

# Light:

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

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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This Company is established with the immediate object of starting and sustaining a Weekly Journal entitled "LIGHT"; devoted primarily to the collecting and recording of the facts and phenomena of Spiritualism, and the exposition of the Philosophy of Life and Mind; and secondarily to the discussion of such allied topics as are now occupying the attention of men of advanced thought.

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## LIGHT:

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HERE AND HEREAFTER.

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Published every Saturday

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

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

There is yet another class of people—usually known as "Spiritualists"—who believe in the existence of facts and phenomena, accessible to those who will seek for them, demonstrating the existence of another world than the present, and who believe that, on the basis of these facts, a science and a philosophy may be built up furnishing a key to the problems of Life and Mind, and uniting both these worlds in one harmonious whole.

A pressing necessity exists for the establishment of a high-toned and impartial Weekly Journal, devoted primarily to the collecting and recording of these facts and to the exposition of this philosophy, and secondarily, to the fair discussion of such other allied topics as are now occupying the attention of men of advanced thought. It is precisely this position which "LIGHT" is intended to fill.

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(3.) MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE connected with the movement, including Poetry and Fiction.

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(5.) A résumé of the Periodical Press, both British and Foreign, devoted to Spiritualism and allied subjects, constituting also a permanent means of reference to important articles and valuable facts, which might otherwise be lost sight of.

(6.) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.—Under this head questions of a general character will be invited, the answers to follow in succeeding numbers, either from correspondents or editorially. This may become an exceedingly interesting and useful department.

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"LIGHT" will proclaim a belief in the existence and life of the spirit apart from, and independent of, the material organism, and in the reality and value of intelligent intercourse between spirits embodied and spirits unembodied. This position it will firmly and consistently maintain. Beyond this it will have no creed, and its columns will be open to the fullest and freest discussion—conducted in a spirit of honest, courteous, and reverent enquiry—its only aim being, in the words of its motto, "Light, more Light!"

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## SPIRITUALISTIC SCANDALS.

Whatever else may be said of Spiritualists, the charge cannot be advanced against them that they are prone to palliate one another's evil doings or even to take the most lenient view possible of their comrades' peccadilloes. Some people even think that they discern a lack of *esprit de corps* on our part in this respect. Not only, they tell us, are we less likely than the rest of Christendom to provoke the remark, "See how those people love one another!" but we even provoke comparisons with the most scandalmongering people that ever dispensed small talk along with afternoon tea. Not only do we like to publish abroad the first intelligence of a "terrible exposure," but we are not, as we ought to be, above the petty tittle-tattle that often does more damage to a reputation than a big outspoken accusation. Allusion was recently made in these columns to the broken ranks of Spiritualism; and what is true of the general body is true of the individuals, and still more true of the cliques and coteries making up the whole mass. Perhaps it was to this peculiarity that a distinguished scientist was alluding when he said, in reply to an invitation to attend the inquiry meetings of the Dialectical Society, that he would as soon go and take tea with the curates and the old ladies in the parish to which he belonged. We own the soft impeachment. We do deserve the accusation; we have provoked the comparison. 'Tis true, 'tis pity—pity 'tis, 'tis true.

Now that such a disposition as this is small, we are ready to admit. We described the failing euphemistically as dealing with peccadilloes. It is in itself a peccadillo. It can be covered with that diminutive. It does not attain the dignity of a deadly sin. Being small, it might seem as though we must allow that it is also contemptible; but we are scarcely prepared to say that. Perhaps it is beneath contempt.

Spiritualistic editors rival those of Eatanswill. Mention one Spiritualistic medium to another and he—or more likely she—will shrug her shoulders and say, "Yes, all very well; but"—the inevitable but! And it is not only journalists or mediums, whose professional interests might be supposed to be at stake, who err thus. Mention Mr. A. to Mr. B.—let both be ardent disciples—and the latter says, "Yes, very good fellow, is A., but a little soft-headed;" while A. will perhaps say nothing at all about B., but figuratively touch his cranium, as much as to say, There is certainly something wrong there, so far as B. is concerned.

Of course this does harm. It has the same disintegrating effect on a small scale as the broken ranks have in an exaggerated degree. It renders it impossible for the rival editors or the mutually depreciating mediums, or A. and B. with the alleged soft places in their respective heads, to present a united front against Materialism which they ought to do; and so far the effect is noxious, no doubt.

Without aspiring to unlimited optimism, however, let us see whether there is nothing to be said on the other side; whether there are no compensating advantages even in scandalmongery.

It shews, at all events, vitality. Some Broad Church apologists justify sectarianism on the principle that rival sects keep each other respectable, much as the ebb and flow of the tide keeps the sea sweet by preventing stagnation. There is certainly no symptom of stagnation apparent among Spiritualists in

this respect. They are very much alive; whether too much alive or not is an open question.

It argues independence. They do not all hang together; very much the reverse. When people have a bad case to bolster up they combine of necessity; but when the case is good they can afford to differ and to disagree. Is it matter for much wonder if they sometimes overact their parts?

What is all this but a certain transparent honesty? Perfect sincerity is often the reverse of agreeable; and the very outspokenness of Spiritualists, whilst it may occasionally offend the canons of good taste or good feeling, shews that at all events they have nothing to conceal.

Scandal is true to its etymology with Spiritualists as well as with other people. It is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; but so long as no bones are broken it not infrequently amounts to little more than a natural roughening of the surface as opposed to that artificial method of smoothing and making things pleasant which is so significant of a cause shaky at the foundation.

## A POSSIBLE KEY TO A MYSTERY.

"It is very striking that in all ages, all people have clothed the ideas of their dreams in the same imagery. It may, therefore, be asked, whether that language which now occupies so low a place in the estimation of man be not actually the waking language of the higher regions; while we—awake as we fancy ourselves—may be sunk in a sleep of many thousand years, or, at least, in the echo of their dreams; and only intelligibly catch a few dim words of the language of God, as sleepers do scattered expressions from the loud conversation of those around them."

Schubert's "Symbolism of Dreams."

Within this universal symbolic imagery of dreams, and of visions, thus beautifully referred to by Schubert, there will not infrequently be discovered a yet more puzzling and mysterious phenomenon; namely, a confusion of metaphor in the use of this universal symbolic language. This confusion of metaphor may also be occasionally met with in the productions of certain highly imaginative and metaphysical poets; very frequently in the writings of "the Mystics;" very frequently in oracular sentences preserved to us from the ancient oracles by classical writers; very frequently—if, indeed, not *always*—in the language used by the Insane; and frequently also in the language of Dying-persons. This peculiar confusion of metaphor will be recognised also in the language addressed to Mediumistic-persons by Spirits during certain conditions of their mediumship—possibly when in a transitional state from one spiritual degree into another.

The writer would suggest as a possible key for the opening of this special phenomenon in the mystery of Spirit language, that it may almost be regarded as an axiom, that oracular speech treats all seasons and cycles of Time as though they formed One Time—or "the Eternal Now;" and addresses the senses of man, as though they composed one Universal-sense. The philologist, the student of mesmeric phenomena, will each have his separate testimony within his special branches of study to bring forward, bearing upon kindred facts.

This possible key was suggested to the writer upon two separate occasions, when addressed by a Spirit-voice on awakening in the early morning. On the first occasion the voice spoke as follows: "And so to-morrow I made my bed, and stand upright in the sunshine." There all times—future, past, and present—were made use of as one time; were confusedly swallowed up, so to speak, in the "Eternal Now" of Spirit-existence. The second oracular utterance was yet more confused and confusing. Here are the words: "Flowers are the barkings of the dog of the skies;" and immediately afterwards were added these equally apparently irrational words: "Men see by the soles of their feet instead of treading the stars with their eyes." The listener to these strange words had, however, been favoured too long by the courteous and invaluable teaching of Invisible Friends to disregard as worthless any words thus uttered,

Treating these enigmatical sentences, therefore, with a polite and curious attention, there was flashed into the mind an internal perception of an underlying, so to speak, submerged, meaning within them; a meaning which the intellect must draw forth from the waters of Truth, like a young Moses from the bulrushes; or a young bard Taliesin from the reeds of his Welsh lake—a living babe of Divine Wisdom, a messenger of Poetic Truth.

The writer could, without much difficulty, disentangle and recognise as familiar the word-imagery employed in this instance by the Invisible Speaker, being aware that in obedience to a fixed law of spiritual influx, Angels and Spirits can alone hold communication with man by clothing their celestial or spiritual ideas in the words, imagery, and knowledge already within the memory and mind of the man with whom they hold converse. *Ideas*, in truth, not *words*, are what we alone receive from Angels and Spirits. Words are the body in which the thought or idea, which is immaterial, is clothed. The material for the present communication was taken from the writer's memory of a passage in a book recently read. This passage referred to the Dog-star, Sirius, being regarded by the ancient Egyptians as the emblem of a Messenger from Heaven; and a mystical inscription was quoted from Diodorus (Liber I.) in illustration of this belief; namely; "I am She that rises in the Dog-star; I am She who is made manifest in my star-like dog—the Messenger." Here was the material out of which the message was framed. But what in itself was the meaning of the utterance?

In the mental "flash," thus came the interpretation: "*Flowers are the manifestation of the Messenger of the Holy Spirit. (Flowers are the barking of the dogs of the skies.)*"

"Barking" here was used to signify *manifestation of a presence*. The inner universal sense of the "spirit-man" was addressed. By the word "flowers," probably was intended correspondentially, not so much *actual flowers* as the ever successively, freshly up-springing, divinely beautiful children of celestial Love—the graces, the amenities of the Spirit, full of glory, of healing, of benignity, as, in a lower and more earthly sense, are flowers of the garden and the field. *Such celestial graces and amenities, therefore, were we to await as fragrant gifts preceding the advent of the Messengers of the Holy Spirit.*

Thus did the writer interpret the apparent irrational words and incongruous ideas, by perceiving that oracular sayings are probably couched in a language which addresses the senses of man as though they were but one universal sense; the *ear* in this case having been addressed, where otherwise it might have been anticipated, in harmony with the metaphor, that the *eye* would have been addressed. The writer had sought, in fact, to follow the advice conveyed in the latter portion of the speech of the Spirit—had sought, *not* as purely human reason does, unassisted by the Spirit, or by the Spirit's handmaid, Imagination—"to see by the soles of the feet;" that is to say, by interpretation, to perceive alone through the outermost natural understanding directed earthwards; but rather had allowed the *spiritual perceptions or eyes* to ascend to the celestial spheres, and there tread the stars; that is to say, again, had, by interpretation, found understanding, or a plane to tread upon, in a higher order of existence.

Similar confusion of metaphor—similar in character if not in degree—is observable again and again in the purely spiritual writings of William Blake: also in Cowley's "Ode to the Muses;" and in the notes given to that highly poetical poem we find further illustration of the subject. Indeed it may be a question whether all highly imaginative, poetical productions 'do not in some degree or other involuntarily obey this spiritual law. Amongst the writings of the mystics may especially be mentioned those of that highly gifted woman and seeress, Jane Lead. Her many beautiful and profound teachings become beclouded to the intellect, and her lovely visions, filled with celestial imagery, become bewildering to the imagination, through the confusion of metaphor and incongruity of symbology. Nevertheless, universal as is this incongruity of metaphor in oracular mystical and poetical utterance, and this thorough obedience, as we presume, to a Spiritual Law, it still remains a question whether the "confusion of tongues" may not be regarded as alone belonging to a transitional condition, incident to a passing-out of one condition and the entering into the next; whether, in fact, it may not be similar to the condition of a person speaking a language in a "broken" manner, and with an inextricable mingling of two idioms. The transitional state, however, we may regard as a necessary condition in spiritual

growth and in the requirement of spiritual knowledge; also, highly salutary as a stimulus to the faculty of Reason, and of Imagination, which is simply the ideality of Reason.

Therefore, we will hope that the Spiritual Being, when introduced into more highly developed and more harmonious condition, will, necessarily, be endowed with the wealth of spiritual knowledge, metaphor, and language appertaining to each sphere of experience through which he will have passed; and will remain possessed of a clear perception of each sphere, distinct in itself,—although to him in one sense "all spheres may be rolled into one sphere," and all times be merged in the "Eternal Now." We will hope that then, when he shall have completed his spiritual education, and have become possessed of a number of distinct spiritual languages, or "correspondential" modes of expression, each one may be employed by him accurately, unmingled and unadulterated with incongruous epithets. But as it is, with our present knowledge of spiritual things we must, at best, be content to see "but as in a glass, darkly"—to behold "men as trees walking," and hear but a "confusion of tongues." Thus must we be content to remain, until we, by the ineffable grace and goodness of God, becoming fully imbued with the Holy Spirit, be divinely "led into all truth," and speak as "with the tongues of angels."

A.M.H.W.

### THOUGHT-READING, OR THE DIRECT ACTION OF MIND ON MIND.

The Rev. A. M. Creery, B.A., of Buxton, delivered a lecture on the above subject before the members of the Philosophic and Musical Society, in Friar-gate Chapel School-room, Derby. Mr. R. Speight, one of the vice-presidents of the society, presided. The lecturer commenced by observing that everyone knows that if a tuning fork be struck it will cause those of similar pitch to sing spontaneously, and that a note sounded on the voice will throw into resonance the corresponding string of a piano. But it is not generally known that the motions of one human brain can set up similar motions in another human brain, thus producing the same idea or emotion in both minds, without any of the ordinary means of communication, but simply by the action of the will. To establish this fact was the object of the lecturer. In the course of a series of experiments performed with members of his own family, it was found that the idea of an object, the name of a town, the date upon a coin, a card selected out of a pack, or a sentence taken out of a book, could be conveyed from one mind to another without any outward or visible sign, but simply by volition or the direct action of mind on mind. These facts were verified in this way: A person goes out of the room, and in his absence the object which is to be named, or the sentence to be repeated by him on his return, is settled on by the company, who keep the ideas clearly and steadily before their mind; and as soon as the absent one comes back amongst the company the ideas flash across him. The lecturer then went on to describe the particulars of the various experiments by which this law is established, but space will only allow us to give two or three of the most remarkable instances. A card out of a pack was solicited, and thrown to the company, in the absence of the guesser, which was named at once by him on re-entering the room; and in 16 trials made in this way 13 cards were named at once without a mistake, the other three being guessed on the second attempt. A book, on one occasion, was taken down by the lecturer off his library shelves, and being opened at random the first line that met his eye was read aloud to the company, in the absence of one of the members, who, on being recalled, after one or two minutes' thought repeated the line exactly as it was printed. In a similar way the titles of the articles in the December number of *The Nineteenth Century* were given by a person in whose absence they were shown to the company—the review not having been previously seen by any of those engaged. It was observed that on the first two or three evenings of these experiments many mistakes were made in guessing; but the successes were so much in preponderance as to show that the thing could not be accounted for by chance; and after a little practice, a failure very rarely occurred. Any one, it was said, could test the truth of the alleged facts in his own family, as there was nothing peculiar in the circumstances under which they took place. If an idea can be passed from one mind to another without the instrumentality of the ordinary means, there must be a medium of some sort, by which the cerebral motions in one person are set up in another. Of the nature of this medium we have no knowledge, but the supposition of its existence is as necessary to account for the psychological facts as is the hypothesis of a luminiferous ether to explain the transference of heat and light and chemical action from one body to another. If future experiments should verify the existence of that mysterious medium, it may ultimately tend to throw some light, not only on the subtle nature of the human brain, but may lead us to the idea of some non-atomic ethereal envelope in which the mind itself is tabernacled.—*Derby Daily Telegraph*.



## SIX MONTHS WITH THE SPIRITS.

By a Swedenborgian.

(Conclusion.)

As I mentioned at the close of my last paper, I have a few more generalisations to make. My readers must not be surprised if they should be of a character to harmonise with my religious and philosophical views. I candidly confess that I should as soon think of receiving any statement made by the comparatively ignorant Spirits who are allowed to communicate, if it were in opposition to the experience and philosophy of Swedenborg, as I should of accepting the opinion of the first person I met in the market place respecting the natural history of this globe, if it were in opposition to the demonstrations of Tyndall and Huxley. If any of my Spirit friends have said anything out of conformity with the truths of religion, I have corrected and instructed them, and after consideration they have acknowledged their error. While, however, most of the opinions expressed by the Spirits on this subject are without value, I have carefully noted indisputable facts connected with their utterances, and I am rejoiced to find in them striking confirmations of the truth of Swedenborg's teachings.

1. Swedenborg teaches that in the spiritual world men have bodies, clothes, residences, furniture, &c., analogous to those which we have on earth. I have repeatedly asked my "friends" on this point, and they have invariably declared that such is the fact. They have also said that these things are in every way as real and substantial to them as our bodies, clothes, and houses are to us. This is, of course, a very simple truth, but I could not omit the mention of it.

2. Swedenborg teaches that novitiate Spirits imagine themselves "still to be in the world, yea in the body," and that though they are afterwards told that they are Spirits they often revert to the old idea. I have had one instance of this kind. The person was an intimate friend—a Swedenborgian. For 18 months before his death he was afflicted with encephalitis, attended with entire loss of reason. For months before his death he was utterly unconscious of all external surroundings, and he departed in this state without a moment of lucidity. It will be perfectly obvious that there would be nothing to make him aware of the change he had undergone. At our first conference I asked him if he knew where he was. To my surprise he said "No." I said "Why you are in the World of Spirits—the intermediate state taught by Swedenborg." To this he gave no reply. I added, "Don't you know that?" He answered "No." "But," I remarked, "you are not in Heaven?" "No." "You are not in hell?" "No, no." "Then where else can you be but in the World of Spirits?" To this he gave no response. "Well," I said, "have you seen Dr. ———?" mentioning a mutual friend, who died during his state of aberration, and who lived not far from himself. He replied "Yes." I said "Can you bring him to speak with me?" He said "Yes," and hurried off to fetch him. When he came back he said our friend was gone; he could not find him. Subsequently I meditated on this strange experience, and remembering the circumstances of his death, I came to the conclusion that he did not know that he had died. At our next séance I questioned him on this point and he confessed that such was the fact. I asked him if he was not surprised at the absence of his wife and children, and at the difference of his surroundings. He replied "No." I said "You found room for your activities and were satisfied?" He said "Yes." If any of my readers wonder at this, I need only remind them that they themselves are never surprised at any condition, however strange, in which they find themselves in a dream, which is a semi-spiritual state.

3. Swedenborg teaches that shortly after death, when the man comes among congenial Spirits, "wonderful to say, he then leads a similar life to that which he led in the world." I have asked my "friends" how they are occupied. The males, without a single exception, have told me that they follow their worldly professions or their worldly tastes. One was an amateur musician, his profession being a journalist. He says he writes and teaches music. Another was a newspaper reporter and paragraphist, with a marvellous faculty for expansion. He says he is engaged in writing books on poetry. Two others were surgeons, and they both say they follow their profession, and in case of any illness amongst us they are ready with their prescriptions. Another was a celebrated teacher of music, and he declares that such is still his occupation. In fact, he is often away from our séances, the others telling us that he is gone to play at a concert, which he subsequently acknowledges to be true.

4. Swedenborg teaches that for those who go to Heaven a place or state of instruction is provided. This was confirmed in a way which at once surprised and startled me, because the doctrine was entirely absent from my mind when the incident occurred. A Nonconformist minister died, and all the Spirits went with one of the mediums and saw his funeral. Three of them knew the deceased in earth-life. I asked them successively whether they had seen him. J. P. said "I saw him pass with two angels." I said "Is he in your world still?" He said "No." I said "Gone to Heaven?" He said "No." "What!" I exclaimed; "impossible—he cannot have gone to hell?" He said with emphasis, "No, no." "But," I protested, "there is no other place—there are only Heaven, hell, and the World of Spirits." He said, "GONE TO A PLACE OF

INSTRUCTION." I solemnly declare that all thought of this state was absent from my mind when this answer was given, and that I had neither read nor said anything about it during the period covered by our séances. I can only conclude that the statement was based on fact and not on any opinion of mine.

5. Swedenborg teaches that resuscitated Spirits are introduced into the World of Spirits by angels. All my "friends" know that they were introduced by friendly Spirits, but they know not who they were. Even the suicide knew that he was introduced by "good people." One who died at about 18 years of age says, "I saw angels but they went away." Mrs C. says, "I saw dear E\*\*\*\* for a minute with angels." W. W. T. mentions a departed friend who was one of the five angels who came for dear E\*\*\*\*. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, J. P. says, "I saw him pass with two angels." I might add other testimony, but this will probably be sufficient.

6. Swedenborg says that some persons are elevated immediately into Heaven. W. W. T. says respecting one whom he had an interview with in the spiritual world: "Departed into Heaven: if I had only been as good and fit as he I should have gone almost straight to Heaven." B. B. says "Not a day did dear E\*\*\*\* stay in this place." Similar statements have been made by all my "friends."

7. Swedenborg curiously says that he has spoken with persons three days after their death, and that they have known about their burial, and have seen through his eyes the ceremony. Even as I am writing this article an exactly similar circumstance has occurred. Let it be, however, understood that Swedenborg had at once conscious vision of the natural and spiritual worlds, while in the case to which I refer the mediums had only conscious vision of the natural world. T. S. O. died, and five days afterwards I asked those of my "friends" who knew him if they had seen him. Three replied in the affirmative. I said "Can you bring him to-night to speak to us?" The reply was "No." "Can you bring him on Saturday, do you think?" "Yes." "You know his body is to be buried to-morrow (Friday)?" "Yes." Well, he came on Saturday. He told us that he had witnessed, through the mediums, his own funeral. He added that he heard his own will read and gave us the name of the person who read it, with other extraordinary circumstances. Lest any one should imagine from this that I think the mediumship of the day is comparable with the experience of Swedenborg, I would add in a parenthesis that I consider the distance between all phases of nineteenth century Spiritualism and that of the Swedish seer to be simply immeasurable. So far as the relative states are concerned they have nothing in common.

Lastly, I will say something about the general doctrines of Swedenborg, known as those of the New Jerusalem. The first point is that there is one God, who is one Divine person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Two of my "friends" have lamented that they could not get rid of the idea of three Gods. One said that it excluded him from Heaven. The second great point is that mere belief is of no avail, and that evil must be shunned and good done from good intention. All my "friends" have confessed this truth and have heaped scorn on the idea of salvation by faith. A remarkable testimony once occurred in relation to the truth of Swedenborg's doctrine. I had been reading aloud the six memorable relations in "Conjugal Love," Nos. 74-82. These relations treat of visits to the people who lived in the ages of gold, of silver, of copper, of iron, of iron mixed with miry clay, and lastly, of the hells, with a description of the new kingdom to arise and a statement of its doctrines. At a séance held the same evening my wife asked one of the Spirits if he had heard the reading, and whether he approved of it. He said "Yes," and expressed great delight. The same question was put to all with a similar result, till we came to Dr. B——, a strong Church of England man, who said "No." "Oh," I remarked, "you don't believe in those revelations?" He replied "No." "What," I said, "do you still cling to the old Church of England doctrine?" He said "No; I believe in the last part." "Why," I said, "that is where he was among the wicked?" He said "No." My daughter thereupon remarked, "He means the part about doctrine." He replied, "Yes." The statement is that in "Conjugal Love," No. 82, to the effect that there is one God, Christ; that a saving faith is to believe in Him; that evil is to be shunned; that good is to be done; that man is to do this as from himself, with the acknowledgment that it is from and by the Lord. "You believe that?" I asked. He replied, "Yes." "Well," I continued, "the other is just as true, as you will find if you inquire; there are more things in the Spiritual world than you have seen."\*

Let me just add that all—whatever may have been their opinions in the world, whether Church of England, Wesleyan, or Dissent—have said that they find things altogether different from what they were taught to expect.

I here bring these papers to a close. I could add much more. However, the probability is that many persons will think what I have already written is more than enough, while some will regard it as egotistical twaddle, and others as utterly unworthy of credence. My answer to each and all is that it is simple truth.

\* While looking through the proofs of this paper, I should like to say that it had been my custom to read aloud every morning a chapter from one of Swedenborg's works, generally "Heaven and Hell." Domestic arrangements at Christmas caused a suspension of these readings for about a fortnight. At the first opportunity, W. W. T. took us by surprise by saying: "Dear Mr. ———, I shall be glad if you will continue the morning readings."

## TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

We are glad to note the arrival in London of Mrs. Hardinge-Britten. For the past three years she has been sowing the Spiritual seed in the Antipodes, and throughout the great American continent. She is, indeed, even now on her way from Australia, for her labours have never ceased, and she is hoping to secure in more sunny France some rest and refreshment when necessary business here is completed. Her account of Spiritualism in America shews that the same disruptive causes that afflict the movement here are in full work there. It is a melancholy picture that she draws, and one that it requires all one's faith in the wisdom of the controlling powers to contemplate with hope. Rampant crotchets, lawlessness that will brook no restraint, petty jealousies, and small mean rivalries have wrought out a terrible destruction among the once flourishing societies that most considerable towns used to support. And now it seems to be a question of working through this scene of ruin to a higher state, where Spiritualism destitute of spirituality is recognised as the source of danger that it undoubtedly is. If the picture be a little highly coloured, we sadly fear the broad outlines are correct, and we would fain hope that its contemplation may teach English Spiritualists a much-needed lesson.

The question, "How far does Clairvoyance prove the agency of Spirits?" receives a curious answer in a letter in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, of the 5th. The writer describes how, at a conjuring entertainment, he, being selected a member of the test committee, wrote in a side room a question which he then and there folded up and put into his pocket. No one was present, and no one could by any possibility know what the question was. In the course of the evening a young woman was placed on the stage and blindfolded. She, it was stated, would read and answer the questions which had been prepared as above described. This she did in each of six cases with perfect correctness. The narrator had written, "Do Spirits aid you?" She first read the question, saying that the "i" in aid was not dotted, and that there was a note of interrogation at the end. She then replied that she received no external aid, but did all by her own powers. The conjuror professed himself quite unable to explain the *modus operandi*. He said it was the exercise of a natural faculty, and that Spirits had nothing to do with it.

That, of course, he could not assert, without possessing a knowledge to which he could lay no claim. The point at which the natural faculties of the human spirit reach their normal limit is one which neither he nor we can fix. Nor can we say what abnormal exercise of latent spiritual powers is possible. Still less can we determine how far and at what times the action of external spiritual agency is brought to bear upon us. There have been many perplexing instances of the exercise of this clairvoyance in public exhibitions. One especially, at the Westminster Aquarium, and in various other large halls in London, where mechanical trick was out of the question, was that of a girl called Louie, who described various articles and read certain words, which she could by no possibility see, in a very striking manner. Wise men—wise, at least, in their own conceit—gave various explanations of the trick, each, it seems to us, more unlikely and far fetched

than its predecessor. It is certain, in our judgment, that the explanation lies outside of all mere conjuring tricks. By all means let us exclude the easy explanation of Spirits till all others are exhausted; meantime we know that there are faculties of the human soul latent or only imperfectly developed in most of us. Is this one of them?

A very brisk discussion followed Dr. Davies's paper, "An Hour's Communion with the Dead," read at the British National Association's rooms last Monday. There was a good audience, and they were not so reticent as usual, the paper evidently offering a good many salient points for remark. One very energetic gentleman protested violently against thus going over old ground, and wanted to start a propaganda forthwith. What was the use, he asked, of talking about these matters to persons who were perfectly familiar with them? An equally enthusiastic gentleman followed, who seemed inclined to go out into the highways and hedges on an open-air mission too. There was a good deal of depreciation of the scientific aspect of Spiritualism, but the reader of the paper protested against this, saying he had simply minimised the scientific aspect because it was one that was not so much his own specialty as the religious phase. The chairman also threw in a few well-timed remarks as to the value of the scientific study of Spiritualism. Then one gentleman wanted Dr. Davies to adduce texts from the Bible to prove that Spiritualism was permissible; but the reader of the paper wisely, as we think, declined to turn his speech into a Biblical homily. Another gentleman wanted some phenomena quoted, and Dr. Davies did so far comply as to quote some remarkable manifestations that had recently come under his own notice. He remarked, however, that it was not possible in a brief speech to do more than group the more important incidents which had characterised a study on his part dating from the year 1857. Altogether the paper, without being actually attacked, called forth a considerable conflict of opinion, and thus answered its purpose, notwithstanding the protest of the gentleman who, like the Athenians of old, seemed anxious to be always telling or hearing some new thing.

Another rumour reaches us, on very good foundation, as to the probabilities of regular Sunday services being started in connection with Spiritualism. A well-known clergyman is likely to take the building once used as the Scotch Church, in Swallow-street, Piccadilly. He will be joined, we hear, by an equally well-known musical man, whose fame as an organist would at once secure attention to the scheme. A talented lady singer, too, is named as likely to lead the choir. Altogether, though we are not in a position actually to give names until next week, yet we think that the time has at last come when there will be a regular public Church of England service, of the broadest possible type, which Spiritualists will be able to attend and find their belief made prominent, not only in pulpit addresses but in every detail of worship. It is a want that has long been felt.

Once more the Micklegate Ghost emerges into prominence; the ethereal visitant at York being now apparently as much an institution, and as likely to become historic as the Cook-lane Ghost himself. The *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* lately gave some interesting particulars connected with this apparition, which were got together by Mr. Baring Gould. Though there is generally only one ghost, which appears on the east window of Micklegate Church, seeming as though some person in a surplice were walking in the churchyard, yet there are sometimes more than one. On Trinity Sunday there are generally three presumably orthodox apparitions, and one observer has seen a whole family of ghosts, a little child with its mother and nurse figuring greatly in the conclave. Had the writer of the article in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* been familiar with the incidents of the ordinary séance, he would have known how frequent it is for different mediums to see different Spirits according to the varying degrees of development in the seer. The remarks, however, are fair enough, which is saying a good deal where a ghost is in question. But whenever one person sees the apparition and another does not, it is at once taken for granted that the former is the victim of an "optical illusion." The good people who go to Micklegate Church must have something very serious the matter with their eyes if so many of them suffer from those illusions. So much a matter of common experience is this ghost-seeing that the vicar has tried to "Boycott" the ghost by felling two trees in the churchyard, but without effect. Where the reverend gentleman learnt this eminently Gladstonian form of exorcism we do not know. We take the matter on trust from the *Chronicle*, but we are not at all surprised to find that the timber felling has no appreciable effect on the ghost's walk.



## "AN HOUR'S COMMUNION WITH THE DEAD."

By the Rev. C. Maurice Davies, D.D.

*A paper read on Monday night last, before the British National Association of Spiritualists, at 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.*

The enunciation of this line from the Laureate's great poem, "In Memoriam," opens up what is beyond all others the largest question of the present day, the question, namely, whether it is possible, and if possible, whether it is allowable and desirable, to hold communion with the dead? We call them the dead under protest and in merely conventional language. They are not the dead. They are at most the departed—if even the departed. We would rather say the changed. But we use the word as one of common speech just as we talk of the sun rising and setting, though we know the sun neither rises nor sets.

This question of the so-called new *gnosis*—the fuller revelation—the revived knowledge about the so-called dead—is, for good or for ill, a great subject. It is, as a foremost professor of the faith itself once said to me, either the grandest fact of the nineteenth century, or the most gigantic delusion that has been palmed off on modern society.

I myself (for in a matter like this one is forced to be in some degree personal) have for many years been engaged in solving this problem on my own account: and I propose to offer you very briefly a few of the phases it has assumed to my consciousness, and to my own conscience; as well as some of its different stages of growth in each. From the first time when I was brought face to face with what purported to be this "Hour's Communion with the Dead," I felt I was bound to ask myself these questions: Is it true or false? Is it what it pretends to be, or not? If it is, then what must be my acceptance of it?

Naturally, of course, from my position as a clergyman of the Church of England, the question assumes in my case a religious aspect. But it does not do so with all, I know. It did not do so at first with me, though there was, even from the first, a sort of foreshadowing as to the form it would afterwards take in my regards. The very earliest question I ever asked when this new *gnosis* confronted me was, "What is this power?" The answer came, "The Spirits of the departed have this power given to them." "What is the use of it?" I asked next; and the reply I received was, "It may make men believe in God." Such an assumption as this at once challenged my earnest attention.

### The Possibility of Spirit Communion.

I. But the first form in which this new knowledge confronts all is, of necessity, what we may call in a certain sense a scientific one. Is it a fact? Is this Hour's Communion with the Dead possible? Are we really talking with somebody else, some intelligence outside ourselves; or is it only our own imagination that cajoles us? If some other intelligence is at work, is it not the intelligence of those with us in circle, consciously or unconsciously—honestly or dishonestly—exercised? If the intelligence be not corporeal but spiritual, may it not still be some tricky sprite that is amusing himself at our expense?

If the hardheaded folk who think us credulous were only to know how hotly we contested every one of these points—nay, how we sometimes recur to them even when some new wonder meets us—they would scarcely charge us with credulity, whatever they may think of our judgment.

But when all these self-questionings are answered; when we have found that, though unconscious cerebration, and thought-reading and charlatanism will cover some of the facts, they will not cover them all—then, forced to deal with this final fringe of facts, not so covered, we go on to the more searching question still, and inquire: If these are the Spirits of the dead with whom I am privileged to hold this hour's communion, are they the spirits of my dead? The question of identity forces itself upon our consciousness; and what a question that is! Credulous! The disciples of the new *gnosis* credulous on this point! So far as my experience goes there are many more antitypes of St. Thomas than of Nathanael among them. And quite right too. Professing, as we do, to supplement faith with knowledge, we have no right to take things for granted. We should be illogical if we did. If faith is to be accepted at second-hand, then there is room for credulity; but there is no room for credulity in a theology that is based on experiment as much as any one of the inductive sciences or as much as the experience of everyday life. I used to have to say this kind of thing apologetically once, when I was only standing on the threshold of the new *gnosis* and had not got my array of facts sufficient for a complete generalisation. Then the more advanced and initiated disciples used to

call me stiffnecked and stubborn, because I did not advance quite so rapidly as they did. Nobody ever called me credulous then.

There is the final fact that most of us want to establish, if our study is to be more than a merely scientific one. Can I check the identity of the Spirits with whom I share this hour's communion?

Few of us have the faculty to pursue the scientific inquiry into lengths which are possible to a Crookes or a Wallace, or were possible to a De Morgan. But *this* is an aspect that comes home to us all. Is it my little lost child—not lost but gone before—who is again talking with me in his pretty baby language? Is it my friend of long ago whose familiar accents once more fall upon my ear? These are the different forms assumed in serial order by the question as to the possibility of "An Hour's Communion with the Dead."

### The Permissibility of Communion.

II. Supposing those demands are answered in the affirmative, and, that, perhaps after long years of anxious questioning, we come to the conviction that we can talk across the void, can span the great gulf that separates us from the so-called dead, there still remains what we may call the moral question: Is such intercourse permissible?

I confess to you that this phase of the matter never had any relevance to myself; and for this reason. I felt instinctively that, if such a boon were possible, it carried its own sanction with it. If I could do this thing I might. Consequently I never lost an opportunity of experimenting. I wanted to certify the possibility, and no shadow of doubt as to the permissibility ever occurred to me, any more than it would occur to me to doubt whether I might learn anything else according to my ability in any other sphere of knowledge. Nay, this knowledge carried more than its own sanction with it. It carried a sort of obligation too. Not only *might* I know if I could, but I almost *must*.

But then, did it not shake your faith? some people say. Is it compatible with Christianity? What kind of faith could that be—how far worthy the grand old name of Christianity—if *any* added knowledge could undermine it? I have no belief in such a timorous religion as that.

That this knowledge does have a destructive effect sometimes, or rather that it fails to have a constructive effect in some cases, we dare not deny. But where this is so, one would very much like to know the original calibre of mind and the cast of previous conviction which the revelation encountered. The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose, we are told. It is possible to back up any monstrous doctrine with a garbled text, we are aware. And so too, if you are determined to extract pure Deism or blank Atheism out of your "Hour's Communion with the Dead" you can do so, no doubt, by means of a little ingenuity.

That the new revelation does gainsay a carnal resurrection and an eternity of torture, I grant; and if the tone of anyone's character was such that he put these excrescences of Christianity in place of Christianity itself, then his first hour's communion with the dead might land him on a blank negation—and the sooner he *was* landed thereon in respect of these figments the better. But the day is past—or passing—when even the most narrow-minded sectary will put these unworthy parts for the grand sum total of the Christian creed, or even venture to affirm either of them—the resurrection of corpses or the eternity of hell fire—very plainly.

The mistake, in my opinion (but it is no more than my own), into which many people fall is the attempt to make a religion pure and simple out of this new faith. It is not a separate system, but a general principle underlying all systems. Open the Bible, it is there, on almost every page of the Old Testament and New Testament. Open the Prayer-book, it is there. Take any manual of devotion, be it Greek, Roman, Anglican, or Nonconformist, until you come down to the stratum of Deism, and there you find the possibility of this Hour's Communion with the Dead postulated. It makes those who believe in it the Broadest of Broad Churchmen, because it does not arrest their sympathies even at the confines of Christianity itself, but spreads them out over such outlying creeds as the Buddhistic and Mahometan, leading people to find brothers everywhere. If the tree is to be judged by its normal fruits, and if charity is to be accepted as in any sense a criterion, then the realisation of an hour's communion with the dead shews not only in the light of a scientific possibility but almost of a moral duty.

### Is Spirit Communion Profitable?

III. In answering thus emphatically the second question, touching the permissibility of this practice, I feel that I have virtually answered the third too, as to its profitableness.

Is it profitable as well as permissible thus to hold communion with the dead, granting the thing to be practicable? and, if so, what are some of the advantages?

If the whole thing were a mere wonderworking, a simple pandering to a possibly legitimate curiosity, then one might hesitate, for there is, no doubt, a responsibility attaching to the exercise of this power, as there is, let me remark, to the exercise of all power. But view the matter as one of Spirit communion, and so of spirit-culture, and the answer becomes at once plain and decisive.

Just as by performing the acts of a gymnast I by-and-bye become an athlete; just as by playing over and over again scales and airs I become a musician, so by thus developing the spiritual element in my compounded nature, through associating with those who, to their blessedness, have thrown off the lower adjuncts of that compounded nature, I do develop what is incomparably the highest element in my blended self.

The anxious parent sends his boy to the public school or to the University not only for what he may learn there but because—as some people think (though I do not altogether)—it is desirable he should acquire the tone of the public schoolboy or gain the varnish of a complete man apart from, or in addition to, the direct advantages he compasses in the matter of the class-list or the Tripos. So in this hour's communion do we associate with those who are a tier above us in the graduated ranks of God's creation. This is low ground, perhaps, but it is very firm and tangible footing. "Wouldst thou be as these are live as they," says Matthew Arnold of the winds and the stars. So say we of those who have gone before. We shall soon be as they are. We shall soon have to live as they are now living; surely, then, it must be profitable to us subjectively to learn from those who have made the step in advance what are the altered conditions of life on which that first footfall lands us.

Even in the mere matter of so-called pandering to curiosity, I confess that I cannot altogether agree with those who denounce this prying into mysteries. There are many cases in which curiosity is commendable rather than objectionable; and surely this is one. Supposing that my family were going to emigrate to the Colonies, and that I went on as a sort of avant-courier or pioneer before I took out my little caravan to their new home. How eagerly they would read the letters I sent home, the scanty telegrams which were all I could afford to wire to them. They would do this because, in addition to any love and affection they might feel for me, they would want to know all about the new home to which I had gone, and where I was waiting to welcome them. Is not that exactly the position we assume in our "Hour's Communion with the Dead"; we lingering in the old haunts: they, Heaven's colonists, gone on before and flashing back their simple fragmentary messages, or writing to us what are so literally letters from the new home?

### Religious Aspect of the Question.

Some of you know, I dare say, that a few of us—a small knot of earnest investigators—have been, for three or four months past, meeting twice a week upstairs in my little oratory—"the place where prayer is wont to be made"—joining in a simple, hearty service, which I call by the very name of "An Hour's Communion with the Dead." We do not expect startling phenomena, though we hail them gladly when they do come; and not until last Thursday evening did we get much that could be described by that name. We sing our simple hymns and say our common prayers and litanies, and then just sit and wait, not asking for or prescribing anything, but trying so far as is possible to be passive recipients, trying to realise those words of Carlyle in which he speaks of "Thirteen most poor mean-dressed men, at frugal supper, in a mean Jewish dwelling, with no symbol but hearts God-initiated into the 'Divine depth of Sorrow,' and a 'Do this in remembrance of Me.'"

Supposing nothing more ever came of it; supposing we had sat there all that time without, as the phrase goes, "getting anything," would it not, think you, have been good for us to be there?

At least we should have undergone the discipline of patience. Some of us—a very few—tried by that touchstone, have been found wanting. It seems now as if those who persevered were going to be rewarded. But supposing no phenomenal results at all obtained, do you think that we have been the better or the worse for that regimen of patience we have undergone, for those quiet cloistered parentheses in life which some of us, I know, have found to be fraught with comfort and with spirit-culture?

It is thus, then, I sum up the few words I had to say to you, and I gladly lay myself open to correction if it seem to you that I have spoken beside the mark.

To this conclusion have I come, after many years' earnest investigation and debate, that, supposing this Hour's Communion with the Dead to be possible; supposing next that it be not only possible, but permissible—that we can reconcile it to our consciences, and find it approved by our Bibles and Church

ordinances thus to talk across the void—then it must be profitable. It must be "for the more confirmation" of previous faith, whatever the special form of faith may be, thus to add to our faith knowledge.

Let people say what they will about current scandals, or ask, Can you possibly go on after this or that *exposé*? Still, I submit that this can scarcely be a very heinous form of belief or practice which brings us to our knees with a prayer for "More light," or keeps us sitting quietly in expectation of that light.

To judge a form of faith by some professor's possible abuse of it would be as unfair as to judge Christianity itself by the treachery of Judas Iscariot or by the lie of Ananias and Sapphira.

It is surely very much to the purpose that the Laureate warns us—

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would hold  
An Hour's Communion with the Dead!

### A SPIRIT'S LAST TEAR.

On the evening of the 17th inst. a private séance was held at 38, Great Russell-street, which presented some interesting features of an exceptional character. The circle was a very small one, consisting of only five persons besides the medium, Miss Katie Cook, and previous to the sitting a religious service was held for the purpose of harmonising the conditions and ensuring as far as possible that the manifestations should be of a high order. How far this succeeded the records of the séance will shew. The members sat in a small circle without a table, their knees almost touching those of their opposite neighbours, and their hands joined. Miss Cook was thus completely "insulated," being held by a gentleman on one side and by a lady on the other. The first effect produced was, that the wife of the gentleman holding the medium became instantaneously endowed with the gift of seeing Spirits. She had never seen one before or been present at a séance where the sitters had been touched. On this occasion, however, she described certain Spirits who were present, and the other sitters had hands placed in theirs corresponding in size to those which would be possessed by the different Spirits described. For instance, this lady spoke of seeing a child, and forthwith on the opposite side of the circle a "weenie" hand was placed in the palm of a clergyman who formed one of the circle.

It should be mentioned that the lady who was holding Miss Cook on the right side was somewhat averse to this kind of manifestation, until she was convinced that the materialised hands belonged to Spirits of a high order. She was not likely, therefore, to make her test anything but a stringent one. The gentleman on the medium's left, too, whilst hands were being felt by sitters in different parts of the circle, kept calling attention to the fact that he still held Miss Cook firmly by the hand. Notwithstanding all these precautions there were the large hands of a man being felt by the wife of this gentleman, whilst on the opposite side of the circle, besides the child's hand just mentioned, there were first an icy cold hand, apparently that of a woman, and then a warm delicately-shaped hand, with beautiful taper fingers, which rested long and lovingly in the hands of different members of the circle. It was quite impossible that these could have been the hands of one person, even supposing that person had possessed facilities for locomotion, and were so clear-sighted as to be able at once to touch the extended palms of the sitters without first feeling about for them.

The most remarkable part of this séance, however, was its close. After sitting for nearly two hours with an almost unbroken chain of manifestations, the sitters proposed to disperse. Just as they were about to relight and sing their final hymn, the male Spirit, who had been close to the lady all the evening, knelt down as if to bid her farewell. "He is kissing my hand. He is crying!" she exclaimed, being very nervous at the unfamiliar experiences of the evening. "I can feel the tears on my hands." The lights were struck and there were the signs of the tears on the lady's hands. There was, in fact, a materialised tear left after the Spirit who had shed that tear had disappeared. The lady who was holding Miss Cook, and who is a sensitively impressional medium, had conveyed to her the information that there was a meaning in the tear being left behind. It was the last tear which that hitherto sorrowing Spirit would ever shed.

Several important deductions flow out from this incident. It has been generally supposed that only comparatively earth-bound Spirits have the power to materialise; but here, amid the religious surroundings of the sitters (and, no doubt, in consequence of those surroundings), though the materialisations were complete, the whole tone of the sitting was obviously of the highest character. After all, may it not be a prejudice which decides that anything analogous to what we should call "degradation" is involved in the act of materialisation? Is it not a fact of revelation that the very highest Spirits have the power and the will to materialise, given suitable conditions on the part of those to whom the manifestation takes place? It is to be hoped that some teaching of a high order will be derived from these séances, which are being regularly held.



## SIMILAR MESSAGES THROUGH DIFFERENT MEDIUMS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. Podmore's suggestion that the close resemblance between the two Spirit messages—that given through me and that given by another unknown medium—points to the fact that both are derived from some common source, is a very feasible explanation; and if the common source could be pointed out, and I could recognise it as one which might have possibly come under my observation at some time, I might accept his explanation as both sufficient and probably correct. But it is plain that his suggestion does not carry us very far till this supposed common source is found.

Mr. Podmore is mistaken in supposing that the message was given to me in "trance." This is a psychologic state which has never occurred to me. All messages given to me come while my faculties are in their natural condition. But my mental condition is that of passive reception, not of active creation, or reproduction. And the result in the case of the message under consideration, I well remember, was one of half-sceptical surprise, which did not subside till after a severe mental struggle.

Moreover, I have no reason to suppose that such a long and detailed reproduction of anything I have read could take place without my being conscious of it. I have never known my memory play such fantastic tricks, in which most remarkable retentiveness and equally remarkable oblivion would, on Mr. Podmore's hypothesis, be strongly and very conveniently combined.

Perhaps this notion of a psychologic conspiracy is a more difficult explanation of the coincidence than the one that I am inclined myself to adopt, viz., that the common source must be found on the other side, and not in the mundane or mediumistic sphere at all. I admit all Mr. Podmore's remarks as to the limited and purely objective point of view taken in both messages. But so far as I am concerned, the message is only a small extract out of a collection which covers some hundreds of pages of MS., and the limitation which he refers to is by no means applicable to the entire series of which this is but a tiny scrap.

Yours truly,

F. J. THEOBALD.

February 19th, 1881.

## ÆSTHETICS AND SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—If I would condense my reflections on this subject to the utmost, it might read: *Æsthetics versus Spirit Phenomena*, that is, if the latter are considered on a broad scale, and particularly as witnessed in promiscuous séances. Every new investigator will be more or less disappointed, at times even disgusted, if his philosophical observation will not for a time silence the claims of refinement and fashion. Hence, a professor or adept of "fine art" will soon be offended by manifestations audible or visible if he enters the séance-room with the idea that Spirits must manifest according to his ideal, that is, to surpass the highest works of art or poetry, or in other words, that Spirits ought to be perfected beings. A musician suffers unspeakable tortures already by the singing which occurs in circles in order to harmonise "the mixed elements." I took once, in Manchester, an excellent lady singer into a séance and she expressed herself fairly perplexed with the phenomena. But next morning she wrote me a letter, full of abuse, about the "humbug," the argument resting greatly on the wretched music on that occasion. This refers, of course, to the discords and blots on this side, but the awful admixture of bad grammar, coarse music, and repulsive voices of rough Spirits "is still barring" the influx of fashionable inquirers.

I had this morning a most suggestive conversation with one of the most eminent musicians in England on our cause, and the triviality of the phenomena (those of refined home circles being ignored) was held by my distinguished opponent as conclusive that these signs could not be attributed to the highest source of being, or to God. I was disarmed in my attempt to draw attention to higher manifestations by the weighty and correct argument, that the Spirits never surpass the genius found on the earth-plane. True, and, therefore, I venture to state that we must look for the most sublime spiritual manifestations in the works of the great inspired masters, who developed their gifts as no ordinary medium could or would do, to enable the impressing or communicating Spirit to unfold itself fully. I have seen in mediumistic drawings touches of a master-hand mixed with childish distortions. We have to put æsthetical analysis aside in judging spiritual phenomena, but, strange to say, they sharpen our criticism on pieces of art, or music, when we return from the séance into the concert room or picture gallery. If we are possessed of a taste for art, we now detect more easily the touch of inspiration, and old favourites of laboured "skill" must give way to those rarer specimens, where we feel the influx of a spiritual world. A trivial manifestation, if connected with positive identity of a known departed, may shake our philosophy of death and a beyond to the bottom, and open new vistas before us, which the most exalted work of art may not directly be able to effect. Hence a few rude "raps"

telegraphed by a departed may tell more than the most fascinating symphony.

If this mistake, of fashioning the doings of Spirits in anticipation of what we have gathered from poetic fiction, or fairy tales in general, should be brought home to the public, a great deal may be gained in drawing new investigators to our cause, but in spiritual meetings the æsthetical feelings are often sadly offended. Wretched music, ugly distortions of new trance mediums, and the like, make us shy of introducing visitors, who naturally expect harmony for eye and ear in spiritual services. The standard, æsthetical criticism is fixed (even by aid of inspiring influences); and "bad stuff" is abominable whether produced on this plane or beyond. I still long for the ideal Spirit circle, that is, one of artists, musicians and poets with a high-class medium. Such a spiritual battery may open a new view on the above subject.

CHRISTIAN REIMERS.

London, February 20th, 1881.

## A PROPHECIC DREAM.

A lady, who I will designate as "Mrs. A.," dreamt that one of her neighbours, "Mrs. B.," called on her one evening and asked her if she would like to see a Spirit. Mrs. A. (in her dream) consented, an appointment being made for the following midnight. At the appointed time they went on foot to a cemetery in the neighbourhood and stopping at an iron gate Mrs. B. pointed out, *through the railings*, a white figure which slowly came towards them, dropping something that appeared like small pebbles. Mrs. A., on the approach of the figure, called, in her fright, to her friend to run away and after running some distance turned to speak to her, but could see her nowhere. Mrs. B. had disappeared. Mrs. A. woke agitated and surprised at the extraordinary distinctness of the dream. A day or two afterwards she told her dream to Mrs. B., who laughed at the dreamer, both being perfectly well in health, and pointed out to her that the cemetery in question had neither railings nor iron gate. Shortly afterwards Mrs. A. fell ill, and for a long time was unable to leave her house, during which period Mrs. B. suddenly died, was buried in the cemetery alluded to, and a marble monument was erected to her memory. And here comes the strangest part of the fulfilment. Mrs. A. some months afterwards visited the cemetery, and to her surprise found that *iron railings* had been placed round it and an *iron gate*, exactly as she saw them in her dream, and looking through the railings at the gate the first object she perceived was the monument to her friend, on the spot on which the white figure appeared.

W. P.

## THE LAST TEAR.

(See report of Séance.)

And is it so? And can you weep,  
Though landed on the eternal shore,  
Where we believed you wept no more?  
Some thought you wrapt in dreamless sleep.

You do not sleep. You stand again  
Amongst us, no ethereal form;  
We feel your hand full-fleshed and warm,  
And yet your face bears signs of pain.

Some olden memories of the past  
Perchance recur while here you stand,  
Leaving awhile the Summer Land  
Where now your peaceful lot is cast.

Once more within the weary round  
It was your bliss to leave behind,  
You feel some sorrow undefined  
Breaking awhile your rest profound.

Yet when, dissolved the transient spell,  
The circle you prepare to leave,  
You seem to us anew to grieve  
What time you bend to say farewell.

The lamps are lit; the parting past.  
Your teardrop on our hand is wet—  
Sweet symbol we can ne'er forget,  
That though you wept to leave us, yet  
The tear you shed shall be your last.

G. H. S.

Mr. J. J. Morse has just received a large consignment of the newest American works on Spiritualism, by Epes Sargent, Rev. S. Watson, J. M. Peebles, and a few remaining copies of *Ghost Land* and *Art Magic*, the last that can be had. Mr. Morse supplies all orders promptly and post free. See his advertisement.

Last week's number of *Fact* had the following reference to Mr. Ernest Wilding's new volume, "Songs of Passion and Pain." "Mr. E. Wilding, a poet of rare merit, who is not unknown to the readers of *Fact*, is about to issue a volume of poems. If they are in calibre equal to his 'Harmony in Sea and Silver,' which graced these columns, they will merit and obtain a wide appreciation. The publishers are Messrs. Newman and Co."

### WAS IT A FREAK OF SPIRIT POWER?

In the "Mémoires du Duc de St. Simon," 1856, vol. II. p. 298, is related the following remarkable incident:—

"That puts me in mind," says St. Simon, "of a still more extraordinary theft that took place a little before the commencement of these Memoirs. The grand suite of apartments at the Palace of Versailles was furnished with crimson velvet hangings, bordered with gold fringes. One morning it was found that the fringe had all been cut away, which, in a place so frequented by day, carefully closed at night, and watched at all hours, seemed next to a miracle. Bontems made the most searching inquiries, but all in vain. Five or six days afterwards I was at the King's supper with only D'Aquin, first physician to the King, between the King and me, and no one between me and the table. During the second course I suddenly saw flying through the air, as if coming from a long way behind me in the direction of the doorway between the two ante-chambers, some very large dark object, which I had not time to make out, on account of the rapidity with which it was precipitated upon the table, where it fell on the vacant place to the left of the King with a loud thump that made the dishes dance upon the table, though without upsetting any of them. The King, turning his head half round, calmly said, 'I believe it is my stolen fringe.' And so in fact it proved to be, the fringe being made up in an ill-formed packet of pyramidal shape, about two feet high, with a base as broad as a priest's hat with the flaps spread out flat. A thread of the fringe, detached in the air, fell upon the peruke of the King, and was removed by Livry, who, coming up to the table, perceived, as we all did, that it was the missing fringe twisted up into a bundle. Livry, stepping forward, to remove the bundle, found a note attached to it which he took up. The King stretched out his hand, saying, 'Let me see it.' Livry prudently withheld the note, and gave it behind the King's back to D'Aquin, in whose hands I read it at the same time that he himself did. In a tall feigned hand there were these words: 'Here are your fringes back again, Bontems; there is more pain than pleasure in them. My duty to the King.' The King again offered to take the note from the hands of D'Aquin, who stepped back, smelt the note, rubbed it, turned it over and over, then shewed it to the King without letting him touch it. The King told him to read it aloud, although he himself read it at the same time. 'This is insolence, indeed,' he said, in a quiet, matter-of-fact tone. He then told them to remove the packet, which Livry found to be so heavy he could hardly lift it from the table. The King took no further notice of the incident, and the rest of the supper passed off as if nothing had happened."

Besides the senseless audacity of such a mode of disposing of the stolen property, St. Simon remarks how inconceivable it was that a bundle of that size and weight could have been hurled over the heads of the crowds who always thronged the supper of the King without attracting notice.

### WINGS.

The Age is weary with fragmentary Thought,  
Which creeps on the circumference of things,  
But reaches not the centre, lacking wings—  
For without wings no living work is wrought,  
Seeing that thereby only can we rise  
Above the deadening fratricidal strife  
Wherewith fragmentary knowledge poisons life,  
And see God's Truths all round with purged eyes.  
Without the knowledge thus to guide his choice  
Man thinks as best he may—the thing that seems—  
Building the fabric of his life on dreams,  
And following as a God his natural voice.  
No man has knowledge in his proper store—  
He who would see things as they are—must soar.

A. A. W.

The effect of opiates on a sensitive system is very noteworthy. Epes Sargent described his symptoms under the influence of hashish in the closing weeks of his life as very remarkably confirmatory of the various accounts given in Eastern records. He seemed to pass into a state of exaltation in which his spiritual senses acted independently of his body. The following extract from the life of Kingsley points to a similar conclusion:—

"He was now kept constantly under the influence of opiates to quiet the cough and keep off hemorrhage, and his dreams were always of his travels. . . . His own physical experiences were very singular to him, for he sat as a spectator outside himself, and said if he recovered he would write a book about them."—Life of Kingsley, vol. 2, p. 457-8.

Many sensitives have experienced similar sensations. Dr. Wyld recently drew attention to the facts in a paper embodied in his book "Theosophy and the Higher Life." The subject deserves further attention.

### OBITUARY.

On the 16th inst., Ada Schallehn, aged 23, youngest daughter of H. Schallehn, Esq., passed away to the higher life, in perfect assurance of God's love, of a joyful meeting with dear ones on the other side, and of continued intercourse with those left on earth. Miss Ada Schallehn, whose sweet and intelligent face was familiar to many Spiritualists, was a member of my home-circle in 1872, at which period our experiences were such as to carry absolute conviction to the minds of all who participated in them. The evening prior to the change which released her from the physical sufferings she had so meekly borne she requested re-admission to the same circle in another capacity. "I shall try hard to come, you know!" was her promise; and, although our dear young friend is fitted for a high sphere, we have no apprehension that the affectionate intercourse between her and the other members of our circle will be terminated by what is called death.

DESMOND G. FITZ-GERALD.

### LIVERPOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Notice of Removal.—This Society has removed from Perth Hall to the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson-street, where services will be held every Sunday at 2.30 p.m., and 7.0 p.m., and on Monday evenings, at No. 11, Towerlands-street, Edgehill, at 8 p.m.

### CARDIFF.

At the weekly meeting, on Sunday evening last, Mr. M. Williams in the chair, Mr. Windoe read extracts from "Plain Truths about the Bible," by the Rev. John Page Hopps. The reading was followed by an interesting and well sustained discussion relative to the authenticity of the books of the Old and New Testaments, mention being made of several important numismatic writings as well as of Professor Oppert's comparison of the Hebraic and Chaldean Chronologies, &c. The new constitution and rules of the Society were subsequently unanimously voted.

### WALSALL.

The members of the Spiritual Society in this town concluded, on Sunday last, a series of anniversary meetings, commemorative of the opening of their meeting-room. The services were also intended to hold in memory the departure to the higher life of Mr. Daniel Holmes, a medium highly esteemed in the town. The public meetings now held have arisen out of a flower service led by Mr. F. O. Matthews, on the occasion of Mr. Holmes' funeral.

The late series of meetings extended over three Sundays, and were commenced by Mr. E. W. Wallis delivering two inspirational lectures on 6th inst., one on "Conscience," and another on "Spirits;" both lectures being pronounced highly satisfactory. On Sunday, the 13th inst., Mr. R. Harper, of Birmingham, gave an excellent lecture upon "Somnambulism," the attendance being large and appreciative. On the following evening a coffee supper was held. A numerous company attended on Sunday last. Mr. J. J. Morse kindly gave his services, closing the anniversary meetings with two excellent lectures; the one at night, on "Sinners, Saints, and Saviours," being listened to by a very large audience. It is the general desire that it may soon be convenient for the above gentleman to revisit us.—T. BLINKHORN, Secretary.

### SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUAL SOCIETY.

On Wednesday evening, 16th inst., Mr. J. J. Morse gave a very interesting address under the influence of his Spiritual guides, entitled, "Spirits: what are they, and whence do they come?" The address was listened to with great attention, and appeared to give satisfaction to a select, if not large audience, as, through various circumstances, several persons were prevented from attending. I would beg to add that the Society is endeavouring to improve the vocal performances at its meetings, and considerable progress has already been made, through the introduction and careful practice of several new hymn tunes, chants, &c.

We shall be happy to receive a visit from any earnest investigators, resident in this locality, or other parts of London. Our meetings are held on Thursdays, at 8, and Sundays 11 and 7.—J. G. ROBSON, Secretary, 8, Bournemouth-road, Rye-lane, Peckham.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C.C.O.—We shall deal with the subject ourselves—probably in our next number. Nevertheless, we should have been pleased to insert your letter had it not been far too lengthy—may we also add, a little too severe?

H.A.K.—We shall be glad to receive, and print, any "official" information you please to send us. Our report of the meeting you mention was sent in the ordinary course, and, unless the meeting was held with closed doors, the report was legitimate, being limited to facts.



## Spiritualist Societies.

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

### METROPOLITAN.

- British National Association of Spiritualists. 38, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.O. Mr. Thos. Blyton, Secretary.  
 Brixton Psychological Society. 6, Akerman Road, Brixton, London, S.W. Mr. H. E. Frances, Hon. Secretary, 22, Cowley Road, Brixton, S.W.  
 Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism. 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston Lane Hackney Downs, London, E. Mr. J. J. Morse, President.  
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