

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.)"

The *Journal of Science* contains, as it now usually does, much that should interest the thoughtful student of Spiritualism. There is an evident disposition on the part of the editor to deal fairly, on the lines of accurate scientific investigation, with our phenomena. "LIGHT contains a great—and we may say an increasing—array of incidents which demand serious consideration. In many cases the stale explanations of trickery or of 'dominated ideas' are utterly inapplicable." "It is much to be regretted that scientific men are so generally deterred by public ridicule from investigating such [psychical] phenomena." "Why is not mind-reading, like Spiritualism, proclaimed mere jugglery and imposture? Surely the evidence in the one case is as trustworthy as in the other, and amongst those who have accepted Spiritualism as truth there are men of attainments as high and of integrity as unspotted as any of the advocates of mind-reading can lay claim to!" These are specimens, selected from among several, of utterances that shew a temper of mind that seems to me to be truly scientific. It is another cheering sign of the times that a professedly and exclusively scientific periodical should venture to treat an unpopular subject in this manly way. I hope that calm and temperate students of the Occult, in all its varied aspects, will endeavour to set forth their facts and conclusions in the *Journal of Science*, so that they may command the attention of men of science who are worth attracting to their study. LIGHT is frequently quoted and referred to, and the facts recorded in it are not infrequently transferred to the pages of the *Journal*. Such a case of haunting as Mr. Wedgwood recorded lately should be paralleled as frequently as possible. It is such cases that have weight with men accustomed to sift evidence.

An article on "Mind-reading" decides against the muscle-reading theory of Dr. Beard as insufficient. An excellent letter from Mr. Henry Edmonds, B. Sc., Headmaster of the Brighton School of Science and Art, is quoted as evidence. He experimented after the manner of Bishop, and found not only that he could see the particular object thought of, but that he could distinguish colour. For instance, a reel of black cotton having been thought of (and hidden during his absence from the room), he says, "I saw plainly with my blindfolded eyes, as though in a dream, the figure of a reel of black cotton floating before me." This, it is pointed out in an article full of acute suggestion, "seems fatal to the theory of unconscious muscular action."

Another article deals with the phenomena of Haunted Houses, and arrives at the conclusion (a little hastily as it seems to me) that they are chiefly subjective. Haunted houses (it is said) are rare; they are becoming rarer year by year, chiefly because modern architecture does not provide the tortuous passages, dark closets, and secret hiding places that ghosts love! The writer finishes his paper with a very good story of a mysterious light in a haunted house, which account he received from "a scientific friend, a gentleman chiefly engaged with the study of physics and chemistry, and very far from credulous." The story is good and to the point, and rather successfully demolishes the subjective theory which the article was written to advocate.

The truth is that until a serious attempt is made to sift out emotional exaggeration, wild theorising, and unimportant or misleading detail from such records, the facts will not stand out in such a way that they can be fairly judged. When this is done I entertain no doubt that all explanations short of that of the Spiritualist will be found inadequate.

The following narrative, which I quote from the *Journal of Science*, is a good comment on scientific theorising. The Theosophists would say, I suppose, as the editor of the *Theosophist* does of a similar occurrence, that the apparition was that of one "whose figure was strongly impressed on the etheric waves:" or else was due to the roaming of the "animal soul" of the deceased, "the shell, or astral form," "an earth-bound elementary." Here is the narrative from the *Journal of Science* :—

The *Gentleman's Magazine* gives the following "strange story":—"While the subject of ghosts is attracting attention, I will offer a nut for our scientists to crack. For obvious reasons I am compelled to omit names. The wife of one of our most distinguished scientific men—I use the term most 'distinguished' advisedly, since the reputation of the man in question is cosmopolitan—saw nightly an old man seated in an arm-chair, near the fire-place in her bed-room. Being thoroughly imbued with her husband's views upon scientific subjects, she held her peace, and tried with partial success to convince herself that it was a delusion. Somewhat later this room was converted into a night nursery, and ultimately into a spare bed-room, with the result that each successive occupant, juvenile or of mature years, described the curious old gentleman who came and sat by the fire. My scientific friend has 'pished' and 'pshawed' at these statements, and has treated the whole matter as ridiculous. He has, however, been compelled to concede something to the vision or the delusion, and to quit the house."

And here, clipped from the *Theosophist*, is the Indian narrative, respecting which the editor further says that "it is but Spiritualists who will insist that it was the Spirit or conscious *Ego*" of the assistant surgeon that thus manifested itself. Some Spiritualists, at any rate, would so maintain, inasmuch as such an explanation is the only one that seems to them to cover the facts. They do not know anything, except from recent Theosophical disquisitions, of these dissolving "shells," denuded of consciousness, and vastated (as Swedenborg might put it) of self. Other Spiritualists see in the hypothesis a something that works in with experiences of their own. They would be glad that the hypothesis should be promoted to the dignity of a theory, on its way to acceptance as an explanation of a puzzling fact.

The narrative was related in the presence of a large assemblage of friends and acquaintances by the late Babu Abhoy Charan Newgy, an assistant surgeon in the employ of the Government of Bengal. He had not long been in charge of a hospital at a certain station in the North-Western Provinces. Accustomed to sleep out of doors during the warm weather, he often slept on an open terrace adjoining the dispensary building. Once, on rather a sultry night, he had retired to bed and was composing himself to sleep. There were a few chairs left standing close to his couch. Suddenly a sound, as that of the rustling of a person's dress or something like it, startled him. Opening his eyes he saw before him, sitting calmly in one of his chairs, his predecessor, the late assistant surgeon, who had died a month previous in the premises of that dispensary. Babu Abhoy was a stoutly-built man, and of a frame of mind quite proof to superstitious fears or anything like nervousness. As might be imagined, he was not in the least frightened. He simply ejaculated a low sound of surprise, when the apparition, floating over a high wall, gradually disappeared. The whole scene took place in a clear moonlight night."

I do not remember ever to have put down a paper with a more sickening feeling of disgust, helpless and yet full of loathing, than that which came upon me after reading Mrs. Kingsford's recent address on the horrors of vivisection. One must purge oneself in some way of any sort of even tacit complicity with such deeds as she recites. The very fact that such horrors

are possible is disgraceful to us as a nation. I have always regarded the national tendency to "go out and kill something" by way of sport as a survival of savagery among an in differently civilised, unspiritual, and coarsely selfish people. Fox-hunting and coursing, from any point of view that a thinking man, not given up to sporting, can entertain, are purely cruel. The animals that are slaughtered in millions to provide man with food (and, as I believe, with food necessary and [suitable for him], are too often grossly tortured before death puts an end to their sufferings. (Dr. B. W. Richardson, I may say, is doing excellent service by drawing attention to this matter.) But all minor horrors fade out of sight in comparison with the selected atrocities which Mrs. Kingsford lays, on evidence that is, I must suppose, complete, to the charge of certain experimentalists, whose moral sense and higher sympathies have been apparently extirpated by a long indulgence in these detestable experiments on dumb animals. I have been hitherto disposed to think that there has been much exaggeration in details of recorded cases, and a not inconsiderable amount of rather hysterical writing against vivisection. But nothing can palliate or make tolerable such brutality as I read of in Mrs. Kingsford's paper; nor can any efforts be misplaced that have for their object the wiping away of this national shame.

The *St. James's Gazette* (February 10th) has a very curious article on "Faces in the Dark." Mr. Francis Galton published some time ago a paper on "The Visions of Sane Persons," in which he went so far as to admit that a man who thought that he saw "strange apparitions in the dark" might not be positively insane, though he hinted that a good many experts would say that he was. Indeed, I have heard that an eminent person whose duty leads him to decide on such cases has expressed his belief that "to hear voices" is unquestionable evidence of insanity. He would have dealt summarily with Peter when he saw the vision and heard the voice urging him to slay and eat! It is good that his powers are limited. The writer in the *St. James's* gives a graphic account of what with him has been a regular experience, the seeing with closed eyes of a great variety of faces, which are living and individual in character, and which appear at a distance of four or five feet as though traced in chalk on a black ground; their "general aspect being as if their substance were of pale smoke." The most remarkable thing about them to the writer is "that while they are always of a strikingly distinctive character, they are like none that I can ever remember to have seen in life or in pictures." "Only one have I ever seen in profile, all the rest confront the vision, and this one was singular in bearing a certain resemblance to some one whom I knew in real life." They are much more often men than women. They are all "extremely interesting (when they can be endured) because they look like the fleeting embodiments of some passion or mood of the mind; usually not the best of moods. . . . Grief the most despairing, scorn, pride, hatred, greed, cunning inquiry, envious or triumphant mockery"—these are the passions depicted. "I have never seen amongst them the mask of pity, or love, or of any tender emotion." The writer is so used to this that till he read Mr. Galton's article he seems to have imagined that his were common experiences. To me they are familiar enough, though his experiences are individualised by some little peculiarities. Are such visions not usual with those whose "eyes are open" (as Balaam's were), and who see with the inner vision? Is not the writer what is commonly known as a medium? And are not these "strikingly distinctive" faces, so natural, yet so little like what he ever sees in the flesh, which gaze at him "with a profoundly meaning, or appealing, or revealing look," just the faces of Spirits who are attracted within his magnetic sphere?

Mrs. Penny's valuable papers furnish in more places than one an answer to the crude theories often put forward by the Re-Incarnationists. It is assumed that a child dying prematurely is perforce bereft of some training, and *must return here to get it*. But why? Is this earth God's only school? It is alleged that those who pass through this world unprofited must return to make a second trial. But why? Is it then likely that a school whose training had been in a particular case a failure, should be tried again and again in hope of success at last? I entirely demur to this philosophy, which seems to me to err from want of breadth of view, and to be self-confessed as of a very human origin. I have never heard it denied that some (as Mrs. Penny well puts it) "should so long for the old corporeal

husk as to seek and gain re-admission to a former phase of being," though I suspect the cases are rare, and form the exceptions that establish the rule to the contrary. But surely it is a poverty-stricken conception of the infinite resources of the Infinite, that "the human body, as we now wear it, is the only possible vehicle that ascendant Spirits can exist in for repeated terms of probation." "J. H. G." hardly grasps the full philosophy that I have learned. It is, as a broad principle, better to have lived out the full experience of a long life: but they who fail of it are provided for in some of God's other schools. The designs of Infinite Love are not frustrated by any accident, as man deems it. There are spheres of education other than this, and it may even be that the removal of a spirit, which to us seems premature or accidental, may be the result of a far-seeing wisdom and the working out of an orderly design. Mrs. Penny quotes from J. Pierrepont Greaves an expression curiously parallel to what I have often been told:—"Man has seven stages of existence, here or elsewhere, and in the eighth he will be perfected." I have learned that there are seven states, or stages, or spheres of probation through which the spirit passes with various degrees of rapidity, until, purged of the dross, and emancipated from the earthly and material, it passes into the state from which it does not emerge—the Heaven of Contemplation—the Nirvāna of the perfected. But this earth is by no means the only road to that haven of rest; nor are "the eternal issues irrevocably decided in this brief flash of existence."

M.A. (Oxon.)

SPIRIT IDENTITY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you allow me space to narrate a few facts which, to my mind, conclusively prove the identity of a communicating Spirit? In these times when doubts are so freely suggested, I think it the duty of everyone to whom positive evidence is given to make that evidence public for the benefit of those who may be less fortunate.

In the early summer of 1879 I occasionally met a gentleman in my neighbourhood who was evidently in a deep decline. One day, whilst slowly walking with him towards his home, the subject of Spiritualism was introduced. He seemed very much surprised to find that I had faith in so uncanny a subject, but was certainly impressed by some of my statements. The next time I met him he eagerly referred to our previous conversation and questioned me as to the evidence which I had personally received; but after that time he avoided the subject, and I, knowing how inexpedient it was to raise any exciting discussion with one in his condition, kept my lips closed.

In July of that year I was at Barmouth, in North Wales, and one evening was controlled by a Spirit purporting to be this gentleman. He made me say, "It is so strange—so different to what I expected; I wish that I had used the opportunity of gaining knowledge of spiritual life which you gave me." During this control I had a painful sensation in the mouth and throat. Two days afterwards I learned in a letter from a friend that my acquaintance had passed away soon after I had left home.

In May of last year I was again controlled by the same Spirit, and on this occasion he made me say in a very emphatic manner, "Tell Mary I have seen Will." Again I had the same painful experience in the mouth and throat. "Mary" was a sister who had kept house for him.

My impression, under control, was that there was an attachment between the "Will" referred to and the sister. So impressed was I by the earnestness of the Spirit that I asked my wife to call upon his sister and deliver the message. She told her that she only knew two persons answering to the name of "Will;" the one was a cousin, and the other a gentleman to whom she had been engaged some years since; but that, to the best of her belief, they were both alive and in good health.

She explained that her brother had suffered very severely from *thrush* before he passed away. This accounted for the painful sensation in my mouth.

No information came in explanation of the message, and I concluded that it, like many others, had been warped in transmission, and the matter passed out of my mind. One day last week the sister called upon me and informed me that she had lately heard that the gentleman to whom she had formerly been engaged had passed away in Australia about the time of my message.

I need only add that the personal history of this lady and gentleman was unknown to me.—Yours truly,

Lewisham, February 13th, 1882.

EDMOND W. WADE.

COMMUNICATING SPIRITS: THEIR CLAIMS TO RECOGNITION.

By Mrs. A. J. Penny.

(Continued from page 65.)

It is quite in accordance with the dogma that death frustrates Divine power in any after method of saving, that we should, as virtually we do—Roman Catholics excepted—no longer attempt to give any succour to the dead. What Omnipotent Love cannot do, it seems, of course, idle mockery for any man to pray for; and hence, as I believe, we act with most unreasonable inhumanity. On what grounds? Apparently on the strength of these words in Holy Scripture, "No repentance in the grave," "After death the judgment," and our interpretation of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus—concluding that when the immortal part of man is severed from the corruptible, we have no further duty to discharge towards him or her, no scope left for the efforts of still hopeful love and still effective pity.

Alas! we use the biblical image of death, speaking of it as "the land where all things are forgotten," and I think it might be almost as appositely applied by the dead to our hurrying ever-occupying life in which they have not only been put to silence, but too often gradually effaced from thought. The earnest entreaties of unhappy Spirits for intercessory prayer are eloquent on this point: ought they not to have weight with us? We might need them ourselves—where we cannot transmit the request. And if we reflect on our omissions in this particular, I believe we shall find them due to the difficulty of ardently desiring anything that imagination cannot lay hold of, or experience draw results from, rather than to any sort of belief for which we can pretend to have a warrant.

Now as to self-interest; I can imagine some may say, who have spared me a little time and more patience, finding as usual that the attempt to discover a gleam of light in thick darkness only wearies the mental eye,—“But after all what is the use of trying to find out before the time what we shall all know sooner or later by experience?” My thought is that we shall only then discover how much we have lost for want of some conceivable notions of the after life; for unquestionably a state that can never be imagined is sure to be habitually absent from remembrance. No doubt we shall find out all that now baffles curiosity as regards the *rappports* of the disembodied with the living; but if we go even to a distant hotel or lodging-house and find a book or a desk on which our work or enjoyment partly depends left behind, we regret it with some pungency of chagrin and self-reproach. Let us for a moment try to imagine what it would be to find ourselves in the close by, ever imminent "other world," with the wrath of God—i.e., the original root fire of our own souls—still unappeased, with a will no longer able to direct or control spiritual force by the help of our present bodily organisation (which gives the contracting limits needful for all expansive impetus); out of sympathy with Divine meekness because of our pride; incredulous of Divine love because of our hate; and longing vainly for poor sensuous enjoyments then beyond our reach. I feel sure that such imaginings would effect present conduct more than all the crude, positive teaching about death which is so common, and, as I believe, so fearfully delusive; assuring people of perfect bliss all at once secured by the faithful after death, or the hopeless, *interminable* torments they are threatened with as the only alternative—teaching which assumes that dissolution can remove us not only from the embrace of Divine love and pity, but from the action of every known law of human nature!

Ah! who that believes this human nature to be something more awful than a breathing, eating and drinking, and digesting machine, crowned with a brain for its guidance during a short term of years, can think it will be time to understand something of the condition of departed Spirits when among them! I can well see that to inquire "What becomes of the dead?" may be as foolish as if an unborn embryo were to ask, "What happens after birth?" Yet to the unborn life we might truly answer: Concealment of spiritual sensations under many a fold of mortal flesh and conventional usage. So, truly, can we now answer the first question so far: All those modes of concealment from self-consciousness and self-betrayal must end with death. Is it wise to wait till then to prepare for the inexorable laws of the unseen life, where *all* the seemings of this world are to be destroyed as surely as the structure left behind in the grave?

"Men," says Mr. T. Lake Harris, "are accustomed to expect Divine possessions not in the sequences of law but by the overruling of law." That expectation ends with death; and what I therefore fear is, no punishment from any other being,

but the sequences of the law of my own. I desire the godlike possessions of love, peace, and joy; and not Omnipotent Mercy can bestow them if I leave my mortal body with an unloving, vindictive, disquieting habit of nature. "*The planes formed in the mind on earth determine for cycles the conditions of eternity.*"* This makes for me the terror of death, for surely to be powerless to form the indispensable conditions of bliss, when every lower degree of comfort or illusory pleasure is beyond reach, must be supreme misery, even were there no fellow contributors of woe.

But I suppose few thoughtful people can doubt that powers hostile to man—call them by what name we will—have a subordinated dominion in the world unseen as well as in this: if, therefore, I am severed from material defences while my will and imagination work in accordance with their malignant desires, it is certain that I must in some degree become their victim. I greatly fear that: not for a minute doubting the love and providence of the Father of Spirits after death, but what my spiritual insanities may bring upon me: for when they are, so to speak, fortified by the sympathy† of more powerful alienated Spirits, that merciful love *must* bring me to reason by severer treatment than any previously undergone. And this I imagine is what constitutes purgatory.

The habit of concluding that after death we shall be under quite a different dispensation, and in all respects unlike what we were in the flesh, necessarily fosters incredulity as to the dead still interesting themselves in the life left behind—a habit which must dull the action of conscience; for if death is to alter every usual turn of thought and force of affection, there will be a tacitly accepted theory that ideas of right and wrong may then be comfortably altered also. Any way, for such a totally transformed individuality who will care to forego much of present enjoyment? And this habit, while robbing us of strong incentives to goodness, and great consolation and hope, has also led us to entertain most unworthy notions of God's wisdom and economy of forces. There seems something preposterous in the thought that He permits all the various and exquisite powers of the human spirit, enriched by daily increments of knowledge, to be suddenly thrown into disuse; inaction being not only a torment, but sure to deteriorate every power. Such a doom amounts to immense loss to the whole universe. A man dies in whose brain may have been forged influences that alter the fate of nations; and, in the wide blank that spreads through his former sphere of action, we feel as if all his plans had been annihilated. He no longer speaks, or counsels, or commands; audibly and visibly, no; but are we so unreasonable as to think his absorbing anxieties at an end because a flesh heart no longer beats in his mortal body? If the distinguishing characteristics of human nature were flesh and blood we might suffer such a thought. But we know better.

Now if the interests and affections of this life are carried through the crisis of dissolution, and I can no longer doubt it myself, it is very possible that the influence is extended by release from his material burden. He has entered, if Swedenborg does not mislead, into conscious association with the Spirits of whose society he has been in this life a member, and can probably act in concert with them (though weakened as an individual) more effectually than he did with embodied instruments of his will in the seen world. The course of modern history after the deaths of Cavour, John Brown in America, and Thiers, for instance, impressed me strongly with this conclusion: they were withdrawn from life with hopes unfulfilled and aspirations unsatisfied, but how soon after the death of each did their principles triumph, gaining permanent success!

My rambling, and I fear somewhat inconsequent considerations, must not be allowed to run on. In conclusion I would bring them to a point thus: If there is solidarity in the human race, which is, I suppose, an undisputed tenet of philosophers (Materialists excepted), there must be constant interaction; were this suspended by death it would amount to what in the individual body is paralysis. The steady advance of the present human generation as to knowledge and power sufficiently disproves anything like that. Now granting interaction of the living and the dead in the mass, we must admit its certain

* T. Lake Harris's "Arcana of Christianity," p. 394.

† "They know only of what they here conceived or took in, and the souls sink down in that opinion into the deepest ground, much deeper than they have here conceived, for that which was known in many of them of the same opinion, what any or all of them know in the same opinion, that one soul alone knoweth: for it is one body with all those that are of the same opinion, and they have one heart in many members."—J. Boehme's "Threefold Life," chap. 12., par. 23.

possibility as regards individuals. One need not stop to notice how much greater worth, interest, and moral safeguard the belief in that virtual oneness imparts to earthly life. In the words of A. Kardec:—

"With the thought that activity and co-operation of individuals is limited to the present life." . . . "what does the ulterior progress of humanity matter to man? How can it concern him whether in the future the peoples are better governed, more happy, more enlightened, mutually the better for each other's lives? Since he is never to draw any result from it, is not this progress lost to him? What is the use of working for those who will come after if he is never to know them, if they are new beings who soon after will themselves return to nothingness? Under the influence of denial of an individual future, all necessarily narrows itself to the mean proportions of the moment and of personality.*"

(Kardec is here arguing for belief in Re-incarnation, but these words seem to me quite as cogent with regard to belief in the solidarity of the human race both in the body and out of it.)

Neither need I point out how consonant this tenet is to what all Christians verbally profess to believe, however little meaning they may derive from the words, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (*Hebrews* xii. 1)—and "I believe in the Communion of Saints."

Affection of whatever kind, let no one doubt it, is the tie death cannot break. Hear Swedenborg on this text:—

"The ruling love remains with man after death." "That man after death is his own love or his own *will* has been testified to me by abundant experience." . . . "The experiment has been frequently made whether Spirits can act in any degree contrary to their ruling love, but they have tried in vain. Their love is like a chain or rope, with which they are, as it were, tied round, by which they may be drawn, and from which they cannot extricate themselves; and the case is similar with men in the world, for their ruling love leads them, and by means of that love they are led by other men; but when they become Spirits, the government of their ruling love is more perfect, because then it is not allowable to assume the appearance of any other love, and feign a character not properly their own."—*Heaven and Hell*, par. 479.

("Allowable"? surely he meant to say "possible"! But the words which I find still more consoling in that book are these:—

"The life which remains after death is his love and his faith thence derived; not love and faith in mere potentiality, but love and faith realised in action."—*Ibid.* par. 476.

What can be compared to a "rope attached" to the departed spirit of love for those left behind, and the ability to *realise love in action*, how should these *not* bring near to us the unseen presence of those whose long-felt affection we mourn? Doubting the possibility of that, bereavement has complicated anguish.

"That dear hugged thing *Identity*
Gone, and the dream that grasped it gone—
All's gone." †

Yes, truly: if love and remembrance can have been quenched by death the past is darkened almost as much as the present, for we may conclude that the one in whose strong attachment we believed was—to our hearts—a simulacrum fully as deceptive as any false representation at a séance: if not, if the attachment was true and real, I think the nearness of the loving Spirit is almost as certain as its invisibility unless repelled by the objects of its affection. The question each one of us can best answer for him or herself would be, "Is our love to the dead so much a spiritual reality that—if or when they can 'look us through and through'—we do not appear to them deceptive shadows of what they once believed us to be?"

"Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?

No inner vileness that we dread?"—*In Memoriam*.

When at last seeing us *as we are*, and our self-love what it is, may they not be tempted to think: "It cannot be those we left! they are only misleading Spirits!"

A CORRECTION.—To the Editor of "LIGHT."—Sir,—The statement appearing in "LIGHT," this week, as to my reasons for declining to stand as secretary to the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society for the ensuing year, is incorrect.—Yours, &c., W. C. ROBSON, 8, Brandling-place, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 10th February, 1882.

* "Avec la pensée que l'activité et la coopération individuelles dans l'œuvre générale de la civilisation sont limitées à la vie présente" . . . "que lui importe qu'à l'avenir les peuples soient mieux gouvernés, plus heureux, plus éclairés, meilleurs les uns pour les autres? Puisqu'il n'en doit retirer aucun fruit, ce progrès n'est-il pas perdu pour lui? Que lui sert de travailler pour ceux qui viendront après lui, s'il ne doit jamais les connaître, si ce sont des êtres nouveaux qui peu après rentreront eux-mêmes dans le néant? Sous l'empire de la négation de l'avenir individuel, tout se rapetisse forcément aux mesquines proportions du moment et de la personnalité."—A. Kardec's "*La Génèse*," chap. 18, par. 13.

† Joseph Downe's "Proud Shepherd's Tragedy," p. 66.

PROPHETIC DREAMS.

The following story is an illustration of the way that "coming events cast their shadows before." These shadows are varied by the form of the mental ground on which they fall.

The chief actor in the events on which the dreams are founded was a young barrister, Charlie B., who lived with his old father in the town of S. On a Thursday in September, 1872, Charlie narrated to his father the following dream which he had had the night before:—

He said: I dreamt I was walking down hill from a friend's house, when I met two detectives in disguise. One of them, named Duffy, addressed me, saying, "Now, sir, we are looking for you; we must have those rings of yours." "No, you won't," said I, "not for anything." "You had better give them quietly, Mr. B.," he replied, "for I must have them, and I have been told to take them off your hand. You know me well, as you are the son of our chief magistrate." "No," I replied, "you won't have them,"—but after much coercion from Duffy and the other detective, I added, "I would not part with that diamond ring for £20; but for the present you may have the plain gold ring." The detectives said they would not let me off without giving them £20 or the diamond ring. So I told them to call at the bank, with a written cheque, which I then gave them, for that amount. But I went home immediately, and sent a note to the bank stopping the payment of the cheque.

This was the dream, as narrated by Charlie B. to his father on the Thursday morning.

Charlie B. had a yacht, and often cruised about alone on the open water. On Saturday morning he told his father he was going to fetch his yacht from the Hythe pier up to her moorings, and he would be home early. "Don't be late for dinner, Charlie," said the old man, "for it is dull and lonely without you, my boy." "All right, father, I promise you; I am only going to take down the tackle and fittings for the craft, and bring her up to her moorings; so I shall be home without fail."

But the dinner hour arrived, and Charlie had not appeared. Seven and eight o'clock passed, and the old father was very anxious. At last the old man, accompanied by Charlie's old nurse, after sitting up all night, went out at dawn to the town quay to inquire if any news had been heard of his son. Soon from one boatman and then another, he gathered the awful news that on the previous afternoon a hurricane storm, which had swept the town, had capsized a small yacht off the shore at Weston, two miles from the town quay. The sailor had found a young man's body on the mud, by the capsized craft, covered with seaweed, and it had been lifted and placed in the bottom of a boat close by. This poor youth had been drowned with all his clothes on. His rings were on his fingers, and his watch had stopped at 4h. 15min. This was just the hour when the hurricane had swept over the neighbourhood, with that cyclone force which will never be forgotten by witnesses, and which had capsized the yacht, as an observer on the opposite shore subsequently informed us.

The sad news spread rapidly, and the chief constable, who was intimately known to Mr. B., the magistrate, went with the detective Duffy to the shore at Weston, where they found the young man's body in the boat where the sailors had placed it. They conveyed it to the nearest inn, whither the father and old nurse were conducted, and identified the body as that of Charlie B. As the inquest was to take place next day, Duffy said to Mr. B., "Shall I take the rings off his fingers, as the poor fellow must remain here all night?" "Well, yes! I suppose you had better," the old man replied, as he turned broken-hearted to leave the place. So Duffy took off the rings and placed them in the landlady's charge. Thus, Duffy literally fulfilled Charlie B.'s own dream after his death, by taking his rings off his fingers.

Another episode in the sad event of the drowning of Charlie B. was the search by another policeman. This man, named Sangate, having heard of the loss of the young man's yacht, made inquiries of the boatmen along the town quay for news concerning him. Presently he met a sailor, carrying a straw hat, with blue ribbon striped with red, and a red cross embroidered on it. Sangate asked him whose was the hat. The sailor replied that he did not know, but he had found it in the mud at low tide near the Weston shore. Whereupon Sangate examined the hat, and by the device of the ribbon on it knew it to be that of the poor youth, Charlie B. It was taken to the old father, who recognised it to be his son's, which

he had worn when at Winchester College; and ever since then the ribbon had been his constant badge.

Connected with this discovery of the hat, we must now relate Sangate's narration of a dream he had on that Saturday night previous to finding the body on Sunday. Sangate, who was well-known as a reliable constable to Mr. B. and his son, had a dream on that night that he met a man near the shore, who brought to him a straw hat, asking him whose it was, and he recognised it to be that of Mr. Charlie B. by the ribbon badge. The constable, in narrating this, said, "When the next day I met the sailor with that hat, my dream came back to my memory, and I knew then the owner of it must have met with his death suddenly." O. T. G.

EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES: SPIRITUAL FAMILIES.

From a paper by M. Fauvety, President of the Psychological Society of Paris.

"Family and Country are the two great natural forms of human association. Both are necessary, but not all-sufficing. With them an institution is required through which the soul may receive nourishment, consolation, and counsel; in which charity—beneficence, benevolence—is organised, in which spiritual instruction is given. Such an institution was, and is still called the Church, and cannot be dispensed with except under penalty of reducing life to hopeless aridity—especially to woman. But it is important that the Church, the ecclesiastical institution, does not weaken the civil, that it exercises no temporal power, and, on the other hand, that the civil does not control or patronise the ecclesiastical. For 250 years Christianity shewed perfect models of such free little Churches."

I quote this from the last page of the book which M. Renan has just published under the title of "Marc-Aurèle," the seventh and last volume of the series commencing with the "Vie de Jésus," under the general title of "Histoire des Origines du Christianisme." I quote it not only for its historic interest, but that I may call attention to the similarity of early Christian meetings to Spiritual meetings of our day. Those meetings of early Christian brethren and sisters for celebrating the Last Supper, praying, and rejoicing in common, soon became spiritual families, whose members, loving and helping each other, obtained the presence of the Holy Spirit.

So, meetings or groups of Spiritualists in our day, consisting of brethren and sisters in belief, of the same religious thought—communion of souls in love of humanity, and belief in the psychical relation of the living with those gone before,—meetings formed under the actuation of this thought, would naturally lead to the formation of spiritual families. Some have, indeed, already progressed so far in this direction that the members seek to aid, spiritually instruct, and elevate each other. But we have to rise beyond this, to regard it as a new and higher social organisation.

The spiritual family, realising a fraternal bond between those of the same belief, can alone do away with that selfish isolation in which we are living under a too highly vaunted civilisation. How many of our fellows fall in the struggle for a bare subsistence! How many, for want of direction, suffer through the temptations of the selfish and bad examples! How many sink under a load of ignorance, vice, and misery who might rise if they had fraternal support in getting the daily bread for body and for soul!

The spiritual family would not nullify the relations of the natural and legal family; on the contrary, the latter, instead of being shut within itself, would find itself opened to social action and expanded by social solidarity.

I look forward to the time when, in the bosom of every spiritual family, will be celebrated solemnities parallel to those by which the Church marks the different phases of our earthly life. Every civilisation has established ceremonies in family and civil life. Spiritual families will confer upon them a character at once intimate, affectionate, social, and truly religious.

Baptism, denuded of that wonderful dogma of original sin, would be simply a presentation of the child by the natural to the spiritual family, and the adoption of it by the latter; with its appointing of godfathers and godmothers, charged with the care and direction, if required, of the child until the next stage of life is reached. The spiritual family would adopt the child, and see that it became a social, reasoning, and well instructed citizen. No more children, then, abandoned to

ignorance and the corrupting influences of a civilisation in which so much is done to excite the senses and so little to elevate the soul!

The godfathers' and godmothers' functions ended, say at the age of fifteen, then would come the introduction to social, responsible, and working activity. This would correspond to the present First Communion (in the Protestant Church, Confirmation). Here, also, should be celebrated a spiritual family festival. The youth or maiden has now to learn to be a citizen, with complete consciousness of the consequences of his or her acts.

The next ceremony would, in due time, be to ratify and bless the civil contract of marriage, the union of two beings spontaneously giving themselves up to each other, and who become the founders of a family. Here the celebration should be one of hope and joy, in which all, even nature herself, should be invited to participate. Marriage should be to the conjoined pair a means of perfecting each other by the interchange of their highest sentiments and of their several mental acquirements during their earthly career. Such a union might be continued into the next sphere of existence; but none except the conjoined themselves should impose upon them an indissoluble bond. Divorce is a natural and ought to be a social right. The spiritual family would prevent its abuse by interposing to moderate disagreements, induce mutual concessions, correct an undue sense of grievance, and urge the making of some sacrifice to family duty and the good of their offspring.

The last solemnity would come at the death of the body. Let the ceremonies here, in respect of departed brethren, have in view the tranquil release of the soul from the burthen of matter and its rise into the realm of spiritual light; let them suggest to survivors contemplation and self-examination, and finally the reflection that at the end of a good and worthy earthly life the angels of death meet us with welcoming smiles.

AN APPEAL FROM AN INQUIRER.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—May I venture to hope that some of your generous correspondents or readers will kindly help me in the following matter?

My attention has been drawn of late to the great question of Spiritualism. A highly esteemed friend, who is what I believe is termed an advanced Spiritualist, has related to me from time to time such marvellous accounts of his own personal experience in Spiritualistic phenomena that I am most anxiously desirous of obtaining for myself *personal experience* of what, I can by no possible means doubt, has been related to me faithfully by one whose ability to judge I think I can trust, and whose honesty and truthfulness I know I can.

Now, strange to say, though this friend has always seemed most anxious that I should see these manifestations, and, become, as he is sure I should, a convert, still he does nothing, talking excepted, towards introducing me where I might obtain this desired end; though I know that he has a somewhat extended circle of friends, where such phenomena are constantly being produced.

As my personal friend fails me, as alas! they often do, I now make an appeal to the readers of "LIGHT" to help me. Is there no one who will admit into their adytum one who wishes to come from no vulgar motives of idle, or still less impertinent, curiosity, but who earnestly desires to see for himself, it may be in a somewhat Thomas-like spirit, but still an earnest and serious one, something of these remarkable phenomena; of which, standing as he does on the threshold of the temple, he catches but faint echoes; and which, if true, as he cannot but feel they must be, solve at once and for ever at least somewhat of the great enigma of life and the awful mystery of death.

Trusting that someone either more willing, or with greater opportunities than my friend, will kindly help me,—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

S. W. WATSON.

Christ's College, Finchley, N.

PSYCHICAL EFFECT OF WEATHER.—Burroughs says: "'Tis an evidence of how directly we are related to nature, that we more or less sympathise with the weather, and take on the colour of the day. Goethe said that he worked easiest on a high barometer. One is like a chimney that draws well some days and won't draw at all on others, and the secret is mainly in the condition of the atmosphere. A pouring rain may be more auspicious than a sleeping sunshine. When the stove draws well the fogs and fumes will leave your mind."

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 sances.

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 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

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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 Correspondents will greatly oblige us if they will take care, in every case, to write on ONLY ONE SIDE of the paper.

Subscriptions for 1882 are now due, and should be forwarded to our Office without delay.

LETTERS, &c., CARRIED BY SPIRIT AGENCY.

This morning I again saw the friend about whom I wrote last week. He told me that since sitting with me he had had a short letter from Mr. Meugens, confirming the story told me by the Control in every respect. Mr. Meugens wrote very concisely under a press of business. He said that he had been sitting with Mr. Eglinton, at the house of Colonel Gordon, where they had rather a blank séance. On coming home, past 11 at night, he and Mr. Eglinton had a sitting in the verandah, when my friend's Control announced her presence by rapping, and spelt out her name, telling them that she had brought an unfinished letter from my friend in London, which they would find in the dining-room. This they accordingly did, exactly as described to me by the Control herself.

Luckily my friend had made an allusion to the hour of his writing, which only differed from that at which the letter was found by about the time due to the difference of longitude.

Here then, when Mr. Meugens comes over early in March, we shall have all the evidence that can be required of the fact of instantaneous conveyance. The writer will speak positively to his having written and lost that particular sheet of paper at about five o'clock on the 15th January last, while Mr. Meugens will testify to having received the same sheet about 11 p.m. on the same day.

HENSLEIGH WEDGWOOD.

February 13th, 1882.

P.S.—My friend informs me that on Monday, January 16th, he dined with Mrs. Lean, and gave her an account of the loss of his letter on the previous day.

I send you the following from amongst many instances in which I have known letters and other articles conveyed by Spiritual agency:—

Five years since a Spirit told me to write a letter to a friend, and lay it on the mantel-shelf in my room, and said, "We will carry it." I wrote the letter and placed it as directed, and though I watched carefully I did not see it taken. The letter, however, was missing after half an hour. The next day I saw the friend to whom it was directed, who said it was placed in his hand by an Invisible, when he was going to bed.

I was one day told by a Spirit that I was to be a medium for things carried, but only in connection with one Spirit. Soon afterwards I was standing in my study when there fell before me an ornamental box, which I opened, and found to contain a great many papers of needles. I had been wanting a needle. I took one paper from the box, and laid the box on my writing desk. When I looked at the place where I laid it the box was gone; I never saw it again, and I never saw one like it. Soon afterwards I was at a séance of Mrs. Hollis-Billing's, and "Ski" spoke to me of having things brought me. I said, "What did I have brought?" He replied, "Needles." How "Ski" gets his information of occurrences in one's life, at periods varying from an hour to more than half a century, has been a great puzzle to me.

I have been present at the bringing of many letters, but whether my mediumship assisted I do not know. I have had a letter from a friend, dated the day and hour, laid upon my bed

when it was quite impossible that either of us could have assisted its transmission, except mediumistically, as both were confined to our dwellings. In this condition articles freely passed from one to the other. Mostly we had Willie Eglinton's mediumship. My friend's power may be equal to his, but mine is very small, though it has been proved to exist. I have letters, I do not know how many, that have been brought by Spirit power from a distance some minutes after they were written, for they were carefully dated, day and hour.

It is a curious fact that though I have watched with attention when letters were expected, and when Willie Eglinton held up a slate to receive them, I have never seen them deposited where they were laid. I have seen a package containing letters for several individuals, received from a friend at a distance, and we knew from dates that they had just been written; but I never yet saw a letter laid on the slate, or on my bed, where they were found. I saw the slate empty, held up before me, and then I saw a letter, or letters, on it, but I never saw them at the moment of being placed upon it.

I have again and again had articles brought from the garden, or from rooms in the house. On one occasion a rose was broken from my favourite bush, and brought through locked doors to me. I fitted it on to the stem afterwards. A German professor who was sitting with us, Willie Eglinton being the medium, had biscuits brought from his overcoat pocket in the next room, through a locked door, and placed in his hand.

One evening a Spirit wished to seal a package which he had made. He got sealing wax from an upper room and sealed it; he set the wax on fire in doing this, and lighted the room brilliantly. But the Spirit was not disturbed.

When I was in Malvern I had a Red Cross ring taken from a sealed box and carried to London and dropped on a table before a friend, who brought it back to me.

I had a bracelet taken from my hand and made invisible by the Spirit who took it. He said he would accept it, if it were not too valuable. I gave it, and have never seen it since.

A Christmas card, with Harry Bastian's writing on the back of it, was brought on Christmas night from Bohemia, and I received it and a message from the Spirit who brought it.

I could write a great deal about things carried, but only those whose minds are prepared can believe what I have written. There is an impossibility in proselytizing. Neither God nor man could have made me or others believe before the time. There is a time for everything under the sun, and the conditions of congelations, crystallizations, and credence are equally fixed. Still, all should honestly do their duty respecting Spiritualism as in all things else.

M. S. G. NICHOLS.

32, Fopstone-road, Earl's-court.

A DEBATE ON RE-INCARNATION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that it is intended to hold a discussion on Monday, 27th inst., at 38, Great Russell-street, W.C., on the subject of Re-Incarnation. The following will be the general arrangements. Miss Arundale will introduce the question in the affirmative. The "Chinese Philosopher" (controlling Mr. Morse) will reply in the negative. It is then hoped that others will take part on both sides, after which the "Chinese Philosopher" and Miss Arundale may probably each incline to say something more.

The discussion will form one of the series of "Evenings with Mr. Morse." The "Chinese Philosopher," last night, signified his willingness to enter into the subject in this way. It will be remembered that these meetings are held under the auspices of a committee of the B.N.A.S., and are open to members and their friends; tickets 1s., hour 7.30 p.m.

EDWARD T. BENNETT.

Richmond, February 14th, 1882.

B.N.A.S. CONVERSAZIONE.—We remind our readers again that a conversazione of the members and friends of the B.N.A.S. will be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Monday evening next, commencing at seven o'clock. The Committee of Management have secured several promises of musical assistance, and there is every reason to hope that the proceedings will be such as to render the evening a very enjoyable one. But one thing is necessary to make success certain—and, that is, a full gathering. It is very desirable, therefore, that all who can possibly attend should do so. The Committee of course will feel gratified if evidence is thus given that their efforts are appreciated.

MORE MARVELS IN SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

It is undeniable that Spiritualism has made wonderful progress of late in every part of the world, notwithstanding the efforts to extinguish it put forth by its enemies. There are, however, a great many who still do their utmost to oppose the movement, either through prejudice or ignorance, but all their endeavours to crush it are, and will be, of no avail. The true believers are not a mere handful, but many millions, comprising men of the highest intelligence, and, I may say, the most trustworthy men of the age. To assail Spiritualism without knowing first what it is seems to me too presumptuous.

Many people ask—what can Spiritualists shew that is of any value? We can produce a literature that is second to none for variety and profundity of thought; but, better still, we can point to facts. Some of these facts which have come within my own personal experience I will narrate for the information of the readers of "LIGHT." In the *Spiritualist* for September the 22nd, I gave a description of a wonderful séance, held in my rooms in the presence of several persons, whose names, except one, an M.P., were published; and in describing the various manifestations obtained through the mediumship of Mr. Eglinton, I concluded by saying, "The time is certainly not very far off when we may see more of these telegraph-like phenomena." I am much pleased to find that I did not make a mistake in saying so, as what I stated then as an expectation on my part has become a reality now. From the accounts published in Calcutta and in London, and from private letters received from India, it is clear that Mr. Eglinton's powers have been so much increased since his landing in that country as to astonish some of the intelligent persons who, though they had investigated Spiritualism for years, and witnessed various kinds of phenomena, had never seen any so clear and so convincing as those seen through the mediumship of Mr. Eglinton.

It seems that a telegraphic communication has been established by the Spirits between India and England, whereby messages and letters are transmitted in a few minutes. Many inquirers who have read the statements received from Calcutta have been asking, "Why, instead of a letter, a copy of the *Times* is not sent from London to Calcutta, and why also is not a newspaper printed there brought to London in the same day?" To my mind such inquirers shew by their questions that they have never had the patience to sit for a few weeks or months, for physical manifestations, or they would not ask why this or why that. Spirit power cannot be commanded to do more of one kind of manifestations than of another, and the invisibles who are sent into this sphere by the Almighty to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, and to prove that the two worlds of Spirits and mortals are blended one with the other, and that there is no real barrier between the living and the so-called "dead," know perfectly well what is best to do for us. If, instead of a letter, a copy of a newspaper printed in Calcutta were brought to a circle in London, would this be a sufficient proof to the outside public or the hard-headed sceptic? I do not believe it would. The greater the phenomena are, the less readily they are accepted by prejudiced unbelievers. If in all languages and sciences the alphabet is necessary first, in Spiritualism it is indispensable; and it will save no end of time to investigators if they are willing to begin with the rudiments of the subject, for no two séances are precisely alike. The more one devotes attention to the endless kinds of manifestations that present themselves, the more one finds the necessity of a close and strict observation.

To convince oneself of the truth of Spirit power, it is not necessary that a copy of the *Times* should be transmitted from London to India or *vice versa*. First of all we must admit the possibility of the phenomenon, and then we can go on. Now suppose that a letter or a newspaper, instead of coming from India, had to come from the other side of the Thames or from any other part of London; would not "a physical miracle," as it is called by some writers, be performed just the same? If we admit that a walnut can be brought at a séance, under strict test conditions, it is clear that with a little more power a cocoanut can also be brought; and that with an addition of still more force bigger objects can be brought, and a person may also be transported from one place to another, as has been witnessed more than once in London and in other countries. Distance is no hindrance.

As I have said before that "The time is certainly not very far off when we may see more of these telegraph-like phenomena," I also state now that the time is very near when

such kind of Spiritual manifestations, and others still more wonderful than the displacement of a piece of paper, will be witnessed by investigators in London, if they will patiently sit for such manifestations; and they may be convinced without doubt that the so-called "physical miracles" are true, and only facts evolved by natural laws. Many a Spiritualist seems astonished to incredulity at the advent of such phenomena as those described, but if what has been promised shall come to pass, we shall soon walk arm-in-arm with the dear ones gone before. For we are told that the greater part of the mediums that have left the earth are returning among us in the flesh to perform greater wonders than before. Indeed, the thing is actually taking place now in America, as the following extract will shew:—

"At Terra Haute, Ind., Mrs. Anna M. Steward gave a private séance to Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Hatch, of Astoria, Long Island, New York.—'When the materialization was completed,' writes Mr. Hatch, 'the cabinet door was opened by our Spirit daughter, and there stood before us seven Spirits in the cabinet with our Spirit child walking about, making the eighth, and there sat Mrs. Steward on her chair, pressed close to the cabinet-door, scarcely half her natural size, and seen distinctly by the wonderful Spirit light shining on the top of the cabinet; in fact, so bright that the whole room was amply lighted. There were eight Spirits besides the medium at one and the same time.'"

Before closing I will narrate a fact or two which took place before Mr. Eglinton left London, as they may afford some interest to the readers of "LIGHT," but I do not write them to convince anyone, as I know by experience how difficult it is to persuade sceptics by merely stating what one has seen or heard.

One evening I asked Mr. Eglinton to join me at dinner. On my entering the restaurant he was standing waiting for me. The place was lighted with four chandeliers, having six burners in each. Under one we sat down. After saying a few words I saw Mr. Eglinton's countenance change, and he gave three or four convulsive shudders. Sitting on his right side, I asked if he felt cold, for I was far from expecting any manifestations. He assured me he did not, and on looking at him I could perceive that he was going under Spirit influence. I immediately took his right hand and put it flat over mine, with my left over his. I observed his whole frame shaking very much, and while thus sitting I felt something passing between my hands, and by this time Mr. Eglinton was in a deep trance. On looking on my hand I found a small roll of paper, which I put in my pocket. On his recovering, I asked what he had felt, but he merely answered he had felt some kind of influence coming over him. After dinner I went home and found that the roll contained three sheets of paper, written by a living person, in answer to a note of mine which I had sent away two days previously by Spirit power. Mr. Eglinton knew nothing about it, neither was it possible for him to have communication with my correspondent.

A few days before leaving England I wrote a letter, and enclosed in it two board cards painted by myself—4 by 2½ inches. I sealed the envelope, and asked Mr. Eglinton's Spirit friend, "Ernest," if he could convey it to the person to whom it was addressed. The little parcel was taken away by the Spirits two days before Mr. Eglinton set sail, but I did not receive any reply. He left on October 12th, and I gave up all hopes of getting any news about my letter. To my surprise on November 7th, I received a letter from Mr. Eglinton, written on board the "Vega," dated October 17th, and posted at Alexandria, bearing the post mark, October 29th, with an enclosed note under date of October 16th, four days after he had left England. He had received it from "Ernest" that morning, during a very heavy storm which was raging. The note was the unhoped for reply, acknowledging the painted board cards. The handwriting was undoubtedly that of my friend, and it was also recognised by two other persons to whom I submitted it for inspection. The contents were of such a nature that Mr. Eglinton could not possibly have known anything concerning them, even if he had read my letter. I have tried several of this kind of experiments, here as well as in Italy, with undoubted success; but I must withhold them from record for a time, as private mediums as well as sitters do not wish for the present to have their names published.

A few days ago I heard of another extraordinary manifestation which took place while Mr. Eglinton was crossing the Suez Canal. Two English mediums were holding a séance at Hackney. This séance was pre-arranged before Mr. Eglinton left London,

with the two mediums and himself, to take place on a fixed evening. It seems that a small indiarubber ball was put on the table, and taken away by the Spirits, and in a few minutes brought back again, but what astonished them most was that in the hollow ball there was a letter written by Mr. Eglinton, and the blue black ink was still wet when the letter was extracted. How the letter could be put into this small globe without opening it, probably some sceptic will explain.

The gentleman who told me the facts has written to the mediums asking permission to allow him to publish a full account with the names of the mediums, &c., with it, and I hope he will succeed in getting their consent, and thus satisfy inquirers and students of Spiritual phenomena. Inquiries have been made in the Spiritual papers, "why the London medium does not come forward to confirm the statement sent from India?" If the inquirers will have a little more patience they may be sure that the facts recorded will be cleared up to their satisfaction.

London, February 12th.

E. ROND.

THE REVERIE.

Oh! that in unfettered union
Spirit could with Spirit blend;
Oh! that in unseen communion
Thought could hold the distant friend!
Who the secrets can unravel
Of the body's mystic guest?
Who knows how the soul may travel
While unconsciously we rest?
While in pleasing thralldom lying,
Sealed in slumber deep it seems,
Far abroad it may be flying;
What is sleep? and what are dreams?
Earth, how narrow thy dominions,
And how slow thy bodies pass!
Oh, to range on eagle's pinions
Through illimitable space.
What is thought? In wild succession
Whence proceeds the motley train?
What first stamps the vague impression
On the ever active brain?
What is thought, and whither tending
Does the subtle phantom fly?
Does it like a moonbeam ending
Shine—then melt to vacancy?
Has a strange mysterious feeling,
Something shapeless, undefined,
O'er your lonely musing stealing,
E'er impressed your pensive mind,
As if he, whose strong resemblance
Fancy in that moment drew,
By coincident remembrance
Knew your thoughts and thought of you?
When at Mercy's footstool bending,
You have felt a sacred glow,
Faith and Hope to Heaven ascending,
Love still lingering here below;
Say, has o'er the thought impressed you
That your friend might feel your prayer,
Or the wish at least possessed you
He could then your feelings share?
Who can tell that fervent blessing?
Angels, did ye see it rise?
Did ye thus your love expressing
Watch o'er human sympathies?
Did ye some mysterious token
To the kindred Spirit bear,
And to what the heart had spoken
Wake a chord responsive there?
Laws, perhaps unknown, but certain,
Kindred Spirits may control,
But what hand can lift the curtain
And reveal the awful soul?
Dimly through life's vapour seeing,
Who but longs for light to break?
Oh, this feverish dream of being!
When, ah, when shall we awake?
Yes, the hour, the hour is lasting.
Spirit shall with Spirit blend;
Fast mortality is wasting,
Soon the secret all shall end.
Let us then hold sweet communion,
Let us breathe the mutual prayer,
Till in Heaven's eternal union,
We shall greet each other there.

JAMES EDMESTON.

A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think.

"THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY."

By Miss Arundale.

On Monday evening, the 6th inst., Miss Arundale gave an address to the members of the British National Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, on "The Religion of Humanity: Is it Positivism or Spiritualism?" Mr. Desmond G. Fitzgerald occupied the chair.

Miss Arundale set out by stating that before discussing the "Religion of Humanity," it would be well to define what she conceived to be meant by religion, and the place it held in the history of the human race. She maintained that the doctrine of evolution could no longer be denied, and that it had been fully proved that, on the physical plane, man, with all his wondrous capabilities, is connected by a continuous chain of descending organisms with one of the lowest of the animal kingdom. What is true of the germ history of the individual is also true of the race. Step by step, through distant ages, man has risen to his present height and position of knowledge: and in no instance is this chain of development more observable than in the consideration of the growth of the religion of the world. Religion the speaker defined as the effort of the unconditioned consciousness struggling through successive stages of growth towards the realisation of the Infinite—till in the present age a strong tendency had been developed to throw off the creeds and dogmas that have so long bound men's minds in narrow and degrading views of God and His relation to man.

Of the various schemes of thought that have been presented to mankind as a solution of the vexed questions of the problems of life, there were probably few that stand out in bolder relief than that of Positivism, or, as it is often designated, "The Human Faith."

For a definition of the claims of Positivism I turn to the "Creed of a Layman," by Frederick Harrison, where we find it thus stated:—"Positivism is a scheme for bringing all these three (Belief, Discipline, Worship) again (or rather for the first time) really into a line. It says: Man has a mind, and an enormous accumulation of knowledge. We have to satisfy that mind and give order to that knowledge. Man has energies; we must give them a full scope and yet keep them in due bounds. Man has a soul fitted for great devotion: we must fill that soul with a worthy object of devotion, strengthen it, purify it by constant exercise." We have here a clear and beautiful description of the necessity that mankind experiences for the realisation of a power worthy of reverence, and capable of fulfilling the aspirations which form a part of the very nature of man, as an intellectual and devotional being. How does the scheme of Positivism answer to this need in the human heart? How does this religion fulfil its pretensions?

Does the idea of a collective human life satisfy the yearnings of mind for the acquirement of knowledge which the circumstances of individual surroundings have denied? Will it be true satisfaction to a patient seeker for the hidden secrets of nature, to feel that in the vast aggregate of humanity, in some far distant future, others will obtain the knowledge that he has vainly spent a life-time to acquire? Will the doctrine of the survival of the fittest for humanity satisfy in the weary hours of sickness, when the energy to do, to spend, and be spent is felt only as an added pain? Shall we be content with "a sum of human energies," which for its development has to sacrifice the feeling of love and justice in the individual?

The religion of Positivism gives no answer to the despairing cry of sin and misery "Why was I born?" Will the sorrowing mother as she mourns the tiny life extinguished, the tiny form swept from her gaze, be comforted in her anguish with the thought of the aggregate feelings of humanity? How will Positivism aid the poor half-starved woman who works her life away to obtain a bare pittance to sustain that life? How will it help the multitude who toil in busy warehouses and who return wearied to their pinched homes and their untrained, unkempt children? How will it help the ignorant and the criminal to be told that humanity is working out through them its development to a higher state of progress? Have they not the right to demand in the sacred name of Justice the same conditions of being, both of organism and environment, as the most intelligent and the highest? It would be a satire on their condition to bid them reform for the benefit of that humanity which too often has left them unaided in their ignorance and vice.

The religion of Positivism cannot solve the problem of the why and the wherefore of life. To all it deals out the same dark destiny of annihilation. The highest intelligence, the most loving nature, the gayest, the brightest, those who have fought the battle of life with the noblest aims, those who have sought to benefit their race, whose existence has been one long, earnest endeavour for right, to them as to all the end is alike. Death, to the Positivist, is not an inevitable change leading to more extended spheres of work, but the end where the intellect must give over its ceaseless questionings, and the loving hands may no longer minister. Human love, that noblest and highest thing that heart or mind can conceive; that which in its purest form

leads us nearest to the Divine,—is it to be extinguished at the open grave? And is the only consolation that the mourner may receive the thought that some time he will obtain the satisfaction of being buried by the side of his “beloved dead”?

That which Positivism holds out as the great aim alike of individuals and societies is the incorporation of all after this life of objective existence in a purely subjective consensus of results which we leave to posterity. But will this cold scheme touch the masses? Will it rouse in them a longing to obtain that which is great and noble? Will it fulfil the aspirations of mankind? Will it satisfy the feeling of justice inherent in human nature?

We do not want a motive power for the philosopher alone; we want something that will touch all, even the lowest. It will not be science, with its ticketed arrangement of the facts of nature. It will not be enlightenment or culture; these are the portion of the favoured few. It will not be any creed or dogma of the many so-called religions of the world that pretend, each one of them, to bestow salvation and happiness *only* on the chosen few that accept the doctrines. It must be something universal; something that will touch the king on his throne, the beggar in his hovel. It must equally be the religion of the saint and the sinner. It must speak to the sage in words of wisdom and be to the simple as an easy lesson. It must be “thoroughly human and yet capable of giving strength and support in every crisis of human life.”

Science tells us that there was a time when this planet, with its countless living, sentient beings, was unnumbered among the rolling orbs of space. But science equally teaches that, as there has been birth and growth, so likewise there will be death and decay; and where then will be found the Great Being, Humanity? And shall the vast consensus of the intelligence of the ages “fade and die, be gone for ever; know no being, have no place?”

Spiritualism says No! Whatever may be the nature and attributes of the Supreme Power and Intelligence that control and govern the laws of the order of nature, this at least Spiritualism establishes on a firm basis of indisputable fact, that there is for each individual a continuity of existence after death. This fact of continuity—and such all who seek patiently may prove it to be—testifies to a power in the individual of far higher import than the results he may leave to posterity, and of far higher signification both to himself individually and to the race; for it is a living power ever increasing and strengthening. This great fundamental truth is fully established amongst us, that the future life, with its conditions of happiness or misery, is the necessary sequence of earth-life, and that spirit-life is not only continuity of existence, but continuation of character. It is this that will touch the lowest and the highest, the knowledge that every action in this life sows the seed for the harvest of result in the next. Those who are selfish here will meet their selfish actions as objective realities, while the deed of kindness done to the lowest and meanest of created beings shall be as the ladder by which the Spirit mounts to higher spheres of progress; and I can conceive no motive of action more powerful in its influence on mankind than this knowledge—that we cannot escape from the necessary consequence of violated law, whether material or spiritual, by any form of theological belief.

Outside Spiritual phenomena there is no fact to serve as a sure basis of belief. Science is quietly sapping the ground beneath the old theological tenets, and let unquestioning faith be once disturbed and it becomes impossible without Spiritualism to rest the soul again securely in its old anchorage of belief in immortality.

The Positivist who has seen one by one the old landmarks disappear—who has watched the rise of positive science and seen it gradually sweep away the old myths—seeks in a life of conscious devotion to human welfare to replace the Deity by Humanity, “as the most ennobling object of reverence, the true disposer of thoughts and lives.” And right nobly have these great thinkers followed their religion in purity of life and devotion to mankind, and for them “religion is summed up in duty towards their fellow-men.” But how is this noble standard of duty to become the guiding beacon of the masses? And if the old theological rod of hell and eternal punishment is removed from before the wrong-doer, where shall be found an argument of sufficient strength to deter men in their vicious paths, and where are they to look for comfort when faith sinks low? I believe most truly that this is the mission of Spiritualism—this its religious aspect—to convince of intelligent action of spirit apart from the physical body and to demonstrate the truth of the axiom that “as a man sows so shall he reap.” It matters little the varied superstructures that may be erected on this foundation. As a Re-Incarnationist I conceive that our differences of belief result from the different grades of spirit development, which is the natural consequence of previous lives, but I am aware there are few present who will endorse this opinion. Be that as it may, it is at any rate certain that differences of opinion obtain equally in the Spirit world as here, and that there as here many see but one side of truth. It may be objected that if this is

true, Spiritualism cannot hope to become the religion of the future. If by religion is meant a mere form of belief, with creeds and dogmas, Spiritualism certainly can never be considered as such, but Spiritualism will prove to be a motive of action and a sure basis of fact, on which each individual spiritual development can erect the structure suitable to its stage of growth; and Spiritualism will include within its ranks Buddhist and Christian, Protestant and Catholic, all those who, resting on the facts of actual demonstration, acknowledge a life after death. The humanity that the Spiritualist believes in is not simply the human race at present on this globe, but it includes within its encircling arms the Spirits of all, from the most distant past “when in wild woods the naked savage ran,” to the child born at this moment, the heir of all our civilisation. Yea, and may we not claim as a portion of humanity all that is tending upward as spirit yet to be individualised. I conclude in the words of the beautiful creed of Eliphaz Eli:—

“We believe in a God principle, the essence of all existence, of all good and of all justice, inseparable from nature, which is its law and which reveals itself through intelligence and love.”

“We believe in humanity, daughter of God, in which all the members are indissolubly connected one with the other, so that all must co-operate in the salvation of each, and each in the salvation of all.”

“We believe that to serve the Divine Essence it is necessary to serve humanity.”

“We believe in the reparation of evil and in the triumph of good in the life eternal.”

JACOB BEHMEN.

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—In a letter from “C. C. M.,” in your impression of the 11th inst., there appears the following passage, extracted from “Böhme”:—“After the departure of the body the soul is naked, and especially if it be without a new body.” This is a striking instance of the inaccuracy and underdevelopment which characterise the writings of Jacob Behmen.

The soul is never naked except by its own act or the act of its comrades. During existence in this life every human being is surrounded by an aura or spiritual atmosphere. When at death the soul leaves the body, this atmosphere clings about the soul and becomes its garment, sometimes forming the most beautiful covering. The soul is never without a body, either spiritual or material. In this life it is the spiritual body.

Why this writer should be called “Böhme” I do not understand. His name is spelt *BEHM*, but he is commonly known as *JACOB BEHMEN*, and it would be better to adhere to this recognised form. I cannot help thinking that his writings are a most profitless study.—I am, &c.,

London, February 13th, 1882.

TRIDENT.

MILTON AND DARWIN.

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—One of your correspondents quotes some lines by Milton, beginning—

“The grassy clods then calv’d.”

Will he (or any one) kindly direct us to the passage in Milton’s works where the quotation can be found?—Yours respectfully,

H.

NIRVANA.—Various terms are used indifferently with, or explanatory of, the word Nirvana:—Immortality, conclusion, completion, excellence, the sweet food and heavenly drink of the wise, departure, emancipation, deliverance from evil, liberation from worldly bonds, ecstasy, unmixt tranquil happiness. There are other terms besides, but all of kindred meaning. The word was used by the Aryas to denote the spiritual state, which it is clear the Buddhists also meant. The most philological meaning of the word is extinguishment of the brain-life and entering into the spiritual state.—*BABOO MITTRA.*

DEATH, once the terror of all, is now recognised as a part of life. Without it there could be no relief from the infirmities of age. The body racked with pain looks to death as a deliverer, but not the end of existence. Men argue concerning death as they do about life. What is its mission, and what is the mission of life? Is it to be supposed that all these mental powers can be blotted out without a moment’s warning? We say nature reproduces itself. The tree that puts on its grave clothes in autumn casts them off again in spring time. The flower that gladdened your sight in June seems as if dead in winter; but the spring time comes again, the flowers bloom again, the birds sing again, but man dies and what shall we say of him? Does death end all? Certainly not. There are no decrees which consign men to eternal sleep, and restore the flowers to life again. There are no separate or special decrees affecting the life of man, different from what we find in other departments of life. What is called death is simply a change of conditions. Life has its winters and it has its spring-time too.—*Olive Branch.*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Medium and Daybreak."

The contents of the last number comprise a lengthy review of Miss Houghton's "Chronicles of Spirit Photography," which is written in a thoroughly appreciative spirit. The editor in reply to a query "Why cannot Spirits remove obstructions from the human body?" quotes cases shewing that such results have been obtained. A correspondent, who signs himself "Aleyone," argues upon the "Telephone as an Emblem in Spiritual Science," his article being very pleasant reading. Another of the Ven. Archdeacon Colley's sermons is given, on "Heaven's Interest in Human Affairs" which is thoughtful and spiritual in tone. The remaining contents refer to items of current news.

"The Banner of Light."

In a letter from J. L. Ditson, of Provincetown, Mass., are narrated the following particulars of some materialisation séances which that gentleman had with Mrs. H. Fay, a medium. Mr. Ditson is an old and able reviewer and correspondent of the *Banner*. The writer says:—

"So fearful am I of being one link in a chain to propagate error, that I have refrained for two months or more from publicly stating my experience; but now feel it to be my duty to give to the world a relation of what I have seen and heard under conditions that rendered fraud of any kind absolutely impossible. During three evenings there appeared before me from sixty to seventy-five forms, male and female, of different statures, different development of person, countenances as varied as those seen on the street, and every peculiarity of action as varied as in every-day life, and in no one instance did I recognise, in face or form, the medium. The séances were held at the residence of the medium, Mrs. Fay, 14, Dover-street, Boston. A close and most thorough examination of the premises convinced all present that if any object of human form other than the medium came from the cabinet, it would not be of earth. We had no sooner seated ourselves than a form glided out dressed in white, which was recognised; then another, their habiliments, size and features being dissimilar.

"A lady remarked, 'Here is a Spirit, beckoning to that gentleman,' pointing to me. I stepped to the curtain, and there encountered my friend Orlando. We saluted each other as before. I placed my glasses for a deep scrutiny; there were his beard and moustache, his eyes, his hair, his broad, high forehead, and every lineament of face and form, just as in life; and now the second time, that remarkable depression of the frontal brain, where we locate Veneration. That depression I had often noted in life; I thought he must have had a fall when a child; yet his reverence for proper things was extremely great. His same pensive, thoughtful face, which struck the beholder that here is a man without guile, was now directly before me. Said I, 'I give it up! You are Orlando!' 'Yes,' said he, 'I am Orlando!' Said I, 'Was I right in fearing that you were buried alive?' He replied, 'I was as good as dead!' and again repeated, 'I was as good as dead!' This phrase struck me forcibly, for it was with him a common one to describe anything not definitely settled; such as 'as good as lost,' 'as good as won.' At the mention of 'Alice,' had he touched a battery the shock would not have been greater. He had stood as long as he could bear the dissolving power of light, and disappeared.

"A female form came toward me, with hand extended. I proffered mine, but was seized by the ear, and gently pulled forward to the cabinet, into which she passed, leaving me outside. Perhaps I stood five seconds, when I turned toward my chair, when the circle cried, 'There she is!' I turned toward her, but neither of us spoke, when she passed in again; and as often as I turned away the circle would exclaim, 'There she is again!'

"The fourth time on coming out she threw both arms around my neck, gave me a fervent kiss, which I returned, when instantly she disappeared.

"This last manifestation completely astounded me, and I fell into a deep reverie, from which I was aroused by some one saying, 'The séance is over.' Members of the circle congratulated each other on the most extraordinary phenomena they had witnessed. I turned to a gentleman, and said, 'Will you please take note of the sealed door?' In a moment he came back, and said all was right, the seal undisturbed. We shook hands, and bade each other good-night.

"Reaching my home, the truth of the last demonstration of spirit presence flashed upon my mind. That loving spirit form was my daughter, who left me so disconsolate in her sixth year, now a woman. The reason I obtained not the slightest impression of her countenance was because of her lack of ability to materialize the face with the life expression."

"The Herald of Progress."

The first article is entitled "Man: or, Mind and Matter," but it is devoid of any indication as to its authorship, though printed under "The Platform" heading. "The Victoria Circle" now turns out to be held at Manchester, the missing information as to its locality being published this week. The proposed convention has proved abortive, the affair standing adjourned until the end of March, when it is to be "held

solely in the interests of the *Herald of Progress*," which is in need of funds. The remaining contents call for no special notice.

"The Two Worlds."

The following letter from "S. T. T., of Ancord, N. J.," will be read with interest by many inquirers:—

"The question, so perplexing to the early inquirers in regard to the truth of spirit-communication, 'Do mediums ever tell anything not already known to themselves?' seems to recur often.

"In answer to it, allow me to narrate an incident that very recently occurred in my family. Early in the winter, my wife and myself, finding we should be alone, especially in the evening, resumed our old habit of former years, of sitting for communications from our spirit-friends. We had been thus engaged for about a month, when on the evening of the 22nd December, after some questions had been asked and answered, we observed that the table was moved with unusual power, indicating that some other Spirit was present. Calling for the alphabet, the following was spelled out: 'Your sister M—is very sick with pneumonia.' My wife instantly asked, 'Do you mean my sister M—?' An affirmative came very forcibly. We were much surprised, for although M—had been an invalid for some years, we were fully aware of the disease that had afflicted her, and that no indication of trouble of the lungs had ever manifested itself, so far as we knew. After some conversation with each other, we concluded there must be some mistake, and said so, when the table with much force gave the signal for the alphabet, and the message was quickly spelled out: 'She is now with us here.'

"We did not sit on the next evening. On Saturday morning, the 24th, we received a postal card dated the 22nd, from a lady friend in Boston, who had been for many years very intimate with my wife's family, saying, 'I was out to M— [about five miles from Boston] yesterday. Your sister M—is very sick with inflammation of the lungs, and your aunt C— has been very ill for some weeks.'

"At our sitting on Saturday evening, the 24th, it was said that our aunt C— had passed to Spirit-life. Late in the evening she appeared at the table and greeted us."

"On Tuesday, the 27th, we received a letter from my wife's family, dated the 22nd, giving the details of M.'s sickness and death, which occurred on the night of the 21st, about 12.37 o'clock. Aunt C— died during the evening of the next day."

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

At the Council Meeting of the B.N.A.S., held on Tuesday evening last, the following statements of account for the year ended December 31st, 1881, were presented by the auditor, Mr. Morell Theobald.

PROFIT AND LOSS.—Dr. To rent, salaries, and wages £154 13s. 1d.; printing and stationery £10 15s. 5d.; postages £10 17s. 8d.; advertising £43 19s. 9d.; charges £7 6s. 2d.; Library expenses £10 0s. 7d.; depreciation of furniture £27 10s. 6d.; capital for balance (gain) £55 0s. 3d.—total £320 3s. 5d.—*Cr.* By subscriptions £248 16s. 6d.; donations (ordinary) £30 5s.; ditto (special) £39 13s.; profit of soirées £1 8s. 11d.—total £320 3s. 5d.

BALANCE SHEET.—Liabilities. To petty cash keeper £1 6s. 4d.; outstanding accounts due £12 16s.; A. Calder, Esq., £55 18s.; Coleman Fund £1 6s.; Séance Committee 4s.; capital £232 19s. 1d.—total £304 9s. 5d. **Assets.** By furniture and fixtures £247 14s. 2d.; cash at bank £56 15s. 3d.—total £304 9s. 5d.

Mr. Theobald pointed out that during the year the work of the Association had been conducted so economically that they had received £55 more than they had expended, even after writing off £27 for depreciation of furniture. This was all the more pleasing seeing that since then they had also had a good accession of new members. Still there were many directions in which good work could be done if they had more funds, and he hoped that the friends would therefore use every effort to promote the prosperity of the Association.

GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday morning last, our friend Mr. Howard, of Luton, read an interesting paper on "Soul and Mind," and also an extract from A. J. Davis' works, wherein he describes the passing away of a Spirit and its entry into the next life. A cordial vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Howard for his paper. In the evening Mr. J. J. Morse occupied the platform for the sixth time, the subject of his discourse being "Concerning Angels," which was delivered in his usual forcible and eloquent manner. This was the sixth lecture of the series and it was listened to by a large and attentive audience, so large that every seat in the hall was occupied. There are but two more lectures, first, "A Coming Creed"; second, "The Day of Judgment"; and friends must come early if they want good seats. It is no exaggeration to say that this course of lectures by Mr. Morse and his guides has placed the subject of Spiritualism before the public of the Metropolis in a more favourable and common sense manner than any previous effort.—RES-FACTA.

CARDIFF.

On Sunday, the 5th inst., the fourth quarterly general meeting of the Cardiff Spiritualist Society was held at the rooms. After the usual service, during which a reading from "Our Immortal Homes" was given by Mr. Adams, the hon. secretary read the report of proceedings during the past six months, which was unanimously adopted by the meeting. A change was made in the Council and the number increased to four. The voting resulted in the election of Messrs. Sadler, junior, Brooks, Windor, and Mrs. Miles to the Council, and in consequence of the retirement of Mr. Adams from the hon. secretaryship, Mr. Miles was elected to fill that post. There appeared to be a strong feeling among the members in favour of pushing forward the claims of Spiritualism, and if the resolves formed are carried out the result will doubtless be a step in the right direction. On Sunday evening last, the chair was occupied by Mr. Brooks, readings being given by Messrs. Saddler and Adams. A discussion followed on the questions of Re-Incarnation and Free-will. Mr. Paynter was asked to prepare a paper on the former for Sunday next, and having consented to do so this topic will form the subject of consideration next week. There is every appearance of renewed vigour, and the new Council evidently intend to do their utmost in favour of the cause in general.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

THE CONVENTION.

On Saturday afternoon, February 11th, at three o'clock, the long advertised Newcastle conference opened its deliberations. The attendance was scant at the commencement, but gradually enlarged until it numbered in all thirty-three persons.

Mr. John Mould occupied the chair, and in opening expressed his regret at the unhappy turn which had deprived the conference of its success. Mr. Hare and Mrs. Britten spoke after the same fashion.

Mr. Hare read a letter apologising for non-attendance, and afterwards Mrs. Britten addressed the meeting in her usual pathetic style, enforcing the desirability of a closer bond of unity, a wider spirit of toleration, and an active living charity in our movement, that should supplant the profession thereof, which at times is more prevalent than the practice. Her ideas upon organisation were of a general nature, and in a great measure similar to those expressed by her in the paper from her pen published in "LIGHT" a few weeks since.

Mr. Mahoney next addressed the meeting, and said:—The first principle of organisation is a centre, from which everything must emanate. I agree with Mrs. Britten that Newcastle is the centre of the Spiritual movement. I have travelled through the entire kingdom, and I confess none possess such advantages for this purpose as Newcastle. I was once of the opinion that the N.S.E.S. was too vain and proud of the work they were doing, but I was an outsider, and did not know them. I have been looking for a centre for my work, and I have now fixed Newcastle as the one most suited to me. London cannot be the centre, nor any other town I know of, excepting Newcastle, which must be the centre, not only for the Metropolis, but for this country. It is the Spiritual force of the movement. The centre is necessarily the most fitted for this work, and consequently must subdue all other forms of organisation. There must be a head in the centre, and Mr. Mould is your president; you will respect him as such. Look at his virtues rather than his faults. He is the erected chief to whom all must bow, not as a man, but as a principal. The submission to the powers that be is necessary to the success of the object. The first to organise will rule.

Mr. Hare remarked: The North will conquer the South. If we allow dissension or insubordination we shall not succeed.

Mr. Swanston in an enthusiastic manner declared, in support of the above statements, that if necessary we should call in the aid of our friend Gladstone's *clôture*.

At this juncture the chairman desired to close the meeting, when Mr. Dunn, of Wrekenton, said he had come as a deputation from the North Durham Society to carry back some definite scheme of organisation, but was disappointed. Hereupon Mrs. Britten proposed that the meeting adjourn till Monday, when a committee shall be formed to draft suggestions and plans for the proper organisation of the district, and to report at the convention in March. Mr. Mahoney seconded the motion, which was carried.

On Monday, at the morning sitting of the convention, the attendance was small, only four persons being present, who after half-an-hour's conversation adjourned until the afternoon, when a similar result followed. Mr. Hare alone was present, and after waiting upwards of half-an-hour he retired downstairs to the stall of fancy work, where a few persons had assembled to buy. So, really, nothing was done to bring about a friendly and conciliatory spirit, the necessary prelude to a successful organisation.

The stall of Mrs. Hammerbom and Miss Colman has realised about £20, which will be devoted towards the clearing of the Society's debt.

During her stay in Newcastle, Mrs. Britten has delivered, from the N.S.E.S. platform, six lectures of remarkable descriptive beauty and power. Her style is at once that of a

finished orator, containing the pathos which wins. Long may she be spared to labour in the vineyard of Spiritualism. I hope we shall see her North again before she leaves the land of her sires.

GATESHEAD.—Our friends on the south side of the Tyne are struggling on most commendably, singlehanded, but with a purpose that doubtless will succeed. On Sunday, Mr. Gray officiated in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Nicholson, and delivered himself most admirably. The chair was occupied by Mr. York, of Sunderland, who made a few introductory remarks, which were very much appreciated. On Sunday next, February 19th, the Gateshead Society of Spiritualists will open their new hall, in the Central Buildings, High-street, when Mr. T. P. Barkas, F.R.G.S., will deliver an address as follows:—"Summary of the Evidence on which the Belief in Modern Spiritual Phenomena is established."

THE DISTRICT.—We observe that our zealous friend and co-worker, Mr. H. Burton, has of late been doing work among the Unitarians in the district, having been lecturing to the friends at Unity Church, South Shields, upon "The Powers of the Imagination," a subject on which Mr. Burton always gives the greatest delight to his hearers. On Sunday last, we notice, he again lectured for the Unitarians, in their church at Choppington, his subject being "The Sublime in Man." He gave the highest satisfaction to his hearers, who pressed him most heartily to repeat his efforts among them at the earliest convenient opportunity. Last Sunday, Mr. Mahoney, of Birmingham, lectured in the Central Hall, Consett, his subjects giving the satisfaction which they always do to the thoughtful and studious. I hear he intends taking up his abode with the denizens of Coaly Tyne.—NORTHUMBRIA.

PLYMOUTH.

Four weeks ago, at the close of the Sunday evening service, it was resolved by the Society here to purchase an harmonium for the Hall. A very excellent instrument, costing when new thirty-five guineas, was offered us at £10, and this was at once secured. On Sunday evening last, it was announced that the whole of the amount had been raised; friends at a distance have rendered liberal aid towards the object; amongst others, Mr. S. C. Hall generously gave us fifty copies of the new shilling edition of Farmer's "New Basis of Belief," a most invaluable boon in itself, apart from the financial result. Another pleasing feature was a service of song given in our Hall last Wednesday by a Primitive Methodist band of singers, the gentleman of whom we purchased the harmonium belonging to that body; and we have rarely had such an evening's enjoyment. A month hence—Wednesday, March 15th—the friends intend to celebrate the anniversary of the society by a tea, musical selections, and a public meeting. We hope to have a goodly gathering of friends on the occasion. Trance addresses were given on Monday last by Mr. P—, and Saturday by Mrs. C—, and on Sunday by Mr. H— and Mr. K—.—OMEGA.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Several interesting communications are left open for want of space. That such contributions are not published immediately, does not necessarily imply that they are altogether rejected. We have often more matter in hand than we can at once deal with, and therefore give the first attention to the most important.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRITS.—Any one truly desirous to be spiritual is helped by Spirit friends. This I know by personal experience. The visits of Spirits do not solely end in the external manifestations which they make to produce a conviction of their existence; such manifestations should therefore be looked upon as the first stage of Spiritual experience. The real work of the Spirits is to spiritualise those qualified to receive their aid, and this providence of God is appreciated as we rise from the natural to higher states.—MITRA.

MR. HENRY LACROIX will give on the first Thursday of February, and on the following Thursdays if possible, a gratuitous conference in experimental Spiritualism, at 8 p.m., 5, Rue des Petits Champs, Paris; and every morning at 10 he will give private and gratuitous clairvoyant séances. Persons who write to Mr. Lacroix with the object of learning the means adopted in the United States of forming a magnetic chain, creating a group, and developing mediums, must send to him the signatures of those who desire to form part of such group. Letters from any part of France should contain a postage stamp for the reply, and from abroad a postal order.—*Revue Spirite* for February.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON, Goswell Hall, Sundays during February; BRIGHTON, February 28; GLASGOW, March 5; STAMFORD, March 12; NOTTINGHAM, March 19; CARDIFF, March 26; BELPER, April 2; FALMOUTH, April 9. For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[*Advt.*]

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN has promised to lecture as follows:—February 19, Liverpool; 26, Sowerby Bridge; 28, and March 1 and 2, Nottingham. Sundays of March and April, Manchester.—Apply, The Limes, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.—[*Advt.*]

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

The following is a list of eminent persons who, after personal investigation, have satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena generally known as Psychical or Spiritualistic.

N.B.—An asterisk is prefixed to those who have exchanged belief for knowledge.

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge; W. Crookes, Fellow and Gold Medallist of the Royal Society; C. Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, the eminent Naturalist; W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E., Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Dr. Lockhart Robertson, F.R.S.; *Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; *Professor de Morgan, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London; *Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., sometime Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; *Dr. Ashburner, *Mr. Rutter, *Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., &c., &c.

Professor F. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of "Transcendental Physics," &c.; Professors G. T. Fechner, Scheibner, and J. H. Fichte, of Leipzig; Professor W. E. Weber, of Göttingen; Professor Hoffman, of Würzburg; Professor Perty, of Berne; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg; Professors Hare and Mapes, of U.S.A.; Dr. Robert Friese, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, Astronomer, &c., &c.

LITERATURE.—The Earl of Dunraven; T. A. Trollope; S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Captain R. Burton; Professor Cassal, LL.D.; *Lord Brougham; *Lord Lytton; *Lord Lyndhurst; *Archbishop Whately; *Dr. Robert Chambers, F.R.S.E.; *W. M. Thackeray; *Nassau Senior; *George Thompson; *W. Howitt; *Serjeant Cox; *Mrs. Browning, &c., &c.

Bishop Clarke, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, U.S.A.; Professor W. Denton; Professor Alex. Wilder; Professor Hiram Corson; Professor George Bush; and twenty-four Judges and ex-Judges of the U.S. Courts; Victor Hugo; Baron and Baroness von Vay; *W. Lloyd Garrison, U.S.A.; *Hon. R. Dale Owen, U.S.A.; *Hon. J. W. Edmonds, U.S.A.; *Epes Sargent; *Baron du Potet; *Count A. de Gasparin; *Baron L. de Guldenstubbé, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H. I. H. Nicholas, Duke of Louchtemberg; H.S.H. the Prince of Solms; H.S.H. Prince Albrecht of Solms; *H.S.H. Prince Emile of Sayn Wittgenstein; Hon. Alexander Aksakof, Imperial Councillor of Russia; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; M. Favre-Chavairoz, late Consul-General of France at Trieste; the late Emperors of *Russia and *France; Presidents *Thiers and *Lincoln, &c., &c.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art!

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS, writing to the editor of *Licht. Mehr Licht*, April 10th, 1881, in reference to phenomena which occurred in Paris through the Brothers Davenport, said:—"As a Prestidigitator of repute, and a sincere Spiritualist, I affirm that the *medianimic facts demonstrated by the two brothers were absolutely true*, and belonged to the *Spiritualistic* order of things in every respect. Messrs. Robin and Robert Houdin, when attempting to imitate these said facts, never presented to the public anything beyond an infantine and almost grotesque parody of the said phenomena, and it would be only ignorant and obstinate persons who could regard the questions seriously as set forth by these gentlemen. . . . Following the data of the learned chemist and natural philosopher, Mr. W. Crookes, of London, I am now in a position to prove plainly, and by purely scientific methods, the existence of a 'psychic force' in mesmerism and also 'the individuality of the spirit' in Spiritual manifestation."

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER, AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bedroom, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have *not in the smallest degree* found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place *under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining* by any reference to prestidigitation is *absolutely impossible*. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to *my* view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, December 6th, 1877.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one, to see how to conduct séances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex; the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

The first indications of success usually are a cool breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held *over* but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means: if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.