

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In 'The Theosophical Review,' for November, Mr. Michael Wood tells an extremely pathetic but useful story concerning a young seer whose guardian tried to knock his supposed 'lying' out of him. The story is not entirely a work of imagination. There are many hard, conventional fools in the world quite as absurd and cruel as Hugh March. On a less wicked level there are multitudes who fight with equal pertinacity against this good gift of God. In a footnote, the writer says: 'The drastic methods which were employed for the repression of the gifts of the luckless little seer are facts, and that is the reason I wrote the story. . . I fancy no cruelty is so hopelessly incurable as that which is rooted in ignorance, stupidity, and self-righteousness.'

In this same number, a Paper by Ernest Horowitz on 'Modern Thought in the Light of the Vedānta' deserves special attention, especially at this moment when so many thinkers are studying the points of actual difference and of possible contact between the East and the West. Certainly, Vedānta teaching has significantly interested England and America for some years, suggesting to many the need and the possibility of at least a bridge between spiritual Christianity and Vedāntic Philosophy; or even between Vedāntic philosophers and really modern scientists. We believe in the probability of this. The tendency everywhere is towards spiritual Monism. What we have to do first is to rid ourselves of the old missionary egotism or bigotry. There are many roads to God, and our true work is, not to condemn any, but to find out the one secret of them all.

Mr. Horowitz holds that in the union of Christian and Vedāntic forces there is a possibility of a tremendous revival of spiritual religion, mightier and farther-reaching than the momentous reformation of Luther and Calvin. He says:—

The monistic revival of the twentieth century will achieve no less, I believe, than the spiritualisation of scientific research, and the rationalisation of religious fervour. Then Science and Religion will cease their conflict, and will peacefully flourish, side by side, like two fruitful-branches grown from the same tree of Divine Knowledge.

A great outpouring of spirit will pass over the earth, and the time will be ripe for the Church Universal, when the Christian and the Indian Churches may meet as friends on the common ground of the Vedānta. The day will likewise come when another Divine Institution, the Mohammedan Brotherhood, will be incorporated into the Monistic Church, for Islām, too, has realised the 'One without a second,' thanks to the illumination of the 'God-intoxicated' Sūfis. Sādi and Hāfiz have done for Mohammedanism what Eckart and Tauler did for Christianity, and the Vedānta for the religions of India. May the time soon draw nigh when we shall be ready to institute the Church Universal!

A costly memorial to Adin Ballou has just been erected at Hopedale in America, by friends of peace, education and reform. He was indeed a noble and notable character, one of those who ought to be kept in remembrance. Mr. Wilder, writing in 'The Banner of Light,' reminds us,—though there was no danger of our forgetting it—that Adin Ballou was an ardent and intelligent Spiritualist. He says:—

Another phase of Mr. Ballou's history has been slurred over. I know of it from a little work on my shelves. Mr. Ballou was a Spiritualist and published his observations. He never asked, Is the matter popular, but, Is it true? Once convinced, he did not hesitate to acknowledge it freely. Like a true successor of John Robinson, he did not suppose that Luther and Calvin had revealed and explained all, but that God had more truth to reveal. He thought he found it in the Bible; but he hesitated not to hear it from other sources. The sitting was a legitimate method; he only desired a pure and truthful intermediary. So he listened like a child and uttered his testimonies like a man.

The anxious people who

Linger, shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away,

wringing their hands in the meantime, lest Telepathy should lead to Spiritualism, and Spiritualism to the ruin of the mind and the reign of the devil, might do well to ponder these words of Sir Wm. Crookes: 'Whilst it is clear that our knowledge of sub-conscious mentation is still to be developed, we must beware of rashly assuming that all vibrations from the normal waking conditions are necessarily morbid. The human race has reached no fixed or changeless ideal; in every direction there is evolution as well as disintegration.'

This takes us very far afield. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be': but we know that we are being led onward and upward; and it is quite possible that what to-day alarms us as something morbid may, in days to come, blossom and fruit as one of the most precious growths on the tree of life.

Sir Hubert Jerningham, in a pleasant autobiographical sketch in 'M. A. P.' for December 8th, gives the following rather amusing account of the beneficial results which followed upon a vision of a ghost which appeared to him when he was a child:—

My advent disappointed my father, who wanted a daughter, and took to his bed for a week in consequence. Annoyed at the small warmth of my reception, it appears I took a baby's revenge by refusing to smile at my parents for fully three years. At the end of which time, however, a precocious misgiving on my part that I had sulked too long and owed respectful amends to the authors of my existence, proved beneficial all round. I saw a ghost, a good, wholesome, family ghost, who, by her very fitful appearances in the course of some twenty generations, is still considered as a harbinger of good fortune to those she frightens into hysterics, as she did me. My father was delighted. He was not much in luck at the time, and I henceforth became his boon companion, the one thing in the world wanted to bring out all the smiles and laughter and sunshine that warmed within a child's heart for the cleverest, most charming and most gifted of parents; and it is the delight of my life to remember how, day after day, we sauntered together in mirth and happiness, until his early death, when I was ten years of age, taught me the first sorrow of my life.

From Mr. James Bowden (Covent Garden) comes a copy of the fourth edition of Mr. W. J. Dawson's exceedingly beautiful book, 'The House of dreams.' It is not at all necessary that we should agree with everything or admire everything in this arresting work: it is sufficient that we recognise fully its richness of imagination and its spiritual beauty. The writer makes the spirit-world tremendously real; flooded with life—nothing but life—the scenery lives, and the life fluctuates with every change of moral and spiritual circumstance: but, through all, the life and thought of the all-discerning God thrill and breathe and judge—and save.

Mr. Dawson, in our judgment, makes very much too free a use of 'The Cross': in fact, in more than one passage, his excessive insistence upon it almost takes the proverbial step from the sublime to the ridiculous. But many might not notice it, while some would like it. We can only say that it appears to us to be affected and theatrical. But it is a defect which is outshone by the general splendour of the book as a whole.

From Messrs. Watts and Co., London, we have received a stirring booklet by Mr. J. S. Laurie, on 'Gospel Christianity *versus* Dogma and Ritual. A Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.' In reality, Mr. Laurie's Epistle is a hard-hitting attack on ecclesiastical Christianity, and the Archbishop disposes of him only by bowing him, or almost kicking him, out of court: but, for all that, Mr. Laurie has the best of it, and his sixty pages would take a deal of refuting.

This, by an unknown writer, helps to reconcile us to the unceasing mystery,—the passing away of competent and willing helpers while it is yet bright day with them:—

O happy blessed way
To reach the Eternal Day,
Before dark age's night
Had touched you with its blight;
While still at work,
With unabated power
To go from Life to Light
In one short hour!

The reconciliation comes, though, only through the faith that no light is eclipsed, no working power destroyed, no career ended. The prayer against sudden death has no special charm for us

'A ROMANCE OF THE UNSEEN.'

As a rule we do not care for 'novels with a purpose,' and nearly all the stories that we have seen in which psychical matters are introduced have been unsatisfactory because the writers have been ignorant of the subject and have made grotesque blunders or absurd and exaggerated assertions which would give a very erroneous impression to the reader. We have, however, in the work before us entitled 'A Romance of the Unseen,' written by M. E. Winchester (and published by Digby Long and Co., Bouverie-street), a book which will be read with interest and pleasure by those of our readers who enjoy healthy and vigorous fiction. The author deals with psychical problems and experiences in a clear, rational, and clever fashion, besides giving us a story of considerable power and merit. There are several blemishes, notably the affectation of learning by the employment of unnecessary scientific phrases and the constant use of the term 'irids' for eyes, and there is also a serious fault in the manner of the marriage of the hero, a marriage which would not be legal as the writer clearly believes it would. These faults, however, may be pardoned by the student of psychical matters, who will find clairvoyant and psychometric perceptions and the philosophical explanation of their existence and employment well worthy of careful study. 'A Romance of the Unseen' is a book which would be likely to produce a favourable impression upon the reader who, through its pages, makes a first acquaintance with psychic science, and would be really helpful and interesting to many who are already acquainted with the subject.

THE AUTOMATIC DRAWINGS OF MONSIEUR F. DESMOULIN.

The phenomena of automatic drawing obtained through the mediumship of M. Desmoulin, a well-known water-colour artist in Paris, having recently obtained some notice from the daily Press of France, and so let in the light of publicity on to these hitherto unsuspected psychic occurrences, it has been suggested that a fuller account concerning this artist's remarkable phase of development would interest readers of 'LIGHT.' The allusion I made to his automatic drawing when writing of the International Congress was of the briefest description, as space had to be considered; but I am pleased now to supplement those first few remarks and corroborate the account which Mrs. E. Bathe contributed to last week's 'LIGHT,' relative to the séance held by her in Paris. An interview with M. Desmoulin, published in the 'Eclair' a short time ago and reproduced in M. Delanne's 'Review,' supplies all the principal information and adequately touches on the prominent features of this very interesting case. As all coincides exactly with what M. Desmoulin told me during a visit I paid to his studio after the séance, I cannot do better than translate certain portions of this French interview, making, in addition, one or two observations of my own.

To begin with, M. Desmoulin is a familiar personality in the leading literary and artistic society of Paris. His affection for Zola is well known, and when that great writer found it necessary to quit France, and seek temporary exile in England during the Dreyfus crisis, M. Desmoulin sacrificed home and work to go with his friend and help him to live through that forced seclusion in this country.

Surrounded as this artist is by a brilliant and materially inclined circle of friends, it was through a purely accidental occurrence that he became roused into the desire to exploit spiritistic phenomena. It happened in the following manner: 'A few months ago,' he tells us, 'I was dining with friends when two young ladies who were of the party suggested, after the meal, that it might be amusing to try a little table turning. The following rather strange phenomena were the result. The table began to move, rose in the air, and then remained stationary there. Several of us endeavoured to draw the table back to its original position but found it immovable. Greater force being then exercised resulted in the smashing of the table. This impressed me considerably, and as I had already heard some accounts of mediumistic phenomena, I determined, on returning home, to see whether I could do anything myself. I took a sheet of ordinary white drawing paper and with pen in hand sat and waited.'

M. Desmoulin then produced for the benefit of his interviewer the first few sheets of automatic control, which he shows to all his friends who are interested in the subject. These first efforts are more curious than wonderful, being mazes of lines and curves in which a vague and indistinct aim to produce some particular effect is clearly visible.

The artist admits that these early trials were not particularly encouraging but still he felt inclined to persevere, and he found that every fresh attempt was an improvement on the former, till at last definite subjects and studies were laboriously evolved, rousing the medium's curiosity and wonder more and more. As M. Desmoulin has faithfully preserved every single sheet filled in by this invisible guide, his work up to the present forms an exceedingly interesting and instructive series of progressive artistic studies. The first scratchings and lines were made in pen and ink, until one day the idea came to him to try with a pencil instead, when the following message was written: 'I leave you. Another spirit much wishes to draw through you.' In effect a fresh style was almost immediately projected, having a bolder and more advanced stamp about it. Before commencing a definite work this new control started to practise on his medium, and as if to accustom himself to the task moved the artist's hand with great power and rapidity round the paper, then in curves, and finally worked upon heavy light and shade effects. These movements were then brusquely terminated and without more ado M. Desmoulin found his hand drawing steadily,

giving him almost the impression that it must be endowed with a thinking brain of its own.

An excellent study of two figures was gradually formed, that of a man and woman, and the style of this first picture is exceptionally good in its suggestion of bold carving in oak. 'I put in five minutes of work on this study,' he informs us. 'My hand drew and drew with a mad rapidity, and I had not the slightest idea of what it would eventually prove to be. When the drawing ceased I looked at it and found to my surprise that the picture had been made on the slant.' Looking at many of M. Desmoulin's automatic productions, one little realises, unless informed, that they were drawn at a very different angle from the one at which you view them, and some of his very good specimens of heads and faces were produced literally upside down.

The spirit-intelligence refuses all requests that he should give himself a name, and invariably signs as 'Instructor.' Once when M. Desmoulin insisted on knowing his identity, he wrote chaffingly, 'Oh, call me Spinoza if you like'; and at another time, 'I am Botticelli.' The artist and his 'Instructor' are very good friends, however, and often hold amusing conversations together, though there are times when this unknown guide appears to become irritable and bad-tempered. 'On one occasion,' says the medium, 'I started to make a portrait of the little daughter of a friend of mine, who is a celebrated novelist, and I found great difficulty in catching the likeness. All of a sudden my hand was impelled to write in a corner of the paper, "Idiot, take another sheet of paper." I obeyed, and in a few moments my first sketch in pencil was made, and the likeness proved most striking. The pose, too, was altogether different from the one I had originally chosen; more than that, all this was done without giving my subject a glance. He likes to astonish me above all things. On several occasions he has made me execute, in the presence of others, portraits of persons I have never seen, and these have proved to be relations or friends of people who are among my acquaintances. These friends, much astonished, attribute the lightning sketches from the unseen to my own powers of observation.'

M. Desmoulin, who knows nothing about the science or theories of Spiritualism, listens very attentively to any hints or explanations which may be forthcoming from friends more acquainted with our facts than himself. The interviewer asked him whether he had any ideas concerning how the phenomena might possibly be produced, and obtained the reply, 'I state facts; I do not explain. All this work is foreign to my usual thought and style. I live in an atmosphere of practical, matter-of-fact people, who care nothing for mysticism, and I myself, so exact and painstaking in work, have nothing in common with that Instructor who, extravagant in his methods, flings in his portraits without apparently heeding where he will put the eyes, nose, or mouth.'

M. Desmoulin has had all his best pencil drawings framed, and these form a thoroughly unique gallery of studies in figures. The majority of these heads are very sad, and even terrible, and suggest that they are possibly portraits of souls who have recently passed over from the lowest grades of humanity. Brutal and repulsive, sad or apparently asleep, these pictures are grimly realistic. A few portraits are also to be seen evidently depicting a more advanced stage of spirit condition, for these are drawn with lighter touch, while flowers surround the heads, and the faces do not give one the same impression of misery and obscurity of atmosphere as do the others.

When the artist works under control his hand moves incessantly and rapidly, evolving a heavy chalk-like background. A light part in the centre of the paper is left for the face which is to be reproduced. Eyes are generally started first, and then the other features follow. When these are outlined the shading is put in with renewed rapidity but lighter touch, and the whole picture rarely takes more than five or eight minutes.

On asking M. Desmoulin, when looking at his sketches, whether he had ever thought of explaining the whole work and personality of 'Instructor' by the subliminal consciousness theory, which can simulate spirit agency very well at

times, he decided after a little consideration that no explanation of that mental order would in any way satisfactorily account for the phenomena. 'Instructor,' he considers, acts and talks with such freedom and independence that you are obliged to treat him as a rational, if invisible, personality. This control is sometimes absent, and then M. Desmoulin is quite unable to obtain anything automatically. He related an instance of this, disposing at the same time of my hint that auto-suggestion might account for his hand remaining passive when his guide informed him he would be away.

One day 'Instructor' told him that he should not be able to control for any drawing the next day, as he had to be elsewhere. On being questioned whether he would return the day after, he answered, 'Yes, and in the morning.' On the day after, therefore, as arranged, M. Desmoulin seated himself, and waiting, pencil in hand, for his friend, found that no sign came and no movement stirred the pencil. Somewhat mystified, he gave up, and proceeded with his ordinary work for about an hour, thinking that perhaps 'Instructor' was not ready. On again placing himself at the table in expectancy, the result was the same, and this unresponsiveness on the part of his guide lasted till late in the afternoon, when for the last time that day M. Desmoulin tried for control. Now, however, his hand was suddenly seized, and without any warning, commenced working as usual in hot haste, stopping only, at the artist's request for an explanation, to make a hurried apology—he had been detained and was sorry for the delay, &c.—nothing more.

For the benefit of those who are interested in the conditions and characteristics of mediumistic people, I should describe M. Desmoulin as kind and sympathetic, extremely artistic and sensitive, but by no means morbid or eccentric. Thoroughly well balanced, he is keenly alive to impressions and quick in thought and action. His manner of receiving this phenomenon is entirely practical and good-natured, without a trace of excitability. He maintains a firm and rational attitude towards this mediumistic work and does not allow it to interfere in any way with his ordinary avocations. He rather suggests the comrade who is willing to accept a new line of thought and impression from a fellow artist, and good-temperedly allows his friend to proceed on the methods he fancies.

M. Desmoulin's own paintings are perfect in delicacy of treatment and technique. His refinement is indeed at variance with the bold dash of his unseen friend. He has also painted in oil under control, and a large incomplete canvas which shows signs of great promise is stowed away in one corner of his studio. The medium finds at present more difficulty in taking the control for this work, as he says the guide uses and mixes his colours so differently from himself and also so quickly that he has not yet arrived at getting the work properly executed.

'Instructor' predicts extraordinary success for his medium in the future, and also says that before long a most famous deceased painter is coming forward to take him in hand.

All that, however, as it may be; the present is certainly not uninteresting, and psychologists would be foolish if they lost sight of a personality endowed with psychic faculties of so pronounced a type as M. Desmoulin's undoubtedly is.

J. STANNARD.

MR. A. PETERS requests us to announce that he will be away from town from December 14th until early in the New Year.

IS 'LIGHT' IN FAULT?—A correspondent writes: "‘LIGHT’ deserves an enormous increase in its circulation, for it must do a vast amount of good, and should be in every home. Some months ago, in conversation with one of our leaders here (and I believe he is a really good fellow), I found he used to be a regular reader of ‘LIGHT,’ but he had given it up because it was ‘too intellectual’ and ‘above’ him.—It is a pity our correspondent did not recommend his friend himself to rise to the ‘too intellectual’ level of ‘LIGHT.’"

THE GERMAN PSYCHICAL JOURNALS.

MATERIALIZATIONS.

Among the serial articles in 'Übersinnliche Welt' for November, the most interesting from a spiritualistic point of view is one by G. L. Dankmar, entitled 'New Facts and Old Problems.' He describes very minutely two materialisation séances at which he was present in New York—presumably last year. In reading this account, I am rather inclined to wonder that Herr Dankmar thought them worthy of such a very detailed description; for, from a critical point of view, neither of them seems to me free from the suspicion that the supposed phenomena may have been pure pretension. Both of them took place at the residence of the mediums, and they were the usual dark or semi-dark séances, with the cabinets, so common in America, and no precautions against imposture seem to have been taken.

The first séance described was at the rooms of a Mrs. Chamberlain in Brooklyn. There were nine persons present, including the medium and her husband. During the first part of the proceedings the medium took her place with the others in front of the curtain; the room was then darkened, voices were heard from the cabinet, and figures appeared more or less distinctly. After the first two or three the medium retired into the cabinet. No one seems to have recognised the forms, one of which, however, beckoned to Herr Dankmar and took his hands in its own; those of the form felt cold and clammy and slipped away from his; the face was covered by a veil and appeared phosphorescent. Apparently embarrassed by the searching gaze of Herr Dankmar, it hastily retreated into the cabinet. Afterwards a voice said that someone named Christine wished to speak to the German gentleman; the latter, however, had never known anyone of that name. Finally the medium herself, *clothed in white*, was seen to come out of the cabinet; her face, uncovered and only slightly altered, being recognised by all; this Herr Dankmar looks upon as a 'transfiguration.'

The second of these séances, which Herr Dankmar says was for him the most convincing of any at which he has ever been present, he describes most minutely; five pages being devoted to the account, which includes a plan of the room in which the séance was held. As I have never been to America, I felt somewhat interested in noting in what manner such matters are conducted in that country, and as many readers of 'LIGHT' may have the same feeling, I will endeavour to give a brief condensed account of the proceedings, as far as possible in the writer's own words.

Herr Dankmar went, on a Sunday evening in December to the house in which the medium—Mrs. Stoddard-Grey—resided, and was ushered into a large and elegantly-furnished room, having a thick carpet, where he was received by the lady, whom he describes as an old, wrinkled woman, with a false front. Mrs. Stoddard-Grey informed him that she had recently recovered from a severe illness, and for some time past had discontinued giving materialisation séances, but had a most efficient substitute in her step-son, Mr. De Witt Hough, who was a wonderful medium. Then, for the first time, Herr Dankmar noticed, crouched on a chair behind the stove, the figure of a short man with a beard and a pale face, whose whole manner and appearance were that of an imbecile or *crétin*. This prepossessing individual only acknowledged the greetings of the visitors by a grin. A third member of this family party was Mr. Stoddard-Grey. The cabinet was a sort of movable screen, with curtains, which Herr Dankmar was invited to assist in setting up in any place he selected, and he chose a blind corner of the room. After twelve persons had arrived the séance commenced, Mrs. Stoddard-Grey standing all the time close before the entrance to the cabinet, Herr Dankmar being at one end of the semi-circle of spectators, and Mr. Stoddard-Grey at the other. Before the séance began Herr Dankmar and a lady were invited to examine the cabinet, in which they found a very large easy chair almost filling the cabinet, and a small box, which, on opening it, Herr Dankmar found to contain some dolls, toys and dolls' clothing. (!) In front of the cabinet were two tables, having on them the usual bells, paper, &c. Mr. Stoddard-

Grey manipulated the electric light, which was shaded with paper over it. At first there was complete darkness, afterwards more or less light was admitted. The séance commenced with a prayer and the company joined in singing hymns at every interval. The usual phenomena with the bells and harmonica followed, and a disagreeable harsh voice—presumably that of the control—proceeded from the cabinet. Mr. De Witt Hough's voice, by the way, had apparently never been heard! Then, in sufficient light, the materialisations began. The first was a female form, which only just showed itself between the curtains; then two figures of children shot out 'like clowns at a circus,' one carrying a doll, the other a rattle, and disappeared into the cabinet as quickly as they had issued from it. Then, after a pause, came out a thin old man, with white hair and *no beard*, in spite of which he bore a resemblance to the bearded medium. This figure advanced to the table, and, without looking at it, 'gazing in a ghostly manner into vacancy,' commenced to write, or rather scribble, with the unpointed end of the pencil on the sheets of paper, which he then threw on the ground. On the visitors picking them up afterwards, Herr Dankmar found his covered with phosphorescent letters. This form remained about a minute and a-half, and then returned to the cabinet, without looking at the visitors; his movements were 'angular and automatic, like those of a sleep-walker'; and this peculiarity seems to have characterised the other phantoms, who, says Herr Dankmar, 'seemed very unintelligent (perhaps corresponding with the medium) and scarcely spoke at all.' Twice during the séance, a glass of water was asked for from the cabinet, which Mrs. Stoddard-Grey provided; a hand and arm clothed in white being stretched out from between the curtains to receive it, and to return it emptied. Several other figures appeared, among which were three female forms together; and one giant-like male form came to the entrance of the cabinet, but was too tall to come out, and in attempting to do so, lifted the cabinet bodily from the ground, when Mrs. Stoddard-Grey pushed him back into it.

But I must not—in justice—omit to give the most remarkable of these appearances, which seems to have made a great impression on Herr Dankmar. While some of the forms were still visible a lady next him touched his arm and pointed to the table near him, under which he perceived a white mist-like sort of ball, or rather balloon, of fine white gauze, which slowly advanced, and out of which gradually emerged a female form—first the head, then the body. The face was covered, but the long hair and bare arms were visible. This wonderful figure bowed graciously, and then returned to the cabinet, appearing to partly dematerialise as she entered it. After the appearance of the inconveniently tall figure, the dissonant voice of the control declared that the power was exhausted, and with some more singing the séance terminated, the medium being found, still entranced, reclining in the easy chair.

For the sake of brevity I have omitted several details, one of which, however, I think I ought to mention. At the beginning of the séance, when the room was in complete darkness, a gentleman who came with his wife, and who had been present at the first séance described, being *seized with nervousness*, got up and left the room, the door of which could not therefore have been locked; he was found sitting in the ante-room after the séance was over. Of course everything *may* have been genuine; I am not at all of a suspicious nature, but I confess that the account, as it stands, does not appear so 'convincing' to me as it does to Herr Dankmar. Given three persons, who may have been confederates, including the *crétin*-like medium, whose imbecility *may* have been a clever piece of acting; and given possibly some accomplices among the sitters, several of whom seem to have been *habitués*; the very large easy chair and box of toys placed in the cabinet, in which paraphernalia and disguises might possibly have been concealed; and an unusual amount of singing to cover any sounds, it does not seem absolutely impossible that very remarkable 'phenomena' might have been produced without the aid of spirits. So many performances of 'materialisations,' especially in America, have been proved to be impostures, that although I have not the slightest idea how they were

produced—any more than I have how *sofite* which I once witnessed at a dark séance given by Mr. Maskelyne were accomplished—I should not greatly care to be present at the materialisation séances of Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard-Grey and M. De Witt Hough, especially as the controls of an imbecile, even if they were genuine, are not likely to have been of a high order.

M. T.

CONCERNING FORECASTS.

BY 'AN OLD CORRESPONDENT.'

I have always inclined to a pessimistic view regarding the capacity of psychics to foretell future events, and yet, time and again, a bit of real evidence turns up going to show that, given good conditions, some clairvoyants have at intervals the power vouchsafed to them of telling 'things to come.' My own experience goes for very little in that respect, but such as it is, perhaps a few facts may not be without interest.

The first incident of the nature of a 'forecast' brought under my notice was so long ago as the year 1870, when I was an earnest inquirer into the 'new cult.' A literary friend of mine, to whom the whole subject had been a *terra incognita*, and with whom I had discussed the matter on various occasions, met me one night at supper at the house of a mutual friend. On this occasion he was not disposed to treat the subject in the sceptical or scoffing way he had hitherto been doing, for he then informed me there was really 'something in it' after all. He told us that on the previous day he and another gentleman, both on the staff of the same daily paper, had had a séance with Lottie Fowler, then in the zenith of her powers as a psychic. She told him many things about his past, all true and very much to the point; and then before the séance closed the medium (in trance) said: 'When you go back to your newspaper office you will find an extraordinary and unexpected thing has happened.' 'Well,' said my friend, 'we were intensely surprised on our return to the office to find that during our absence the editor-in-chief of the paper, a well-known man of letters, had resigned his post, and left the office.' Of this sudden event they had not, my informant said, the slightest premonition, and yet it was foretold, not perhaps specifically in words, but clearly indicated by the clairvoyante.

The next incident of the nature of a 'forecast' occurred at a séance I had with Madame Greck about ten years ago. She was a total stranger to me, and I went to her as a 'healing medium,' because at that time and for some time previously I had suffered intensely from insomnia, with all its attendant horrors. On the day of my visit I had had a 'good night,' and was in particularly good condition, with no signs whatever of nerve prostration about me. I said nothing about my ailment to the medium, and yet under control the person describing himself as 'Sir John Forbes, the Queen's Physician,' accurately described my condition and sufferings, and promised that he and another spirit colleague would visit me in my home often, and would in process of time entirely remove the acute nervous depression from which I suffered. Well, no miracle was wrought; my cure did not begin exactly the next day, but slowly and surely after that séance the 'cloud' left me, and in about three months thereafter I became my old self again. And yet in all other respects this medium did not impress me favourably as regards any of her powers, but rather the reverse; so that after the séance (at which others were present) I was not (mentally) disposed to regard the prediction as at all a safe one, or likely to be fulfilled; and yet it came right.

The next incident occurred about five years ago. A professional friend, a Spiritualist of many years' standing, whose daughter has excellent gifts as a psychic, was visiting us one night. One of the circle (a lady) had been in poor health for a long time, was very despondent of recovery, as she had a variety of physical troubles, and though not 'moribund,' imagined herself so. In the course of the sitting the psychic said to the invalid: 'Your sister Jane has just come to me and bids me tell you not to fret; you will come all right and she sees you living on and your family all well settled long before you go.' Five years have since elapsed, the lady is still 'with us,' much better, and true enough, her

large family are getting gradually well settled; so the forecast of 'Sister Jane' from the spirit-world has come true.

I again recall that three years ago, this very month of November, a near relative of mine had been lying for two months unconscious from cerebral congestion, with two specialists and two nurses in attendance, and all hope abandoned; and yet the ex-Lancashire doctor, who controls my clairvoyant relative, through a trance medium selected by him and brought at his request to her house, predicted complete recovery, and the patient lived, and is living still in good health.

Here, however, on the other hand is a prediction not fulfilled. In September, 1899, at a séance with Mrs. Treadwell at which one of my sons was present, 'Sophy,' her Indian control, made certain statements to me quite accurately describing the professional position of one of my sons who sat with us, and also his elder brother, resident in another town, and predicted advancement in a certain direction to the former at Christmas, 1899, and to the latter a month later. Neither of these predictions was fulfilled, although at both dates mentioned everything looked as if what had been 'forecasted' would come to pass; but suddenly events changed, and 'Sophy' proved on this occasion to be a 'false seeress.'

My last incident is also connected with 'Sophy.' At a sitting with Mrs. Treadwell in September last at her house in St. John's Wood, among others present with me was a young relative, who had just resolved to start business on his own account in the profession he had chosen. On my advice he had delayed doing so, and was waiting for a possible vacancy in a certain post by the retirement of a gentleman known to me, and although I was extremely hopeless of his success, I put the question to 'Sophy' as to how matters would turn out. The circumstances were certainly peculiar, and yet 'Sophy' was *au fait* with the whole matter, and cheerfully predicted complete success in my friend's application. And greatly to my surprise her prediction was fulfilled at the time she specified; so on this occasion this intelligent and sprightly Indian spirit redeemed her reputation as (occasionally at least) a good seeress.

I have been led to lay these few instances of 'forecasts' before your readers, in the hope that some of them will follow my example and relate their experiences in a similar direction. The subject is full of interest, and though we may never 'on this side' know the 'why or wherefore' of predictions of future events, yet when they do occur and are duly noted, they will certainly afford food for thought to all earnest truth-seekers. The details given are entirely personal and of a commonplace character, but such as they are they appear to me to show that on occasion our friends on 'the other side' are able to give us some glimpses of the future, and also, as we very well know, oftentimes enable some on this side, who regard spiritual predictions and warnings received, to give heed to them and often to escape danger, disaster, or even death by misadventure; thus exemplifying the saying of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles that we are encompassed about with a great 'cloud of witnesses'—some undoubtedly beneficent and others, it may be, the very opposite, yet all intelligences actively directing their forces on the material world they have left.

PRIVATE MEETING WITH A PUBLIC PSYCHOMETRIST.—A journalist in Newcastle writes:—Mr. H. E. Howes, of Blackpool, where I believe he was chairman of the Spiritualist Society and helped to found the church there, was introduced to me on Saturday by Mr. W. H. Robinson, and I had with him an interesting meeting at my house. He claims to be a magnetic healer and psychometrist, both gifts being manifested in his normal condition. Mr. Howes interrupted in a general conversation to describe a spirit form which he saw in the room and while I thought I identified it I gave him two albums to look through, to see if he could find a picture like that of the lady he saw. He very readily discovered it in the portrait of my mother, which was just as I had thought from his description. He psychometrised very well, without touching any article; read me as if I were an open book; so, too, my wife and a son abroad, the latter from an article he used to wear; and also a daughter. He dwells mostly upon that which relates to the past and present, and as a clairvoyant he would be no less successful with the future if it were not tabooed as 'fortune-telling.' Mr. Howes seems likely to be a splendid accession to the list of public mediums, and he speaks well. He is a widower with four children.

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EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

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GOD STILL INSPIRES.

Dr. Heber Newton, to whom we have occasionally referred as an influential Episcopal clergyman in New York, continues vigorously his enlightening work as a spiritual rationalist. On all the great subjects of religion and theology he stands in New York very much where Canon Wilberforce and Mr. Haweis stand in London:—none of them lingering behind with the mediæval interpretations of the old creeds, however bothered they may be with the burden of the old words. In fact, the teachings or suggestions of 'LIGHT' on these great subjects are, so far as we can see, precisely those of these advancing men.

This is especially true of the vital subject indicated by the words 'Inspiration' and 'Revelation,'—a vital subject with us, as we have always held that separate opinions are of but little importance compared with the great thought which lies at the fountain head. In the unceasing struggle for truth, we would make an obscurantist a present of all the old dogmas if he would only leave with us the admission that God still inspires the human spirit, and that the Heavenly Father can still guide His earthly child. Admit that, and the struggle is over: admit that, and we are free to shut the book and enter into the sanctuary of the soul: admit that, and it not only becomes our right but our urgent duty to revise all faiths in the light of the hopes, the insinuations and the inspirations of our day: and then the battle is won.

Dr. Heber Newton, in 'Mind' for November, discusses this subject in his usual frank and spirited way. His very first words lift up the subject at once to the highest attained plane:—'In the light which the Spirit of Truth now sheds upon us, the general principles involved in our belief in inspiration may be stated somewhat as follows.' A severe critic might call that a sheer begging of the question, for, indeed, 'In the light which the Spirit of Truth now sheds upon us' contains the superb affirmation that inspiration is a present fact, which is, or was, the very subject in dispute.

What, then, are 'the general principles involved in our belief in inspiration,' now being taught us by the Spirit of Truth? Dr. Newton holds that there is a Divine Being behind Nature and within man, 'the Life and Soul of all existence; the Intelligence thinking out its laws; the Will energising its forces.' 'All the life of Nature opens back into this Divine Being. All life of man opens, within, into God. There is a natural connection open between the soul of man and the Divine Spirit.' Here is the crucial

point. If this be granted, the old idea of a closed inspiration and a finished revelation is at an end. It does not need to be refuted. It simply vanishes.

Dr. Newton rightly draws the inference that the men of past ages received inspirations from God according to their capacity. Not that God doled out His inspirations in proportion to their capacities, but that they drank in from the ever infinite ocean of life the little or the much they were able to appropriate. It is this foundation truth which puts us in right relations with all past religions and all the Bibles of the world. No religion has been perfectly true, and none has been wholly false. The seeker found what he could, and interpreted as he was able: that is all we can say. Undoubtedly, at certain epochs and in certain localities the inspirations were specially potent, perhaps in response to special incitements from the spirit world; and, also undoubtedly, the whole of the human race directly or indirectly profited by these special activities; but we have paid dearly for these helps in so far as we have cherished the delusion that they were supernatural, infallible, and final. In reality, they were but suggestions and urgings, and the right view to take of them is that they do but foreshadow the time when inspiration will be consciously felt by all, and when a responsive world will be able to say what Dr. Newton now prematurely says: 'The reality of divine inspiration has been gradually expanding on the human consciousness, until that which was at first found on certain spots of earth, at certain times of history, amid certain privileged races, within certain narrow spheres of thought and action, is seen to be a reality of all the earth, of all races, of all time, of all men, of all truth and life.'

Looking out upon the anxious and eager world of to-day, how unspeakably precious is this enlarged thought of God and inspiration! how painful now would the old notion be that God has spoken His last word, and that henceforth all we can do is to turn over the leaves of a Greek or Hebrew book! Dr. Newton says, pithily: 'I once heard a minister of my own Church, in preaching from a text in the book of the Revelation, speak of this book as "the swan-song of the Holy Ghost." So God is dead! That is the logic of this thoroughly atheistic orthodoxy. Shallow folly of man—blaspheming, though knowing it not!' That is not what *we* say; that is what Dr. Newton, an Episcopal clergyman, says. It is almost too strong for us!

But not only in the religious sphere is God inspiring us. He is the Living God of all living things, and of the living uses of not living things. The Bible itself says that, telling us (Exodus xxxi.) how God inspired men and filled them with His spirit, 'to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.' Modern Christendom has pitifully lost this superb rationalism and humanism of the ancient world,—and greatly to its loss. Dr. Newton faces the great orthodox heresy like a man, and claims God for the world as well as for the church; for science and statesmanship as well as for theologian and priest:—

Churches have sought to shut up the inbreathing of the Divine Spirit within the ecclesiastical and theological spheres. 'Within them,' the scribes and rabbis have said, 'He may be present and acting even now. We may hear the voice of God therein, when councils decree a law or when popes proclaim a dogma; but we may not hope to hear that voice outside those sacred domains. In a merely poetic sense, in the way of imagery, it is allowable to speak of inspired musicians and painters and poets, though even then the language is questionable. It is, however, sheer irreverence to speak of an inspired geologist or chemist or political economist.' How, then, are we to draw any such hard and fast lines around the sphere of the Divine Spirit's presence and action? Are the faculties of man that busy themselves in the tasks of the scientist, the statesman, the economist,

the artist, the poet, the musician, the man of commerce and of industry, not of divine origin? Are they not the curious workmanship of the Most High, worthy to be the organs through which the Infinite Spirit shall breathe His thought?

This is splendid: and though, to-day, it may be regarded as opening too widely the human door, for mental freedom, we cannot but regard it as the setting forth of a truth which will be the salvation of the world when the imperfect faiths of the world fail it, as some day they will. God in all ages the inspirer of every anxious spirit; God in all the forth-marchings of man, slowly coming to his own; God excluded from nothing; but the central life and light and energy of everything;—this is the best legacy this century will hand on to that which is so nigh at hand.

A HOME COLONY OF SYMPATHETIC WORKERS AND THINKERS.

An ardent Spiritualist and Humanist (is not that word needed?) writes in 'Land and Labour' respecting a project started by Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, aiming at the creation of an ideal community of kindred spirits on business lines. Our friend says, in his communication:—

To facilitate the residence of progressive people near each other, it is proposed—if the needful funds can be obtained—to purchase estates in favourable localities where selection can be exercised as to their occupants, and where power can be retained to preserve the natural beauties and general enjoyability of their immediate surroundings.

As a beginning, the refusal has been obtained of an estate of more than 200 acres in a picturesque, healthy, and wooded district some 400ft. above sea level, near a main line station westward of London, and within half-an-hour's run of it, at a very reasonable price.

The money required to purchase the estate is only about £15,000, and if that sum, on satisfactory inquiry, were subscribed by a few, they could confer as to the conditions of the occupation, and constitute a committee of selection (or *J'eto*) of the future residents. It seems certain that an estate, so eligible and low in price, sub-divided, could be very soon disposed of—either on 999 years leases at low rentals, or otherwise, reserving power to the residents upon it (through legally appointed trustees) to prevent any future deterioration by over-building, or other nuisances, which would probably result if it were sold in freehold lots. Under such an arrangement, a considerable portion of the fine woods and other suitable portions of the estate could be retained for the general use and enjoyment of the proposed colony—thus preserving for the young and others, a fair portion of wild nature and its woodland charms.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, so well known as an advanced thinker and writer, after searching for years throughout the home counties for a rural dwelling, has examined this estate and finds it by far the best he has seen. If it be purchased, and the buyer or buyers offered him the old house and gardens at an inviting price, I feel assured that he would at once take up his residence there, and render very important service as honorary agent in the development of the scheme by the attraction of his great name, and his experience in relation to the subject, for in early life he was a land surveyor. Let me add that subject to approved conditions of purchase and tenure, I would gladly subscribe one-third, if needed, of the capital required.

All this looks a good deal like going to Heaven, and we look on with longing eyes. But, as a matter of business, it is tempting. And yet, what about the poor creatures who would be left behind by these progressive spirits? Is it right to abstract the good influences they embody? On the other hand, the aggregation of the progressive units might result in a force that would largely tell upon the whole life of England.

There is a spiritual longing in it which attracts us, we must confess.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

'READER.'—Kindly send us your name and address.

'E. A.'—The next 'Drawing-Room' meeting will be held on January 11th.

Several communications are necessarily held over for a future issue.

IS A SPIRITUALIST CHURCH NEEDED?

ADDRESS BY MR. ROBERT THEOBALD, M.A.

On Friday evening, November 23rd, in the French Drawing Room, St. James's Hall, Mr. Robert M. Theobald, M.A., addressed a meeting of the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance on the subject quoted above.

MR. E. DAWSON ROGERS (the President of the Alliance), who occupied the chair, in opening the proceedings, referred to the subject as one of absorbing interest to some Spiritualists, but of comparatively little importance to others; and continued: However, you who are present will all, I believe, be gratified by Mr. Theobald's address. We know him as a cultured and accomplished gentleman, and although he may say some unpalatable things, or, at any rate, some plain ones, he will deal with them with that courtesy to those from whom he may differ which we should expect from a gentleman. Now I must make one special request. In questions of a religious character, we are too apt to be carried away by our feelings instead of being guided by our reason. That is always the case when religious questions are under consideration. We are in the habit—frequently unconsciously, it may be—of listening with the determination, notwithstanding what may be said, to hold fast, at any cost, to the views we have hitherto espoused:—

'Determined beforehand, we gravely pretend,
To take the advice of a trustworthy friend.
Should he differ from us on any pretence,
We are shocked by his want of the commonest sense;
But should he fall in with and flatter our plan,
Why really, we think him a sensible man!'

That is the attitude we are too apt to assume on all these questions. I ask you, therefore, to give a rational consideration to what Mr. Theobald has to say, and to take care not to let your feelings carry you away.

MR. THEOBALD then addressed the audience as follows:—

Since last June the columns of 'LIGHT' have almost every week published letters or articles on the religious aspects of Spiritualism. This is a very important topic, worthy of all serious consideration; and I propose this evening to refer especially to that aspect which may be represented by the question, 'Is a Spiritualist Church needed?' Some related topics must be briefly noticed in passing, in order that we may find an intelligent answer to the question proposed.

As a sort of prelude or overture to the succeeding symphony, a writer signing himself 'Hactenus' takes up the theme. His chief desire is to see some large and authoritative exposition of spiritual philosophy; and he thinks the conditions for such exposition do now exist in Spiritualism, as we know it. For Spiritualism, in his view, is both a religion and a philosophy: it is, he tells us, a 'religion of law,' 'a philosophical key to the arcane realm of power'; a 'science of the soul, and its possibilities'; a 'revelation of exanimate existence'—a comforter, inspirer, interpreter—the coming Messiah. All of these functions cannot, of course, meet in one *locus*, so that we must regard this rather composite collection of ill-defined and not altogether intelligible incompatibilities as rather rhetorical than exact. The question of a church does not arise in his letter, and as he finds 'a wonderful harmony of thought and unity of affirmation in the various religious systems,' one may infer that he considers no new system is required.

Another strain in this overture is struck by an Editorial article. 'The work of the iconoclast,' we are told, 'is over; that of the builder has begun.' The era of the Religion of the Spirit Love—approaches: let us arise and meet it. Still we are in the sphere of rhetoric—no definite suggestion is made.

But this deficiency is soon supplied. Next week 'Verax' translates the unshaped longings of 'Hactenus,' and claims

that Spiritualists shall have a church of their own. Hitherto we have had propagandist societies, with platforms for the critic, the iconoclast, the advocate, and the partisan. What we now want is some place for the thinker, the worshipper, the pastor, teacher, friend. 'Verax' is the prophet of this new church; he seeks for its apostle, and gives some indications of the formation, constitution, and mode of working of the new church. 'Verax' accepts the aphorism of Mr. J. Page Hopps—that the church exists for 'Aspiration, Worship, Resolve.' Like-minded people are to find a home where they can meet one another for fellowship and growth, for spiritual heartening and culture, for meditation, self-examination, self-righting, for the sympathy and counsel of seen and unseen brethren; where the atmosphere is favourable to psychic development, and all the emanations and environments are healthy. In a subsequent letter 'Verax' asks for good music and singing, reverent worship, devotional readings, bright altruistic teaching. The services are to last about an hour, and to be followed by a 'communion service' [not a very happy designation] of a more esoteric nature, for prayer, the exercise of spiritual gifts, and intercourse with spirit friends.

Mr. Hopps endorses this prospectus, and another correspondent hails it with great joy. Mr. Cochrane, who means business, thinks pew rents will be required, and that some general form of worship should be arranged. But 'H. W. T.' has already hinted at the impossibility of constructing any form of service that will be generally acceptable. Shall we have, he asks, Moody and Sankey's hymns, or Hymns Ancient and Modern? Shall we have an organ or only voices? Shall we have a trance speaker or only conscious speakers? Some would wish to hear the ladies; others, like St. Paul, would silence them.

Another writer, 'H.C.H.' advises 'Verax,' with his desire for mutual help among worshippers, to go to the Quakers, where quietism and free utterance alike prevail. Mr. Clarke thinks that a start might be made if those who approve of the proposals of 'Verax' will send in their names, and subsequently 'Verax' informs us that about half a dozen such names have reached him. Then comes Mr. W. H. Simpson from South Africa, and, as I think, goes at once to the root of the whole matter. He contends that all rational Spiritualists should resolutely oppose the attempt to convert into a religion what is, in its present stage at least, a branch of science, and he quotes a pregnant and felicitous utterance of Mr. F. W. H. Myers, that psychic research may supply the preamble of all religions but not the clauses of any. Moreover, he very pertinently remarks that the conditions for psychic development are not likely to be found in such assemblies as a Spiritualist church would muster. If this is desired, the meeting must be one of selected persons, aliens excluded—a carefully packed assembly.

And now a very different person writes; he signs himself 'Vir.' Curiously enough—for few would anticipate this—he finds that Spiritualism has landed him in such pure, undiluted rationalism that he has no sympathy with worship or any religious exercises whatever. He considers such phrases as 'spiritual life,' 'spiritually minded,' 'spiritual uplifting,' are the currency of 'simple dishonesty,' and that all religion is delusion or imposture. Such an amiable and tolerant controversialist need not detain us: one would rather play billiards with him than discuss any serious question. For when dishonesty is imputed mutual conference is closed. The fact that Spiritualists of this type exist is to be carefully noted. Any representative conference of Spiritualists must admit them, but they would be a very freezing addition to any church gathering. Edna Olham and others reply to 'Vir.'

Mr. Clarke desires meetings 'devoid of all strife and contention.' Surely such assemblies are not far to seek. Strife and contention are not often found in any churches. Not many receive periodical visits from Mr. Kensit or any of his fraternity. And of very many services the complaint is made that they are more soporific than combative. But perhaps the soporific character might make Mr. Clarke himself, or any other lively hearers combative. Nor do I think that Mr. Clarke would find himself in a less warlike atmosphere at meetings of Spiritualists than elsewhere. Spiritualists are not, I believe, more pugnacious than other men; but

they are precisely the same; and anyone who is warmly attached to any theological tenets bordering on orthodoxy will sometimes find his corns sadly bruised. For it is worth noting that in the whole of the correspondence which I am reviewing the only note of discourtesy comes from the spokesman of rationalism. He alone talks of 'dishonesty,' while those who are athirst for assemblies where worship, aspiration, and resolve would find their home have no word of unkindness for those who dissent from either their aims or their instruments. The iconoclastic temper is more likely to use missiles than the conservative temper.

Then that very earnest and thoughtful Theosophist, Madame Isabel de Steiger, comes forward. She thinks that a Spiritualist philosopher can worship in spirit and in truth in all Christian temples, and that churches with historic antecedents and symbolic rites and ceremonies are likely to be preferred. This strikes me as very important. If Spiritualism is to be the basis of church life, it must be gradually evolved by historic development—not made to order. A mushroom growth that springs up in a night will very soon decay. The same catholic spirit finds beautiful utterance in Mr. Atwood's letter. He says, 'Be the preacher's views ever so narrow, the service ever so discordant to my feelings, I have never yet found the place of worship where I could not feel on leaving it that it had been good to be there.' An admirable temper. 'Good, Mr. Atwood! I would say, *Rem acu tetigisti*;—you have hit the bull's eye of the controversy.'

Another correspondent thinks that the required church already exists. Mr. Page Hopps's 'Our Father's Church' supplies the pattern which may be adopted elsewhere. Here a word of comment may be permitted. Doubtless many such churches exist; in fact the entire Unitarian body may be regarded as such a collection, the name itself being restricted to one. And it seems to me very desirable that such designations should *not* be generally adopted. There is a body of Christians calling themselves Bible Christians. There is a political party which calls itself the Constitutional party; the same party calls itself Unionist, and, as a corollary, calls others Separatists. Now all such names appear to me to have a certain flavour of self-complacency in those who use them, and of covert attack on others. Thus other Christians are *not* Bible Christians. Other parties are *not* constitutional. Other religious bodies have some different paternity to Our Father. Let all such names be religiously avoided.

Another writer—'Bidston'—notes the important fact that the serious study of psychic phenomena does in itself promote sobriety of life and other healthy qualities of character and behaviour, doing church business in its own way; and for this no special ecclesiastical organisation is required; while on the other hand, a Spiritualist Church, like any other other, would soon develop its own type of dogmatism.

Miss Mary Mack Wall makes another suggestion, and generously backs it up by offering a contribution of £50 to the working of it, if her proposal is accepted. She would have, not a Church house, but a central building, something like, I presume, the Wesleyan Centenary Hall, where spiritualistic force may be concentrated and focussed, and needful facilities for combined action liberally supplied. This is a perfectly sensible suggestion—but as it has no ecclesiastical bearing, it may be set aside from our present discussion.

I do not think I need further enter into particulars regarding other letters and paragraphs or articles which have appeared. Those already very partially described will sufficiently indicate the lines on which the discussion has proceeded. And reflecting on all these interesting communications, we may now look at the question generally, and seek for some intelligible and practical conclusion.

Now, it is to be noted that the suggestions of this correspondence may resolve themselves into two answers to the question which is our topic: 'Is a Spiritualist Church desirable?' Some would form a church, appoint its officers, and construct the necessary ceremonials, symbols and rites. Others would promote spiritualistic services of a more or less devotional character, with the addition of such special features as the resources of mediumship can supply—

inspirational addresses, or some kind of intercourse with unseen beings. It is well to keep these two aspects separate. It is one thing, and a very vast thing, to form a church. To organise public meetings is a widely different matter, of much less importance. Mr. Page Hopps seems to wish that the church notion should be dropped altogether, though why he should desire this if the objects of a church are sufficiently defined by the three words, 'Aspiration, Worship, Resolve,' I do not understand.

Whichever of these methods of organising Spiritualism is adopted, it is clear that the governing thought is to make religion the end or the basis of spiritualistic assemblies. The services are to have the character of worship—whatever other features Spiritualism may add. And the practical questions that arise will have a much better chance of intelligible solution if we can form a clear idea as to the nature of Religion and a Church on the one hand, and of Spiritualism on the other. As a preliminary, therefore, let us consider these questions of definition.

As to Religion, I have not found any clear account of its real nature. There is a group of letters especially devoted to this question. Mr. Romilly thinks it rests on 'speculations about the infinite and ideal,' which Mr. Boddington rightly considers a description of theology rather than religion. Both writers have, I think, an idea which is rather dim than inaccurate, on the subject; but their psychology is defective. In an address given by my brother and myself twelve years ago we endeavoured to show that Religion is essentially emotion: its ultimate seat is not in the intellect (where speculation originates), nor in the will (which operates on the created universe of matter or mind), but in the feelings. Next, that the special quality of this emotion is the sense of absolute dependence. This sense becomes God-consciousness when the intellect is called upon to interpret the interior and voiceless sense of absolute dependence; and then, being connected with conscious intelligent life, the idea of God enters into the mind. Religion, in all its varieties, implies some recognition of the infinite, personal Being on whom the spirit depends. If the interior vision of God is forgotten or banished, religion ceases to exist—its very essence is lost.

This is a very interesting and vital point, and is worth a little dwelling upon. It is variously asserted even in Scripture. Three times in the Old Testament is the aphorism repeated, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Psalm cxi. 10; Prov. i. 7; ix. 10). That holy tremor which contact with the absolute, unseen, eternal Source of Life causes is really the opening of the spiritual faculties: the porch that conducts to the temple of all wisdom. And where shall we find a more majestic acknowledgment of this supreme dependence than in the 139th Psalm:—

O Lord,

Thou hast searched me and known me :
Thou compassed my path and my lying down :
Thou hast beset me behind and before :
And laid thine hand upon me :
I am fearfully and wonderfully made !

Now the spirit of man expresses its sense of an all-controlling, all-embracing Presence by worship of some kind. I do not mean ceremonial, or ritual, or even articulate speech. I am speaking of the interior psychologic attitude. The spirit feels infinitely dependent; the language for this sense may find voice in different tones of worship. Beginning in mute speechless wonder, it becomes articulate in words expressive of adoration, supplication, contemplation, self-prostration, contrition, or ecstatic and measureless gladness, or repose, infinite rest.

With these preliminaries the nature of a church may be partly ascertained. It is certainly the outcome both of the religious and of the social elements in human nature. When religion ceases to be a matter of private, individual feeling, and seeks embodiment in such forms as may at once deepen the individual religious sense, and bring its action to bear on others—single persons, or the spirit and frame of society—then a church is formed, and the organisation thus resulting seeks to bring into its enclosure all who are within reach of its voice. This special question, when fully developed, brings out the fact that those who speak for the Church and represent its claims, have a message; and this message is not simply about man or other finite creatures,

but about God. The unique characteristic of Christianity is that it brings a message from God, a message concerning God.

It is very important to notice that this idea of a church applies not to any one body but to all such bodies. The separation of one from another is, as a rule, very much a matter of outer ceremonial and organisation, of ritual and government, rather than of worship and doctrine. For example, the essential difference between a Wesleyan and the various Congregational bodies (including the Baptist) is not that the one is Arminian and the other Calvinist. For, in fact, these doctrinal distinctions are scarcely realised and rarely expounded. Indeed, both these theologies have ceased to exert any formative influence on religious bodies. The separation—and it is a very amiable one—is really on questions of church polity. I am speaking of churches in which no sacerdotal element exists; for this brings a new *primum mobile*, which almost displaces other centres of attraction.

Also it is very important to observe (and this brings our special topic within view) that the church is not a close corporation of like-minded people, met for Aspiration, Worship, Resolve; for this limits church life to individual aims and methods. We are told that those who join themselves to form a church seek to purify and elevate their own aspirations, to quicken their own devotion, to strengthen their own resolves, by sympathy and co-operation. But is this at all a sufficient account of the import of church life? Has the church no message for the world? no revelation from God to convey, and interpret, and enforce? Meetings for holiest self-culture may be very enjoyable to the privileged persons who are present; but they are only remotely related to society. The church becomes a sort of spiritual refreshment saloon—a religious buffet—where those present by invitation may enjoy themselves, and get nourishment. Such meetings have no more interest to the general public than a dinner party or a Cinderella dance. Will Spiritualists consent to be thus extinguished?

Even individual religious life is very imperfectly sustained by these methods. For healthy growth, self, even the highest self, must be often forgotten. The individual is augmented when he casts aside his private interest, ceases to care for his own soul, leaves such agonising questions as 'What must I do to be saved?' to frantic, panic-stricken persons whose nerves are unsettled by the shuddering tremors of some sort of earthquake. A larger sphere is supplied by the church—partly by its action, entirely by its spirit and teachings. When I, the Ego, am weak, then I, the mouthpiece and representative of the Divine, am strong. Even individual Aspiration, Worship, and Resolve are silenced or postponed by these larger contemplations. St. Paul's altruistic rapture made him ready to be 'accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren.' He would even risk perdition rather than contract his sympathies and endeavours to the sphere of his own personal welfare, however large and enduring that welfare might be. Surely this is the finest expression of altruistic, catholic sentiment ever uttered. And the church reflects the same spirit. It has sympathy with all movements for the amelioration of human conditions, with political, social, educational, philanthropic schemes; with schools and senates; with soups, blankets, boots, and coals; with books and pictures and music—with all that makes people happier, better and wiser. And it looks with loving eyes on sinners, street-arabs, beggars, prisoners, drunkards, criminals, outcasts, and men of all sorts and conditions. I do not find that such a conception of church life has presented itself to the recent advocates of a spiritualistic church. Being men of public spirit, they would doubtless enter heartily into these wider interests, but so far as I can see they show no disposition to bring church life into touch with them. And obviously this idea of the church is no part of the ecclesiastical programmes which have been offered for the use of Spiritualists. And yet, I would strongly and earnestly insist that the idea of a church is lowered, enfeebled, almost debased by bringing it down to a lower level—a mere individual level. And I would therefore say to my friends—Whatever plans you adopt to bring about a happy and holy alliance between Spiritualism and religion, do not allow your conception of a church to be dwarfed and defaced.

For if we once more front the question—What is Spiritualism?—I do not think it will be difficult to see that it has nothing in common with the fundamental facts or ideas either of religion or a church. No sense of the Infinite enters into its conception. It deals properly, not with the one, uncreated, infinite Spirit, but with many, created, finite spirits. Spiritualism is not atheistic—most assuredly not. But it is not necessarily even theistic; it may be very agnostic, as we have already seen in the case of our friend 'Vir,' who tells us that our religious raptures are 'simple dishonesty.' If the existence of God is recognised by a Spiritualist it is not because he is a Spiritualist, but because he is an awakened Man. And if the phenomena which Spiritualism discloses lead the mind to thoughts of God and the attitude of worship, it is because of the holy associations which these facts awaken in the mind; and because every human experience, if traced to its primal source and probed to its deepest meaning, leads to God and thus may feed the flame of devotion. Every fact, every event, brings us to

That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

What then shall be the relation between Spiritualism and Christianity, or any other religion? This may be looked at in two ways: Does Spiritualism need the help of Religion? or, Does Religion require the service of Spiritualism? And in either case the answer may be that the co-operation is desirable, but it can be best realised by friendly alliance and friendly separation, on the lines of existing organisations. No new ecclesiastical structure is required. Indeed none of any lasting character can be formed; of that I am persuaded.

It is quite true, as some of the correspondents have said, that the place of Spiritualism is rather among the sciences than the religions of the world; and I maintain that much of its value depends on a resolute maintenance of this distinct position. Spiritualism concerns itself with facts, and facts of a particular class. It seeks to prove these facts, to investigate their nature and significance, to bring them into general acceptance, and then leave them to act upon character or creed in the manner best adapted to each case. And, as a rule, I do not think intelligent Spiritualists wish for more than this. They do not wish to create a new religious sect to take its place side by side with the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian bodies. They have no wish to unsettle those bodies, to refute their dogmas, except in so far as they contradict their special facts; and this leads rather to an indirect refutation than a direct, argumentative one. Nor do they wish to shatter their ecclesiastical framework. If Spiritualists are iconoclastic, their iconoclasm does not thus operate. We do not desire to bring new strife or schism into the churches, which are now beginning to abandon their old feuds and live together amicably. For them we wish only that which we know they desire for themselves, larger audiences, deeper life, wider influence, vaster hopes, clearer vision, and a happy rescue from that decadence which threatens some of them.

This is an aim which is as practical as it is simple. For all the churches already possess creeds or forms on which our teachings can be easily engrafted. If they will put fullest emphasis on their own utterances they will at once accept our standpoint. Let the Episcopalian, when he recites the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe in the Communion of Saints,' realise the fact that this is true, not merely in a mystic, interior sense, but as a matter of ordinary everyday experience, leading to facts which may be put into historic narration, or paragraphed in newspapers, if that were a fit way of recording them. When he says, 'I believe in the life everlasting,' he can, by help of our teaching, verify his belief as surely as any of the phenomena with which chemistry or biology is concerned are verified. Our facts, thus connected with current beliefs, enlarge the range of those beliefs, perhaps transfer them for the time to a lower, I may even say a more material plane, but on that very account secure a broader and more solid foundation even for the most hidden verities.

(To be continued.)

PROFESSOR BARRETT ON PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

We have received several reports of Professor Barrett's important lecture at the Durham College of Science, Newcastle, on 'Psychical Research: Its Aims and its Results.' The following is a fairly complete summary:—

'The lecturer stated that there were numbers of superior people who regarded the subject of his lecture with undisguised scorn. Their intellectual horizon was limited to what they had been taught at school, or to things which they themselves had handled and could vouch for. Everyone recognised the two-fold nature of man. Man had a physical and a psychical side, and all would agree with St. Paul that, "There is a spiritual body as well as a natural body." Psychology had, within recent years, attacked the difficult problem with experimental investigation. No doubt, much of the ferocious scepticism which prevailed on the subject arose from a materialistic philosophy. They who had studied these things had been driven to believe that the universe was the field of spiritual energies and the introduction to a life of infinite hope. It had been urged that the matters into which the society inquired were not legitimate objects of inquiry. To the man of science all phenomena were legitimate objects of inquiry. The work of the Psychical Research Society was to examine the nature and extent of any influence that might be exerted by one mind upon another mind; to go into hypnotism and mesmerism; to investigate clairvoyance; to inquire into apparitions; to inquire into what was called Spiritualism, &c. Amongst the many members are or were: Lord Tennyson, John Ruskin, W. E. Gladstone, A. J. Balfour, Gerald Balfour, Sir William Crookes, Alfred Russel Wallace, Professor Lombroso, and other intellectual lights. Telepathy, he showed by illustrations of its marvellous possibilities, was a problem of supreme interest. And its truth had been conclusively demonstrated. Having spoken of this communication between mind and mind and soul to soul, he went on to speak of mesmerism or hypnotism. On that subject Mr. A. J. Balfour had said that British scientists had shown to it a bigoted intolerance that was discreditable. On the Continent, however, that intolerance did not exist. It was really a question of evidence and the obtaining of facts, for knowledge removed a thing from the realm of the impossible. It was necessary that such inquiries should be conducted with an open mind. Psychologists claimed a sixth sense in the mind. There were three distinct lines of inquiry by which they had come to the conclusion that there was another avenue, which they called thought-transference or telepathy. They meant by that the mental perception by certain persons of an impression, an emotion, or idea, which vividly exists in the mind of another person, and which was independent of any information derived through the ordinary channels and the senses. If that were true it was a fact of the utmost interest and importance. What if there be an opening to the human race of communicating their thoughts and feelings without speech or language, but in a finer way? If thought-transference existed might it not play a large part in the waves of popular feeling -- of religious fervour or political passion -- which they saw pass over a community? Might telepathy not play an important part in the growing sense of humanity, and of sympathy with the poor? What if, in the process of time, we became involuntary sharers in each other's pleasures and pains? The brotherhood of the race would not then be a fine aspiration or a strenuous effort, but the reality of all others most vividly before us -- the factor in our lives which would dominate all our conduct. There were three ways in which the existence of telepathy had been proved to his mind. First, by experiments in that abnormal state which is called the hypnotic or mesmeric trance; secondly, experiments in the normal waking state; and thirdly, certain observations of sporadic phenomena which they could not reproduce by experiment at pleasure, but which might be observed and classified. The lecturer quoted numerous cases of thought-transference, and showed experiments to prove, physically, the existence between inanimate objects of sympathetic responsiveness and degrees of sensitiveness. He recorded instances of telepathic impacts between living persons by way of simultaneous feeling, sounds, and sight. The appearance of apparitions was to be accounted for by telepathic impacts, the telepathic influence continuing to operate after the shock of death.'

A hearty vote of thanks was given to the lecturer at the close.

'THE KEYSTONE.'--The latest addition to the journals devoted to Spiritualism is a penny monthly newspaper entitled the 'Keystone,' published by the editor, Mr. T. O. Todd, at 21, Laura-street, Sunderland. Judging from the first issue it promises well, and is likely to meet with a fair measure of support. It is intended to be suitable for the home, the circle, the church, and the Lyceum.

A REMARKABLE FRENCH SEER.

The 'New York Journal' of September 9th published an article written in Paris by Mr. W. T. Stead, on September 1st, in which he gave the details of his interviews with a seeress named Madame Mongruel, who passes into the trance state, and is then able to trace people who are absent, if some article that once belonged to them is handed to her. Mr. Stead relates how he gave her, among other things, a shred of silk taken from a tassel given to Count Cassini when he was Russian Ambassador in Pekin by the young Chinese Emperor; and the clairvoyante declared that the ambassadors in Pekin were alive, but were being held as hostages. She claimed on another occasion to see the British Ambassador, and declared that he was alive, as also were his wife and his children.

Mr. Stead writes that at that time he was not aware that Lady Macdonald's previous husband and three children had died of cholera in Persia, but the clairvoyante assured him that she saw 'a man and three children, who seemed very near to Lady Macdonald, who were supporting her in the midst of her trouble.' Madame Mongruel declared that the ambassadors would not be killed, and explained that, although the order for their destruction would be given, the Allies would reach Pekin in time to prevent its execution. She asserted that there were no Germans in the Allied army that were attacking Pekin, and that the ambassadors had plenty of food. 'It was not until several days after that that the news reached Europe that all the ambassadors were safe, and that in the composite army which had been to the relief of Pekin there was no German contingent.' When she regained her normal state and heard what had been given to Mr. Stead, Madame Mongruel declared that she did not believe a word of it; she was quite convinced in her own mind that the ambassadors were all dead.

The predictions of the seer regarding the near future were dismal in the extreme—but 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents, and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

'Conditional Immortality.'

SIR,—In correcting the proof of 'More Light on "Things to Come,"' I omitted to readjust a sentence at the bottom of page 583. It should have run: 'For this notion [indefeasible immortality] is, I believe, largely responsible for the horrid dogma of everlasting misery on the one hand, and for the idea so commonly held that *all must* eventually attain the final goal of beatitude, on the other; together with a vast amount of *laissez faire* among easy-going people.' In the days when Catholic ingenuity had exhausted itself in devising means for the torture of the human body, an everlasting hell did not seem too bad for the reprobates. But with the closer study of Nature, and the critical examinations of modern times, came a revulsion of feeling. The 'Zoo' Society, which developed into the 'Conditional Immortality Association,' did good service in pointing out that everlasting misery was nowhere taught in the Bible. Unfortunately, lack of occult knowledge prevented the dissociation of the doctrine from purely orthodox notions of the person and work of Jesus. Added to this, the 'Conditionalists' committed themselves to a crude materialism which has always, and justly, made 'Conditional Immortality' a rock of offence to philosophic and to spiritual minds. Yet, that it is true in so far as life is 'conditional' upon our obedience to Divine law, I am as certain as I am of personal survival. My impression is that the possibility of extinction is known to very depraved spirits, and to those who are far advanced, rather than to the majority of those who have recently crossed the border. Many spirits are a long time getting clear of their orthodoxy, though they may be on the upward path. A near relative, some time after passing on, assured me that 'as far as she was aware, spirits could never die.' Since then she has watched a case in which an obsessing spirit has ceased to exist.

HECTOR WAYLEN.

3, Tennyson-road, Mill Hill, N.W.

Professor Mendeleeff.

SIR,—In the Rev. H. R. Haweis's lecture printed in 'LIGHT,' No. 1,037, p. 563, the following passage occurs:—

'Professor Mendeleeff wrote a book to prove Spiritualism a fraud before he knew anything of the facts. After that he investigated, with the result that he felt himself compelled to write another book to say that the first was wrong.'

As a matter of fact Professor Mendeleeff has published only one book on the subject, 'Materials by which to Judge Spiritualism,' in which he embodied the negative results arrived at by an official Russian scientific commission which investigated the 'phenomena' of the Petty brothers and of Mrs. 'Clayer' (*alias* Marshall), in 1876.

Very soon afterwards Professor Mendeleeff, it is true, had the opportunity, it is said, of convincing himself of the reality of certain mediumistic 'phenomena' different from those investigated by the Commission; but he has never printed anything on the subject himself, only admitting his subsequent belief in conversation. (See M. Aksakoff's article in the 'Rebus,' 1893, No. 2.)

MICHAEL PETROVO-SOLOVVOV.

St. Petersburg.

Matter and Spirit.

SIR,—With regard to the quotation in your issue of November 24th, in your 'Notes by the Way,' from McCabe's article in the 'Agnostic Annual,' you rejoice that he has lost his beloved Matter. But has he? I doubt it. We are told in the Vedanta philosophy that matter (*Prakriti*) is eternal, meaning continually existing in form and in shape as limitation, through form and shape, of the eternal Cosmic Ether. But these forms and shapes are endless—appearing and reappearing, merely altering in shape. The materialists have at last had their want of knowledge (a polite way of translating the Sanscrit word *avidya*—ignorance) removed by the fact that they admit that which the far abler mind of ancient thought always knew, that matter *does not end because its sensuous cognition does*. Matter to the materialist meant something which an advanced schoolboy might diagnose by the aid of his five senses, aided by scientific tests. All else they doubted. They considered 'spirit,' if it existed, as something unreal, vapourish, of no vital force, in spite of contrary facts in nature staring them in the face. Perhaps, however, they admitted 'force.' Finally they find that they cannot actually get to the bottom or end of matter; *neither will they*.

The mystics knew long ago, and taught, that there were many higher or more potent forms of Matter, the more potent and vital the further removed from the senses. We have this as an authorised scientific fact in the discoveries concerning electricity. All such knowledge of Helmholtz, Tyndall, &c., is to be found in principle in the 'Upanishads,' that storehouse of wisdom. These gentlemen only re-establish foregone knowledge, which tells you, and much beside, as I said before, that (*Prakriti*) Matter, like (*Purusha*) Spirit, is eternal. But the two are not one. Spirit exists absolutely apart from Matter, but Matter cannot exist a minute without Spirit. Moreover, though the scientists admit the ancient idea of the Cosmic Ether as the source of Matter, yet this is a most hazy conception, and is merely postulating a new theory; that is, as they put it, and as you, sir, say, 'Nobody knows what the omnipresent Ether is.'

However, it is noteworthy that modern science is making advance towards truth in acknowledging the first Matter Ether, of which at first they were so willingly in ignorance, but 'the chemists are coming to a standstill in regard to the Ether, which is subject to higher tests than they are provided with. It needs but another step or two to prove an utter frustration of their methods,' or may be that something foreseen though feared may otherwise appear.

Ether is but astral matter as is everything that is not absolute Spirit—or *Purusha*. There are forms of ether in degrees of purity, from the pure Virgin Ether or Eleuthera, down to the coarser and more material ethers which are more immediately 'above' and immediately 'below' man's place in the planet; but they are all, we are taught, subject to spirit. The Son is ever subject to the Father. It is reserved for man's choice how he uses this world-stuff or Cosmic Ether, for good or for evil.

ISABEL DE STEIGER, F.T.S.

P.S.—I am sincerely in mental accordance with the paragraph translated from Schur's book 'Les Grands Initiés,' in the letter signed 'J. A.' It is indeed remarkable that when thought and reflection penetrate to inner depths, as it were, all minds come to similar conclusions—that there is, as says Leibnitz, '*perennis quædam philosophia*.' Disputes and differences of opinion lie only on the road. At the end there is Unity, only we are indeed far off.

The Occultists' Defence League.

SIR,—Permit me, through your next issue, to announce to our members and all others interested in this movement that a general meeting will be held at Seller's Restaurant, 17, Great Ducie-street, (opposite No. 6 platform, Victoria Station), Manchester, at 3.45 on Wednesday afternoon, the 19th inst., when all members and others interested, or desiring to join, are strongly requested to attend, as, in view of the fact that important appeals to the High Court against recent convictions are now pending, as well as strong efforts being made to bring about the repeal of the Vagrant Act, the support of a well-attended meeting is much required.

Will all who, through being on tour, cannot receive their circulars of the meeting in time, please note above particulars, and attend accordingly?

Yours faithfully,

J. DODSON,

Hon. Solicitor and General Secretary.

Stainland, near Halifax.

December 10th, 1900.

SOCIETY WORK.

CAMBERWELL, S.E.—GROVE-LANE, 36, VICARAGE-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mrs. Holgate gave an interesting address which was listened to with great attention. A circle afterwards was well attended. A public circle will be held on Thursday next, at 8 p.m., and on Sunday next Mr. Sloan will occupy the platform.—H. W.

LEICESTER SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, LIBERAL CLUB LECTURE HALL.—Mrs. L. A. Peters gave two excellent addresses upon 'God is Spirit,' and 'The Old Century and the New,' which were greatly appreciated by large audiences for their thoughtful, helpful, and spiritual nature. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., Mr. Walter Howell will deliver addresses.—A. O. W.

73, BECKLOW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—On Sunday last Dr. Hutchinson gave a very interesting address on 'Materialisation: Its Religious, Scientific, and Phenomenal Aspects.' We hope to have the pleasure of listening to him again soon. A large circle was afterwards held. On Sunday next, at 6.30 p.m., Mr. Clegg will speak, and on Thursday, at 8 p.m., a circle will be held. 'LIGHT' on sale.—M. E. C.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—On Sunday last Mr. D. J. Davis gave an earnest address upon 'Christ and Spiritualism,' illustrative of the similarity of the teachings of Jesus Christ and those of true Spiritualism. On Sunday next Mr. J. A. White will give an address and clairvoyance. On Tuesday, at 8.15 p.m., the members' circle will meet at 226, Dalston-lane.—O. H.

MERTHYR SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, CENTRAL HALL, MERTHYR TYDFIL, WALES.—At Mr. Scott's Music Room, Brecon-road, on Sunday last, a masterly address entitled 'A Cry in the Wilderness' was given through the mediumship of Mr. Mayo, of Cardiff. We made two applications to the District Council for the use of the Town Hall, but were refused. No other hall being available in the town, our services will be held at Mr. Scott's room until further notice.—W. M. H., Hon. Sec.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—There was an overflowing attendance at these rooms on Sunday last, when clairvoyance was given by Miss MacCreadie. As is often the case when surroundings are unsuitable from the crowded state of the rooms, the first few descriptions were the clearest, and two of these were remarkable. Miss Samuel sang 'Beloved it is Morn' (Florence Aylward), and received the warm appreciation of her hearers. Miss MacCreadie met with a hearty reception from the audience, whose appreciation was most marked throughout. Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Mr. E. W. Wallis, trance discourse, 'Mental and Spiritual Healing.' Doors open at 6.30 p.m.—L. H.

BATTERSEA SPIRITUALIST CHURCH, HENLEY-STREET, S.W.—On Sunday last, Mr. Coles gave a short reading from a work entitled 'The Economy of Human Life.' In his instructive address on 'Life in Three Spheres,' Mr. Coles dealt with the purely physical life, the psychical or soul life, and the spiritual life. Mr. Adams presided. On Sunday next, at 11.30 a.m., public discussion class: at 3 p.m., Lyceum; at 7 p.m., Dr. Berks T. Hutchinson will deliver an address. On Tuesday, at 6.30 p.m., Band of Hope. On Thursday, at 8.30 p.m., public circle; and on Saturday, at 8.30 p.m., a social evening will be spent. On Boxing Day our annual plain, fancy and evening dress 'Social and Cinderella' will be held, preceded, at 6 p.m., by a tea; tickets, including tea and social, 9d. each, which can be obtained from H. Boddington, Sec., 99, Bridge-road, Battersea.

CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—Splendid attendances at both morning and evening services on Sunday last. The last of a series of interesting addresses was given at the evening service by Mr. W. E. Long. The subject, 'John on the Isle of Patmos,' was dealt with in a masterly manner. Next Sunday, at 11 a.m., a public circle will be held, when any question relating to the above address, or to the teachings and practices of our Church, will be gladly answered. Strangers are especially invited. At 3 p.m., children's school; and at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long will discourse upon 'The Spirit Body.'—J. C.

STOKE NEWINGTON SPIRITUAL SOCIETY, BLANCHE HALL, 99, WIESEBACH-ROAD, STOKE NEWINGTON-ROAD (Near Alexandra Theatre).—A large audience assembled last Sunday to meet Mr. Peters, whose clairvoyant descriptions were of a very minute character, and except in one case all were recognised. Such convincing phenomena are required in our movement. Many strangers were present. On Sunday next an inspirational address and clairvoyance will be given by Mrs. H. M. Wallis upon 'Spiritualism: Its Message for the Dawning Century.' The committee have decided to change the name of this society, and it will be known as 'The Spiritual Progressive Church, Stoke Newington, founded on the Facts and Philosophy of Spiritualism,' and they have engaged exclusively the services of Mr. Edward Whyte. A branch mission will be opened on January 13th, 1901, at Glendale Hall, St. Ann's-road, Stamford Hill, N. The address by Mr. Whyte will be followed by Mr. A. Peters, who will give clairvoyance; chairman, Mr. Henry Belstead. The hall (seating 300) is a few minutes from the High-road, where the red cars pass from Shoreditch and Dalston, and two minutes from Stamford Hill, Great Eastern Railway. Special announcement will be made later. All communications should be addressed to the secretary, Mr. A. Clegg, 18, Fleetwood-street, Stoke Newington, N.

OBITUARY.

On Sunday, December 2nd, at Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in her sixty-eighth year, there passed suddenly away Mary, the wife of Mr. John Lord. Our dear sister had been a sufferer at intervals for twenty years from an affliction the action of which had been met by indomitable will on the part of the sufferer, but on November 30th she was seized by the fatal attack which ended her life's career.

On Monday evening, a few of her associates from the Heaton Society, with other friends, met at her late home, when around her coffined remains, to sweet and plaintive music, two of her favourite hymns were intoned, as follows, 'Lead Kindly Light' and 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,' after which a reverent and solemn address was delivered by Mr. J. H. Lashbrooke. During the after meeting for suitable converse, Mrs. Margaret Elliot, a lady test-medium, was suddenly controlled, when unmistakable evidences were accorded—visionary and otherwise—of the presence of Mrs. Lord, which affected the visitors very much.

On Tuesday, early, Mr. Lord accompanied her remains to the family vault at the Unitarian Cemetery, Bury, Lancashire. Our sister and her husband were originally Unitarians in the above town. They became associated with the early investigations in Manchester during the sixties, and often has the writer listened to recitals of abnormal facts then elicited by those pioneers, many of whom have joined the great majority, while others still remain. Subsequently, circumstances necessitated the removal of Mr. Lord and family to Rastrick, Yorkshire, Leyland near Preston, thence to West Hartlepool and Newcastle some five years ago.

We shall remember our sister's phenomenal life for her intense sympathy and constant goodness of heart. Purified by physical suffering, she moved constantly upon a plane of exalted spiritual repose. Perhaps her chief characteristic would appear to be a sweet reticence, with a boundless charity to everyone. Every medium who met her would reflect her intense sympathy and devotion to the cause of Progressive Truth.

While her friends will miss the external form, her husband will remember a forty years' faithful companionship and an affectionate motherhood to her children. We may conclude in the words of the poet:—

'No, dear companion, no;
We gladly let thee go
From a suffering life beneath
To more active life above.
Thou hast triumphed over death,
Thou art crowned with life and love.'

A number of beautiful wreaths were placed upon the coffin by sympathising friends.

W. H. R.