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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1881.

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MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN ON "ORGANISATION."

The following paper was recently read by Mrs. Hardinge Britten before the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society; but as the writer has had a wide experience her suggestions may be equally applicable in the case of other Spiritualist associations:—

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—You have seen enough of me to understand, in some measure, why I value Spiritualism as the pearl of price for which I can afford to throw away all the world beside; but lest you might in any degree fail to apprehend the leading thought of my mind on this subject, let me say, in brief, that I deem the main doctrine of Spiritualism is that of man's personal responsibility, and the fact that he suffers or enjoys, in the life beyond, the consequences of the evil or good he has done on earth. To me, these are the only teachings that will lift man up from the slough of crime and wrong in which he is now steeped; these, the doctrines that will ultimately become the world's redeemer. Confident that every human being must work out his own salvation; feeling impelled by beloved Spirit friends to impress my own solemn convictions on my fellow mortals; I resolve to devote as much of my life and effort as possible to the promulgation of this doctrine, and I deem that all who think with me must feel with me, and be as anxious as I am, to disseminate the facts and teach the salvatory truths above stated. Deeming that the fidelity with which you have hitherto laboured to establish a Spiritual nucleus in your city, speaks most favourably for the energy and self-sacrifice with which you are prepared to conduct your work for the future; feeling also assured that you must recognise the world-wide effect which Spiritualism as a religion may exert on the race when considered in the light above described; I gladly unite with you in the effort to discover, if possible, the best methods of disseminating the inspiring and elevating teachings growing out of Spiritualism.

First, then, I recommend you, if possible to maintain steadily Sunday gatherings where the doctrines of our faith can be taught. Next I would urge that a place of meeting be procured which shall not repel those who come out of the world to find us, but who have not yet recognised the value of our teachings. Such persons would naturally shrink back from following us into scenes of questionable appearance and respectability; they must judge us by worldly standards, and the obscure scenes to which we often invite them are ill-calculated to attract them or secure their confidence. Besides this, let me add, spiritual speakers and all mediumistic persons are favourably or otherwise affected by their surroundings; and however the purpose may hallow the place, we cannot but experience loss of power and unfavourable influences in utterly uncongenial scenes. Next I would ask you to recall an article put forth by a Mr. B. Lees, President, I believe, of the Yorkshire District Association of Spiritualists, and quite recently published in the *Herald of Progress*, in which he comments wisely and well on the duty as well as the expediency of seeking for good professional speakers as the best and most acceptable means of filling the Spiritual rostrum and commanding the attention of those whom we wish either to convert from error, or impress with the truth and beauty of our faith. As I am writing against time, and merely hastily jotting down ideas as they arise, without any papers to refer to—in

fact, writing in the waiting-room of a railway station—I can neither copy Mr. Lees' excellent and common-sense remarks, nor quote them from memory; but I wish my friends would refer to them and incorporate all the remarks therein set down as if they were my own sentiments expressed in Mr. Lees' language. To all he writes on the subject of the rostrum and professional speakers, I cry "Amen!"

Permit me now to reiterate my opinion, that the best interests of a suffering and sinning age will be best served by enforcing upon all who can be reached the doctrines of personal responsibility; salvation through good deeds done, and stern retribution for evil ones. Thus believing, and for the purpose of convincing men that these doctrines are taught by the Spirits, who are themselves in the experience of these truths, I would advise the promotion and formation of private circles, and the cultivation of family mediumship, as well as the encouragement of professional mediumship by all the best available means open for these purposes. I would recommend the culture of home mediumship for reasons too obvious to need explanation, but I also submit that a vast amount of the propagandism effected in the new dispensation has been due to the marvellous gifts displayed by professional mediums; and when investigation is conducted under strict, but honourable and courteous test conditions, professional mediumship is at once the most available and legitimate method of aiding investigators to ascertain the stupendous truths involved in Spirit intercourse.

All that remains for me to notice is the question of ways and means, and for this purpose I advise that earnest attempts be made to obtain subscriptions from at least one hundred persons of one shilling per week, paid in advance, monthly, or in such ways as may be deemed expedient. The same number of persons, viz., one hundred, should be urged to contribute sixpence weekly, paid with the same fidelity, and as a tribute to the world's great need of a vital practical religion, and to prove by this small act of self-sacrifice that the faith of Spiritualism is of some value to the subscriber. I would propose that four admissions to the two Sunday meetings should be afforded to the subscribers of one shilling, and two for the payment of sixpence, weekly. I would recommend, also, that the committee give away free tickets to the very poor, unable to contribute the above sums, to a limited number each week. In this way an audience will always be ensured and a sufficient sum to meet current expenses be guaranteed, yet none will be taxed beyond the petty sums which all true and earnest Spiritualists ought to feel too grateful for the boon of Spiritualism to withhold, when its disbursement may work such immeasurable good to the world. I should also advise that an admission of sixpence be uniformly charged at the meetings. Those who are sincerely desirous to hear what is taught will not object to pay this trivial sum; none others are wanted, and if none come, the subscribers, whose tickets should be transferable, can always furnish a sufficient number of persons to form a fair audience and cover moderate expenses. Other means, such as social gatherings, &c., &c., should also be resorted to, to increase the treasury and promote more kindly intercourse between the members of the association. I would advise that efforts be made to obtain the co-operation of the outlying districts, and to all who object to pay the modest fees suggested above, I, on my own part, should be disposed to say: "If you do not feel so small a sacrifice of your means an honour and duty, rather than a burden to you, in behalf of your noble cause, and especially in view of its propagandism to humanity, you are not worthy of your cause, and it ought to do without you."

As I am not likely to be a resident amongst you, my friends, and therefore can have no personal motives in what I suggest, I would add that when you are fortunate enough to secure the services of good and competent speakers, I should advise that you act on the American system and invite them to remain with you for two Sundays or even a month. The broad and comprehensive philosophy of Spiritualism requires a course of lectures

rather than one or two sensational addresses and a continual change of speakers. Furthermore, the cost of your speaker's board would be less than a continual outlay for railway fares, and you then would be able to establish week night lectures, conferences, social gatherings, &c., &c., and to call upon your speakers for aid in all these directions, besides enabling them to visit the sick and afflicted, and perform such other services as belong to the offices of true religion. There are of course many other points of constructive detail which I cannot touch upon in this hasty sketch. I can only close as I commenced, by advising you all to ponder upon the stupendous importance which the *knowledge* of a hereafter has been to us, and would be to millions who live and act now in blind and reckless ignorance of their immortal interests. We Spiritualists alone, of all sects in the world, can answer the startling question, "What shall we do to be saved?" but we all of all people seem to have been the most unpractical and to have trusted that the great movement would work itself without human effort. If there is yet one more point of paramount importance upon which I ought to touch ere I close, it is upon the solemn duty of being more unselfish in our desire to force our opinions upon one another. Instead of petulantly withdrawing from the great work when we cannot have our own way in everything, we must agree to disagree in everything but our unselfish purpose of building up this great cause. For this one object let us sink all petty differences, unite heart, soul, and means for this purpose, and we shall ensure the blessing of God and angels and carry the world by storm.

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

SPIRITUALISM IN RELATION TO RELIGION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I ask space for a twofold purpose? First, to congratulate you and all persons interested in Spiritualism on the approach of the anniversary of the publication of your first number; on its success, as indicated by the announced intention of enlargement; and especially on the general excellence of its contents. I regard as a chief feature of that excellence the manly and Christian abstinence from injurious references to periodicals and persons by which so many other serial productions, and notably those in connection with this movement, have been disfigured and disgraced.

My other object in writing is to express my interest in, and opinion about, the much discussed question of the relation of Spiritualism to Religion. Here, as everywhere, a definition of the terms employed is essential to such argument as should compel conviction; and such definition, to be worthy of the term, should, of course, cover all the facts, and include nothing besides the facts.

By Religion, then, I understand the aspiration of the individual human Spirit after, or towards, the all-pervading Absolute. The experience of such aspiration I think to be universal. Expressed or latent religion is the heritage of all.

The word Spiritualism is capable of being used, and by some is used, in a sense as comprehensive as that which I attach to the word Religion. In this discussion, however, it seems to be employed, and I now employ it, as meaning a belief in the possibility and fact of communion with departed human Spirits.

Now all objects of thought are reticulated. It cannot, therefore, be said that there is no relation between Religion and Spiritualism. Certainly, however, that relation does not seem to be either obvious or very important. A man may be very religious without being a Spiritualist. He may be a Spiritualist and not any the more religious.

If the question were the relation of Spiritualism to Christianity, as one particular expression and development of Religion, my conclusion would be different. Christianity is based on certain alleged extraordinary historical facts. Spiritualism claims to confirm the record of those facts, by proving that similar ones are possible and are of frequent occurrence now.

Thus to me it seems, that whilst Spiritualism has very little to do with Religion regarded simply as such, it has much to do with Christianity as such; and religious people who are Christians, and become intelligent Spiritualists, will find in the confirmation of their belief that which will prove, indirectly, very helpful to their religious aptitudes and habits.

Proffering such help as I may be able to render in the interests of "LIGHT,"—I am, sir, yours most truly,

236, Richmond-road, Hackney,
December 4th, 1881-

W. MIALL.

SPIRITUALISM AMONGST THE CLERGY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—On Monday, the 5th inst., it was my good fortune to be present (by special invitation) at a most interesting meeting, which was held at the residence of a justly popular clergyman in this neighbourhood.

The party consisted of twenty-four persons, twenty-one of whom were ministers of the Established Church. The other three were laymen, Spiritualists. The object of the meeting was to discuss the subject of Spiritualism, and what should be the attitude of the Church towards it.

The chairman, and master of the house, having opened the proceedings with a short, pointed speech, introducing the object of the meeting, called upon a reverend gentleman (I am sorry I am not authorised to mention names) to read a paper which he had prepared. I could not help being struck with the marked personality of this gentleman. He was the very fac-simile of that "simpatico uomo," the Rev. Dr. R. Thornton, of Church Congress celebrity; the same broad, well-developed brain, the same genial manner and open countenance—in fact, a kind of Homeric frontispiece, which a student of Gall and Lavater should feel it good to behold.

And just as the reverend gentleman was the double of Dr. Thornton, so the paper he read was almost identical with that given by the same gentleman at Newcastle. There were the facts and theories of Spiritualism as given at the Congress, but as we are all aware, not quite in accordance with our knowledge of them; and there was also the question, "What should be the attitude of the Church towards Spiritualism?"

The reading of the paper was followed by unanimous applause, after which the chairman invited discussion, calling upon every member of the meeting in turn. With one exception not a word was raised against the new philosophy, and I must confess my great admiration of the spirit and tone displayed by the meeting in discussing this all-important subject, and the absence of any reference to diabolic agency.

When the turn came for the Spiritualists to speak, the first, a Theosophist, merely testified to the truth of the phenomena; the second brought forward facts to shew the *cui bono* of it; the third (myself) spoke as follows: Let it be understood that we, the Spiritualists, look upon Spiritualism as a new revelation, intended, not for those who possess the Divine gift of faith, but as a means of crushing the baneful Materialism which is poisoning the rising generation. I further added, that in my recent travels in search of Spiritualism I found little else but gross infidelity everywhere. In France, Germany, and Italy this state of things did not surprise me, but what about England? Forty years ago, when I first visited this country, no public professor would have dared to say to a studious assemblage, as was said the other day, that there is nothing beyond unconscious matter and blind force. I ended my necessarily short speech by telling the assembly that Spiritualism does not come to break the law but to confirm it.

True, believing that we, the children of a benign Father, must inherit somewhat of His glory, we reject the idea of eternal punishment, but even in the Church opinions differed on that point; and although we too may differ in theological disquisitions, the Spiritualists one and all uphold the Christ principle.

I have said there was one dissentient voice; it proceeded from a reverend gentleman whose cerebral conformation seemed to give a lie to the science of phrenology, for he possessed a brain characterised by marked signs of benevolence and spirituality. He said that the Church had better have nothing to do with Spiritualism.

I hope, on further reflection, this good divine will see reason to change his opinion on the subject. Let him reflect that although he may not need the comfort to be derived from a conviction of immortality, yet there are thousands of hungry souls who should not be denied the crumb they need because they cannot sit at the same banquet with him.

The meeting left the impression on my mind that the most intellectual amongst the clergy think it now high time to examine the subject seriously, and are willing to meet Spiritualism as an ally in trying to put down that hydra, Materialism, which threatens to rob mankind of its immortal soul.

G. DAMIANL.

29, Colville-road, Notting Hill.

December 8th, 1881.

The most common things are the most useful: which shews both the wisdom and goodness of the great Father of all.

RE-INCARNATION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Having read with deep interest the previous Spirit Teachings through the mediumship of "M. A. (Oxon)," which have appeared in "LIGHT," I am the more sorry to be obliged to dissent from some of the teachings contained in this week's issue, upon the doctrine of Re-Incarnation. The controlling Intelligences, whilst denying the truth of the doctrine as "popularly understood" (by which I presume they mean Spiritual knowledge obtained through a series of earth existences), appealed to the "questioner" in the following manner:—"No, friend, you must use discretion and reason. Those weak Spirits who return to talk inoffensive platitudes lack both: and as a consequence would deny their use to you. The first thing such will tell you is that to use reason is wicked. The first thing that we tell you is that not to use it is sin; and that those who surrender its use hand themselves over, bound hand and foot, to any delusion which may be forced upon them."

Now, in my experience, the Spirits who have taught this doctrine made this an essential condition of their teaching, that their statements should be submitted to the reason and accepted only if it were satisfied. They were particularly anxious to meet every difficulty which arose; were most patient in answering numerous questions; and in no instance did they ever exhibit the slightest desire to dogmatise. I humbly maintain that with the majority of persons who accept the doctrine of Re-Incarnation, this test of the reason has been applied, and has been the means of grounding them in their faith, no surrender having been made until the reason has felt the force of its explanation of the mystery of poverty, temptation, and crime, and its vindication of the justice and impartiality of God.

The fact that the doctrine of Re-Incarnation does not in any sense "flatter vanity" or "foster bigotry," but demonstrates the truth that man must ever work out his own salvation, is a proof to my mind of its reasonableness, to use no stronger expression. Very few individuals, I opine, have had such a superabundance of happiness in this life as to wish to return to earth for the sake of earthly existence, and therefore he who feels the truth of Re-Incarnation must recognise the purifying process of earthly trial and experience, the opportunities which it affords of becoming victor over all that is unholy, and must be actuated by much higher motives than those of mere sensual enjoyment. Nor in every instance is the teaching the "preconceived opinions of the recipients of the message," as in my own case it was automatically written when my thoughts were in direct opposition, and the communication, I candidly confess, was received with scepticism, as the work of a mocking Spirit.

From the opportunities I have had of associating with those who hold this doctrine, I should say that they would be the last to "surrender themselves to any delusion which may be forced upon them."

In conclusion, the authority of this communication appears to me to be considerably weakened by the difficulty I find in reconciling the following apparently inconsistent statements:—

"It is precisely they who know not what they say who are most ready to settle all questions in a few airy sentences, and to expound to the feeblest intellects among men mysteries into which the loftiest seraphs have not been able to penetrate. Mistrust such."

"We do not enter into competition with these popes, nor emulate their infallible utterances."

"Re-Incarnation, we have already said, in the sense in which it is popularly understood, is *not true*."

"All these teachings which contravene what we have taught will be found to proceed from nameless sources. They do not come from any source from which man may reasonably expect enlightenment." (The italics are my own.)

All teaching must, *in a sense*, be dogmatic, but if dogmatism of every kind is to be mistrusted, surely the dogmatism which *denies* must be looked at with the same caution as the dogmatism which *affirms*.—I am, Sir, yours obediently, "ARKASE."

December 10th, 1881.

MR. MORELL THEOBALD will read a paper on Monday evening next, at seven o'clock, at the rooms of the B.N.A.S., 38, Great Russell-street, on "The Religious Aspects of Spiritualism; or, is it from the Devil?" Mr. Theobald will bring a good deal of intelligent and careful thought to bear upon his subject, and we trust that he will have a large and appreciative audience. There has been a good deal of discussion of late on a very similar question—but the interest shews no signs of abatement.

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

Among the numerous cases of presentiments subsequently verified, the following, recorded in the memoir of the late Bishop Wilberforce, may be new to some of your readers. It is similar to very many that have been sent me by trustworthy narrators; and I should be glad to add to my collection any good cases your readers may be able to give me, at first hand if possible. According to the writer of the Bishop's memoir it appears that "the Bishop was in his library at Cuddesdon with three or four of his clergy writing with him at the same table. The Bishop suddenly raised his hand to his head, and exclaimed, 'I am certain that something has happened to one of my sons.' It afterwards transpired that just at that time his eldest son's foot (who was at sea) was badly crushed by an accident on board his ship." The Bishop himself records the circumstance in a letter to Miss Noel, dated March 4th, 1847; he writes: "It is curious that at the time of his accident I was so possessed with the depressing consciousness of some evil having befallen my son Herbert, that at last on the third day after, the 13th, I wrote down that I was quite unable to shake off the impression that something had happened to him, and noted this down for remembrance."

From other letters in the same volume we find that the Bishop took a deep interest in mesmerism, and after having read largely on the subject it was unexpectedly brought before him by one of his parishioners, "who had mesmerised his daughter and found her a first rate clairvoyante." From this parishioner, Mr. Pyne, he borrowed a set of books, "which," the Bishop writes, "I am devouring, to come, if possible, to what magnetism (he refers to mesmerism) is." Subsequently the Bishop writes to Miss Noel: "On Saturday I went down with Robert and Lord Morpeth to see Pyne at his mesmerising. We found all Phillip had described, and finding a larger number of patients than he could attend to, we three undertook others, and I sent two into a deep magnetic sleep, one instantly and one soon. Pyne says that *practice* increases the power. This may account for my succeeding better than at Winchester."—Yours truly,

W. F. BARRETT.

Monkstown, Dublin, November 29th.

EMANATIONS OF THE WORLD-SOUL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Having no knowledge on the subject it may be absurd to offer any opinion in answer to "Student's" question in today's impression of "LIGHT" as to the emanations of the world-soul; yet since both ignorance and faith are notoriously apt to have a belief quite independent of knowledge, I assume none when stating what I believe; viz., that the world-soul creates—by formative imagination—multitudes of bodies, which I call astral because I know no better designation for them; that these are animated by the outbreathing of the derived Spirit of the world-soul; and that they emanate from this sub-creator as necessarily as those thoughts of the Abyssal God which create *Spiritual* beings.

I suppose these forms to have their being in the life and nature of the world-soul, as certainly as our ideas have in our nature and life. And I feel convinced that a firm and patient apprehension of such an entity as this vice-regent in our material world, would not only give us nearer approach to hitherto impenetrable mysteries, but would greatly relieve the strain put upon reason by the supposed requirements of faith. If no longer trying to believe that God designed the whole of the creaturely world *as we now see it*, we should be more ready to worship the "Father of Spirits" with adoring love.

One other good effect I anticipate from a return to the old belief in the world-soul—a revival of reverence for astrology as a science. Regarded by the vulgar as a means of fortune-telling, it is naturally scorned by savans and reprobated by the religious; but a silly abuse of partial knowledge proves nothing against this source of occult truths. When once we are used to think of the agency of a world-soul in our own planet, the inductions of astrology as to other orbs, and the interacting influence of *their* world-souls, cannot be far off. A. J. PENNY.

December 10th, 1881.

"OUR CONTEMPORARIES."—The pressure on our space has been so great of late, that we have been obliged to omit the usual notices of "Our Contemporaries." We hope to resume them with the New Year, when we shall have more space at our disposal.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

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.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

Five lines and under, 3s. One inch, 4s. 6d. Half-column, £1. Whole column, £2 2s. Page, £4. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

Cheques and Post Office Orders may be made payable to EDWARD T. MANNING, at the Chief Office, London. Halfpenny Postage Stamps received for amounts under 10s.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may be obtained direct from our Office, and also of E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

Our Correspondents will greatly oblige us if they will take care, in every case, to write on ONLY ONE SIDE of the paper.

ENLARGEMENT OF "LIGHT."

At the urgent entreaty of many of our readers we have determined to enlarge "LIGHT." With the beginning of the New Year the number of pages will be increased from twelve to sixteen.

We have yielded to the solicitations of our friends because we have felt that the representations which they have made to us have been such as to commend themselves to our own judgment. For want of space the contents of "LIGHT" have necessarily been of a less varied character than we could have wished; and many valuable contributions we have been under the unpleasant necessity of excluding because they were too long.

The numerous commendations of our efforts with which friendly correspondents have kindly favoured us, have been the source of no little gratification and encouragement; and with the extension of our opportunities, which the enlargement of our journal will give, we look forward with confidence to a great increase of the satisfaction with which "LIGHT" has been so generally received.

But the new step which we are about to take will bring also increased responsibilities. In view of these we appeal to our readers to be generous with their literary help. We ask them to supply us, as often as occasion offers, with reports of well authenticated facts and phenomena, and also to use our pages freely in the courteous discussion of the questions of interest which arise from time to time. And we ask them, too, to aid our efforts by doing all they can to extend our circulation. The enlargement of "LIGHT" will materially increase the cost of its production, and that our work may be adequately sustained, the number of our subscribers must be greatly extended.

The present subscribers should remit the amount of next year's subscriptions at once, and we hope that every one of them will make an earnest effort to induce others to add their names also to the list.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon)."

As to the explanation of the Materialisation phenomena of which I was writing last week, Dr. G. Wyld is inclined to refer these things to "the image-creating faculty of the Spirit," and thinks that materialisations are real in substance, though they may represent assumed names, or be the forms taken by the will, or desire, or belief of the Spirit of the medium. Let us leave the identity of these forms out of the question. My own strong belief is that evidence of that nature is not to be had from such a source. But it is very necessary to be cautious in investigating such a question. The form exists as an objective reality; on that we are agreed. How came it there? If questioned it will invariably refer its origin to the creative power of external Spirit. There is no proof whatever that the imaginative faculty in embodied man has any creative power. It can indeed, as Dr. Wyld points out, call up an illusory image, but it has no power whatever to give that image form and shape as an objective reality. Nor is there any evidence that the "will, desire, or belief" of a medium can create an objective human form. All the evidence is to the contrary. The medium is usually entranced: a condition of his success is passivity, not energy. He is almost always unconscious,

not active in any of his faculties. To all outward seeming, and so far as we can judge, he has nothing to do with the operation beyond providing, as is alleged, a certain amount of the pabulum used by the Spirit or Spirits who are acting. Here we come back to external Spirit again!

But what is the *modus operandi*? Who are the Spirit-artists who mould these sometimes imperfect forms? That, I venture to think, no one can tell us as yet. Some are the work apparently of a perfect artist. I remember vividly the perfect beauty of the elder Katie King, and I entertain no doubt of the reality of her manifestations. I have seen some faces horribly imperfect as though gnawed by rats. I have seen forms that stalked about the room in a wooden way as though their joints did not work properly; and who, in sitting on a chair by the cabinet, doubled up with an audible click, as though they were not constructed to sit. These are very different from Dr. Morrow's shadowy apparitions, yet they were *real*, I believe; as real as his. We shall err if we narrow down our belief to any one kind of form-manifestation. There are several, some solid, some shadowy, some perfect in make, some horribly imperfect. But respecting each, and all, it seems to me that we know little of their genesis; except perhaps this, that all the evidence points to the intervention and agency of external Spirit, and not to the action of the medium's disengaged soul or Spirit (if I may guard myself by using both words); or to his energy in any way.

The Bishop of Winchester is a prelate of sagacious and far-seeing mind. He has more than once shewn capacity for looking at events with some eye to their issues; and it is not surprising to find him taking advantage of the induction of an incumbent to the important parish of St. Peter's, Bournemouth, to utter some grave words of warning as to the vices of the age, and their inevitable tendency. It is an age, he says, "of sensuality, luxury, intemperance, and impurity." He rightly predicts that "one more generation of this may remove the candlestick" from the Church; i.e., if I may translate his idea, that if the Church cannot check this tendency, her mission will be a confessed failure. There can be no doubt whatever of that. But when the Bishop refers these signs of the times to a prevalence of scepticism and unbelief, I am compelled to demur. What proof is there that the extremest scepticism, by which, of course, the Bishop means a suspension of opinion as to the dogmas propounded in the creeds of the Church of England, or, possibly, a denial of some or all of them;—what evidence is there that this attitude of mind, which may conceivably be the necessary result of logical processes of thought, is incompatible with a high moral and spiritual standard of life? Scepticism, if honest, is the outcome of mental processes which have nothing to do with morality, save that, being honest, they are so far commendable by a high moral standard. A man may assent to every dogma that can be propounded for his acceptance, and lead a vile life, all the worse for his pious pretensions. Another man may weigh all according to the Divine standard within him, reject it as unproven, or improbable, or impossible, and yet lead a life of the highest moral excellence, all the more conspicuous for the absence of pretensions which, in him, would be hypocritical and insincere.

If this be true, and surely it is, is it not time that the Church recognised that modern scepticism is the revolt of Reason from the bondage of Dogma, a bondage to which it has too long been subjected; and that these vices which, as the Bishop says, characterise the age, are in no way dependent on the prevalence of scepticism, but are rather traceable to an immoral assent to dogmas and doctrines which the Church, and not Christ or God, has ordained; and which, if it would maintain its place as a Teacher and Guide in a thinking age, it would do well to abandon with all convenient speed? That is occurring here in England which has long since taken place in France. The National Church is ceasing to be the Church of thoughtful men; therein its condemnation is written broadly across its face. If it would gain the ear of those who now hold aloof from it, it must be by abandoning claims on blind and unreasoning faith, and by submitting to the experimental method of demonstration those great problems of the future life and the best preparation for it in the present, which can be reasonably approached in no other way. It is no longer any use to cry with shrill iteration, "Believe this or take the consequences." Men have made their choice. They will take the consequences. If the Church is wise, it will lose no time in approaching these matters from the position—the impregnable position—of the Spiritualist.

The *Chicago Times*, which has repeatedly shown fairness and openness of mind in its treatment of Spiritualism, has, I am glad to see, noticed the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* in the following terms :—

"The *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, generally acknowledged as authority on all matters pertaining to Spiritualism, exceeds in circulation any eastern organ of the class. Its rigidly scientific method of investigating and analysing the phenomena has attracted widespread attention, and met the almost universal commendation of the enlightened press of the country. It speaks well for the Spiritualists as a class, or sect, that a fearless, independent, non-sectarian paper—as *The Journal* has proven itself to be—meets with widespread and universal favour among them, and in its successful warfare waged against mountebanks and tricky mediums, in its demand for test conditions and scientific methods of investigation, as well as in its fair and just treatment of honest mediums, it has the earnest sympathy of all contemporary publications pretending to be in the service of truth. The *Journal* has made its influence profoundly felt in the Spiritual movement of the age, and, like all Chicago enterprises which meet the demands of a wide-awake, progressive public, is steadily widening its circle of influence, and is more frequently to be found in the minister's study and on the desk of the professional and literary man than any other modern journal devoted to the philosophy and the phenomena of Spiritualism."

Quite irrespectively of the praise deservedly bestowed on the energy and independence of the *Journal*, I welcome with unfeigned pleasure such comments from a secular newspaper on a Spiritualist contemporary. I read not infrequently in the *Banner of Light* similar appreciative remarks from some contemporary on its merits. When shall we find a like spirit governing our contemporaries in this country?

I have recently had the opportunity of testing the powers of a medium who is unknown to the general public. Her gifts are chiefly, though not solely, psychometric. In view of this, I carried with me some letters, selected at random from a drawer into which I throw my answered correspondence, and three of these were diagnosed by the entranced medium. In each case the account given of the writer was curious and striking; the usual vagueness was conspicuous by its absence, and there was a clearness of definition which impressed me with a feeling of reality. I am free to confess that some previous investigations into this branch of mediumship have left me with a sense of unreality and vagueness. It seemed to me mere guess-work, and I felt that a shrewd person, by the help of leading questions and bold guesses, could do a good deal. Probably it was not so, but at any rate the experiments had little real value, except for one already convinced of the truth of psychometry. I am inclined to believe that the medium of whom I am speaking can be of service to Spiritualists by enabling them to investigate this interesting psychological phenomenon, and I have therefore sent her address to the office of "LIGHT." Circumstances of a private nature have made her willing to place herself at the disposal of the public for these investigations, which hitherto have been confined to a private circle, where her powers have given much satisfaction, as I am informed. To those who have no knowledge of psychometry, I may say that it is well that the letter submitted to examination should be a recent one, and that it should have been kept separate from others that are likely to have a strong magnetic influence.

M.A. (Oxon).

SPIRITUALISM AND RELIGION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I defend my definition of religion, "the following of an inner law for the sake of that law," which "Trident" assails? I do not feel at all sure that the above is a correct definition, and in my paper I expressed this doubt, by beginning my sentence with "Perhaps religion may be" so defined. But I do not see that the form of attack "Trident" makes destroys my position. He says: "Self-preservation is an inner law. The definition might, therefore, read thus: Religion is the following of self-preservation, for the sake of self-preservation." People do not follow self-preservation for the sake of self-preservation only, but for the sake of the happiness life gives them. When life ceases to give this happiness some men no longer follow self-preservation, but commit suicide. But others, however miserable they may be, continue seeking to preserve their lives, because they think it right to follow self-preservation for the sake of self-preservation. This following of self-preservation for its own sake is an act of religion with them.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

EMILY S. FORD.

THE WORTH OF CONSCIOUS SPIRIT INTERCOURSE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have read with some interest "M.A. Oxon.'s" Notes on the dangers of Spirit intercourse in your number of November 26th. I always admire anything "M.A. Oxon" writes, and he never wrote truer words than the Notes in question.

But now that so many are attending to Spiritualism, no argument for it should be left untouched or unguarded. "M.A. Oxon." says: "Assuming all that has occurred to be due to Spirit-agency, I shall not go too far if I say that communion with such Spirits should not be sought, except for serious reasons, and under carefully guarded conditions." Now I approve of that, and of what no doubt the writer intended. But it supposes, what I emphatically dispute, that persons are free to be non-Spiritualists, and need not have communion with bad Spirits except they choose. Many say they will have nothing to do with Spiritualism, it is so dangerous. But that is precisely what they cannot do. If we be right—and I hope yet by scientific experiments to prove the fact—if we be right in asserting that Spirits, good and bad, are all around us, then who is free? You are not free from the influence of St. Giles because you live in Mayfair. If your lackey does not keep his body clean, becomes thereby susceptible to contagious disease, gets it, and dies, you feel the consequences whether you will or no. You are obliged to live on this earth with your fellow men, good or bad, and have dealings with them. And Spiritualism shews that those who die do not go from us—certainly not the bad. People are not aware of their surroundings. They look around a room and fancy they are alone. I scarcely ever enter a room in any house but I know some are there not seen—not always the best of characters, even in fine houses, though they don't often stop with me.

All that Spiritualism has to do is to proclaim a fact—the so-called dead are all around us. The bad must live somewhere. They cannot rise to higher spheres—their Spirit bodies are too gross. They stay where they are fitted for—on earth, and as I have proved by many an experiment, do more harm than many think. In fact, I would not like to state all I know. Few can stand horrors. The facts will have to be faced soon, no doubt. They are bad enough, Heaven knows, to make the cheek turn pale, and, let us add, so glorious on the other side as to be enough to make a God rejoice over the beauty of His children. If my experience has revealed to me a world of human beings so fearful that I shrink to give them a name, thank God I know a Heaven so beautiful that every adoration of my heart is given to God for it.

But let no one imagine he is not a Spiritualist. All are; and by the inevitable laws of God. If a Spiritualist be one who has intercourse with the departed, then I boldly assert, and some day will challenge any to deny it, that all are in intercourse with the unseen world. The mere fact of being consciously so makes no difference except in this—that it is better to know it than not to know it. Why the Church says it. I do not know a single clergyman of any sect who denies this fact—that angels work on us, and devils. If so, in God's name, let us have common-sense enough to recognise the truth. All this bosh about the wickedness of Spirit communion is the raving of men who never think of what they teach. I may aid an angel in his beneficent purpose by being consciously in communion, and hinder him and aid a bad Spirit, or demon, by not being so. Surely that follows. To me this hesitancy about Spirit intercourse is like nothing so much as a wife locked out in the coldsome night, entreating her husband to let her in, and he barring doors and windows, and muttering, "Is it lawful? Can it be? Is she there?" Why, of course she is. His vacant couch and married love would say, "If she can be at the door she will be at the door." Now all religious people believe that our departed are at the unseen door. Then open the door.

Knowing what I do, it seems to me unutterably sad, this disregard of the facts of the case. I have been witness of veritable dispossession on simply entering a drunkard's house or a raving lunatic's room. I have seen the struggle and the ensuing peace. A fearful fact is this all-present evil, and nobody takes the least notice. Struck at in the dark, men go staggering on to ruin. A glorious fact is this angel throng, waiting and striving to do us good, and piteously asking us to help the cause of humanity and of God by conscious intercourse. I deny to all men that they can be non-Spiritualists.—Yours truly,

December 3rd, 1881.

P. PILON.

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN AT BELPER.

On Tuesday evening last, December 6th, Mrs. Britten delivered an address in the commodious and comfortable room which has recently been secured by the Spiritualists of Belper for their meetings. The subject of the lecture was "The Great New Spiritual Dispensation." Mr. W. P. Adshead occupied the chair. On the following evening Mrs. Britten again addressed a large, intelligent, and most appreciative audience, the subject of the lecture being "What New Thing has Spiritualism taught? What Good has Spiritualism done?" Chairman, Mr. A. Smedley. The addresses were simply splendid. The feeling which appeared to be produced in the minds of all who heard them was a mixture of intense admiration and profound astonishment, and one of the effects was the expression of an earnest and unanimous desire that Mrs. Britten will repeat her visit at as early a date as possible. At the close of the last address a vote of thanks to Mrs. Britten, couched in most eulogistic terms, was proposed by a clergyman of the Church of England, and cordially and ably seconded by a member of one of the Dissenting churches of the town.

On taking the chair on Wednesday evening, Mr. Smedley said: "One of the first things I have to do is to express the desire that Mr. Adshead will send to the editor of 'LIGHT' for publication his opening address as chairman last evening, in order that the friends generally may have an opportunity of reading it, and that the Rev. Dr. Potter in particular may be able to acquaint himself with what has been said, and act as to him seems best under the circumstances." This suggestion having been cordially endorsed by the meeting, Mr. Adshead kindly gave his consent.

Mr. Adshead's Address—Another Challenge.

DEAR FRIENDS,—It is most gratifying to find ourselves so circumstanced as to be justified in extending to Mrs. Britten an invitation to visit Belper, and address us on the subject of Spiritualism. Such addresses will be most opportune. It appears to me that this is a supreme moment in the history of the Spiritualistic movement in this country. From all one can learn there would appear to be a very general spirit of honest inquiry on the subject. It is, therefore, all important that broad and exhaustive statements of the facts, philosophy, principles, and teachings of Spiritualism be given to the public by those who are qualified to speak about the matter. For in regard to Spiritualism, there are teachers and teachers. There are men who, without the slightest qualification for the work, have assumed to take the public into their confidence and informed them as to what Spiritualism is and what it is not. There are men who, although they have never attended a séance in their lives—have never in the privacy of the home circle held an hour's communion with the Spirits of friends passed on to the higher life—who, knowing nothing of that glorious inspiration which from the higher planes of thought, lights up the chambers of the human soul; of that pure, refined magnetism, which, under proper conditions, palpably, sensibly draws the denizens of earth within the sphere of the Spirit world; or of those grand lessons in connection with Spiritual culture which from time to time in the form of ghostly counsel and admonition have been given to us by our mediums, the appointed channels of communication between the two worlds—I say, there are men who, knowing nothing of these things, have nevertheless not hesitated to impose on those they have been permitted to address, by describing Spiritualism as necromancy, the devil's masterpiece, the grand soul-trap, foreseen and minutely described by men who lived 1,800 years ago, as a thing to be shunned, to be investigated at the peril of the soul's salvation. Again, there are men who, although they have never heard a Spirit rap or a Spirit voice, who have never seen a Spirit light, or articles of furniture moved about without human contact, aid, or appliance of any kind; who have never seen direct writing produced on closed slates which the medium was not even allowed to touch; who have never looked upon a materialised Spirit form, or felt the pressure of a materialised Spirit hand; have nevertheless not hesitated to impose upon those who would listen to them, by describing the entire rôle of Spiritual phenomena as a gigantic swindle, to which there were only two parties, impostors and dupes. Fancy anyone undertaking to teach the sciences of astronomy, geology, botany or chemistry, on these lines; imagine the popular school-master abroad with no higher credentials for his work. If the blind lead the blind, we know what the end will be.

Sir William Harcourt in his admirable address at Derby the other day, said very wisely that in the statement of a case nothing is gained by treating your opponent unjustly. This I believe, and would therefore rather understate than overstate facts. Those who are acquainted with the literature setting forth both sides of the question know right well that I have not drawn on my imagination, but if anything have painted the picture in very sober colours. Of course there is a difference of degree in the hatred and prejudice which underlies misrepresentation, for, while there are some men so uncompromising as to declare Spiritualism to be something the claims of which cannot on any terms be

entertained, there are others who, while they regard the thing in its origin and propagation as Satanic and mischievous, or as the perfection of the conjurer's art, nevertheless confess themselves ready to be convinced to the contrary, provided they can be provided with the necessary evidence. Our quarrel with such is that they stand on stilts and dogmatise, that they set themselves up for teachers, instead of occupying the student's seat, content quietly and patiently to feel their way into that realm of Divine mysteries into which thousands have been permitted to enter, and from which they have returned, bringing with them the indisputable fruits of their investigation.

For instance, in last week's issue of "LIGHT," there is a letter to the editor, written by the Rev. Dr. Potter, Vicar of St. Luke's, Sheffield, in which, after saying he has read with interest the pamphlet on "Spiritualism at the Church Congress," with the editor's comments thereon, he mounts his pedestal and does the teaching business, telling us what Spiritualism is, although, as his own letter proves, he is in every sense of the word disqualified for the work. In its source, and its influence upon the characters and lives of men, he holds it to be diabolical, "because," says he, "if it be of God, it will be good all through"—a most singular argument to be advanced by one whose special work it is to expound the ways of God to man, the order and method of the Divine administration in the world. If I were to ask Dr. Potter if he held the products of the earth, the institution of marriage, human government, and Church organisation to be of God, he would doubtless answer, Yes. But have the results of the use by men of any or all of these Divine gifts been invariably good—good all through? Does not the earth yield poison, as well as food for man and beast? Are not villainous gunpowder and strong drink, our nation's greatest curse, of the products of the earth? Do not men sometimes comply with the legal requirements of marriage for the purpose of securing the wealth of the woman for whom they have not the smallest affection? Has not many a blushing young bride stood at the altar with a very old man having one foot in the grave, her sole motive in joining her fate with his being to secure the wealth and position which such an alliance would bring, thus prostituting one of the most sacred bonds of human life to the vilest of uses? Have not human governments, especially the kingly forms, been sometimes most tyrannical, mere instruments of personal aggrandisement or dynastic ambition? And have not Church organisations themselves been sometimes a curse to the world? Did not the Church send Galileo to his knees, and draw from him his recantation, and send Bruno to the stake because he would not recant? Did not a Protestant Church do to a fiery death the more Protestant Servetus because of his opinions, and before that death permit him so to be treated as to make it possible to say that no act of Roman Catholic persecution ever exceeded in barbarity that judicial murder? So that the use by the Church of her organised or executive power has not been invariably good, good all through, and, therefore, in accordance with Dr. Potter's syllogism, is not of God.

And so Spiritualism, or intercourse with the Spirit world, like every other good gift of God, is subject to laws and conditions which, if understood and rightly used, will bring to the investigator unmixed good, but which, if misunderstood or misused, will bring to the investigator disappointment or something worse. The character of the investigator, and his motive in seeking to draw light and power from the land of souls, will largely determine the quality of the results obtained. So that in regard to this part of the subject the Doctor's teaching is altogether unsound.

And when he comes to deal with the phenomenal aspect of the case, he is not one whit more reliable. He says writing on slates, &c., has been again and again exposed, and that it is cleverly done by the exhibitor by a pencil under the finger nail. Now, I would not for a moment have it supposed that I even think that Dr. Potter states what he does not believe to be true; but when it is well-known that no intelligent investigator, be he Spiritualist or non-Spiritualist, will accept as satisfactory an experiment in slate writing the conditions of which are such as would enable the operator to write with a pencil fixed under the finger nails, and that the cases relied upon as evidence of direct Spirit writing, of which there are hundreds on record, are those in which a piece of pencil has been placed between two clean slates, which were then closed, and securely bound, the medium in some cases not being allowed even to touch the slates, meanwhile the pencil at work inside producing the writing being heard by all present, it is manifest that the Doctor is a most untrustworthy guide for those who are seeking to know the truth in relation to this matter.

Again, Dr. Potter says: "I have had confessed to me by experts how they rapped." Now, if the Doctor does not wish us to understand that the experts explained to him how what are known as Spirit raps are produced, the statement is idle talk. If he does wish us to understand that the experts explained to him how what are known as Spirit raps are produced, he is just the gentleman I want to meet, the very individual on whose trail I have for some time been anxious to plant my foot, for just right here I wish to observe that, if either Dr. Potter himself or the experts of whom he speaks will undertake to produce raps similar to those produced in the presence of mediums I am prepared to name, and under

the same conditions, and will explain to me the method by which they are produced, so that I can produce them at any time or in any place, I will donate the sum of *One Hundred Guineas* to St. Luke's Church or any other institution the Doctor chooses to name. This proposition is subject to the condition that, in the event of failure to produce the raps required, Dr. Potter shall hand over to the secretary of the British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, London, the sum of *Twenty Guineas*. This is my estimate of the value or importance to be attached to Dr. Potter's teaching on the subject of Spirit raps.

The Doctor is clearly of opinion that these manifestations are tricks, the work of subtle brains and nimble fingers; and with something like a sneer he speaks of judges, lawyers and great men who, notwithstanding the exposure of the tricks, allowed themselves to become the victims of the conjurer's art. And yet, a few lines further on, he says: "I should be glad to have proved to me any real facts," an admission which is scarcely consistent with his "diabolical theory;" with his statement that "he has never known any good result from it, but a vast amount of evil;" or with his sneer at the victimised judges and lawyers. For if he deems it possible that he can be convinced as to the genuineness of the phenomena, it would have been more logical, and certainly more complimentary, if he had assumed that the judges and lawyers had perchance attained to that point of assurance which he professes himself anxious to reach if the evidence is forthcoming. If the Doctor should say that he specially referred to the judges and lawyers who attended the séances of the Fox Sisters, I have to reply that those judges and lawyers had ten thousand times more evidence in support of the genuineness of the phenomena they witnessed in the presence of these girls than he has for the statement that "the whole American mystery was exploded by one of the original ladies," for long years ago the story of Mrs. Culver and the Dutch servant-girl rapping in the cellar was sifted to the bottom, and proved to be a most malicious lie.

Now this is a hasty and imperfect description of by far the largest part of the teaching on the subject of Spiritualism to which the public have been treated since its advent amongst us. But, thank God, we have another order of teachers, who have a message for the world grander in its issues, more precious in its wealth of Spiritual blessings, more glorious in the light it sheds upon human destiny, than any the dead centuries have ever given forth. And amongst those teachers are found men distinguished for their scientific attainments; men famous in literature; divines, whose love of truth, and strong sense of justice cannot be repressed, either by the dark shadow of ecclesiastical censure or the bitter pains and penalties which come to the man who stands up in defence of fact *versus* faith; hard-headed, keen, shrewd business men; hard-handed and truth-loving artisans; and women with brilliant intuitive powers, and deep religious instincts, together with our valuable contingent of mediums, male and female, who exercise most unselfishly their marvellous powers in the interest of truth and right. These all, after long-continued and honest investigation of Spiritual phenomena, objective and subjective, together with months and years of sweet communion with their arisen friends, stand forth and speak what they know to be true; and their testimony is unimpeachable, and cannot be overthrown either by the exports of science or the professors of theology. And in the very front rank of this noble band of teachers and workers, having for many long years stood defiantly against every form of opposition, persecution, and misrepresentation, having triumphantly emerged from the most severe ordeals through which the advocates of an unpopular cause could have to pass, is Mrs. Britten, the lady who has to speak to us to-night about "The Great New Spiritual Dispensation."

SPIRITUAL ORGANISATION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Many of your correspondents have discussed this subject but from different points of view. Some assume that human nature is more exalted than it really is, and suggest schemes which could only be worked by a community of angels; while others seem to take for granted that human nature is so quarrelsome that any combined personal association is sure to end in discord. Is there not a safe and useful path between these opposite views? I do not myself see any absolute necessity for a separate organisation of so-called Spiritualists. Spiritualism is intended as a means of exalting the thoughts and conduct of mankind; and as there are plenty of organisations already formed which have this end in view, notably our Churches and other religious communities, would it not be as well to concentrate our efforts upon the aim of Spiritualising those associations which already exist for the purpose of benefiting humanity, and which purpose has become almost smothered by a load of corrupting materialistic conventionalism and worldly formality?

TRIDENT.

MISS WOOD'S SÉANCES.—To prevent disappointment to her friends, especially from the country, Miss Wood desires to announce that no more sittings for the Newcastle Society will be held by her in Weir's-Court, Newgate-street, until a satisfactory arrangement is concluded with the committee.—31, Belsay-place, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 13th December, 1881.

CHALLENGE TO CONJURERS.

The following advertisement appeared in the *Daily News* of Saturday, December 3rd. The *Times* refused to insert it:—

CHALLENGE TO CONJURERS.—The British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C., has liberty from Mr. John Fowler, of Sefton Park, Liverpool, to give further publicity to the following challenge, which appeared in the pages of *Light* for November 5, 1881. It was addressed to the Bishop of Liverpool on the occasion of his lordship's taking the chair at a meeting held in St. George's Hall, Liverpool, to witness an "exposure" of Spiritualism by Mr. Charles Stuart Cumberland:—

"To the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Liverpool.

"Seeing that you are being made a tool of in the hands of a conjurer who wants to advertise himself cheaply . . . I hereby beg to make a proposition, viz., that I will give £500 sterling to the Seaman's Orphanage and £500 sterling to any other charity or hospital you like to name, if Stuart Cumberland produces before a committee (half of whom are to be chosen by your lordship and half by myself) and under the same conditions—all in the light—the same phenomena which are produced in the light by Spiritualists. If he fails, he or some one for him is to give £50 sterling to each of two hospitals or charities to be named by me.

"This challenge I wish to be made before the audience in St. George's Hall this evening, your Lordship being advertised as chairman. The money to be lodged at any time to be named by you; mine is ready now,—I remain, your Lordship's most obedient servant,

"JOHN FOWLER.

"Liverpool, October 27th, 1881.

"N.B.—This challenge remains in force, and applies to all expositors of Spiritualism by means of conjuring."

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON AND THE PROVINCES.

THE BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

The Council of this Association met on Tuesday evening last at 38, Great Russell-street, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers in the chair.

The Secretary reported the decease of two members of the Association, the Rev. Sir William Dunbar and Mr. H. D. Jencken, and votes of condolence with surviving relatives were unanimously passed.

Nine applications for membership of the Association were received, and in every case the applicant was elected. There were no resignations.

The Secretary reported that in accordance with instructions at the last Council meeting he had sent a reply to an article which had appeared in the *Herald of Progress*, but that reply had never been inserted.

A gift was received from Mr. John S. Farmer of a dozen copies of his "New Basis of Belief," to be used for the purpose of distribution amongst local societies. Votes of thanks were cordially passed to Mr. Farmer, and the secretary was instructed to order a number of copies of the new and cheap edition of the same work.

The Secretary announced that a copy of Mr. Fowler's "Challenge to Conjurers" had been advertised in the *Daily News*. The same advertisement had been offered to the *Times*, but had been refused insertion in that journal. It was also mentioned that as Mr. Cumberland is announced to appear in Norwich this week, the advertisement of Mr. Fowler's challenge had been sent for insertion in a Norwich paper, the *Eastern Daily Press*.

The Chairman reported that he had had a letter from Mr. J. P. Turner, of Birmingham, suggesting that a circular should be issued, and posted to Mr. C. Stuart Cumberland's "patrons" and supporters, explaining the circumstances under which he professes to give an exposure of Spiritualism and enclosing a copy of Mr. Fowler's challenge. The Council cordially adopted the suggestion, and directed that a circular should be prepared accordingly.

GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday morning last a meeting was held in this hall to consider the report of the committee on the Society's rules, a draft of which was submitted, and, with a few amendments, the rules as read were carried. Next Sunday, members will be enrolled and officers elected. In the evening we again had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. J. J. Morse, whose guides delivered a stirring and eloquent address on "Death a Divine Providence," which was highly appreciated by a large and intelligent audience. The hall was quite full, which is usually the case when Mr. Morse occupies the platform, a fact which speaks volumes for the high esteem and respect that is evinced towards him. On the motion of Messrs. Greenwell and Swinden, a most hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Morse and his guides for their gratuitous services during the past year, to which Mr. Morse suitably responded. The announcement that Mr. Morse would occupy the platform for eight consecutive Sundays, commencing on January 9th, was received with loud applause, which augurs well for the success of the impending meetings.—VERITAS.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday morning last the usual local talent occupied the N.S.E.S. platform, and in the evening Mr. T. M. Brown discoursed upon "Spiritualism: what is it and what has it done?" This discourse was remarkably good, clear and concise; in fact, one of the best we have ever listened to from this gentleman. His trip to South Africa has decidedly improved his powers of discourse, and such is the testimony we receive concerning him from all parts of the North. May he be more appreciated in the future than in the past. Mr. Jno. Hare officiated as chairman.

MISS WOOD AND THE N.S.E.S. COMMITTEE.—On Monday evening last I ventured to Weir's Court, hoping the "Convocation" might sit with open doors, and I am happy to say it did, or my readers would not have had the pleasure of knowing the following particulars. This meeting was a members' meeting, convened by the committee to consider Miss Wood's terms for the new test arrangement. The president, Mr. Jno. Mould, who in most part acted for the committee, stated that Miss Wood had refused to sit under the new test unless she was paid one guinea per sitting, which would be a virtual raising of her salary to three guineas per week. Miss Wood in her statement, which she had carefully prepared in writing, put another face upon the matter; she contended that the new test entailed an unnecessary expenditure of vitality on her part, and urged that in reality it was no more conclusive, or a jot more secure, than the present one, and as it was got up by one or two persons for their own gratification she thought they should be prepared to pay for it. She had been content for some time, and was still content, to go on in the old manner, financially, simply taking the collections; but for this test she stipulated one guinea per sitting, and if they were not able to stand the cost then let them say so, and let there be an end of it. She further said that Mr. Mould, as one of the deputation from the committee, agreed to her terms, but now for some reason better known to themselves the promise had been retracted; therefore she refused to sit. This was followed by a desultory conversation upon the merits of the case, in which we were pleased to find that Miss Wood had some staunch friends who defended her position courteously but pointedly, and without any pretension of friendship, such as proceeded from the side of the executive, who loudly proclaimed what they had done for her and how they had been and were her best friends. Whether they have been so Miss Wood, from her practical experience, is the best judge. Some of the committee insinuated that there was some one behind her advising and prompting her action; others of them suggested that she was backed by a clique the same as stood by Mr. Morse. I thought that the less they referred to their treatment of that gentleman the better for their own reputation. Several members called for the names of the clique referred to. One more assertive than the rest said it was visible to all who were the clique, but could not muster up the courage to name them. The request was several times repeated but failed to get a response, whereupon another member who had spoken in Miss Wood's favour, denounced such remarks as cowardly and slanderous. We thought the remark somewhat strong but really when men make wild and defamatory statements which they are unable to prove they deserve the castigations they get. After some time a member of the committee proposed that a vote of confidence be passed in the committee. An amendment was moved, "That the present condition of the Society's funds do not allow the payment to Miss Wood of higher terms than at present and that if she cannot agree to their conditions the committee give her due notice for the termination of her services." On being put to the meeting most of the committee voted for the amendment, but the members as a whole out-voted it, and it was lost. The vote of confidence was afterwards put, the committee only securing a majority by voting for themselves. As reports have been circulated by interested parties that Miss Wood's present action was caused by a desire to shirk being further tested, she desires to publicly intimate that at no time or place has she refused or shirked any test, however elaborate or stringent, and at all times is willing to give ample satisfaction in that regard to investigators. The point of disagreement between her and the N.S.E.S. is that of terms, not tests.

GATESHEAD.—Our friends in the sister borough are struggling on toward success in a most admirable manner, and if they persevere with a firm and steady purpose for truth's sake their endeavours will, undoubtedly, be amply rewarded. On Sunday evening they had a gentleman from Ashington lecturing to them "under trance," from the well-known Bible text "Weighed in the balance and found wanting." The speaker, Mr. Wake, during a short but earnest address, shewed how all men and all religions had been put in the balance and found defective, and pointed to the further revelation of higher truth in the guise of Modern Spiritualism that would lead man to a more perfect unfoldment of the greater nature within. Mr. Robertson, of Glasgow, at the conclusion of the trance address, took up a short time with a few sensible and practical remarks upon the true basis of Spiritualistic advocacy. Mr. Grey followed with an inspirational poem, and the meeting ended. Mr. H. Burton occupied the chair.

PORTOBELLO.—Two well attended and enthusiastic meetings were held at this place last Sunday afternoon and evening.

The lecturer was Mr. Thomas Dawson, librarian of the Gateshead Society. The first discourse was entitled "A Message from the Grave;" the other, "Spiritualism a Religion of Fact." Both subjects were ably handled, and impressed the audience very deeply with the ability of the speaker and the truth of his teachings.

FELLING.—At the Spiritual Temple of this place on Sunday evening last, Mr. Rowe, of North Shields, delivered a lecture upon "Proofs of Mortality." The subject was well digested, evidencing in its composition a great amount of care, and an earnest desire to reach the truth of the matter. The speaker read his discourse, a procedure much deprecated by several of the friends. But I protest against such unkindness. Men are not equally gifted with ready powers of speech. People so gifted are, as a general rule, more popular and effective in their appeal to the sensuous mind, but they seldom give the same quality of food that the other can produce. The man of the pen is in general more profound than the man of ready speech.—NORTHUMBRIA.

WISBEACH.

A Mr. Edward J. Dexter has lately visited this town with a conjuring entertainment, which, so far as regards his professions concerning it, was calculated to leave Bishop, Cumberland, and Maskelyne and Cook far behind. The title of "Spiritualism Exposed" was the bait held out, as usual with these gentry. A good friend of the cause here, Mr. Thomas Stocking, however, had Mr. J. Fowler's challenge inserted in the *Wisbeach Telegraph*, and the public in consequence learned that there were two sides to the pretended exposure. The advertisement quoted the statement made in "LIGHT" that Mr. Cumberland was anxious to be understood as not exposing genuine phenomena.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"MERCURY."—We can make no use of your communication, because you have not given us your name and address.

W.N.—See references elsewhere. Let us know when the conjurer is about to appear in your neighbourhood.

S.T.—Yes, we shall publish an Index as soon as possible after the end of the year—that is, after the first volume has been completed.

DR. POTTER'S LETTER in a recent number of "LIGHT" has brought us a communication from a clergyman in reply. It is too long to appear this week, but we hope to give it in our next.

DR. BERKS T. HUTCHINSON, we learn from a letter just to hand, has safely reached his home in Cape Town. He reports himself and Mrs. Hutchinson as well. He hopes some day to visit England again.

MRS. MALTBY'S SPIRITUALISTS' HOME.—Mrs. Maltby desires us to state that she has re-considered her intention of taking the lease of the house, 22, Gordon-street, and has determined not to do so. The establishment will in consequence be closed forthwith.

MR. THOMAS WALKER.—We learn from our Australian contemporary, the *Harbinger of Light*, that Mr. T. Walker was to arrive in Melbourne on the 18th ult., for a series of lectures, and that the Grand Opera House had been secured for the first course. Arrangements were being made for a reception to be publicly tendered to Mr. and Mrs. Walker on their arrival.

MR. CHARLES STUART CUMBERLAND having been announced to appear in Norwich this week to give "an exposition of the phenomena of Spiritualism," an advertisement of Mr. Fowler's "Challenge to Conjurers" was published in a Norwich paper, the *Eastern Daily Press*. We shall be glad if our country readers will make it a point to give us an early intimation of Mr. Cumberland's announcements, or those of any other conjurer who professes to "expose" Spiritualism.

ALIMENTARY REFORM in France is represented by a strong society, calling itself *La Société Végétarienne*, which boasts of members in all parts of France and abroad. It gets up meetings and provides lecturers and banquets, at which vegetarian dishes of every variety are set before the guests; studies the properties of alimentary plants and their products, with reference to the best modes of preparing them. The society at its last annual gathering organised a public lecture, at which Dr. Guinard discussed the question of food from all points of view, to the satisfaction of a large assembly.—*La Chaîne Magnétique*.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—KEIGHLEY, Sunday, December 18, Temperance Hall. Afternoon at 2.30; Subject, "Spiritualism not Irreligious." Evening at 6; Subject, "Living for Death."—[Advt.]

MRS. HARDINGE-BRITTEN'S WORK.—By the desire of the friends of Spiritualism in the North of England, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten announces that she is engaged to speak as follows:—December 18 and 19, Halifax; 24, 25, and 26, Batley Carr.—Mrs. Britten can still form some week evening engagements, but her Sundays up to the third Sunday in January next are all promised.—[Advt.]

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; Gerald Massey; T. Adolphus Trollope; S. C. Hall, F.S.A.

The late Abraham Lincoln, President U.S.A.; the late W. Lloyd Garrison; the late Hon. R. Dale Owen, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Naples; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of the U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; the late Hon. J. W. Edmunds, sometime Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York; the late Professor Mapes, the eminent chemist, U.S.A.; the late Dr. Robert Hare, Professor of Chemistry at the Medical University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.; Bishop Clarke (Episcopalian), of Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, of the Treasury Department, Washington.

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?—

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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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