

Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

No. 77—Vol. II.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1882.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

CONTENTS.

The Pence Hall Materialisations ..	293	The Nature of God	299
Physical Mediumship in France ..	294	Impressibility	319
Difficulties of Spirit-Identity	295	Mr. Eglinton and the Occultists ..	301
"Will-o'-the-Wisp"	296	Spiritualism and Theosophy	301
Views of a French Spiritualist	296	Progress in Russia	302
A Question for the Occultists	296	Spiritualism and Christianity	302
Spirit Teachings. By M.A. (Oxon.) ..	297	Instance of Spirit-Intervention ...	303
Attitude of Spiritualism to other Systems	298	Work in London and the Country ...	303

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

In collecting evidence for materialisation or form-manifestation I have more than once adverted to the extreme difficulty of estimating the exact value of published records. Even when no flaw can be detected in the narrative it is almost impossible to say whether the recorder is a person who is capable of exact observation, and whether his record is one that may be accepted as scientifically accurate. I have received a letter relative to my Notes on certain Pence Hall sances held with Mrs. Stewart as medium, and narrated by Mr. J. B. Robbins, of Terre Haute (Ind.) U.S.A. This letter, signed by D. P. Kayner, M.D., of St. Charles, Kane Co., (Ill.) is a useful comment on the difficulties that are met in sifting evidence. Dr. Kayner is a writer who has been more or less identified with Spiritualism since 1850, and was selected by Colonel Bundy to make a personal investigation and report on the marvels alleged to occur in the presence of Mrs. Stewart. His instructions were "to be careful not to be deceived on the one hand, nor to be prejudiced on the other, and to stay as long as might be necessary to reach the exact facts." In accordance with these instructions he remained a fortnight carefully investigating the phenomena. The report was published in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of September 20th, 1879, and was not of a favourable character. Passing by this, which I mention only as shewing his competence as a witness, I come to his letter of comment on my Notes of April 29th ult.

First of all, some statements made by Mr. Robbins, which I had quoted as material to the reality of the manifestations, are distinctly traversed by Dr. Kayner. Mr. Robbins stated that the séance-room was in a public hall, always open for general inspection; that the door leading to it was in full view so that confederates could not be introduced; and that a ventilator was so constructed that it could not be used for purposes of deception. On these several points Dr. Kayner writes as follows:—

"The séance-room is not 'in a public hall,' but in a room on the same floor as the medium's residence, adjoining her suite of rooms, and through which she passes on her way to the room containing a wardrobe in the rear of the cabinet. The entire suite of rooms is under Pence Hall. The door to this rear room was not 'in plain view of the spectators,' as they were carefully and for a specific purpose seated to the left and out of sight of this door, the view of which was carefully obstructed from all except one or more of the 'committee' or some of their confederates. The ventilator is a box 13½ in. by 10 in. inside and drops through the floor 2 ft. and 9 in. between the joists to connect with a smaller box from the outside of the building, and although its opening is barred the entire ventilator could be lifted out of its place, where the extreme width between the joists would afford space sufficient, if necessary to aid the show, to secrete not only 'the form of a child' but a dozen children, and could also be made to afford a means of entry for those children from the medium's private room, not over eight feet from the cabinet."

Other marvels recorded by Mr. Robbins are thus disposed of:—"The medium had vanished and in her place, holding high the vacant chair with exulting countenance, there stood the manly form of what we all recognised as Charley Smith, the superintendent of the Spirit-band." (By the way, the medium is a muscular woman with a powerfully-knit frame.) But to return, I too have seen the cabinet doors thrown open and what purported to be 'George Powell, brother of the medium,' as

we were told by the 'committee,' came out of the cabinet, took an apple from Mr. Connor, one of the committee, and thanked him for it, borrowed a knife from another and peeled and ate the apple, holding conversation of a trivial nature meanwhile; at other times the scene varied to eating caromels, &c.; while 'the medium' was seen by many sitting entranced in the chair and ringing a bell. At such times the light was turned down very low, on some occasions so low that with the aid of strong eye-glasses I could not see the black hands on the white dial of my watch without the aid also of a powerful magnifier. Once this performance was continued so long that my eyes began to get accustomed to the light, and, the cord which turned on the light working the valve a little more open, I distinctly saw the overdress and shawl which Mrs. Stewart took into the cabinet, lying flat and limp upon the chair and a mask to represent her face, with a bell attached to a frame, so that it could be rung by a thread of black silk extending from the chair to where the alleged Spirit was holding one hand at the back of the centre-post to which the doors fastened.

"I have also seen the tall 'manly form' of what purported to be 'Dr. Brock,' appear at the door of the cabinet, and have been requested by Dr. Pence to approach and shake hands with him, 'pull his whiskers and see if they were fast,' 'hold his hand while he dematerialised,' and to 'see if I could feel any pulse.' The whiskers were fast—but fast to the back of Mrs. Stewart's head—so fastened about her face that a dim light would suffice with many to cover the deception. The hand and wrist were cold and had a peculiar feel, and on a common examination no pulse could be felt, but on pressing the thick, close-fitting rubber glove encasing her hand and wrist heavily down upon the radial artery, I could count the normal pulse of Mrs. Stewart.

"The talking of 'Minnie' who claimed to be the control of Mrs. Stewart in the cabinet when the Spirit had pretended to go into the room in the rear of it, I found to be Mrs. Stewart talking behind the cabinet where 'the Spirit' had gone when pretending to pass into the other room. To accomplish this the door to that room was kept out of view of the sitters, and by being opened and shut twice—once on the disappearance of the 'Spirit' going and again on returning—made the deception complete."

Dr. Kayner's conclusion from what he saw is that "it was a deeply concocted scheme of fraud from beginning to end." He goes on to say:—

"It may be asked, 'Why do others get such astounding evidence of the genuineness of the manifestations if your conclusions are correct?'

"This is all easy enough. Mrs. Stewart has confederates who are cunning, and they are so distributed in the various hotels, boarding houses, and other business places, that everyone who goes to see these wonders is shrewdly 'pumped,' until enough of their history, expectations, and desires are learned to take them entirely by surprise, on account of the crafty manner in which it is presented to them."

And lest it should be supposed that he is a prejudiced witness, who has no belief in the possibility of such alleged phenomena really occurring, he testifies, "I am certain that Spirit-communion is an established fact, the truth of which I am ever ready to vouch for, and I have had indubitable evidence of full form materialisation." He is, therefore, so far as can be judged, an impartial and competent man. It will be seen how difficult it is, under existing methods of investigation, and with the loose system of reporting that unfortunately obtains, to arrive at a clear and indisputable view of what has actually occurred.

I have felt bound to give the two sides of the question, and am content to leave the matter to the judgment of my readers. Whether Mr. Robbins or Dr. Kayner be right, or whether (as is most probable) the truth lies between them, is not what I am concerned to argue. Fact and fraud will probably be inextricably mixed up so long as the conditions of investigation invite deception, and a chance of pecuniary gain furnishes so plain a temptation to supplement real phenomena by spurious imitations. Various circumstances have tended to shew of late that promiscuous circles held for the gratification of persons who have no proper sense of the risks that attend

them, or for the satisfaction of an idle curiosity, are beset with Spirits of a low order, who are the probable sources of much fraud. It has also become clear that the conditions under which such circles are held need stringent purification. And further, it is clear that the temptation to a medium, whose very bread depends on the fees received, to counterfeit when the real phenomena cannot be had, is enormous. It is as sure as most things can be that an unbroken flow of real psychical phenomena cannot be counted on. The opportunity for fraud is, therefore, manifest; and the checks upon it, under existing conditions of observation, are practically worthless. Even if the medium be so tied up and secluded that the fraud cannot conceivably proceed from a human source—and how rarely is that done!—we have still to reckon with the elusive and delusive Spirit-agency to which we have given such an opportunity for imposture.

What is the remedy? Mediums must live: and “the labourer is worthy of his hire,” we have high authority for maintaining. The problem is not to be solved by sweeping condemnation of public mediumship, nor is it possible, so far as I can see, to devise any means that will make it certain that all sources of error are eliminated, short of insisting on a clear view of the medium. Transfiguration or transformation of the medium is a most interesting phenomenon when we know that it is occurring, but none of us, I suppose, desire to be perplexed by wondering whether on a given occasion we are observing a case of that description or a genuine materialization. Until that source of error is eliminated, it is impossible to be sure of what is taking place. If it is proved to be necessary that the medium should be in a measure secluded, that result may be attained by stretching across a corner of a room a small curtain, so arranged as to veil the face and upper part of the body, and to leave the hands and feet visible. But no such case has been made out in my opinion. Dr. Slade gets unimpeachable results by methods that are as simple as they are efficacious. He never retires from view, but sits beside the observer, while the materialized figures come out from behind a light, portable screen placed before a corner of the room. Other mediums have dispensed even with that arrangement, and obtain their results without any aid from a darkened cabinet, or secluded space. There are mediums in London now who sit at a table, held on either side by observers, while a partially materialized form, head and bust, forms over the table at which they are placed. This was the method adopted in the early days of the movement in London, and I cannot but think it was an evil day when cabinets were first introduced, and total darkness was insisted on as a necessary requisite for success.

It would be absurd, in our present state of ignorance, for any one to say dogmatically that such and such conditions are quite unnecessary, or are absolutely required. But it is open to us to say that some very much less portentous phenomena, obtained under perfectly satisfactory conditions of observation, are of infinitely higher value than any amount of dubious phenomena obtained under imperfect conditions, and recorded with emotional enthusiasm or looseness of attention to detail. It is also open to us to point to the dangers that beset the present methods of investigation; dangers in which all concerned share, but which especially press upon the medium. We have a right to ask, not only how far it is desirable to place ourselves in relation with the class of Intelligence that has done so much to bring bewilderment and contempt on what is known to the public as Spiritualism—the only type of it with which they are familiar—but also to ask ourselves how far we are justified morally in exposing a medium to such risk by our own foolish methods, and for the gratification of our own idle curiosity. I believe that such questions admit, in the sight of God and at the bar of conscience, of only one answer. The first step will be taken to a better and nobler spiritual epoch when we revise our methods, purify our own selves, and discountenance those conditions which invite and harbour fraud, buffoonery, and delusion, which sap the health of mediums, and expose them to unknown perils, and the cause of Spiritualism to merited obloquy and contempt.

It is by no means easy to do this without over-stepping the bounds of a wise discretion. The criticism which starts with the assumption that every medium is an impostor till the reverse is proved, is only less reprehensible than the credulity that swallows everything that professes to come from a Spirit, without thought or discretion, because unfortunately repeated

exposures of fraud have lent some colour to a hasty generalisation. But I gravely doubt whether any sweeping methods, which will uproot tares and wheat alike, are to be desired. The zeal which purifies should be combined with the discretion that is careful to differentiate. In this direction some remarks of the editor of the *Psychological Review* in the June number of this year seem to be worthy of commendation. It is a matter of the last importance, as I conceive, that all who value the good name of Spiritualism, and who desire to get at truth, not merely to fill gaping mouths, should work together to revolutionise the present methods of public investigation, and to bring them back more nearly to those which obtained in the early days of the movement. To this end mediums should set themselves to obtain phenomena in light sufficient for observation, and under conditions which make it impossible that deception should occur. And those who record phenomena for public information should be rigidly precise and accurate in what they state for our information. Even so there will creep in sources of error; but they will be reduced to a minimum. There will be wise folk who will sneer and refuse credence to the best attested and calmest recital of facts; but they will gradually yield to the weight of a carefully formed public opinion which produces for its credentials records in which logic can pick no hole, and destructive criticism can find no flaw. At present it is impossible to deny that the critics have full material for their criticism. M.A. (Oxon.)

PHYSICAL MEDIUMSHIP IN FRANCE.

The Spiritualists of Paris are now paying more attention, we see by the *Revue Spirite*, to physical mediumship than formerly. Dr. Michel writes an article in the current number on the subject. He considers that facts of a physical order are calculated to fix the attention of sceptics when exhibiting the action of forces of which they can give no account. He thinks our William Crookes might not have become a psychical philosopher had he not encountered such facts through the mediumship of Mr. D. D. Home and Miss F. Cook. In these times of realism and positivism, facts, thinks Dr. Michel, are required, and the rougher the facts the more potent they are with Materialists, who have to be acted upon through the senses and astonished by the incomprehensible agitation of matter. Of no use is it to appeal to a man's soul until the thought has been roused in him that he has one.

Dr. Michel speaks highly, for this purpose, of the mediumship of Madame Bablin. He has witnessed at sittings with her, in company with other investigators and under their own conditions, many of the phenomena with which Spiritualists in England have been long familiar, such as displacement of objects, floating of musical instruments while playing, lights in motion, production of caressing hands, large and small; the bringing in of flowers and branches of various kinds, and direct writing, one piece of which was a poem addressed to a lady in the circle, with the signature of her deceased betrothed.

Dr. Michel urges all who attend such séances to make records of the phenomena, which he thinks cannot be too numerous. He says that he is preparing the record of his own séances with Madame Bablin for the Press. A medical journal, the *Moniteur de la Polyclinique*, has for some weeks past been giving a series of observations upon Mr. W. Crookes' psychical experiments, and these are to be followed in the same journal by a narrative of certain remarkable psychical facts witnessed by Dr. Michel's friends and colleagues, Drs. Puel and Dupouy.

SPIRITUALISM IN FRANCE.—Further help in advocating Spiritualism in France has appeared, in addition to the establishment some time ago of *La Lumière*, in the recent bringing out of *L'Esprit*, published in Paris. We have received copies of the latter; they contain articles upon the general subject, and communications through mediums, from the Re-Incarnationists' point of view.

SOMNAMBULISM.—In this state a person performs a series of rational actions, frequently of a difficult nature, and with a talent to which he could make no pretension in the ordinary waking state. His memory supplies him with words and images of things which, perhaps, were never before at his disposal. He speaks fluently a language more refined than usual. He has not only perception of things through some other channels than the organs of sense, but the sphere of his cognition is enlarged far beyond the limits to which sensible perception is confined.—SIR W. HAMILTON.

DIFFICULTIES OF SPIRIT IDENTITY.

Will you permit a few additional remarks on the case of "J.P.T.," published in your issue of May 6th, and commented on in a communication by Mr. Frank Podmore, dated May 14th. Mr. Podmore's interesting letter refers to two cases where communications were received through mediums of entire purity and sincerity, being in one case the investigator's own children, and in the other a relative, a little girl of twelve—all writing mediums. It is not stated whether impressional or mechanical; but in regard to the main point involved, this is not of primary importance.

The special fact as stated in each case was the change that after a time took place in the character of the messages written, they being at first apparently genuine and reliable, and containing nothing but what was pure and elevating, giving also striking indications of personal identity; but suddenly becoming obscene and blasphemous, so that the investigator, a Baptist minister, became convinced that he had been imposed upon by some cunning fiend, who had personated in an ingenious and artful manner the persons from whom the former messages had appeared to come. This explanation Mr. Podmore seems to accept, and asserts, as one of the lessons to be derived from this experience, that "there can be no proof, in the strictest sense of that word, of personal identity;" that is to say, no reliance is to be placed on such indications as references to private conversations, peculiar modes of expression, handwriting, &c.

I agree with Mr. Podmore, that such a narrative is of great value, because it leads to the discussion of important principles. Indeed, if the incidents of such an experience cannot be satisfactorily explained, not simply *explained away*, Spiritualism must, literally and metaphorically, "give up the ghost." It is very difficult, however, to discuss the principles underlying these facts, because, being purely spiritual, they seem to be appreciated by so very few. Usually only mundane considerations are recognised, and on these no satisfactory explanation can be given. Thus, in the statement to which I refer, the unpleasant experience described is said to be the more inexplicable "from the absence of any motive for deception." People ordinarily sit down in a matter-of-fact way to "talk with the Spirits," and for a time they may get satisfactory answers. Curiosity suggests questions of various kinds, and suddenly they are confounded with vulgarity or falsehood, from which they start back in pious horror, thinking that all the time they have been holding converse with a "fiend" at the other end of the line, who has been cunningly personating their relatives or friends; whereas, if real piety or spirituality had been felt at the beginning, they would have been saved the *horror* and its inciting cause.

I have had a long and diversified experience with writing and other mediums, and I have found that at every instant while Spirit communication is going on, there is a liability to a change of control, either partial or entire. I have seen a message broken off completely by the mere *thought* of a person present, and I have seen the control utterly changed by a particular question, that indicated an idle or prying curiosity, a wilful scepticism, or a frivolous state of mind. An eagerness for "tests" is pretty sure to have this effect; while the best tests are presented unexpectedly, and without being sought. The following incident will illustrate this point: On one occasion, I was desirous of obtaining proof of identity from the Spirit of a friend's wife, in order to convince him of the fact that she still lived. The Spirit assented, and commenced the communication by writing: "I died in the room which we called the Blue Room;" then described the apartment more minutely, and mentioned a number of circumstances connected with her married life, entirely unknown to the medium or myself, for, after her marriage, the lady had resided in a remote city of the West. The husband, on receiving the message, replied, "— *did die* in the room which we called the Blue Room;" but there was nothing else in the communication that was correct. It seemed to me that, after writing the first sentence, the Spirit lost control, and another, or others, passed in, and continued the message (pitched as it was on a low test key) writing *anything*, without regard to the truth.

I have known, under certain conditions, the medium (my own son) commence to write communications, when, after a few moments, he threw the pencil down, saying, "I won't write what they want me to write." A brief but earnest prayer having been offered, the writing was resumed, and the following was written by the

medium: "Your prayer is answered; a heavenly, not a hellish, band is in control." Then my Spirit friends came one after the other, each attesting his or her identity by peculiar signs. I have been directed by a Spirit relation to ask the Spirits to sign their names, and write "In the name of God I sign my name, and attest the truth of this message." This does not appear to be necessary when thoroughly spiritual conditions have been established; but these conditions are liable to change, especially when new sitters are introduced, and in a mixed company. In the latter case, each one having his or her own spiritual surrounding, the influences become *mixed*. In the initial stages of a Spiritualistic experience, before a strong guardianship is established, and particularly if there is no high or definite purpose in obtaining the communications—merely the satisfaction of curiosity or personal gratification—these changes of control are apt to be frequent. The motives of sitters may be apparently good, but they must be strongly unselfish—must look to the good of others, or the guardianship of the higher Spirits will not be obtained. These Spirits do not expend their energies on triflers; they leave them to learn the lesson which they need.

The views of another correspondent of your paper, signed "Fritz," commenting on the same case, agree with my own. "Disastrous results follow the constant seeking for tests." Some of my friends—excellent, well-meaning people—have lost all confidence in Spirit communication from resorting to what I regard as foolish tests. These always attract "lying Spirits," who are eager to *fool* mortal inquirers. As "Fritz" says, "Prayer should precede the séance"—not mere solemn verbiage, but the prayerful, humble, and aspiring spirit, that seeks purity, and shuns selfishness. "Pure in heart and sound in head" must be who holds intercourse with Spirits, for there is a constant effort on the part of mischievous, mocking Spirits to "flow in," as Swedenborg says; and, when conditions permit their entrance, the guardians cannot keep them out.

That excellent work "From Matter to Spirit," contains many striking illustrations of this fact. The talented authoress shews that the wicked Spirits can *minge their influence*, and mar a communication, unless the *spiritual* condition of the sitters is strong enough to repel them.

Spirit identity *can* be established, if this principle is faithfully observed; and the circumstances referred to in "J.P.T.'s" case, and others similar to it, are not, as I think, to be explained by supposing a long series of deceptions by personating Spirits, but by a change of conditions that permitted the "fiend" to come in at the end.

The first experiences are more satisfactory sometimes than the later, because the very novelty of holding intercourse with the "dead" begets serious, if not spiritual feelings; but, as "familiarity begets contempt," the sitters become careless, and they sit down to *chat* with the Spirits, forgetting to close the door against intruders. Thus the "tramps" invisibly enter, and soon make their presence known by language appropriate to such characters; but, before doing this, they will enjoy the sport of puzzling or bewildering the mortal by all the personation in their power.

Spiritualism is not a thing to be trifled with. As "Fritz" says, "only the earth-bound, deceitful Spirits are drawn to those who abuse it." People may sometimes think they are proceeding properly, while they are violating the subtle laws on which pure intercourse depends; but the effect proves the existence of the cause. When SPIRITUALITY prevails, *the door is closed to deceivers*.

HENRY KIDDLE.

New York, June 6th, 1882.

DALSTON ASSOCIATION SOIREE.—The names of the Misses Sparey were accidentally omitted from the report of the Dalston Association soiree last week. These young ladies are always so willing to assist at such meetings that we at once repair the omission as an act of justice, due to them for the assistance so kindly rendered.

KEIGHLEY.—On Saturday, July 8th, the presentation of the portrait to the family of the late Mr. Weatherhead will take place. As was stated in our columns a few weeks ago, Mr. Weatherhead was one of the original workers in the cause in this country, and on the date mentioned it is intended to mark the deep sense of esteem entertained for him by the Spiritualists of Yorkshire by presenting a life-sized portrait of him to the family. The event will be the occasion of a large assembly of Spiritualists, and a full report of the proceedings will be given in these pages.

"WILL-O'-THE-WISP."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The "Jack-o'-Lantern," or "Will-o'-the-Wisp," is, we are told, due to the evolution of phosphuretted hydrogen gas in marshy places. May not, however, Spirits of a low and malicious order, bent on mischief, when they find a natural medium in the dark, under circumstances favourable to their malice, make use of this gas, found in marshy places, to suit their purpose, as other Spirits of a better class may use phosphoric oil from a chemist's shop, or bring in muslin from a draper's to adorn themselves withal? Or may not an evil Spirit, fond of marshy places, have the power to turn an *ignis fatuus*, that has its rise from natural causes, into a devious course for an evil purpose? This is certain, as your correspondent, "G. E. A.," of June 10th, remarks: "It is recorded of the Will-o'-the-Wisp, that it invariably leads its followers to the vicinity of water."

And folk-lore is entirely of the same opinion. I was calling on an old cottager some time back, and I was so interested by what he said that I wrote it down when I got home, and here is what was told me.

"Did you ever see a Jack-o'-Lantern?" said the old man. "Well," I answered, "I did see one once, when passing a swampy tract of country. I was on a stage-coach and the coachman and the rest of the passengers saw it also, and we made our comments on it." I think the coachman said (but it is long ago) that he often saw them while driving by that way. So probably this was only phosphuretted hydrogen gas taking its natural course. If any one had followed it one cannot tell what would, in this case, have been the result. But here is the old man's story.

"When I was a plough-boy, at Purbeck, I was sent to the blacksmith, who lived some distance off, with some harness to be mended. The blacksmith was at chapel; this delayed the work, and it was not till half-past nine in the evening that I could start for home.

"It was pitch dark, and as I went along a Jack-o'-Lantern came hopping before me. It was not above the size of your two fists. I was quite aware that Jack-o'-Lanterns came to lead you out of your path, so I kept my foot in the rut all along the country road, till he, the Jack-o'-Lantern, hopped over a gate where there was a pond close by, and tried to entice me there."

There seems to have been intelligence and calculation in the apparent allurer here, as well as a sentiment utterly wanting in pity and kindness towards a night-foundered child.

At the above very evident testimony of evil intention the boy was overwhelmed with fright, and taking to his heels rushed, he knew not where, till he came to a house. There they took him in, and one of the inmates accompanied him over the fields, and put him on his way home.

"I had not gone far," continued the old man, "before another (?) Jack-o'-Lantern came hopping before me, and tried to entice me to a swamp which lay on one side of my way; but I knew where I was, and went straight for home, half dead with fear. Never again would I go to that blacksmith's of an evening."

"If he had not kept his foot in the rut," broke in the old woman, his wife, "it might have been all over with him. When a Jack-o'-Lantern gets you in the water, then he sniggers; he laughs, you know. I've heard my father say that scores of times."

Thus we see the old woman brought forward the testimony of her father also, with respect to the traditional shady character of the Jack-o'-Lantern, or Will-o'-the-Wisp, or *ignis fatuus*.

"You call the Jack-o'-Lantern *he*," I said. "You talk as if you thought it knew what it was about; and by luring you into danger it had an object in view, and not a good one." "Just so," said the old man. I said I was inclined to agree with him.

What I would here point out is this, that these two respectable old people, as they are, the man from his own experience, and the woman from the teaching of her father, should not have had the remotest idea of accounting for the phenomenon except by a spiritual interpretation, as arising from the action of a sprito.

On the man's assenting to the woman's assertion that, "when a Jack-o'-Lantern gets you into the water then he laughs," I pressed the question: "Do you really mean to say that they are really *heard* to laugh—that they make the noise of laughter?" "Yes," was the reply. "But how," I rejoined, "can people know that they laugh when those who are led by them get drowned, and do not live to tell it?" This rather

lame special pleading on my part seemed rather to disconcert the old man for a moment, but evidently did not shake his faith.

MIRROR.

VIEWS OF A FRENCH SPIRITUALIST.

M. Maeder, of Paris, writes to the *Revue Spirite* that the Protestants of France are divided into two sects in antagonism to each other, called respectively the Orthodox and the Liberal. M. Maeder having been summoned, as one of the former, to a special meeting, in declining to attend called attention to the proceedings of the Anglican Council of October last. He announced that from orthodox Protestantism he had, after much study and observation, passed into the ranks of Spiritualists. In his letter he took the opportunity of thus summarising the present convictions of the majority of French Spiritualists:—(1) Man does not die, but continues to live through various stages of spiritual existence. (2) Man, an incarnated soul, endures successive experiences and trials on earth, and from the lower savage stage passes, progressing, into new lives on earth, to the state of the civilised man. (3) Arrived at the civilised state, ever incarnated for knowing, feeling, for having a better and better consciousness of the beautiful, the good, the just, and the true, he passes to other more advanced planets, according to his intellectual and moral progress. (4) Free will is the law under which he lives. The devil is an infantine invention; hell exists only in the conscience, anguished by evil, but happy in good. (5) Man, the artificer of his own future life, knows, through Spiritualism, that wise and immutable law, taking no account of time, forces him to progress; if he falls he rises again, the grief which he brings upon himself being a school for moderating his passions and raising his soul by the aid of good. (6) God is thus beheld, in His true aspect, as the wise and merciful Father, impartial and true; His infinite greatness and power are reflected in us, for our grander thought takes in all universal beauties. We learn that science, study, love of serious investigation, and devotion to humanity prepare us for other planetary or sidereal lives, and that we shall work for ever, more and more conscious of a greater and still greater approximation towards the God of all Humanities.

M. Maeder concludes his letter to the assembled orthodox Protestants by recommending them to follow the example of the Anglican Congress, and investigate Spiritualism, which truly and logically assigns everything to its place, continues the teaching of Jesus in spirit and in truth, and thus hastens the end of fruitless sectarian strife.

A QUESTION FOR THE OCCULTISTS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have investigated Spiritualism for ten years, and have long been convinced that some foreign Intelligence can communicate with me. I have received great help and kindness from many Spirits, especially from one who calls himself my guide. But now, upon studying the writings of Theosophists, in which I have found much which seems to be truth, and which explains the triviality of many of the "manifestations," I learn that the Occultists (who say *they know*) condemn all the Spirits as "shells," or *relique* of worldly-minded or bad people, and warn us against encouraging them. Now I write for information, and trust you will kindly insert my letter in "LIGHT." I can understand that some physical manifestations may be classed under their description, but do they mean to say that Spirits who shew themselves to be kind and good, and also possessed of great intellectual powers, such as my guide, who communicates by impression, and whose form no clairvoyant has ever seen, is also a "shell"?

It seems a dreadful idea to suppose that a great part of mankind after death are wandering "shells"—soon to become extinct; and if so are we to suppose that mediums in all ages have obtained all their high teachings either from these "shells," or else from their own souls? Where are the good and great who have passed away? Are they unable or unwilling to do anything for us even if we aspire and send up our earnest invocation to them, as I for years have done? Perhaps if you will kindly insert this letter some Occultist may answer and give an explanation which I am sure many will welcome at the present time.—I am, yours truly,

A. F. TINDALL.

30, Wyndham-street, Bryanston-square, W.

Emulation desires to excel by noble effort; Ambition desires to be installed in the seat of honour, no matter how.

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. XXV.

You seldom give me credit for much except that which obstructs you. It is refreshing to hear that I am progressing. But (since nobody else will say so) I maintain that I should never have had any conviction at all if I had not "proven all things," preparatory to "holding fast that which is good." Faith, you were the first to teach me, is poor compared with reasonable and reasoning trust.

It is not necessary now to go back over ground which has been done with. You needed the teaching that you had. And now you need to remember also that faith is a Divine gift which is indispensable to progress in truth. Because we bend the stick strongly in one direction you must not forget that there is another side to truth. We cannot write on this point now. But we have long said that weak faith was a drawback to you. It is stronger now, because, as we believe, you see more clearly than you did the reality of our work. It is well that you recognise it, however tardily. You may now understand the true import of the words of Jesus when he said to the doubter, "Belief has come by sight; blessed are they that have believed without seeing." Do you realise that?

In a sort of way, no doubt. But I still think that faith must have a basis of experience. I know there is a sublime faith which X. has, and which is very fine and noble, but which sometimes comes very near to folly, and which in daily life would be pure nonsense, and would expose a man to swindles of all sorts. I dimly see that it is sublime, though, and it is another proof that there is only one step between the sublime and the ridiculous. It is a pure gift. I have faith enough in some people and things; none in others, and I cannot help it. It is not my fault.

Partly it is. You have laid down too strongly for yourself a law that faith is credulous. You have not seen that in its essence lies that which alone can conduct to the heights. If any one should cautiously question every step he will not climb far. But we shall speak on these subjects at another time. The present is not suitable.

I have had a very interesting letter from ——. Can you add at all to the information given me, or confirm it?

Hereafter: but not now. We do not wish to enter into wide subjects now. Do not ask more. It is well that you wait and watch with prayer, and faith, always ready. For the days are days of peril, and you need have watchful hearts to steer a devious way through them. Verily the Adversaries are massed together, and it may be that a battle is at hand, the result of which will decide much. Be patient, and may the Supreme bless you.

[For a long time we had been forbidden to meet in circle. I made various attempts to get this edict revoked. This was in March, 1876.]

I am sorry that you should think it necessary to terminate our meetings. Indeed I hope very earnestly that you will not, for I know they were a source of pleasure. Could not the two go on together?

We have not spoken of terminating our circle meetings. We have but said that we are gradually withdrawing from you the external physical power of mediumship. The higher gifts will grow; the physical is fading. And we do not wish any meetings in circle until it has so far ceased as not to be renewed by sitting. If you were to sit frequently now, it would be fanned into life again. Hence we wish you to refrain from meeting till it is extinct. We spoke of getting some other physical medium. But indeed such material evidence as you need can always be had by our friends from available public circles, to which, however, we do not encourage you to resort. For the present it would not be well for you to meet; nor can we allow it till the physical power in you is extinct, or is so entirely under our control that we can use it with safety. At present it is not so.

Do you object to its use if it were under my own control absolutely?

No; but that will be long hence. We only refuse to allow a reserve of the power to be available for experiments which are dangerous, and which obstruct our work entirely. We cannot permit it on any ground. The researches which you are able to make in the direction you speak of will not be any bar to us, nor will they be developed in any way so as to impede the work we have on hand.

Then you do not anticipate any very rapid results from my endeavours. Can I advance them?

Yes, but we will not tell you now. We wish you to learn exactly what we mean.

Yes. You want us not to sit till you tell us, and by that time the phase of physical mediumship in me will be extinct, or under control. And you speak of supplementing that by using another medium, or so I gather. As to meeting, of course we simply cannot meet till you let us, and as to cutting off the manifestations except those given by you through me in trance, I have nothing to say personally. I should not hear, but should probably get the knowledge in some other way. But I fancy we should not all of us care for that. You know best. It seems to me useless to meet except under perfectly harmonious conditions. We have nothing to say so far as I see, and all details can be arranged when the time comes.

Yes. Farewell. The Supreme bless and keep you.

No. XXVI.

[I had made some inquiry about a person respecting whom it was important that I should have information. I had no direct earthly means of getting it, and, half by way of experiment, enlisted Spirit aid.]

We sent you information as to the man of whom you were enquiring.

C. S.—Yes? you sent it?

Magus caused it to be sent to you. We help when we can.

This new phase. Can you tell me of it?

It is not new; but a mere development of the old; even as that which is now old was a mere development of that which has been going on throughout your life. There never was a time when we did not guide you. From the time when you first drew the breath of earth-life you were under our protection and guidance, and that which for a long time was not objectively manifest has lately become so. That is all. For the future we propose to dispense more and more with material aids, and to act directly on your spirit. If we had done so exclusively before you would have thwarted us; as you can now, if you wish. But we have so brought home to you evidence of our power, and of our honesty and truth, that you are now disposed, as you never would have been otherwise, to trust us. Your life is consecrated to the work we have in hand, and no material obstacle outside of yourself can hinder us; for we are able to remove all. It was with yourself only that the risk lay.

I do not doubt your power, nor your truth. I must have my own judgment free, that is all. I am prepared to admit the beneficence and importance of your plans.

It is well. We shall work for the best. Remain passive; and do not be too eager. Let our friends know that we are always with them, and that though we do not openly work, we are not the less around and about them.

As to R——. Can you not help there?

There is much help given and all is going well.

You do not go in for healing?

Not as you understand; but we do heal, as you ought to know by this time.

But one reads of such wonderful cures by Spirit agency.

Only under certain conditions is that possible. We do not say that we can work such miracles, but we can aid. If you had more faith we could use you as a potent means of healing, but your physical health and lack of faith intervene.

I think I should be a very bad agent, for I am frequently ill, and I should have no sort of faith in my power.

Therefore, the power would be of no avail. But with faith it would be very potent.

I have no doubt that the magnetic power is very real. But I should be horribly afraid of conveying illness from which I am seldom free.

That is a real danger, and faith is required in yourself and in all surroundings, or harm would come. But we counsel you to be passive and to attempt nothing for the present. The Adversaries are still powerful, and your wisdom is to be quiet. The Supreme guide and guard you.

+ IMPERATOR.

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 15s. 2d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

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

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

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

THE ATTITUDE OF SPIRITUALISM TO OTHER SYSTEMS.

We remember hearing an important paper and discussion in a denominational conference some few years ago on "Our attitude to those who differ from us in fundamentals." The Christian sects, with the exception of the Unitarian body, have always placed a great deal of stress upon the intellectual and verbal form of certain doctrines which they characterise as fundamentals. We are glad to know that the list of such necessary ideas for salvation is gradually becoming less and less.

As Spiritualists, we of course, think very little of the form of things, though we prize highly the spirit, or inner reality. We believe what the Founder of Christianity taught with reiterated words that "the letter killeth, it is the spirit that maketh alive; . . . My words are spirit and they are life." The various sects which adopt His name have forgotten their Master's cardinal principle. They have repeatedly perpetrated the fatal blunder of worshipping the form when the soul had fled. The Scotch have carried this vice to a fearful extent. They are probably the most addicted and pertinacious to theologic form of any people on the face of the earth. A story is told of a Cameronian church dividing over a particular doctrinal form when united over all else. The seceding half had a secession very soon from itself, and that secession had another secession from it. So it went on till at last there was the secession of a solitary couple, a man and his wife. The minister of the original kirk met the seceding wife one day and accosted her with, "Well, Jeannie, are you sure you're quite right now, you and Sandy?" "Well, minister, I am sure aboot mysel', but I am no sure aboot Sandy." The Free Kirk of Scotland divides from the National Establishment on what is scarcely a worthy difference for such a mighty rent as the disruption turned out to be. Both Churches to this day believe in Established Christianity; the fight was over the patronage question, which a few years would have settled, and is settled now. Yet both Kirks still keep apart. The orthodox sects—with the noble exceptions of the Independent and Baptist bodies—have invariably formed themselves on the basis of a creed. The result is an eternal heresy-hunting and a state of mutual suspicion, or, the worse vice, a laxity of adhesion which means a most vile tampering with conscience.

As Spiritualists, we are not inclined to dispute the importance of a clear verbal expression of truth so far as we know it. The form is a good index to the spirit-state. A muddled thinker is always a muddled writer or speaker. Form is, after all, our means of interchange of spirit-being with one another. No man can commune with another man unless there be some formal link of expression. An English missionary is helpless with a Zulu savage till he learn the Zulu tongue. God is seen by none, learned by none, except by the medium of a visible universe, and its quickening action upon the mind, emotions, conscience, and will of mankind. There are no innate ideas. Spirit without phenomena we cannot imagine to be self-conscious. Every thought that the soul thinks is really an image when traced to its ultimate conception. Every nominal and adjectival word is a picture. A people's progress is measurable by the opulence of its vernacular dictionary. The Semitic languages are scarce in words, and therefore scarce in ideas. The civilised tongues of to-day are continually adding appendices to their dictionaries, a sure sign of our growth in knowledge of the phenomenal universe around us.

Every year, too, finds our scholars correcting their definitions. The inner laws and spirit of things are being penetrated more deeply, and the old verbal ideas of them must, perforce, be altered. The history of theology, like that of science and literature, is one of enforced remodelling of credal form. There is an irresistibility about the growth of man's spirit that refuses to be compressed. We have seen a sapling grow till it forced the adjacent wall to the ground. And so it is impossible for any organised system of things to say to the spirit of the age, "Thus far and no farther." We think, therefore, that form is always necessary, and the approximation of the form to accuracy and cohesion of statement is a sure index to the harmony of the inner spirit. A man or woman slovenly dressed is a slovenly soul, a badly, or one-sided, developed soul, however learned in the classics. An unpunctual man is a soul out of time, though he may be a premier or a poet laureate.

But while Spiritualists recognise the necessity of formulation of spiritual conceptions, they differ essentially from the remaining religious world in their idea of progression. Their cardinal doctrine is that man is and ever will be a progressive being. They know of no heaven of stagnated holiness. Angels as well as earthly men grow in knowledge and moral attainments. That will be as true a billion centuries hence of every individual as it is to-day. Hence there will be an eternal divergence among human beings. No two beings will ever beat time together, tick to tick. The fundamentals of one will be in the van or rear of some other beings.

Now all this being so, it shews how impossible it is to form a true union upon credal forms. Spiritualism, we hope, will establish on earth, as in heaven, the true attitude of one man or system to another. It will carry out the New Testament idea of oneness of spirit with diversity of form. It will not tolerate, but respect. For few words are fuller of cant and more hateful than this popular one in our age—toleration. There is an offensive patronage about it, a superciliousness, an arrogance of one party over the other, that is not feasible to a man who has realised his true dignity in this universe. Everyone here has just as much right to be here as another, and so long as he respects the moral right of others and his moral duties to himself, no one has a right to lord it over his personal heritage. Spiritualism is Free-man-ism. It is by the conflict of ideas that knowledge is gained and progress attained. The peace of uniformity is the peace of death. The peace of a true spirituality of progress is the peace of a unity of spirit with a perpetual variation of form. One of the chief aims of Spiritualism is to establish the unity of the spirit in a growing humanity. It proclaims the reign of liberty to think, speak, and write without let or hindrance, contempt or sneer. It lets every expression of opinion be weighed in the balance of experience or test. The only thing it refuses to admit is liberty to sin, because that infringes the liberty of others. A man is not a sinner because he conscientiously thinks the world is flat, and does not revolve round the sun, or that there is one Person in the Godhead; or that superlapsarianism is false and that sublapsarianism is true; or that the doctrines of Malthus are divine. Spiritualism will culture a Divine lovingness of respect for one another's views. It will teach that every man who expresses a new thought is a benefactor to his race.

It will be well to notice, too, that Spiritualism is not a solitary system born of an isolated energy. It is the outcome of all the ages of human life. It has been ushered in in "the fulness of time." As such it is dependent on, and inclusive of, all that is good. "I am the result of all my ancestors," said a great man. All that is could not have been as it is, but for all that has been. It took all the myriads of the human race to produce me as I am to-day. One man less, and I would not have been as I am. Spiritualism must in its very nature recognise this all-inclusiveness of human attainment. Nothing is outside the sphere of Spiritualism. It absorbs all that is true in religion, science, art, literature, and commerce. It includes everything that is good in the systems of the past, and transcends them all because it has a wider sweep of facts to generalise upon.

Spiritualism, therefore, is hostile to no system, although it may contend against the spirit in which that system is advocated. Its spirit is one of love and generosity. Our standard of attitude is the "Sermon on the Mount." IOTA.

DEAN STANLEY.—We have received from the author, Mr. John A. Rowe, a very tastefully printed little poem, which is an eloquent tribute to the memory of the departed Dean.

THE NATURE OF GOD.

If the "awe of God is the beginning of wisdom," then those who regard "Akasa" or magnetism as "the highest idea of Supreme power," can scarcely have experienced much of that initial wisdom, and if Miss Arundale thinks "the idea of a conscious Deity outside the manifested universe" as foolishness, would she also regard the manifestation of a noble aspiration in her own face as simply a soulless galvanic arrangement of the muscles of the skin?

But Miss Arundale has a logical mind, and I would ask her is it conceivable that Akasa or magnetism could possibly evolve mind, seeing that a bottle of electricity, or a jar of galvanism, or a horse-shoe magnet would remain for millions of years as fixed and blind forces?

Is mind not higher than either matter or Akasa? And if so, is it possible or conceivable that a higher can ascend from a lower unless there be an antecedent higher towards which it can aspire?

Is evolution possible or conceivable except as a development towards a pre-existent higher?

The blade of grass becomes the ear of wheat by an aspiration towards, and a gift from, the light and heat of the sun, and so it is with the human soul when born of the Spirit.

Further, we are thinking beings and conscious individuals, and as *The All* must contain the entire universe, how is it possible that God can contain less than man, and if so how is it possible that a blind, unthinking unconsciousness can be God?

Even the atheist, in a moment of despair, calls on God for help. Does he on those occasions call on Akasa or magnetism for help, as "the highest idea of Supreme power," or does his soul not—in spite of his assumed atheism—call on the living God?

One shrinks from dogmatism on a subject utterly beyond the conception of the human mind; but it is sufficient for me to know that the wisest, the best, the most powerful, and the most holy being who ever spoke to man, taught the personality of the Divine Father of man and the universe.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

IMPRESSIBILITY.

Forty years ago I was introduced to Dr. J. R. Buchanan at the close of one of his lectures in Boston, Mass., U.S.A. He was then a young man, engaged in what seemed the almost hopeless task of stating and explaining occult science. I was then as remarkable to myself for what I did not believe, as I am now for what I do not know. Dr. Buchanan looked fixedly at me, and said, "You are what is termed impressible." "What is that?" I asked. "I must explain by experiment," he replied. A party of friends went from the lecture room to the house of an artist present, who was an inquirer. There Dr. Buchanan manipulated my head, and shewed by results the impressibility of the organs. There was much philosophy and some fun evoked. I remember passing from the discussion of abstruse philosophy with Mr. Albert Brisbane, the noted Fourierist, to a mirthful and combative state, in which all my large reverence and Dr. Buchanan's staid dignity of character and deportment hardly restrained me from boxing the Professor's ears when he had touched combativeness and mirthfulness. I was glad that I was restrained, but I took such a dislike to being made a show of that I would never again allow my head to be impressed.

After this evening I met Dr. Buchanan several times. On one occasion he put a letter into my hand. I held it between my palms and was affected to tears. I gave a *résumé* of the contents which proved to be correct. I only remember that someone had died, and that the writer of the letter, though grieved, was trying to get some money that had belonged to the dead friend. I shunned the exhibition of this newly discovered gift, even as I avoided having my head manipulated. But in private I often read my letters and those of my friends without opening them, and, as the saying is, I read between the lines when I had opened them, marking where one mood ended and another began in the same letter; also noting that a letter might give me one impression, and the envelope quite the contrary. I remember once having a letter from Charles Dickens, the novelist, that had a most disagreeable envelope, while the letter was very bright and cheerful, containing a pen that he had written a chapter of "Our Mutual Friend" with. When I saw him next I told him of the impression which the envelope had given me. He told me he had written the letter at home and got the envelope on his way to the post, and he said laughingly, "I don't know what rascal had had that envelope before I got it."

Mr. Dickens had the greatest objection to the idea that Spirits have anything to do with impressing us, though he was greatly impressed by Spirits in the body, and always told the character of those he met unerringly.

Impressibility to the contents of letters varies from a general idea of the subject matter to the reading of the words and signature accurately. So far as my observation extends, persons who read the words are more simple and wanting in understanding and culture than those who merely comprehend subject and scope. Then time must be allowed in all kinds of psychometric reading for the impression. If I open twenty letters in my morning's post I seldom get any impression. If at midday only a few letters are delivered, I may be able to read them substantially without opening the envelopes.

All faculties improve by cultivation as we very well know; the blind improve in the sense of touch. In 1870 I was blind during six months; I threaded fine needles then. How I did it I could never tell, and when I thought about it I could never do it.

Of the gifts that we call spiritual, viz., clairvoyance, clair-audience, thought-reading (which is one form of clairvoyance), the gift of healing, what is termed inspirational speaking and writing, psychometry, and other forms of impressibility to spheres, I have found in my case that each one obtained prominence just in proportion as I cultivated it. At one time I was so impressed with the sphere of letters, which brought not only their contents, but the character of their writers, often painfully before me, that I had to be as careful of touching letters as I would of putting my hand in a swarm of bees. Now I can have twenty painful letters in a day, and handle them and reply to them quite peacefully.

For years I was governed and guided by prevision, seeing the future for days, weeks, and years in advance, as I now see the past. For years I was clairvoyant to such an extent that I saw people in the spiritual world more plainly than those in the material form.

When I became fully employed in healing the sick, my clairvoyance became faint and foggy, so to speak, and I was only exceptionally clear-sighted as of old. Now my healing the sick has gone on for ten years and has filled my time, so that other gifts are obliged to be in abeyance. But when I set apart some time for other gifts, their sure presence proves that they are not lost. At one time, when I was blind, I wrote some books with indescribable rapidity. These automatically written books I knew the subjects of perfectly, but I did not read a word of them till I recovered my sight and read them in print.

When I have been hindered by secular spheres, or employments, from the forms of mediumship usual to me, I have received strange manifestations in sleep, from the simplest facts to very complex information. When my youngest child was two years old I dreamed that the nurse brought her to me with her face frightfully swollen and inflamed, her eyes closed, and the beautiful face hardly to be recognised. When I came down from my room in the morning, the nurse brought the child to me in exactly this condition. My dream was realised to the smallest particular. The little one had been in the garden the day before, and had broken one of the ornamental plants in a border, that exuded a quantity of milky juice. This she had rubbed all over her face. It was poisonous, and the result was severe inflammation and swelling, closing of the eyes, and much suffering. The use of water soon allayed the inflammation, and the child was cured with no ill consequences. The impressions of what was happening at a distance, that I had when I cultivated that form of mediumship, were brought in factual or figurative dreams, when I wilfully, or from necessity, avoided being impressed.

I have come to the conclusion that as surely as there are dreams from indigestion ("that confounded cucumber I ate, and can't digest"), just as surely there are dreams that warn, instruct, punish and comfort us.

Doubtless most persons can confirm all this from their own experience, for all who live are mediums of life, and the current flows on whether we have consciousness of it or whether we are capable of philosophical observation of the phenomena of life, or not.

I have spoken a good deal of the facts of mediumship in its different forms. In my next I wish to speak of the laws of orderly and disorderly manifestation; this is of all subjects one of the most important.

"The Judge of all the earth will do right," and it is as needful for us to do right as for the Highest. There is no hell

without adequate reason—no “endless” punishment. All suffering has a Divine end in view. This does not disprove hell, but asserts its infinite use and necessity. “There is a headache, therefore there is a hell,” and the man who wrote those truthful words, probably knew as little of the causes of headache as of the causes of hell. Still it remains true, that there is no effect without cause, and the laws of order are our best and most beneficent study.

MARY S. G. NICHOLS.

MR. EGLINTON AND THE OCCULTISTS.

Marvellous Manifestations.

Mr. Sinnett has published a second edition of his interesting book, the “Occult World,” and has taken the opportunity of offering additional evidence of the marvellous powers said to be possessed by Koot Hoomi and another occult “adept,” whose name does not seem to be known, but who is spoken of as “The Illustrious.” During Mr. Eglinton’s recent visit to India he made the acquaintance of members of this strange brotherhood, as will be seen by the following extracts which we take from the new edition of the “Occult World,” just issued by Mr. Trübner, Ludgate Hill.

The story now to be told has already been made public in India, having been fully related in *Psychic Notes*, a periodical temporarily brought out at Calcutta, with the object especially of recording incidents connected with the spiritualistic mediumship of Mr. Eglinton, who stayed for some months at Calcutta during the past cold season. The incident was hardly addressed to the outside world; rather to Spiritualists, who while infinitely closer to a comprehension of occultism than people still wrapped in the darkness of orthodox incredulity about all super-material phenomena, are nevertheless to a large extent inclined to put a purely spiritualistic explanation on all such phenomena. In this way it had come pass that many Spiritualists in India were inclined to suppose that we who believed in the Brothers were in some way misled by extraordinary mediumship on the part of Madame Blavatsky. And at first the “Spirit guides” who spoke through Mr. Eglinton confirmed this view. But a very remarkable change came over their utterances at last. Shortly before Mr. Eglinton’s departure from Calcutta, they declared their full knowledge of the Brotherhood, naming the “Illustrious” by that designation, and declaring that they had been appointed to work in concert with the Brothers thenceforth. On this aspect of affairs Mr. Eglinton left England in the steamship *Vega*, sailing from Calcutta, I believe, on the 16th of March. A few days later, on the morning of the 24th, at Allahabad, I received a letter from Koot Hoomi, in which he told me that he was going to visit Mr. Eglinton on board the *Vega* at sea, convince him thoroughly as to the existence of the Brothers, and if successful in doing this notify the fact immediately to certain friends of Mr. Eglinton’s at Calcutta. The letter had been written a day or two before, and the night between the 21st and 22nd was mentioned as the period when the astral visit would be paid. Now the full explanation of all the circumstances under which this startling programme was carried out will take some little time, but the narrative will be the more easily followed if I first describe the outline of what took place in a few words. The promised visit was *actually paid*, and not only that but a letter written by Mr. Eglinton at sea on the 24th describing it,—and giving in his adhesion to a belief in the Brothers fully and completely,—was transported instantaneously that same evening to Bombay, where it was dropped (“out of nothing” like the first letter I received on my return from India) before several witnesses; by them identified and tied up with cards written on by them at the time; then taken away again and a few moments later dropped down, cards from Bombay and all, among Mr. Eglinton’s friends at Calcutta! who had been told beforehand to expect a communication from the Brothers at that time. All the incidents of this series are authenticated by witnesses and documents, and there is no rational escape for any one who looks into the evidence, from the necessity of admitting that the various phenomena as I have just described them, have actually been accomplished, “impossible” as ordinary science will declare them.

For the details of the various incidents of the series, I may refer the reader to the account published in *Psychic Notes* by Mrs. Gordon, wife of Colonel W. Gordon, of Calcutta, and authenticated with her signature.

Colonel Olcott, Mrs. Gordon explains in the earlier part of her statement, which for brevity’s sake I condense, had just arrived

at Calcutta on a visit to Colonel Gordon and herself. A letter had come from Madame Blavatsky—

“dated Bombay the 19th, telling us that something was going to be done, and expressing the earnest hope that she would not be required to assist as she had had enough abuse about phenomena. Before this letter was brought by the post peon, Colonel Olcott had told me that he had had an intimation in the night from his *Chohan* (teacher) that K. H. had been to the *Vega* and seen Mr. Eglinton. This was at about eight o’clock on Thursday morning, the 23rd. A few hours later a telegram, dated at Bombay, 22nd day, 21 hour 9 minutes, that is to say 9 minutes past 9 p.m., on Wednesday evening, came to me from Madame Blavatsky, to this effect: ‘K. H. just gone to *Vega*.’ This telegram came as a ‘delayed’ message, and was posted to me from Calcutta, which accounts for its not reaching me until midday on Thursday. It corroborated, as will be seen, the message of the previous night to Colonel Olcott. We then felt hopeful of getting the letter by occult means from Mr. Eglinton. A telegram later on Thursday asked us to fix a time for a sitting, so we named 9 o’clock, Madras time, on Friday 24th. At this hour we three—Colonel Olcott, Colonel Gordon, and myself—sat in the room which had been occupied by Mr. Eglinton. We had a good light, and sat with our chairs placed to form a triangle of which the apex was to the north. In a few minutes Colonel Olcott saw outside the open window the two ‘Brothers’ whose names are best known to us, and told us so; he saw them pass to another window, the glass doors of which were closed. He saw one of them point his hand towards the air over my head, and I felt something at the same moment fall straight down from above on to my shoulder and saw it fall at my feet in the direction towards the two gentlemen. I knew it would be the letter, but for the moment I was so anxious to see the ‘Brothers’ that I did not pick up what had fallen. Colonel Gordon and Colonel Olcott both saw and heard the letter fall. Colonel Olcott had turned his head from the window for a moment to see what the ‘Brother’ was pointing at, and so noticed the letter falling from a point about two feet from the ceiling. When he looked again the two ‘Brothers’ had vanished.

“There is no verandah outside, and the window is several feet from the ground.

“I now turned and picked up what had fallen on me, and found a letter in Mr. Eglinton’s handwriting, dated on the *Vega*, the 24th; a message from Madame Blavatsky, dated at Bombay, the 24th, written on the backs of three of her visiting cards; also a larger card such as Mr. Eglinton had a packet of, and used at his *séances*. On this latter card was the, to us, well-known handwriting of K. H., and a few words in the handwriting of the other ‘Brother,’ who was with him outside our windows, and who is Colonel Olcott’s Chief. All these cards and the letter were threaded together with a piece of blue sewing silk. We opened the letter carefully by slipping up one side, as we saw that some one had made on the flap in pencil three Latin crosses, and so we kept them intact for identification. The letter is as follows:—

“S. S. Vega,

“Friday, 24th March, 1882.

“MY DEAR MRS. GORDON,—At last your hour of triumph has come! After the many battles we have had at the breakfast-table regarding K. H.’s existence, and my stubborn scepticism as to the wonderful powers possessed by the ‘Brothers,’ I have been forced to a *complete belief* in their being living distinct persons, and just in proportion to my scepticism will be my *firm unalterable* opinion respecting them. I am not allowed to tell you all I know, but K. H. *appeared* to me in person two days ago, and what he told me dumbfounded me. Perhaps Madame B. will have already communicated the fact of K. H.’s appearance to you. The ‘Illustrious’ is uncertain whether this can be taken to Madame or not, but he will try, notwithstanding the many difficulties in the way. If he does not I shall post it when I arrive at port. I shall read this to Mrs. B.—and ask her to mark the envelope; but *whatever happens*, you are requested by K. H. to keep this letter a profound secret until you hear from him through Madame. A storm of opposition is certain to be raised, and she has had so much to bear that it is hard she should have more.” Then follow some remarks about his health and the trouble which is taking him home, and the letter ends.

“In her note on the three visiting cards Madame Blavatsky says:—‘Head-quarters, March 24th. These cards and contents to certify to my doubters that the attached letter addressed to Mrs. Gordon by Mr. Eglinton was just brought to me from the *Vega*, with another letter from himself to me which I keep. K. H. tells me he saw Mr. Eglinton and had a talk with him, long and convincing enough to make him a believer in the ‘Brothers’ as actual living beings, for the rest of his natural life. Mr. Eglinton writes to me: ‘The letter which I enclose is going to be taken to Mrs. G. through your influence. You will receive it wherever you are, and will forward it to her in ordinary course. You will learn with satisfaction of my complete conversion to a belief in the ‘Brothers,’ and I have no doubt K. H. has already told you how he appeared to me two nights ago,’ &c., &c. K. H. *told me all*. He does not, however, want me to forward the letter in “ordinary course” as it would defeat the object, but commands me to write this and send it off

without delay, so that it would reach you all at Howrah to-night, the 24th. I do so * * * * H. P. Blavatsky.'

"The handwriting on these cards and signature is perfectly well known to us. That on the larger card (from Mr. Eglinton's packet) attached was easily recognized as coming from Koot Hoomi. Colonel Gordon and I know his writing as well as our own; it is so distinctly different from any other I have ever seen that among thousands I could select it. He says, 'William Eglinton thought the manifestation could only be produced through H. P. B. as a medium, and that the power would become exhausted at Bombay. We decided otherwise. Let this be a proof to all that the spirit of *living man* has as much potentiality in it (and often more) as a disembodied *soul*. He was anxious to test her, he often doubted; two nights ago he had the required proof and will doubt no more. But he is a good young man, bright, honest, and true as gold when once convinced. * * * * This card was taken from his stock to-day. Let it be an additional proof of his wonderful mediumship. * * * K. H.'

"This is written in blue ink, and across it is written in red ink a few words from the other 'Brother' (Colonel Olcott's Chohan or Chief). This interesting and wonderful phenomenon is not published with the idea that any one who is unacquainted with the phenomena of Spiritualism will accept it. But I write for the millions of Spiritualists, and also that a record may be made of such an interesting experiment. Who knows but that it may pass on to a generation which will be enlightened enough to accept such wonders?"

A postscript adds that since the above statement was written a paper had been received from Bombay, signed by seven witnesses who saw the letter arrive there from the *Vega*.

As I began by saying, this phenomenon was addressed more to Spiritualists than to the outer world because its great value for the experienced observer of phenomena turns on the utterly unmediumistic character of the events. Apart from the testimony of Mr. Eglinton's own letter to the effect that he, an experienced medium, was quite convinced that the interview he had with his occult visitant was not an interview with such "Spirits" as he had been used to, we have the three-cornered character of the incident to detach it altogether from mediumship either on his part or on that of Madame Blavatsky.

Certainly there have been cases in which under the influence of mediumship the agencies of the ordinary spiritual seance have transported letters half across the globe. A conclusively authenticated case in which an unfinished letter was thus brought from London to Calcutta will have attracted the attention of all persons who have their understanding awakened to the importance of these matters, and who read what is currently published about them, quite recently. But every Spiritualist will recognize that the transport of a letter from a ship at sea to Bombay, and then from Bombay to Calcutta, with a definite object in view, and in accordance with a pre-arranged and pre-announced plan, is something quite outside the experience of mediumship.

Will the effort made, and the expenditure of whatever force may have been required to accomplish the wonderful feat thus recorded, be repaid by proportionately satisfactory effects on the Spiritualistic world? There has been a great deal written lately in England about the antagonism between Spiritualism and Theosophy, and an impression has arisen in some way that the two *cultes* are incompatible. Now the phenomena and the experiences of Spiritualism are facts, and nothing can be incompatible with facts. But Theosophy brings on the scene new interpretations of those facts, it is true, and sometimes these prove very unwelcome to Spiritualists long habituated to their own interpretation. Hence, such Spiritualists are now and then disposed to resist the new teaching altogether, and hold out against a belief that there can be anywhere in existence men entitled to advance it. This is consequently the important question to settle before we advance into the region of metaphysical subtleties. Let Spiritualists once realize that the Brothers do exist, and what sort of people they are, and a great step will have been accomplished. Not all at once is it to be expected that the Spiritual world will consent to revise its conclusions by occult doctrines. It is only by prolonged intercourse with the Brothers that a conviction grows up in the mind that as regards spiritual science they *cannot* be in error. At first, let Spiritualists think them in error if they please; but at all events it will be unworthy of their elevated position above the Bæotian herd if they deny the evidence of phenomenal facts; if they hold towards occultism the attitude which the crass sceptic of the mere Lankester type occupies towards Spiritualism itself. So I cannot but hope that the coruscation of phenomena connected with the origin and adventures of the letter written on board the *Vega* may have flashed out of the darkness to some good purpose, showing the

Spiritualistic world quite plainly that the great Brother to whom this work is dedicated is, at all events, a living man, with faculties and powers of that entirely abnormal kind which Spiritualists have hitherto conceived to inhere merely in beings belonging to a superior scheme of existence.

SPIRITUALISM AND THEOSOPHY.

Having had repeated inquiries made of me since my return from India as to my "conversion" to Theosophy, and as to its effect upon my belief in Spiritualism, I must ask you to be kind enough to insert this communication as an answer to the many correspondents who have addressed themselves to me on the subject.

I confess I am unable to understand what is meant by "Theosophy" other than the mere technical meaning—seeking after the wisdom of God. I find, however, that Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy is totally opposed to this interpretation, because both in her public and private utterances, she has never made any secret of her utter scepticism of a belief in God. I also confess my total ignorance of the abstruse subjects generally set forward by those calling themselves Theosophists, and have confined myself to practical reasoning. We understand from the written Theosophy of Madame Blavatsky that certain "spooks" and "elementals" produce in, say ninety-five per cent. of instances, all the manifestations commonly believed by Spiritualists to be the work of departed human Spirits. If this is so—and in not more than a few scattered instances, such as the case related recently by "J. P. T.," do the Theosophists shew their theory to have any real ground for acceptance—then we must at once understand that, as we gain in our investigations nothing but what is utterly untrustworthy and bad, a seeking after conditions liable to the visitation of such beings is at once and for ever to be discountenanced. But I contend that if a "spook" is able to take on the form, figure, and speech, say, of my deceased mother, and gives me nothing but the holiest, kindest, and best counsels, then I am very willing to go on accepting that generous "spook" as my mentor and guide, since nothing but good results from my connection with it. The other five per cent. of high-class manifestations is claimed, I believe, by the Theosophists (or let us say by Madame Blavatsky) to be produced through the agency of certain adepts, who have the power of projecting their astral body to any required distance at will. But has it never struck Spiritualists that if such is the case—and it is nowise proved—the astral body, which is, I presume, the soul, and consequently the nobler and better part of man, must be infinitely lower and more debased than man himself, since these appearances represent themselves as being people whom they are not! These are, however, some of the puzzles which a slight investigation into Theosophy leads one to. And having pointed out what appear to me to be salient points for believing in the easy explanations of the Spiritualists rather than those given by the Theosophists, I shall here state what I know of practical Theosophy; I mean that portion which is demonstrated by facts. Putting aside as opposed to proof the various theories so plentifully bestowed upon the world by the leaders in Theosophy, I made up my mind to wait until something tangible presented itself to me for belief; and it was not until the last week of my stay in India that I began to receive evidence of the existence of the beings designated the "Himalayan Brothers." One night I was sitting with Colonel and Mrs. Gordon at their house in Howrah when my guide, "Ernest," came and informed us that he had been in communication with certain of the Brotherhood. This aroused my curiosity, because I knew I could depend upon a statement so made, but nothing more happened to convince me until I was homeward bound on board the s.s. *Vega*.

Shortly after leaving Colombo, about 10 or 10.30 in the evening, I was in my cabin which was on deck forward, preparing to turn in for the night, when what I thought to be a Hindoo servant appeared at the door. Speaking in Hindustani, I told him to go away, but to my surprise he replied to me in perfect English, and stepping forward, gave me the grip of a Master Mason. This astounded me, and I asked his name, when he replied that he was one of the Himalayan Brothers and had come from Thibet to prove that such beings really existed. I entered into a long talk with him, much of which I cannot detail for obvious reasons. He was a well-formed, distinct, living, human being, and I knew of no such person on board. He gave me such evidence as satisfied me he must be the much-talked-of Koot Hoomi Lal Singh, and that there was no longer room for

doubt. Two days after this I wrote a letter to Mrs. Gordon detailing these experiences, and it was carried to Bombay the same evening into the presence of several witnesses, and from thence to Howrah, in Bengal, to the residence of Colonel Gordon. A Mr. O'C——, a Civil servant, also sent Madame Blavatsky a letter by the same means, although I have not yet heard as to its arrival. Other phenomena in connection with the Brothers have taken place, which I need not detail here. This is my experience of Theosophy, or more strictly speaking, of its phenomena. But it has not converted me to Theosophy, still less has it interfered with my belief in Spiritualism, because I consider that I have an explanation for the appearance and manifestation of Koot Hoomi other than that given by Madame Blavatsky. For years past Spiritualists have understood that there exists a human double, as has been proved in the case of Mr. Gledstanes, his portrait appearing in a photograph taken in London, while at the same hour his body was asleep in Paris. I also personally know of two instances of the double. One occurred to me in India when in a séance with Mr. Meugens. I distinctly saw that I had left my body sitting at the table. I went to London to the prison-cell of Mrs. Fletcher, who recognised me. She wrote a letter which was taken to Calcutta immediately after; and I saw myself enter my own body, having retained a double consciousness throughout. The other instance was when Mrs. Fletcher appeared to Dr. and Mrs. Nichols and others last year in her prison dress, and she was, as we afterwards learnt, perfectly conscious of the fact. Now assuming it to be possible that these phenomena of the double have been established by proof, why am I to believe that the being I saw in my cabin was other than the double of Koot Hoomi, then no doubt reposing in his Thibetan home? Only it appears to me that he and his brotherhood may have developed their powers to the extent of projecting their doubles or astral bodies to any distance at will, which is at present beyond us in the West.

My belief in the existence of these Brothers—whom I have now learned to respect as clever, intelligent men, possessing a certain knowledge of occult science—in no wise affects my belief in Spiritualism; because if we were inclined to think the manifestations commonly known in séances to be the work of the astral body, or the double, of certain living men, the one insuperable difficulty of the spiritual body of man being more depraved than his corporeal or material body remains to be accounted for, and until it is I prefer to believe that the Spirits I know are, with the exception of those undeveloped controls who sometimes mislead us, actually the persons they represent themselves to be.

Perhaps this question of the double may be further borne out by the experience and evidence of some of your readers.

W. EGLINTON.

PROGRESS IN RUSSIA.

The *Revue Spirite* contains a letter from St. Petersburg, reporting a series of lectures on animal magnetism by Professor Wagner, before audiences of about 500, made up principally of physicians, students, and literary men. He had had great difficulty in gaining permission to give these lectures, as they approached a subject which has been condemned alike by clerical and scientific authorities, the former attributing all psychical phenomena outside of the church walls to Satan, and the latter to physiological disturbance, to be rectified by orthodox medication. To gain his hearing Professor Wagner called animal magnetism by the less disagreeable name of hypnotism (sommnism, sleepism). He quoted facts of history from ancient times down to the present, noticing the discoveries of Van Helmont, Mesmer, Reichenbach, Du Potet, Barette, and others, not forgetting Braid, the introducer of the term hypnotism. Professor Wagner solved all the mysteries of the subject by introducing a *psychic principle*, not a resultant of the organism, but a force having individuality and consciousness, existing independently of it, whose vehicle is the nerve fluid within the organism and the ether of space without. The lectures were well received, and were frequently interrupted by earnest applause. Professor Wagner concluded by recommending—seeing that the authorities no longer opposed discussion—the constitution of a society for investigation, like our recently formed one for psychical research.

There are truths which some men despise, because they have not examined them, and which they will not examine, because they dislike them.

SPIRITUALISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I heard with much interest the paper written by Mr. H. T. Humphreys at the rooms of the Central Association of Spiritualists, and I think it quite deserves the prominence you have given to it in the pages of your journal. At the same time I crave your permission to insert the substance of a few remarks I made to the meeting after the reading of the paper referred to. My object is merely to protest against a certain narrowness of scope, or rather a circumscribing of the mission of Spiritualism, which oozes, so to speak, through the ideas embodied in the writer's argument. I cannot accept the proposition that "any other gospel" preached than that laid down by St. Paul and his associates—as popular orthodoxy understands that gospel to be—should merit a curse, because it is other than his or their gospel. The assertion is too dogmatic, too selfish, to be used by any class of Spiritualists.

Mr. Humphrey says that Spiritualism has not led him to change his religious convictions. This proves that he has been a Spiritualist *de facto* all through. I do not look upon Spiritualism as a new religion but I consider it a revealer of hidden truths. Before the invention of astronomical instruments the stars revolved in their orbits just as at present, but we knew it not. Truth is eternal and Spiritualism is, to me, a telescope (one of many, perhaps) which causes it to shine clearer to our beclouded earthly vision, and we are but on the threshold of knowledge, certainly not in a position to declare that the preacher of any other message than ours should be "anathema," or that any one book is the whole of Divine revelation. Let us rather say of the latter, that it is one of the *channels* of revelation.

There are, of course, Christians and Christians, as there are Spiritualists and Spiritualists, and I take it that the duty of the latter is to keep their ears open for the hearing of *all* new teaching, whether of old or new doctrines, and submit what they hear to the criterion of their own reason, assimilating what they may, and rejecting what they cannot, comprehend.

For all this, what is rejected to-day may be accepted to-morrow, for the criterion advances in harmony with the progress of the individual. Ancient philosophy taught that man was originally face to face with the Infinity of perfection, and saw it in all its fulness, but is now undergoing a series of metempsychoses, through all of which the recollection of the absolute clings to his spirit; thus, when seeing beautiful works of art, or admiring the grandeur of nature, he still can imagine something more beautiful and sublime than his earthly eyes have ever beheld, and while hearing harmonious sounds or listening to the teachings of religion, poetry, and science, he has always the intuition of something grander and more comprehensive than all these, and this because of the fleeting reminiscences of the Perfection of things. Who shall say positively how much or how little truth may be in this teaching?

Again, Christianity teaches that we are in God's image. I accept this as a truth and believe that our spirits reflect through our earthly organisms just so much of the real and true as corresponds with our grade of progression, and that in each of us is faintly imaged the reflection of those glorious and transcendent attributes of Divinity, the fulness of which will be for ever beyond our reach, but always shining—a glorious beacon shewing us the path of love and duty.

Let us then preach the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God, laying down no hard and fast lines of anathema, neither curse those who preach what may appear to us another gospel than ours; but stand in the front of the battle with Materialism, and proclaim loudly the glad tidings of Spirit communion, with the firm and steadfast purpose of the Nazarene, striving after the same rewards.—I am, sir, yours fraternally,

June 19th, 1882.

WILLIAM PAYNTER.

Mr. J. S. Farmer, editor of the *Psychological Review*, will give an address on Monday evening next, at 38, Great Russell-street, to the members and friends of the C.A.S., on "The Law of Deterioration as applied to Spiritual Phenomena." Mr. Farmer's devotion to Spiritualism, and his ability as a clear and cogent writer, are sufficient guarantee that his paper will be full of valuable and suggestive thoughts. As this will be the last discussion meeting of the season, there ought to be a large attendance.

Wit is the lightning of the mind, reason the sunshine, and the reflection the moonlight; for as the bright orb of the night owes its lustre to the sun, so does reflection owe its existence to reason.

REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF SPIRIT INTERVENTION.

A Spirit on Shipboard.

In the course of a meeting held recently at the residence of Mr. Wm. H. Banks, 176, Lexing-street, East Boston, by a number of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were several prominent Spiritualists of this city, Capt. C. P. Drisko, who is well-known as an able and experienced shipmaster, gave the following recital of a striking experience met with by him on shipboard, whereby he was made the recipient of a warning from a materialized Spirit, by heeding which he not only saved his own vessel and crew from shipwreck, but also those of another captain, who, unacquainted with the shoals, was, by agreement, following implicitly in his wake :—

"Every man who has attained the age of fifty or sixty years has had some strange experience, which, though real to himself, he cannot account for or explain to others. Therefore, when I hear people speak dogmatically that certain appearances are mere illusions, fancies, hallucinations, dreams of a diseased brain, &c., I become something of an agnostic, and ask, How do you know? The unknown is greater than the known, and unless a man knows everything, he cannot tell whether the thing I know is real or imaginary. So much for preface.

"In the winter of 1865 I commanded the ship *Harry Booth*, bound from New York for Dry Tortugas, with a cargo of government stores, and two hundred mechanics and laborers to be employed on the fortifications then in the course of construction. When the ship reached the vicinity of Abaco, the wind blew a fierce norther with heavy rain; the sun had gone down, and the weather soon became quite dark. To haul off was impossible, the wind blew too fresh to carry sail, and the only rational course left was to incur the risk of crossing the Bahama Banks. The ship drew fourteen feet, and I could not expect that there were much more than fifteen feet of water on some parts of the banks. A foot is very little to spare under a ship's keel; but I resolved to take the chance, and accordingly squared away, that is, put the ship before the wind, and took my departure from Berry Island. Having seen everything in order on deck, I left the chief mate, Mr. Peterson, a careful and trustworthy officer, in charge, and went below for a little rest.

"At ten minutes to 11 o'clock I heard a voice clear and distinct, say: 'Go on deck and anchor!' 'Who are you?' I demanded; and I sprang on deck, for I was not a man to take orders from anyone. I found the ship going along on her true course, and everything as I could wish. I questioned Mr. Peterson if he had seen any person enter the cabin, but neither he nor the man at the wheel had either seen or heard anyone.

"Thinking it might have been hallucination I went below again. About ten minutes to 12 a man with a grey great coat and slouched hat entered the cabin, and looking me straight in the face, commanded me to go on deck and anchor. He left the cabin deliberately. I heard his heavy tread as he passed before me. Once more I sprang on deck and found the ship all right. Sure of my course I was not disposed, even with this second warning, to obey any man or anything else, no matter what appearance it might put on. Again I went below, but not to sleep, for I had everything on, ready for a spring on deck.

"At ten minutes to 1 a.m. the same man entered the cabin, and more imperiously than before said: 'Go on deck and anchor!' I recognised at a glance that the speaker was my old friend, Captain John Barton, with whom I had sailed when a boy, and who treated me with great kindness. I sprang on deck, rounded the ship to and anchored her with fifty fathoms of chain. All hands were called and the sails furled.

"Shortly afterwards I felt the ship touch, but neither the mate nor any one else noticed it. A few minutes later, however, all hands felt it. I threw the lead first from one side, then from the other, and found five fathoms (thirty feet) of water. I was perplexed, and asked myself what it could mean, when the same voice sang out, 'Throw the lead over the stern!' I did so, and to my dismay found only thirteen and a half feet (the ship drew fourteen). I immediately set the mizzen topsail and spanker, and backed her clear of the reef against which she sheered every time she brought a strain upon her chain.

"The danger was past; the ship rode clear of the reef and sustained but little damage where she struck. A ship which spoke me in the early part of the evening, and whose captain was not familiar with the Bahamas, said that he would follow me, and for this purpose I hung a light over my stern. Watching my movements closely, he rounded to almost as soon as I did and thereby saved his vessel. No doubt the norther had shallowed the water on the banks, and that if we had continued on our course we both would have been wrecked. Will those who assume that the spirits of our departed friends do not take an interest in us, please explain? What I have stated is true. It was the spirit of a departed friend, Capt. John Barton, well known as one of the best shipmasters in the country. He commanded among others the ships *Talleyrand* and *Superior*, and was esteemed by all who ever knew him. My voyage in the *Harry Booth* was entirely successful."—*Banner of Light*.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

GOSWELL HALL.

Mr. Wilson, the "Comprehensionist," has evidently made a deep impression on the minds of the frequenters of the morning meetings at this hall. He is now there every Sunday but one in the month. In the evening, not having a lecturer, an open or experience meeting was held; Mr. J. Swindin in the chair. With a reading by Mr. Lishman and a few remarks from several members of the society a fairly interesting evening was spent. The committee of the C.L.S.E.S. have decided to have a picnic and camp meeting on the third Sunday in July. Epping Forest, I think, is to be the place of meeting. More particulars can be obtained from the secretary. Several prominent workers are to be invited to take part in the project.—*RES FACTA*.

QUEBEC HALL.

I shall feel greatly obliged if you can afford me space to state that on Sunday, July 2nd, the Society will celebrate its anniversary of freedom from all material burdens and fetters, by a tea at five o'clock, hoping that a meeting will be held of such a nature that a real spiritual Pentecost will be the result. As this must be the last tea that I can undertake for several reasons (the weight of them always falling on my daughter and me), no effort will be spared to make it pleasing and gratifying. Flowers, fruit and music aid us considerably. I shall depend upon the voluntary offerings of the friends to cover all expenses (Acts II., 41 to 45). On Tuesday, July 18th, at eight, we shall have an entertainment, in which Mrs. Weldon has kindly promised to take part, and also Mr. L'Estrange. Further particulars next week. A post-card from those purposing to be with us, forwarded as early as possible, will greatly oblige, as I am not able to send personal invitations.—*J. M. DALE*.

LEEDS.

Mrs. Nosworthy, the talented and highly accomplished daughter of the late George Thompson, Esq., M.P. (himself a Spiritualist) has kindly consented to give an address to the Leeds friends, on Sunday next, the 25th inst., when, no doubt, the Yorkshire Spiritualists of that locality will gladly assemble together, and give her that cordial reception which her oratorical and elocutionary powers! so richly deserve, more especially when, as in the case of Mrs. Nosworthy, her experience and observation of each phase and variety of Spiritual phenomena have been exceptionally wide for many years. Lord Brougham and John Bright have spoken of George Thompson as "the best of natural orators," and one "whose eloquent defence of Truth and Right uplifted men." Truly so. Mrs. Nosworthy, long the chief lecturer at Meyerbeer Hall, Liverpool, re-appears in public by her father's desire. May every blessing attend the joint efforts of the spirit in the flesh and the Spirit out of it, to heal and soothe the souls of all within their sphere!

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

Sunday, June 25.—Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Mr. Wilson on "Comprehensionism." 7 p.m., Mr. J. J. Morse: Trance Address, "Spiritualism: Obstacles to its Progress."

June 25.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Mr. Iver MacDonnell: Lecture, "The Church."

Monday, June 26.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 7.30 p.m., Discussion Meeting. Paper by Mr. J. S. Farmer: "The Law of Deterioration as Applied to Spiritual Phenomena."

Tuesday, June 27.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m.

Thursday, June 29.—Christian Spiritualist Mission. 8 p.m. Séance.

Friday, June 30.—Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street. 8 p.m., Members' Weekly Free Séance.

PROVINCES.

Public meetings are held every Sunday in Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Bradford, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, &c., &c. See our list of Societies on p. 2.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A.P.—Mr. Stuart Cumberland professes an utter disbelief in all the phenomena; Mr. Irving Bishop admits the genuineness of some of them.

"PSYCHIC."—Apply to the Secretary, Mr. E. T. Bennett, The Mansion, Richmond Hill, London.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: June 25th, also July 2nd and 16th; KEIGHLEY: July 8th and 9th; STAMFORD: July 23rd. For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[*Advt.*]

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

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

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; 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; *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 Fricse, 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 held 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 a *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.