

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATEVER DOTTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT.'—Paul.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

It is astonishing to find how many well-informed people still entirely miss noting what happens in Röntgen or X-ray experiments. Here is no less a man than Mr. Leadbeater saying (in a Chicago lecture), 'Your X-rays would enable you . . . not to read a letter, perhaps, but it would enable you to see through material objects, to desery a key inside a locked box, or to observe the bones of the human body through the flesh.' This is not so. What happens in an X-ray experiment is that the rays penetrate through solid substances—through some more readily than through others—and throw shadows on a screen. We see the shadows. Not we but the rays 'see through material objects.'

But possibly Mr. Leadbeater is referring to a clairvoyant power similar to that possessed by spirits who can 'read a passage out of a closed book,' or 'a letter shut up in a box.' This, however, has been done again and again by sensitive mortals in the flesh. Mr. Leadbeater knows all about this, and he justly remarks that 'all such additional sight is simply obtained by being able to respond to a larger set of vibrations.' But the possession of such a power is hardly on the same plane as the unconscious thrilling of X-rays.

In this Lecture, Mr. Leadbeater gives a useful caution in relation to the varying planes or divisions of matter, from the seen to the unseen. Many unskilled persons naturally think of these as separate in the sense of being one above another. Mr. Leadbeater says:—

One more word of caution with regard to this unseen world. Do not imagine that these various stages or divisions of matter here are lying above one another like the shelves of a book-case. Realise that interpenetration is perfect within, around, and about every physical object. It is already known that ether interpenetrates most physical substances. I should like, if I could, to make clear to you the exceeding naturalness of the whole of this, and to guard you against the various possibilities of error which come from supposing that everything beyond the physical is not natural, but supernatural. It is not so at all. It is superphysical if you like, but not supernatural. The whole scheme is one scheme and the same laws run through it all.

'The world's Advance-Thought,' in a short paper on 'Be still, and let God find you,' by Lucy A. Mallory, reminds of a truth which, though simple enough, opens up depth upon depth of thought. One might almost say that it covers the whole field of religious inquiry. How true, and how far-reaching this is!—

As far back as the history of man extends, he has been trying to solve the problem of Life through his reasoning culties; he has been seeking for God in the noise and the

darkness of matter-sense, and the gods that he has found have been conditioned gods, made in man's own image, and endowed with such qualities as he himself possesses—anger, jealousy, cruelty, and a desire to be worshiped by word of mouth included. . . . But the brightest intellects, the keenest reasoners, have never come any nearer God, any nearer solving the problem of Life, than have those with the poorest intellect and least capable of reasoning.

The one thing needful is truly the cultivation and comprehension of 'the inner sense.' The world needs to trust itself; and poor demon-ridden man needs to retire upon himself, and listen for the true revealer of God in the temple of the soul. We need not revolt against the old idols. It is not an outward campaign at all that is wanted. What we need is self-reliance, and a going with God into 'the secret of His tabernacle.' As Emerson has taught us;—we have only to go into the great quietness of the spirit, and let God speak to us there.

The following, from this Paper, is, as we say, very simple, but, O, how far-reaching it is!—

We have become what we call 'civilised,' and have wonderful inventions for physical convenience; we are far advanced in the arts and sciences, but we have never yet learned the art of being happy and at peace, and we never will until we develop this inner sense. This inner sense will bring us into conscious touch with Immortal Life. It will give us that 'Peace that surpasseth understanding.' Be still and listen for that which will come to you in the Silence. Be still, and let God find you!

Some American reformers are discussing the desirability of reverting to the old order of things, when 'medicine man' combined doctor and priest. Christ is called 'The good physician,' and he worked, it is said, miracles of healing: and, in the early Christian Church, for generations, very much was made of healers, though in what is now known as the Spiritualist's use of the word. The New York 'Churchman' prints an Article by the Rev. W. R. Inge, in which he contrasts the biologist's and the divine's treatment of sin. He says:—

I cannot but feel that there is something wrong, when I take up (for instance) a biological work dealing with 'Degeneration' and morbid states of the nervous system in relation to heredity, and then a religious manual dealing with sin, repentance, conversion, and growth in the spiritual life. The subjects are manifestly the same—the same bad habits and evil dispositions are treated of; the objects are the same—how to prevent or cure these morbid conditions; but the methods are utterly different. Not only do the theologian and the biologist completely ignore each other, but their theories as to the cause of moral evil seem often to be diametrically opposed. The favourite theological doctrine is that sin is in its essence rebellion, a revolt of the will against the law of God. It is assumed that we are rational and self-determining agents, and that when we sin we deliberately choose the worse instead of the better course. Biologists, on the other hand, tend more and more to regard almost all immoral and anti-social conduct as symptoms of nervous degeneration, inherited or acquired.

The New York 'Churchman' says:—

May not the time have come—may not the very eagerness with which multitudes have embraced Christian Science show that it has come—when that stable alliance between the two branches of the healing art, that existed centuries ago, when each was groping in comparative darkness, may be restored again? Each has gone on its own way; each

has acquired a manifold weight of experience ; each may come to the other bringing precious gifts for the cure of souls. Many a clergyman is already a consulting physician, many a physician is constrained to be a moralist and to master the therapeutics of sin. Each can help the other.

The projectors of the 'National Health League' of New York definitely announce that they 'intend to establish health colleges where the main stress of study shall be laid on the maintenance of health. They desire to establish a sufficient number of free scholarships, to enable poor theological students to obtain this knowledge regarding health, free of charge. The hygienic care of the pastor for his congregation seems to be most natural, as the welfare of the soul and body are interdependent and as the founders of all great religions recognised this dual service of the priesthood.'

The New York 'Sun' gives a careful summary of a notable Essay by Professor Eliot on Progressive Liberalism in ecclesiastical, political, educational and domestic affairs. Some of his conclusions are very thought-provoking. He sees, all round, a loosening of authority, though this need not be regarded as an evil: it may, indeed, be a positive good, as indicating a growth of self-reliance, and of a personal conscience, based on something better than mere authority.

The 'Sun' gives the following summary of his reference to the comparatively new Science, Sociology :—

It is, in our author's opinion, a body of doctrine clearly founded on the ethics of the New Testament, though it is at present in a confused, amorphous state. At least one of its characteristics, however, is pronounced hopeful—it aims at the prevention rather than the cure of sin and evil; just as preventive medicine aims at the prevention of disease both in the single individual and in society at large. The Old Testament relied chiefly on prohibition and penalty. On the contrary, faith in penalty as a preventive of wrongdoing has rapidly declined during the nineteenth century, and this is equally true of penalty in this world and of penalty in the next. Barbarous punishments have been everywhere abolished in the civilised world, or are used only in moments of panic and delirium; and barbarous conceptions of punishments after death have been everywhere mitigated or abandoned. The new sociology, based on the Gospel doctrine of love to God and love to man, seeks the improvement of environment, the rectification of vice-breeding conditions, and the realisation of the ideal 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

The following, from 'The Harbinger of Light,' has point in it :—

Mrs. Foye has left Melbourne, and the regrets and good wishes of all investigators of the truth follow her. It is a deplorable matter that all through a season of the most remarkable phenomena, the three daily papers have maintained a dogged attitude of strict silence. But had Mrs. Foye been proved a 'fraud'—had she, through sickness or ill-health, failed for one night to satisfy her audience—what then? Why they would have devoted columns to condemning her. They would have branded her and libelled her, and the only evening paper would have inserted huge black headlines 'exposing' the 'fallacy' of Spiritualism. But they could prove no fraud, they could find no fault—hence their silence.

Our English newspapers, by fits and starts, behave rather better than of old, but they are still far too ready to ignore everything favourable to us, and to gloat over everything unfavourable,—a course of conduct as stupid as it is unjust. There is nothing for it but to 'peg away,' neither courting praise nor fearing blame.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE 'REFEREE' SEANCES.—Letters are reaching us suggesting that we should give expression to our own opinions as to the composition of the circle and the committee's management of these séances. The obvious reply is, that not having been present, we have no official information beyond that which appears in the committee's report. If, however, either the medium or any members of the circle have anything to say, our columns are open to them.

EXPERIMENTS WITH A SOMNAMBULIST.

By 'WIDAR.'

ABRIDGED FROM 'SPIRITISTISCHE RUNDschau.'

It was by our never-to-be-forgotten Carl du Prel that the high importance of somnambulism in connection with Spiritism was brought to my notice; I therefore seized the first opportunity which presented itself of convincing myself by means of experiments, whether somnambulism were really so valuable.

I selected as my subject a young man of twenty-six years of age, who willingly agreed to my proposition, as he was most anxious to become a medium; and at the commencement of the sittings I readily induced in him the mesmeric sleep by making passes. Later on I was able to accomplish this from some distance.

I then gave him the following command: 'For two hours you will see the spirits by whom you are surrounded; you will hear them speak, converse with them, and repeat what they say to you. At the expiration of two hours you will return to your normal state quite well and in good spirits.'

I then breathed in his face and said 'Awake,' and he immediately did so. Sometimes he woke up in great agitation; generally, however, very quietly.

At the first sitting, on awaking, he looked around in an astonished and anxious manner and asked what had become of all the persons he had seen. Whereupon I explained to him the command I had given him, and asked whom he had seen besides ourselves; and he then gave the names of many persons long since dead.

He now became the means of communication between us and the spirits; more powerfully, indeed, than many mediums with whom I have experimented. Erhard, as our somnambulist was called, saw the spirits, described their appearance, gave their names, and told us all they wished to say to us.

He saw them as distinctly as ourselves, only that he could see through them, with the exception of their faces and hands, which he said were milk-white. Once I stood on the spot where he said a spirit was standing, but he said the latter did not move but remained, as he could see, in the same place.

He said he saw the spirits gaze alternately at himself and me, but they took no notice of the other persons present. When I told them to sit on the sofa they did so at once, and I was able to place myself on the sofa without interfering with them at all. Their lips moved when they spoke, and Erhard observed no difference between their way of speaking or their movements, and our own.

Their language was for the most part far finer than any Erhard could have made use of, and one spirit spoke so powerfully that it must have been the great thinker, whom Erhard saw clairvoyantly. Erhard was generally in the somnambulist condition and only became entranced if begged some spirit to use his vocal organs to converse with us. I only on one occasion commanded Erhard to remember when he awoke what he had heard and seen during the two hours of his somnambulist state, and he retained this memory, but usually he remembered nothing of what had then occurred.

Once I placed him *en rapport* with the sphere of music, of which the spirits sometimes spoke. He then said he heard most lovely music and repeated the words of a song he heard sung, which were extremely beautiful; but as he appeared much agitated, I speedily awoke him.

French, English, and Latin were spoken by Erhard when in the somnambulist state, though he had no acquaintance with any of these languages, and several remarkable proofs of identity were given by the spirits. (Here follow some examples.)

Erhard was very susceptible to thought-transference. If I mentally put a question to him, he usually answered it at once, but in a way as though his words were not in response to my question, but came independently. In the same manner he would comply with commands made by me mentally. Once I awoke him by a command so made, although I was in another room.

On one occasion his deceased mother was present, and as his relatives much wished to have a likeness of her, I commanded him to draw her portrait. He did so, and though it is true that it was not an artistic work, it was in general characteristics correct. The strange thing about it was that, according to him, the picture was already on the paper, and he only had to trace the lines over it.

Once I told him to direct his looks to the spirit world. His description of this corresponded with that given in Dr. Friese's book, 'Voices from the Spirit Land.' As there was something he was unable to see distinctly, I said to him: 'Go there yourself!' and immediately he left the body and began to wander in the spirit land. I commanded him now to return. He said 'he did not wish to resume his earthly garment, which only brought sorrow with it.' During this time his body was cold and limp, and his voice weak, like that of a dying person. I exerted my will powerfully and commanded him to return, when he immediately obeyed and awoke up strong and well.

It happened that once, during a sitting, he appeared to become very weak, so I laid my hands upon his head, when he seemed to recover his strength. He said he had the sensation as though an invigorating stream proceeded from my hands, and he could even see the spirits better. He never seemed tired or exhausted after the sittings; on the contrary, he declared that he felt stronger after than before them. It was myself who suffered from exhaustion; a sure sign that he drew much upon my vitality. He always liked to be close to me, although he knew I did not wish it, on account of the vitality I felt he drew from me. (Here follow some accounts of verified predictions made by Erhard, while in the somnambulist state.)

Often I commanded him to diagnose the diseases of persons present. He seized the hands of the sick persons, with his eyes closed, and described what they were suffering from, what was the cause, and prescribed the remedies.

Towards the conclusion of these experiments he would only reluctantly allow himself to be placed in the somnambulist state, in compliance with the request of his father and brothers. It then often happened that his mother, who was his guide (*Schutzgeist*), upbraided him for his unwillingness to join in the séances. She said, however, that he was under some bad influence which she was unable to overcome. This influence unfortunately became so powerful that I had to use all my will power to combat it, and was obliged to give up the séances. His character seemed to be completely changed. He became hasty, impatient, and violent; in short, signs of obsession were evident in him, and I had to exert my utmost powers to restore him to his former state.

I must here assert that during all the experiments I kept my mind quite passive and impartial, and, to the best of my ability, I avoided every source of deception or confusion, by conducting them on the rules laid down by Carl du Prel in his work, 'Studies in the Domain of Occultism.' I wish particularly to point out that Erhard was totally unversed in our science of the supernormal, and that his utterances were therefore quite independent of those of other somnambulists.

I am therefore convinced that the rich literature dealing with somnambulism contains genuine facts, and that our revered Carl du Prel was right in the great importance he attached to it.

M. T. (Tr.)

'LIGHT' FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING.

A Calcutta correspondent suggests that friends of Spiritualism should subscribe for 'LIGHT' to be sent to hospitals, schools, colleges, soldiers' or seamen's coffee rooms, &c. He says: 'When a man is ill or convalescent he has many weary hours in which his mind naturally dwells upon the future life. How many would be comforted by what they would read in "LIGHT," and how many would, at that time, give due attention to the subject of Spiritualism who might at other times treat it with indifference.' In accordance with this suggestion we invite subscriptions for this purpose, and will forward 'LIGHT' by post for thirteen weeks, for 2s. 6d., to any institution named by the contributor.

HOW I FOUND THE LIGHT.

A NARRATIVE OF PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT.

By REV. HOLDEN E. SAMPSON, LATE OF DURBAN, NATAL.

(Continued from page 388.)

Passing over various important circumstances and incidents in my career, I found myself at last in Durban, Natal, stationed at a mission station for natives, twelve miles from the Port. For a number of months I had been living alone, having sent my wife and children to England, my wife being in a precarious state of health. Owing to my many monetary misfortunes, I had been obliged all these months to live practically on bread and water and bananas. I now know that all these misfortunes and distresses were in the fulfilment of my destiny, and to fit me physically for developing my spiritual nature and bringing me into contact with the spirits of the upper spheres. I suffered greatly in mind and body, as well as in estate, and spent my days in studying and meditating upon the past history of my life, to find a clue to the purpose of my then grievous state of desolation and destitution. All my past misfortunes were traceable to one direct cause, the concatenation of circumstances which directly sprang from my struggles for spiritual and intellectual freedom and fundamental settlement. I had been driven from pillar to post all my life, seeking spiritual and intellectual rest, and had 'tapped' every religion, philosophy, science and organisation purporting to supply what I desiderated more than all things in this world—*Truth*. But in one and all I found discrepancies, inconsistencies, contradictions. Yet I *knew* that the Truth existed somewhere, despite the imperfections and failures of all professed exponents of the Truth. Find it I would, if at the risk of death.

Then I met a man who gave me the first clue, a dear brother clergyman, whose own life, like mine, had been chequered and catastrophic in the pursuit of Truth, and in antagonism with the world of Untruth, Half-Truth, and No-Truth. I give his name, for he is a man who can contribute largely to present-day knowledge of occult and spiritual things—Rev. C. D. Tonkin, of Durban, a man revered by all for his high-mindedness, as he is pitied for the hardness of fate throughout the uneven course of his life. He it was who first introduced me to the spirit world. In his house I investigated, very closely and narrowly, the many beautiful and mysterious phenomena of the ordinary spiritualist séance; we read books together, and discussed Spiritualism from all its sides. Previously to this, I had been greatly struck with M. Maeterlinck's mystical book, 'The Treasure of the Humble,' particularly by his remarks, so illuminating, on occult science. It was then that I launched out in a few speculative opinions, as I then only regarded them, namely, that all religions are One in principle. Get hold of the fundamental principle, and we arrive at the unification of truth, as it is obscurely manifested in all religions, philosophies, sciences. Also, that the 'Holy Ghost' is not a single entity, but the whole concourse of spirits in the upper world, operating in behalf of the spirits of good and holy men on the earth. I also came to see that in occultism and Spiritualism were to be found the 'lost secrets' of modern Freemasonry; likewise I dimly saw a cohesion between Spiritualism and what is known nowadays as 'Esoteric Buddhism' and Theosophy. I read carefully A. P. Sinnett's lucid exposition of 'Esoteric Buddhism,' and at the same time I read a book called 'Wanderings in Spirit Land,' by a spirit, through inspirational writing. I then thought I perceived the points of cohesion between these two occult bodies, and a possible reconciliation between their differing tenets. But all this was very vague, more *impressions* than conclusions. I, nevertheless, kept them in my heart, and pondered over them deeply.

One day, after a long period of enforced 'fasting' (for I am by no means an ascetic), and comparative solitude, out in the midst of the 'Bush,' I suddenly felt my mind to be illumined by a golden thought, which expanded into a

great and wonderful conception, as it seemed then, and still seems, to me. No sooner did I find myself overwhelmed with the greatness of the conception which had flashed into my brain and infused my being with a fire I could not control, than I was impelled to seize a pen, much to the astonishment of a young friend who had paid me a visit, and into whose conversation I broke by exclaiming, 'Excuse me, I must write,' and I set off writing at an incredible speed, without reflection or premeditation, a long series of articles, one after the other, until ten articles were written. This work occupied me, day and night, for three days, hardly stopping for food or rest. The articles I named, 'The Cultus of the Larger Christianity,' and sent off to the Editor of the 'Natal Witness,' who, to my surprise, published them, twice a week, in his paper. I issued these articles under the pseudonym of 'Lux,' and portions of them were extracted for publication in 'LIGHT,' and other papers. I can now, after twelve months of the most astonishing experiences, and progress in the development of my psychical and spiritual nature, say that I have nothing to change or to modify in the inspired words which are embodied in those articles, although I have been under the inculcative power and instruction, on psychical, spiritual, scientific and theological questions, of the spirits of the upper world, ever since. Those articles form the ground-work of a voluminous, scientifically sound, and deeply spiritual body of teaching, all of which I have received inspirationally, by the psychical process of automatic writing and mental illumination.

Immediately after the publication of these articles, and as soon as the public became aware of the real name of the author, I came to a crisis in my life, by being dismissed from my incumbency. Naturally I might have expected such a contingency, considering the extreme heterodoxy of my views. I then found myself cast upon the world, without a penny, and almost friendless. I will not describe here my physical experiences, excepting as they are germane to the elucidation of my spiritual experiences. I went to Pietermaritzburg, to visit a Spiritualist friend, and there I followed up my study and investigation of Spiritualism. On a certain occasion my friend had lent me the use of an Ouija board, with which I hoped to obtain some satisfactory results. So far as I knew, I had not been conscious of having developed any special mediumistic powers. Now I know that I had developed, unknown to myself, a very remarkable psychic gift of inspirational and automatic writing, combined with mind-illumination, which is, with me, always a distinct and pronounced phenomenon. I persevered for five days with the Ouija board, and had not the slightest sign of a communication, or the slightest sense of spirit-control. On the sixth day, my hand was moved strongly, steadily, and deliberately, and spelt out the words, 'I am your spirit-guide.' We conversed for many hours in this cumbrous and laborious way, and I elicited a great deal of very helpful teaching from my 'guide,' but he would not divulge his name, only answering to my repeated requests, 'Call me Emmanuel.'

It is desirable for me here to state one fact which occurred previous to this last event. When in Durban I was often asked to preach at a church at which previously I had for some months been acting incumbent. I came into contact also with a dear brother and his wife, who, strangely enough, had years before been one of the young 'cadets' of the Salvation Army during the spiritual phenomena I have recorded. He had years ago ceased his connection with the Salvation Army, for the same reasons that compelled me to do so. He had become a fervent and *spiritual* Spiritualist, and both he and his wife were powerful spirit-mediums. Mr. Fisk, indeed, was one of those rare souls of deep spiritual perceptions, and a most delightful medium in séance. Both he and his wife had the gift of *clairvoyance* strongly developed. They told me that what first attracted them to me was the fact that, whenever I preached, there appeared the spirit form of a venerable minister bending over me, and his hands laid upon my head. This gave them confidence that they would hear 'something worth hearing.' The description of this spirit form which they gave me was identical with the appearance of my beloved and venerable spiritual teacher, Dr. Asa Mahan. I then recalled the fact that this aged saint, on his death-bed, had sent me a

message, the last words that he spoke on the earth before his departure to the 'other side.' This message I had never forgotten. It was, 'Tell Sampson he will fulfil my work.'

After several days with the Ouija board, I was told by 'Emmanuel' to cease employing the board, and to take pen and paper, and he would henceforth speak to me by automatic writing. To my inexpressible delight I found I had indeed developed this precious gift. Besides this means of communication, I found, in the course of a week or two, that I possessed that remarkable spiritual gift which, I believe, in spiritualist parlance, is called 'clairaudience.' As a matter of fact, it is the gift of hearing my own spirit speaking into, as it were, the speaking tube of my mentality. It is the 'voice of the silence of my soul,' as Buddha describes it, and is clear as a bell in the distance, vocalising the words of the spirits, communicated to my spirit, and through my spirit to the mental consciousness. This gift has been to me an unspeakable delight, when I have been alone and solitary in the world, but 'never less alone,' for many spirits have been constantly in communion with my spirit. It was at this point that I was told by 'Emmanuel' his real name—I should say, his earthly patronymic; it was none other than my old departed teacher, Dr. Asa Mahan, sent to still guide, teach, and inspire me, in the forthcoming wonderful course of discipline of pain, adversity and perplexity which I was shown I must undergo to attain to complete union with the higher circles of spirits in the 'heavenly places.'

It is impossible for me, with the short space at my disposal, to enter into a description of all the deep import of this strange and wonderful series of mystical and mysterious experiences. Indeed, their narration would involve disclosures of so remarkable a character that I feel the subject altogether beyond my power and permission to narrate, in any particularity, except to an audience not unaccustomed to hear of marvellous psychical experiences, without marking the narrator as an irremediable lunatic. It must suffice to say that I went through a succession of strong tests of my *faith* in the spirits who were now my 'directors'; of my *obedience* to their words and counsels; of my *submission* to the pains and sufferings to which I was subjected, in my body, my mind, my spirit, successively; of my *devotion* to the cause of *Absolute Truth*, at the fountain-source of which I found myself daily deriving the most wonderful knowledge and wisdom, concerning all and everything on which my mind and soul had sought elucidation and explication; and of my *loyalty* to God, the Centre and Source of all that is in the Universe, of whom all that is, is but His various forms and manifestations in their evolutionary stages of development.

There at last came a time when I found myself arrived, in spirit, when in a trance, on the margin of the last circle of spirits; and there, in vision, I saw the lofty and holy spirits who dwell in the highest Arcanum of Being, the 'Seventh Heaven,' and my spirit eyes beheld, my spirit ears heard, and all my spirit senses were ravished by, scenes and sounds and sensations which it is beyond the capacity of human tongue to tell or human language to narrate.

But this brief account must suffice for the present narrative. These things happened in the few months of the year 1900. Space forbids my entering into any further description or elucidation of subsequent psychical and spiritual truths and experiences that it has been my lot to pass through and learn. I can only say that I have had many problems solved, many knots unravelled, many difficulties removed, through the teaching which every day has been imparted to me by my spirit 'masters.' I have passed very briefly over these incidents, and have omitted to mention many phenomena and facts which have proved to me conclusively that *there is a philosophy, a religion, a science—all in one—that is absolute and fundamental*; and that God has at last rewarded my years of painful search after the Truth, by putting me into possession of the key that unlocks the Gates of the Path Upward.

Before concluding this narrative I feel it my duty to say one word on the question of the rationale of suffering. Perhaps there are few, if any, men living who have passed through a life of so much secret suffering of mind, soul and body, as I have. I have known almost every form and phase of that strange accompaniment of human existence, suffering, and always of the most poignant and acute kind—suffer-

ing which no one has fully known, and for which I have never sought, however much I have longed for, real human sympathy. In fact, I have found that my life has had to be given to sympathise with, and listen to the stories of, other people's sufferings, and I have had no heart to obtrude my own. But I have learnt this axiom, that *suffering and sin are both a necessary part of human life*, and for psychical and physical reasons. The only way of human emancipation from the present evil state into which mankind has fallen is to climb up the steep gradient of sin and suffering down which the human spirit has fallen, and each step of the ascent is a step of pain and suffering, the instrument of deliverance, which must be applied to the four parts of human nature, body, mind, soul, and spirit. We are only 'made perfect through suffering.' It is only through 'tribulation' that we can enter the 'Kingdom of God.' And I have seen that all my past life of sin and suffering in this existence has been absolutely necessary for the complete work of development of my spiritual nature. As 'prayer and fasting' literally are necessary for psychical development, to fit the body, mind, and soul for the occupancy of the higher circles of the spirits, so suffering, on all sides of our nature, is necessary for the development of our four-fold nature, and its culminating coalescence in the unity of the spirits of God. This is my experience, and the truth 'in a nutshell,' which has been revealed to me from the circles of the spirits, and it is fully in accord with both the teaching of Jesus and of Buddha.

SEANCES WITH MRS. MELLON.

Since writing you last I have had the pleasure of attending two of Mrs. Mellon's seances. Thanks to the kind courtesy of the genial treasurer of the Manchester Spiritualist Alliance, Mr. Herring, and his wife, the hospitable doors of Edendale were thrown open to the members of the Alliance (by purchasing tickets, of course), and I, as one of them, was delighted to attend the seances and desire to record in your columns my perfect faith in Mrs. Mellon and my thorough conviction as to the genuineness of her mediumship.

Mrs. Mellon sat outside the cabinet in full view of the sitters, with light sufficient to distinguish the objects and people in the room, and a round spot of white appeared on the carpet, which widened and spread upwards until a small form (No. I.) appeared at the medium's side. He gave the name of 'Arthur.' He came for Miss Watson-Moore. He was not recognised by her at the time, but was afterwards identified as the brother of an intimate friend of hers. After this test Mrs. Mellon proposed going inside the cabinet, and so getting better results more quickly, which was gladly agreed to. She went in, the sable curtains were dropped, and all was still. A hymn was sung, and before it was finished a white square, similar to a gauze handkerchief, appeared, and this widened until the lovely form of 'Clara' (No. II.) was evolved and recognised with glad emotion by Mrs. Ellen Green as her sister-in-law, and 'Geordie' told us in his sonorous tones that 'John Lamont' was also there. Mrs. Mellon, whose voice was constantly heard talking to and encouraging the spirits, told us that an Indian (No. III.) was there, who duly appeared like a flash of white light against the black curtains, and was recognised by Mrs. Herring as her guide 'Sam'; the olive tint of face and hands being clearly outlined against the spirit drapery and black curtains (which had not been inclosed since Mrs. Mellon passed through them). Up to this point I should imagine the spirit visitants were what our American friends call 'Etherialisations,' as they were so very shadowy and transparent, all clothed in the same exquisite snowy drapery; but now appeared the more substantial form of 'Cissie' (No. IV.), who took a sweet (given by a friend) from Dr. Gallagher, an old friend of hers. She made an audible noise with her lips when requested to munch the sweet, and then threw it back to the giver (not Dr. Gallagher), saying it was a 'du-dube' and 'slobbery.' A rose was also given, which she also threw back. Being requested to dance 'Cissie' did so, and the sounds of her little bare feet were distinctly audible, as also were the kisses given by her little black hand in full view of the sitters.

A childish form (No. V.) holding a lovely spirit light also appeared, and was recognised by Mrs. Herring as her son 'Little Willie,' who waved his light to and fro in delight at being recognised. Then came a female form for Mr. T. Braham, of the name of 'Mary' (No. VI.), who spoke to him in a faint, weak voice but was unrecognised by him. Somewhere about this point came 'Geordie' (No. VII.), and as he was of lower stature than we had imagined him to be, and remarks being freely passed to that effect, 'Geordie' grew and grew until he was of the recorded height—briefly summed up as 'a big man.' Much amusement was caused by his addressing personal remarks to his friends amongst the audience, beginning with 'Weel, Misthress Green, ye're a bonnie wee woman,' and 'Hey, Maister Hairring, ye're a braw mon.' Not one friend known by him before his medium left England years ago was passed over unnoticed by him, but I must confess to being surprised and a little overawed when he fixed his eyes on me and said, 'Misthress Robinson, ye're weel kenned on oor side. We ken a' about ye and the work ye're doing—ye're a grand worker for the cause.' It is impossible for me to reproduce 'Geordie's' broad Scotch or 'Cissie's' broken English; both had an inexplicable charm of their own, impossible to reproduce. A spirit friend giving the name of 'Sammy' (No. VIII.), in a quick, hoarse voice claimed Dr. Gallagher, who did not recognise him, though he said he had been described as being with him three times before. The spirit friend then said they had been on a battlefield in America together.

A friend (No. IX.), in a low, faint voice, said he had been killed by lightning and knew Mrs. Green. His name was Marshall, of Bradford, and he was recognised by her at once as a friend who had recently passed on.

A lovely draped female figure who gave the name of 'Messenger' (No. X.) came for Miss Elderton and told her to sit for automatic writing.

'Elsie' (No. XI.) came at an earlier point than this, and was claimed by Mr. and Mrs. Searle beyond all doubt as their little daughter Elsie, who always appears and makes herself known when it is possible to do so. At the beginning of the seance I felt a childish form leaning heavily on my knee trying to pass behind me to Mr. Searle, and then my dress was gently lifted three times.

If I have not recorded these spiritual visitations in the exact manner or order in which they appeared, I can only say I have done it to the best of my ability, as no notes were taken at the time and some of the changes were very rapid and also appeared different as seen from different points of view. But I am sure any friends present would be glad to testify, if needed, to the general accuracy of my record and to the genuineness of Mrs. Mellon's mediumship.

KATE TAYLOR-ROBINSON.

COLONEL OLCOTT ON HYPNOTISM.

Colonel H. S. Olcott lectured recently in Chicago, and according to the 'Chronicle' of that city he said, speaking of hypnotism:—

'Hypnotism and mesmerism are powers that should be called into service very rarely. They are dangerous powers. Much harm has been done by the indiscriminate utilisation of these great powers. A hypnotist can make a criminal by suggestion. It has been said that a hypnotist can only call forth the evil that is in a person and utilise the seed of evil to propagate greater evil. This is not so. They can make criminals of persons who are free from vices, which they give way to under the power of a hypnotist. There are ways in which a hypnotist can kill a person, and I believe that they have sometimes availed themselves of the opportunities for doing evil that have been presented to them as a result of their power.'

UNSATISFACTORY CONDITIONS.—A South African Spiritualist now in London writes: 'A short time since I and some friends went to Peckham to a seance at Mr. Husk's, but we were very much disappointed. If the process of materialisation is a scientific one, why do not the mediums practise with a ruby, or a yellow, light, so that all the spirits who come can be easily seen? So far as I can judge, little or no progress has been made in this phase of manifestation during the past twenty-five years. Anything occurring in total darkness, in a circle of sitters all more or less strangers, is very unsatisfactory.'

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
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APPLICATIONS by Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., for the loan of books from the Alliance Library, should be addressed to the Librarian, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

THE CANDID FRIEND.

We welcome 'The Gift of the Spirit,' a selection from the Essays of the late Prentice Mulford (London: Philip Wellby), an interesting American mystic. The Essays are all on subjects of spiritual value, and are finely woven with subtle thought and poetic expression. One of them, however, specially concerns us. It is entitled 'Healthy and unhealthy Spirit Communion,' and it is, on the whole, a deterrent. We cannot, in this instance, go so far as to say with Canning:—

But, of all plagues, good Heaven, thy wrath can send,
Save, save, oh save me from the candid friend.

But the writer of this Essay was, for a friend, quite distinctly 'candid.' The Essay commences with a reference to the 'disagreeable associations' of the word 'Spiritualism,' and to its 'froth and scum,' and hastens to the chastising of test-seekers, and to nine-tenths, indeed, of séance-seekers. It is, we are told, 'the material mind' which 'demands proof of spirit existence and spirit power through material evidences'; and it is 'never satisfied.' Nay, if spirit intercourse is 'only sought with the desire of communicating with the loved ones on that side of life—the chances are that very little good will come of such dealing with Spiritualism.' 'Spiritualism,' we are assured, 'is, in its present form, an abnormal and unhealthy development.'

It came of the premature ripening of the spiritual senses and functions in certain individuals.' Trance mediumship is bad. The gift is 'a most dangerous one.' 'Two minds have no business using one body. It is unnatural and unhealthy.' But 'far worse is it for "the medium" who gives communications from day to day for several on the unseen side, even though this is done by the agency of one spirit controlling him or her. . . . They are visited by grief-stricken people who want to communicate with their friends. These friends are grieving also, and the medium stands between the embodied and disembodied as a strainer through which is passed the dark and gloomy thoughts from both sides, and, as thoughts are things, and grieving and regretful thoughts are very harmful things, the medium's mind absorbs a great deal of this element. The result to the body is destructive.' Finally, even if the spirits made use of certain 'forced or artificial conditions' and habitually made themselves visible and tangible, this would not be well for them or for us. For them it would be 'an unwise expenditure of strength': for us 'a sort of hot-house condition or growth,' an artificial state which could neither last nor naturally advance. 'You would return weakened by an artificial life and training, as

a bird is really weakened by its artificial and caged life, and with your capacity for living and growing healthily retarded.'

As we have said, this is distinctly candid, desperately candid; and there is a touch of truth in it: but it is palpably overdone. For example: it is not only the material mind which asks the help of material evidences. A thoroughly good material test is evidence for the intellect and is useful in the very highest regions as demonstrating the existence of a personality minus the earthly tabernacle. Neither is it accurate to say broadly that mediumship injures the medium. It may injure some, but it helps others. And what if it injured all? What if every medium were a minor martyr? Might it not be worth it, for the race? Is there no place for vicarious sacrifice? But is it true that the medium stands as mediator between only grieving souls? How many who succeed in establishing communications—or who think they do—are unspeakably happy! and are there not many many times when the medium is 'a strainer through which are passed,' not 'dark and gloomy thoughts,' but thoughts of unbounded joy? Again; whether the acceptance of external spirit-help, visible or tangible, produces the artificial and weakened condition of a caged bird is purely a matter of experience. Undoubtedly it could so act: but, also undoubtedly, it does not always so act: we do not believe that it usually acts so: and, where it does, the fault may be with Society and its foolish repulsions, and not with an intercourse which, rightly understood and used, might give vast accessions of freedom, growth and strength.

But Mr. Prentice saw the good side of it, and expressed it, thereby drifting into certain inconsistencies. Here are some of his admissions in these Essays:—'Thousands of people who have dealt in spirit intercourse, with all its present crudity and mingling of true and false on both sides of life, are obliged to own to themselves that the death of the body does not end all. This is one step ahead, and a profitable conviction for any mind.' And again: 'Spiritualism, with its accompanying evil, has served a purpose. It has awakened a portion of the race to the fact that the death or loss of the body is only an episode in the real life—the life of the spirit.' Surely that goes a very long way towards discounting this writer's grave dissuaves!

As we ponder this Essay, as a whole, indeed, these dissuaves tend to disappear altogether, inasmuch as the writer makes the duty of prosecuting the inquiry imperative. He refers to 'the writings of Moses and others in the Bible' as 'a true historical record,' recognises spirit-intercourse throughout, during 'a period of several thousand years,' and then asks, 'If such communication was possible then, why not now?' It is true that we are exposed to the influence of evil as well as of good spirits, he says, but that is no reason why we should ignore the subject. On the contrary, that would be 'like ignoring the existence of gunpowder because some people have done foolish things with explosives.' As for the inability of Spiritualism to bear the full stress of repeated tests at will, this writer defends us well. He says to the scientist with his severe demands: 'You are demanding the perfect development of a science before it has passed through its earlier and immature stages of growth. You are like one demanding at once the perfected steam engine without the preceding experience of trial, experiment and failure of the last eighty years out of which has come the locomotive engine. You allow nothing for the defect, immaturity, misconception, and ignorance existing in your own mind when you deal with and judge of these things.'

After sober and solid reflections like these, it is provoking to turn a leaf and find this writer wearily bidding farewell to 'physical phenomena,' and yawning, 'I see no greater marvel in the materialisation of flowers than in the

building of the Brooklyn bridge.' Now that is, and can only be, tiresome nonsense. The building of a bridge is an understood process on a well-known plane; but the materialisation of flowers (if possible) introduces us to a wonderland which may revolutionise all knowledge and 'make all things new.'

It is also provoking to find him saying, 'When some people ask me "Are you a Spiritualist?" I prefer to say "No." This saves a great deal of trouble in the endeavour to explain what I do believe and what I do not believe, &c.' Perhaps; but it is also naughtily misleading: and, besides, pulling the blinds down is not a high-class occupation in order to prevent people seeing what you have for dinner.

But, on the whole, this Essay aims high. It looks for a time 'when people will not need any form of physical phenomena to convince them of the reality of another life. . . There will be the most perfect blending of minds of those with the material body and those without.' A mighty change will come over the human race, by the all-compelling 'force of a great wave of spiritual element and spiritual impulse, which shall clear men's eyes and quicken their understanding, so that all things shall regulate themselves, even as in the heavens the millions of planets are moved in the intricacies of their orbits without clash or disorder.' We believe that this great wave is at work now, and that the clash and disorder are a necessary part of the process by which harmony and wisdom are being evolved.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

The next series of meetings of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be opened with a *Conversazione* in the Banqueting Room, St. James's Hall, on the evening of *Thursday*, October 24th; and addresses will be given in the Regent Saloon, St. James's Hall (entrance from Regent-street) on *Thursdays*, November 7th, November 21st, December 5th, and December 19th. Further particulars will be announced in due course.

GOOD TO DIE BY.

The 'Sunflower,' for August 1st, reported the passing of Mr. Edward Bach, father of Mr. W. H. Bach, the editor of that journal. The departed was for many years an ardent Spiritualist and an active worker for the extension of the movement. 'Spiritualism,' he always said, 'is a good thing to live by, but a better thing to die by.'

'This saying,' says Mr. W. H. Bach, 'was proven true in his own case':—

'Before losing consciousness he talked with members of the family and his last words to the writer were, "This is death, but I am not afraid of death." Then he repeated, "I want you to understand that I am not afraid to die." Speaking to mother in the old endearing term, he turned to a daughter who stood at the foot of the bed, saying, "Daisy, don't cry." Turning from her to a presence unseen by us but evidently as real to him as were we of the earth-life, he said, "What is it, Walter?" and then spoke to his spirit mother in German.

'What we want to know is, if he had consciousness and ability to recognise those of earth-life and turned, as he did, from those in earth to those in spirit, and back to those in earth, why should we doubt the presence of one more than the other? When he spoke to one son, in the person of the writer, perfectly rationally, then spoke to another son, whom the world calls dead, equally rationally, why is not the evidence as good in one case as the other?

'Spiritualism cannot take away the sense of loss of earthly presence, but it can take away the pointed sting of death, make the last hours pleasant, and remove from the passing person that fear that haunts so many.

'As for us left in life we can only say with the poet:—

"This same way we too shall go,
Just a little farther only,
And the waters' ebb and flow,
Will not seem one-half so lonely,
Since thy hand will reach across,
Taking ours to aid the landing,
Thou wilt teach the gain and loss
To our darkened understanding."

OLD-TIME EXPERIENCES.

(Concluded from page 393.)

There are still a good many people who are in what may be called the 'black-swan' condition with regard to the phenomena. That is to say, they think it a sufficient justification for disbelief to say that the marvellous things they hear about the spirits are self-evident lies. Now 'a black swan' remained a synonym for an impossibility only while Australia was still undiscovered; and it is now-a-days just as much a proof of ignorance to deny the reality of even the most astounding séance-room manifestations, as it would be to deny the existence of black swans; there is, in fact, fifty times as much evidence for the reality of the phenomena as there is for the actuality of black swans. 'Ah, but anyone can go to the Zoological Gardens and see a black swan!' And so can anyone go to séances and see the phenomena. But you must take care not to mistake some neighbouring farmyard for the 'Zoo,' and you should not tie a bandage over your eyes before you go in.

Now, although I think that the readers of 'LIGHT' are the least likely people to cry 'black swan' to me, still I should like to say a few words about fraudulent manifestations before I bid them good-bye. I may say that I have been agreeably surprised during my investigations to find so little deception, and so much openness and sincerity, among the professional mediums whom I have frequented. It is true that I never went 'fraud hunting'; but I have always been on my guard, for at the very threshold of my investigations I met with three cases of deception, in the persons of a young doctor, of a young clergyman, and of a young lawyer, who at different times were admitted to our little family circle. They were soon suspected, and charged with cheating, and, after a little hesitation, they all confessed—the first two did so with shame and sorrow, declaring that they felt an unaccountable and irresistible desire to make fools of us; but the young lawyer treated the matter as a joke, and was much surprised at our indignation. Moreover, I once played the part of deceiver myself; so if there be any virtue in setting a thief to catch a thief, I ought to be a good detective! It happened in this way: One day a lady with whom I had just been talking about the spirits, suddenly held up her hand and said, 'Hush, I hear raps!' We were at the moment standing at opposite sides of the room, and sure enough, rap, rap, rap, came apparently from a bureau close to her. I soon found, however, that when I pressed with my foot, the raps occurred; for, as I afterwards found, the plank of the flooring under my foot ran across the room to the bureau. Just for fun, I kept up what I considered a little joke, fully intending to show her presently how I myself made the raps, for I thought she was much too credulous, and I believed that this would be a good lesson for her; but after I had rapped out a few little 'communications,' she became so excited and so delighted that I thought I would let her 'cool down,' and would tell her the next time I saw her. And there I made a mistake; had I told her at once, she would have understood it, and taken it in good part, whereas her manner to me ever after my deferred confession showed that her belief in my trustworthiness had received a severe shock.

Not meeting with any trickery myself, the constant denunciations of fraud in spiritualistic journals greatly puzzled me. I found a nervous anxiety on the part of mediums whom I believed to be perfectly honest, to 'keep in with' the editors of certain journals, for, whether rightly or wrongly, the professional mediums in America at that time believed that if they were so unlucky as to offend the said editors, their good name would be gone. I was naturally chary of believing the stories of editorial unfairness which reached my ears; and I could not reply to the argument that there existed persons who made a livelihood by supplying what they called 'mediums' requisites; that is to say, luminous paint, 'invisible' wires, masks, wigs, stuffed gloves, and other such paraphernalia. Not only were (and are) these things advertised in the newspapers in the United States, but two of the mediums whom I visited showed me circulars that had been sent to them containing descriptions and price lists of these nefarious articles. I had nearly come to disbelieve in the

testimony of my own senses to the general honesty of professional mediums, and had almost accepted the simple argument of the spiritualistic journals, that Spiritualism must be in a rather rotten state to provide customers, in the shape of dishonest mediums, for these makers of 'mediums' requisites,' when an acquaintance (who thought the mediums frauds, and myself a poor unfortunate dupe) offered to take me to see a friend of his who could imitate all the séance-room phenomena 'to perfection.' Of course I jumped at the offer; and I accompanied him to his friend's house in Brooklyn one evening, and found about a dozen others there, who had come by invitation to see the 'exposure of Spiritualism.' Well, I saw slate-writing rather cleverly done; I saw a table and a chair apparently move without contact; a hand came from behind a curtain, and a face showed itself at that curtain for a moment. And afterwards Mr. X., the performer, showed us how he had changed the slates when we were not looking; drew our attention to the really clever arrangement of 'invisible' wires, by which the table and chair were moved; and produced the 'spirit hand' for our inspection—a white kid glove attached to a stick; and also showed us the 'spirit face'—a coarsely painted mask, fitted with a wig and a piece of white drapery. The friends present loudly complimented the gentleman on his 'complete exposure' of the tricks of the mediums; and it was, in fact, a clever performance of its kind, and quite likely to take in anyone who knew nothing of the conditions under which the real phenomena occur. I found that only two out of some dozen people present had ever attended a séance; but it could not have been 'much of a séance,' for these two expressed their gratitude to Mr. X. for having disillusionised them, declaring that he made the manifestations much better than the mediums themselves. But clever and neatly done as was the performance, it was so unlike 'the real thing' that certainly no one who had had any experience of genuine phenomena would have accepted it as anything but an imitation. After this experience I took care, whenever I had an opportunity, to ask those I met at séances if they had ever seen any of these so-called 'exposures,' and I only found two people who had, and both of these pronounced the imitation much feebler than I myself had thought it.

Now, it seems to me that the conclusion is unavoidable that the patrons of these makers of 'mediums' requisites' are *not* fraudulent mediums, but the 'exposers' and enemies of Spiritualism; and that those good people (editors and others) who are so anxious to 'purify Spiritualism' that they are never tired of declaring to friend and foe that it is overwhelmed with fraud, are the victims of an auto-suggestion, the result of an erroneous inference—the inference that the 'mediums' requisites' are used by professing mediums,' whereas in reality they are employed by professed 'exposers.' It is absurd to suppose that anyone who sets up as a genuine medium would trust his reputation for honesty to a person who publicly announces that he teaches people how to cheat, and supplies the means of doing so, as a medium necessarily would if he purchased that person's goods. The exposure of Spiritualism is a gratifying performance for many people, not only because it enables them to make their neighbours out to be fools, but because it looks clever, for it is simply a variety of sleight-of-hand performance, which requires no particular dexterity, and can be made very effective by confining the exhibition to those who are ignorant of true mediumship. Were the object of the suppliers of 'mediums' requisites' to help mediums to bamboozle the public, they would certainly not explain their methods and apparatus as openly as they do, not only in their circulars, but in the journals of the opponents of Spiritualism. One maker of these articles, for example, has a whole-page advertisement of his goods in this month's issue of a Chicago magazine (August, 1901), and he has also an article in its pages entitled 'Spirit Portrait Painting,' which professes to teach the innocent readers of the magazine how the mediums do spirit pictures, and at the same time 'do' their clients. The writer gives three methods of cheating, all equally unlike anything that could possibly occur in a real séance; one of them will be sufficient to quote here:—

'Procure the following ingredients from your druggist: Sulphate of iron, for blue; nitrate bismuth, for yellow;

sulphate copper, for brown; make solutions separately of each by dissolving a small quantity of each ingredient in warm water. Now make a solution of prussiate of potash, and put it in a bottle atomiser. Now with a brush for each colour make a picture, landscape, portrait, or anything you desire, on a screen of unbleached muslin; when dry, these are invisible. Show the screen and place on an easel or anywhere you desire. Now slightly dampen muslin and place a lamp back of it on a chair; lower lights a trifle. Have the muslin placed so your assistant can conveniently spray all over back of it with the solution prussiate of potash, which slowly brings colours out. The effect is very weird, and although not artistic, it is a novelty and is apparently done by unseen agency. Light being placed back of screen, visitor can see that no one approaches screen. Have a little suitable music; this amply covers slight sound of atomiser.'

For my part, I can say that I never met in the ranks of the Spiritualists any person who would be so exceedingly credulous and stupid as to believe that such a production could possibly be the work of spirits; but there must be thousands and thousands—the purchasers of 'mediums' requisites' and their clients—who are idiotic enough to believe that the phenomena of Spiritualism are of that nature, and are produced in that way.

And now, if I may in conclusion be so very bold as to say an exhortative word to my brother Spiritualists, I will say, Have courage! Don't let the poor little pseudo-scientist, with his sealings, and tyings, and contemptible suspicions, and colossal ignorance, terrorise you. Such people are more foolish than the man who goes to look for a gas escape with a lighted match; he at all events finds the escaped gas, but the 'scientific investigator' who goes to look for the phenomena with tyings and sealings and sewings up in bags, has about as much chance of gaining knowledge of the invisible world as a sportsman would have of shooting grouse if he went to the moors preceded by a brass band. For my part I have never willingly sat with a medium who allowed him or her self to be tied up or held, at least on the occasions when I was there. All that kind of thing is 'playing to the gallery,' for the public do not know that those proceedings prevent the manifestations; but men of science know it, and when they have recourse to them they are proved out of their own mouths to be traitors to Science herself; for it is the fundamental axiom of Science that 'if you wish to obtain a given result, you must furnish the necessary conditions.' Have courage, brother Spiritualists, to fight in defence of your mediums! When the enemy attacks them, do not run away from them, or help to stone them. If three-fourths of their phenomena were false, there would still remain enough to justify you in defending them tooth and nail against their assailants. And don't be so mortally afraid of being 'taken in'; if it should happen to you, smile and try again. It is vanity, not love of truth, that prompts that paralysing and stupifying fear in most cases. And remember that we can never say with any certainty how far the medium, even if conclusively proved fraudulent on some occasion, is morally responsible for the fraud.

'CHRONOS.'

TRANSITION OF MR. A. ROLAND SHAW.

Those who had the pleasure of listening to the address delivered by Mr. A. Roland Shaw to the London Spiritualist Alliance in October of last year, upon his 'Experiences of Supernormal Phenomena,' will learn with regret of his passing to incarnate existence with tragic suddenness at the early age of fifty-four, on Thursday, the 15th inst. While in Moorgate-street Station he became unconscious, was removed to St. Bartholomew's Hospital by the police, and expired without uttering a word while being taken into the wards.

MRS. M. BRECHLEY desires us to announce that she will be out of town until the end of August.

MR. J. J. VANGO wishes us to inform his friends that he will return to London on Saturday, the 24th inst., when he will be pleased to meet them as usual.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE UNSEEN.

BY A. P. SINNETT, IN THE LONDON 'SUN.'

Probably almost everybody who may read these lines will have heard, one time or another, of what are called 'spirit photographs.' These represent, in a more or less shadowy fashion, beings—spirits, ghosts, or astral entities—call them what you like—that are perfectly invisible to ordinary eyesight. The simple reason why such appearances on a photographic plate are not overwhelming in their effect on popular incredulity is that such photographs can be very easily 'faked,' or fraudulently imitated. Nothing is easier than to dress up a living person in floating drapery, to give a momentary exposure of the plate with this imitation spirit focussed upon it; afterwards to use the same plate for an ordinary sitter, and so obtain the semblance of a ghostly form standing by his side. The value of a spirit photograph depends entirely upon the perfect *bona fides* of the whole operation. And innumerable private photographers, and Spiritualists, have taken such photographs themselves, also, knowing that no improper trickery had been concerned with the results, have obtained photographs of spirit forces on their plates.

SOMETIMES OBTAINED UNEXPECTEDLY.

I suppose there are few professional photographers who, if they told the truth, would not have to confess that sometimes strange effects come out on their plates that seem to represent something 'supernatural.' But it would not be good, in the present age of the world, for an ordinary photographer's business that he should be supposed to dabble in such 'uncanny' achievements, so when the strange results come out, the ghost is treated as a defect of the plate and is suppressed accordingly. However, unless the sitters or the photographer, or both, are mediums such results are unusual. On the other hand, when the photographer is a medium and lays 'himself out for the unusual effects, they are exceedingly common. I have seen an immense number of such spirit photographs taken under conditions that have made me quite sure they were genuine, and very recently I have obtained a series under conditions that make any question as to their authenticity altogether absurd for me, and equally so for any other persons who are capable of understanding that I am telling the truth.

A STRIKING SERIES.

I went to a photographer who had been successful in obtaining several such photographs for friends, and, with his cordial concurrence, took precautions which put all possibilities of fraud on his part out of the question. I should like to remark that these precautions would have been unnecessary for my own satisfaction, first, because the honesty of the man and his sincere interest in the whole matter makes his *bona fides* perfectly obvious to any rational person having to do with him; and, secondly, because I was accompanied by a lady of my own acquaintance, gifted with clairvoyant sight, who could see the spirits being photographed. But, in order that I might have an answer for people to whom I might be inclined to show the results, and who might not be able to attach importance to the ideas I have just expressed, I took my own packet of plates—purchased the day before at Whiteley's—went myself into the photographer's dark room, put my initials on the corners of the plates, and arranged them ready for use, saw the first put into the dark slide, and came out with it into the studio, sat, and afterwards saw the plate developed under my own eyes. It bore a spirit form, as did all the others used that morning, more or less completely. In two cases the faces of the astral entities are as clearly defined as if they had been physical sitters.

A lady of my acquaintance, wishing to obtain spirit photographs, arranged a series of private sittings with a few congenial friends; used her own camera, and after a few failures obtained some of the desired effects. But then a very wonderful development ensued. The spirit friends present said (for so it was understood that in this case the sitters included some who were clairvoyant and 'clairaudient,' so

that they could converse with the visitors from the astral plane), 'Do not bring your camera any more. Merely sit in the dark with a photographic plate in your hand, and we will do the rest.' Following these instructions the lady used to take her plates to the séance, unfasten them in the dark, hold them by the corner for a minute, wrap them up again, take them home and develop them in the ordinary way. Under these circumstances faces used to appear on the plates together with a number of curious and unintelligible markings that covered the rest of each plate; but the faces are in all cases quite distinctly recognisable, in some cases as those of departed friends. I have a collection of prints from these extraordinary negatives by me as I write, and they are a defiance of what ignorant materialistic people call the 'Known Laws of Nature.' But, at the same time, they are facts, like Nelson's Column at Charing Cross, and human beings capable of reason have got to revise their views of Nature's laws accordingly.

HOW THE SPIRITS MANAGE IT.

Now the spirit photographs obtained with a camera like those of my recent series are produced in one way, and the photographs without the camera in another which is less easily explicable; but still I hope to give the reader a clue to the comprehension even of that process. There is really very little that is truly mysterious in the camera-spirit-photograph. But it has nothing whatever to do with the method by which the unseen in astronomy is photographed. That process is one which should be understood by anyone wanting to understand the spirit photograph, only that it may be put aside as inapplicable. It is interesting enough in itself, and has given us knowledge concerning some phenomena of the heavens that could not have been obtained in any other way.

If you look with the eye at the constellation called the Pleiades, for example, you see a certain number of stars. If you look with a telescope, you see more; but however many you see in either case, you do not see more by continuing to look. Now, take a photograph of the Pleiades with a short exposure, and the plate will show you much the same effect as the telescope, but the longer you let the camera look at the constellation the more it will see. That is to say, the very faint light from small stars or nebulous matter surrounding the stars that are bright enough to be seen with the eye, produces an effect on the plate by degrees. The effect of the light on the sensitive plate is cumulative, and in this way we have come to know that the whole constellation called the Pleiades is surrounded by a wonderful nebular of colossal magnitude quite too faint to be seen by any telescope.

Again, there is another variety of the unseen that can be photographed on different principles. The peculiar kind of light called the Röntgen ray is not perceptible to the eye because the vibrations of the ether which constitute that variety of light are too rapid and minute to suit the mechanism of the eye, delicate as that is. Everyone knows that there are sounds too shrill to be heard, and just in the same way—to put the idea paradoxically—there is light too bright to be seen. But the camera can see that sort of light. In other words, the sensitive plate can be impressed by it, hence we get our radiographs of people's bones and all the other phenomena of X-ray photography. And hence also—for the matter is not more complicated than that—do we get our spirit photographs of the ordinary kind—those which are taken with the camera. The spirit may be in a vehicle of consciousness that is not of a kind to impress ordinary vision, and yet it may impress the photographic plate.

How, then, does it happen, an intelligent inquirer may ask, that we do not get superphysical effects on every photograph taken, since we are told that the astral plane is all around us, and the whole of another world always in sight if we could only see it? Just so, but the light emitted from, or reflected by, *astral* matter does not affect the plate. The spirit or astral entity who wants to get himself photographed—and nobody ever yet photographed a spirit who did *not* want to have his portrait taken—has to suffuse his astral body with matter of a somewhat different kind in order that its shape and appearance may become

visible to the plate. The matter in question is spoken of by students of occultism as 'Etheric,' and it exists, though unseen by the eye, in the constitution of every human being. From the constitution of some it is very easily withdrawn by astral spirits who want to borrow it, and susceptibility to that sort of treatment is one of the attributes that go to constitute a medium. Such withdrawal is a weakening, enfeebling process, and that is why mediums often feel very much depleted and exhausted after sances at which materialising phenomena have taken place. But the materialisation of the spirit sufficiently for the purposes of the photographer need not be carried nearly so far as that which aims at making the spirit actually visible to ordinary eyesight; all the same, it is still more or less of a strain, and Spiritualists generally who do not study the science of their own experiences are often foolishly reckless about strains of that sort themselves—indeed, only one kind among many perils that beset the practice of mediumship.

I said the method of X-ray photography was the same as that by which we get the portraits of spirits. That is because the X-ray is really an emanation—from the 'cathode' or negative pole of the electric circuit in a vacuum tube—of etheric matter. Ordinary science has not yet realised this fact, for in many ways it lags behind the knowledge gained by occult research; but such is the fact, and many other interesting possibilities of the future hang on to that fact. To see astral matter, a person in the physical body must have an altogether new sense developed, but to see etheric matter it is only necessary for the present eyesight to be improved, as already it is improved for some few persons. The eye is an instrument of very varying capacity. This may be illustrated by an interesting experiment with the spectrum.

If we arrange things so that a solar spectrum—the rainbow-coloured band of light—is thrown on a sheet of paper or a screen, it will be found that some people can see colour beyond the violet tint visible to all. That is because the eyes of such persons are enabled to cognise vibrations of a higher order than those which are perceptible to the rest of us. Persons who can see a good deal further in the spectrum than others will probably be able also to see the Röntgen ray. That is to say, such persons have, in a greater or less degree, the etheric sight. When this is perfectly developed the possessor of such a faculty can see through opaque matter of some kinds—of those kinds which the Röntgen ray penetrates—and are thus endowed with a species of clairvoyance—not of that kind which is the true clairvoyance of astral sight, but of a sort that seems very wonderful, nevertheless.

PRECIPITATION PHOTOGRAPHS.

Now, as to the rationale of the spirit photograph taken without the aid of the camera. To explain that I must refer to a phenomenon almost as wonderful, but of which I have had abundant experience. It is possible for the few who not alone can see with the astral sense, but can make use of some of the elemental forces belonging to the astral plane, to produce writing on paper without the aid of pen or pencil. This is done sometimes at spiritual sances even, and is not understood in the least by the ordinary Spiritualist, but it is done by a process called in occultism 'precipitation.' I have endeavoured to explain that, on the astral plane, thought is a creative power. Your thoughts, if they are sufficiently intense and clear, form images there which are perceptible to others. If you form a thought-image of the words you wish to write, and know how to materialise the image by means of etheric matter, you can condense it on paper. Nothing I can say here will enable anyone to do the thing, but many things we cannot do ourselves may nevertheless be intelligible as do-able by persons adequately gifted. Now, that which seems to take place when a photographic image is produced on a sensitive plate without the aid of a camera is analogous to the precipitation of writing. Only the thing precipitated is not visible matter, but a chemical influence. The whole idea is extremely subtle, but there is the accomplished result lying before me, and the solution I have suggested seems the only one available if we want to do something more than gape at it as an inexplicable wonder.

THE 'REFEREE' TEST SEANCES.

As our readers are aware, in consequence of a challenge which appeared in the columns of the 'Referee,' a committee was formed for the purpose of testing the allegation of a gentleman, who described himself as 'A searcher after truth,' that the phenomena of materialisation could be produced under test conditions. The committee consisted of Professor John Atkinson, the Hon. E. Feilding, Mr. W. W. Baggally, Mr. Ernest Stollery, and 'Merlin,' the last-named gentleman as representative of the 'Referee.' The services of a lady medium were secured and though her name has not been published, it is an open secret amongst those who have taken an interest in the matter. With this medium a series of sances have been held in the presence of a selected circle, while the committee acted, it appears, in the capacity of observers and directors of the proceedings; and the result was published in the last issue of the 'Referee.' Of the report, which was drawn up by 'Merlin' and subscribed by the committee, the salient features will appear from the following extracts:—

'The first sitting was held on the evening of the first of this current month of August. The medium was carefully searched by a committee of ladies, and afterwards carefully secured within the cabinet. The members of the circle were also searched, and, like the medium, were provided with special garments for the occasion. They were lightly but firmly secured to the chairs in which they sat, and were fastened to each other wrist to wrist. All lights were extinguished with the exception of a small lamp, such as is used by photographers in the developing room. This gave a faint ruby-tinted light by which it was possible with no difficulty to distinguish a near neighbour. The eyes became accustomed to it in a little while, and any pronounced movement must have been easily detected. Soft music was played throughout the sance.

It became instantly evident that the medium was engaged in testing the fastenings which secured her. A furtive creaking of wood and leather and a rattling of padlocks was audible from the beginning. The sitter in her natural voice complained of the noise which followed her slightest movement from the rasping of the padlocks which secured her. Deep suppressed breathings appeared to indicate that considerable force was being exerted in her examination of the fastenings. The accuracy of this supposition was established later on by an examination of the sleeves provided for the medium, and of the interior of the cabinet. The sleeves, which had been closely laced, were strained, so as to be open by about a third of an inch, and the oaken uprights to which the straps fastening the arms of the medium had been secured yielded about an inch from the perpendicular. Except that certain rappings were heard which were scouted by the members of the circle as being "unintelligent," nothing further was observed. It was remarked by members of the circle that the rapport between themselves and the medium was not yet complete, and better results were prophesied for the next sitting. There were present on this first occasion four members of the committee only—the Hon. Everard Feilding, Mr. W. W. Baggally, Mr. Ernest Stollery, and myself. An alteration in the date appointed for the sance was answerable for the absence of Professor John Atkinson, our fifth member.

'The second sitting was held on the 6th inst., in the presence of the same four investigators, and on this occasion we were favoured with a manifestation of some interest. The furtive tuggings and rattlings which had been observed at the first sance were noticeable at the second, but at an instant, separately noticed by three members of the committee, there ensued an interval of almost complete silence, which was followed by a sound as of the rubbing of cloth upon wood. This fact is of importance in view of the phenomenon to which our attention was shortly afterwards called, and it is our belief that the sound was caused by the medium's effort to force towards her elbow the sleeve which confined her arm in order that her wrist might have greater freedom. A faint click, very much the sound which would be produced by the closing of a pair of scissors, was heard soon afterwards. This was followed by a scream of alarm from the medium—an ejaculated "Oh!" The sitter called to us to ask if any member of the circle or the committee had left his or her seat, and being assured to the contrary, declared that some person was present with her in the cabinet; that a large and heavy hand was pressing upon her head, and that some harsh object was being painfully pressed upon the scalp. One of the committee entered the cabinet and reported that a padlock had been removed from its original place near the right elbow of the medium, and had been found attached to her hair by a long tortoise-shell hairpin.

'A light was at once provided at the medium's request, and the phenomenon was examined. The padlock was found to be hanging loose from the tortoiseshell hairpin. The force—whatever it may have been—which had been able to unlock it had not succeeded in locking it again. The lamp was extinguished, and a little later we were informed by the medium that a number of faint lights were playing about her lap. At the close of the sitting it was discovered that the two ends of the ribbons with which her sleeves were tied near the shoulder had been drawn from the loose loop in which they were each arranged and were fastened together in a number of knots. On examination it was discovered that the medium could reach her hair without difficulty, and in the presence of the committee she removed and replaced the hairpin. The padlock proved to be defective, and it was practically demonstrated that it could be opened with the point of a scarfpin. It was within reach of the medium's right hand, although, in my own personal opinion, it would have implied a considerable physical ingenuity to get at it without the aid of the long hairpin. With its assistance it was an easy and obvious matter, and no doubt was left in the mind of the committee as to the purely normal character of the "manifestation." The tying of the knots was a matter so merely infantile that it would scarcely have beguiled a baby. The medium's hands could not actually meet, but a mere bending of the body brought the loose ends of the ribbons easily within their reach, and it was shown that by tossing one end across the other and repeating that simple operation a knot could be formed with perfect ease.

'At the third séance, held on the 9th inst., in the presence of the full committee, no manifestations of any kind were secured. The only note I found occasion to take that evening was comprised in the letters "N.P.—N.P.," which I used to indicate "New Padlocks—No Phenomena." The new padlocks were of the kind used by bicyclists, and were carefully sealed at either end. No loose ends of ribbons were left for spirit hands to play with, and the medium's hairpins were removed. The committee must accept the responsibility for having left it open to the medium to play the two recorded tricks upon their supposed credulity.

'On the following Friday a meeting was arranged between the leader of the circle and the committee, and it was suggested in behalf of the circle that the test conditions should be revised, and that the medium should be allowed to sit under such conditions as those in which she had secured her manifestations in the séances held in Paris last year, and recorded in the pages of "La Revue Spirite" of August and September last. The proposal was accepted, after some discussion, on the understanding that the committee accepted no responsibility, and that the test was regarded as being abandoned. At the fourth séance, however, the medium repudiated this arrangement, and demanded that all the original conditions should be imposed. Her desire was, of course, complied with, and the committee resumed its function. On this occasion, after the now customary strugglings and suppressed pantings, a slight but clearly audible metallic sound was heard, and the medium observed that "one of our tin-tacks" had given way. She assured us repeatedly of a cold air which blew upon her left hand, and was careful to emphasise the locality. At the close of the sitting it was found that her wedding ring with its accompanying keeper had fallen to the floor. There could not have been the slightest difficulty in removing them from her finger by drawing them along the edge of the chair-arm on which her hand rested. A second phenomenon was revealed in the fact that the tape which had been used to knot up the sitter's hair had been removed and had been tied upon the lower strap which secured her left wrist. The strap was within easy reach of her fingers, and at the close of the séance one of the committee tied a precisely similar knot upon the strap, using one hand only, in the space of certainly not more than thirty seconds.

'At the fifth sitting, to put an end to these trivial and vexatious pretences, the arms of the medium were encased in tubes of kamptulicon, each closed at one end with a sort of drum-head of silk, which made it impossible for her to make any play with her fingers. No phenomena of any kind, except for a loud and vigorous knocking within the cabinet, were observed. The medium after sitting fruitlessly for three-quarters of an hour pleaded faintness, and the séance came to an end. In view of the disappointing character of the results so far obtained, an informal meeting of the circle and the committee was held, and it was decided that the investigators and the assistants of the medium should, at the final sitting, form a single circle. This was done, and the results were nil. The medium had apparently decided to attempt no further investigation of the bonds by which she was secured. There was entire lethargy within the cabinet, and an animated friendly conversation outside it. From the moment at which the medium's hands were encased in the kamptulicon tubes all manifestations ceased.

'Here my duty as historian ends, but I append the official verdict of the committee:—

"We, the undersigned, having read the foregoing narrative of the proceedings under our investigation, certify that it is a true summary of the facts observed. We are of opinion that the medium has completely failed to substantiate her claim to the power to produce supernormal phenomena, and that the few trivial occurrences recorded, which were represented by her as being of spirit origin, were deliberately produced by her, and by her only.

"(Signed)

E. FEILDING,
W. W. BAGGALLY,
ERNEST STOLLERY (Chairman)."

'Professor Atkinson was prevented from attending the final séance by being called upon to attend to a rather serious accident. His signature is therefore missing. My own report having been accepted and signed by the committee, it is, of course, unnecessary for me to append my signature to it. It would be unjust to close the report without an acknowledgment of the entire good faith displayed by every member of the circle. All the conditions suggested to them were most cheerfully complied with, and almost to the last their belief in the medium induced them to hope for some genuine manifestation of supernormal power.'

The result of these sittings has in no way disappointed us, but on the other hand has confirmed the doubt which we expressed in 'LIGHT' of May 25th as to the wisdom of 'challenges of this kind.' All experienced and thoughtful Spiritualists know well that phenomena cannot be produced to order, and it is, to say the least, a lamentable piece of folly to make any sort of pretensions to the contrary. The failure in this case, therefore, does not in any way greatly concern us, because proofs of Spiritualism are attainable by any earnest seeker by more private and prudent methods. Whether the medium, as suggested by the committee, was herself, consciously or unconsciously, attempting to impose upon them we have no means of judging. In this they may possibly have been mistaken; but, apart from that matter, the report strikes us as drawn up with studied fairness and moderation, and we are strongly inclined to think that, with no better evidence than they received, we ourselves should have been, to this day, just as sceptical as they.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: WHAT A 'PUNDITA' SAYS OF IT.

The 'Sunflower,' July 15th, reports that 'Pundita Ramabia reached New York a few days ago, and having been told of the astonishing progress of a new cult called Christian Science, she said: "The same philosophy has been taught among my people for 4,000 years. It has wrecked millions of lives and caused immeasurable suffering and sorrow in my land, for it is based on selfishness and knows no sympathy or compassion. It means just this: The philosophy of nothingness. You are to view the whole universe as nothing but falsehood; you are to think it does not exist; you do not exist; I do not exist; the birds and beasts that you see do not exist. When you realise that you have no personality whatever, then you have attained the highest perfection of what is called 'Yoga,' and that gives you liberation, and you are liberated from your body, and you become like him without any personality. You draw on the blackboard a zero, you add a zero, multiply by zero, divide by zero, and it equals zero. It is just like that, nothing more."

THE DIVINING ROD.—The divining rod of the 'dowser,' or water-finder, is reported to have achieved another success. After a leading firm of artesian-well borers had gone down some 300ft. in a vain effort to find water at the Kingsdown Institution, situated several hundred feet above Box Valley, in Wiltshire, Messrs. Mullins, of Colerne, the water-finders, were appealed to as a last resort. They agreed to try on the 'no result no pay' system. Hazel twig in hand, they walked over the grounds, and pitched on a spot rather more elevated than the disused boring. Here they sank a well 5ft. in diameter, and at a depth of 110ft. tapped a copious supply of water, thus solving a very pressing problem for the Institution. The 'dowsers' assert their singular gift to be purely a natural one, not always descending from parent to child. For themselves they profess to be quite unable to account for its possession or manifestation. In Wiltshire—the home of the divining rod—faith is firm in the magic wand and its wielders, but no one pretends to be able to explain the phenomenon.—'Daily Express.'

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.

Reincarnation.

SIR,—I wish your readers would kindly recur to Mrs. Britten's 'Nineteenth Century Miracles,' and read about the origin of reincarnation (from p. 46), and about the institution of the 'Theosophical Society' (from p. 296); then they would understand me a little better.

I should never think of attacking Theosophy, as my knowledge about it is by far too limited. I have heard many fine lectures about it, and things which sounded beautiful, but nothing in them newer or more elevated than what is contained in the Bible. Moreover, the name of 'Theosophy' is, I think, not quite the right designation, as it has nothing at all to do with the old Christian mysticism of that name; and I was confirmed in this impression when, at the latest of the above-named lectures, I heard that there are *many* Gods, a God for every planetary system. Then I felt quite out of my depth, and candidly told this to the amiable and most honoured circle in which the lectures took place.

I do not *attack* anything, but I have felt as if I ought to express my concern about the excessive importance which many Spiritualists attach to the question of reincarnation, gradually excluding all the beautiful truths which come to us through conscientiously conducted tests. I fear that many of those who are naturally addicted to fleshly tastes will recur to their fleshly tastes if they feel sure of other chances for spiritual growth to be afforded them by new incarnations, &c.

Anyone who has been at a blessed spiritualist séance, with its purity, calmness, and feeling of elevation, will know that it is the beginning of a new life. To lose this in unceasing discussions about our many incarnations before and after this earthly life is certainly a pity.

Excuse the imperfection of these lines, which are my last on this question.

MADAME DE CHRISTMAS-DIRCKINCK HOLMFELD.

Valby, Denmark.

SIR,—Permit me to compliment your correspondent, A. E. Major, upon the adroit way in which he avoids the questions that I addressed to him in 'LIGHT' of August 10th. I asked him to kindly tell me what *knowledge* he possessed, what *facts* he could cite, what *evidence* he could offer in support of the assertion that one thousand or one thousand five hundred years must elapse between each incarnation for the 'ordinary good and holy person.' To these pointed questions he, in effect, replies that he merely stated 'the teachings of the theosophic school.' Am I, then, to understand that he does not possess any knowledge and cannot cite any facts that will prove what he affirmed? or am I to understand that he stated 'teachings' which are unsupported by evidence? In 'LIGHT,' p. 369, he said that the question to be answered was, 'Is the teaching true?' That is just what I, too, wish to ascertain. I have heard of people who claim to be reincarnations of Joan of Arc and Mary Queen of Scots, and of other persons of still more recent time. I have also met with expositors of the doctrine of reincarnation, or re-embodiment, who differ materially in their assertions both as to the reasons for return and the length of time between the sojourns here, and I am anxious to know the facts, if facts there are, that will settle the points regarding which the *teachers* differ.

'ADMIRER.'

The 'Referee' Séances.

SIR,—I have received many letters from persons all labouring under the impression that I am the lady medium who has been engaged in giving a series of 'test séances' as the result of Mr. Maskelyne's challenge in the 'Referee.' I shall be truly grateful if you will permit me through 'LIGHT' to disclaim all and any connection with the affair.

I have been a Spiritualist the whole of my life, and my work and experience during the last thirty years have given me actual and positive proof that neither newspaper controversies, public discussions, nor quasi-scientific experiments, and such like spurts, have ever had any lasting effect, or done any good. I know that when a person is *anxious* to believe and adopt the truths and teachings of spirits and Spiritism, he does not start by issuing bombastic challenges never meant to be acted upon or kept by himself; he seeks and always finds.

Personally I am so far removed from being the lady medium engaged in giving her services for these séances that I am actually opposed to them, and am most anxious to

express publicly my entire absence of any connection whatever with them.

My husband has written several letters to the 'Referee,' and probably this may be the reason for my being credited as the lady medium now on trial.

I do not believe any good results will accrue to the cause as a result of the present experiments, and I am more than sorry to think that any honest medium should be induced to submit, or her spirit friends to allow, her or themselves to undergo trials, suspicion, and future calumny for the sake of convincing a set of persons who no more wish in their hearts to be convinced than the man in the moon.

I have had as much experience as most mediums, and the result is that *I know* that those who *need* and are fit and ready for the great truth *will find it*; not through such means as public discussion or semi-scientific experiments, but by earnest and persistent seeking, often in the most unexpected places.

Scientific researchers, public conjurers, and sporting journalists are not looking for a great and grand truth but for objects for practice and experiment; something to imitate and exploit, and for interesting copy. None of them will get it out of

BESSIE RUSSELL-DAVIES.

Arundel House,
Balham Park-road, S.W.
August 16th, 1901.

Automatic Writing.

SIR,—I would advise Mr. John Nuton, in his practice of automatic writing, to speak to the spirit friends gently but firmly, and say that unless reliable information is given he will not continue the sittings. He must not be grieved or dismayed, as sometimes another spirit may personate his friend. Time and patience will set this all right.

K. T. R.

SOCIETY WORK.

SOUTHALL—1, MILTON-VILLAS, FEATHERSTONE-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Millard spoke upon 'Our Presence Here and There' in a very excellent manner. A hearty invitation is extended to all who are interested in Spiritualism to attend these meetings.—E. B.

GROVE-LANE PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, 36, VICARAGE-ROAD, CAMBERWELL, S.E.—On Sunday last Mr. Adams delivered an able address, and Mrs. Miller gave successful psychometry. No meeting on Sunday next. On Thursday, at 8 p.m., public circle.—S. OSBORNE.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY, 73, BECKLOW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday last Mr. J. H. Smith, from Waltham Abbey, gave a short address on 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Discussion followed. Mrs. Vaughan presided at the piano. Very full meeting. Large after-circle. Meeting on Sunday next at 6.30 p.m.—C.

HACKNEY SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, MANOR ROOMS, KENMURE-ROAD, MARE-STREET, N.E.—On Sunday last, following a reading by the vice-president, an earnest address was given by Mr. W. Ronald Brailey upon 'Peace, perfect peace.' Whilst replying to written questions, Mr. Brailey gave some valuable advice, and clairvoyantly described several spirit people, who, with one or two exceptions, were recognised. On Sunday next Mr. D. J. Davis will deliver an address.—O. H.

CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT, SURREY MASONIC HALL, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S.E.—On Sunday last the morning public circle was well attended. At the evening service Mr. W. E. Long gave an eloquent address upon 'The Holy Ghost,' being the third of an interesting series upon that subject. Many new and striking truths were enunciated, and an earnest invitation to question and discuss them was given from the platform, and an opportunity for doing so will be afforded at the morning public circle at 11.15 on Sunday next; at 3 p.m., children's school; at 6.30 p.m., Mr. W. E. Long.—COR.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALIST MISSION, QUEEN'S HALL, 1, QUEEN'S-ROAD, PECKHAM.—On Sunday last Mrs. Carter, who received a hearty welcome, dealt with a subject from the audience, 'The First Step After Death,' and gave psychometric readings successfully. Eighty-three persons remained at the after-circle, when Mrs. Carter, after giving fourteen clairvoyant descriptions, twelve of which were recognised, answered questions in an instructive manner. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., service as usual; at 8 p.m., the hon. secretary will explain the plan of work of the Mission. On Sunday, September 1st, at 3 p.m., an open-air meeting will be held on Peckham-rye; and at 7 p.m. the service of dedication of the Mission will be performed by Mr. J. Adams of Battersea. 'LIGHT' always on sale.—VERAX.