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THE THEOLOGICAL BEARING OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

Theology is a word that is looked at suspiciously in this latter half of the nineteenth century. The science of God and man, and of their mutual relations, is rapidly becoming a system that raises the flippant smile, if not the sarcastic sneer. And with but too much reason. Resting principally upon speculative bases, and often evolving repulsive dogmas, it has hitherto raised a Reign of Terror among humanity and made the rebound from its iron grasp a frightfully distant one.

Yet we think theology has still its part to play in the education of the human family. At present it occupies much the same position that astrology and alchemy did in natural science. As astrology and alchemy gave way to the exact sciences of astronomy and chemistry, so, we think, out of the wreck of theologic ideas will be evolved a science of God and man, and their mutual relations, which will satisfy reason, conscience, heart, and life.

Spiritualism, without a doubt, means the enlargement of our relationships and responsibilities to living beings. It is the mark of a sublime rising in human life. What the fall of Constantinople was to the Renaissance and Reformation; what the inductive method was to natural science; what the invention of printing has been to the multiplication of human thought; what the telegraph, and railway, and steam-boat have been to social, political, and commercial life; what the repeal of the paper duties was to the Press and literature of Great Britain; that, and far more, will Spiritualism be in the cause of religion. It will not destroy man's idea of the Deity, but confirm it. It will not diminish his sense of awe, but expand and purify it, and, let us add, simplify and affectionise it. Just as steam has annihilated the barriers that made nationalities, and is rapidly carrying the world to cosmopolitan relations, so the outcome of Spiritual intercourse means the sweeping away of the barriers between such of the human race as have entered the Unseen and those who still dwell on earth. It means, therefore, new relations, new duties, new phases of moral obligation and experience.

We anticipate that Spiritualism will reform and energise the varied forms of human life. Politics will receive a new impetus; science be enlightened with loftier facts and more sweeping laws; and religion be divested of the letter and inspired with the spirit.

It is to be regretted that Spiritualism so far has posed as the direct foe of the Church. It cannot be disputed that Spiritualists have too often been carried away with the joy of their new discovery into excess of expression. It has claimed respect before it had proved itself worthy; it has supposed it knew all about the matter while only yet at the A B C. It has listened to the Spirit world with too passive an ear, and swallowed lies and absurdity as the veriest Gospel.

It is our purpose in this article to consider certain root ideas in theology which we apprehend Spiritualism will confirm and expand. We do so with a view to strengthen our earthward position in Spirit intercourse. That there are lying Spirits, there in the Unseen as well as here, cannot be disputed. Our only defence against such must be the dictates of reason and conscience.

The root fact of theology, humanly considered, is human sin. It is a scientific fact, the demonstration of which lies all around and in our own hearts. Human consciousness must admit that it not only acts from ignorance and weakness, but

also from malice and other impure motives, wilfully against light and experience. Orthodox theology has distorted and inflamed this truth, but when divested of all monstrous conceptions it still exists, a potent, indisputable fact. The dogma of original sin coming to us from a fall of our first parents may be untrue, but the fact of hereditary bias to evil is a scientific certainty.

An inevitable sequence of such a fact is Retribution. Every sin is a robbery. It is the assertion of one man beyond his rights and at the cost of another man's fair due. The Bible statements, that "the way of transgressors is hard," that God can "by no means clear the guilty," are such that no system of knowledge can afford to dispense with them in the education of the human being. That in this life retribution does not come is a reliable certainty; that if harmony be the test of truth there must be a continuity of life where adequate punishment will come, is another. The horrors of irretrievable wrong-doing and materiality of punishment may be excised by Spiritual teaching, but that beyond death we shall receive *according to the deeds done in the body*, whether they be good or whether they be bad, is one of the eternal verities.

The correlative fact to this is that of Compensation. The injured must not only be defended but recouped. The laws of our being implanted by the Deity must include our personal compensation for ill received. The slave of the United States must have his hallelujah time of glorification. The Bastille prisoner must have a sphere and capacity to outbalance his durance vile. The seduced maiden must have a life that shall wipe away the tears of her earthly ignominy.

Out of this springs another fact—the idea of Reward. The philanthropist works at immense personal cost against bitter opposition. The patriot strives, to the block, against tyranny. The reformer works from unselfish motives and at self-denial to accomplish the well-being of his fellow-man. There must come a time when the environment of such, their outward sphere of living, will be in correspondence to their inward spirit. Justice demands that such shall some day abide in circles of human life that shall not jar their emotions, and that shall also lend joy and peace to their ransomed souls. Every struggle on earth means an enlargement of soul-being to him who fights, but happiness demands an environment of peace looming in the certain future.

The eternity of Hope for man is another fact we may expect to be enforced. No one sins beyond return. It will be seen that God's laws, expressing His creative idea, comprehended man's salvation, not his eternal loss. The law of man's being makes self-destruction to all time impossible. True punishment is not simply penal, but remedial. There is an imperative law in human life which proclaims to sinful action, "Thus far and no farther."

So far we have dealt with the manifest working of Divine laws on the hypothesis that man is an immortal, the only hypothesis that can bring harmony into human thinking. But theology brings us into a still closer relation to the Creator than so far considered. Man's idea of God has evidently been a progressive one. Whatever may have been the original idea of God in the origin of the race, it is quite clear that even on the orthodox lines the idea of God has been a progressive one. The Adamic conception was a very different one from the Abrahamic, and that from the Prophetic, and that from the Christian. There has been a gradual march from the God of locality to the God of infinity, from the God of autocratic rule to the paternal. The Jewish conception of Deity was that of the stern ruler, the ideal lawgiver. The latter prophets recognised something more benignant in the Divine Being than this; but their fervid imagery fell upon dull hearts. It was left for Christ to say, "When ye pray, say, 'Our Father.'"

Modern research into the antiquities of human history proves conclusively that the construction of the God-idea went through divers mystic stages, with apotheoses of heroic men and a mingled

pantheon of deified phenomena, human attributes, and individual men transcendentalised. The mere fact that such was the earlier stage of the God-idea does not negative the existence of a Supreme Being, as it is too often supposed to do. Humanity advances, with sundry epochs of degeneration, and as it advances realises more fully the nature of the First Cause.

The revolt from authority in religion, and the majestic conception of the universal reign of law, which are the great characteristics of the nineteenth century, have threatened most disastrously the idea of personality in the Divine Being, and still more His relation to His created works. This has been fostered mainly by too rigid a study of one set of phenomena to the entire exclusion of another. The evolution theory has so fascinated the scientific mind, and the study of the mere pictorialism of matter so deceived, that Materialism threatens to dominate the mind of earth. Spiritualism comes in as a welcome counterfoil to this. It will be the uprearing once more of the superiority of personality over conditions, physical or otherwise. It will teach that man, however he has come to be, whatever the Divine method in his creation, is able by the exercise of reason, conscience, and free-will, to rise above the surroundings in which he started. It will reveal the true doctrines of "natural selection" and "the survival of the fittest." These doctrines, even in the animal kingdom, suppose some crude form of spontaneity of will by which a being may climb to the higher environment. Spiritualism, with its endless progression of human life, will teach that man's ascent or descent is governed by his personality acting by free-will or choice, moving deliberately or impulsively under the dictates of reason, and conscience, and heart. Such ideas will banish the mere materialistic idea of the universe. They will enthrone once more, and more firmly, the personal God, and as an inevitable sequence reconstruct a new philosophy of Divine and human relations. God will be looked upon as an Infinite Father, with the human race as His family. It will be seen that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being," and, that being seen, man will enter into a living link with Him.

The vastness of the universe has paralysed our eye, and, paradoxical as it may seem, beggared our conception of Deity. The infinitely great has been reared upon an anthropomorphic throne, and, like some autocratic czar, he has looked down upon his myriad subjects, but has been unable, from their numbers and comparative insignificance, to enter into the minutiae of their hourly existence. Spiritualism will restore the Christ idea. It will teach that the God of mighty Jupiter is the God of the tender lily and the crawling worm; that a constellation is not more worthy in His eyes and heart than the animalculæ that find a universe in a dew-drop. It will shew that the truest, and only true, idea of the Infinite is the All-comprehending One, the complete in understanding; that there is no partiality with Him. It will shew that He does not sit indifferent upon His unseen throne, but is intimately related to all; that He is not simply a Creator of a universe of splendid laws, but a manipulator of those laws, responsive to every sigh and prayer. It will uprear a new theology of Divine paternity. It will proclaim that man is not an orphan in a universe of un pitying law. It will shew a new philosophy of prayer as the way of intercourse between the Divine heart and mind and His struggling children. It will uprear a God of love and active interest, and dethrone the infinite, omnipotent stoic that the most hopeful materialist seeks to proclaim as the only possible Deity.

Without the ideal of a supremely perfect Being it is impossible for man to rise. With the vision of awful and eternal ascent which Spiritualism teaches as the final destiny of man, the human heart will instinctively crave for the continual presence of the Divine Helper, who shall walk with him up that soaring height. He will not, dare not, scale those towering heights of human progress if his eye and heart be not upon the All-regal Person who sits upon the innermost throne. While materialistic science seeks to level man to the confines of earth, Spiritualism reveals his true dignity, and with that his true Father and Helper.

Hence the idea of a Divine Providence will be restored. Man will feel safe amid all the perils of his progress, sure that the great Father is always and instantly at hand to aid, cover, protect. He may never cross the chasm, however lofty be his attainments, that divides the Infinite from the finite; but he will know as the highest teaching and experience of the human mind that God is tender over all His works.

EPSILON.

FACTS IN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

[The persons who narrate the following incidents have furnished their names and addresses to the Editor as guarantees of good faith.]

In our early observations of Spirit manifestations we had a good table tipping and writing medium, one C., who gave admirable tests. One day a Spirit expressed a desire to communicate, and spelt out her name—"Mary Norris." Mary had left us a few weeks before; the medium had never known her, for anything we knew. She was alive and well, and this announcement of her decease was a great shock to us. We asked particulars, and she gave time, place, disease, and by the hand of the medium wrote us an affectionate message. We wrote to her friends, and found in a day or two that Mary was alive and well. The whole story was false. The story was false, but not the medium. He might by possibility have known the truth, but he had no motive to invent the lie. We were sure that he had never heard of Mary Norris, and it was equally sure that the intelligence at the other end of the wire had told a falsehood. We learned not to distrust mediums, and also not always to believe Spirits.

The communicating powers are not always polite. One night, in a dark séance, in my own room, and with persons whom I could perfectly trust, an immense force twice, with instantaneous action, pulled my chair from under me. The first time I alone was left sitting upon the floor—the next, both my chair and that of the medium, whose hand I was holding, were at the same instant snatched from under us. We broke up the circle; and were afterwards told by our friendly Spirits that they could not always prevent or warn us against such incursions.

As the manners of some Spirits are rough and what is called vulgar, so the morals of some are as bad as those of living men and women. There is abundant proof that the mere change which we call from life to death—the mere getting out of the body, does not transform a vulgar, ignorant, sensual man into an angel of light. Death has no such transforming, or immediately purifying, influence. It is not in this way miraculous. This observation disgusts some poetical people with Spiritualism, as the fact of human depravity disgusts men with life; but what we have to do is to take men and Spirits as we find them, and our theories, to be of any value, must be based on facts.

Imperfect as Spirits may be, those with whom we have conversed testify to progressive improvement. If there be those who are going from bad to worse, whose path is for ever downwards, we have not known them. But as human beings of all proclivities die at all ages, it may be that some plunge into spheres of evil on the other side as on this. In the Spirit-life there must probably be many unfathomed, perhaps unfathomable, mysteries.—T. L.

I wish to recount to your readers some of the incidents of a devotional séance held in London lately, at the instance of a very well known clergyman. Though, perhaps, of little importance as of now common occurrence, still each item of evidence of this sort goes towards increasing the weight of the vast array of testimony to the verity of Spiritualism, and as such may not be without its value. Soon after the commencement of the sitting the Spirit of a young girl, Lillie, (so she signed herself in a little note written for me as a *souvenir*), paid us a visit in a very tangibly materialised form. Before we were permitted to see either her "light" or features, Lillie placed her hands several times in mine, and in those of others among the circle. Spiritualists acquainted with this and higher phases of physical phenomena well know the peculiarly soft and velvety touch of Spirit hands, which may be aptly compared to that of newly formed baby flesh. At this time I was somewhat of a sceptic and accordingly adopted the following test. Holding one of Lillie's hands, whilst it pointed in a downward direction, I lifted it up as high as I could, leaving my sitting posture to do so, and raised it I should say at least seven feet from the floor. The hand remained extended in the same direction, and when at the greatest altitude was withdrawn slowly, or rather it seemed melted from within my own, as if inviting a continuation of the upward progress. Now neither the medium, who is rather a wee body, nor any one of the circle could have possibly held their hand in this position at such a height unless standing on a chair, and I will answer for it that all in the room kept their places during the proceedings. Afterwards, as often as I wished, Lillie brought her face (a very beautiful one, I may mention, of a

perfect oval form) sufficiently near to be well examined, and she allowed me also to touch her "light." For the information of those of your readers who may not have had so favourable an opportunity of inspecting this substance—for substance it is—a description of it as it appeared to me may not be amiss. Of a beautiful lambent radiance, soft and clear, at times it would die away, and again shine forth with undiminished brilliancy from between the fingers that grasped it. To the touch it was hard and warm, looking very much when close to the eye as a lump of alum brightly illuminated would do, in size two or two and a-half cubic inches, an irregular parallelopiped. I must mention that the room in which this séance was held contained a large cross covered with the newly introduced luminous paint, which shed a soft light around, and enabled the sitters to distinguish faintly objects in close proximity to themselves. Before the cross, which was on an opposite side to that occupied by the medium, Lillie passed and repassed, appearing as a dark shadow, the lines of the cross shewing distinctly through the texture of her robe. A veritable orthodox "ghost," in fact! Throughout these proceedings Lillie kept up a lively running conversation with the circle in a pretty child's voice with a noticeable lisp in it. One thing she told us is worth mentioning. Asked whether in her sphere sittings were held similar to our own for the purpose of communication with higher intelligences, Lillie replied, "Yes, instruction comes to us in the form of rays of light; and," she added, "we always do as we are told, and are very thankful for what is revealed to us." I have only to add that the conditions under which the sitting took place could scarcely have been more open and above-board, and precluded the possibility of deception, though space will not permit me to go into details.—T. H.

In 1869, I was for some months in Paris. One Sunday, whilst sitting out in the garden enjoying the soft air and rich foliage with which I was surrounded, I felt conscious of a Spirit influence. Getting my pencil and paper, I sat down to receive what might be given to me. It proved to be a message for my dear friend Mrs. H. I posted it to her in England. She received it on Tuesday morning. In the meantime she had what she called one of her "visions" or dreams. It came to her on the Monday evening. She had a long and interesting conversation with her dear ones in the Spirit-land. When it was nearly over she, with her usual incredulity as to her own medial power, remarked to her Spirit-children, "I wish you could give me some test, that I may be quite sure to-morrow morning that this has not been merely a dream; that it is not fancy only, but that I really have been talking with you." "We will give you a test," they replied. "By to-morrow morning's post you will receive a Spirit-message which we gave to F. T. for you on Sunday morning—in Paris." She fell asleep. In the morning she found many letters on her breakfast table awaiting her, and amongst them was my own, posted from Paris to London on Sunday, and re-posted to my friend, who was at the time away from home.—F. J. T.

HEALTH IN RELATION TO MEDIUMSHIP.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In your last issue "An Old Spiritualist" does me the honour of reviewing my paper read at the B.N.A.S. lately on "Health in Relation to Mediumship," which he is good enough to describe as "strong and wholesome" like myself. As I do not know who "An Old Spiritualist" is, he, or she, will pardon my pointing out that my paper dealt with the "health," and not with the moral character of mediums; consequently a new factor has been imported, which was, in my paper, purposely avoided, though incidentally my argument was in support of the idea that there was nothing in the exercise or development of mediumship incompatible with morality and virtue.

My friendly critic writes that he is "probably the oldest Spiritualist now living in England." But may not others have an experience as widespread? Certainly I should hesitate to tabulate any 53 persons, Spiritualists or mediums, in the manner presented by your correspondent. To say that 19 out of the 53 are "indifferent to morality," or that 10 are "otherwise low and detestable characters," savours more of hasty judgment and impetuous generalisation than of charity, or even caution. On my own part it would be with extreme hesitancy, if at all, that such opinions would be entertained, let alone expressed, especially when it is stated, "My analysis is a very severe one and a very painful one, and of course I cannot submit it to open examination."

Dealing strictly with health the statistics presented are more intelligible, for 52 out of 53 are thus accounted for:—

In good robust health, apparently, about... 22

In delicate or poor health, about 30

It is also stated that—

"If it can be shewn that public and private mediumship is favourable to that 'harmonious balance of all the faculties of body, soul and spirit,' which constitutes health, then the exercise of the faculty must be a great blessing to all who practise it; but, if on the other hand, it can be shewn that mediumship is a dangerous possession, then it must be watched and guarded as one would a store of gunpowder, a dangerous animal, or an infectious disease. From my own observation

extending over many years I have come to conclusions the reverse of those arrived at by Mr. Morse."

Yet, on the ground that 30 out of the 53 mediums known to an "Old Spiritualist" are described by him as in "delicate or poor health," he concludes that "mediumship must be pronounced in the majority of cases, as now practised, an unfortunate and dangerous possession."

Is there not a confusion, probably due to myself, in the mind of an "Old Spiritualist" when he does not discriminate between "the right use of mediumship" by the medium, and its "right use" by the Spirits controlling? My paper dealt with the first, and not with the latter question.

My strong dissent must be recorded against the statement:—

"Now, Spirits who control, take possession of, and obsess human bodies are, if one may judge by the results, almost invariably earth-bound, weak, pretending, idle, and wandering Spirits, and not seldom lying, immoral, and deceiving Spirits."

Though, according to "An Old Spiritualist," mediumship is pronounced as "an unfortunate and dangerous possession" and the Spirits are described "as almost invariably earth-bound, weak, pretending, lying," &c., yet we are asked to assent to the conclusion that—

"It is to mediums we are indebted for those phenomena which are the only unanswerable reasons we possess in the refutation of Materialism. Not only so, but by the demonstration which comes through mediums of the existence of Spirits, and of their power over material substances, we arrive at a knowledge of the nature of matter, not as yet otherwise attainable."

"Through this profound discovery we are led to the highest possible philosophy, not only regarding the nature of matter, but regarding the nature of man as a triune being, of body, soul, and spirit, and thus regarding the essential, that is, spiritual essence of true religion."

The "rare instances" in the following quotation prove the possibility of the moral goodness suggested in my paper:—

"Mediumship has hitherto been almost entirely disorderly and chaotic, but it has also in rare instances shewn the possibility of human beings becoming mediums for the highest angelic intelligence, and for the Spirit and Voice of God."

Let us cast out vice by the cultivation of virtue.

J. J. MORSE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have been much struck with "An Old Spiritualist's" communication in your number of the 28th May; it is evidently the result of a large, thoughtful, and enlightened experience.

Before we decide whether "mediumship" is or is not detrimental to health, we must first consider what we mean by mediumship. There are two kinds of mediumship—that which is normal and common to all mankind, and which is capable of more or less high cultivation in special persons, such as artists, poets, physicians, orators, and notabilities of all kinds. Every one who is trained to any occupation does, whether he is aware of it or not, develop a mediumship for that particular form of human endeavour; and it may or may not affect his health according to the degree and manner in which his development is conducted. All education is a wholesome mode of cultivating natural mediumship.

The other kind of mediumship is that which is concerned in the production of those extraordinary phenomena which have been described as Spiritual or miraculous, and which are manifested by or through exceptionally constituted persons. This faculty of overt mediumship appertains to, and is associated with, a very sensitive organisation, which is consequently liable to very peculiar and abnormal disturbance.

I can safely say that during my 27 years' experience of the phenomena of Spiritualism, I have never known a single instance of a medium capable of exhibiting very pronounced manifestations who enjoyed satisfactory health. There was always a screw decidedly loose somewhere; and if the production of manifestations was too persistently pursued, mischievous results too often supervened.

Sucubus, incubus, paralysis, demoniacal possession or mental alienation was sometimes the penalty of an imprudent perseverance in the manifestation of spiritual phenomena. I consider that a little of this sort of thing ought to go a great way. In fact, we must in this world pay a price for everything we possess: every blessing must have its corresponding drawback.

Many years ago an individual met with a singular accident. He was shot in the stomach, and the bullet which entered left a permanent orifice through which physiologists were enabled to study correctly the process and phenomena of digestion. The man suffered, but science was enlightened. Our mediums are our benefactors after a somewhat similar fashion. The veil of the temple of their life is rent in twain, and through the gap our sceptical and materialistic eyes are enabled to catch glimpses of an immortal existence beyond! Our mediums suffer that we may be taught. If we would only accept in faith the truths of Revelation and practise them, we need not torture our mediums to ascertain certain sublime facts which, once for all, were triumphantly revealed to us by the sufferings and death of the most Divine Being who ever visited our benighted earth—the Son of Man Himself!—Yours, &c.,

NEWTON CROGLAND.

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.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return postage.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

We have before us various notices of Mr. Bishop's so-called thought-reading experiments. The articles are of various degrees of merit, but all agree in describing the result as failure. Mr. Labouchere seems to have arrived at the conclusion that "Alexis was a humbug" because he did not read the number of a bank note when requested. Mesmerism does not impress him as curious because he has "before now sent persons into the soundest sleep by merely making a speech to them." Table-turning and Spiritualism are dismissed with equal calmness. "I regard Spiritualists as composed of dupes and duped." *Figaro* gives four columns of the dreariest twaddle we ever remember of the would-be funny type from the terrible O.P.Q. Philander Smiff. There is a good deal of stuff about Mary Anne in Smiff's most side-splitting manner; we hear of an old aunt, and get some comments on Bishop which it is hard to separate from the comic business. But when we got to the end it seemed to us that Smiff only viewed Bishop as a peg for fun. We are almost disposed to sympathise with Bishop!

This thought-reading is a very common experiment, and some six years since we remember reading of some very remarkable experiments which were tried with one J. R. Brown, who described himself as a mind-reader. The *Inter-Ocean*—a Chicago paper—sent a reporter to interview Mr. Brown, and from his report, which lies before us, it would seem that Mr. Bishop is very far behind in his methods and results. Mr. Brown did not clutch the hand of the investigator and "prance" round a room, failing more frequently than not to do anything else; he read the thoughts at a distance, and through the wire of an electric telegraph. The particular experiment to which we now refer was made in the month of April, 1875, at Chicago, U.S.A., the reporter being at the office of the Western Union Telegraph Co., and Mr. Brown at Tremont House, which is connected by private wire with the telegraph station. The reporter had with him two independent witnesses, and several observers watched Brown at the other end. All being ready, the wire to be used was disconnected from the battery and held between the fingers of the two operators—the reporter and Brown. The reporter was directed to fix his mind intently on some object, and to concentrate it there till the experiment was over. Mechanically feeling in his pocket for a pencil to write down something, he took out a gold penholder, which also contained a pencil. He wrote down on paper a characteristic expression, "*How is this for high?*" and wrapping the paper round the penholder put both in a drawer in one of the operator's desks. In a few minutes a message came from Brown: "Gold pen in drawer wrapped up in paper; something written on paper; words are—How is this for high?" Brown seems to have been, like Bishop, "considerably exhausted and nervous after the experiment was over." If this be not mere trick, and the reporter asserts that he could find no loophole for suspicion, it is an extremely remarkable fact. We take our narrative from the *Inter-Ocean*, quoted in *extenso* in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

Evidence is continually cropping up, in unexpected places, of the wide-spread belief in the possibility of communication with departed Spirits. Thus the Rev. Dr. Lee contributed to *The Burlington* magazine a story which he seems to regard as

perfectly reliable, and which is decidedly at one with a good many others that are certainly well attested. It seems that two clergymen, Dr. Walker and Mr. Pitts, entered into a solemn compact with each other that, whichever of the two should die first, the other, if he were permitted, and if it were possible, would return in spirit to the survivor to speak of the realities and nature of the unseen world. This mutual pledge was made and committed to writing in terms of great sacredness and solemnity. Dr. Walker remained a Fellow of his college for many years after his friend Pitts had taken a country living, about eighteen miles from Oxford, where in a pleasant rectory, he resided as a bachelor, attended by a considerable number of servants, living in good style, and was looked upon with singular regard by all who sojourned near. The friends had been separated by circumstances, and nothing had occurred to make them unusually thoughtful of each other, when without any assignable reason Dr. Walker had an extraordinary dream or vision.

He was in residence in college in the month of November (1815 or 1816), and in the night had a most vivid and distressing view of his friend Pitts's face, pale and suffused with pain. Having awoke in a state of suffocation or something akin to it, Dr. Walker mused for some time on what he had beheld, or had seemed to behold. Soon, however, he went to sleep again. He then dreamed that Pitts appeared once more to him, with his features drawn, his eyes glazed and very wide open, with an expression of deep fear on his countenance, and that Pitts exclaimed several times, "Walker, they are burying me!—Walker, they are burying me!" Again he woke in a state of perturbation, and before he went to sleep again he half resolved to ride over to Mr. Pitts's rectory in the coming afternoon. Then soon afterwards he once more went to sleep and this time he slept till the morning. The 15th of the month of November broke unusually bright. The sky was rosy and almost cloudless. Some pressing college work demanded Dr. Walker's unremitting attention up to luncheon time, and he consequently then abandoned his proposed ride. In due course he went to bed, rose as usual the next morning, and having duly breakfasted, was sitting reading a book, in an arm-chair before the fire, when an ordinary tap was heard on the door of his apartment. Thinking it was the boot cleaner or scout, he called out "Come in," without looking round or discontinuing his reading. Suddenly, having noticed the opening of the door and the certain ingress of the servant, as he imagined, he at once heard most distinctly an audible whisper in his ear, in his friend Pitts's familiar voice, "Walker, they are burying me!" Starting up suddenly, he turned round, to find the door closed, no one in the room, neither scout nor anyone else; nor, on inquiry, had either of these servants come. He was greatly perplexed and alarmed!

Coupling this strange occurrence with his dream of the previous night, Dr. Walker resolved at once to start off and see his friend without delay. After a hard ride, he at length reached his friend's house, when, to his intense surprise and amazement, he came upon a plumed hearse and pair of horses standing on the gravel before the front door. On making inquiry of the servants, Dr. Walker found that his friend was dead, and that the coffin was actually being screwed down at the very moment, preparatory to the funeral. Dr. Walker, who was singularly overcome, for he had constantly dwelt on their former understanding during the ride, pressed earnestly to be allowed to see his old friend's face once more. It was too true! Death had evidently overtaken him, and Dr. Walker had lost a true and dear friend. Stooping down, however, to kiss his forehead, he at once noticed that there was an absence of that peculiar and unmistakable odour which always so distinguishes the death-chamber. He then put his ear to the body's breast and lips, and with a firm and determined exclamation, cried out, "Surely he breathes, he's not dead! This is a trance; this is not death! Pitts!" he exclaimed, in a clear and commanding voice, "Pitts! do you hear me?" There was at once a slight paroxysm visible at one corner of the mouth; at least, so it seemed to him. He peremptorily forbade the funeral taking place; and after some discussion with the relatives of Mr. Pitts, the body was lifted out of the coffin and placed in a bed. The extremities were rubbed; warm applications were used; and although the trance continued for three days, the latent signs of life were such as to give every hope of eventual recovery. The signs developed in due course; and within a week of Dr. Walker's visit, Mr. Pitts had regained his consciousness, and he lived nine years afterwards!

REMARKABLE PHENOMENA IN FULL LIGHT.

By Berks T. Hutchinson, of Cape Town, South Africa.

A fact once proved remains so forever; at least, so I have been taught; but in this age of enlightenment, some of our so-called savans, according to their reasoning, would seemingly have us believe the reverse.

Facts are the basis of philosophy, for without them the mind cannot construct its theories. Cause and effect are the two great things that the student of natural or occult phenomena has to deal with, and when he has thoroughly satisfied himself that a certain effect is the result of a definite cause, he, like a trustworthy explorer, records the facts which he has witnessed for the benefit of his fellow creatures who may follow in his footsteps. Having passed through the phenomenal aspect—or what may be termed the “signs and wonders” of Modern Spirit Communion—my mind has frequently been occupied in trying to trace the cause of many of the astounding effects which I have witnessed in my own house in Cape Town. I will relate one of (what I consider to be) the most remarkable of my experiments, and state some of my theories about the cause; and shall be glad to hear the opinions of others who are interested in this class of phenomena.

Having secured the services of one of the most powerful sensitives,* I induced him to submit to the following experiment, which he did with considerable reluctance, not having any faith in obtaining successful results under such conditions.

I cut a piece of galvanized sheet iron into a circular form, about 18 inches in diameter, around the margin of which I pasted all the letters of the alphabet, with the numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0, interspersed, and a few words, such as “yes,” “no,” “what,” “and,” “the,” &c., in order to save time and economise the “psychic or motor” force of the sensitive. Students of occult phenomena will understand the reason.

Exactly in the centre of the disk I cut a hole about a quarter of an inch in diameter to receive the axle of a pointer which revolved round it and pointed to the letters on the margin. This apparatus was then placed on my dining table with the gas in full light immediately above it, so that every person (11 including myself) could distinctly observe every movement of the pointer and take the letters down which the pointer indicated, should the experiment be successful.

In order to allow the axle of the pointer to go through the table I had a small circular piece cut out of the latter, which could easily be replaced when so desired. This was done to make a sort of “dark chamber” under the pointer in order to prevent waste of power.

The members of the circle were placed round the table, about 18 inches away from it, each kneeling upon a wooden chair, the back of which was between the person and the table. In this position the feet of everyone were off the ground and turned from the table towards the wall of the room. The table was perfectly bare with the exception of the apparatus which rested on it. The sensitive was placed on a wooden chair in a sitting position three feet away from the nearest point of the table, which was nearly five feet wide, so that he would be at least five feet away from the axle of the pointer.

In this position, with the full light of my gas burner, every muscular twitch of the face or other parts of his body could be minutely observed by 11 intelligent and educated persons. After being seated a few moments we observed a sort of convulsive movement come over him, which might alarm tyros of occult phenomena. Then he passed into a sort of cotamose condition, having frequent attacks of shivering and shaking. At this stage we observed the pointer on the dial begin to oscillate, then become very agitated, and suddenly turn round at a very great speed. I then put the question whether the intelligence or force acting on the pointer would send us a message by guiding the pointer to the letters. No sooner had I said this than the pointer steadied itself and began to indicate a number of letters which I carefully took down and found that when properly grouped they spelt out an intelligent message relevant to the topic of conversation.

Observing that the sensitive was becoming very distressed, to spare his strength I conversed with the intelligence by the pointer answering “Yes” or “No” to any questions put by the audience. Believing that the apparatus was governed by an intelligence that in some way was connected with the sensitive,

I suggested that the medium should be blindfolded and then place his hand on the pointer. In this way, with two persons pressing the bandage lightly down over his eyes, we got the first message repeated, and questions and answers relevant to the topic of conversation, but quite independent of the sensitive's mind. Being perfectly satisfied with the success of the experiment we broke up the sitting, which left the sensitive in a very exhausted state, owing, no doubt, to loss of vital force.

On many subsequent occasions very similar experiments were tried with every success; but finding this method a very slow way of telegraphing, or holding converse with the invisible “intelligences,” I relinquished it for easier and quicker methods which caused far less distress to the medium. My observations in the first experiment, without mortal contact, and subsequently, have led me to the following conclusions:—

First.—The sensitive supplies the psychic or motor power by which the pointer is worked, as I invariably observed that the convulsive movements of the sensitive and the intelligent movements of the pointer were synchronous. Second.—The shivering and convulsive movements are caused by the loss of heat from the body of the sensitive. Third.—The heat is required for setting the pointer in motion, for where force is wanted heat must be generated and liberated. Fourth.—Invariably after any experiments at sésances, the sensitive has desired food, and eaten it at times ravenously, especially after obtaining powerful physical phenomena. This abnormal desire for food after powerful physical manifestations is experienced by other sensitives, as was the case with Miss Wood, who, when unable to obtain some refreshment, one evening after a successful experiment with Mr. Adshead (I think) some few years ago, snatched up a tallow candle and voraciously devoured it. This was because of the urgent need to replenish the waste consequent on the development of heat.

I have given a very imperfect sketch of what took place, but the facts are that the apparatus constructed, and put in position by myself for experimenting, was actually set in motion without any mortal aid, and that it communicated sentences such as none but an intelligent and educated being could give. I need not add that the invisible operator declared most emphatically that he once had a mortal body, but was now a disembodied being. I am an old telegraphist and electrician, an adept at magic, and perfectly acquainted with the working of such mechanical automata as Psycho, Clio, Phono, &c., but I have never seen any trick that could not be explained, and yet I am quite unable to explain the facts I have related, except it be from the occult point of view. Possibly some of the readers of “LIGHT” may be able to explain them away from a scientific point of view.

Being a poor hand at expressing my ideas I must crave the indulgence of my readers should I have failed to give a clear account of what took place or appeared ambiguous in my theories. I expect to remain in London a short time and look forward to the pleasure of exchanging thoughts with some of the “occult students” of this great centre of civilisation, some of whom I hope to meet before leaving England. My temporary address I give below, where I may be found if appointments be arranged beforehand, by letter or otherwise.

2, Scarsdale Villas, Earl's Court-road,
High-street, Kensington, W.
May 28th, 1881.

The Dalston Association will hold a conversazione on Thursday evening next.

The next Fortnightly Discussion at the rooms of the B.N.A.S., 38, Great Russell-street, will be held on Monday evening, June 13th, when Mr. Desmond G. FitzGerald will introduce the subject of “Spiritualism versus the Press and the Outside Public.”

“The Value of Prayer: a Scientific and Practical View of the Subject” is the title of a small pamphlet, embodying an address delivered by Mr. N. Morgan, a well-known lecturer in the North, upon Phrenology and Physiology. The author is of opinion that answers to prayer may be accounted for upon the supposition that “we are surrounded by an extremely subtle element, which is the medium of inter-communication between mind and mind,” and that the prayer, as an effort of the will, traverses this medium, and affects some person or persons, causing them to act upon the impulse conveyed to them. Several illustrations of the power of mesmerists to affect persons at a distance are introduced in support of the writer's contention; and it is stated that the address, when delivered before the members of the Free Associate Church, Sunderland, gave such satisfaction that its subsequent appearance as a pamphlet is due to the requests for it in that form which have reached the author.

* I allude to Mr. W. Eglinton, whom I induced to come out to South Africa in 1878.

BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

Annual General Meeting.

The annual meeting of the members of this Association was held on Tuesday evening—Mr. E. Dawson Rogers in the chair—when the following report of the Council was presented:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.—The present is the Seventh Annual Report of the proceedings of the Association. In looking back over the years since the Association was founded, the Council believes that none of its Members can question the useful position which it has occupied, especially in the facilities which it has afforded to a large number of investigators and inquirers, and as a centre, not for the Metropolis only, but for the whole country. It has been an outward and visible sign of the reality of Spiritualism, and an evidence to the world of the hold which Spiritualism has taken on many minds of intelligence and culture. The Association has had its share of the trials and perplexities of life, times of deep discouragement, and almost of despair; it has suffered from foes within and without, but through all has kept on its way; and the Council has endeavoured to take up such work as came before it from time to time. The change in the constitution of the Council, recommended last year, and adopted at the General Meeting, has worked well. In consequence of the position of the Association a special General Meeting of Members was convened last September, at which a resolution was passed "vigorously to sustain" it, and substantial promises of assistance and continued support were received. The Council is not prepared, at the present time, to recommend any further changes in its own constitution, or in that of the Association itself. It would, however, hail with joy any proposals which would tend to produce a united action on the part of all those interested in the grand subject of Spiritualism, both outside the Association and within it. One of the great truths of our faith is that the Spirit, the Life, endures, but the Form changes. And if, seeing all forms are temporary, the time is approaching when such considerable changes would be attended with advantage, the Council feels sure that its own Members and those of the Association at large, would allow no minor or personal considerations to stand in the way of what might be for the advancement of the subject they all have at heart.

THE PRESIDENCY OF THE ASSOCIATION.—The regret of the Council will be shared by all the Members of the Association in having temporarily lost the valued services of Mr. Calder as President, in consequence of his absence abroad for some months. As, however, Mr. Calder kindly expressed a hope that on his return he should be able to resume his old position, the Council decided not to take any steps to fill the post thus, as they sincerely trust, only temporarily vacated.

CHANGES IN THE MEMBERSHIP.—Since the last Annual Meeting 24 Ordinary Members have been elected, as against 39 in the previous year, 14 of whom have joined the Association since January last. The present number of Honorary and Subscribing Members is 272. Thirty-six members of Council were elected at the Annual Meeting last year, seven of whom have since resigned. Of these 36, 12 (including two who have resigned) go out of office by rotation, and are eligible for re-election. These 12 vacancies have now to be re-filled. Two of our Honorary Members have been removed by death in the course of the year—the Rev. J. Tyermann, of Australia; and Mr. Epes Sargent, of the United States.

ALLIED SOCIETIES.—Thirteen Societies, home and foreign, are now in friendly alliance with the Association. Three of these, namely, the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, the Durham District Association of Spiritualists, and the Leicester Spiritual Society, have allied themselves with the Association during the past month. The Council commends this question of friendly alliance to its Members and to Spiritualists generally in the Provinces, believing that its possible advantages are great, while it in no way interferes with the independence of local Societies, nor does it call upon them for any pecuniary support, while it gives a representative of each allied Society a seat on the Council.

THE SECRETARYSHIP AND ROOMS.—The Council has made certain changes in the management of the business of the Association at 38, Great Russell Street, to a large extent under the pressure of financial considerations. The only cause for regret has been that these involved parting with the services of Miss Burke. The Council feels that the vote of thanks which was unanimously awarded to her will be responded to by the Association at large. Since the commencement of the year the Resident Secretaryship has been placed in the hands of Mr. Thos. Blyton, who, with his family, occupies the spare rooms in return for his services. Mr. Blyton brings with him the experience of a successful connection with the Dalston Association since its formation in 1870, giving the Council good reason to believe that he will devote himself with zeal and energy to the interests of the Association.

WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION.—The chief feature in the work of the Association during the past year has been the series of Discussion Meetings, which has been kept up through the season with interest and success. A few soirées and conversations have also been held, notably one in July last on the occasion of Mrs. Tappan-Richmond's visit to this country. The Council feels that thanks are due to all those ladies and gentlemen who have taken part in these meetings, and in the arrangements in regard to them. Special reference must be made to the Memorial of the British National Association of Spiritualists and others, relative to the state of the Law affecting persons known as Spirit Mediums and Clairvoyants, which was referred to in the report of the Council last year. The Memorial was presented to Sir William Harcourt, as Home Secretary. Owing, however, to "the pressure of public business" it has been found impossible to obtain consent for a Deputation to be received. The Council, however, desires to commend the Memorial to the attention of the Members of the Association, as a most able and useful document. Various Stances and meetings of a more or less private character have been held on the premises of the Association by consent of the Council, especially under the auspices of the Rev. Dr. Maurice Davies and others. Under existing circumstances, the Council would strongly encourage individual work of this kind, as being more likely to be attended with benefit than arrangements of a more official and public nature. It is with deep regret that the Council hears of Dr. Davies' impending departure for South Africa. His services in the interests of Spiritualism have won for him the sincere regard of all earnest friends of the cause. Although desirous of, as far as possible, avoiding subjects of a painful and personal character, the Council feels bound to express its regret at the course of action which necessitated the retirement of the Rev. Stainton-Moses from active participation in the work of the Association, and which led to the tendering of resignation of membership by Mr. W. H. Harrison, and to the acceptance of such resignation by the Council. The Council trusts that the time will soon arrive when there will be both a revival of earnest work in the experimental and philosophical investigation of Spiritualism, and also when in the eyes both of its friends and of the public at large, its truth and beauty will not be obscured and marred, as they have been too often of late, by human weakness and vanity. Although not directly connected with an annual report of the Council, it may be interesting to advert to the fact, as shewing the increasing interest taken in the general subject, that, during the past year, two new weekly periodicals devoted to Spiritualism have been started in this country, "The Herald of Progress," published at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the first number of which appeared in July, 1880, and "Light," published in London, commencing with the beginning of the present year.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—A statement of the accounts of the year is laid before you made up and audited in the usual way. It now only remains for us to ask all the members of the Association to continue, and, if possible, to increase their efforts for its prosperity.

(Signed on behalf of the Council),

E. DAWSON ROGERS, Vice-President.

The report having been unanimously adopted, the Chairman announced that 12 members of the Council had retired by rotation, and that as only 12 members had been nominated as their successors, he had to declare those 12 as duly elected. The names were as follow:—Mr. W. P. Adshead, Mr. E. T.

Bennett, Mr. Walter H. Coffin, Mr. J. F. Collingwood, Mr. Newton Crosland, Miss Houghton, Mr. J. J. Morse, Mr. W. C. Pickersgill, Mr. G. H. Potts, Mr. C. Reimers, Mr. M. Theobald. Mr. J. W. Gray and Mr. G. H. Potts were then re-elected as auditors for the ensuing year.

Mr. Berks T. Hutchinson, from South Africa, and Mr. Graham Ponton, from South Australia—both members of the Association—being present, were asked to address the meeting, and kindly did so, giving some interesting information as to the position of Spiritualism in those countries. Speaking of the B.N.A.S., Mr. Hutchinson said that the very existence of the Association exerted great influence abroad, and much good had often come from the ability to point to the list of distinguished names connected with it as published weekly in "LIGHT." He was afraid that the friends in Great Britain did not realise the value of the Association as fully as the friends abroad.

Mr. Pearson said he was a frequent visitor to the rooms of the Association on an evening, and he had been so much struck with the zeal, energy, and ability displayed by the present secretary, Mr. Thomas Blyton, that he hoped this general meeting would recognise his services by a special vote of thanks, which he had much pleasure in moving.

This was seconded by Miss Houghton and adopted unanimously; and Mr. Blyton, in reply, said that what he had done had been not only a duty but a pleasure, and it was an additional gratification to know that the members were satisfied.

This terminated the proceedings.

SISTER DORA.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As you profess to devote your journal to the discussion of what concerns "the highest interests of Humanity here," perhaps you will have no objection to insert a "few more last words" respecting the biography of this remarkable woman, whose career raises a great question respecting what constitutes our duty towards our neighbour.

I must commence my remarks by frankly admitting that your able correspondent, Dr. Wyld, has gained an advantage over me in some of my arguments, but I consider it no disgrace that the weak joints in one's armour are pierced by such a skilful and redoubtable knight. I think, however, he will admit that cancer may originate in the pernicious conditions to which Sister Dora submitted herself, and that a cancerous diathesis generally prompts and favours a misuse of stimulants.

But my great objection is to the disgraceful state of things which rendered it expedient that so valuable and noble a life as that of Sister Dora should be sacrificed for such a cause and in such a manner. Let me illustrate my meaning by a few examples.

A set of drunken ruffians have a "lark"; one of them falls down and breaks his ribs; such a woman as Sister Dora is compelled to nurse the blackguard. Another set of people defy the vaccination laws, and infect a whole parish with the small-pox. Sister Dora has to perform the revolting duty of stamping out the disease. Patients suffer for a time and are probably turned out cured, but as soon as one goes another comes on, and Sister Dora enjoys no cessation from her poisonous labours. Surely such work as this is not properly distributed, nor even sanely conducted. The State should interfere to prevent the possibility of such self-sacrifice being required.

I quite agree with Dr. Wyld that the book cannot be read without emotion; but this emotion will be wrongly directed if it stimulates others to go and do likewise. I believe that if Sister Dora had turned her splendid nature in the direction of marriage and maternity, she would have done the world more service than if she had founded a dozen hospitals and nursed an army of patients.

N.C.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R.M.—Your kind communication shall have attention at once.

C.C.M.—Next week.

BORDEAUX.—Thanks. Your interesting contribution shall appear in due time.

J.G.M.—We must take time to consider.

As our readers will learn by an advertisement in another column, Mrs. Maltby has taken No. 22, Gordon-street, Gordon-square, which she intends to open as a boarding-house for Spiritualists. With so genial and cheerful a disposition as Mrs. Maltby possesses she is sure to make her visitors happy.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Spiritualist."

For some time past our contemporary has printed numerous articles concerning "The Kabbala," and in the last number there is a further contribution from the pen of Mr. Gerald Massey, who thus writes:—

"The secret wisdom of the Jewish Kabbala relates primarily to the mythological astronomy and the doctrines of the hidden wisdom concerning the cycles of time. The Imagery was astronomical, before it became Eschatological to convey a later doctrine. In its latter forms abstractions and other mystifications took the place of, obscured, and obfuscated the primordial facts. Although, even of these, the reveries of the Rabbis and the Kabbala in its decrepitude, it may be said they are less false to the facts than are the Hebrew Scriptures, which re-state the myths as history."

The article, extending over six columns, deals with much interesting matter, but we could not do it justice without exceeding the space at our disposal.

"Violet," in an article upon "Spiritualism from a Religious Point of View," states: "Spiritualism is not what you think it to be—a magician's den for revealing worldly knowledge. It is a true religion sent by God and Jesus Christ to redeem sinners, and give them that blessed knowledge which will save their souls from trouble and pain when they first pass away from communion with their spirit-guides and dear departed friends; let all those who wish to penetrate the beautiful truths of Spiritualism bend their souls in solemn prayer to God, and then they will find the happiness they seek, for Jesus Christ has said, 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.'"

Commenting upon recent proceedings at Bow-street Police-court, the editor writes:—

"We are glad to state that Sir James Ingham has refused to grant the summons against Mrs. Hart-Davies, applied for by Mrs. Fletcher. Doubtless, when Mrs. Hart-Davies came to England, she may have thought it to be a very simple matter to obtain justice in relation to the fraud perpetrated by Mrs. Fletcher and others, without being at all aware of a divorce and alleged occurrences of some ten years ago having anything to do with the case, or that it was possible to drag these old things up afresh in an English law court."

"The Medium."

In a letter upon the necessity of Spiritualists shewing that their faith is capable of meeting the moral and spiritual needs of men's nature, A. Dobson urges that the fact of the adaptability of Spiritualism to the above ends can be best "evinced by a conduct of self-abnegation and assiduous and persevering labours to bless humanity, rooted and grounded in love—faith working by love and purifying the heart. Such must be its operative and influential results if it is to leaven the masses and retain its hold of their hearts and affections, illustrated and exemplified in its ennobling and purifying influence on their daily conduct and deportment. This evidence will furnish a proof—demonstrative—that no amount of sophistry can overturn; when this is accomplished then hold just that which is good."

"Is Spiritualism really Iconoclastic?" asks the editor. "Is it not rather Constructive? Is not every step it takes an affirmation? The tip of the table, the rap, the view of the seer: are they not all of them—every form of manifestation—the declaration of a positive existence—a force, an intelligence? But, hold! what does 'Iconoclast' mean?—An Image Breaker! Human notions are subjective 'images'—idols, just as much as the 'stocks and stones' of the 'heathen.' Every item of positive knowledge we receive dispels some false notion—breaks some idol—that occupies the site of truth. So then, Spiritualism, like all forms of knowledge—science—is Iconoclastic. It is bound to be so, otherwise the 'images' would displace Spiritualism."

"The Herald of Progress."

The new editor in his opening "leader" upon "Our Future Policy" appeals to his readers to strengthen the position of the journal by extending its circulation, so that its price need not be increased; and to contribute to its columns experiences and thoughts that may make the paper of use and interest. "We are not angling," says the writer, "for support in opposition to any of our contemporaries, whose methods we heartily appreciate. Nay, we cherish with a high regard their past and present efforts, which have not only very largely contributed to our own existence as a periodical (without, we believe, impairing their usefulness), but have," continues the article, "helped likewise in extending the area of human knowledge, and deepening and broadening the sympathies of mankind." By the closing paragraph the editor implies that there has been a danger of the *Herald* ceasing to be public property, for it is said, "We hold the *Herald of Progress* in trust for the movement, and most willingly will we yield it up, if assurances are given us that it is passing into capable and disinterested hands, but, like true sentinels, we will guard it (as long as we are able) from passing into the hands of private speculators who are always more concerned for their

own narrow interests than the larger interests of truth." Commenting upon Mr. Oxley's articles upon "Jesus, the Sun God," the author of "The Religion of Jesus" writes:—"Giving Mr. Oxley's speculations their full value, what do they prove to any intelligent mind? Not, I venture to say, that Christ and the Apostles were mythical personages corresponding to comets, planets, and fixed stars, but that *certain extraordinary aspects of the heavens corresponded curiously with the events that were happening at the time of Christ's sojourn on earth.* This is all that Mr. Oxley's articles prove to my mind. To say that because the aspects of the planets corresponded with events on earth, therefore these events never happened, but the history of them was merely read from the stars is, in plain English, to *confound cause with effect.* The Gospel narratives contain invaluable practical advice, golden precepts of daily application to our affairs, admonitions to love one another, to lead lives of purity in thought and in deed, to be charitable to one another, to be temperate, to be industrious, to be unselfish, &c. Christ tells us that 'the Kingdom of Heaven is within us,' and that by 'doing the things which He says,' not by constantly 'calling him Lord, Lord, shall we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' *Are these practical, useful truths, or are they not?* This is the question of questions—not whether the disciples corresponded to the Signs of the Zodiac, and Christ to something else, I forget what, and it does not matter."

"The Theosophist."

The financial report of the Theosophical Society shews a deficiency of Rs.19,546, which sum has been advanced by Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky. The following remarkable story, to say the least of it, is recorded:—"There is a samadhi or tomb in the village of Alundi, near Povna, of a celebrated saint and yogi, named Dnyaneshwar or, as Marathas pronounced it, 'Ganoba.' The tomb is a sacred place of pilgrimage of the rising sect of Warkarees, who follow the precepts of Dnyaneshwar and Tookaram. The latter is believed to have ascended to heaven in the presence of a crowd, at Dehoo, in 1649, as mentioned in the life of Tookaram attached to the *gatha* or poems edited under the patronage of the Bombay Government. Dnyaneshwar wrote his celebrated commentary on Bhagwat Gitta in 1290. He is said to have gone alive with his book into the tomb and was buried alive. Three centuries later he appeared to another saint, Eknath, of Pyton, and told him that his book of commentary was fully revised and directed him to publish it. So Eknath came to Alundi and dug up the tomb. He found Dnyaneshwar sitting with his book, which he gave to Eknath. Such is the story of the book called 'Dnyaneshwari.' It is written in 'onvi' form of poetry. It is printed in Bombay, and extensively read in the Deccan."

"The Banner of Light."

An article entitled "Are Evil Spirits allowed to Manifest?" from an old correspondent, A. E. Newton, criticises a statement put forth in vol. iii. of Mrs. M. M. King's recently completed "Principles of Nature," to the effect that "In no case is this class of phenomena [obsessions, and manifestations of apparently evil disposed and malignant Spirits] induced by malignant Spirits." Mrs. King argues that all such Spirits are forcibly detained in the Spirit world, and prevented from intruding into this, though it is admitted that "unwise" and "incompetent" Spirits do often manifest in circles held merely for amusement.

Preliminary notices of the impending camp meeting season are given, Lake Pleasant being as usual foremost, for which, among other speakers engaged, are Dr. J. R. Buchanan, Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond, Professor Henry Kiddle, Professor S. B. Brittain, W. J. Colville, W. J. Fletcher, and J. Frank Baxter.

"The Religio-Philosophical Journal."

THE FLETCHER CASE.

The latest issue to hand contains several articles, editorial and contributed, upon the Fletcher case, all alike condemning Mrs. Fletcher, and congratulating the jury which convicted her.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten writes:—"For the present at least these impudent, daring frauds have completely killed the cause. . . . The best I can ever hope for Spiritualism is that such things as Fletcher and his infamous associates, will stay in America and reap the benefits of the *Banner's* enthusiastic endorsements." And a writer, who does not like to sign his name "because of the persecution he thinks would follow," but who is described "as an eloquent and popular Eastern lecturer," indulges in nearly two columns of criticism, which would have been more effective if the writer of the article had the courage of conviction, and avowed his or her name.

Editorially the following comments are made:—"Despicable as were the acts of the Fletchers, they are far surpassed by the shame-faced course of some of our contemporaries in endeavouring to screen these adventurers from public condemnation and righteous punishment. We reluctantly give much space to the lamentable case this week, but we do not propose to see without protest the great majority of English-speaking Spiritualists misrepresented by Spiritualist papers whose course is only explicable by one of three words—Venality, Credulity, Idioty."

When it becomes necessary for the JOURNAL to cater to the prejudices of fanatics, fools, or frauds, by espousing the cause of such an unprincipled creature as Susan Willis Fletcher, in order to live, we shall close up business and turn to some occupation compatible with self-respect and decency. We wish in summing up this sad and disgraceful affair to point a moral, which all Spiritualists will do well to heed. Whenever a Spirit, if Spirit influence be inferred, lends aid to the furtherance of any such purely personal and selfish scheme, this fact alone shews utter untrustworthiness. Mrs. Davies's mother would never recommend her to give herself over to the mercies of an unscrupulous pair. If there is one thing certain, it is this. That the Fletchers were influenced by irresponsible rascally Spirits or are the essence of rascality themselves."

DALSTON.

On Thursday evening, the 26th ult., a large gathering of the members and friends of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism assembled at their rooms for the purpose of listening to a trance address from Mr. E. W. Wallis, of Nottingham. The subject dealt with by the medium's "controls" was a comparison between Spiritualism and Christianity, and the conclusions arrived at were to the effect that the higher phases of Spiritualistic teaching were in perfect harmony with the true teachings of Him concerning whom it is said "He went about doing good." Several questions were propounded by the visitors and replied to by the "controls," who, alike in their address and answers to questions, exhibited a courtesy and desire to instruct which caused the evening to be pleasant and profitable. The president, Mr. J. J. Morse, occupied the chair, and at his suggestion the following resolution was moved by Mr. J. Taft, the hon. sec., seconded by Mrs. Nichol, and unanimously endorsed by those present:—"Resolved, that we, the members and friends of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, having been favoured with a visit from Mr. E. W. Wallis, trance-speaker, who has this evening delivered a lecture before us, desire to express our appreciation of his services to the cause of Spiritualism, and to cordially commend him to our American brethren as an excellent, earnest, and efficient medium, in whom all may have confidence, alike as a true worker and a worthy and reputable gentleman." Mr. Wallis made a suitable response, after which the meeting closed. The above lecture is the last Mr. Wallis will deliver in London prior to his departure to America.

GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday evening last the platform of this hall was occupied by Mr. Walker, who on this occasion made his first appearance upon the public platform. The subject chosen by his guides was "Spiritual Wisdom," on which they discoursed at considerable length, but evidently labouring under great difficulties, which were easily understood by Spiritualists, seeing that the medium came fresh from the harmonious surroundings of a private circle to the mixed influences of a fastidious public audience. Let us hope that in the not far distant future our young brother will be more perfectly fitted by experience to carry out the work in which he is so deeply and earnestly interested.—J.N.G.

LADBROKE HALL.

On Sunday last Mr. Holmes, of Leicester, occupied the platform both morning and evening. The hall was well filled in the evening and the subject of the lecture, in which Mr. Holmes undertook to shew that Jesus was not what sceptics represented Him to be, was well handled, and gained for the lecturer much hearty commendation. Mr. Holmes paid a fitting compliment to Mr. Knight Smith for the beautiful manner in which he rendered the pieces from Handel, "Comfort ye my people," and "Every valley," and further said that if the frequenters of Ladbroke Hall allowed its doors to be shut and the meetings discontinued, it would be a great shame to the Spiritualists and to the city, for, as far as his knowledge went, he knew no place belonging to the Spiritualists so nicely arranged, everything seemed so inviting. Mr. Knight Smith with his talent, and the Spirit communications, which followed the lecture, all spoke volumes, and he felt constrained to give expression to his heartfelt gladness that there was such a place open for the working of Spiritualism as Ladbroke Hall. Mr. Matthews also announced that he wished a special service held at Ladbroke Hall, on Sunday, July 3rd, being twelve months since he emerged from Wakefield Prison to face the public with their contempt for Spiritualism and its mediums. Mr. Matthews also invites friends to come forward to take part in that service, and stated that he will call a special meeting next week at his parlours to make arrangements as to the course of meetings.

QUEBEC HALL.

On Sunday evening last Mr. James Veitch delivered an instructive and interesting address on the "Claims of the Churches." The different Churches, Romish, Protestant, and others, which have claimed power to exercise authority over reason and conscience, were shewn to be human institutions, and not, as has been claimed for them, of Divine origin. He shewed

in an exceedingly plain manner the great differences that exist in the teachings of these Churches compared with the doctrines that Jesus enunciated.—J. M. D.

CARDIFF.

The platform of the Cardiff Spiritualist Society was occupied on Sunday evening last by Mr. Brooks, who delivered an excellent inspirational address, shewing the value of the religions of the world by their various effects upon humanity. He urged Spiritualists not to lose the opportunity offered them of shedding their light on the present age, and to purify their ranks wherever such purification was necessary. A circle was formed at the close of the public meeting with most interesting results, two mediums being successively controlled. Spiritualism is looking up in this neighbourhood, its power being rather felt than seen.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

On Wednesday evening of last week a select circle of friends assembled at the Tyne Temperance Hotel, for the purpose of giving a reception to Mr. Walter Howell, a gentleman well-known as a lecturer in the South and Midland counties. It was thought by some that the executive of the Newcastle Society would have secured the services of this worthy and capable young medium during his visit among us. As it was we had to content ourselves with an evening reception, and if Mr. Howell's mediumship be of equal quality in general as manifested on that occasion, we feel certain that at no distant future he will hold a prominent and honourable position among trance speakers. He delivered a thoughtful and well digested discourse upon "Man—his Duty to his Fellow Man," which was selected by the company; and he afterwards answered several important questions in a satisfactory manner. He was also successful in diagnosing some peculiar cases of ailments among the sitters. We hope the cordial reception given him on this occasion will not be the last accorded to him in Newcastle, and we as sincerely trust that his labours may be appreciated to the extent of their worth. On Sunday morning last, Mr. Wright, of Liverpool, delivered a trance address before the members of the N.S.E.S., and in the evening of the same day a large gathering of friends listened to a most able discourse by the same gentleman upon "Spiritual Progress." On Monday evening Mr. Wright spoke upon "Spiritualism and the Times." He proceeded in an argumentative and forceful discourse to enlarge upon the grand influx of independent thinking, and urged his hearers to an undaunted expression of conviction which feared not despotism, or persecution. Minorities were oftentimes the only preservers of liberties and defenders of right, while ambitious majorities may strangle the expression of truth, and crush the spirit of progress. The meeting was fairly good in point of attendance, and warmly appreciated the many excellent sentiments expressed by the controls.—NORTHUMBRIA.

NORTHAMPTON.

On Sunday last Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, addressed two semi-public meetings in this town, Mr. Ward, of Cowper Cottage, kindly placing his spacious parlours at the service of the friends. Mr. Cheshire presided upon each occasion, and the lectures, respectively upon "Spiritualism a Protest against Superstition," and "The People," appeared to give pleasure and afford satisfaction to the audiences that completely filled the rooms at each service.

The truth of Spiritualism will be discussed next Sunday, morning and evening, at Goswell Hall. Mr. Holmes, of Leicester, will take the affirmative, and Mr. Carpenter (a gentleman connected, we believe, with the London Press) will take the negative.

Let no man who is in anything above his fellows claim, as of right, to be valued or understood. The vulgar great are comprehended and adored, because they are in reality on the same moral plane with those who admire; but he who desires the higher reverence must himself convert the worshipper. . . . The world of thought must remain apart from the world of action; for if they once coincided the problem of life would be solved, and the hope which we call Heaven would be realised on earth. And, therefore,

"Men are cradled into poetry by wrong.

They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Lord Houghton's Life of John Keats (died February, 1821).

The imputation of novelty is a terrible charge against those who judge of men's heads as they do of their perukes—by the fashion—and can allow none to be right but the received doctrines. Truth scarce ever yet carried it by vote anywhere at its first appearance. New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common! But Truth, like gold, is not the less so for being newly brought out of the mine. It is trial and examination must give it price, and not any antique fashion, and though it be not current by the public stamp, yet it may, for all that, be as old as Nature, and is certainly not less genuine.—LOCKE.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—Goswell Hall, Sunday, June 12; Keighley, Sunday, June 19; Stamford, Sunday, July 24.

WHO ARE THESE SPIRITUALISTS?

The following is a list of eminent persons, who, after careful investigation, have fully satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena of modern Spiritualism:—

Archbishop Whately; the late Lord Brougham; the Earl of Dunraven; the late Lord Lytton; the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain; the late William Howitt; the late George Thompson; the late Harriett Martineau; Gerald Massey; T. Adolphus Trollope; S. C. Hall, F.S.A.

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William Crookes, editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, Fellow, Gold Medallist, and Member of the Council of the Royal Society; Cromwell Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., the eminent naturalist, sometime President of the Biological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; W. F. Barrett, Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge; the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President of the Royal Astronomical Society; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S., long one of the editors of the *Journal of Science*; the late Dr. J. Elliottson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; the late Professor de Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society of London; the late Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; the late Dr. Ashburner; the late Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; Professor, Ch. Cassal, LL.D.; Captain R. F. Burton, the celebrated traveller.

The late Emperor of Russia; the late Emperor Napoleon; President Thiers; the Hon. Alexandre Aksakof, Russian Imperial Councillor; the late Prince Emile de Sayn Wittgenstein; His Imperial Highness Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; the late Baron L. de Guldenstübbe; Count A. de Gasparin; the Baron and Baroness von Vay; the Baron du Potet; Mons. Léon Favre, Consul-General of France; Victor Hugo.

Professor Friedrich Zöllner, of Leipzig, the eminent physicist, author of "Scientific Treatises," "Transcendental Physics," &c., whose recent researches in this subject have attained a world-wide fame; Gustave T. Fechner, Professor of Physics in the University of Leipzig, also the author of many volumes bearing on the general subject of Psychology; Professor Scheibner, the renowned teacher of mathematics in the University of Leipzig; W. E. Weber, Professor of Physics in the University of Göttingen, and known as one of the main workers in connection with the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy; Immanuel H. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of the University of St. Petersburg; Dr. Maximilian Perty, Professor of Natural Science in the University of Berne; Dr. Franz Hoffman, Professor of Philosophy, Würzburg; Dr. Robert Friesé, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, the well-known astronomer; and many other members of learned societies in this and other countries, and a vast number of persons eminent in literature, science, and art, and in the ranks of social life, whose names we are not at liberty to mention.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS.—*Licht, mehr Licht*, in its number of May 16th, 1880, gave a letter from the well-known professional conjurer, Jacobs, to the Psychological Society in Paris, avowing himself a Spiritualist, and offering suggestions for the discrimination of genuine from spurious manifestations.

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bed-room, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation, is absolutely impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to my view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, Dec. 6, 1877.

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