

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.)"

It has been frequently stated that colouring matter, which has been accidentally or intentionally applied to the hands or face of a materialised form, may reappear on the corresponding part of the medium's person. In commenting on a case which occurred at the circles of Mrs. Andrews, of Moravia, Epes Sargent adopts and endorses this theory.* A trumpet was used for the purpose of rendering the Spirit-voice more audible. A sceptic blackened the small end of it with printer's ink; and the ink was found, as soon as the light was struck, on the medium's mouth. Plain evidence of fraud, I should have thought. Other cases occur to me, which have a similar bearing. But I know that there is a theory among investigators that whatever force is abstracted from the medium for materialisation purposes is returned when the form is dissolved; and that any colouring matter on the form would be found, therefore, on the body of the medium. If this is not a mere hypothesis, a conjecture to cover inconvenient facts, it has a most important bearing on the philosophy of this perplexing subject. I should be very much obliged to any one who will give me facts within his own observation, or who will refer me to good cases which seem to establish this theory. So far as I see, it would be very difficult indeed to prove it; and in such a case as that quoted by Sargent the plain presumption that the trumpet found its way somehow to the lips of the medium would need much evidence to refute it. It may have been abnormally done, *i. e.*, "Spirits" may have held it, and have used her voice in pretence of the real Spirit-voice; but the point is not *that*. Is it possible that the colouring matter could have got on her lips in the way alleged?

In reference to the transference of colour from the "form" to the medium, I find it recorded that in the early stage of the development of the Katie King manifestations through Miss Florence Cook (*Spiritualist*, November 15th, 1872)—"Katie asked a gentleman present (Mr. Tapp) to rub some violet ink over the back of her hand, which she put out of the cabinet for the purpose. She said she was going to try and transfer the colour. When Miss Cook came out of the cabinet, the (? a) violet patch, about as big as a five-shilling piece, was found on her arm, just below the elbow," not, it will be observed, on the back of her hand, but on another part of the body. Again, in a discussion held at the B.N.A.S. (*Spiritualist*, April 14th, 1876), Mr. Varley, F.R.S., related how some aniline dye, into which the materialized form of Katie King dipped her fingers, was found, after the séance was over, not on the fingers of Miss Cook, but upon her arm. Mr. Varley expressed his opinion that "Spirits who materialised naturally took substance from the body of the medium, and afterwards carried back to the same anything that had been placed upon this temporary organisation." This is the commonly accepted theory, *viz.*, that these transient forms are clothed in matter borrowed from the body of the medium, and perhaps also, from the bodies of the sitters. When the process of materialisation has been carried on under conditions that admit of observation, the evidence tends to this conclusion. For instance, Judge Dailey, of Brooklyn, U.S.A., records a séance which he recently had with

* "Proof Palpable," p. 38.

Dr Monck. Five observers witnessed what he describes. "Glancing at Dr. Monck's side we observed what looked like an opalescent mass of compact steam emerging from just below his head. It at once increased in volume, rising up and extending downwards, the upper portions taking the form of a child's head, the face being distinguished as that of a little child I had lost some twenty years previously. It remained in this form only for a moment and then suddenly disappeared, seeming to be instantly absorbed into the doctor's side. This remarkable phenomenon was repeated four or five times, in each instance the materialisation being more distinct and perfect than the preceding. This was witnessed by all in the room, with gas burning sufficiently bright for every object in the room to be plainly visible."

This is substantially what I recorded as my experience with the same medium some years since. Such are genuine cases of materialisation, and the *pabulum* is taken, it would seem, exclusively from the body of the medium. What goes on when the medium is secluded, one cannot say; but from stray hints that alone are obtainable under such conditions, we may assume that something analogous take place. Some observers, for instance, record their impressions that faces presented at the aperture of a cabinet are in a state of constant flux and reflux, as though the cohesion of the material particles was maintained with difficulty. Others describe (as, for example, in séances with Slade, where the medium is not secluded, but a table is simply drawn up to a corner of the room, in which space the materialisations occur) that a column of vapour rises gradually, circling round and round, until it assumes form and shape: and then sinking in a similar manner, until it disappears. Others again describe the gradual evolution of such a form outside of the cabinet from a germ that looks like a small white patch. All this points to the same process when a real materialisation is effected. But there can be no doubt in the mind of one who carefully sifts all the recorded evidence that, many narratives having been put aside as worthless for purposes of testimony, there are other processes, *e.g.*, of transformation or transfiguration of the medium, which must be carefully differentiated from materialisation proper.

My attention has been drawn to these points by the fact that I propose to complete my "Researches," for publication in book form, by a chapter on Materialisation. The records are overwhelming, and sifting them must be a matter of long time. I shall be grateful for any help that can be furnished me by directing my attention to unimpeachable evidence already published, or by furnishing me with new facts and observations. It is obvious that only typical cases can be recited at any length; and that it is imperative that the phenomenon should have been observed in sufficient light, and under conditions that make it certain of what special description it is, *i. e.*, transformation or materialisation, lifelike and active, with flexible features and limbs; or of the nature of what may be called "Spirit-statuary," white, mask-like in face, and unnatural in movement. The time seems to have come for some collected statement of evidence, if not for a philosophical theory of the efficient causes and methods by which the results are probably arrived at. But the whole subject is beset with difficulty, and needs very cautious and discriminating treatment.

The *Lancet* has a striking article on the axiom of law laid down in the Guiteau trial. It was then declared as good law "that if a person doing any act which the law regards as an offence, has sense enough to know that what he is doing is wrong in law, and that he is breaking the law in doing it, he is not insane." This excludes insanity of the will or of the moral sense, emotional, inspirational, or impulsive insanity of all kinds; and would (as our contemporary points out) have consigned Joan of Arc to the executioner instead of, as it would have wished, to the lunatic asylum. This refusal of law to utilise the discoveries

of modern science greatly shocks the *Lancet*, and it betakes itself to an inquiry as to the reasons for such a course. In the disquisition which follows some striking admissions are made. "*Science* (it says) *has suicidally cut the ground from under its own feet by committing itself to the premisses of a coarse and rigid materialism.* Scientists assert that mind has, and can have, no existence without matter. . . . How then are we to make it plain to the public that there are undoubtedly states or conditions of mental function in which the inter-relations of the faculties are so disturbed or destroyed that the mind is not its own master, and the will is in abeyance or for the time enslaved? It was easy to speak of moral insanity so long as we were prepared to place the seat of the moral instinct somewhere behind matter. The existence of an unseen Spirit being assumed, madness which could not easily be traced to brain-lesion could be credited to an unseen Spirit. . . . *Science has, however, discarded this view,*" and is in an untenable position. Some forms of insanity are demonstrably not accompanied by any brain-lesion: it is, however, desirable to enforce the view that this hearing of voices (for example) *is* insanity: yet how is it to be done? This is our scientific fix! The *Lancet* is seriously frightened, and confesses the dilemma with much frankness. "*We must try back, and if it should be found that we have moved too rapidly on the lines of a pure Materialism, scientists will do well and wisely to acknowledge the possibility of a fault underlying the superstructure of their previous hasty, if not precipitate conclusions.* It may be that the special localizing view of brain function and disease is not the ultimate or whole truth: that the brain is an instrument which, though it commonly behaves as a barrel-organ, can be made to discourse music or discord, not of its own inner motive force, but at the will or caprice of an unseen player, and *that such a player really exists.*" Quite so! This is good Spiritualism as far as it goes, and is at any rate a good step in advance of that crass Materialism which men of thought, who are not merely men of one-sided or diseased thought, are generally agreeing to abandon. From whatever side it is examined, it is found wanting; and though I have no sympathy with the desire to extend the limits of any definition of insanity, it is a noteworthy fact that the scientific organ of the medical profession is found stoutly disavowing Materialism.

The *St. James's Gazette* (February 15th) publishes more experiences about "Faces in the Dark." The correspondent who now takes up his story carries the matter further than the first writer placed it. To him the faces were colourless, always presented full and not (except once) in profile, human embodiments of passion, seen only in a dark room, with closed eyes. "D.," who writes now, confirms in the main what the first writer said, but records some interesting variations. He sees with eyes open, as well as closed. To him too the phantoms present themselves at the distance of a few feet, but they advance at times, and come nearer until "their eyes look straight into mine, apparently only a few inches away." They are not colourless but "their colours are vivid and intense," and are thrown up in strong relief by a background of intense blackness. They are by no means always presented in full face, but often turn round from profile to a front view. They "are like nothing in life or art," and, like the phantoms previously described, seem to be embodiments of the meaner and baser human passions.

One very remarkable point is brought out into strong prominence in "D.'s" paper. These faces invariably undergo a process of degradation. At first "a face is presented which is of transcendent beauty: then, changing second by second, it becomes more and more degraded until in the end so hideous a phantom is before you that you open your eyes to obtain relief." This remarkable characteristic pervades all "D.'s" visions, for they are not confined to mere faces but extend to groups of figures, animals, landscapes, stirring scenes of all kinds. But it is only the human faces that are degraded in development. The animals may become grotesque, though not debased in type, but the men, even in crowds, always change for the worse; the strange process going on, in a quoted case, till a large mob, in an Eastern city, rushing through an archway, develops into a "seething rabble, such as a morbidly imaginative painter might draw escaping from Hell." What is the meaning of these two things—first, that the faces are types of meanness, and second, that they undergo degradation so completely?

Some interesting personal observations are given by the

writer. These visions are independent of the state of health. They are not regular visitors, but fitful in presentation. They are independent of all efforts of will. They can be differentiated from the visions which an effort of loving memory will conjure up; as well as from those phantoms of an over-taxed brain that make night hideous to the man who has sat too long at his desk or mental labour. What are they? Mr. Galton is invoked to shed light on the problem. Perhaps he can, more probably he cannot. To aid the solution it may be well to notice one or two points. First, these experiences are more common than men think. I have talked at hazard with two friends since reading the papers on which I am commenting, and I find that both are subject to these strange experiences, with some little variety. Then, both my friends agree that the phantoms are all types of mean and base passions; but with one they change rapidly, with the other they seem to be permanent types. The one regards them as the forerunners of sleep after a time of wakefulness; to the other they are productive of restlessness and feverish tossing to and fro. In the one case they would seem to be "such stuff as dreams are made of;" in the other, they are apparently the outcome of a fevered brain, more akin to delirium than to dream.

The *Daily News*, in noticing these facts, to the discriminating discussion of which it contributes little or nothing, goes out of its way to have one of those illiberal sneers at those who seek to fathom the obscure mysteries of Psychology or Spiritualism, which have too often defaced its columns of late. It was characterised in past years by a generous, a truly liberal treatment of any subjects that it handled; and, though never quite friendly, it was courteous and fair to Spiritualists. Now it goes out of its way to dub those who have any belief in communion with the unseen world by objective means as "lunatics, enthusiasts, or persons on the verge of lunacy;" and with a fine sense of fitness, it selects for so doing a time when more men of position, culture, and intellectual eminence are openly concerning themselves with the subject than at any previous time in its history. It talks of "that insignificant fraction of Spiritualistic phenomena which is not demonstrably vulgar imposture;" either ignorant of or ignoring, with the acumen of the ostrich, experiments which the least instructed of the readers of "LIGHT" are perfectly familiar with, whatever the *Daily News* writer may be. It is an open disgrace to a paper that loudly boasts of its liberal tone and advanced culture, that it should be thus conspicuous for ignorant and illiberal abuse of an unpopular subject.

M. A. (OXON.)

MILTON AND DARWIN.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—“H.” will find “The grassy clods” that I quoted (with an insignificant variation) in “Paradise Lost,” vii. 463. In the same letter, further down, “Nephitism” is a misprint, I need hardly say, for *Nephilim*, the race mentioned in Genesis vi. 4, and whose extinction by the Flood is implied because their name only occurs after it in remarking that certain tribes “were accounted to be of the Nephilim”; implying that they were not really so.

Your printer made a change in my initials, but I willingly remain as he pleases—

E. G. L.

SIR,—Your correspondent “H.” will find the quotation he seeks in Book vii., line 463, of Milton’s “Paradise Lost,” but in the edition which I am referring to (1730) it is rendered in the present tense, thus: “The grassy clods *now* calv’d, *now* half appear’d,” &c.—Yours truly,

ROBT. W. CANN.

Harleston, February 18th, 1882.

MR. FOWLER’S CHALLENGE.—MR. W. Yates, hon. sec. of the Nottingham Spiritualists’ Society, in the course of a letter to the *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express*, makes the following statement:—“This week Mr. Fowler, of Liverpool, has altered the form of his challenge, and now he states he will give £1,000 to Mr. Cumberland for his own use, and a similar sum to the Liverpool charities, if Mr. Cumberland will produce by means of conjuring, under the same conditions and tests, the same phenomena as those which have been produced in the presence of the most scientific men of the age, and others whose veracity stands unquestioned.” The letter of Mr. Yates was called forth by the appearance of Mr. Cumberland in Nottingham, where, as usual, he pretended to expose Spiritualism. Mr. Yates quoted the letter of the Rev. J. Page Hopps, which appeared in the *Leicester Post* at the time of Mr. Cumberland’s visit to that town.

DARWINISM.

"There was an Ape in the days that were earlier;
Centuries passed and his hair it grew curlier;
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist,
Then became he a Man and a Positivist."

Mortimer Collins.

"For these are the now dark ages, you see, of the popular press."

Tennyson.

The opinions and teaching associated with the name of Mr. Darwin have for some time past infested the path of modern thought, and as they are beginning to taint some of the Spiritual tenets which are now making such decided progress, the opportunity should not be allowed to pass of examining and testing this intrusion into the science and philosophy of the age. Darwinism professes to expound some of the most important difficulties and aspects of Creation by a theory of Evolution based upon three principles, termed—(1) "The Struggle for Existence;" (2) "Natural Selection;" and (3) "The Survival of the Fittest."

I propose to shew that these popular and plausible hypotheses have no practical basis or existence in reality; or that they have no such influence as their author attributes to them; that they are mere chimeras, and, considered scientifically, are in fact a clumsy apparatus invented for the purpose of concealing ignorance. In conducting my argument I shall confine my remarks more especially to the animal creation. In discoursing on this subject I think we must start with the belief in three propositions.

1. That two great principles of nature are Reproduction and Destruction.
2. That all living things have their food or prey.
3. That all creatures are bound, when they arrive at maturity, to get their own living; and that their dispositions and habits are modified by circumstances.

In attempting to elucidate his peculiar and superfluous system, Mr. Darwin lays great stress upon "Variability," but he admits that he is profoundly ignorant of its laws; and he also acknowledges that he cannot decide what degree of influence to attribute to conditions or surrounding circumstances. He professes not to know whether habits precede organs or organs precede habits in the order of creation, but he thinks that they are both developed together.

Thus feebly equipped for the voyage, he launches his little vessel of Science on the ocean of Nature. Thus endowed with an abundant store of ignorance, he entertains no scruples and feels no diffidence respecting his power and qualifications to teach mankind in general. Thus clothed in flimsy armour and bearing a sword of lath, he complacently enters the arena of philosophy to challenge all other expositors of Creation.

I do not denounce any man for being ignorant; but I cannot help feeling indignant when no amount of ignorance of the mysteries of Nature is felt as an impediment to their attempted elucidation.

Mr. Darwin starts with a theory of "the struggle for existence." Would he be surprised to hear that in Nature there is no such law? What is "the struggle for existence"? Mr. Darwin admits that it is "a metaphorical expression," so that his system is partially based upon a metaphor! This notion is certainly sufficiently shadowy and unsatisfactory for the foundation of a scientific argument; but the question is, has it any real and positive significance in relation to the facts of Nature? I deny that any order of animals is doomed to struggle for existence in the life-long, structure-moulding sense contemplated by Mr. Darwin; if there is any struggle in the matter it is to work out destruction, not preservation. Let me as an example and illustration of my meaning take the case of a single race of animals—the elephant. What is its struggle for existence? In its youth it is fed by its mother, in its maturity it has nothing to do but to seek out and help itself to the food Nature provides. Its principal enemy is man. If man did not hunt and destroy the elephant for the sake of its ivory, it would multiply to such an extent that in the course of a few hundred years there would scarcely be standing-room for all the elephants which would be produced in Asia and Africa; without taking into consideration the difficulty of obtaining food. Can the elephant's destruction by man be considered in any sense "a struggle for existence"? An elephant may perhaps pass fifty years of its life without even seeing a man, and then "the struggle" between the two does not last many hours or probably many minutes. Can this brief incident in the career of an elephant be called, with any proper deference to the meaning of words, "a struggle for existence"?

In any case the death of the animal, at some time, is inevitable, and falling a victim to its enemy after a short contest cannot be scientifically termed "a struggle for existence." Let us, however, suppose that the elephant does not suffer a violent death: when it becomes too old or too sick to eat it simply lies down and dies, and its body becomes food for vultures. To call such a life and end "a struggle for existence" is to indulge in metaphorical, platitudinarian, scientific cant.

All animals that, as a rule, are destined to be the prey of other animals, can only be said to struggle for existence so long as they are pursued by, or are in the clutches of, their foes. Such a catastrophe only occurs to some among many. Can the many be said "to struggle for existence"?

The search for food which Nature provides, or, under special conditions, withholds, is not "a struggle" on the part of the animal creation. The creature flourishes or succumbs to its fate as its wants are satisfied or craving, and no "struggle" on its part will protract its existence a moment longer than the laws of Nature permit and ordain. Of course man can exterminate any creature which he may determine to destroy; but such a consummation is the *artificial* result of man's choice, and by no means dependent upon a decree of Nature. Man is the lord of creation, and he can modify it by his will.

Furthermore, I contend that no such thing as "natural selection" is possible. It is a practical and logical absurdity. We must take great care to clearly distinguish between selection and affinity. The idea of selection involves the fact of choice by an intelligent and independent selector for a certain purpose. Artificial selection is easily understood and managed. Man exercises his discretion and brings together picked animals for a special end and obtains expected results. Here Man proposes and Nature disposes; but under the government of Nature uncontrolled by man, she cannot propose, she can only dispose. There is no satisfactory evidence in existence to lead us to any other conclusion. In this case we are compelled to dispense with the essence of selection; how then can we obtain its results?

Mr. Darwin argues that in the course of untold ages an animal somehow "becomes" gifted fortuitously with some freak or development of organisation, which being an improvement and found to be a benefit to the creature so endowed, is perpetuated by natural selection and the law of heredity.

No supposition can be more entirely the figment of a mind disturbed by, or wandering in search of, baseless theories. Any organic or structural deviation from an animal's model, however slight, is an impediment to that animal's existence, and injurious or destructive to its special aptitudes.

In the case of those creatures who undergo a metamorphosis, the transmutation as a rule must be rapid and complete, and during this process their former vital powers and organisation are suspended while they are being invested with their new functions and attributes.

Mr. Darwin teaches that man is descended from an ancestor of the ape family; and he draws this inference on account of the resemblance which can be detected between man and the ape in form, habit, and expression. No argument can be more senselessly fallacious than this method of reasoning from similarities. We cannot practically trace the origin of man farther back physiologically than his own ovule, which is a microscopic object, not distinguishable in any way from the ovules of any other animals. Thus a rat, a bat, a horse, a dog, an elephant, and a man originate from ovules apparently identically alike in every respect. This fact alone ought to open the eyes of the Darwinians to the fallacy of their position; because, if Nature can, in the course of a few years or a few months, develop from apparently similar germs, creatures so entirely different in structure and qualities as a man and a rat, never making a mistake in preserving the individual identity of the two products, and never by any possibility losing her control over the growth and reproduction of such distinctly diverse objects, what necessity is there, I ask, to go back, say half a million years, to guess how a man or a rat originated, when in this year of grace we have the originating germs under our eyes? In the ovule of the man there are contained and concealed all the elements of his future being; and in the ovule of the rat all the form and faculties of that interesting and agreeable rodent.

Why then need we go farther behind these animals to endeavour to track the source of their origin? If we pursue our search through the possibilities of a million years we shall never get beyond the egg; and when we find that the egg reveals all that we can possibly discover, why should we

waste our precious time in reading, writing, and criticising big books dealing with the most elaborately useless hypotheses which cannot enlighten us?

There is not a particle of trustworthy evidence to shew that man has existed on this earth more than six or seven thousand years, and why we should wish to establish a longer pedigree for him I am at a loss to imagine.

The opinion that the horse and the ass, the cow and the sheep, are descended from common ancestors; that the large dogs emanated from the wolf, and the small dogs from the jackal; is uttered without even a spark or pretence of proof to justify it. It simply sets common-sense at defiance.

Some innocent and offended dissentients cry out, "Oh, Mr. Darwin says that we are descended from monkeys." His disciples frantically or sneeringly retort, "Mr. Darwin never said anything of the kind. You do not understand him." The rejoinder is scarcely ingenuous, as Mr. Darwin's own words are that man is descended from "an ape-like" animal—a branch of the genus *Simia* developed by "natural selection." Now we are justified in asking what kind of an animal this "ape-like," ancestral creature was. Was it an ape, or something higher or lower in the scale of being than an ape? What was the first budding improvement which natural selection seized on for development? Any alteration in its structure in the direction towards humanity could scarcely have fitted it for the work of a man, while the change in its organisation must have rendered it difficult for the creature to get its living as an ape; so that the honour thus thrust upon the ape-like animal must have made its existence precarious if not impossible; unless, indeed, the poor thing upon whom Nature was trying such strange experiments, was cast into a profound and prolonged slumber, and that it afterwards awoke one fine morning to find itself Darwinianly famous!

Some naturalists have made the sapient discovery that certain creatures partake of the colour and aspect of the places where they make their abode, and that the purpose of the disguise is that such creatures may be concealed from their enemies. Thus tigers are said to have stripes to resemble the long grass in which they have their habitation, and the spots on the leopards are supposed to have some mysterious connection with the speckled appearance of light darting through trees. Scientific gentlemen utter this opinion without being in the slightest degree aware how preposterous it appears. If Nature has any such intention as that attributed to her by her expounders, she is a greater bungler than I take her to be; and she must be in her dotage to suppose that she can protect her *protégés* by such a display of feeble strategy; for if she has any such purpose she is singularly unfortunate in her efforts to accomplish it. She is thus supposed to exhibit towards certain of her subjects a degree of favouritism which, if proved, would earn and deserve a vote of censure from the rival party. Nature, however, is too sensible and impartial to do anything so absurd as her ambitious delineators would have us believe. She leaves all her children to choose their own mode of self-preservation in accordance with their subtlety, skill, and powers of contrivance.

In a recent number of *Knowledge*—a publication so named on the *lucis a non lucendo* principle, I presume—there is a review of a book by Sir Edward Beckett on this subject of Darwinism, in which the author very satisfactorily shews that the spider must have made its web complete from the first, otherwise it would be useless. The reviewer contends that the web was gradually evolved, and he also cites instances of imperfect cellular construction by the bee. His argument is entirely unsupported by a particle of evidence, and is, in fact, a gratuitous piece of intolerable nonsense. Whenever the bee has made imperfect cells, the defect has been accidental or due to the want of proper materials, and not to any undeveloped skill on the part of the constructor. Doubtless there are different species of bees which have different modes of making their nests or cells, but who shall say that any one of these modes is faulty if it fulfils its purpose? I should like to see in vision the rudimentary spider or bee gradually groping its way through centuries of effort; through the teaching of "Struggle for Existence," "Natural Selection," and "Survival of the Fittest," to its final triumph for securing and perfecting the means of its future existence! Could not the Darwinian evolve the picture from his "inner consciousness"? What a clumsy, roundabout method of creation the hypothesis involves!

What shall we say about Mr. Darwin's last principle—"the survival of the fittest"? It is simply and definitely scientific slang—nothing else! In Nature everything is "fittest" in its

respective order, degree, and locality. When the purpose of any particular creation is fulfilled and ended, such a creation is extinguished; and the finest specimens are perhaps the first to feel the exterminating influence of the destroyer. Even the existence of Agnostics and Positivists is probably not without some useful purpose although at present inscrutable to us.

I never read any books professedly scientific in which there were so many "ifs" and "buts," and "possibly," and "probably," as appear in Mr. Darwin's works. Such a style of conducting an argument is fatal to the formation of sound, lucid, scientific ideas. The author maunders and twaddles on through thousands of wearisome pages, every one of which is open to some serious objection. To call such workmanship science and literature is to degrade both.

Mr. Darwin very properly acknowledges the existence of the Deity. The scientist gives a familiar nod of recognition to the Almighty, and then passes on to the study of his own exquisite scientific superstition.

The creature does not seem disposed to entertain the idea of an Infinite Creator eternally at work; personally, or through his appointed agents, superintending His productions; moulding every variety of form; delicately and artistically decorating the aspects of Nature with the most wonderful harmony of colour and proportion; organising His everlasting or ever changing designs; tracing the expression of His creations and endowing living beings with faculties according to His intention of their use and destiny!

To an Infinite Creator what can be more easy, pleasant, rational, and necessary than infinite creation!

For reasons thus briefly told, I am compelled to come to the conclusion that Mr. Darwin has altogether failed to solve the problem of the Creator's mode of dealing with His creations.

NEWTON CROSLAND.

London, February 20th, 1882.

"AN APPEAL FROM AN INQUIRER."
To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I was attracted by a letter in last week's "LIGHT," signed S. W. Watson, complaining of the difficulty which the writer found in obtaining admission to the adytum of a circle advanced in Spirit phenomena and communion. He is only one of a large class for which I feel much sympathy. Those who have gone through the initiatory processes for obtaining these by earnest, continued, and patient investigation in their own families, have earned for themselves the wondrous proofs and "tests" which reward only such patient investigators. I will endeavour to explain some of the reasons why the admission your correspondent desires is so difficult. During my experience, extending over many years, I have invariably found—and I think I shall be borne out by others in this assertion—that the addition of an inquirer, especially one with the Thomas-like spirit which Mr. Watson frankly admits, has always had a disturbing influence. Each new person seems to bring with him his surrounding Spirits, only too eager to seize an opportunity of introducing themselves. These sometimes give misleading names and create great disturbance. I have suffered from them myself in the earlier days of my investigations with my own family, and have been obliged to interrupt our sittings sometimes for weeks together, until the intruder or intruders have taken their departure. The doubt and mistrust inseparable from the mind of a recent inquirer, however earnest and sincere his wish to be convinced, disarranges the harmony of the family circle, and this has afterwards to be restored; added to which the communications of a private and well-directed circle are sometimes of so personal and sacred a character that they would not be understood by, and are often withheld, when a neophyte is introduced, who perhaps after all may only desire to satisfy curiosity by "seeing something," without an earnest feeling in the matter. This is clearly not Mr. Watson's case, but I should advise him to sit with some intimate friend or relation in whom he has perfect trust and to try for himself. It is the only royal road. I have had given to me a sign or watchword from my own guardian Spirit, without which I never venture to sit even in my own family circle, so indispensable is some such precaution in the study of high and esoteric Spiritualism.

CHARLOTTE FITZGERALD.

The Ladbroke Hall friends have formed themselves into a society, called the West London Spiritual Evidence Society, meeting at 4, Talbot Grove, Ladbroke Grove-road. Services on Sunday at 11 o'clock in the morning, and 7 o'clock in the evening. Tuesday and Thursday, seance at 8 o'clock.—W. HARLING, Hon. Sec.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

SECOND SERIES.

This series of Spirit-Teachings, like the former, is made up of selections from a great mass which have been automatically written during a series of years. They are selected on no other principle than that of printing what has been valuable to the person for whom they were originally given, in so far as this can be done without trenching on what is merely of personal and private application. The latter consideration excludes a great mass of what would otherwise be interesting and valuable matter. The phraseology has been preserved, as far as possible, intact, names only being omitted. The series follows directly on the first, from which, indeed, it is separated only by the accident of its publication in another journal, and after some considerable interval of time. The publication is resumed in deference to many repeated requests.

M.A. (Oxon.)

No. XVII.

[At this period we were accustomed to the presence at our séances of extremely delicate perfumes, introduced, as was said, for the purpose of harmonising us. In my "Researches" I have described at length phenomena of this kind, and it is sufficient to say now that the perfume would fall in sprays from the ceiling, and at times would be wafted round the circle in waves of scent-laden air. Various sweet odours were thus diffused, sandal wood and verbena being favourites. On the occasion to which the following communication refers, argumentative conversation had caused inharmonious discussion, which is always, in some way or another, fatal to success. Here the perfume was suddenly, instantaneously changed into the most pungent and offensive odour of something like peppermint, only more rank and intolerable. The tablecloth and garments on which the liquid fell were purified only by long exposure to the air, and the house was pervaded with the odour.]

I want to know what caused that abominable smell? You talk about harmony. We were harmonious enough, and that would not be the way to increase our harmony?

The conditions were very far from harmonious. The odour would have been good, but that it was spoiled by the conditions, which were bad and inharmonious.

Why?

Because of the influence, to us inharmonious, which pervaded the room and the house.

Why inharmonious?

It was so, and we could not act in it. Moreover, there were alien influences present.

What?

We do not know, nor do we concern ourselves with them save to exclude.

But I don't see how good scent should have been changed into peppermint because of that.

Yet you know that it was so changed.

No. I only know that I smell peppermint.

We tell you how it came. Moreover the interruption of our work always causes disturbance; and especially when the interruption is displeasing to us.

I thought it likely that we could not get much; but I did not expect what came; it occurred once before, a year ago.

It is not for you to say what may occur after such disturbance as has interrupted us. It mars our work, throws us back in it, and prevents us from carrying it on fairly. If proper conditions were secured you would not have such scenes, but as they are not, we cannot help it; we can but deplore the cause.

Yes; but you know what you call proper conditions are not to be had. Isolation either of house, circle, or medium is impossible. I insist enough on the conditions which should be had: but we can't have impossibilities.

Nevertheless we are hindered; and time must elapse before we can resume our original state. It would be better to wait.

But how are we to know?

You might know well that time must elapse. You do know. And everything is against us now. It needs not that we point out to you that the time and the work you do, and the state both of the Spiritual and material atmosphere, render communion both precarious and undesirable. Such communing can but result to you in the evolution of noisy manifestations of force, or in the production of that which annoys and disturbs you as the odour did. If you choose to meet under such circumstances we cannot help it. We always urge you never to meet for the sake of meeting. But we have long left off all attempts to make mortals understand the delicate conditions which govern our manifestations. They desire evidence of it; they have learned no more as yet: and so long as that is given they do not much value its quality.

But we do.

• Do you indeed! Then you do not exercise due discretion in

eliciting from us our message. It could not be given under such conditions as those of which we complain. It is always better to stop if nothing occurs readily.

But you don't seem to write now as you used. Are manifestations going to cease?

They have not ceased at all yet. Rather they have grown. But you all need appreciation of the delicate conditions under which alone true communion is possible. When these are not present all we can do is to fence you round from the dangers into which you have obtruded yourselves: and in which it seems to us that men do not believe, because they are unable to see them; even as the ignorant do not dread the subtle infectious poison of whose existence they can take no cognisance by their rude senses. You see not: therefore you know not. Nor do we write for the sake of writing. We regulate our messages according to necessity. We do not find in you a progress in faith which would warrant us in imparting a large access of knowledge. We must go slowly on.

Faith! I can't govern that. Surely you would increase my faith more by giving me a reason for many things which now are utterly unreasonable. What merit in believing against reason? Faith! That is mere blind credulity.

We do not wish that: far otherwise. But we desire progress and we see rather retrogression. You do more good to others than you get for yourself.

Well, that is the grand law. Is it not?

Only part. You need to meditate more, and to weigh the truth.

What is truth?

You are learning it by slow degrees.

Then the vast mass of mankind is in great error, and even those who are being taught by Spirits are not always taught as you teach.

Truth is variable, and what is truth to others may not be truth to you.

All which proves that there is no truth at all.

No! It proves only that you and your fellows are not able to enter into Divine mysteries. You can but learn with slow and steady painstaking.

We fancy we could learn a good deal faster than you are inclined to teach; and we fancy, too, that we have learned and unlearned much that you say.

Doubtless unprogressed Spirits do teach in error much that you learned to know as error. They are but disembodied men, and share their fallacies. We have nothing to do with their errors. The truth is spreading fast, and a great development of it is impending. You will know: nay, good friend, you do know, only you are more liable than you were to mental impressions; we will not do you the injustice of saving you from the discipline which is necessary for you. You will find your own difficulties answered best in answering those of others. + IMPERATOR.

"THE REVERIE."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Permit me to draw your attention to the fact that the poem entitled "The Reverie," published in the last number of "LIGHT," and signed James Edmeston, is a transcript, word for word, of the first half of a poem bearing the same title and signed Conder. The author was the Rev. Josiah Conder, an eminent Nonconformist divine, and the poem itself has been familiar to me since childhood. S. T. SPEER, M.D.

13, Alexandra-road, N.W., February 19th.

INDEPENDENT SLATE-WRITING.—In the recent visit we received from Charles E. Watkins we obtained the following communication written between two clean slates when in close contact, and a bit of pencil put there before being closed, the medium holding one side, and two of our family the other, in broad daylight: "My Dear Father, Mother, Brother and Sister—It is now fourteen years ago, I think, since I passed away from your natural sight; but, dear ones, think not that I am gone forever, for am I not now near you, and do I not now write you these few lines? I say am I not now writing you? God only knows how hard we do strive to come to you; but we cannot always come when we wish. I wanted rather to have come yesterday, but I could not. If I had succeeded in coming yesterday it would have been at the anniversary of my birth into Spirit-life.— Lovingly, ANNA McEWEN LONG." This was written Dec. 1st, and it had not come into our minds how long our daughter had been in Spirit-life, neither the day when she departed. Surely, when we thought it over, it was just fourteen years the last day of November. The medium knew not her married name, neither that she always retained our family name. The matter of the communication is not so very wonderful, but the fact that it comes from the Spirit-world and from a dear one who was so glad to send us a word, makes it very important and interesting to us.— Yours truly, S. G. McEWEN, Westfield, N.Y.

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.

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

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

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

Our 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.

THREE YEARS IN A HAUNTED HOUSE.

On June 8th, 1880, I called on Mrs. P., whom I have known from a child, for the purpose of hearing her experience in the haunted house at C., which she lately occupied. In the year 1868, Mr. P. having occasion for a residence at C., was in negotiation with a gentleman, who was willing to let his house on very favourable terms, his wife having taken a great dislike to it. In fact, he said, she would not stay there on any account. After Mr. P. had agreed to take the house, the landlord mentioned odd noises that were heard about the house, and that it was said to be haunted. As the house was then agreed for, and Mr. P. had no belief in anything of the kind, he thought it better to go on, requesting only that no hint of the matter should be given to Mrs. P., who was in ill-health. Mrs. P.'s bedroom was over the pantry and passage, with steep winding back-stairs abutting upon it. They had not been there long when, in the middle of the night, she heard the long iron bar that fastened the shutters of the dining-room slammed down, and noises exactly as if someone was forcing his way into the house. This occurred perhaps thirty or forty times, and when Mr. P. (who was frequently absent) was at home, she would get him to go and look, but when she was alone she often went herself, and they always found everything undisturbed. On one occasion, when in bed, she distinctly heard steps slowly coming upstairs which stopped opposite her door, but on her going out no one was there. They often heard sounds as of people moving about in places where really nobody was. One time Mr. P., who was sitting in his study opposite the dining-room door, heard someone open that door. He then heard the jingling of keys and the opening of the cellaret, of which nobody had keys except himself and Mrs. P. Wishing to see what wine was wanted for, he crossed over to the dining-room and found no one there.

They found that the maids as well as themselves heard footsteps and noises of people moving about. There was a favourite dog in the house which at one time was in bad health, and one night the maids heard her distinctly panting upstairs as if laboriously mounting step by step, and when she got nearly up they heard her apparently roll tumbling down from top to bottom. They rushed out to see what had befallen her and found that she was not there at all. There was a water-tap on the first floor landing and a basin to catch the drippings where the dog might drink, and Miss P. (who was then a child of six or seven) told me that she had repeatedly heard the dog (as it seemed to her) lapping violently at this basin. She went several times to see, and finding no reality in the sounds, she ceased to pay attention to them. She is now about fifteen or sixteen, and she gave me an account of a scene which took place towards the end of their stay at C., of which she has the most vivid recollection. Her parents had gone out to dinner, and she was sleeping alone in the upper part of the house, with only a younger sister of three or four in another bed. She awoke in a great fright, hearing something moving under her bed. She

raised herself up and put one foot out of bed, intending to rush out of the room, but she became motionless with fright when she saw rising up from the foot of her bed, between that and a chest of drawers which stood a foot or two off, the figure of a man in a large slouch hat, with something like a cloak thrown over his shoulder, concealing the lower part of his face. He moved across the room and went into a large cupboard on the opposite side. She then recovered her power of motion and rushed downstairs to the maids in the kitchen, where her mother found her sobbing on the nurse's lap when she returned from her party. They treated it as a bad dream, but the girl is certain it was not, and Mrs. P. assured me that she gave exactly the same account of the apparition on the night of the occurrence.

Almost to the last Mrs. P. had no suspicion of anything like haunting, but a few months before their leaving in 1871 circumstances occurred which led her to talk to the maids and to a charwoman who occasionally assisted, and she found that it was well-known in the neighbourhood that the house had the reputation of being haunted. It was about ten o'clock at night when Mrs. P. being alone in the study, clearly, as she thought, heard the sound of scrubbing the kitchen floor going on for some time. Thinking it an odd time for such an operation, she went down and found the maids quietly sitting round the fire. The immediate cause of the final explanation was another occasion when she was alone in the study and heard steps coming down the back-stairs till they came just opposite the study door, when a tremendous crash was made as if a scuttle of coals was dashed to the ground. Mrs. P. rushed out, and finding nothing, went down to the kitchen, where the maids had heard nothing of the crash that had alarmed her, and then for the first time she heard of the reputation of the house being haunted.

By an odd coincidence, just as Mrs. P. was making her appointment with me, an old friend happened to call, and told her that one morning, after she had left the house, when the maids came down they found that the heavy hall table, which would take two men to lift, had been moved from the wall opposite the door, where it usually stood, to near the door.

31, Queen Anne-street.

H. WEDGWOOD.

IS THERE ANY REALITY IN DREAMS?

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I am not a Spiritualist, but, in common with many others, I have often been struck with what has appeared to be a remarkable phenomenon in dreams. My past experience has clearly proved to me that there is in many dreams something more than mere results of indigestion and imaginary visions. Take an incident that has just come under my notice. Staying at a friend's house, our conversation turned on the high moral and intellectual qualities of the departed husband of one of our number. Strange to say, our host had dreamed on the previous night that the deceased was present with him, and that they had conversed together as freely and intelligently as when they were bosom friends on earth. Our host stated that he had not been previously thinking of the deceased, neither could he in any way account for the remarkably natural appearance of his friend and the vivid details connected with his visit. Another of our circle described the deep impression made upon her mind by a recent vision of a lady acquaintance of hers. The lady, who resides at some distance, appeared to the sleeper to have been claimed by death as one of its victims, and was formally encased in her coffin. The narrator had not seen nor had communication with this friend for months, neither had she been thinking of her prior to the incident. Can any of your readers furnish explanatory causes of such dreams?—Yours truly,

H. W. S.

THE B.N.A.S. AND THE NEW SOCIETY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have heard whisperings about a new Society for Psychological Research, under the auspices of some distinguished men, and I am glad if such a Society is really to be established—provided no injury is done to the B.N.A.S., of which I have the honour and the pleasure to be a member. Some modifications of the old Society may be needed, but one thing is certain—it must not be allowed to suffer, and I am disposed to think that, with a little extra effort just now, it might be placed on a firmer foundation than ever. Above all things, I hope that no member of the B.N.A.S. will forsake it for the new Society. For myself I hope to be a member of both.—Yours truly,

AN OLD SPIRITUALIST.

MR. EGLINTON IN CALCUTTA.

Testimony of a Professional Conjuror.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have to thank you for kindly inserting my two letters giving an account of letters being brought to me here from London instantaneously, and it may be of interest to your readers to know that I duly received confirmation of these manifestations from my friend in England by mail. Since these accounts were written I have received other letters in the same way from another friend.

As was to be expected, Mr. Eglinton's marvellous séances produced no little excitement and also I may add not a little hostility, slander, and abuse, but we have done the best we could to convince all who really wished to investigate of the truth of our philosophy.

A month or so back Mr. Kellar, who has a world-wide reputation as an exceedingly clever conjurer, arrived in Calcutta and performed nightly to very crowded houses, his chief attractions being an *exposé* of so-called Spiritual manifestations. Mr. Eglinton's séances were at the same time exciting a great deal of comment, which was much increased by the publication of the following letter from Mr. Kellar in one of our daily papers:—

A PROPOSITION.

To the Editor of the "Indian Daily News."

SIR,—I have followed with much interest the correspondence in your columns regarding the Spiritualists, and more particularly the accounts of manifestations said to have taken place in the presence of a gentleman now on a visit to India in the capacity of a medium. I am far from wishing to sneer or throw discredit on what is said to have taken place, and what has only reached me on hearsay. At the same time I should be glad of an opportunity of participating in a séance, with a view of giving an unbiased opinion as to whether, in my capacity of a professional Prestidigitateur, I can give a natural explanation of effects said to be produced by Spiritual aid. I trust that my character as a man is sufficient guarantee that I would take no unfair advantage, or violate any of the conditions imposed at a séance to which I was invited.—Yours, &c.

Calcutta, January 12th, 1882.

HARRY KELLAR.

Many of our friends wished to accept the challenge and at once ask Mr. Kellar to come to some of our séances. We, however, felt that it would be simply useless to ask Mr. Kellar to an ordinary dark séance, or to in any way countenance the acceptance of any challenge. We determined, however, to become personally acquainted with Mr. Kellar, and if we found him to be as honestly desirous of investigating as his letter professed, to give him, if possible, an opportunity of seeing some manifestations for himself. He accordingly came to have a chat at our invitation and we were much pleased with his way of talking.

He assured us that he had never seen any Spiritual manifestations that he could not account for as a conjurer.

A few evenings later we asked him to come and dine with us, and we would see if any manifestations would be forthcoming. He came on the evening of Tuesday, 24th January, and after dinner we sat in the light, the result being Mr. Kellar's conversion to a belief in the reality of the phenomena, at all events. I will, however, let his letter, which appeared in the paper on the following day, speak for itself.

To the Editor of the "Indian Daily News."

SIR,—In your issue of the 13th January, I stated that I should be glad of an opportunity of participating in a séance, with a view of giving an unbiased opinion as to whether, in my capacity of a professional Prestidigitateur, I could give a natural explanation of effects said to be produced by Spiritual aid.

I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Eglinton, the spiritualistic medium now in Calcutta, and of his host Mr. J. Meugens, for affording me the opportunity I craved.

It is needless to say I went as a sceptic, but I must own that I have come away utterly unable to explain, by any natural means, the phenomena that I witnessed on Tuesday evening. I will give a brief description of what took place:—

I was seated in a brilliantly lighted room with Mr. Eglinton and Mr. Meugens. We took our places round a common teak-wood table, and after a few minutes the table began to sway violently backwards and forwards, and I heard noises such as might be produced by someone thumping under the table. I tried to discover the cause of this movement, but was unable to do so. After this Mr. Eglinton produced two common school slates, which I sponged, cleaned, and rubbed dry with a towel myself. Mr. Eglinton then handed me a box containing small crumbs of slate pencil. I selected one of these, and, in accordance with Mr. Eglinton's directions, placed it on the surface of one of the slates, placing the other slate over it. I then firmly grasped the two slates at one of the corners; Mr.

Eglinton then held the other corner, our two free hands being clasped together. The slates were then lowered below the edge of the table, but remained in full view (the room remaining lighted all the time). Instantaneously I heard a scratching noise, as might be produced by writing on a slate. In about fifteen seconds I heard three distinct knocks on the slate, and I then opened them and found the following writing:—

"My name is Geary. Don't you remember me? We used to talk of this matter at the St. George's. I know better now."

Having read the above, I remarked that I knew no one by the name of Geary.

We then placed our hands on the table, and Mr. Eglinton commenced repeating the alphabet until he came to the letter G when the table began to shake violently. This process was repeated till the name of Geary was spelt.

After this Mr. Eglinton took a piece of paper and a pencil, and with a convulsive movement difficult to describe, he wrote very indistinctly the following words:—

"I am Alfred Geary of the *Lantern*; you know me and St. Ledger."

Having read this, I suddenly remembered having met both Mr. Geary and Mr. St. Ledger at Cape Town, South Africa, about four years ago, and the St. George's Hotel is the one I lived at there. Mr. Geary was the editor of the *Cape Lantern*. I believe he died some three years ago. Mr. St. Ledger was the editor of the *Cape Times*, and I believe he is so still. Without going into details, I may mention that subsequently a number of other messages were written on the slates, which I was allowed to clean each time before they were used.

In respect to the above manifestations I can only say that I do not expect my account of them to gain general credence. Forty-eight hours before I should not have believed anyone who had described such manifestations under similar circumstances. I still remain a sceptic as regards Spiritualism, but I repeat my inability to explain or account for what must have been an intelligent force that produced the writing on that slate, which, if my senses are to be relied on, was in no way the result of trickery or sleight of hand.—Yours, &c.,

HARRY KELLAR.

Calcutta, January 25th, 1882.

This is the more interesting from the fact that shortly before Mr. Kellar's first letter appeared, some correspondent had written to the papers suggesting that all that was necessary to convince the whole world was to convert some eminent conjurers to a belief in the reality of the phenomena. I replied to this, sending to the paper the declarations (as printed in "LIGHT") of Houdin, Jacobs and Bellachini. This, however, was met by the rejoinder that such testimony was of no value as these gentlemen were probably in collusion, but that if we wanted to prove the truth we could take advantage of the presence amongst us of Mr. Kellar.

The publication of Mr. Kellar's second letter appears to have silenced our correspondent, who, up to the present, has not again rushed into print. As Mr. Kellar was still sceptical as to dark séances—knowing what he, as a conjurer, could himself do in the way of deceiving people in the dark—we gave him the opportunity of attending one at my rooms last night. Besides Mr. Kellar, Mr. Eglinton, and myself, there were six other sitters, all well-known in Calcutta, viz.: Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Nicol, Mr. Mackillican, Mr. Proy, Mr. Reilly, and Lord William Beresford (Military Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy). Mr. Eglinton purposely seated Mr. Kellar next to himself and gave him the opportunity of accounting for the various manifestations that speedily took place in any way he could. We had the usual powerful physical phenomena, one noteworthy feature being the levitation of Mr. Eglinton, who rose to such a height that he compelled Mr. Kellar to stand up on the table to hold him, thus disproving the theory that the levitation was done by means of a telescopic pole. After the séance we had a long talk, and Mr. Kellar at once stated his utter inability to account for what had taken place by anything known to him as a conjurer. He offered to pay £1,000 to anyone who could produce similar manifestations under the same conditions, and further, that if Mr. Eglinton would agree to produce such phenomena on his stage, he would engage him for six months at £100 a night. I believe both Mr. Washington Irving Bishop and Mr. Stuart Cumberland had the pleasure of Mr. Kellar's personal acquaintance; so perhaps they will kindly put themselves in communication with Mr. Kellar, and find out "how it is done."

I cannot speak too highly of Mr. Eglinton as a medium. During his stay here he has given upwards of fifty séances, besides any number of slate writing manifestations in private. During the whole series we have only had three or four evenings without result, but I regret very much to have to add that despite all this he has not met with such appreciation as he deserves. Of a truth the path of a medium is beset with difficulties, and it does not speak well for those who are indebted to

mediums for the conviction of the truth, that so soon as troubles or offences come, the mediums are left pretty much to their fate. I do not make these remarks in any unfriendly spirit, but having followed the movement closely for several years I cannot help being struck with the apathy, indifference, and sometimes open hostility, of those who call themselves Spiritualists, towards their well tested mediums when troubles come.

Without good mediums the cause could make no progress whatever, and it should be the sacred duty of every one who claims to be a Spiritualist to do everything in his power to shield such from adverse influences. Truly there is not much cause for wonder that mediums should wish to withdraw from the movement and seek occupation in any other walk of life, when their efforts are so little appreciated, and they find themselves attacked both by friends and foes.

Trusting to have the pleasure of meeting you in England shortly,—Yours ever,
J. G. MEUGENS.

Calcutta, January 30th, 1882.

A DEFENCE OF "RE-INCARNATION."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

Sir,—For the first time I have had the misfortune of being unable fully to appreciate an argument on a subject of the greatest psychological importance, from the very able pen of "M.A. (Oxon.)"

At p. 74 of your last issue he says:—

"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?"

Why assumed? We know that the child dying prematurely is bereft of training. This is no assumption, but a fact. But who ever said that this earth is God's only school? Re-Incarnation never taught that Spirits are re-embodied always in the same world, but that we may have come from other material worlds, and that, after one or more probations, we may choose other schools, although many seem to prefer returning to previous earthly associations.

Again "M.A. (Oxon.)" says: "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." The Infinite is, of course, omnipotent; this is the old argument. But experience teaches us that, as regards humanity, these are His ways.

Further on "M.A. (Oxon.)" says: "The designs of Infinite Love are not frustrated by any accident, as man deems it." Quite so: we entirely agree. But, "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 far-seeing wisdom, and the working out of an orderly design." Here again I am in accord with the views of the writer. If by "other spheres," "M.A. (Oxon.)" means material spheres, he is a Re-Incarnationist, and I congratulate him on that; but if he means progress in spiritual spheres, our ideas are as far apart as the poles,—firstly, because in the case of an infant, one day old, he would be deprived of the necessary advantage of at least one incarnation; and secondly, there would thus be created a privileged caste of Spirits uncontaminated by earthly contact, which would not be consistent with justice. Re-Incarnation gives us a clear insight of the reasons why so many of the human race leave this world in infancy; but as the explanation would carry me too far, I leave the investigation of this point to the industry of the willing student.

With all due deference to so enlightened and earnest an investigator of truth as "M.A. (Oxon.)" I would remind him that Spirit communications are always tempered by the opinions and preconceptions of the people amongst whom they are given, which is proved by the many obvious errors committed by such adepts as Swedenborg and Behmen.

Would that I could beat time with "M.A. (Oxon.)" on this vexed question, as I do on every other point of the Spiritual philosophy. But, who knows! Rome was not built in one day.

—Very truly yours,

G. DAMIANI.

29, Colville-road, Notting Hill.

February 20th, 1882.

P.S.—I trust that in the coming discussion next Monday (27th inst.) with the Spirit Tien-Sien-Ti, some light may be thrown on the momentous question of Re-Incarnation.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

Many of our readers will be aware that early in January a Conference of persons interested in Psychological Research met in London at the invitation of Professor Barrett, of Dublin. At that Conference a committee was appointed, which made its report to an adjourned meeting of the Conference held on Monday last. As the result of these Conferences, and of the work of the committee, an association is now established under the designation of the "Society for Psychical Research."

We have been furnished with the following statement of the objects and purposes of the Society which will we understand, be substantially if not verbally adopted as the basis of its constitution.

- (a) To unite students and inquirers in an organised body, with the view of promoting the investigation of certain obscure phenomena, including those commonly known as Psychical, Mesmeric, or Spiritualistic; and of giving publicity to the results of such research.
- (b) To print, sell, or otherwise distribute publications on psychical and kindred subjects; to afford information to inquirers into these subjects by correspondence and otherwise; to collect and arrange facts respecting them; to open libraries, reading-rooms, and other suitable premises and offices; and generally to do all such other things as may be conducive to the attainment of the above objects.

NOTE.—To prevent misconception, it is here expressly stated that membership of the Society does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation, in the physical world, of forces other than those recognised by physical science.

The names have also been given us of those who have already agreed to take an active part in the work of the Society at its commencement, with power, within certain limits, to add to their number. It is intended that a number of committees should be formed from among the Council and others, under exceedingly elastic arrangements, and that such committees shall undertake special branches of work.

The names are as follow:—

PRESIDENT:—Henry Sidgwick, Trinity College, Cambridge.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:—Professor W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E.; Arthur J. Balfour, M.P.; John R. Hollond, M.P.; Professor Balfour Stewart; W. Stainton Moses, M.A.; Hensleigh Wedgwood.

COUNCIL:—Professor W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E.; Edmund Gurney, Trin. Coll., Camb.; W. Stainton-Moses, M.A.; Frederic W. H. Myers, Trin. Coll., Camb.; Charles C. Massey; Walter R. Browne, M.A.; Hensleigh Wedgwood; E. Dawson Rogers; Mrs. Boole; Dr. Wyld; Walter H. Coffin, F.L.S., F.C.S.; Alexander Calder; Desmond G. FitzGerald; Fras. W. Percival; Dr. Chas. Lockhart Robertson; Edward T. Bennett.

It will be seen that, while the new Association seems intended to embrace a field of inquiry almost bewildering in its extent, it will in no way interfere with, or supersede, the B.N.A.S., or any of the existing societies for the pursuit of Spiritualism. Indeed, it is calculated to help them, by encouraging and systematising the work of a large number of students and inquirers into cognate subjects, the investigation of which we, as Spiritualists, believe is calculated to lead the searcher after knowledge to an acceptance of Spiritualism.

Any further information as to the Society may be obtained from Mr. Edward T. Bennett, The Mansion, Richmond Hill; who is at present acting as hon. sec.

THE DISCUSSION UPON RE-INCARNATION.—We remind our readers of the discussion which is to take place on Monday evening next on the question of Re-Incarnation, in the rooms of the B.N.A.S., 38, Great Russell-street, W.C. The event will be of interest on account of the question being debated under slightly novel conditions. The affirmative will be opened by Miss Arundale, and the negative maintained by the chief Control ("Tien") of Mr. Morse. The meeting constitutes one of the "Evenings with Mr. Morse," and no doubt the discussion will maintain the interest which these meetings have created. Miss Arundale is well qualified to deal with the topic, and a thoughtful exchange of opinion will do good to all concerned.

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN has promised to lecture as follows:—February 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.]

KANT UPON SPIRITUALISTIC PHENOMENA.

After remarking that upon certain suppositions, the scarcity of apparitions would be more strange than their frequency, Kant continues:—

“This difficulty may be, and in part is, removed. For the representation made by the human soul of itself as Spirit through an immaterial intuition, when it regards itself in relation to beings of a like nature, is wholly different from that in which it is represented as a *man*, by means of an image originating from corporeal impressions not related to other than material things. It is indeed one and the same *subject*, belonging at the same time to the visible and invisible world, but not the same *person*, since the representations of the one world, by reason of its different quality, are not associated with ideas of the other; and therefore what I think as Spirit is not remembered by me as man; and conversely, my condition as a man does not enter into the representation of myself as a Spirit.* However clear and perceptive may be the representations of the Spirit-world, this is not enough for me, as a man, to be conscious of them: how much soever, then, the soul may attain by inference to the conception of itself as Spirit, this can with no man be a matter of experience.

“This heterogeneity of spiritual representations from those which belong to our bodily life must not, however, be regarded as making it impossible that we should be sometimes conscious, even in this life, of influences from the Spirit-world. For though they cannot pass immediately into the consciousness of man, yet according to the law of associated ideas they can excite related images, and awaken those analogical representations which are their symbols. For the self-same subject belongs to this and the other world, and to this subject belong the respective representations of both, which are connected together. We can make this conceivable by considering how our higher rational ideas, which approximate to the spiritual, ordinarily assume, as it were, a corporeal investiture for the sake of clear perception. Thus the moral attributes of the Godhead are represented under the figures of anger, jealousy, pity, revenge, &c., and poets personify the virtues, vices, and other qualities of nature, yet so that the true conception of the understanding appears through these images; thus also geometry represents time by a line, although the agreement between space and time is only one of relations, and thus, indeed, by analogy, yet the quality not coinciding. It is thus that even with philosophers the representation of the Divine Eternity appears as endless time, much as one may guard against confounding the two things; and one great reason that mathematicians are commonly indisposed to grant the Leibnitzian monads is that they cannot avoid thinking of them as little molecules. Therefore, it is not improbable that spiritual impressions might enter our consciousness by exciting images which are related to them. In this manner spiritually imparted ideas would be clothed for us in the signs of our ordinary speech, the sensible presence of a Spirit in the semblance of a human figure, and the order and beauty of the immaterial world in such images as delight the senses, and so on.

“Yet will these phenomena be confined to persons whose organs† have an unusual sensibility, and in whom the images of the phantasy, conformable to the inner condition of the soul, can be more strengthened by harmonious movement than happens, or should happen, ordinarily, with healthy men. Such rare individuals would in certain moments seem to perceive objects as external, which they would regard as spiritual objects apparent to their bodily senses, while in fact they are only a composition of the imagination; yet so, nevertheless, that the cause of them is a true spiritual influence, not immediately perceived, but manifest to consciousness only through the related images which assume the appearance of perceptions.

“In these phenomena, ideas of education, and erroneous conceptions otherwise implanted, would play their part, delusion being mingled with truth, and a real spiritual impression at the root of them being translated into the shadowy forms of sensuous things. It will be conceded that this faculty could with difficulty be utilized to develop into clear intuitions the impressions from the spiritual world, since the spiritual is necessarily so closely interwoven therein with the brain-wrought

fancy, that it must be impossible to distinguish the true from the gross illusions involving it. Such a condition, moreover, as it presupposes a disturbance in the equilibrium of the nervous system, set in unnatural motion by the activity of the spiritual sense, would, in fact, denote disease. So we should expect to find in a clairvoyant (*Geistseher*) also a visionary (*Phantasten*), at least as regards the images accompanying these phenomena, since representations, by nature foreign to, and incongruous with, those of our corporeal condition, force themselves in, and introduce ill-assorted images into the outer sense, whereby a long train of wild chimeras and marvellous extravagances are hatched, juggling the senses, notwithstanding they may have a true spiritual influence for their foundation.

“Thus, we are at no loss for an apparently rational account of the stories of ghosts and other spiritual influences which are so often brought to the notice of philosophers. Souls departed and pure Spirits can never, indeed, present themselves to our external senses, nor have anything in common with matter, yet they can so act upon the spirit of man, who belongs with them to a great republic, as to awaken in him representations clothed in related forms after the laws of his imagination, and producing apparently external objects conformable to them. This deception is of the sense, and however great may be the mixture of undiscriminated figments of the brain, we may still conjecture that a spiritual influence underlies it. I need not detain the reader with applications of this method of explanation. The adaptability of metaphysical hypotheses is such that this one can be easily accommodated to every such narrative, even before an investigation into its truth, which in many cases is impossible, and, in still more, discourteous.”—“*Dreams of a Ghost-Seer Interpreted by Dreams of Metaphysics.*”

WHY DO NOT SPIRITUALISTS PROSELYTISE?

To the Editor of “LIGHT.”

SIR,—The above question asked by your correspondent, T. Heywood, and published in “LIGHT” of 11th February, is one of great importance, and one which may be looked at under many different aspects.

I fully believe that your correspondent's doubts might be asserted as facts, that is, as a general rule, viz., “that the bulk of Spiritualists do very little indeed, if anything at all, in that direction.”

I can most fully give credit to Mr. Heywood for his good intentions and noble sentiments, but I believe that were he to scrutinise the cause of so little proselytising, his conclusions would be somewhat modified.

It is quite true, on superficial examination only, that the moment people are in possession of certain knowledge which causes them to realise the fact that to them “old things are passed away, behold all things are become new”—a knowledge which many prize more than life itself—it would only be natural that being in that happy state they would not leave a stone unturned until their friends were in possession of similar knowledge. But would it be an advantage to the cause, or to many of the proselytes? I think not. Let us honestly and fearlessly look at things as we find them, and we shall be obliged to admit that the cause of Spiritualism is not, in general terms, on a right basis, and that until we attain a state of sanctity under God's blessing, we cannot expect to be a light to mankind.

I cannot endorse your correspondent's opinions when he says, “There are many outsiders willing, if not anxious, to hear the whole truth about the matter, and who do not know the means to attain their object.” On the contrary, all are called, but few are chosen. And why? Because, as a rule, outsiders are merely actuated by curiosity, and instead of beginning at the A B C, wish all at once to dive deep into a matter they do not understand, and often they are disgusted and turned into enemies instead of brothers. To my mind there is nothing more to be regretted than to see those open shops at so much per head for making proselytes. It does succeed sometimes, but only when the seekers are really in earnest. None, however, will deny that all seekers can find the high road to true Spiritualism, which will, if they are true to themselves, lead them to obtain blessings unknown, a happy peace of mind which passeth all understanding.

For that purpose let us invite them to well conducted meetings where prayer for God's blessing will not be conspicuous by its absence, and let them enjoy the greatest boon given to men, (viz.) trance lecturing; and let us circulate broadcast good literature, free of offensive arguments against

* In a note, the author illustrates this dual personality by the supposition that in deep sleep, which leaves no memory of dream on awaking, the soul is active and conscious.

† Hereby is understood, not the organs of outer sense, but the sensorium of the soul, as it is called: that is, that part of the brain whose activity, as philosophers surmise, accompanies the different kinds of images and representations of the thinking soul.

others. Then we may rely that if we make but few proleptics, they will be of the right sort.

Let us give glory to God for what we know, and recollect that all good gifts come from Him, who will in His good time add sheep to Christ's fold; and let us daily raise our hearts to Heaven, praying that all impediments to the progress of true Spiritualism may be removed.

A JERSEY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST.

Jersey, 14th February, 1882.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

"The Medium and Daybreak."

A sermon, by the Rev. C. Ware, of Plymouth, upon "Peter's Trance and its Lessons," is the opening article, and the following is a summary of the conclusions advanced:—"Was Peter a Spiritualist? If to have intercourse with and communications from Spirits make a Spiritualist, then Peter was pre-eminently a Spiritualist, for there was nothing in his experience more familiar to him than this. In the first chapter of this book we find him taking a leading part in soliciting spiritual interposition. They were electing a new apostle to complete their circle (Acts i. 26). . . . Look at the results of that first circle held in the upper room; they there realised the development of such extraordinary mediumistic power, that they no longer needed the humble phenomenon of casting lots. Peter himself became a clairvoyant, clairaudient, trance, inspirational, and healing medium—that is, he saw and heard spirits; under their influence he healed the sick, and by their inspiration and guidance he taught, prophesied, and laboured in the spiritual field, winning thousands to a knowledge of the truth and to faith in Christ.

"And this was the case, in a measure, with each one of that little community. It was a common experience with them; they knew they were guided, influenced, and inspired by invisible intelligences—by Jesus in particular—and were thereby enabled to exercise gifts and perform works which were impossible to their normal and natural abilities. Look at Philip and Stephen, and Paul, and Barnabas—can we wonder at the increase of Christianity in those days, when we read such words as these, 'And the multitudes gave heed with one accord to the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those which had unclean spirits they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied and that were lame were healed' (Acts. viii. 6, 7). These were the grand characteristics of Primitive Christianity, this endowment of power, this spiritual intercourse, this performance of extraordinary works—these SIGNS AND WONDERS. It was SPIRITUALISM, and Spiritualism is true and genuine Christianity, and as with the phenomena, so the teaching is the same—not the grotesque fictions called dogmas, not a system of theology concocted by councils and priests to impose upon the human understanding and enslave the human conscience, but the simple principles of Truth, manifestation of Divine Love, demonstration of immortality, necessity of pure morality, and a Christ-like life as a preparation for the future; the life of the spirit being the real life. One lesson we have dwelt on, viz.: that the phenomena with which we are familiar were not only common in the days of the early Christians, but were essential elements of Christianity, i.e., Christianity as we find it in the Acts; hence we are satisfied that the two are identical, and that what we call Spiritualism is genuine Christianity."

"The Banner of Light."

In the course of a letter from S. P. Kase, the following interesting record of phenomena is given, as recently witnessed by the writer in Philadelphia:—

"Thinking the remarkable Spirit phenomena occurring through the mediumship of Mrs. Thayer to be worthy of record as a matter of interest to the public, I write to say that, at my residence, on the evening of January 18th, a number of persons being present, that lady seated herself in a small room, adjoining the more commodious sitting-room, the curtains closing the entrance. The Control then requested Mrs. Kase to sit beside the medium, which she did. While thus seated, with the medium's hands in her own, Mrs. Kase distinctly felt hands on her head, neck and shoulders, and presently the control said she might retire.

"She had scarcely taken her seat in the larger room when the curtains at the door of the room she had just left parted, and Mrs. Thayer appeared, a beautiful spirit-form standing by her side, at a distance of about two feet, both spirit and medium being plainly seen by all. This was several times repeated, the Spirit making a low bow each time it retired. There was present with us a well-known lawyer of Philadelphia, who said he was entirely convinced of the possibility of the return of loving spirit-friends, but had never before seen anything satisfactory to his mind of the truth of Spiritualism. To use his own words, he felt himself 'completely floored.'

"Mrs. Thayer has her usual manifestations of flowers, frequently in the daytime.

"One other incident: Mrs. Thayer and her daughter were with us one Saturday afternoon in May last, at which time I was

quite ill. In the evening the daughter's hand was controlled, and it was written that there was a band of chemists and physicians present who had looked at my situation, and gave it as their opinion that unless I took active measures for relief I would soon be with them. We were then directed to place a pitcher under the table and sit around it, and they would bring some medicine.

"We followed the directions, and in a short time, to our very great surprise, recognized the fragrance of herbs. We lighted the gas, and taking up the pitcher found it to be one-third filled with medicine. This I took, as per directions, and was materially helped thereby."

"The Herald of Progress."

The controls of Mr. J. C. Wright contribute an essay upon "Re-Incarnation."

The editorial article thus comments upon the failure of the late attempted convention in Newcastle:—

"The meeting slowly gathered, every one seeming under a dense cloud of uncertainty and humiliation. All programme and system and routine of action seemed shattered to atoms, and the originators of the scheme sat with despair depicted on their countenances, until a godly number (far more than expected) were gathered together."

In a letter from C. G. Oyston upon "Organisation," the plan of a district committee is revived. It was tried some years since, but met with so little favour, either in the district or from the officers of the Newcastle Society, that it collapsed in a very short period. Mr. Oyston says:—

"However, there is one method of working which I would like to submit to the Convention in as brief and concise a manner as possible. Let Newcastle be the centre for the two counties, Northumberland and Durham. Establish a fund to be supported by each Spiritualist individually. Let that money be utilised for the purpose of engaging physical and speaking mediums. The committee appointed to be invested with power to make the necessary arrangements. Thus mediums could be sent into outlying districts in the two counties without serious inconvenience to small and weak societies or circles. The *Herald of Progress* could then be the organ of the movement in the North. The announcements could appear week by week in its columns, and thus a new interest would be created in its perusal and circulation."

"The Religio-Philosophical Journal."

A letter from Mrs. Sarah Drury Ladd, of Elmore, Ohio, contains the following satisfactory evidences of Spirit return:—

"When Dr. Slade was in Toledo last summer, my husband and I visited him, and, oh! such a visit—I never shall forget it. We were scarcely seated in a circle when my chair was raised entirely from the floor. Then the doctor took a double slate with a pencil point enclosed, laid one hand on the table, the other held the slates resting on my shoulder, and the slate was written full, a letter from Warric. Afterward we wrote many questions, the doctor not seeing the writing, and the questions were answered every time. Once the slate was taken from him, thrown upon the floor, and came up on the opposite side of the table in plain sight, with no human hand touching it—went back, was put in his hand and was written on, and three times I felt something touch my lap as distinctly as you could touch me. A chair on the other side of the room danced around, and the table was raised a foot from the floor. My husband was raised in his chair. There were many such manifestations, but the slate-writing was the most conclusive. I think he is a wonderful medium. Oh! how much good it did me, it was such a good letter from Warric. Thank God, our friends still live, and we shall miss them only for a little while."

The editor appends the following explanatory comments:—

"On Christmas Day, 1881, young Warren S. Drury was shot by ex-Governor Scott, at Napoleon, Ohio, and died instantly. He was the idol of a loving mother, and, as might be expected, the shock almost ended her life also; but after a severe illness she sought balm in Spiritualism, and her letter tells what she received."

The *Banner of Light* has the following kindly notice of "LIGHT":—"Agreeable to previous announcement, our London contemporary, *Light*, was enlarged from twelve to sixteen pages on the opening of the new year, and now comes to us with greater claims than ever before, upon the favour and support of every friend of spiritual truth, and liberal, progressive thought. Under the able management that has distinguished its course thus far, it seems destined to retain its advanced position as the leading periodical of its class in England. It has our best wishes for success, and our sympathies in its efforts to bear to those in darkness the light that comes to earth from the homes of the immortals."

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON, Goswell Hall, Sundays during February; BRIGHTON, February 28; GLASGOW, March 5; GATESHEAD, March 6; STAMFORD, March 12; NOTTINGHAM, March 19; CARDIFF, March 26; BELPER, April 2; PALMOUTH, April 16 and 17.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[*Adv.*]

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

BRITISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

The members and friends of the B.N.A.S. held a *conversazione* at 38, Great Russell-street, on Monday evening last, when there was a large attendance. Addresses were delivered by Mr. Desmond G. FitzGerald and Mr. Dawson Rogers; the musical portion of the proceedings was ably sustained by the Misses Withall and Mr. E. A. Tietkens; Miss Allan gave some clever recitations; and Signor Rondi and Mr. C. C. Pearson afforded much gratification to the company by the exhibition of some of their very beautiful paintings.

In the course of the evening the relation of the B.N.A.S. to the newly formed "Society for Psychical Research" was freely discussed, and though it was evidently felt that that Society would do good, and even important, work, and should therefore have the warmest sympathies of the members of the B.N.A.S., there was nevertheless a very strong conviction that the S.P.R., would proceed on altogether different lines from those of the B.N.A.S., so that even though it might be found advisable to modify to some extent the constitution and work of the B.N.A.S., it must be sustained as a separate and distinct Association, the two working amicably side by side.

Amongst the friends present we observed Miss Arundale, Mr., Mrs. and Miss Allan, Mr. E. T. Bennett, Mrs. Barnes, Mr. G. Butterworth, Mr. and Miss Burrell, the Misses Corner, Mr. W. H. Coffin, Mr. J. F. Collingwood, Mrs. and the Misses Cook, Miss Crouch, Signor Damiani, Mr. and Mrs. Deane, Mr. F. Everitt, Miss Ford, Mrs. FitzGerald, Mr. Desmond G. FitzGerald, Miss Lottie Fowler, Miss Glendinning, Mr. J. N. Greenwell, Miss Godfrey, Miss Houghton, Mr. T. Heywood, Mrs. James, the Hon. Mrs. C. Lonergan, Mr. R. W. Lishman, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Morse, Miss McKellar, Miss McCulla, Signor R. Parga, Mr. R. Pearce and Mrs. Pearce, Mr. E. R. Pease, Mr. C. C. Pearson, Mr. F. Podmore, Signor Rondi, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, Mrs. Rogers, and Miss Rogers, Mr. Frank Rogers, Miss Robertson, Mr. Thos. Shorter and Miss Shorter, Miss Schönberg, Mr. E. A. Tietkens, Mr. W. Towns, Miss Ullmann, Mr. Oswald Wirth, Mrs. G. Worth, Mr. E. W. Wade and Miss Wade, the Misses Withall and Mr. H. Withall, &c., &c.

GOSWELL HALL.

At the usual Sunday morning meeting Mr. Lishman read a very interesting and able paper, entitled "The Lessons of Science," for which a cordial vote of thanks was accorded him. In the evening Mr. J. J. Morse delivered the last lecture but one of the series; subject, "A Coming Creed." In referring to creeds of bygone ages, the Guides pointed out wherein they had been useful, also wherein they had failed, the latter principally being due to their want of elasticity. The creed of the future would be one to which all could faithfully subscribe, and would be fully expressed as "Life, Immortality, and God." The outcome of this coming creed will be intellectual freedom; political freedom, which will confer on the people their legitimate power, viz., to be the source of their own government; and religious freedom, which has been the bone of contention throughout so many ages, but happily is now, though slowly yet surely, drawing towards a realisation. As usual, this was a fine oration, and the hall was crowded to excess, and many are the regrets expressed that the course is so nearly run. Sunday evening next will be the last, when a most fitting subject will be discussed, viz., "The Day of Judgment." Miss Allan rendered "Face the Sunshine," by Lizzie Doten, with fine effect, and received well-merited applause.

Friends who are willing to assist at the forthcoming *soirée* will oblige by communicating with Mr. Swindin, 34, Pancras-road, N.W., or Mr. J. N. Greenwell, 15, Pakenham-street, King's Cross-road, W.C.—RES-FACTA.

CARDIFF.

The usual weekly meeting of this Society was held on Sunday evening last. Mr. Paynter read a paper on Re-Incarnation, in which he pointed out the general misunderstanding of the theory—even by eminent Spiritualists and "Spirit guides," especially referring to the current numbers of "LIGHT" and the *Herald of Progress*. He gave at the conclusion of his paper quotations from Re-Incarnationist writers with the object of shewing the grand ideas they shadowed forth of the solidarity of the inhabitants of the whole universe. A number of questions were put to, and answered by, the lecturer.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday last, the platform of the N.S.E.S. was occupied morning and evening by Mr. Dodds, of West Pelton, who delivered two thoughtful lectures upon Spiritualism. I observe a note in last week's "LIGHT," from the pen of Mr. W. C. Robson, stating that my information upon his resignation is incorrect. I gave it simply as information, and it came to me from two sources, both of which I considered most reliable. I believe my friend Mr. Robson is hurt because of his semi-private conversation becoming public. All I can do is to express my sorrow for this, but in justification of myself I may

state that before I wrote, his reasons had become pretty well known. Even members of the executive had, more or less, "let the cat out of the bag."

GATESHEAD.—OPENING OF THE NEW HALL.—Our Gateshead friends on Sunday last entered upon their new premises, the Central Buildings, High-street. The large hall, which is well lighted and admirable in its acoustic arrangements, will comfortably seat over 200 persons. One thing we noticed is that the friends have erected a solid and commodious platform, which is very useful for entertainments, &c. They have a large ante-room as well, which will accommodate very easily eighty persons. We also noticed that they had ventured upon a large fine-toned harmonium, which is really of great value in connection with the public services; and now we may state that this admirable effort of our Gateshead friends is due to the exertions and enthusiastic endeavours of a few working people, scarcely one among them being socially above the average employé of the workshop. More or less they have given freely in money and labour, and now desire to call upon their friends in the cause to render them any little assistance in their power towards clearing the debt incurred during this last month in the furnishing of their hall. Remittances to their president, Mr. H. Burton, 3, Clifford-street, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne, or to their secretary, Mr. J. M. Routledge, 10, Sutherland-street, Gateshead, will be gratefully received. On Sunday evening, at 6.30, as advertised, a crowded assembly of friends and strangers awaited the lecturer. After the preliminary singing and prayer, and a reading from the poems of Lizzie Doten, admirably given by Mr. Dawson, the president, Mr. Henry Burton, having congratulated the members upon the successful issue of their endeavours, which he hoped was an augury of future success, briefly referred to the advent and spread of the Spiritual movement, and how it had shed its influence over the world, laying hold of the thinker and scientist, ascending to the king upon his throne, and visiting as a bright and beautiful presence the home and heart of the humble cotter. He then called upon Mr. T. P. Barkas to deliver his lecture—"Summary of the Evidence upon which Modern Spiritual Phenomena are established." Mr. Barkas, on rising, was enthusiastically received, and he at once proceeded in his usual calm, clear, and forcible manner to summarise the facts presented to the investigator in connection with the most wonderful modern innovation. He carefully and ably weighed the evidence for and against the Spiritual hypothesis, and pointed out the impossibility of accounting for the indisputable facts procurable and occurring in the ranks of Spiritualism by any theory save that of the Spiritual. Some of his illustrations upon the reliability of testimony in regard to this subject were remarkably fine, and operated convincingly upon the feelings of his audience. The discussion shewed a thorough grasp of the subject, evidencing that Mr. Barkas had carefully held to the intelligent and demonstrative side of Spiritualism, which saves men from credulity and error, and preserves more surely than the rhapsody of heated oratory the truths of God in the heart, knowledge, and understanding of man. At the conclusion of the lecture, Mr. Dawson, in a few feeling remarks, proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer. Mr. H. A. Kersey seconded the proposition in his usual warm-hearted and sympathetic manner; and the motion, on being put to the meeting by the chairman, was carried enthusiastically. Mr. Barkas, in his reply, evinced great pleasure at having the opportunity of coming among the Gateshead friends, and promised that although he was beginning to retire as much as possible from platform work, he would favour them with a further illustration of his subject whenever they were in need of a lecturer.

QUARTERLY MEETING.—On Monday evening the first quarterly meeting of the G.S.I.S. was held in the ante-room of their new premises, the president in the chair. The report of the secretary for the quarter ending January 22nd shewed a membership of sixty-six persons, a library of about 130 volumes, and a balance in the hands of the treasurer of £3 16s. 6d. Mr. Joseph Stephenson and Mr. J. G. Grey were elected vice-presidents, and Messrs. Shield and Pope as hall stewards for the ensuing quarter. Mr. H. Burton was elected as representative of the Society to the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists, with which the G.S.I.S. allied itself some short time since. It was resolved to have a public tea on Easter Monday and a committee of ladies was formed to look after the arrangements. A committee was also formed to look after and gather subscriptions towards the harmonium and furnishing fund, comprising Mr. Martin, Miss Martin, Mr. H. Burton, Miss Wood, &c. The mode of service was afterwards discussed and arranged, and the meeting concluded. Mr. Lambelle will lecture at Gateshead on Sunday, March 5th, and Mr. Morse on Monday, March 6th.

NORTHUMBRIA.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. E.—As a Spiritualist you should give your cordial help to the B.N.A.S. If you had been an inquirer only, desirous of pursuing a scientific investigation, we should have referred you to the new Society for Psychical Research. If you can afford it by all means help both.

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 Guldenstübbe, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H. I. H. Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; 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-Clavairoz, 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.