

Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

I have fallen on evil days. Madame Blavatsky, accompanied or attended by five chelas, has seen fit to devote no less than three columns of remonstrance and rebuke to me "from an altitude of over 8,000 feet above the sea-level." I have been indiscreet enough to avow my belief that the *Journal of Science*, as compared with other journals and reviews of a like nature, is conspicuously fair in its treatment of Spiritualism and the Occult. I thought so in respect of its review of Mr. Sinnett's book. It does not write from my point of view, and I should except to some of its remarks, but, after reading it again in deference to the rebuke of my critic and her "Chelas, who know their masters," I am bound to say I think it contrasts honourably and strikingly with the treatment, let me say for example, that Madame Blavatsky met with in the pages of a prominent English Review. As to the chelas, if it be a wise son that knows its own father, no doubt it is a wise chela that knows its own master. But otherwise their wisdom is not apparent in what they write. For my friend, I beg to assure her that I have not consciously written a word that ought to cause her hurt. I am sure she claims and values liberty of thought for herself too much to deny it to me. I must be permitted to do my own thinking, and I regret to find that I cannot always, no doubt from inferior means of information, agree with her and others of my friends. That is all. She imports into my writings a spirit that does not animate them, when she reads in them any sort of personal animus. I will not even discuss the question: but to clear away possible misconception I may make a personal explanation. Since the secretary of the Parent Society does not think it wrong to break the rules of secrecy which fence in the Theosophical Society, it cannot be wrong for me to say that I ceased to take any active part in the London Society some years since, and have during this year resigned my membership.

The attention of educated Spiritualists is being increasingly directed from the mere surface phenomena, and the cut-and-dried explanations of them, to some systematic study of their inter-relations and of the causes which underlie them. One of the chief avenues of knowledge in this direction unquestionably is the relation of mind to mind, with the kindred subjects of transference of thought, or sympathetic impressions, and of the power of influencing certain sensitive and susceptible minds by power of will. Thought-reading attracts just now an amount of practical attention that bids fair to elucidate most of the superficial difficulties that surround it. Mesmerism* has, at all times, attracted students of the Occult; and from the study of it, intelligently made, much light will, I believe, be thrown on the obscure phenomena known as Spiritualistic. Some of these seem to be distinctly referable to the action of an invisible Intelligence using an unknown Force. Others are equally distinctly referable to the action of mind on mind, conceivably using the same Force, but requiring no importation of an external Spirit to explain the facts. What is the Force? Psychic Force is a name good enough. What is the Agent? In the former case, Unembodied Spirit; in the latter, the Human Will; aided or unaided, but at any rate energizing consciously.

* Miss C. L. Hunt's "Private Instructions in Organic Magnetism." Printed for the Authoress by G. Wilson, 67a, Turmill-street, E.C.

The little book now under notice contains a large amount of information, original and collected, respecting the subject of Mesmerism. There are in it, no doubt, some things calculated to repel the scientific mind, and the apparently preposterous price at which it is published is suggestive of a quality only too easily attributed to this and kindred subjects. It is fair, however, to say that the guinea charged for the book includes also a course of instruction to pupils. It would, perhaps, be better to separate the book from the oral or written instruction, and to charge a reasonable price for each. Be that as it may, I am concerned with the book alone, having had no other advantage in reading it. At the outset I may at once declare my belief that it will prove a serviceable and useful manual for the student who approaches the subjects with which it deals as a tyro. As a practical guide it is clear and concise, though it includes some questionable matter. The scientific student of causes who would exhaust his branch of a wide subject must go elsewhere; but he will find a guide to his steps in the list of more than a hundred works on various branches of the subject, which are enumerated in an appendix.

What are the general principles on which Mesmerism is founded? These simply. Every organism is surrounded by a magnetic aura which makes itself pleasantly or offensively manifest to almost all who come into *rapport* with it. These are usually sensitives; many of whom, for example, cannot tolerate a cat near them. This aura can be utilised by one who can, by exercise of will, control it. He can command and direct it, and can use it for purposes of relieving or healing disease. This is the broad statement. The controller is known as magnetiser or mesmeriser: the controlled as the subject. To the mesmeriser the qualities essential are purity of spirit, concentration of will, and a commanding magnetic gaze. The first is the energizing source of power: the second is the method of setting it in action: the third is the efficient cause relating the agent to the subject. The power possessed by the mesmeriser is said to be injured by improper diet, and by the use of alcohol and tobacco. It is dissipated by ebullitions of temper, and by an ill-regulated and unbalanced habit of mind, as well as generally by a lack of that self-contained force of character that renders a man impregnable to the assaults of external temptation. This is the allegation of our authoress. Probably it is true as respects the safe and beneficial use of a highly dangerous power. He who would safely wield such an influence should be physically, psychically, and spiritually "whole."

What manner of person to the outward eye is the possible subject? A successful mesmeriser probably recognises his own subject instinctively: and different qualities are probably found suitable to different operators. But, as a broad rule, to which exceptions must be admitted, a subject is of negative rather than positive temperament, with the faith-faculty largely developed, with no dominant animal propensities, or physical powers, such as are indicated by a tightly-set mouth, a large chin and nose, and a high coronal development of the head. It is easier to say who is not likely to prove a good subject than to indicate one who is. Given a lithe, active, vigorous young man, with little repose and great muscular activity, with a dome-shaped head, a large nose, and a powerful jaw and chin, the mesmeriser would probably not regard him as a promising subject. If in addition his mental peculiarities included a strong will, a good opinion of himself, and a dominant self-hood, he might fairly be pronounced impregnable to ordinary assault.

How does the mesmeriser acquire his power? Somewhat in this way. He gains by practice the positive magnetic gaze which controls and searches the eye that meets it. All can probably recall some eye that seemed able to pierce through and through, and read the very secrets of the heart. This fixed "dynamical"

gaze is an essential gift of the successful mesmeriser. This acquired or developed, he cultivates the power of imagination ; consciously projects mental pictures vividly conceived. This conception, as in thought-reading, he directs by power of will on to the mind of his subject, aiding his mental effort by a few communicatory passes. (Just in this way some energetic talkers unconsciously emphasise their words by action of the hand.) By degrees a *rapport* is established between the two minds, and the subject *sees* as the mesmeriser *imagines* and projects his conception. This is the secret, in another sphere of action, of true oratory. When matters have gone so far, sympathetic control is easily established. The subject, excited to laughter or tears, soon becomes unable to control the sources of those emotions, and acts solely according to the suggestion of his mesmeriser until a few reverse passes liberate his subjugated will and restore him to liberty. His very muscular movements are beyond his control, and he can be influenced and governed when beyond the sight of his mesmeriser.

There are various processes of mesmerising. Miss Hunt, besides her own, which is simple and good, enumerates those of various successful adepts in the art—Mesmer, Dr. Keiser, Abbé Faria, Bruno, Deleuze, Billot, Teste, Lafontaine, Dupotet, Puységur, Gruelin, Gassner, Jörden, Hufeland, Kluge, Dr. Gregory, Dr. Darling, Mr. Lewis, Captain James, and others. She alludes also to two processes of Auto-mesmerism, the Hypnotism of Braid, and the Statuolence of Fahrenstock. I may say that the elaborate instructions of Kluge, and the experiments of Dupotet, are worth special attention. The latter are full of danger, and should be studied rather as examples of what to avoid than as models for imitation. I remember the Baron detailing to me with much vivacity how by his arts and practices, which he was willing then to regard as unlicensed and belonging to Black Magic, he had evoked certain spiritual beings of a type so terrible that he fled for his life, and abandoned his black arts ever after.

All experiments of the mesmeric kind are (as I believe) risky, and unless conducted with extreme care, and by properly qualified persons, are in a high degree dangerous. In this belief I am glad to find myself at one with so experienced a person as the writer of this book. One of such dangers is dramatically illustrated in a recent story of Julian Hawthorne's, published in his "Prince Saroni's Wife." The story is called "Constance," and though somewhat overdrawn, illustrates what may conceivably be the terrible use of this power in the hands of an unscrupulous person. There is, however, a legitimate and beneficent use of it which I have not space to dwell upon—the healing or alleviation of disease. To this the authoress devotes a large amount of attention. This portion of her book is perhaps most worthy of study, and will least bear condensation. In taking leave of her book, I venture to refer my readers to this part of it as a subject of study ; and I am glad to express my own obligations to a manual which has amongst other good qualities the merit of clearness and brevity. I should be glad to see it, with some excisions and additions, placed at the command of a wider public.

M.A. (OXON.)

LINES BY A GIRL OF SIXTEEN, DYING OF CONSUMPTION AT PISA,

ON BEING AWAKENED BY HER MOTHER.

Ah, why disturb me from my morning dreams,
And call me up to face my fevered day !
Full well I know the tenderness which prompts
The wakening call, but cannot but repine
To exchange my fleeting bliss for hours of pain.
Just now methought that Death, that dreaded thing,
Made lovely to my sight, on angel wings,
Had wrapped me round. I, in his soft embrace,
No terror found ; but grateful ease was there ;
Delights surpassing all the joys of health,
When early o'er the hills of our* lost home
We gaily wandered, tasting all the sweets
Which that regretted happy place supplied.
One thought alone recalled me back to life,
So to compose this form, that when forsaken
It might tell her on whom my spirit dotes,
Whose tender care supports me, and who soothes
The wearied moments of this fading life,
How blissful was her child's departure hence.

* She was the daughter of a Devonshire clergyman who had died a few years previous.

THE ASTRAL LIGHT AND THE OBJECTIVITY OF THOUGHT.

Some words in explanation of what I find stated in a possibly misleading manner in my last article. The spiritual Ego may seem to be there represented as the result of a process of religious conversion, and thus not essential to humanity as we know it. That is certainly not what I intended to convey. Man is man by virtue of this principle of consciousness, which is indeed the *capacity* of the highest spiritual attainment, but is *manifest* only in the recognition of an universal reason and will superior to the individual. It is, in fact, this very universal come to individual consciousness, but the individual does not recognise it *as such* at first, but sees in it a law upon him, external to him, at variance with his own will. This is his conscience. And because it is the Absolute Reason in him also, it is his *nous*, in the great Greek sense, which signifies so much more than the discursive, analytic faculty we moderns take for reason. What these teachings aim at shewing is that the Divine Spirit is not a mere adornment, so to speak, of an already immortal soul, but is itself the principle of that soul, which, by accretion or organic substantiation, becomes the basis of *objective* immortality. But personality, in any but an empty subjective sense, is not therefore likewise immortal. It is a phenomenal *experience*. It depends on external conditions, and is the objectivity of the Ego under those conditions. The complex of the latter is what we call a world. The personality is a *manifestation* of the Ego in such a world, and thus itself phenomenal. Now relatively to spirit the Ego is itself objective and phenomenal ; it may be said to be an organic mode of spirit. It is the consciousness of this mode, in and through personal experience. And at death, when the Ego enters the state of Devachan, or comparative subjectivity, its consciousness is the net result or income of this past experience. That is its Karma ; and with a good Karma this state is "Heaven." But since that is not Nirvana, i.e., perfect identification with the impersonal, universal consciousness of spirit, this does not last for ever,* but there is re-manifestation, or re-birth into another objective world, or "world of causes," where new Karma is generated. In the personal lives, there is no self-identification by the Ego, and for this reason. What took place in Devachan was the gradual *indrawing* of its past life experience till it ceased to be objective unconsciousness and became the subjective basis of another external life or personality. That is the character of the new person. Our character is thus the result of our former lives, the quintessential product of these, but to us, of course, is not an objective memory. It will become so, however, when we get *behind* our present character, that is, into the still more internal condition to which all past results are objective. And then, also, there will be an unfoldment of these results into their causes and elements, and the whole vast field of phenomenal experience will be displayed to our view.

But to come to the proper subject of this article. To suppose that there is no objective world besides that which is manifest, or possibly manifest, to our present senses, can only arise from the latent, unconscious materialism which secretly thinks that after all there is something essential in "material" phenomena as we know them. That idealism gives to the elements of every objective world an explanation in accordance with its principles is pre-supposed ; it requires that they should be recognised as phenomenal, but certainly not that they should be ignored. To infer philosophical ignorance from the use of phenomenal language in the description of phenomena is as unwarrantable as it would be to impute such ignorance to a scientific physicist who did not preface his lectures with allusions to Berkeley and Kant. Mr. Noel disclaims that position, yet he objects to speaking of the astral light, of Akasa, or ether, and of "pictures" therein, because every form of matter, and all its representations must be phenomena of consciousness. The Occultists don't say this ; so every "candid person" is to infer that they don't know it. They *do* say it, by-the-by, Eliphas Levi speaking of the astral light as "*cet être phénoménal*," and others sometimes describing it as the sensorium of the world soul. But why should they speak of a picture in the astral light as in consciousness, any more than a botanist should speak of a plant as in consciousness ? This visible world is phenomenal and contains plants. The astral light or ether is no less phenomenal (though, indefinitely more vitalised, that is

* "Last for ever" would, of course, not be a phrase applicable to Nirvana, which is the state of Eternity, above time altogether.

more *evidently* a manifestation of life), and contains an infinite variety of phenomenal representations. And though I may avow the authorship of a suggestion referred to by Mr. Noel, that the pictures in the astral light may be conceived as memories in the world soul, I am no more driven to this or any other explanation in the case of these "pictures" than I am to account for the possibility of objects in this sensible world when not immediately present in the consciousness of any individual percipient. It is not the idealist, who can conceive this apparently solid, lifeless world of sense as a presentation of conscious spirit to conscious spirit, who should find it difficult to realise the fact that his own thinking is similarly creative, and may give phenomenal representations to a faculty of sense. We shall never understand these teachings unless we get rid of the notion of thought (the object, not the process) as exclusively subjective, that is, as existing only in the individual present consciousness of the subject evolving it. We call it so in this earthly life of ours because it is not apparent to sense. But its objective distinction from the subject thinking is recognised in philosophy. Occultism asserts that this objectivity is as truly phenomenal, as truly figured in what it calls the astral light, as stones and plants are in our elementary world. Nay more, it declares that thought is nothing else than the plastic energy of spirit on a subtle material. This is one of the assertions which appears to scandalise Mr. Noel's idealism, especially when to it is added that the human brain, itself a "material" organ, is the workshop in which this subtle material is elaborated, or thought (wrought) out. But why not? To Mr. Noel, as an idealist, it should never have occurred to make such an objection. An idealist should be the last to except to thought being represented as material, that is, phenomenal. For if we regard the "material object" as the phenomenon resulting in our consciousness from the energy of another consciousness, what is to prevent us from conceiving that *our* thoughts so act phenomenally as to produce in another world of apparent space-conditions those "pictures" in that world which to suitable percipient faculties would be "objects" in it?

But since the idealist principle allows of no dead product, but requires that all shall be sustained in consciousness, Mr. Noel postulates an immediate relation between the originating thinker and the thought as product, object, or phenomenon. Therefore is it that the notion of a thought waiting, as it were, in the "astral light" to be "picked up" is to him so unphilosophical. If the astral light itself were a dead element, this objection would be unanswerable. But then that supposition is fatal to idealism itself. It is reading into the Occultist theory the very materialism derived from a false conception of our world of sense, which every idealist disavows. The astral light bears the same relation to its phenomenal modifications (though a much more *manifestly* living one), that our terrestrial elements bear to objects of sense. It is the "material."

All sensible objects in this world are forms impressed upon its elements. These elements antecede the particular forms as the "material" for the spiritual energies which construct them. Granted that they exist only in consciousness, they are yet a more primitive and universal form of consciousness than the sub-forms which they include. Mr. Noel can no more object to the akasa or astral light—the *prima materia*, or hyle, of the old philosophers—on idealist principles, than he can object to our four (so-called) elements of matter. Now what we can do manually with these elements, namely, impress upon them forms which, as in the case of a statue or picture, may henceforth last as long as the elementary conditions will permit, quite independently of the consciousness of us the artists, that, it is said, is done through a more subtle organ, the brain, upon this kosmic element, the astral light or akasa. All thinking is a modification of this element, a production of form in it. We call these forms thoughts, and when we have produced them, and are no longer conscious of them, we suppose that they have no existence, or exist only potentially, as our capacity to reconstruct them. But for our experience of "material" permanence, we should suppose just the same of the statue we had sculptured as soon as we had turned our back upon it. It may be said that in such operations we know there is a pre-existing element, but that is not the case with thought. It is the case with thought—the whole process of thinking is the elaboration of a material which we know already as ideal—absolute origination of material as well as of form there is none for us. It is just this ideal material and its modifications which constitute the objective world of *any* state of existence. The fixity and comparative inertness of our world of nature

are a state of consciousness. In the organic order we see the formative ideas of spiritual energies working in this state. In the inorganic, the energies are working also, and the results are known to science, though the process is too slow to be detected by common observation. In the inner objective world we are these agents, or some of them; but it is a crude and not a developed idealism which supposes that the results of our activity—our evolved thoughts—can only be sustained and conserved by our individual minds. We have *thought into* a world-consciousness, which is the basis of perpetuation.

In conclusion, I must express my surprise that so instructed a writer as Mr. Noel, to whom knowledge of the essential character of Eastern philosophy must be ascribed, should suppose it possible that the crude, gross error of Western Materialism—which our Christianity, by-the-by, has done nothing whatever to correct—should vitiate any *genuine* product of Indian thought. Could I find it there, I should at once say, "Don't talk to me of Koot Hoomi Lal Singh! this is an Anglo-American hash." We, indeed, find it difficult always to speak and think in consistency with conceptions which Western philosophy has only re-evolved within the last century or two, but in India the phenomenal character of "matter" is the commonplace of millennia of teaching. And perhaps that is why these Occultists talk so composedly of "matter," with an understanding which we newly-fledged idealists cannot take for granted, but must have distinctly expressed.

C. C. M.

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I hardly like to add a word to your very pertinent article on the duty of supporting the C.A.S., and would not do so except to ask all who believe in the mission of Spiritualism to read it.

I will only say a few words, as treasurer of the Society, to emphasize all you say. We started some years ago with a distinct resolution never to incur any expense which our current subscriptions were unable to meet; and the Finance Committee, in faithfully carrying out this instruction of the Council, have frequently had to refuse work which they would gladly have undertaken. You have indicated some of these good works; I may add that even now the Council have a proposition before them which we would gladly undertake, but we shall either have to leave it alone altogether or half do it unless we have an unexpected but very welcome accession to our numbers or funds in starting on a New Year's working.

The land of Spiritualism is literally a *terra incognita* to the outside public, and yet the craving to explore is largely increasing. The consequence is that a rough and ready method is adopted which too often disgusts honest inquirers in the outset, who if they could be reached by an educated guiding hand might be led into wise research and assist us to

"Ring in the Christ that is to be."

I should like to see all the S.P.R. subscribers *also* subscribing to the C.A.S.; both are doing efficient work but neither will make progress so rapidly as they would do if they stood shoulder to shoulder.

The more direct work of the latter will point out to the former where their methods of research can be wisely applied; in fact it is the work of the C.A.S., which they have under great difficulty been carrying on for years, which has given rise to this new S.P.R.—with which I have also the honour of being associated.

Many of the members of the C.A.S. who now pay 10s. 6d. could just as easily pay double; and many good Spiritualists who pay nothing, yet like to know of our doings, might without any sacrifice become liberal donors and place the Society in an entirely different and more influential position.

That Spiritualism is independent of all aid which we can offer, I am perfectly convinced, but we shall be the losers if we do not welcome it in its present advent.

Subscriptions now paid rank for the year 1883.

Apologising for thus occupying your space,—I am, yours truly,

MORELL THEOBALD,
Hon. Treasurer of Both Societies.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—A general meeting of members of this Society will be held on Saturday, the 9th inst., at No. 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, when interesting reports will be presented from the committees who have been engaged in various branches of investigation. The meeting will be open to members and associates, members being also at liberty to invite friends.

PROFESSIONAL PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP.

We subjoin a report of the discussion which followed the address by Mr. Thomas Shorter, at 38, Great Russell-street, given at length in our last week's issue :—

Miss HOUGHTON said she was most deeply thankful that twenty-two years ago she first heard of Spiritualism through a professional medium, Mrs. Marshall. In her opinion there was an absolute need of professional mediums, from whom people might learn the alphabet of Spiritualism. Persons in a sceptical frame of mind could not be received in private circles, where their remarks might be regarded as impertinent and offensive. It was therefore necessary to have professional mediums in whose presence anyone who wished might study the truths of Spiritualism.

Dr. NICHOLS said the beginning of the present phase of Spiritualism was when a widowed mother and three daughters, getting their living by the work of their hands, had physical manifestations given to them. It became known in the district, and in order to prevent the neighbours from coming into the house they had to lock the doors, otherwise they would not have been able to earn their livelihood. But the Spirits took the work into their own hands and made the house too hot to hold them with the doors fastened. The consequence was that they were at last compelled to receive all the visitors that came to them. They were, therefore, under the necessity of receiving offerings. Thus Spiritualism, such as it is, had spread by means of professional mediums. This gospel, like another, had come to the poor, and the poor had to live, and those that serve the altar must live by the altar. That mediums were physiologically subject to the temptation of stimulants was well-known, but he had known clergymen, solicitors, barristers, and politicians, suffer in the same way. Mediumship was not a talent to be buried in a napkin, but a calling or vocation, and he had a very strong feeling as to the duty of persons possessing that endowment. If he had it himself nothing would prevent its exercise, and if it became necessary for him to receive the offerings of those who benefited by the gift he would receive them and not feel himself disgraced by doing it. The testimony of men of science had been obtained generally through professional mediums, and Spiritualists should treat them in a friendly and brotherly manner. He had tried to do that and had been rewarded in so doing. As the Spirits themselves who commenced this work in the world had chosen their instruments, he apprehended they would go on in the same way, and they were better able to direct the movement than perhaps we were who knew less about it. His experience was that the Spirits did the best they could for the sitters. He was not at all inclined to pessimism in respect to the work. There would be ebbs and flows, but that was not at all peculiar to Spiritualism, and he expected to see the cause advance from the interior and not the exterior. Perhaps the more they fenced it round the more they would hamper it and the worse it would be.

Signor DAMIANI said he attended the meeting in order to explain why he could not sign the circular which had been sent out. In that circular it was proposed that a medium should not be allowed to give sances for physical manifestations unless he was in sight. It appeared to him that mediums had been treated in a most extraordinary way; they had been stripped, gagged, manacled, their clothes had been sewn up, they had been tied to their chairs, and then when the Spirit came out it had been snatched at. Now, as if that were not enough, it was proposed to impose impossible conditions. In one case it might be possible to see the medium and the Spirit at one and the same time, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it would be impossible; and yet the proposal now was that the ninety-nine should be excluded from giving sances. If that were carried out he did not know what would become of Spiritualism. It was a very difficult thing for a stranger in a town desiring to study Spiritualism to be introduced into a family, whereas he could easily satisfy his desire by visiting a paid medium. He himself attended three or four sances in one day with Mrs. Marshall, but no stranger could do that in a family. To abolish public sances altogether would, in his opinion, be to put an extinguisher upon Spiritualism. With regard to the scandals that had taken place, he thought that it was better that Spiritualism should be spoken of in connection with exposure rather than it should not be spoken of at all. Dr. Slade was exposed; the consequence was that German *sarans*, finding that scientific men, such as Mr. Wallace, declared the mediumship to be genuine, inquired into it, and the presence of Dr. Slade in

Germany created a new school there. Spiritualism being a truth, was a little flame which nothing could extinguish. If it was blown upon it would only increase; if all the world blew upon it, it would be larger still, and if an extinguisher were put upon it, the extinguisher would catch fire.

Mr. BENNETT said that the qualities which led to a man's becoming a medium were analogous to those which led to the development of poets, or artists, or literary men, or singers; and men of that class were sometimes found injuring their health by over-pursuing their favourite study. Could they not all call to mind instances in the professions where men had recourse to stimulating beverages to recover energy which had been taken from them? He hoped the time would come when there would be professional mediums whom society would regard in the same light as professional men in the highest departments of science and art were regarded. In an ideal state of society they might not think of paying poets, singers, or artists, but till that day arrived he hoped they would continue to try and remove the evils and the objections felt to professional mediumship, by raising its status instead of ignoring it altogether.

The CHAIRMAN said he felt personally very grateful to Mr. Shorter for having brought this subject forward. Whatever might be the ultimate decision of Spiritualists with regard to it he thought the address must inevitably do good. Personally, he ought to acknowledge his indebtedness to public mediums, and in the comparatively early period of the modern development of Spiritualism he had little to complain of with regard to mediums. More recently it had been different. Still his attitude towards mediums, sixteen or seventeen years ago, was not that which was likely to lead to the detection of fraud. He felt himself under the necessity of almost ignoring the possibility of fraud in order to reach to truths which to him were of the highest importance, and that any endeavour to bring about an exposure, even under circumstances which struck him as peculiarly suspicious, would be almost certain to constitute a very grave interruption of his researches. Therefore, for a number of years he never obtained any indubitable proof of fraud, but on the other hand he obtained indubitable proofs of the realities of Spiritualism. He thought Spiritualists scarcely realised the great deterioration which had taken place generally in the manifestations obtained through public mediums. He would be very much puzzled to get, at the present moment, results anything like those which occurred many years ago. Since then suspicion had touched every public medium, almost without exception. During the last six or eight years he had studied the popular manifestations, not from his old point of view, but in a more critical spirit, and he must say, as the result of his experience, that fraud had prevailed to an extent which seemed hardly to be suspected by most Spiritualists. He had with great pain come to the conclusion that amongst those who had been recognised as public mediums, who had obtained testimonials and high commendations, were people who had in no degree whatever the faculty of mediumship, who had joined the movement solely to prey upon it, who had made a study of deception, and whose manifestations had never been varied by any genuine phenomena whatever. These people, however, were comparatively few. As a rule his experience had led him to the conclusion that those who claimed to be mediums were mediums. The percentage of those who had joined the movement merely to prey upon it was after all but small. What had struck him as extremely repulsive in connection with Spiritualism was the absence of indignation, the presence of a large amount of calmness, on the part of Spiritualists when they had very good reason to suppose that imposture had been practised. The trickery and deception which had been practised had caused honest men to spit on and despise Spiritualism, and all Spiritualists should feel that the responsibility of this to a certain extent attached to themselves. They must all admit that if public physical sances were not actually to be abolished they must be regulated, for the condition of things which had prevailed was intolerably disgraceful to them. When the attitude of receptiveness was too pertinaciously adhered to it led to deplorable results. Over and over again, in the presence of one of these fictitious mediums, he had noted phenomena which he felt absolutely certain were deceptions. On one occasion, after the pretended medium had left, everyone present, Spiritualists and investigators, enlarged on the marvellous character of the phenomena which they had witnessed, and he offered to repeat the sance from beginning to end, indicating at the same time that he would employ nothing but the very simplest means of deception. He carried out his engagement, and, in darkness, produced all the

phenomena which had been accepted as so wonderful. But to illustrate the extraordinary condition of receptivity on the part of the circle, one gentleman made the observation, "You may have done a good deal by natural means, but some of the phenomena were indubitably produced by genuine mediumship." This attitude of mind was calculated to encourage imposture in its worst forms. He was led very strongly to the conclusion that if, as was now proposed, public physical manifestations were not to be altogether abolished, it behoved them, as Spiritualists, to watch them very carefully, to warn those who might be deceived, and to guard inquirers, especially those who had made some progress in Spiritualism. He trusted that this might be the outcome of the meeting,—either that it would be decided to discourage altogether the public exhibition of physical mediumship, or that a strong and stern resolve would be taken by all the foremost Spiritualists to protect themselves, to protect honest mediums, to protect the inquirers, and even to protect that God-sent visitant, Spiritualism itself.

Mr. SHORTER (in reply) said that one of the most effective checks against flagrant impertinence at private séances would be that the visitors came with proper letters of introduction, so that the family might be satisfied that they came to the investigation from an adequate motive. If anything could tend to encourage such impertinences it would be the fact of the séance being public and paid for, when the visitors would think themselves privileged to make any observations they thought proper. He did not deny that certain temporary advantages might have resulted from professional mediumship, but Spiritualism had now reached such a stage of development that professional mediumship was no longer desirable, and the evil seemed to him to more than counterbalance any advantages which at present might be derived from it. If difficulties were placed in the way of the inquirer, if he were compelled to exercise a little more patience, to pursue some course of study, and if he felt that Spiritualism was a thing not to be bought with money, Spiritualism would essentially gain by such a result. He altogether dissented from that state of mind which considered that the Spirits were everything and investigators nothing. On the contrary, he thought that the Spirit-world was a vast assemblage of human beings of every possible grade of intelligence and moral character, and that those who were nearest to the earth, who were most capable of producing violent physical manifestations because they were most closely allied to gross matter, were not those with whom it was most desirable to be in constant and close communication. The elevation of purpose, and the greater purity of motive, would draw around Spiritualism adherents far more desirable than those who were merely attracted by the grotesque surroundings of the professional medium. No doubt they had duties to perform in regard to mediums, but they should first satisfy themselves clearly as to what was absolutely the best thing to be done, and then if they made up their minds that some new departure was required they should consider what arrangements were necessary.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Shorter terminated the proceedings.

VISION OF DEPARTED FRIENDS AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

Mrs. De Morgan in the memoir of her husband, p. 367, say that her husband had always been interested in the history of cases where departing persons, while fully conscious, asserted the presence of those who had gone before. "Such instances," he said, were so common that we could not believe them to be all illusion; but whatever they were, they should be recorded carefully. During the last two days of his life there were indications of his passing through the experience which he himself considered worthy of investigation and record. He seemed to recognise all those of his family whom he had lost—his three children, his mother, and sister, whom he greeted, naming them in the inverse order to that in which they had left this world. No one seeing him at that moment could doubt that what he seemed to perceive was, to him at least, visible and real."

C.A.S. DISCUSSION MEETINGS.—The next Discussion Meeting at 38, Great Russell-street, will be held on Monday evening in the coming week, when Mrs. Heckford will read a paper entitled "Suggestions on the Practical Teaching of Materialisations." We do not know Mrs. Heckford's views on the subject, but we are quite sure that they will be found deserving of candid consideration. The subject is certainly an important one.

"SHELLS."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I do not think that Spiritualists in general would find it so difficult to accept the idea of "shells," as so called by Occultists, if they would simplify matters to their own thoughts by remembering that they do not expect the "natural man," as he is on earth, to "go to Heaven" (I employ phrases ordinarily in use). They one and all believe there is "progression" on the other side. Progression implies "change," a casting off of old states, habits, earthly modes of thought and life; in short, the growth of the "spiritual man," who puts off, as an old "shell" we will say, the "natural man." Spiritualists, it appears, have mistakenly been in the habit of considering this external, temporary personality, formed on the earth-plane for the convenience of the spirit in earth-life, as *the* man proper—or the individual—the Ego: when, in reality, the true man or individual is the inner spirit, which in the processes of human evolution, wears many external, temporary forms of personalities, which are necessarily evanescent.

Although we Spiritualists believe that the man is changed after death, and ascends from "sphere" to "sphere," yet we do not know the processes of the changes the ascending spirit passes through. Many of us have not, until now, learned that the spirit gradually detaches itself from the earthly externals, worn as a garment, and that the old husk or "shell" hangs together, as a species of personality, for a certain period; and may receive a sort of galvanic re-animation by the calls of friends living still in the body, to re-manifest itself in a dreamy sort of way, by giving a few isolated "tests." But if we will reflect a little we must see that these "shells"—the Kama-rupa, "passion," or "desire" forms of the Occultists, are in truth the "perisprits" we form by our lives here; and as we advance, forming new "perisprits," the old must be left off. Unfortunately they do not dissipate *at once*, and are *visible* in the Spirit-world. As we advance, and become spiritualised on earth, we also form new "perisprits." We leave off old habits of thought and life which were unclean, but of whose uncleanness we were not conscious until a new spirit was awakened within us: we become "changed" visibly to the eyes of neighbours and friends; and the old personality gradually and almost insensibly merges into a new one. Even the physical body will change, atom by atom, during these processes of spiritual growth, and necessarily the old "perisprits" also become disintegrated, giving place to new. In the Spirit-world, the physical body having died, and been buried on earth, only the "perisprits" can be seen, which are these "shells," in process of disintegration, having been cast off by the ascending spiritual Ego, the *true man*.

I have thrown these thoughts together more with the idea of aiding a friend, who frankly confessed inability to understand "C. C. M.'s" able and lucid paper on this subject. And I hope this humble attempt at a simplification of occult teachings, will not be deemed an intrusion upon the ground so ably occupied by "C. C. M." It would be impossible to add to, or improve upon, his beautiful and complete exposition of these abstruse metaphysical subjects. His papers are an intellectual treat, and a boon to fellow-students.

It appears to me that after the sublime picture presented of the "Evolution of Man," in the last "Fragments of Occult Truth," in the *Theosophist* for October, the opponents of the Re-incarnation theory must find themselves driven into their "last trench," or routed out entirely. If it be the necessity, the inevitable law of "human evolution," there can be no escape from myriads of returns upon a series of planets, of "individual units" composing the human family, and Re-incarnation can no longer be disputed.

I would recommend the perusal of this "Fragment" to your readers. The grandeur and fascinating beauty of the picture there presented to the mind leaves one in the state of being lifted to a vast altitude, and gazing at an infinite prospect, lost in reverential awe and intense admiration, mingled with the deepest joy, and a wholesome sense of one's own littleness. In contemplating the vastness of this mere sketch, human life becomes extended to an infinitude of grandeur, worthy of its Divine Originator, and the small schemes of creation believed in by some of our more orthodox friends sink into puerile insignificance.

November 20th, 1882.

C. G.

Chastisement does not always immediately follow error, but sometime comes when least expected.

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

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return Postage.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 15s. 2d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

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

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

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

OUR FUTURE.

We have received from very many of our readers expressions of their warm appreciation of our work, and of their earnest hope that "LIGHT" will be continued in the coming year. We gratefully acknowledge their kind and generous messages of encouragement and sympathy, and are pleased to be able to assure them, not only that "LIGHT" will be continued, but that we confidently hope to introduce some marked improvements in our issues for 1883.

And, with the new year, the price of "LIGHT" will be reduced to twopence, or post-free 10s. 10d. per annum, paid in advance; while the size and number of pages will remain the same as at present. This reduction has been determined upon in consequence of very strong representations which have reached us that the change will add very materially to our circulation, and thereby greatly extend the sphere of our usefulness. We hope that the friends to whose suggestions we have thus deferred will do their best to ensure the fulfilment of their own prognostications.

Those of our readers who have already forwarded subscriptions at the present rate, will either have their term of supply proportionately extended, or will for a time receive an additional copy of the Journal. In the absence of instructions to the contrary, the latter course will be adopted, in the hope that the second copy will be forwarded to persons who may thereby be induced to become subscribers for themselves.

Lastly—We venture to ask those who have been unable to contribute to our Sustentation Fund to help us in another way. Let those who can do so, begin with the new year to take two copies instead of one, and so introduce "LIGHT" amongst their friends and neighbours. They will thus make our success secure.

"LIGHT" SUSTENTATION FUND.

Amount already acknowledged	...	...	£188	3	6
"Number II."	...	...	5	0	0
W. Painter, Cardiff	...	...	1	1	0
Thos. Stocking, Wisbech	...	...	0	10	0

For "Rev. D. G. Houghton" in last week's list read "Rev. G. D. Haughton."

THE Members' Free Séance at 38, Great Russell-street will be held next week on Tuesday evening, instead of Wednesday as hitherto.

SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.—We understand that arrangements are nearly completed for the holding of a course of Sunday evening services, under the auspices of a new organisation entitled "The Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum," and that particulars of the preliminary scheme will at once be issued. A choir is in course of formation, and those who are willing to render assistance in this direction are invited to communicate without delay with the Hon. Secretaries, Jos. N. Greenwell, 15, Pakenham-street, King's Cross-Road, W.C., or Thos. Blyton, 38, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury, W.C. The services will in all probability be held in St. Andrew's Hall, Newman-street, Oxford-street, W., and Mr. J. J. Morse has been engaged for the first three months of 1883. Mrs. Britten is expected to deliver the inaugural address.

DEATH-BED APPARITIONS.

A persuasion that the Spirits of the departed occasionally revisit the scene of their earthly existence is too general, and too deeply seated in men's minds, to yield either to ridicule or to that superficial system of inquiry which is the very bane of philosophy.

It cannot be disputed that a taste for the supernatural has greatly augmented of late among the educated classes of society.

It has abandoned its ancient form of bald credulity. A well-introduced phantom is, indeed, as certain as ever of a polite reception, but something more is needed. We neither shoot at the ghost nor wholly believe in him, but merely maintain our right to learn, if possible, something of his right to be once more among us.

The indulgent spirit of the time is the welcome child of progress. As every age stamps itself upon the roll of time with the seal of some grand discovery, the mind becomes less and less inclined to impose limits upon that vast unexplored ocean which, like the material horizon, seems to know no bound but God; and man, as he gains wisdom, gains humility.

Some excellent persons discountenance inquiries of this nature, on the ground that we might be betrayed into the investigation of mysteries beyond the legitimate range of human philosophy.

But what is the legitimate range?

It would rather appear that a class of phenomena so frequently revealed to our natural senses, yet so vaguely comprehended, would form a peculiarly fitting theme for consideration and comment, nor is it easy to conceive how such a path of study can do otherwise than tend to the added glory of Him by whom all things consist.

Even should what we are accustomed to term extra-natural occurrences ultimately elude the grasp of reason, there is at least nothing terrible, nothing revolting, in the pursuit. It is, for example, a simple, touching, and beautiful faith that the last earthly regards of the Spirit about to be set free should be fixed upon its best beloved.

Few things spread such snares for the truthful as a "ghost story." Owing to a certain family resemblance which runs through this class of narrative, the temptation to lay stress upon any novel feature is strong—an error which has removed to the realm of fiction, many an anecdote that might have furnished good material for reflection and comment.

Examples of "death-bed appearances" are almost numberless. Now, did it so happen that coincidence of the apparition with the moment of death prevailed in every case, the field of explanation might be narrowed down to the single theory of what may be called a sixth sense—that species of spiritual telegraphy by means of which the spirit, at the moment of its release, is enabled to communicate with those with whom the bond of an intense affection has placed it *en rapport*.

This intermediate agency has been fully discussed by Dr. Passavant, and is probably identical with the nervo-electric fluid, of which I have not space to speak at large. It is, however, describable as a nervous ether, which, in cases of somnambulism, trance, or impending dissolution, becomes partially detached from its material conductors—the nerves—and is rendered capable of acting upon objects at any distance, provided only that, in those latter, there be a pre-existent condition of receptivity.

Dr. Passavant instances, as a humble but not inapt illustration of his theory, the case of a *gymnotus electricus*, kept alive, at Stockholm, for four months. This fish, when faint and hungry, could destroy others, secured at a distance, without any contact, or perceptible effort at all. Since the moribund *gymnotus* possesses this power, why may not the human spirit, under certain abnormal conditions—as when partially liberated from the encumbering flesh—exercise over the electric element a similar control?

Those who have borne testimony to these phenomena, have frequently alluded to a certain unaccountable feeling of gloom or uneasiness, preceding the visitation, and indicating, no doubt, the latent process through which the seers were being insensibly drawn towards the sensitive magnetic condition requisite for the vision.

My friend, Colonel Steinbach, while commanding a force of irregular cavalry in India, attached to the British army under General Sir Harry Smith, was, one night, occupying a hut close to his out-lying picquets, and, although much fatigued and without any immediate cause for anxiety, found himself unable

to close an eye. He lay, for hours, awake, listening to the only sound audible in the stillness—the monotonous tread of the sentry at his door. Suddenly, in the breaking dawn, a head was protruded through the casement. It presented the countenance of his brother, in England!

Starting from his couch, Steinbach rebuked the sentry for allowing anyone to approach unchallenged. The man—a steady soldier—denied that anyone had approached his post. With the first letters from England, the Colonel received notice of his brother's death, at the moment of the vision.

Here is another curious military incident. I give it on the authority of another friend, Colonel Kent Murray, who served on the staff of General Sir De Lacy Evans, throughout the War of succession in Spain.

After a severely-contested action, at Andoain, between the Carlists and the British Legion, under Evans, it fell to Murray's lot to visit the chain of outposts established a short distance in advance of the scene of the action.

On approaching one of these, the sentry, though apparently on the alert, uttered no challenge.

Murray rode slowly past him, but received neither salute nor challenge, and going close up to the man, saw that he was in the greatest agitation, his eyes staring at some fixed object, and beads of perspiration streaming down his working features.

"Are you drunk, sir, or dreaming?" asked the officer, sternly.

"Neither, your honour," stammered the man, who belonged to the Irish regiment which had suffered much in the day's encounter. "But there's Tim O'Dwyer standing forrest me, —what was kilt in the orchard—and beggin' to be berried with the rest of 'em."

It being manifest that the man, though sober, was unfit for duty, Murray had him relieved, and sent to camp; then, with an impulse of curiosity, galloped back to the orchard in which the worst struggle had occurred, where he was informed that both dead and wounded had been carefully removed from the field.

On the point of leaving, his eye fell upon the huge branch of an apple tree, which, partly severed by a round shot, drooped down upon the earth. He had it lifted, and beneath it lay the body of O'Dwyer, still warm, but dead.

We have seen that, in the great majority of "death-bed apparitions," there has existed a condition of *rapport* between seen and seer, favourable to the phenomenon subsequently to be produced by the power of projection of sound or image through the nervo-electric agency on the one side, and by a condition of magnetic receptivity on the other.

But when no such *rapport* can be reasonably supposed to exist, the operation of some further law seems essential to the phenomenon.

If any psychological student can assign the incident I am about to relate to any recognised or unrecognised law, I shall not have appealed to him in vain.

In the year 1809, the fourth troop of the 1st, or King's Dragoon Guards, was stationed at Romford. On the evening of the 12th August, the party at the mess comprised Captain T. Lieutenants S. (the writer's uncle), and McN., and Mr. C.

The four gentlemen were dining in a detached building, used merely as a mess house. After the removal of the cloth, attendance had been dispensed with, and not a soul, except an elderly female who presided over the kitchen below, remained under the roof.

A warm discussion had arisen between the three younger officers, while the senior sat listening, apparently with eager attention, when suddenly a piercing shriek was heard below. It was repeated, and the young men at once started up, and hastened to ascertain the cause. The cook was discovered, kneeling on the floor, her apron over her head, as if to shut out some fearful sight. She was in violent hysterics.

On regaining some composure, she stated that she had been greatly alarmed by seeing Captain T. enter the kitchen, looking singularly wan and white—that he had passed her slowly, looking her in the face, but without speaking, and entered a kind of pantry, used as a receptacle for pans and dishes, from which there was no egress, save through the kitchen.

Supposing from his disordered aspect that he was ill, she had wolloed him at once—but, to her utter amazement, found the little apartment empty!

Looking round incredulously on each other, the young men,

for the first time, became aware that T. had not accompanied them, and one of them, hastily returning to the mess-room, found that officer, still seated, in the attitude he had maintained while listening to their conversation—but dead.

Here, indeed, we have coincidence of time, but absence of *rapport*, since it would be difficult, if not absurd, to pretend that any such connection, or "polarity"—as the learned phrase it—could have existed between poor Captain T. and the ancient cook-maid.

Nevertheless, the incident as it stands, was true.

HENRY SPICER.

HINTS TO THE EDITOR.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As one who has taken a great interest in "LIGHT" from the first, you will perhaps allow me to say a few words on what I think would be the best means of enabling it to assume an independent and permanent position.

It seems to me that there are two means by which the attainment of such a result may be greatly aided. During the past year, especially, a considerable amount of space has been devoted to subjects just outside the limits of "Spiritualism" in its most restricted sense—to "thought-reading," for instance. Of this particular topic we have, perhaps, heard nearly enough in the pages of "LIGHT," unless some considerable progress can be shewn; but there is a large group of subjects standing between Spiritualism proper and the physical sciences in which the number of those who are interested is great and increasing. On looking over the list of members published by the "Society for Psychical Research," I have been struck with the large number of names, more than two-thirds, that are not known, at all events generally, to have taken any interest in "Spiritualism." They represent what must necessarily be a large class to whom "LIGHT" might become an attractive journal.

Means might, I think, be taken to secure their support without in any way lessening the interest of "LIGHT" to others.

The second means to which I would refer is one as to which there will be a greater difference of opinion. When "LIGHT" was projected, two years ago, it was part of the idea of its founders, more or less definitely stated in some of the preliminary prospectuses, and which idea still survives in the words following the title—"Devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity Here and Hereafter"—that the paper should not be wholly taken up by the advocacy of "Spiritualism," but that matter relating to other subjects should occasionally be introduced, having reference to topics and movements in which many Spiritualists feel a deep interest. Individually I regret that this part of the programme has never been carried out, and I know that there are others who share this feeling. I do not want to go into details, but I would strongly urge that if it is decided that the present size of the paper is to be maintained, and if, as I hope, the price will be restored to the original figure, a limited space, say from one to two columns, should be devoted to the fair and temperate discussion of a variety of what, to use a hackneyed term, may be called "progressive" subjects, in one or more of which the great majority of Spiritualists take almost as much interest as they do in Spiritualism itself. I would only mention such questions as Vegetarianism, Temperance Reform, the Education of Woman, her position legislatively and in regard to the learned professions, Capital Punishment, Vaccination, and Vivisection, and others which might be enumerated. There is not one of these subjects which might not be treated in a way directly bearing on the "Highest Interests of Humanity," psychically as well as physically, and as such would come legitimately within the objects of the Journal.

The practical question is, whether the introduction of a column or two of this kind would add to the interest and popularity of the Journal, and thus aid it in the only way in which it can be kept alive. If possible, it would be desirable to elicit the opinions of its readers. If there was a general expression of opinion that such would be the case, I hardly think any of its present supporters would take offence because they would occasionally see a paragraph or two with which they had no sympathy, or even which might excite their antipathy. At all events, seeing how limited and superficial our knowledge really is in all directions, I do not think such a feeling would be worthy of a Spiritualist.—I am, yours faithfully,

November 27th, 1882.

A STUDENT.

[We shall be glad to learn the views of our readers in regard to the suggestions of "A Student."—ED. "LIGHT."]

SEANCES WITH DR. SLADE AND MR. PHILIPS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the present unsettled state of public opinion at home, in relation to phenomena, perhaps the following testimony may be of some use.

I have just had a sitting with Dr. Slade, and will give as cursory a description of it as possible. We sat down to an ordinary table: a square body, with four legs supporting two hinged flaps, which were up. Dr. Slade sat at one side and I at another, near him. He held a slate, with a minute scrap of pencil on it, half under the open flap, the wooden slate frame pressed against the flap of the table, and his hand visible outside the edge of the table. His other hand clasped mine on the table. We obtained immediately a long written communication.

He then took two slates which I had brought with me and held them together, with the usual scrap of pencil between, on my shoulder and neck close to the ear; his other hand clasped mine on the table, and immediately I heard the scratching sound that accompanies writing on a slate, and on opening the slates found a communication from a relative.

I then held a slate myself, under the flap, on the side most distant from Dr. Slade, with my right hand. His hands and my left one lay on the table. The slate was several times pushed away from under the table, with more force than I could exert to keep it there. As my legs intervened between Slade and that side of the table, his could not get near the slate.

I then held the slate alone, with my left hand, under the flap nearest Slade, his hands and my right one lying joined on the table. At once I heard writing, which proved to be a personal communication.

During this time I had been repeatedly touched on the outside of the right leg, where neither Slade's hands nor feet could reach. A chair standing near me, and on the other side of the table from Slade, was lifted and held suspended, evenly balanced, for a second or two, and then quietly set down. A slate was taken from Slade's hand under the table and thrown quickly and strongly through space diagonally, and in an upper direction, the full length of the table, emerging from under it at the other side, and then at a height of about a foot above the level of the table suddenly stopping in space as if caught by a hand, and as quickly thrown back by an invisible power, traversing the distance under the table till it was caught in the air by a rapid movement of Slade's hand about two feet further on. The line traversed by the slate in space was not straight, but curved.

When Slade and I joined hands together under the table, we were touched all over the arms by a hand which emerged from under one side of the table for a moment only.

My sitting with Mr. Philips was interesting in a different way. While sitting at opposite sides, fronting each other, at an ordinary table, we held two slates in close contact with each other, with no pencil between. Our two hands held the sides of the slates nearest to us, over the table, thus forming a bridge. I at once heard writing, and on opening the slates found the inner side of one of them clearly written on as with a slate pencil.

I then, by instruction, took two hinged slates, which I had bought on my way there. I alone held these perpendicularly, the lower edges resting on the table, the upper in the air; my hands clasping the outer rims closely together. One of Mr. Philips's hands was on the table, two feet from mine, the other lay in his lap. There was no pencil or any other substance between the slates. Writing was at once heard, and on opening them I found a message written with what appeared to be chalk.

I repeatedly had replies to questions by knocks made inside the closed hinged slates when held in the air, about two feet above the table, by myself only and several feet away from Philips.

All these phenomena occurred in the broad light. They distinctly prove the existence of a power beyond our present knowledge of natural forces; of an intelligence directing that power; that intelligence often showing a knowledge of facts with which only an immediate relative could be acquainted.

I have previously enclosed my card, and beg to sign, yours faithfully,

A SUBSCRIBER.

Hoffman House, New York, November 7th.

P.S.—Both Dr. Slade and Mr. Philips contemplate visiting England when their engagements permit.

MRS. HARDING-BRITTEN'S LECTURE APPOINTMENTS.—
ROCHDALE: December 3rd. BELPER: December 10th and 31st.
HALIFAX: December 17th.—Address, The Limes, Humphreys-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

THE FAIRY-LAND OF MATHEMATICS.

No. I. Two Ways of Drawing an Ellipse.

By the Authoress of "*The Home Side of a Scientific Mind.*"

When a schoolboy wants to draw a circle he ties a bit of thread into a loop, sticks a pin through it into his paper, and draws a line round the pin as far off as the loop will stretch out. If God wanted to make a circle (which I have no reason to know that He ever does) He would put a sun where the boy puts his pin; take for His thread the force of gravity; and for the pencil moved by the boy's hand, a planet moving along with a momentum exactly proportioned to the force of gravity.

If the schoolboy wants to draw an ellipse instead of a circle, he does just the same thing as before, only that, instead of one pin, he sticks in two, at a short distance apart. The points marked by these two pins, we call the two foci of the ellipse.

When God wanted to draw the ellipse of our earth's orbit, He put the sun in one focus, and *nothing at all* in the other. The same effect which the boy produces by his second pin, He brings about by making the momentum slightly overbalance the force of gravity, and by making the gravity not uniform like a thread, but able to act at varying distances.

Mathematical teachers cause some confusion by not pointing out to children that the second focus is, in one sense, a fiction, which in nature, has no real, tangible existence.

We are obliged to *speak* of every ellipse as having two foci; and for the following reasons:—

In the first place, to describe an ellipse, *conceived of as the path of a planet moving round one sun under the action of two forces*, requires considerable mathematical knowledge; whereas any child can understand the statement that the thread which goes from his pencil to one pin, added to the thread which goes from his pencil to the other pin, is to be always of the same length. Anyone not acquainted with high mathematics who attempted to state the mathematical law of an ellipse without reference to the second focus, would make a complete and hopeless jumble.

Another reason is this:—Although in the case of the earth's orbit there is No-Thing in the second focus of the ellipse, the focus-point has a curious relation to the ellipse itself. If the attracting body in one focus is luminous, and the body in the orbit reflects light, then, wherever in the orbit the planet may be, the reflected ray passes through the vacant focus. Consequently, if several planets had the same orbit, and if any bit of non-luminous matter happened to stray into the second focus, it would appear lighted up with a false second-hand light.

And this seems to me to suggest a thought about the duality of most religious beliefs. Possibly the reason why alongside of Ormuzd there has always been an Ahrimann, alongside of God a devil, is that we have not sufficient command of language, nor sufficiently high powers of conception, to speak truly of the complicated problems of life without supposing an Evil Spirit. And moreover, "Evil Spirits" may have a certain kind of objective reality. Some foolish, rubbishy, purposeless ghost may happen to wander into such a position that the eccentricity of three or four people's orbits may combine and cause them to reflect on it a glare which makes it seem for a time a source of light and a focus of real attraction.

When I hear people trying to account for the facts of our lives without any reference to the existence of Satan, I cannot help remembering that, though a teacher would do well to tell his class that the second pin is a convenient fiction, needed because of their ignorance, yet no statement of the path of a planet would be more false than one which attempted to describe the ellipse in *any mathematical language intelligible to beginners* without reference to the second focus.

I once had a lesson from Mr. Boole on the path of a planet. He described the body flung off into space by the impulse originally communicated to it, yet prevented from entirely yielding to that impulse and flying off at a tangent at any point, by the attraction of the sun. He shewed how the gravitation became weaker and weaker as the planet went further from the focus of attraction, and how it seemed as if it must ultimately lose its hold. But by a mathematical law, as the distance between the planet and the sun increases, the momentum diminishes even faster than the attractive force does; so that, however strong the original impulse, however excentric the orbit may become, the gravitation ultimately conquers the tendency to escape from its influence and brings the planet back to revolve round the true focus. He made me

write out the mathematical part of the lesson, and seemed particularly anxious that I should have the whole theorem quite clearly in my head. He gave no hint that it was meant for anything more than a problem on astronomy.

Since his death, some notes have been found in his handwriting on the subject of gravitation. They appear intended to discuss the question how a supplementary force ought to be placed, so as to increase the effect of the sun's attraction and assist it in diminishing the ellipticity of a planet's orbit; and where it would rather tend to counteract that attraction. On the same scrap of paper are quotations from religious poems, &c.

In the last chapter of his "Laws of Thought" occurs the following passage:—

"What evil may be in the eyes of Infinite Wisdom and Purity we can at the best but dimly conjecture; but to us in all its forms, whether of pain or defect, or moral transgression, or retributory woe, it can wear but one aspect,—that of a sad and stern reality against which, upon somewhat more than the highest order of prudential considerations, the whole preventive force of our nature may be exerted."

A DEFENCE OF MEDIUMS.

Mr. T. Shorter's address which appears in the current number of "LIGHT," suggests a few comments. Under the heading "Apologies for Fraud," Mr. Shorter states, "When an exposure takes place. . . . Professor B. will write saying he tried and tested him" (the medium) "and established his genuine mediumship beyond all question," and then Mr. Shorter arrives at the following conclusion: "*as though what happened six months before had anything to do with what subsequently occurred.*" I must confess to a feeling of surprise when I read such words as those I have italicised. In my humble opinion, the fact of a medium having been thoroughly tested and proved genuine, not once but scores of times, and such proofs being spread over a long series of years, has a *very important* bearing on the case, when a so-called exposure of such a medium takes place. Without endorsing the maxim "a medium can do no wrong," we may, I think, with advantage, be a little less hasty and positive in our judgment. Take the latest fiasco. Here we have a medium such as described, no medium probably having been more thoroughly and successfully tested than Miss Wood. She is accused of fraud by those who, on their own showing and by their own acts, prove themselves incompetent observers. Their honesty need not be impugned; doubtless they described what they believe actually occurred. But look at the matter; on the one hand we have a medium of established reputation, whose powers are testified to during a long series of years by a crowd of experienced, competent, and careful witnesses. On the other hand what have we? An accusation of fraud by those who practically know nothing of the said medium's powers, and probably as little of the delicate character of the investigation, the difficulties attending it, or the patience necessary to enable any one to offer an opinion of value. Doubtless there has been fraud in connection with Spiritualism, but my contention is that in some (perhaps in many) so-called exposures, the cause of the trouble lies much deeper down, and is very different in reality to what it appears on the surface or to the superficial investigator. It may be an *easy* way out of the difficulty, but I contend there is neither justice nor philosophy in accusing a medium, with a long and honourable record, of wilful fraud, unless we have better evidence than any as yet forthcoming in the case referred to. Mr. Shorter in another part of his address states regarding mediumship:—"We know little of its nature or conditions, but we know that it may be very easily disturbed." And again he states, "We know so little of the nature of mediumship, of the principles which govern it, of the laws which underlie it." And yet in the face of these admissions, when an alleged exposure takes place, Mr. Shorter and others can come to no other conclusion than that gross fraud has been perpetrated. Does it never occur to them, that with our confessed ignorance of the laws and nature of mediumship, we are likely to blunder in our conclusions, especially if we adopt such rough and ready solution? When the result affects the character of a fellow-creature, when, moreover, there is good ground for thinking that another explanation will meet the case (such for instance as that suggested by Alfred R. Wallace and other experienced investigators), then I enter my protest and say, that to harp upon and repeat the parrot-like cry of "Fraud, Fraud," is not worthy of experienced Spiritualists, but is eminently unphilosophical and probably unjust. Wisdom dictates a different course; it whispers, Sus-

pend your judgment until you have made a more careful investigation, accumulated more facts, and have at hand, to guide, some of those laws and principles which underlie mediumship, and which even Mr. Shorter acknowledges we are at present so deficient in. When we have done this, possibly such questions as Mr. Shorter asks—"How is it that mediumship and occasional imposture are found to be compatible and to co-exist in the same person?"—may require to be modified. We may discover that "things are not what they seem." The many may discover what the few already are assured of. The separate identity of the "form" may be clearly established, and yet its intimate relation to the medium shewn by the rapidity with which the one is absorbed as it were by the other.

Let me say here that some of the expressions which have recently appeared in your columns from certain contributors, anent a certain case, by those who it is evident are not practically acquainted with the facts, are not calculated to promote the discovery or diffusion of truth. It cannot be too often repeated that seizures are pre-eminently foolish acts, and I would quote the words of one of the accusers and say to such, "Zeal which is without knowledge, and is wanting in discretion, can never aid a good cause." A few words in conclusion regarding a feature of professional mediumship which has been much commented on by some writers. It is said "the greed of gain" prompts mediums to such and such acts. Like other wholesale denunciations this one will often fall wide of the mark. It is particularly inapplicable in the case it is intended for, as the medium whose name has been so freely handled of late in your columns is just about as "uncommercial" as any man or woman well could be. It occurs to me that those who talk so glibly of "the greed of gain" displayed, are again very often at fault. Are such aware, I wonder, of the scores of free sêances that such mediums give cheerfully when the need arises or is seen, and of valuable help in other ways offered? I reckon not, or we should hear less of "the greed of gain." Did "greed of gain" prompt a recently much talked of medium one wild, dark, and stormy night to walk alone five or six miles across an open country utterly strange to her and in a drenching rain rather than disappoint a circle of miners; she having promised them a free sitting, and knowing full well she would never be one penny into pocket by the transaction? How many of the sterner sex would have kept "a brave heart still" under such circumstances, and acted their part as nobly as she did!

Mediums are an open-handed race, generous to a fault, and it is difficult for those who know them best to keep patience when they see some of the attacks that are made by those who, in many cases, are culpably ignorant of the subject with which they presume to deal.

J. WALTON.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, November 27th, 1882.

THE TEACHINGS OF "THE PERFECT WAY."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—To "think otherwise" than the writers of "The Perfect Way" is, it seems, to incur the charge of favouring "idolatrous corruptions," and to be classed with the worshippers of Dagon! But as one who feels responsible to exercise common sense, and to "prove all things," I will venture a few remarks.

1. Their confession, that Jesus Christ might just as well never have existed, as far as they are concerned (for this is what their language amounts to), was not shared by His own disciples, as is evident from every page of their letters. Whatever spiritual lessons they taught are based upon the facts of His life, death, and resurrection. "Who is a liar," says St. John, "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (the expected Messiah). Are we then to understand that God had so little purpose in permitting the wonderful circumstances of the birth, life, and death of His Son, that we should have been just as well off if they had never happened? There must be something faulty in a system which admits of such an anomaly.

2. I must protest against the loose and indiscriminate imputations heaped on ministers of the Gospel, as if all were "*ignorant and designing men.*" It is obvious to remark that a vast proportion of them are at least as learned, as sincere, and as self-sacrificing as the authors of "The Perfect Way." And it is false to say that they have an inveterate desire to provide the people with a material god, palpable to sense; for they teach that He rose from the dead, and is therefore, not material, but *spiritual*,—not palpable to sense, but apprehended only by *faith*. When will these "advanced" writers learn what Paul considered a "more excellent way"—the religion of love? for "love," says he, "rejoiceth in the truth."

3. Christians will hardly appreciate their efforts to "rescue Jesus from the category of 'impossible monstrosities.'" Such extravagant language must sound to them either meaningless or blasphemous; since they consider Him, as did the Apostles, as the manifestation of God to the world.

4. But our writers have discovered that "even He was not perfect." They seem unconscious that this word, which is used in various senses, can have no *absolute* meaning, except as applied to God. And it is curious that, to prove their assertion, they adduce a passage which really proves the contrary. Every one has his own will, just as he possesses also affection and intelligence. But it is one thing to bring his will into complete subjection to God's will. It is quite another to have that will obliterated or swallowed up in God's. This would be to dehumanize him; it would be a downward step towards greater imperfection. But our Lord could say, "Not My will, but thine be done." His victory over self was complete. Of Him it could truly be said, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright."

So what was "impossible" has come to pass—a perfect man has been found on the earth plane!

Perhaps it would not be profitable now to rise to higher themes, and to shew that God Himself is *Divinely Human*, which yet is a necessary truth, as Swedenborg has convincingly argued; for the writers would probably fail to appreciate it, and so would misconstrue it.

5. We are now brought to the doctrine of "re-birth;" for we are told that Jesus "owed the high grade to which He attained to successive re-births"! How do they know that? And what right have they to affirm as a certain truth what in the nature of things can only be a hypothesis? Reasons against it crowd upon one; but there are two which, to my mind, are conclusive. (1) That it admits of the interchange of sex—a man may re-incarnate as a woman, and *vice versa*. But since sex is in the spirit, and thence in the body, as every one who thinks deeply may know, a male spirit could never develop a female body, any more than the germ of a cat could develop into a dog. "Every seed has its own body." (2) If there were a recollection of former lives, there might be a chance of improving on them. But since there is no remembrance of any former life, identity is as good as lost, and there are no means of advancement. A million re-births could add nothing to our experience, and could contribute nothing to our moral progress. It is too clumsy an arrangement to be of God's contriving, and is as opposed to His justice as to His wisdom. He has a better and kinder method with His children. In the spiritual world, where the memory of earth-life remains, provision is made for correcting the results of ignorance and perversity, so that truth and goodness may be appropriated and evil rejected, and this in conscious freedom. Such is the testimony of Swedenborg, from "things heard and seen," and it will commend itself to most people as far nearer the truth. May it be long before the terrible and irrational dogma of Re-incarnation finds a home among English Spiritualists.

6. The mention of Swedenborg reminds me of the divergency of our writers from him in respect to the relations of matter and spirit. They profess a great regard for the seer. It would have been better had they confessed, what is sufficiently palpable, their utter ignorance of his writings; for had they been acquainted with them, they would hardly have expressed regard for one who, in their gentle judgment, must take his place with "idolators and blasphemers;" nor would they have been so ignorant of his doctrine of matter and spirit, as to ascribe to him "two original self-subsisting entities"! If they would only study his "doctrine of Degrees," and "the science of Correspondences," they would certainly become wiser, perhaps even better, for their pains.

I should like to have remarked on another groundless hypothesis—the *extinction* of the perseveringly evil; and on the curious assertion that to take away the life of animals (insects, I suppose, included) is *murder*, only in a lower degree; but I will not trespass further on your space. S. C.

[To some of the letters which we have published on the "Teachings of 'The Perfect Way,'" we have received a reply by the writers of the book. This we shall give in our next issue, and the discussion on the subject must then be considered as closed.—ED. "LIGHT."]

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—GATESHEAD: December 3rd and 4th. LONDON: December 10th. CARDIFF: December 17th.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.

THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC PHYSICAL SEANCES.

The following Declaration on the conduct of public or promiscuous sances for physical manifestations was drafted by a committee appointed for that purpose by the Council of the Central Association of Spiritualists, and having been presented to a meeting of the Council, held on Tuesday, November 14th, 1882, was unanimously approved, and ordered to be printed and circulated. Persons wishing to have their names added to the list of signatures are invited to intimate their desire to the Resident Secretary, Mr. Thomas Blyton, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

Conduct of Public Physical Seances.

Few Spiritualists can have failed to note, with regret, the deterioration which has of late years taken place in the conditions under which physical phenomena have been sought in public sances.

These conditions—so favourable to fraud on the part of dishonest mediums, and so calculated to excite suspicion in the minds of observers—have led to the most disastrous results. We are not speaking without full warrant when we say that there is hardly a public medium for physical manifestations in this country against whom, at one time or other, charges of imposture have not been brought. We fear that in some cases no reasonable doubt can be entertained that fraud of the grossest kind was really perpetrated; while in other cases there is reason to believe that—whatever may have been the appearance to inexperienced spectators—there was no conscious deception on the part of the medium.

But in either case the name of Spiritualism has been brought into discredit, and we are forcibly driven to the conclusion that our methods of procedure must be amended. We must demonstrate our abhorrence of imposture by disavowing and discouraging all conditions which do not plainly shut out even the suspicion of its possibility.

Obviously these remarks can have little reference to family circles, which are naturally held sacred by those who regard them as affording opportunities for veritable "communion with the dead." But it is open to grave question whether—even in the case of family circles—*inquirers* should ever be permitted to make their first acquaintance with Spiritual phenomena by introduction to sances held for physical manifestations in the dark, or where a cabinet is used for the seclusion of the medium.

We are chiefly concerned, however, with what are known as public or promiscuous sances for physical manifestations. These have been of late years generally marked by the following characteristics:—(1) The séance has been conducted in imperfect light, or in total darkness. (2) The medium has been isolated from the circle, by being placed either in a cabinet or behind a curtain. (3) The sitters have been, either wholly or in part, unacquainted with the subject and with each other. (4) There has not infrequently been a manifest want of harmony, consequent upon differences of opinion as to the nature and value of the tests employed.

These conditions, usually found in combination, effectually preclude careful and dispassionate investigation; open wide an avenue to fraud; suggest suspicion of its presence even where it does not exist; and in many cases, we fear, expose the medium to very injurious influences.

Such conditions should be allowed to prevail no longer. "Mixed" circles should be as little mixed as possible—mere wonder-seekers, and men whose moral atmosphere is known to be impure, being carefully excluded. Above all, darkness should give way to light. In the early days of Spiritualism public dark circles were the exception, and there is no need for them now. There is abundant evidence that, with mediums of the present day, satisfactory phenomena, including even "form" manifestations, can be obtained without isolation—the medium, where a cabinet is used, being placed near, but *outside of it*, and in full view of the sitters. But even if this were not so, it is neither wise nor honourable to expose mediums to the risks which have been shewn to attend sances held under the conditions that have of late been prevalent; and it were far better that we should have no public manifestations of physical phenomena than that they should be sought under circumstances which, to say the least, inevitably conduce to suspicion.

In view of all these considerations, believing that fraud is not of the essence of this confessedly obscure subject, but rather an accident dependent on faulty conditions of research; feeling that Spiritualists have the remedy for the evil in their own hands, and that without its conscientious application they cannot hope

to maintain a fair reputation before the world; we earnestly recommend—That in all public circles held for physical phenomena, the medium be so placed, and in such light, as to be continuously under observation by each member of the circle.

Edwin Adams, Cardiff
 W. P. Adshead, Derby
 Alexander Aksakof, St. Petersburg
 G. P. Allan, London
 W. R. Armstrong, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 R. Baikie, M.D., late H.E.I.C.S., Edinburgh
 *T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., Newcastle-on-Tyne
 Frederick A. Binney, Manchester
 *Anna Blackwell, Paris
 John L. Bland, President of Hull Psychological Society
 Hannah Blundell, Manchester
 John James Bodmer, London
 Hugh Booth, Sowerby Bridge
 Colonel Joshua Brayn, Jersey
 Emma Hardinge-Britten, Manchester
 William Brown, Burnley
 Henry Burton, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 Alexander Calder, London
 †Robert Redgrave Cann, Harleston, Norfolk
 Robert Scammell Clarke, Hon. Sec. Plymouth Free Spiritual Society
 John Colley, Hon. Sec. Birmingham Christian Spiritualist Society
 John Cowie, Dumbarton
 John Crake, Houghton-le-Spring
 William Day, Ipswich
 James Dawbarn, London
 Thomas Dawson, Hon. Sec. Gateshead Spiritualist Society
 David Duguid, Glasgow
 T. H. Edmonds, Sunbury-on-Thames
 §W. Eglinton, London
 J. Crossley Eno, Dulwich
 Thomas Everitt, London
 John S. Farmer, London
 Lewis Firth, Hon. Sec. Rochdale Spiritualist Society
 Richard Fitton, Manchester
 Charlotte FitzGerald, London
 D. G. FitzGerald, M.S.Tel.E., London
 Elizabeth FitzGerald, London
 *Hannah Ford, Leeds
 George Forster, Hon. Sec. Seghill Spiritualist Association
 H. E. Frances, Hon. Sec. Brixton Psychological Society
 William Gill, Brighton
 Henry Goodechild, Hon. Sec. Middlesborough Association of Spiritualists
 Thomas Grant, Maidstone
 G. F. Green, London
 Joseph N. Greenwell, Hon. Sec. Dalston Association
 S. C. Hall, F.S.A., London
 *Mrs. F. V. Hallock, Chiswick, London
 William Hardy, Hon. Sec. Sheffield Psychological Association
 Samuel Hayes, Hon. Sec. Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
 Georgiana Houghton, London
 Hugh Hutchinson, President Islington Home Circle
 John Enmore Jones, London
 H. A. Kersey, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 W. F. Kirby, London
 Edward Larrad, President Leicester Spiritualist Society
 John Lamont, Liverpool
 P. G. Leymarie, President Société Scientifique d'Etudes Psychologiques, of Paris
 J. E. Lightbown, Hon. Sec. Manchester and Salford Society of Spiritualists
 R. W. Lishman, Hon. Cor. Sec. Central London Spiritual Evidence Society
 "M.A. (Oxon.)," London
 Iver MacDonnell, London
 James McDowall, Glasgow
 John McG. Munro, Hon. Sec. Glasgow Association of Spiritualists
 Thomas McKinney, Peterborough
 *C. C. Massey, London
 William Miall, London
 William Morris, London
 J. J. Morse, London
 Hay Nisbet, Glasgow
 Roden Noel, London
 W. G. Pickersgill, London
 Thomas Pinkey, Durham
 Richard Pearce, London
 Cornelius Pearson, London
 *Edward R. Pease, London
 *Frank Podmore, London
 *Thomas Pole, Clifton
 Charles Poole, Hon. Sec. Yorkshire District Committee of Spiritualists
 John Pringle, Hon. Sec. Hetton Spiritual Society
 S. R. Redman, London
 George Ridley, Hon. Sec. North Durham Spiritualist Society
 A. J. Riko, The Hague
 W. C. Robson, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 E. Dawson Rogers, London
 George Rogers, President Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
 John Rouse, Croydon
 Adam Rushton, Minister, Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
 †Thos Shorter, London
 J. Bowring Sloman, Plympton
 S. T. Speer, M.D. (Edin.), London
 M. A. Stack, London
 Lucia C. Stone, Bridport
 Edith L. Stone, Bridport

Morell Theobald, London
 Ellen Miall Theobald, London
 E. A. Tietkens, London
 I. Thompson, Manchester
 *E. Louisa Thompson Nosworthy, Liverpool
 Charles Tomlinson, London
 George Tommy, Bristol
 Jno. P. Turner, Leamington
 Mary Wainwright, London
 †Alfred Russel Wallace, F.R.G.S., Godalming
 E. W. Wallis, Nottingham
 *Rev. W. Whitear, London
 W. Winlow, Hon. Sec. Ashington Spiritual Society, Northumberland
 Oswald Wirth, Paris
 George Wyld, M.D., London
 J. F. Young, Llanelly

* Is of opinion that public miscellaneous sances for physical manifestations should be altogether discontinued.

† Would prefer that the word "conscious" should be omitted from the last sentence of the second paragraph.

‡ Is of opinion that public miscellaneous sances and professional mediumship for physical manifestations should be altogether discouraged.

§ Is opposed to all public sances, whether in the light or the dark, unless the conditions are favourable to a complete investigation.

SPIRITUALISM IN A SPANISH PRISON.

The Christian Circle of Tarragona sends the following communication to the *Revue Spirite* :—

"The great convict prison here in Tarragona, has 800 inmates sentenced to forced labour. By some means, Spiritualist books have been introduced among the prisoners. The circulation of these books among them has been the means of bringing seventy or eighty of them to be believers in our doctrine. These converts have ceased to regard their miserable position from their old point of view; they no longer entertain schemes of revolt against the authorities. They endure their lot with resignation under the influence of the teaching that this world is but a preliminary stage to another, where, if repentant of the ill they have done, and seek the good of others, they will be better off than here.

"Not long since one of these men died; at his death he declined the established offices of the prison priest, on the ground that he was a Spiritualist and did not need them. The priest then discovered that Spiritualism was a subject of discussion with many of the prisoners. He made a representation of the matter to his bishop, who made formal complaint of it to the commandant of the prison, and the commandant made an investigation. In the end a particular prisoner was selected for punishment in the form of an additional weight of fetters. This coming to the knowledge of the Spiritualists of Tarragona, Barcelona, and Lerida, they had a meeting upon the subject and delegated one of their number, a man of position, to the commandant. The representations which he made led the commandant to cancel his order as to the additional fetters. The bishop's censure against Spiritualist books placed them under prohibition, which was maintained. It is known, however, that although never found by gaolers, the books are still there."

A communication has been written through the hand of a medium of the Circle of Christian Spiritualists of Tarragona by the Spirit, as is believed, of the prisoner whose death is mentioned above; it is as follows :—

"My brethren, whatever your burdens may be they are light compared to those who suffer under the heavy penalties of the law: wearing fetters, enduring indescribable hardships and the brutalities of coarse and cruel gaolers, heavy indeed are the burdens of those who have so violated Society's laws as to find themselves inmates of the galleys! But is Society always equitable? Does it not sometimes provoke men into criminality? Does it not sometimes create the evils which it punishes men for doing? And how many are there who, if equity ruled, would have similar sentences passed upon them? They seem to escape being called on to pay their moral debts, but the time will come when they will have to do so.

"Life in Society is a struggle in whichever one has to take part; and few are they who come off victors. Let those who have to succumb cover themselves with the shield of love against the shafts of the enemy.

"Did I know the meaning of the word Love? Towards my earthly end I had learned, through reading the works of the teachers of Spiritualism, to have charity for my enemies—to love them. Death released me after a new light had penetrated the veil of my dark past. This new light dissipated the clouds that enshrouded me. I felt warmed by it, and prepared for another stage of life, in which I find the light of the sun of my salvation!

"Brethren of the terrible fetters, have love! Have charity for your gaolers. When they would goad you to rebel into evil, resist by every thought that goodness may suggest; endeavour to win them over to gentleness, to goodness, and, if it be possible, to the truth, and so you will serve humanity!

"I pray you may have Love. Adieu!

"BENITOR AMAROS."

The Dalston Association will hold a tea and concert on Wednesday, December 13th, at their rooms, 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, E.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday evening last Mr. J. J. Morse occupied the platform of this hall, when, by special request, his guides re-delivered a lecture, on "Death a Divine Providence," which was given in this place some twelve months ago, and had impressed itself on the minds of a large number of the audience. A fairly large and sympathetic company assembled on the present occasion, many of whom expressed themselves as highly delighted with the admirable manner in which the subject was treated.

RES-FACTA.

QUEBEC HALL.

On Sunday, when Mr. MacDonnell lectured on "Cant," mere pretensions and external display of piety, both in the domestic circle and in public, were strongly condemned, the lecturer urging a devotion to simple truthfulness of word and action.

CARDIFF.

On Sunday last the guides of Mr. E. W. Wallis gave two excellent lectures in this town. The subject of the morning lecture "The Influence of Spirits upon our Daily Life" was chosen by the audience. The controls strongly condemned the tendency some people exhibit, to ascribe to the influence and interference of Spirits many of the trifling experiences of daily life. They deprecated the credulity with which many accept the dictation of "the dear Spirits" in various matters. They contended strongly for the self-reliance and self-responsibility of mankind. On the other hand, it was claimed that Spirits do take a deep interest in the well-being of friends they have left behind them in earth-life, and that they can and do administer comfort and spiritual help, and that, therefore, we should strive to cultivate the purest aspirations, thus rendering ourselves receptive to the best inspirations from the great and good in Spirit-life. As in earth-life men seek the society most congenial to them, so do they form associations with many in Spirit-life; and as are their ruling desires and motives, so will be the kind of company attracted towards them. As a general rule, men may choose what Spirit company they will keep; if they be made mere automata, (whether from the physical or the spiritual side of life) they have themselves mainly to blame. But, as in earth-life all who desire to cultivate the higher qualities of their being, seek association with men of cultured intellect and practical goodness of life, so may they likewise ally themselves sympathetically with the good and advanced intelligences of Spirit-life, by looking to it that their desires and motives are really thitherward, and the influence resulting therefrom will of necessity be beneficent. In the evening a good audience listened to a very able lecture on "Man's Three Saviours,"—which the controls stated to be Knowledge, Work, and Love.—E. A.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday nothing of any note took place for us to record, but we may state that in the course of a few weeks a concert will be held for the purpose of reducing the debt incurred during the last few months.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday last, the expected speaker having disappointed us, the president, Mr. Henry Burton, was called on to occupy the platform, and he delivered a lecture which was highly appreciated by the company present, on "The Common Origin of the Faiths of the World." Mr. Shepherd, secretary, occupied the chair. Next Sunday and Monday Mr. J. J. Morse, of London, will lecture to the friends at Gateshead.

NORTH SHIELDS.—Mr. W. H. Robinson, of Newcastle, gave an admirable lecture to the Spiritualists at North Shields, on Sunday evening last.

ASHINGTON.—On Sunday last Mr. Dawson, of the Gateshead Society, lectured in the afternoon on "Spiritualism a Faith," and in the evening his subject was "Through Death unto Life." The discourses were exceedingly good, and gave great satisfaction.—NORTHUMBRIA.

MRS. HARDINGE-BRITTEN IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND.

It cannot be said that Mrs. Hardinge-Britten's friends have troubled the Spiritual papers with any eulogistic notices of her work, although this has been, and still is, incessant, laborious, and most important. Why the committees in whose behalf she devotes herself have not sent reports of her unceasing and valuable services in the cause of Spiritualism, it matters not to inquire; suffice it to say, I break through this somewhat ungracious silence for the reasons that will appear in the sequel. Now, as last year, Mrs. Britten's lectures are given principally in Yorkshire, and it seems that though the largest halls are taken, they are always too small to accommodate the immense throngs who flock to hear her. The special point to which I wish to call attention, however, is the delight and eagerness with which the Spiritual message she has to give is received. Amongst the fraud, folly, and imbecility which is foisted upon Spiritualism, it is most encouraging to note how enthusiastically the well-proven facts and philosophy of the movement are received by hard-headed, common-sense masses of people, when they are presented with force, eloquence, and commanding logic. Were

there but one hundred such committees as the resolute, self-sacrificing men of Yorkshire, determined to utilize the powers of such speakers as Morse, Wright, Wallis, Mrs. Wallis, and Mrs. Hardinge-Britten, Spiritualism with its pure, elevating, and salvatory teachings would soon become the religion of the country. Last week's services at Bradford may be taken as an example of Mrs. Britten's weekly meetings and their most encouraging result. A committee of working men and women hired the new Mechanics' Hall, a beautiful yet expensive building, capable of seating some 1,200 people, and during Mrs. Britten's visit, elastic enough to accommodate any number standing. Long before the hour of commencement, the hall was crowded, and hundreds were turned away. The meetings were free, and the collections realised a large surplus over expenses, a fact, I am well assured, which always follows Mrs. Britten's lectures. The lady was engaged to speak twice on Sunday, and on Monday and Tuesday to hold public debates at the end of each lecture. The speaking on the part of the debaters was shrewd, bright, and often scholarly, and although the meetings extended for over two hours, the debaters were so eager in their work, that question and answer (the latter by Mrs. Britten) followed in sharp incisive succession; no efforts on the part of the chairman could stop the shouts of applause which followed Mrs. Britten's unanswerable explanations of every problem presented. The meetings were perfectly "Pentacostal," and when the immense multitudes dispersed they lingered at the door to cheer the speaker, and many a one loudly protested that the cause of truth and morality has received an impetus which permeates the whole community, and one which neither the bigot, sceptic, nor trickster can check. Permit me to add that the main drift of Mrs. Britten's teaching is, that the men and women who left us but yesterday are the same men and women in the after life, and that they have neither become "astral shells" by passing through the gates of death, nor the 144th part of—nobody in particular, or somebody unknown; also, that every human being is his own saviour and creates his own heaven or hell by his good or evil deeds; furthermore, that progress is eternal and must be out-wrought here or hereafter for every human soul by its own efforts, &c., &c.

I have no desire to trespass on your space with further descriptions, nor could any feeble words of mine do justice to Mrs. Britten's burning eloquence, nor the deep and healthful effect it is producing on her listeners. My purpose in writing at all is first, to oblige one of Mrs. Britten's honest Yorkshire employers, who assured me, with tokens of feeling, which I felt bound to reverence, that Mrs. Britten's lectures had made him "a better, happier man," and he longed to tell the world so, yet lacked the ability to clothe his grateful sentiments in appropriate words. Next I am urged to write by those who stand in the same category as the aforesaid Yorkshiremen, in the hope of stimulating others to follow their example. Their experience proves that a few persons in each town and county as determined as themselves, especially those who neither attempt to force upon the public the superstitions of bigots, nor the vagaries of dreamers, may soon dissipate the shadows that fraud and fanaticism have cast on the vital truths of Spiritualism, and inaugurate a great religious movement that may become the saviour of a very corrupt and irreligious age.—W.

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

- Sunday, December 3.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. MacDonnell. (See advertisement.)
 Monday, December 4.—Quebec Hall. 8.30, Meeting.
 Tuesday, December 5.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Wilson.
 Tuesday, December 5.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 8 p.m., Members' Free Séance.
 Thursday, December 7.—Dalston Association. Weekly Séance.

PROVINCES.

Public meetings are held every Sunday in Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Bradford, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, &c., &c. See our list of Societies on advertisement page.

Societies advertising in "LIGHT" will have attention called to their advertisements, as above, without extra charge.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- "PUZZLED."—There is no mediumship in the case. It is simply a conjuring trick; and not a very clever one either.
 "A TRUE SPIRITUALIST."—The Psychical Society is doing good work, and will feed the ranks of avowed Spiritualists in the near future; at any rate that is our conviction.
 S. N.—We appreciate your kind offer to endeavour to obtain new subscribers for "LIGHT." You can help us in no better way. See our notice about reduction in price.