopted. It was found that 20 meetings had been held under the committee's auspices, three of which were by Mr. Morse, who had given his services for his expenses only, visiting Leicester, Birmingham, and Walsall. The balance-sheet for the quarter shewed a balance of £1 19s. 1d., after all expenses were met. The secretary wished to resign his office owing to his contemplated visit to America, and Mr. Smyth, of Birmingham, was appointed as his successor. It was resolved to

make an effort to utilise the local speakers as much as possible for the purpose of maintaining Sunday services, in addition to engaging paid speakers. Among other aids to carry on the work it was decided that a circular should be issued to guarantee fund subscribers who are in arrears, asking them to continue their contributions; the appointment of a lady collector who should be authorised to receive donations in each town was also decided upon. The question of Sunday-schools for children was broached, but considered to be beyond the scope of the committee at present, though the conference was unanimous in declaring that something ought to be done in that direction. It was resolved that the conference should meet again at Birmingham on April 17th, for the purpose of discussing future plans and prospects. Great hopes were expressed that the committee would be enabled to do more, and better, work in the future than ever before. A large audience assembled in the evening to hear the discourse by the controls of Mr. E. W. Wallis upon "The Needs of Humanity supplied by Spiritualism."

E. W. WALLIS, Hon. Sec.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

On Sunday and Monday last the guides of Mr. Wright, of Liverpool, delivered three excellent discourses before the members and visitors attending the Lecture Hall of the S.E. Society. The broad and free expression of thought which characterised his remarks obtained from the audience expressions of the strongest appreciation. It was pleasant in the highest degree to listen to the noble sentiments of the controls as they hurled their invectives against the hypocrisy everywhere manifest in social life, trade, politics, and sacerdotalism. Neither did they forget the miserable dissensions and despotisms abounding in Spiritualism, or fail to rebuke the intolerant spirit which obtains in its high places.

A Séance with Miss Wood.

Last week I unfortunately overlooked a report of one of Miss Wood's séances, handed to me by a well-known and trustworthy gentleman, who will, if it be required, testify openly to the accuracy of the same. I mention this fact lest my accuracy be disputed upon the matter, as it was on a prior occasion. On Thursday evening, March 17th, about 24 members and friends assembled in the séance-room at Weir's Court. After Miss Wood—the medium—had been firmly screwed into the gauze cage by a stranger and a member, and the light turned down, "Pocha," the medium's Hindoo Spirit guide, took possession of her organism, and entertained us with some very interesting remarks. After three-quarters of an hour had elapsed in this manner, the somewhat indistinct voice of Pocha, which characterises her when speaking through her materialised form, was heard muttering something behind the curtains, and presently her little form presented itself and moved about among the sitters, shaking hands with some and chatting with and kissing others. After remaining with us for about half an hour, she retired at the right side of the enclosure, when, simultaneous with her disappearance, a form, almost as large again as Pocha, strode forth from the centre aperture. It was tall and slim, having a well-defined figure, which moved quickly round about the circle. Presently it retired, and drew the curtains aside, shewing the door of the cage to be shut. It then proceeded to unscrew the door and dragged the chair containing the medium out of her confinement to the outside of the curtains, clearly away from the cabinet, opposite to its centre, and visible to all the sitters. One of the managers placed a white handkerchief over the head of Miss Wood to make her position more clear and definite, and immediately after this, between the curtain and the wall at the right, a tall form presented itself about five feet from the medium. At the request of several sitters the figure repeated the action three or four times, and then disappeared.

NORTHUMBRIA.

NOTTINGHAM.

On Sunday last the Spiritualists meeting in the Shakespeare-street Chapel received a visit from Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, who delivered two inspirational addresses. The morning address was upon "God; and how to serve Him;" and the evening one was entitled "The Day after Death." A large audience assembled at the evening service, which was impressively conducted by Mr. W. Yates, and an excellent, but somewhat lengthy address was listened to with close and earnest attention.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CARDIFF.—Next week.

"RESURGAM."—Too late for this week's issue.

"A SENSITIVE."—Your letter has come to hand, and shall have early attention.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—Birmingham, Sunday, April 3rd; Glasgow, Sunday, April 10th; Cardiff, Sunday, April 17th; London, Sunday, April 24th; Belper, Sunday, May 1st; Northampton, Sunday, May 29th. Liverpool, May; Stamford, July; dates not yet fixed.

Spiritualist Societies.

Secretaries and Presidents of Societies will oblige by informing the Editor of *LIGHT* of any alterations that may from time to time be necessary in the following list:—

METROPOLITAN.

- British National Association of Spiritualists. 38, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C. Mr. Thos. Blyton, Secretary.
- Brixton Psychological Society. 6, Akerman Road, Brixton, London, S.W. Mr. H. E. Frances, Hon. Secretary, 22, Cowley Road, Brixton, S.W.
- Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston Lane, Hackney Downs, London, E. Mr. J. J. Morse, President.
- Goswell Hall Spiritualist Committee. 290, Goswell Road, E.C. Secretary, Mr. W. Towns, 1, Albert Terrace, Barnsbury Road, N.
- Hackney Primitive Christian Mission. 7, Ellingford Road, Mare Street, Hackney, E. Mr. O. Rhys Williams, Manager.
- Ladbroke Hall, Notting Hill, London, W. Mr. F. O. Matthews, Manager, 126, Kensington Park Road, Notting Hill, W.
- Marylebone Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. Quebec Hall, 25, Great Quebec-street, London, W. Mr. J. M. Dale, Hon. Secretary.
- South London Spiritual Society. Mr. J. G. Robson, Secretary, 8, Bournemouth Road, Bye Lane, Peckham, S.E.
- Spiritual Institution and Progressive Library. 15, Southampton Row, Holborn, London, W.C. Mr. James Burns, Proprietor and Manager.

PROVINCIAL.

- Ashington Spiritual Society. Mr. G. Scott, Secretary, Ashington Colliery, Northumberland.
- Batley Carr Association of Spiritualists. Mr. Joseph Armitage, Secretary.
- Birmingham Society of Spiritualists. Mr. J. Kennedy, Secretary, Oosells Street Board School, Birmingham.
- Birmingham Christian Spiritualist Society. 312, Bridge Street West. Mr. John Colley, Hon. Secretary.
- Bolton Spiritualist Association. Mr. D. Cordingley, Secretary, Bath Street, Bolton.
- Cambridge Association of Investigators into Spiritualism. 7, Fitzroy Street. Mr. James Harpley, Secretary.
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