

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

There is always a touch of pathos in the cheery greetings which welcome a New Year in. They remind us of an Old Year gone, and suggest the reflection that for us all there are fewer that remain. Nor is he to be congratulated who misses the significance of one more year gone, or who shirks it. But, for the true Spiritualist, the pathos only takes its place as in a beautiful Psalm of Life. Content and happy with the life that now is, he blends with his contentment and happiness the delightful prospect of promotion to a better life to come. He knows he is marching on to emancipation, not to dissolution; and the New Year's greeting is all joy to him.

With special emphasis we can offer this greeting to all who follow with sympathy our studies and our demonstrations. Every year strengthens us in our faith and adds to our following; and, though methods have somewhat changed, we were never anything like as strong and as influential as we are to-day. The flowing tide is indeed with us, and it is with a very animated hope that we wish all our friends

A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

There are still many eminent persons who talk of material forces or movements passing into thoughts: but the passage is not only unthinkable; it is, we may say, impossible, for thoughts and material forces or movements belong to absolutely different categories, and, as Martineau said, we might as well talk of Christmas Day passing into or becoming Westminster Bridge.

What about memory and the effort to recollect? It is suggested that, in the effort to remember, 'the sensations in the brain are gradually leading up to the right one'; but what or who is it that conducts the search and detects the correct thought? No: the thinker and the thought are not on the material plane at all.

Mr. G. M. Trevelyan contributes to 'The Independent Review' a brilliantly written Article on 'Religious Conformity.' The strong bias of it is in favour of intrepid agnosticism, and against weak conformity where there is no real faith. We cannot help liking the manly tone of it, though we regret the burden of its message. 'Genius,' says Mr. Trevelyan, 'seldom spreads its wings off the shoulders of a hypocrite': and he has far more hope of honest agnosticism than of hypocritical or conventional conformity.

He has a special reproof for those who decide to wait until a suitable 'atmosphere' is created. He says:—

If we are going to remain nominally Christians till there is a great agnostic literature, no such literature will ever be written. If we are going to wait for an agnostic atmosphere, no such atmosphere will ever be formed. If we want a tradition, it is we who must take it from our intellectual and spiritual fathers, add to it, and hand it down. But no great religion, literature or poetry ever was made, or ever will be made, save by people who love what they believe to be the truth, and openly reject what they believe to be untrue.

That is the tone we want. If public opinion is against us, we must make our own public opinion. If we want traditions and precedents, we must create them. Above all things, we must be outright and honest: and we can thank an agnostic for teaching us that.

'The Light of Reason' for this month contains a thoughtful little Essay by the Editor on 'Refinement,' the first line of which is, 'All culture is a getting away from the beast.' 'Evolution itself,' says the writer, 'is a refining process.' This thought is brightly worked out, with illustrations from many sides of life and many spheres of conduct. The following sentences lead up to a notable conclusion:—

When a man aspires to nobler heights of achievement, and sets about the realisation of his ideal, he commences to refine his nature, and the more pure a man makes himself within, the more refined, gracious and gentle will be his outward demeanour.

Good manners have an ethical basis, and cannot be divorced from religion. To be ill-mannered is to be imperfect, for what are ill-manners but the outward expression of inward defects?

It is a frequent error amongst men to imagine that the Higher Life is an ideal something quite above and apart from the common details of life, and that to neglect these or to perform them in a slovenly manner is an indication that the mind is occupied on 'higher things.' Whereas it is an indication that the mind is becoming inexact, dreamy and weak, instead of exact, wide-awake and strong.

The 'notable conclusion' is that this law of refinement applies to Heaven. It is a somewhat novel thought that the conditions of 'going to Heaven' are good inclinations and good manners, but there is something to say for that view. Mr. Allen seems pretty confident about it, as he says:—

It is not a despotic condition in the law of things that so long as a man persists in thinking and acting unkindly of and towards others he shall be shut out from Heaven, and shall remain in the outer pain and unrest, for selfishness is disruption and disorder.

An American medium who made some remarkably accurate predictions concerning the late Presidential and State elections, has sent for publication the following further grave predictions:—

During the next four years a great financial and industrial panic will ensue, the political result of which will be the complete overturning of the Republican administration and the election of a Democratic president in 1908. Governor Falk's administration of his office will intensify his popularity to such a degree that he will be the almost unanimous choice of the National Democracy as its standard bearer and will succeed

Roosevelt in the presidential chair. I want to add that one of the striking developments of the next four years will be the enormous growth of Socialism as a political factor.

The gathering financial and industrial storm is sure to burst upon the country ere long, and as a result the defeat of the Republican party in 1908 will be as thorough and complete as that just administered to the Democratic party. Meantime 'watch the smoke' of the Socialists. Their growth will be enormous, but will alarm the conservatives of both the older parties, who will unite upon Falk as a sort of compromise.

Farewell to the Old Year is not unlike farewell to life. Let us face both, bravely and blithely, in the spirit of Oliver Wendell Holmes' cheery and hopeful lines:—

Brothers, farewell! The fast declining ray
Fades to the twilight of our golden day;
Some lessons yet our wearied brains may learn,
Some leaves, perhaps, in life's thin volume turn.
How few they seem, as in our waning age
We count them backwards to the title page!
Oh! let us trust with holy men of old
Not all the story here begun is told;
So the tired spirit, waiting to be freed,
On life's last leaf with tranquil eye shall read,
By the pale glimmer of the torch reversed,
Not *Finis*, but *The End of Volume First!*

MADAME MONTAGUE IN CANADA.

On Tuesday evening, November 22nd, Madame Florence Montague and Mrs. Bell Lewis favoured us with their presence, to meet a number of our friends who are interested in Spiritualism and the higher thought.

Madame Montague gave us a discourse on the 'Celestial Mechanics,' and she spoke eloquently for about three-quarters of an hour under inspiration. We all sat spell-bound until the speaker ceased, and then expressed our heartfelt appreciation. At the close a number of questions were asked by the audience, and answered impromptu by the speaker.

Mrs. Bell Lewis offered some acceptable remarks on mental healing, so that the good seed of advanced thought was sown in some thoughtful minds, and will, no doubt, bring forth fruit in good time.

On the following Thursday evening Madame Montague and Mrs. Lewis met the Society for Psychical Research, at their assembly hall; Madame Montague occupying most of the time in relating her first experiences in clairvoyance, and dwelling particularly on three remarkable manifestations through unseen agencies. Mrs. Lewis also gave some of her deeply interesting experiences in telepathy, and great interest was shown by all present, and at the close of the meeting a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the ladies.

Madame Montague and Mrs. Lewis have already made warm friends in Montreal, who regret much that their present stay cannot (according to all appearances) be prolonged, but there is an earnest hope that we may have the pleasure ere long of meeting them again.

Montreal.

JOHN MURPHY.

'THE GREY WORLD,' by Evelyn Underhill (published by William Heinemann), is a story which deals with the question of comparative realities. The first two chapters may be regarded as a prologue. They are necessary to the form in which the book is cast; but they deal with the death of a sharp little London waif, the aimless wandering of his undeveloped soul in 'The Grey World' of shadows that have not yet discovered a reason for their existence, or an aim to strive for, and finally his re-appearance on the plane of human life. In this second life he retains more or less recollection of 'The Grey World,' and this supernatural experience is the constantly recurring theme. But the every-day life of a middle-class household, very matter-of-fact, and nourished intellectually on scientific materialism, appears to be not less 'grey' spiritually; and the hero's adventures in search of a higher type of experience, the friendships he makes, and the lowering or raising influence of love, according as it is of the material or spiritual type, are apparently founded upon a deep conviction, and as such cannot but interest those who are making the same quest.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East (near the National Gallery), on

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12TH,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN

BY

MADAME E. D'ESPÉRANCE,

ON

'SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES,'
FOLLOWED BY ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the Address will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES.—Mr. George Spriggs kindly places his valuable services in the diagnosis of diseases at the disposal of the Council, and for that purpose attends at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., on Thursday afternoon, January 5th, between the hours of 1 and 3. Members, Associates, and friends who are out of health, and who desire to avail themselves of Mr. Spriggs's offer, should notify their wish in writing to the secretary of the Alliance, Mr. E. W. Wallis, not later than the previous day, stating the time when they propose to attend. No fee is charged, but Mr. Spriggs suggests that every consultant should make a contribution of at least 5s. to the funds of the Alliance.

PREMONITIONS FULFILLED.

The 'Annales des Sciences Psychiques' comments upon a case in which a premonition, many times repeated, was fulfilled, as reported by Professor August Lemaître, of Geneva, in the 'Archives de Psychologie,' published in that city. A curious part of the matter is that these premonitions had already been published, and now they have been fulfilled. In August, 1901, M. Lemaître published the following description of the form taken by these premonitory visions. The young man—the subject of the premonition—said:—

'I saw myself transported to the foot of the mountain, and had a feeling that I had wished to destroy myself, and had thrown myself from the top of a rock. My limbs were bruised and broken; I saw and felt my blood flow, and I became faint. I wanted to die, and yet I regretted it on account of my youth; but whence comes this continual sadness? I would rather die once for all than feel myself thus dying so often.'

He had also a presentiment that he would die at the age of twenty-one. The fatal accident occurred on July 10th, 1904, at the same hour at which his father had died on that day seventeen years before. The young man, aged only twenty-one, was climbing the Salève, near Geneva, along with some younger companions, to whom he was showing the way. Arriving at a dangerous part, he said to the others, 'Go on, I'll follow'; but they had not gone far before they saw him fall from a height of seventy or eighty feet. He was picked up still living, but died about a week afterwards.

The problem in connection with this occurrence is—Was the accident a direct result of the previous visions or not? M. Lemaître tries to show that it was; he supposes that the repeated premonitions brought on a 'crisis of hysterical autoscopy,' in other words that the young man passed insensibly into a dream brought on by the visions, and so into ecstasy or 'hallucination.' It is not suggested that he went to the Salève with any intention of suicide, but that he was impelled thereto by the momentary clouding of his intellect.

The editor of the 'Annales,' however, thinks that the young man had simply prophesied his own death by premonition during an 'ecstatic' state, and remarks also that the origin of the presentiment still remains unaccounted for by M. Lemaître's hypothesis.

FRAU ROTHE, THE FLOWER-MEDIUM.

Herr Weisner, a head-teacher at Magdeburg, sends to 'Psychische Studien' an account of a recent visit to Frau Rothe, who, since the termination of her cruel sentence of eighteen months' imprisonment, has been living with her son-in-law, Professor Sellin, of Berlin. The following is an abstract of the narrative:—

'On October 7th, about 4 p.m., we were sitting in full daylight at a table in the middle of the room. Frau Rothe was opposite to me, Professor Sellin and his wife to right and left. It was rather an informal conversation than a regular séance. Very soon we heard knockings, faint, like the tapping of finger-nails on wood, coming apparently from the parquet floor, now right, now left of my chair, sometimes directly behind it, at varying distances, but *never* in the direction of Frau Rothe. I noticed these knockings before my attention was called to them. They answered various questions by Yes and No, and accompanied the conversation for some time.

'Presently Frau Rothe passed into trance; the condition came on rather quickly. She stood at the table, her eyes wide open, globular, staring with an unearthly brilliancy. She spoke with a stronger and firmer voice than before, in a more manly tone. Her hand, which she held out to me, had a rigid, cataleptic feeling. The return to consciousness was not so easy. I have made many experiments in hypnotism, and if the trance state is to be regarded as identical with the hypnotic, or even similar to it, then I must unconditionally declare that the trance condition of Frau Rothe was genuine.

'Frau Rothe looked several times towards different parts of the room, as though she saw something. After she had gazed fixedly over our heads for a while, she suddenly jumped up, made a snatch with both hands, as though catching some falling object, and held in her hands, about eight inches above Professor Sellin's head, a quantity of fresh loose flowers and leaves. Her hands trembled greatly as I took the flowers from them. Her look was rigid. A regretful thought crossed my mind, that owing to the quickness of the seizure I had not been able to notice more exactly the forward movement of her hands. As though in answer to my unspoken doubt, there occurred, a short time afterwards, a second *apport* of flowers. This time Frau Rothe stood up, held both hands, palms upward, quite still during a short time measurable by seconds, almost at the same place where the first flowers had been caught. While I watched her hands carefully they were suddenly again filled with flowers. A third *apport*, when a fern frond was placed on Frau Rothe's head, has less evidential value, because she had left the room shortly before, and I did not observe the moment of its appearance. In both the other cases I saw the flowers appear suddenly, and both times I had the impression that they grew, *i.e.*, came into existence, in her hands. The flowers were fresh, but dry, that is, not sprinkled with water; the cut ends were cleanly severed by a cutting instrument, but not quite freshly cut. There were marguerites, carnations, ferns, a shoot of Californian oak with autumnal foliage, and two dahlias with long stems, one about a foot in length. The tender leaves were quite uninjured, which is sufficient in itself to make the pocket hypothesis very improbable, to say the least.

'There are, to be sure, plenty of people who deny the existence of occult forces without further investigation, and will not be convinced even by the most unexceptionable results, because they say that flowers *could not* suddenly be where there were none just before, therefore there *must* be fraud behind it. But for me personally the question of Frau Rothe's mediumship is settled. Let us hope that her rehabilitation as a genuine medium will take place, at least in occult circles, during her lifetime on earth.'

An editorial note states that Professor Sellin, on being asked for further details, writes that various foreign men of science have visited Frau Rothe at his house, and that similar *apports* have frequently occurred, one of the last being a branch of fir, two feet in length, with six cones on it. Professor Sellin's good faith, it is also remarked, has never been called in question, even by those who have doubted the accuracy of his observations.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Our space is so limited this week that we are compelled to hold over a number of communications of interest, but we hope to use them early in the New Year.

TRANSITION.—Frau Rothe, the flower medium, passed away on December 16th, at the house of her son-in-law, Professor Sellin, Berlin, in her fifty-fifth year. A few particulars have reached us which we shall publish in our next issue.

DIRECT WRITING IN BROOKLYN.

Special interest, from an evidential point of view, often attaches to séances in which the sitter is of a different nationality from the medium, or, for other reasons, obviously quite unknown to him. We take the following, in brief abstract, from an account of some séances in Brooklyn, reported by Mr. Hermann Handrich in 'Psychische Studien' for December:—

'On September 2nd I made an appointment by telephone with the medium Hugh Moore, of Brooklyn, for a sitting with a Hungarian friend, Dr. Simonyi, who had recently arrived from Europe. The sitting was arranged for the afternoon of the 5th. At the appointed hour we went to the medium's residence, and sat down at an ordinary table in a sunny upper room. Before us lay two common slates and about one hundred loose sheets of glazed paper, that is, paper white on one side and having a glazed black surface on the other.

'Dr. Simonyi, at the medium's request, wrote a person's name on a sheet of ordinary paper, which he signed, and placed in an envelope, sealing the latter, and handing it to the medium, who held it in his left hand on the table. After a few minutes the medium wrote with his right hand a request, addressed to me, that I would ask my companion (whose name was given) to write down the name of a relative, because his friend (whose name, though completely unknown to the medium, was also given) was not present. This simple demonstration bore all the marks of genuineness, because the medium knew neither the name nor the nationality of my companion, and could not possibly know what name was in the envelope. According to request, Dr. Simonyi, unseen by me or the medium, wrote the name of his deceased mother on another piece of paper, while I, also at the desire of the medium, wrote down the name of my departed friend, an Indian, Skie-Wau-Kee, and asked him to help. These two pieces of paper were enclosed by Dr. S. in another envelope, secured, and handed to the medium, who, as before, held them in his hand in full view. While waiting for the manifestation of psychic power, we chatted and exchanged experiences for a full hour.

'At the end of this time Dr. S. was asked by the medium to place a number of sheets of glazed paper, from the pile before us, between the slates, which were then held by the frames by all three of us. We could plainly perceive the vibration of the slates, as if under the influence of a strong magnetic current. This proceeding lasted about five minutes, when a strong convulsion shook the body of the medium, who declared that the sitting was over, and Dr. S. took the slates apart.

'The twenty black sheets, previously quite free from writing, were now covered with handwriting in white, and numbered in order from one to twenty. The first nineteen sheets contained a message signed with the name of Dr. S.'s mother, written in ordinary English, on the subject of intercourse with the spirit world, and containing a verse from the Bible in excellent Hungarian. The medium, an American almost without education, took us both for Germans, and scarcely knew Hungary by name.

'The last sheet contained a message in broken English, addressed to me, and signed "Skie-Wau-Kee," saying that he had helped "the squaw" (Dr. S.'s mother) to write, that he was glad to see me, and would write for me another day.

'We left the house perfectly convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, and called on a builder named Roach, whose niece is the medium for a spirit called "Jack." The latter makes musical instruments sound in unison with a piano played in another room, answers questions by strokes on a hand-bell, and told the numbers on Dr. S.'s card, laid face downward on the table, by the same means.'

Dr. Simonyi sends to 'Psychische Studien' a confirmatory letter, in which he says: 'The facts mentioned are given quite correctly, and I confess that the direct writing astonished me greatly, for the circumstances under which it took place precluded any fraud or mistake.'

'L'AU-DELA' ('The Beyond') is the title of a new monthly review devoted to the psychic sciences—Spiritualism, occultism, hypnotism, telepathy, theosophy, &c.—and published under the direction of M. A. d'Avesne at 62, Montagne de la Cour, Brussels. Its programme is one of progressive Spiritualism, international and eclectic, based on the doctrines of Allan Kardec. There is much excellent spiritual and moral teaching in the first number, and some admirable advice is given as to starting circles, with due insistence on the advisability of having sufficient light to negative the supposition of deception. There are good lists of recommended works and spiritualist periodicals. The price is 50 centimes; yearly subscription (foreign), 6fr. 50c.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON. W.C.

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PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Office of 'LIGHT,' and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. E. W. Wallis, and should invariably be crossed '— & Co.'

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.—'LIGHT' may be had free by post on the following terms:—Twelve months, 10s. 10d.; six months, 5s. 5d. Payments to be made in advance. To United States, 2dol. 70c. To France, 13 francs 86 centimes.

'LIGHT' may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and through all Newsagents and Booksellers.

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.

FATHER IGNATIUS.

A life of Father Ignatius will not particularly attract the average man of the world whose knowledge of him goes no farther than the impression that he has been, for many years, the centre of torrents and swirls of exciting disputes, and that he may be summed up and dismissed as a fanatical monk and a pious but cantankerous controversialist. But the average man of the world would be wrong, as usual, and we do him a good turn by directing his attention to a work just published by Methuen & Co., 'The Life of Father Ignatius, O.S.B. The Monk of Llanthony, by The Baroness de Bertouch.

Father Ignatius has again and again received the particular and characteristic attentions of certain sections (high and low) of the British public, whose habit it is to howl at what they do not understand, and to heave half a brick at people better than themselves,—a detestable and most unconvincing argument. For our own part, we have no special admiration for Father Ignatius, but have always regarded him as a truth-loving, brave and highly consistent man, and we are disposed to agree, in the main, with the writer of this bright book when she says: 'Few people are aware how much the monk of Llanthony has achieved in one way and another, during his busy walk upon earth. The public is so accustomed to think of him as the orator-enthusiast, the famous ascetic, whose name has been passed from lip to lip under so many and different circumstances, that it has forgotten to inquire into the national results filtering through contemporary history, from this lifelong work and watchfulness.'

The record of this strenuous life covers not only a great deal of ground but many kinds of ground, and it presents him as indeed a many-sided man,—a mystic in matters far too high for the common ken, and a missionary as practical as any missionary that ever tried to stop a street fight, or worried about the soul of a wayward East End Mary Ann.

The book is a thoroughly alive one, full of movement and incident, and dealing incidentally with a multitude of interesting characters who have occupied the theological and church stage during the past forty years. But there is one subject which surpasses all others, and the book is full of it. It is that which a brief Preface by Father Ignatius specially draws attention to in the following paragraph:—'As to the supernatural events recorded, I desire to say that whether the reader believes the statements

regarding them or does not believe them, it is no concern of mine. I simply give them to the Author because I believe it is our Lord's will and for His glory that I should do so. People will believe them or not as they are taught of God. I have not knowingly mis-stated or over-stated these things which, at all events, I myself regard as "wonderful works of God." The time has come to give my witness respecting them, and "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knoweth that I lie not."

We are glad that 'the time has come' for bearing witness to the wonderful experiences here recorded, and it would be difficult indeed for any unprejudiced reader to doubt that solemn, 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knoweth that I lie not.'

These 'supernatural events' began with him at an early age. When only seven years old he and several schoolmates, being in bed, saw the apparition of a lately deceased schoolfellow who spoke to them; they not knowing of his decease. It must not, however, be supposed that this experience indicated any special saintliness in the budding 'Father.' He was indeed a marked child from the beginning, with a 'strangely susceptible nature,' and some characteristics that made him quite different from ordinary children: but it was a streaky character at the beginning, as the following humorous memorandum indicates;—'During the interim, between ten and fourteen years of age, Father Ignatius fought once, swore once, terrified with intention an unoffending lady and the domestic cook, and assaulted an old gentleman in the open street. He also composed some beautiful prayers about this time':—that last touch indicating the lovely gift of humour which has never left him.

The 'supernatural events' which Father Ignatius refers to are exceedingly varied, and, as the vast majority of persons would say, entirely unbelievable, especially as they include, not only instant healings of the sick, but actual raisings of the dead. The writer of the book says that 'the miracles of Llanthony' 'touch the highest note in her story,' but the miracles elsewhere, in the East End of London, for instance, far surpass them. At Llanthony, it is affirmed that 'the Blessed Sacrament passed miraculously through the closed doors of the Tabernacle,' and that 'the Mother of Jesus appeared in the Monastery meadow, on four different occasions, and in sight of seven rational human beings.' On one occasion, being busily engaged in his study, 'the voice of his soul' suddenly and urgently bade him go down instantly to the chapel. He obeyed and found it on fire. He was then commanded to put out the flames. 'Go forward,' said 'the Voice.' Into the flames he rushed, making the sign of the cross, the fire literally dying away before him: and then he found no sign of it in the holy places, except two little heaps of ashes, neatly piled up, the remains of two dusters that the Brother Sacristan had neglected to take away. A curious story, but one of a score like it.

We believe Father Ignatius once told the Spiritualists that they were the victims of demons. Why discriminate between his spirits and ours?

WHO RANG THE BELL?—A correspondent ('J. P.') writes: 'The following incident may interest the readers of "LIGHT." A couple of months ago a dear one passed over. He was taken from his own house to a relative's for change some little time before. He passed away at 7.30 p.m., and at that time a bell in his own house (communicating with the shop and by which he was always called upstairs) rang loudly, so much so that a sister who was in the shop rushed upstairs to see what was the matter. No one had touched the bell; there was only an elderly friend upstairs, and she, having heard a bell ring, went from the dining-room to the kitchen to see if the side entrance bell was ringing, the servant being out. None of the people concerned are in any way spiritualistic, and are well-balanced in their minds.'

SPIRITUALISM PURE AND SIMPLE.

ADDRESS BY MRS. RUSSELL-DAVIES.

On Thursday evening, the 15th inst., in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Mrs. Russell-Davies addressed a large gathering of the Members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance on 'Spiritualism Pure and Simple,' Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, the President of the Alliance, occupying the chair. The following is a somewhat abridged report of Mrs. Russell-Davies' remarks:—

MRS. RUSSELL-DAVIES, who was cordially received, said that she had anticipated that her remarks would be addressed to an audience mainly composed of Spiritualists, and had prepared herself to speak accordingly. She hoped, therefore, that whatever she had occasion to say would be understood, and if she said things that might appear a little harsh, she trusted they would be taken in good part; for she wished to speak to Spiritualists from her own experience as a Spiritualist. In the first place, she desired it to be understood that she was a Spiritualist, not from conversion, nor from the witnessing of the phenomenal evidences of Spiritualism, but because she was born and bred a Spiritualist, with parents who were Spiritualists before she was born. She had been brought up in a household where, although the family were familiar with all the various phases of phenomena, they had no acquaintance with the technical terms and phrases so current amongst Spiritualists to-day. Her decision to speak on 'Spiritualism Pure and Simple' on the present occasion arose out of the fact that she was constantly meeting investigators whose questions and opinions had brought her reluctantly to the conclusion that very peculiar forms of belief were masquerading to-day under the name of Spiritualism. A great many people, for example, seemed to regard Spiritualism as another name for fortune-telling, an idea which every honest Spiritualist should repudiate. Spiritualism was *not* a fortune-telling movement; it was a religious science, but it was unhappily the case that it had been degraded and dragged through the mire, and hence there was a prevalent belief abroad that a medium was a sort of fortune-teller. 'Now,' said the speaker, 'have we Spiritualism pure and simple to-day, or have we an adulterated article? As a Spiritualist and a practical medium who has worked for over thirty-five years without a break, I say that Spiritualism as known to-day is a very much adulterated article. The Spiritualism which is presented to the inquirer of to-day is not the Spiritualism of forty years ago. I do not know whether this view of the matter will vex or please you—that is not a matter which concerns me—but I speak from my own observation as a medium who is frequently consulted, and I may say that there is not a day in my life on which I do not get a shoal of letters or a number of callers, and I feel at times utterly disheartened by the view which is taken on our subject. We have a compound of Spiritualism and deleterious matter, and this deleterious matter is mixed up with the grand truths and the beautiful religious science of our subject.'

Mrs. Davies then proceeded to pass in review the various ideas and forms of thought which, although associated with Spiritualism, she considered to be entirely alien to it. There were, for examples, Theosophy, the theory of the double, demonology, and obsession. Not one of these things had any true relation to genuine psychical science. Theosophy she regarded as mainly a hotch-potch of mediæval ideas. They had observed for a great many years the incursion into Spiritualism of theosophical doctrines and teachings, but she contended emphatically that Spiritualism is not Theosophy and has nothing in common with it. Spiritualism pure and simple was the communion between the natural and the spiritual worlds, between spirits and mortals, the mortals being the people still on earth, and the spirits their departed friends. Theosophy knew nothing of this. It told the Spiritualist that he was deceived, that he was dealing with astrals, elementals, and spooks, and not with those he had loved and lost. As to what an 'elemental' was, they might refer to the dictionaries, from which they would learn that it was something without intelligence, something unformed, something in the elementary stage of creation, and yet Theoso-

phists asked them to believe that these elementals were able to give them beautiful and elevated communications and a great deal of knowledge. Then, according to Theosophy, they also had communications from astral beings—beings from the astral plane. Whenever she heard of these creatures it seemed to her that the astral plane was very closely related to the lunar plane. (Laughter.) Let them think of one of these curious beings coming to a woman who had lost her child, and representing itself to be that child. She put the matter in this way because they all knew what a mother's love means, and what it can do. A woman who had lost a child might, as a consequence, be prompted to investigate Spiritualism, and go, with aching heart, to a séance, or to a private medium. As they knew was frequently the case, the bereaved mother might be disappointed again and again, but in the end she would, doubtless, attain her object by receiving proof after proof, test after test, every one to be relied on as an evidence that her child was not dead, but only gone before. But, as regards this 'astral' theory, what were they to understand? Were they to believe that after her first unsuccessful efforts to communicate with her child, the mother had at last succeeded in getting into communication with an 'astral'? Surely it was the most outrageous theory that had ever been introduced into Spiritualism. The very failure of the mother's earlier séances was in itself inconsistent with the theosophical teaching that these astrals are ever around us, seeking an opportunity to lure us down to the depths, or up to the 'lunar planes.'

As another subject alien to Spiritualism, although associated with it, Mrs. Davies cited crystal gazing. She did not wish to decry it, but only to show that it is not Spiritualism at all. There were numbers of crystal gazers and seers who had never heard a word about Spiritualism, and who knew nothing of spirits. The crystal gazer used the crystal as the hypnotist or mesmerist of former days used the disc when mesmerising, simply as something to concentrate the attention, but the fact remained that the seer could see quite as well without it. A seer was a seer always, whether with or without the crystal. Crystal gazing, therefore, had no necessary connection with Spiritualism, nor, indeed, had seership. The Highland seers, for example, had no connection with the spiritualistic movement.

Taking next the question of palmistry, about which they had heard so much lately, Mrs. Davies pointed out how little it had in common with Spiritualism. 'I was glad to hear of the prosecutions,' she said. 'It was quite time that business was put an end to, and the men and women who patronised it prevented from making fools of themselves. The palmists had nothing whatever to do with Spiritualism, although a good many of them called themselves mediums. They never proved their title to the name, or they could have avoided the prosecutions.'

Referring next to the question of 'doubles,' Mrs. Davies alluded to the supposed peregrinations of Mr. Stead's double in various parts of the country, while he himself *in propria persona* was supposed to be engaged in his daily business. She denied the possibility of such a thing, alleging what is now generally recognised in psychic science, that during normal consciousness the spirit is inseparable from the mortal part. Only by the withdrawal of the consciousness could the spirit manifest elsewhere than in conjunction with the body of which it formed the animating principle. If the man or woman whose double was seen at a distance happened at the time to be engaged in active work, 'then,' said Mrs. Davies, 'somebody is being deceived: that is all. These,' she continued, 'are simple facts; but they are facts that must be recognised if we are to have Spiritualism pure and simple.'

Proceeding, Mrs. Davies vigorously denounced the prevailing doctrines concerning demonism or obsession. 'This,' said she, 'is the latest fashion—to caution each other in our investigations against becoming "possessed." We must beware of the demons that are roving about ready to take possession of us. We have only to be quiet or negative for a few moments or to go to a séance and we lay ourselves open to obsession by demons. To this I say, fudge—twaddle! I have sat at séances since I was a child and so far I have never been obsessed. I

have sat with every class of person—with people reputed to be unmitigated villains and with people described as being next door to angels, but there have been no ill-effects, and I have never seen a case of obsession that would stand a thorough sifting by a person who knows what he or she is doing.'

In illustration of her statements Mrs. Davies cited two cases which had come under her personal observation. Both were cases of women pronounced by Spiritualists to be obsessed by evil spirits, and each was reputed to bear marked symptoms of such a condition. Careful examination by Mrs. Davies led her to the conclusion that injury to or disease of the brain was at the root of the matter in each instance, and her diagnosis was completely verified by the subsequent history of the patients, for one died, and the autopsy revealed a brain lesion, while the other turned out to be a case of softening of the brain and paralysis. Yet each had been declared by supposed experts in psychical science to be a case of obsession! 'My observation,' remarked the speaker, 'leads me to the conclusion that every man or woman who goes honestly, truthfully, and clean-mindedly to a séance is as safe as the angels in heaven. The spirits do not possess you, you possess yourselves—with too vivid an imagination very frequently.' All must admit the facts of hysteria and nervous breakdown, and any medical man could tell them of the extraordinary forms which hysteria can assume. Before jumping to conclusions in regard to demonology, spirit obsession, and malignant influences, let people use their common sense a little. (Applause.)

Spiritualism pure and simple had nothing to do with fads, fancies, and theories. It dealt only with demonstrable facts. The astral or the elemental could not give a tangible, living proof of its existence or of the powers attributed to it. But give the spiritualistic medium proper conditions, the right time, and the right people, and he or she could introduce the inquirer to spirits who could give absolute proof that after this life we continued to live as sentient, intelligent, individual beings in a world to which we were suited, and which was suitable to our new condition.

If any of those present were inclined to investigate Spiritualism let them study works by such writers as Emma Hardinge Britten, W. Stainton Moses, and other spiritualistic authors. On the other hand, if they were disposed to investigate Theosophy, she would recommend 'A Modern Priestess of Isis,' by Walter Leaf. By reading such books as these, students would learn where the 'astrals' had been resurrected from and what they were worth. (Laughter.) Spiritualism pure and simple and Theosophy were as wide apart as the poles, and therefore could not occupy the same platform. Let the two work out their destiny, each on its own lines. Contrasting the two, Mrs. Davies claimed that Spiritualism was progressive, that it affirmed the eternal progress of the human soul, that it turned even this world from a wilderness to something approaching heaven. Theosophy, on the other hand, proclaimed disintegration, the breaking up and casting away at death of the principles alleged to make up the human being, the loss of the intelligent individual life, and the final absorption of the central principle (or whatever it might be called) into Nirvana, which seemed to her to be equivalent to diffusion into space.

The methods of the Psychical Research Society, as exemplified in the views of its more sceptical members, were next passed in review, and Mrs. Davies expressed a hearty contempt for the various hair-splitting theories which had been broached to explain away the spiritual hypothesis. Mind-reading, and the subliminal consciousness, had been shown to be utterly inadequate explanations of the phenomena which they were reputed to cover. In support of her contention Mrs. Davies related instances in her own mediumship in which names of spirit friends given through her had been quite unrecognised by her sitters until they had consulted other members of their families to whom the names were known. A notable case in which thought-reading, telepathy, and other evasive explanations, were shown to be altogether untenable, was that of a widow lady—a member of a family of eminence—who received through Mrs. Davies letters from her departed husband, letters

which not only bore internal evidence of their genuineness but were in his own earthly script. The handwriting, indeed, was recognised not only by the widow but by her friends and also by the solicitor of her deceased husband; they were all prepared to swear that the letters were in truth reproductions of the deceased gentleman's handwriting. 'I say,' Mrs. Davies proceeded, 'that these letters would establish beyond all question or doubt that the husband was living an intelligent, practical life in another world.' (Applause.) These letters were commenced ten years ago, and the widow received a letter in her husband's handwriting every week! Another case exemplifying the consoling power of spirit communion related to a recent visit by Mrs. Davies to a Brighton church. It was on a weekday and a wedding was being conducted in the church, but although she was in no way interested she felt impressed to enter the place. There she encountered an old lady who appeared to be present as an interested spectator, although in no way connected with the wedding party. The two visitors entered into conversation, the old lady remarking to Mrs. Davies that she hoped the newly-married couple would be as happy in their wedded life as she and her husband had been. 'Fifty years ago,' said the old dame, 'I was married to my husband, and we never had a cross word. He is gone now; God took him away from me. I shall never see him again.' Mrs. Davies gently corrected the despairing belief of the widow, and as she did so she beheld the figure of the departed husband slowly and distinctly form at the side of his wife. 'Your husband is standing beside you at the present moment,' said Mrs. Davies, and she mentioned his name, adding, 'He says you are to go back home, and tell John not to worry about little Willie. His illness is only a passing condition, and he will soon recover.' The old lady acknowledged that the names were correct, and that the message related to actual events. As for her husband's appearance at her side, 'I have always felt,' she said, 'that he was near me.' It was, no doubt, her intuitions on this point that explained the lack of surprise with which, knowing nothing of Spiritualism, she received Mrs. Davies' revelations, although she was none the less deeply moved.

Alluding to the unsympathetic attitude which the Church had so long preserved towards Spiritualism, the speaker dealt with the wealth of spiritualistic manifestations recorded in the Bible, a characteristic comment being her remark that 'Samuel was not only a medium, but a paid medium, since before Saul went to visit him he had to see whether he had the shekels to go with!' Referring to the opposition of the clergy, Mrs. Davies said, 'They have failed ignominiously. They have failed, but they will have to give in, and, what is more, they are already giving in. They are not doing it gracefully, but they will have to acknowledge the truth. They have to realise that they have not been truthful when they professed to believe in the communion of saints while denying it by their attitude towards Spiritualism. They will have to face the facts of clairvoyance and clairaudience, or they will have to declare that St. Paul wrote with his tongue in his cheek, and was deceiving the Corinthians.' (Laughter.)

In conclusion, Mrs. Davies said, 'Put away theories, put away fads, put away fear of obsessing spirits; and know this, that when you take up the investigation of Spiritualism, if your own soul is clean, you need not fear any evil spirits. Like attracts like. Birds of a feather flock together. And if you hear these wonderful accounts of evil deeds and evil spirits, well, think twice before you accept them, and be very certain that the persons to whom these things happen are the persons producing them, and not the poor spirits, who have lived their life, borne their burden, done their work, laid down their cross, and now wear their crown.' (Applause.)

Mrs. Russell-Davies then replied to questions and comments from members of the audience.

To a gentleman professionally known as 'Alastor,' who testified to having received great assistance from his studies of Theosophy, and who was understood to take exception to Mrs. Davies' strictures regarding the subject, she replied that her remarks had been devoted to the question of Spiritualism pure

and simple, and in doing so it was necessary to show that the alien matters which had been foisted on it had nothing to do with it. Theosophy was one of those alien questions, and as it had been recently asserted that Theosophy and Spiritualism might work together, she felt it necessary to show the wide divergence between them.

DR. A. WALLACE, in the course of some comments on the address, raised the question whether spirit control was not practically the same thing as obsession, so called. He congratulated Mrs. Davies upon having attained a position in which she felt quite immune from evil influences from the unseen world. He was disposed, however, to regret her onslaught upon Theosophy; for, while he did not accept all its teachings, he had derived great benefits from the study of them.

In her reply Mrs. Davies said that her remarks as to obsession had reference to the idea that evil disposed spirits or demons could obtain permanent possession of human beings. The true process of spirit control was precisely of the same kind as the influence exerted by a mesmeriser over his subject. The medium, instead of being hypnotised by another mortal, was simply hypnotised by a spirit. As an example of the grotesque ideas which obtained in some quarters on this subject, she alluded to an account given of an obsessing spirit which entered into possession of the body of a person by the process of diving through the solar plexus, passing thence through the intestines up the spine and into the brain. (Laughter.)

MR. H. BODDINGTON was understood to take exception to the statement that the spirit could not quit the body while the latter was in a conscious condition, and referred to instances in which the 'double' had been observed while its possessor was in a waking active state. In regard to obsession he referred to the case which had recently been exhaustively described in 'LIGHT.' Such cases, he thought, were largely the result of suggestion. The instance in point seemed to him to be probably a case of liver complaint, and likely to be benefited by a course of Turkish baths. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT related a case within his personal experience which appeared to be inexplicable by the theories of thought-reading or the sub-conscious self. A lady medium from the country, whom he had never previously met, called upon him at the office of 'LIGHT.' As soon as she entered his room, and introduced herself to him, she stated that she had found the office entirely by spirit guidance, having no idea where it was. On arriving outside of 110, St. Martin's-lane, a voice had directed her to stop, as this was her destination. The unseen monitor had also said to her, 'When you go upstairs tell Mr. Dawson Rogers that I am his brother George, whom he never knew, for I died a short time before he was born.' On hearing this, Mr. Rogers said that this was a mistake, as his brother George and he were ill together when both were very young, George dying at that time. The medium, however, maintained the truth of the message, and added that the spirit not only confirmed the statement, but furthermore mentioned that he watched over and helped his brother (Mr. Dawson Rogers) in his work. 'I still thought, however,' said the President, 'that some mistake had been made, but when I returned home I consulted an old Bible which had belonged to my mother; I then found it was I who had made the mistake,—George had died before I was born; it was another brother who had died while I was ill. There was no thought-reading there, no sub-consciousness; nothing but pure spirit communion. (Hear, hear.) Nobody in the flesh was aware of the facts, which occurred nearly eighty years ago.'

The meeting closed with the usual vote of thanks to the speaker of the evening.

'THE HERALD OF THE CROSS,' edited by the Rev. J. Todd Ferrier, of which we have received the first number, is published by 'The Order of the Cross,' of Paignton, Devon, an association devoted to the cause of universal brotherhood, not only among mankind, but with recognition of 'the unity of all living creatures in the Divine.' This involves humaneness towards all men and animals, and the adoption of a bloodless diet by the return to simple and natural foods, and the realisation of the Christ-life. The magazine upholds the Unity of Creation, and defines the status of animals, as having within them the germs of individuality and soul.

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.

Spiritualism at Brighton.

SIR,—As President of the Brighton and Hove Psychic Society, permit me to fulfil a pleasurable duty in thanking the Editor of 'LIGHT' for his kindness in publishing the appeal for funds made by Mrs. Russell-Davies about a year ago. Several friends responded in a generous manner, and we were enabled to commence holding meetings at Brunswick Hall, and have been so successful that we are compelled, owing to want of space there, to take a larger place, viz., Compton Hall, 17, Compton-avenue, which will be opened by Mrs. Russell-Davies on New Year's Day, at 7 p.m., when any Spiritualists resident in, or visiting Brighton will be cordially welcomed.

ALFRED CAPE.

Mrs. Russell-Davies' 'Spiritualism Pure and Simple.'

SIR,—I wish Mrs. Russell-Davies had shown herself to be only a 'pure and simple' Spiritualist, and had confined her attention, in her address, to a narration of her experiences as a medium, which her audience certainly appreciated.

Unfortunately, when she adopted the rôle of the critic, she manifested anything but the attitude of mind and the breadth of view one expects in those who have benefited by the teachings of Spiritualism as given by such noble souls as Emma Hardinge Britten and Stainton Moses, to whom she referred.

She displayed a great want of broad-mindedness and charitableness towards anything she did not understand, and towards anybody whose experiences were not quite in line with her own. She displayed prejudice and intolerance in regard to many theosophical matters and an ignorance of the history of Theosophy—that 'God-wisdom' which has existed ages before Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott founded the Theosophical Society.

To characterise as 'fudge' the speculations of other truth-seekers who attempt to grapple with some of the great problems of life, incarnate and ex-carnate, is, in my opinion, unworthy of anyone who is in the honourable position of an occupant of the platform of our London Spiritualist Alliance.

One hopes to find in those who address us at least a tolerance of other systems of psychic philosophy, whether they enjoy the consolation of the special teaching of Spiritualism or not. If these systems be criticised we expect a logical treatment of them, and not mere assertions and individual opinions, which do not tend to minimise the differences between the various schools of psychic students.

Our honoured President, from the tone of his introductory remarks, apparently anticipated a more or less caustic address; but as a humble student of the problems of humanity in its spiritual evolution, I desire to enter my protest.

SCRUTATOR.

SIR,—I was one of the large number privileged to listen to the interesting and spirited address delivered by Mrs. Russell-Davies to the Members of the London Spiritualist Alliance on the night of the 15th.

It was refreshing to meet with such unabated enthusiasm in one so long familiar with the marvels of psychic phenomena as the lecturer. There are one or two remarks, however, that I feel constrained to make, and if I did not rightly understand Mrs. Davies, she will no doubt correct me in the same friendly spirit as that in which I write. In treating of obsession, for instance, the lecturer all but discredited any such possibility unless induced by some mental or moral infirmity on the part of the obsessed. To prevent confusion, I will use the word 'obsession' when speaking of evil influence, and 'control' when speaking of good. As, in fact, is usually done. Mrs. Davies appeared to consider that the recent articles on obsession in 'LIGHT' were rather worse than useless—were indeed, harmful. I do not think so. There are, of course, cases, such as those cited by her, in which the trouble is quite independent of the action of discarnate intelligence, but there are also many in which that, and that only, is to blame. All along the

line of our investigations runs one paramount and imperative necessity—that of *discrimination*. The same result is due to one cause to-day, and to another to-morrow. Now it is the sifter, now the sensitive, and now the unseen operator who is responsible for effects, and in each case the action may be either conscious or unconscious; this, at least, is the conviction forced upon me by my own experiences. Mrs. Russell-Davies advised every investigator to study 'Spirit Teachings,' by the late Rev. W. Stainton Moses, and I cordially endorse the recommendation, for the book stands second to none. Among many other things which it teaches are the following:—

'The messengers of God are resisted, now as ever, by the hosts of the adversaries.'—Page 9.

'Earth-bound spirits retain much of their earthly passion and propensity . . . the earth-bound spirit lives again its life of excess in the excesses of those it is enabled to drive to ruin.'—Page 24.

'It would appear that your inability to see the operations of those adversaries renders you unable to grasp their existence, or to appreciate the magnitude of their influence in your world.'—Page 231.

'In most circles every facility is given for the introduction of tricky spirits. The phenomena are sought after in a spirit of mere curiosity. Personal friends are greedily summoned, and no pains taken to ascertain whether the spirit answering be indeed a friend or a deceiver. Foolish queries are addressed, and foolish replies eagerly swallowed. No wonder that such are the sport of the undeveloped.'—Page 240.

It is true that on page 99 it is stated: 'It is only they who by a fondness for evil attract to themselves the congenial spirits of the undeveloped,' but there are exceptions to this rule, and it is desirable that all should remember it. On more than one occasion Mr. Stainton Moses was warned by his controls of the danger of promiscuous circles, and at times was exhorted to abstain altogether from sitting:—

'We warn you to avoid mixing with other circles. At your risk do you seek communication thus.'—Page 169.

'If we are to work with you, you must seclude yourself from other influences. If you do not, you render yourself so far the worse for our work, and run *grave risk of possession* by intelligences whom you would avoid, and with whom we could have no part.'—Page 172.

These are only a few extracts from much to the same purpose, but suffice to show that the danger of obsession for one not mentally or morally degraded was frankly admitted by his good and wise controls. It would be foolish to overstate the risk, but it cannot be prudent to ignore it.

Then as to palmistry, Theosophy, and crystal-gazing, Mrs. Russell-Davies expressed satisfaction at the result of certain recent prosecutions. But why? Because, as she said, 'they have nothing to do with Spiritualism.' Is that so? Do they indeed shed no light upon the spiritual faculties of man? 'Second-sight' was stated to be 'soul sight,' but surely that has something to do with Spiritualism whether the 'seer' be aware of it or no? A 'seer' probably is a 'seer' with, or without, a crystal; but if a crystal assists the seeing, why despise it? If Mrs. Russell-Davies only meant that the 'Bond-street people' were frauds and should, therefore, be hauled up before a magistrate, that is another thing, but so far as I am aware, no adequate and impartial examination of their claims was ever made, and consequently their punishment is resented as a piece of high-handed tyranny. If the present Government is really of so paternal a nature that it proposes in future to step in between us and every would-be extortioner,—well, it will have enough to do.

Finally, one word on Theosophy. The theosophical theories do not attract or impress me—I require facts to build upon,—but inasmuch as Theosophy is antagonistic to a purely material conception of the universe, I hold it to be of value, and personally I should like to see an amalgamation of our forces. Truth is destined to supplant error. What is there to fear? The gentleman who spoke immediately after Mrs. Russell-Davies said that Theosophy had brought him to our door. If Theosophists have made mistakes, so also have Spiritualists. We are all groping our way towards a desired goal, and must be tolerant of one another's methods of procedure. I hope we shall have another visit from Mrs. Russell-Davies later on,

and that she will then give us more of her own varied and deeply instructive experiences. One cannot have too much of such good first-hand evidence.

BIDSTON.

SIR,—When I reflect on all the wrangling that is going on in the world, and the differences of opinion entertained on nearly every subject, I can but regret that the utmost charity does not also exist instead of, too often, harsh judgments without knowledge. We are all only children in this great and wonderful school of life, and we are all in different stages of spiritual development, and accordingly there are, as there ever have been, churches and sects of all sorts, and all thinking they only are right. Now, if all were only influenced by love, charity, and humility, instead of mental or spiritual pride, what a difference it would make! These thoughts are the result of hearing Mrs. Davies' address in Suffolk-street on the 15th inst. She was very earnest and positive in all she said, and spoke from her own personal experience, and this is what we all ought to do.

She and hundreds more are comforted and helped by the knowledge which their belief affords them, that their dear ones are alive on the other side, and in this I fully sympathise with them; but why not be satisfied with this, to them, comforting belief? And I say this as I practise it, though looking at the future from the theosophical standpoint; and I may say, from my point of view, that the theosophical teaching appeals to me just as her teaching appeals to her, and as no other teaching has ever done during my long life of over eighty years; for it has raised me above the world and its pleasures and sorrows; it has taken off the desire for the one and the fear of the other. Personally, I have no anxiety or doubt about the future, and for this reason: that my development and the life principle in me that keeps my heart ever beating, and my wonderful organisation, physical and mental, and my curious adaptation to existence on this strange and beautiful world on which I find myself, satisfy me that the future, whatever it may be, *must be right*; I care not what it is, and I feel ashamed to doubt.

I believe I am a spiritual being with an infinite capacity for self-development, and that this is the object of my life here; and self-development means to me a transformation, an unfolding; and if a man or woman's life is *right* and the better for their belief, it matters little to what sect they belong or by what name they are called, that belief is clearly the *right one for them* in their stage of development, though it may not be for me.

4, Kilburn Priory, N.W.

C. J. HARRIS.

[We have other letters on the same subject, but the above must suffice.—ED. 'LIGHT.']

'Mundane or Spiritual Phenomena?'

SIR,—May I, as an old Spiritualist, suggest to your correspondent, 'A Doctor,' that his patient may not be suffering from exactly the cause he imagines. I know of an almost similar case, where, however, it has been learned, from one of our most gifted and reliable London mediums, that there is actually little or no clairaudience, although there is every appearance of it. Had this not been explained we should have believed that the sufferer really heard all that he believes he hears, and that he was subject to cruel persecution from personating spirits.

However, the spirit-control of our medium friend—one who has never on a single occasion failed us—has explained to us that the voices are for the most part imaginary in this case, and are due to the unconscious workings of a worn-out, active brain, and also that the invalid does spend a great deal of his time on the other side, while apparently here, and that in that state he receives communications which are entirely perverted in the return to the body. Thus there are two sources of misunderstanding: the imaginary voices, and the real but perverted ones.

It is most painful to witness the distress and perplexity arising in the mind of the sufferer, and it is found that the less points are argued the better it is for him, as he then quickly forgets, and passes on to other things; but one needs to be always on one's guard not to betray the real state of one's mind.

The case of 'A Doctor's' patient may, of course, be quite different; but should the above experience be of use, I shall be glad to have mentioned it.

SPIRITUALIST.