

Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

No. 90.—VOL. II.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1882.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

CONTENTS.

The <i>Journal of Science</i> and the <i>Occult World</i>	417	Medial Inspiration	423
"Odours and their Recognition".....	417	"The Perfect Way" and its Critics	425
M.A. (Oxon.) on Tests	418	Curious Case of Clairvoyance	425
Correspondence on Miss Wood's Exposures.....	418	Weighing Materialised Forms	426
The Evils of Dark Cabinets.....	422	Clairaudience and Clairvoyance	427
		Mrs. Nichol's Séances	427
		Séance with Miss Wood	428

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The *Journal of Science* has now completed a candid and temperate notice of Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World*. The writer deals with the evidences of extraordinary power, such as the creation of the cup and saucer at Simla by Madame Blavatsky, fairly, and in a judicial spirit. He considers that the narrative must be accepted as a record substantially accurate of a real occurrence. He puts aside the supposition of an elaborate fraud as "literally bristling with difficulties," and arrives at the conclusion that "the cup and saucer were produced in the earth where found, by an agency to us inconceivable." This is a startling concession when it is considered from what quarter it comes. We are so accustomed to find the inexplicable or the unexplained treated by open science as the impossible, especially in the case of psychical phenomena, that this candid consideration of an antecedently incredible statement is as startling as it is welcome.

But wonderful as this display of power unquestionably was, the multiplication of such marvels to the utmost extent would have little effect on certain minds. The feats of the juggler bear so close a resemblance on the surface to those displays of occult power that many minds will refuse to regard them as any valid evidence of more than clever trickery. The unearthing of crockery where no crockery ought to be, the production of teapots from unlikely places, are strikingly akin to the average conjuring trick, the cooking of an omelette in a hat, or the finding of a large doll in the pocket of some nervous young gentleman. There is a superficial similarity between them that cannot be overlooked. Nor, when the absolute genuineness of the feats is conceded, can they be regarded by the most friendly critic as suitable or convincing evidence of the existence of persons who claim, not only a superior knowledge, but also a higher sanctity and a purer philanthropy than that which inferior mortals can boast. Open science may not be able to create crockery as occult science can, but it can, at least, point to a long list of successes won in the field of investigation and research; to inventions which have extended our knowledge of Nature, and to contrivances which have ameliorated the lot of countless myriads of our fellow-men. I am far from saying that these Adept Brothers, of whom I know so little, do not spend themselves in some measure in the service of humanity, any more than I would say that the benefits conferred on us by the intervention of superior spiritual beings on our earth are incommensurate with reasonable expectation. But it is not to be denied that what the outer world knows of the results in both cases is somewhat calculated to provoke the ridicule of the sceptic. It is fair to say that Mr. Sinnett's book gives some letters from one of these Adepts, which contain some noble thoughts, and we are indebted to Spiritual sources for some glimpses of a higher philosophy than most of us possessed before. But, after all, it is the creation of crockery and the displacement of furniture that make most impression on the average Philistine.

On this point the Reviewer has some pertinent observations. Koot Hoomi makes a strong point of his reticence, for the lifetime of a man would not suffice to convince a whole world of sceptics. He is not anxious to convince any man. He

wraps himself up in his own virtue, and hardly condescends to hold the door ajar. It is, of course, merely idle to prescribe to persons who assume this attitude any course of conduct towards the outer world. But I entirely appreciate the words of the Reviewer when he points out that such feats, so like mere jugglery, are by no means the best evidence of superior knowledge. "Suppose the Brotherhood were to say, 'Point your telescope to such and such a spot in the heavens, and you will find a planet as yet unknown to you, having such and such elements' or, 'Dig into the earth in such a place, and you will find a mineral containing a metal new to your science: its atomic weight, its specific gravity, &c., are so-and-so.' . . . Such or similar proofs not of superior power, but of higher knowledge, would not increase any man's facilities for evil-doing." Rather, I may add, would they increase the store of human knowledge, and prove incontestably the presence among us of some beings wiser and more beneficent than we. But, as the Reviewer points out, we search in vain for any such evidence. "Till some foothold of this kind is given us, it is useless to bid us join the Theosophical Society or change our 'mode of life.' Teachings so indefinite we are compelled to reject, not indeed 'superciliously,' but sadly." It is impossible to find any reasonable fault with such an attitude. It is true that the Adept Brothers pose as men reluctant to open the door of knowledge to any but the most patient and persistent appeal made by one who has proved himself a worthy postulant. That is an attitude incompatible with some steps lately taken. Too much or too little has been said in their name, and the result is bewilderment and confusion.

Mr. J. W. Slater, in the same number, has a very interesting and suggestive paper on "Odours and their Recognition." What is the attraction that a rich perfume has for most men; what the irritating repulsion exercised by a foul odour over persons especially of sensitive organisation? Nothing harmonises (if I may use a word that is degenerating into slang) some people so much as sweet perfumes; not the blended beauty of a rich painting, nor the melody of perfect music. For some years I was familiar with the power of sweet odours in inducing a feeling of placidity and repose. I was a regular attendant at a circle where this method of harmonising us was adopted by the unseen friends who came to us. Waves of scent-laden air swept round and round our heads and over our hands, and liquid perfume fell frequently and in profusion on the table-cloth. So marked was this that the room in which our meetings were held never lost the sweet smell, and I well remember the delightful odour which greeted me on one occasion on going into it after it had been shut up for some months. These abnormal perfumes did for us what music does for most circles. They induced that sense of calm repose and delight which, probably because it is the farthest from discord and unrest, is the most favourable for what Dr. Beard would call the great psychical or spiritual delusion. Strange that in the calmest mood of pleasurable quiet, when least distracted and most himself, man should be most deceived, deluded, and misled. Strange, if true.

I remember, too, as I have already recorded here, how, by some subtle chemistry that, which was a fragrant perfume, was changed into an intolerable stench. The discord of our mental states was expressed by the odour that filled the room. By some inexplicable Spirit-chemistry the inharmonious thoughts expressed themselves in that disagreeable odour. That which had no objective existence when we formed our circle, became the objective and palpable expression of our inner thoughts. Is not this proof of the intimate connection that exists between the members of a circle, the medium, and the manifestations? Does it not shew that like causes produce like results; and that harmony must precede any satisfactory or agreeable manifestation of Spirit-power? This comes out, too, in the controversy respecting Miss Wood's séances—a controversy on

which a lurid light has been cast by the Peterborough exposure. It is to no purpose that we spend our time in speculating whether or not certain phenomena are or may conceivably be true and genuine. No sitting should ever be held under conditions which admit of such speculative guesses at truth. Tests should be absolute, or should not be employed. "C.C.M." is right as to tests. Mr. Podmore is right too. I have never pretended that I regard it as probable or even possible to obtain the best phenomena under conditions of prescribed test, which are not compatible with the perfect comfort of the medium, and which in themselves must imply some doubt as to his integrity. I have preferred always to adopt the method recommended by "C.C.M." But I have tried to point out that any tests which are employed should be complete; and, with a view to extending our knowledge of the *modus operandi*, as well as for our more simple satisfaction, I still think no condition of observation is so good as a clear view of the medium during the whole séance.

There is one difficulty in adopting "C.C.M.'s" advice to "submit, if necessary, to imperfect conditions of observation, treating as of no account . . . any phenomena which do not make up for this usual defect and carry conviction by their own spontaneous cogency and character," and this is a serious one for the future compiler of evidence. No circle of which I have ever been a member would unanimously agree as to what was or was not "indisputably genuine." This comes home to me just now, for the various records that I have sifted in collecting evidence for materialisation are bewildering from the very fact that no reader can now tell the exact value of the testimony so given. The Spiritualist journals, in "C.C.M.'s" contemplated case would be filled with conflicting records, and it would be impossible in the strife of tongues to get at any fair conception of what really had taken place. A would write to say what he had seen, and B would rejoin that it was pure fancy on A's part. C would point out that the medium *might* conceivably have done so-and-so, and D would wax virtuously indignant and vituperative over the unmanly attack on the character of an &c., &c. And so it would go on, till (as we have seen in other cases) two mutually irritated camps were formed, one who regarded the medium as a long-suffering martyr—the other as a probable trickster; one who believed everything; the other who believed nothing (except what was in accord with preconceived opinion). This is surely a consummation devoutly to be deprecated. In private circles the method usually adopted is that advocated by "C.C.M.," in mixed circles tests of some kind must be used. I desire only that they should be complete, though I have no hope of any being devised so satisfactory as to exclude all doubt from all minds. And, in view of these perpetual exposures, I am by no means sure that any public and promiscuous circles should be encouraged to seek for such phenomena.

The appeal that "C.C.M." makes to the Physical Phenomena Committee of the Society for Psychical Research is one that touches a very important matter. I believe that nothing will be easier than for that Committee to pursue a long series of investigations under conditions so devised that nothing can take place. It is not unlikely that a fear of such conditions will make it very difficult to persuade mediums to give them opportunity of investigation. Private mediums will not submit to the elaborate system of testing. Public mediums have before their eyes the fear of failure. It will be hard, perhaps impossible, for them to get good results, and then investigators or Spiritualists generally will say "Ah! yes; his power is failing; he sat for the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research and got nothing. Better go to someone else?" And so the trade would depart, and they who live by it naturally fear and hesitate. It is a delicate question; for the absence of all tests, and the trusting of the unseen agents to tell us when they can dispense with such and such conditions, is risky. I, for one, do not believe that *all* the illusion, deception, and what we roughly call fraud, i.e., the elements of misconception as well as of deception, come from this side only. I have said repeatedly, and I maintain the opinion, that such demonstrably come, in cases which I have known, from a source other than the medium. I have seen, after watching a particular manifestation over and over again under conditions which were good enough for any reasonable being, the same phenomenon presented in such a way as to suggest the most obvious and foolish attempt at trick, such as no sane man would attempt. And this has been Spirit-trickery. We can reckon without the intelligent operator, but all difficulties will not vanish by leaving all in his power.

"M.A. (Oxon.)"

MISS WOOD'S "EXPOSURE."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—You have given insertion to two letters from Peterborough, alleging that I was seized personating "Pocha."

I went alone to Peterborough and Stamford, among people who were entire strangers to me, in consequence of a pressing invitation from a Mr. Catling, at whose house I suffered such uncalled-for and brutal treatment.

I will leave my friends and the public to criticise the statements made by Messrs. Catling and McKinney, and to draw their own inferences, bearing always in mind that not a single friend of mine was present at the sitting in question, and that the reports have, of course, been made as strong as possible against me. In consequence of representations made to me of the poverty of the cause at Peterborough, I consented to help them by foregoing one half of my usual fee and expenses (I need not mention that the Peterborough Spiritualists (?) retained the other half also). My conditions are well known. I never guarantee any phenomena; neither have I ever guaranteed or advanced any theory as to their origin. I only undertake to sit, and have always insisted that the circle of sitters should adopt a test, with the choice of which I make a rule not to interfere. I merely trust to their honour to obey my conditions after I comply with theirs. I think I have sufficient friends in the cause who will publish accounts of the phenomena obtained through me, and I do not think I need to ask the editor of "LIGHT" to give my friends the same facility for expressing their opinions as he has done to my detractors.

I think it will not be denied by my bitterest enemies that I have always been anxious to do service to Spiritualism. I have sat thousands of times, with of course varying results, and whenever I have been requested, either through poverty of the sitters or for the benefit of a society's funds, to attend free of charge, I have invariably complied. It is very difficult for me to "keep a brave heart still" when I see inserted in a periodical of the Spiritual movement such violent attacks and misrepresentations, the date of which, compared with the date of the issue of the paper itself, shews that no verification of any kind has been attempted before the insertion. How can this further the cause of truth? Again, this happens immediately after a prolonged correspondence about tests in which my name has been freely used, not altogether to my satisfaction, and makes the burden hard for me to bear.

Mr. McKinney says I objected to what he calls the "reasonable test" of a piece of tape sewn around each of my wrists, the ends to be held by sitters. This is put by him in such a way as to constitute a perversion of the truth. The fact is that *two or three days before, in the course of conversation*, such a test was mentioned, but I recommended its non-application, as I thought that the sitters holding the tapes might, through their inexperience of such phenomena, jerk my wrists and injure me during any possible manifestation; but I offered to have my wrists sewn in the manner suggested, the ends of the tape to be sealed on both wall and floor in view of the circle.

I have sat under every possible "reasonable test" for years, including sitting *outside* the cabinet as a member of the circle, with successful results, and in conclusion I offer to sit either three times or such a number of times as a national representative committee of Spiritualists may judge proper, and under such conditions as may be decided upon unanimously by them, free of charge, and will stand or fall by the final result. It is not improbable that once my innocence is publicly established in such a manner in the minds of Spiritualists I shall retire from a field of labour where I have received so many hard knocks, and where so little consideration has been shewn to one who has never evinced any selfish pretensions, but has always done her best to help forward the cause by whatever time, labour, and money she could devote.—Yours, &c., C. E. Wood.

September 16th, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It is with deep regret that I observe you publish a one-sided statement of a so-called "exposure" of Miss C. E. Wood. However, I am optimist enough to hope that her innocence will shine clear through all misrepresentations. Messrs. Cade, Catling and Co. have certainly proved one thing very clearly, if confession may be considered proof. They have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that not only are they devoid of honour and the sentiments of English hospitality, but that they are also in crass ignorance of the simplest laws necessary to the production of what is called "materialisation."

For myself, I say that I have had such proof of genuine psychic power exercised through the mediumship of Miss Wood that the Peterborough reports do not shake my confidence a hair's breadth.

I think Miss Wood very much to blame for putting herself in the power of people without a previous inquiry into their personal characters. For instance, I am told that Cade came from Stamford to seize the "form"; that he boasts of having done it before to other mediums, and of his intention to do it again. This class of sitter is *unsatisfactory*, to put it mildly.

There seems to have been a general scuffle by Mr. McKinney's account, during which Cade hustled Miss Wood from her chair and *discovered* (?) the muslin wrapped round her. Yet, *hey presto!*

two minutes elapse, in fact just sufficient time for Mr. McKinney to "turn round," and Miss Wood is completely attired in her black dress and the muslin has disappeared, "hidden in her dress." More brutal hustling takes place, and the spoils of the fight are divided among the brave and gallant defenders of the truth. I take their own statement as my basis.

In another report they say her boots were off, and that Miss Wood bit and kicked, but they do *not* say she wore *shoes* at the sitting and that they tried to put on her boots the next morning, before she was partly restored from the state of unconsciousness they had thrown her into. Again, if we are to have *scientific* evidence of what took place, may I ask if Mr. Cade himself was searched, especially as he professes to be a medium, and came "deliberately planning a deception" and to break what gentlemen consider as binding as an oath—his word not to evade conditions?

And now, sir, may I just allude to the past correspondence about tests, &c., in connection with Miss Wood's sittings, merely to say that I entirely agree with those who say that insufficiently ascertained results ought never to be published in the columns of a paper such as yours, either *for* or *against* mediumship. Such reports only give rise to bad feeling on either side. Witness the present instance, where it is difficult to write dispassionately, and the correspondence before referred to, some of which you were compelled to hold back from publication. I am an advocate of circles of "*Light and Sweetness*," and trust Miss Wood will not hold back from her intention to develop "direct writing" in the light. I will give you two instances. I have just sat with her, her left hand and my right hand being joined across a table in full light of a large lamp, not turned down in the least. On her open right hand I placed one of my business cards, drawn from a sheaf in my card-case; on the top of the card a piece of pencil an inch long. I then placed my left hand under the hand holding the card and pencil, in such manner that each of my fingers felt a corresponding finger of Miss Wood's hand. We then carefully, so as not to allow the pencil to roll off, placed the hands occupied by the card and pencil under the edge of the table. In a couple of minutes a signal came through my right hand clasping her left hand on the top of the table, that the card was written on; and such proved to be the fact. The card was covered with the writing of a private message to myself, referring to forgotten circumstances in my career. I then lowered the light of the lamp, first clasping both Miss Wood's hands in mine, our joined hands together touching the lamp, and in a flash of time a blank card lying on the table was covered with a characteristic communication from "Pocha," addressed also to myself. Our hands never unclasped between the interval of the commencement of the tests and their completion. The cards were mine. Miss Wood had never before seen them. I subsequently obtained two other similar cards, asking Miss Wood and myself to sit in the *light* for these manifestations. I will no longer trespass upon your space except to say that Miss Wood is at Cardiff, and if she will kindly prolong her stay here we will do our best—in this I speak for the Cardiff Society—to produce harmonious and agreeable phenomena in as much light as we can.—Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM PAYNTER.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have read the correspondence with regard to Miss Wood in your current number without much surprise. Will you kindly allow me space for some remarks on it?

This exposure of trickery on the part of a well-known medium, by a gentleman who is a believer in Spiritualistic phenomena, corroborated by other gentlemen who hold the same views, is very interesting and ought to be utilised to its utmost.

We have a series of facts the careful investigation of which ought to add something definite to our knowledge of Spiritualistic phenomena.

1st. Miss Wood personated "Pocha."

2nd. Dr. and Mrs. Nichols, sitting alone with Miss Wood, in their own house, saw the form of a tall man standing behind Miss Wood. (*Vide* Mrs. Nichols' letter in "LIGHT" of September 2nd.)

3rd. "Pocha" spoke through Miss Wood at this sitting, and so did the "tall man," the latter giving to Mrs. Nichols the name of a friend whom he said he saw standing by her.

4th. At a subsequent sitting held by Mrs. Nichols in her house, at which a "great sceptic" was present, "Pocha" appeared in her usual form, then became as small as a "goose," and whilst she was in this condition, and lying near Mrs. Nichols' feet, Miss Wood and two tall figures appeared simultaneously.

5th. "Pocha" at this same sitting told a gentleman that he was not to smoke any more, and some days afterwards Mr. Eglinton, who knew nothing about this, when a cigar was offered to this gentleman, who called on him at his office, heard a voice say close to his ear, "He is not to have any more tobacco," and on mentioning this to "F." was told the story of the previous injunction given.

Now, a comparison of these statements makes it evident that either Miss Wood is occasionally a "medium," and occasionally, or probably frequently, an impostor, or that Mrs. Nichols and others are subject to very extraordinary delusions. The evidence of Mrs. Nichols, as also of Mr. Eglinton, is important in proportion to their being conversant with Spiritualistic

phenomena, and the value of Mr. Eglinton's evidence is, it appears to me, considerably enhanced by the fact that he is constantly employed in dry office work, being a partner in a firm, and so is less likely than many to become a victim to his own imagination.

If Dr. and Mrs. Nichols, Mr. Eglinton, and those who were present at the sitting recorded by Mrs. Nichols, will allow this matter, as it came before them, to be thoroughly sifted, and the result published in "LIGHT," and if possible, in other papers in which the record of Miss Wood's exposure has appeared, they will be worthy of the most grateful thanks of all students of the science of Spiritualism.

In saying this, I am quite aware that I am asking these ladies and gentlemen to make a great sacrifice of personal feeling for the good of others, but I take it that this is a thing which all who earnestly study Spiritualism must hold themselves prepared to do.

If such a serious investigation as I propose resulted in the weight of testimony being in favour of these ladies and gentlemen *not* being subject to delusions, and of the sitting with Miss Wood having been conducted in *precisely* the manner conveyed by Mrs. Nichols' letter of the 2nd September, then I think it must be conceded that in Miss Wood certain so called "mediumistic" phenomena are developed at times, and that as a means of livelihood she supplements them by trickery.

If this were once fairly well established, I should propose that Miss Wood be engaged by a select circle of students, and be studied upon with the greatest care. It appears to me that such a circle would be prosecuting its investigations under exceptionally good conditions. The fact of the medium having been convicted of trickery would remove all scruples as to the most searching investigation of the phenomena produced, and impose a wholesome check on the circle in the matter of permitting any frivolity into its conduct.

I can see that an objection might be here urged, to the effect that there would be a certain antagonism between the medium and the circle, which would render the conditions so unfavourable that no results could be produced by sitting, but to this my answer would be that it would be the fault of the circle if there were such antagonism; for whether Miss Wood be only partially or altogether an impostor, she is the result of the circles that have "developed" her.

The life of professional mediums is a life of great temptation to evil unless the "circles" they sit with are very much in earnest. It can hardly be called being "very much in earnest" if the majority of the persons composing them are satisfied to kiss and be kissed by the "form" and to talk very small talk and make little jokes with the phenomenal voice.

If "circles" had not been contented with the idea that they were doing their duty to themselves and the Spirits whom they imagined visited them, by encouraging in it a love of physical contact, and of trivial conversation, poor little Miss Wood would never have been tempted to degrade herself as she has done.

The evil which "circles" have done can be to some extent repaired by "circles" if Miss Wood be not a complete impostor. If the exposure of Miss Wood had but this one advantage, that it awoke "Spiritualists" to feel the responsibility they, thinking or unthinkingly, accept in entering "circles," it would do much good.

The letter of "An Indian Theosophist" in your current number makes an apt commentary on Miss Wood's exposure.

There are three things which it seems to me that all who attend sittings ought to bear in mind.

1st. That if the "manifestations" are genuine each member of the circle is being brought into contact with an individual who is in one of three conditions as compared to himself—(a) Of a superior, anxious to help him, and whom it is an act of ingratitude not to aid in its endeavours by cultivating earnest and elevating thoughts. (b) Of an inferior whom it is his duty to help, and towards whom he sins grievously by not trying to strengthen and purify it during its short communion with him. (c) Of an equal, liable to the same temptations to good and evil as himself, and whose relations with himself lay upon him the same responsibility as anyone not a materialist ought to feel in his relations with those around him.

2nd. That if the "manifestations" are not genuine, any frivolity opens the door to a depth of moral and physical degradation not agreeable to contemplate.

3rd. That great caution ought to be used in either accepting a manifestation as genuine or in attempting to expose it as an imposture. By accepting it one may be stultifying one's own intelligence, and aiding in degrading the "medium" by offering him a temptation to do wrong, and specially disgusting wrong. By suggesting doubts as to the genuineness until the evidence against it is cumulative, one may be causing very great pain unjustly, and also offering a temptation to an honest but weak person to practise deception by suggesting that his or her honesty is no protection against suspicion.

The study of "Spiritualism" appears to me to have in it some elements of immorality such as will be found in any researches instituted by means of sentient creatures; and in entering a "circle" or attempting insulated Spiritualistic experiments, whether the manifestations sought are moral or physical, I think it ought to be the aim of the student to keep a very high moral pressure on himself, or else he is in danger of becoming more

selfish and hence more cruel than if he had never attempted to search into the secrets which are beyond the knowledge of the most commonplace humanity; and if the study of Spiritualism is not to teach us to be less selfish and less cruel than we are it must surely be worse than a waste of time.—I remain, yours obediently,

SARAH HECKFORD.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Allow me a word on the latest "exposure." I am used to them, and they do not trouble me. Miss Wood has had one before—like Slade, Mrs. Corner, and nearly every physical medium I ever knew. The Davenport Brothers had their "exposures" like the rest. After Miss Wood's exposure some months ago, she was carefully and thoroughly tested. So with the others.

In the last case, Mr. Catling says:—"Miss Wood was tied to an arm-chair by two gentlemen." What have they to say? Anyone with the gumption of a goose can tie any person into an arch-chair so that he cannot possibly get free. When the Brothers Davenport were tied by sailors and engineers, and the knots sealed, they were set at liberty in a few moments. Dr. Ferguson said he had repeatedly seen Ira Davenport, or his double, free in the circle, and a moment after, firmly tied in his chair.

There seems to be no doubt that an entranced medium can be taken out of any bonds, and made to do anything which the controlling Spirits may desire; and there is some reason to believe that a suspicious person present—say a medium, like Mr. Cade—may bring about such a catastrophe as this at Peterborough.

The *Peterborough Express* says:—"Miss Wood expressed herself as quite willing to submit to any reasonable test, and accordingly, two gentlemen of the company were requested to tie the lady's hands to the chair, which they at once proceeded to do with black tape. When finished, this also was open to the inspection of those present."

If Miss Wood's two wrists were properly tied to the two arms of the chair, she could not have got free without assistance. I once tied one of the Brothers Davenport in and to the cabinet in the Hanover-square Rooms. He could never have freed himself—yet before I could close the door a hand came out of the cabinet and struck me a smart blow on the shoulder. I instantly opened the door, and found his two wrists bound as fast together as knotted hemp could make them.

I attended Miss Wood's first séance in Great Russell-street, and sat next the door of the cabinet. I am certain that she could not have crawled through the meshes of the net that enclosed her, and that, had she done so, I should have both seen and heard.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

September 15th, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Allow me to express my emphatic approval of the wise and steadfast words with which Mr. McKinney concludes his letter. There is one consideration which alleviates the pain and sadness with which Spiritualists, who have obtained in the home-circle the physical, psychical, and moral basis of their knowledge must regard the recurrent evidences of widespread fraud amongst those who make mediumship a profession. Only through such fraud, glaring and patent, can the knowledge of the real position and needs of Spiritualism reach the great body of Spiritualists without causing a wide and bitter schism in our ranks. Many Spiritualists besides myself,—publicly denounced as "a traitor to the cause" for ignoring the pretensions of such a "medium" as Firman—must be weary of reproaches for "unjustifiable doubts," "sceptical inaction," "cruel and dastardly insinuations against the private character of mediums," &c., &c. Shall we not, one and all, at length recognise the fact that a truthseeker such as Mr. Podmore, striving for evidence which—however freely given to some, in the truthful and holy atmosphere of the home-circle—has been denied to him, may find amongst us a sphere of utility, an occasion to teach as well as to learn? Far above any other knowledge do I value that which has come to me through Spiritualism, and gladly would I do more to give to my brethren, and to the young generation, its vital truths, rather than the less important truths of physical science. But with Spiritualism, as a public movement, under the stigma and incubus of fraud,—of fraud the grossness of which is obvious to all save to some of the "supporters" of this movement,—what can we do but wait, in soreness, suffering, and shame, for a new dawn, for a purer atmosphere, made beautiful by the light of reason? But "how long, O Lord! how long!"

DESMOND G. FITZGERALD.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The wise men of Greece were seven; those of Peterborough are seventeen. To them the testimony of some of the cleverest men of science, and that of a host of veteran Spiritualists, who have testified to the genuineness of Miss Wood's mediumship, counted for nothing, and they must go and organise a trick séance, and a trick they found. A few hours later we see their gallant deed chronicled "*urbi et orbi*," in a number of the London papers, as well as in "LIGHT." Was there also a lay reporter amongst the seventeen? The recorder of the exploit affirms that many at that séance were Spiritualists, and that there was also a medium. We believe him about the

medium, but as to the *Spiritualists* we must be allowed to entertain the strongest doubts; for, had any such persons been there they could not have acted as they have done, nor be ignorant of—First, that at séances sitters find only what they seek and deserve. If they search for Divine truths, angels will attend upon them; if for physical manifestations, tables and chairs move in response; if the presence of the Evil One is suspected, behold! Beelzebub comes to greet them. Let him who doubts this read the big volumes of Messieurs De Mirville, Bizouard, Des Mousseau, and fine company, who one and all solemnly testify to having seen the very person of his Satanic Majesty with a Cyclops' head, and that when the intrepid De Mirville put his thumb in the monster's single eye, the Arch-fiend coolly moved his basilisk espial on the extreme side of his horrible brow.*

But if, of all things, suspicion guides the investigator's steps to a séance, he is sure to find there deception, true or imaginary.

Secondly. Had one only of the Peterborough party been well read in Spiritualism, he would have known that *catching the Spirit* is the same as catching the medium, of whom the materialised form is part and parcel. This has been explained and proved over and over again, for years and years past, but in vain, it appears, for the Peterborough seventeen.

Thirdly. That seventeen in a séance are about a dozen too many for obtaining satisfactory results, unless in perfect harmony. But what about the finding of the muslin? It was certainly a great trophy! But what tyro in Spiritualism does not know that muslin, lace, drapery, jewellery, as well as flowers, fruit, live birds, *et multas res*, are generally, and for good or evil, brought into the séance by the *invisibles themselves*? And when the Peterborough seventeen come to tell the world that a fully grown person like Miss Wood could be squeezed into the diminutive form of "Pocha," they affirm a belief that cannot be shared by any sane man, even though asserted by seventeen billions of witnesses, being contrary to natural law.

Sir, if Spiritualism suffers, it is not by the ignorance and materialism from without, but by the unenlightened action of its would-be votaries within the pale; not from its enemies, but from its too zealous friends. To persist in catching the Spirits after all that has been said on the subject is, to say the least of it, a thoughtless and undignified act.—Very truly yours,

September 16th.

G. DAMIANI.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have been a believer in Spiritualism for twelve years, and during that time I have seen every medium for materialisation phenomena "exposed" as a cheat and a fraud after hundreds of test séances, when the veracity of the medium and the phenomena had been placed beyond question.

I hold, therefore, that instead of blaming the medium, those investigators who are always ready to rush into print to expose the medium are themselves deserving of all the censure. I say this advisedly, because it is their bounden duty as trustworthy witnesses of these phenomena to test them in the first instance by proper scientific tests—for instance, to satisfy themselves that the phenomena occur quite apart from any possibility of fraud on the part of the medium, and until then to hold their judgment in suspense and give the medium the benefit of all doubts. There are various ways of doing this, by tying the medium, by weighing the medium, or by placing her in a locked cabinet with iron bars in front through which she cannot get out. Some of these tests have been repeatedly applied to Miss Wood, and the genuineness of the phenomena in her case has been abundantly established. Even without any such tests, if a human figure comes out which is manifestly much smaller than the medium it is proof conclusive that it is a Spirit, always assuming that no human confederate could by any possible means have got into the cabinet.

Now, sir, what have we in the alleged exposure? What are the facts? Are those gentlemen who so hastily denounce Miss Wood as a fraud not aware that a medium is an unconscious instrument in the hands of Spirits to be used as they think fit, and that their power depends on the conditions? Generally the band of Spirits attached to the medium controls the séances, but sometimes the conditions are unfavourable, and they are overpowered by Spirits introduced with strangers (sitters at the circle); and when such get control of the medium (she being an unconscious instrument in their hands) they can make her do anything they like. She is, to all intents and purposes, possessed by an evil Spirit, and it is the evil Spirit that is exposed in the fraud, and that struggles and bites, &c. This is my explanation of all these "exposures," where the previous genuineness of the phenomena has been established under test conditions. I say this without any knowledge of Miss Wood, with whom I have never had a sitting, but merely as an explanation to satisfy the doubts of inquirers into Spiritualism, who will, of course, be disgusted with the subject when they see the leading papers in the cause publishing exposures of all the best mediums.

Anyone who knows anything at all about trance mediums must know that when "possessed" or controlled by a Spirit they are to all intents irresponsible beings, and it is difficult for an outsider to know when it is the medium and when it is a Spirit that is speaking. Often it is a long time before the medium is really herself again, and what has happened or what

* See De Mirville's "Pneumatologie," Vol. V.

she has said or done in the meantime she is perfectly unconscious of.

Therefore I say that Miss Wood's statement that she was unconscious of the whole affair until long after it was over is to my mind quite consistent with fact and with my experience of mediums.

Knowing (as those gentlemen must do who expose Miss Wood as a fraud) that she has been previously often tested and the phenomena pronounced to be genuine through her mediumship, and knowing also that as a medium she is necessarily liable to be as much "beside herself" when possessed by a Spirit as ever a lunatic is, I must say I think that the blame rests, not with Miss Wood, but with those incompetent and unscientific investigators of Spiritual phenomena who do not absolutely refuse to sit with a fresh medium except under test conditions in the first instance. When they are all quite confident of her and are willing to make allowance for the freaks of undeveloped Spirits gaining possession of her, or deliberately planning frauds beforehand through her, then only should they sit without any tests. A medium who at any time consents to sit with strangers except under test conditions is equally to blame. Mediums should say to their sitters, "Use what tests you think necessary to satisfy yourselves, and then please do not hold me responsible if the Spirits cheat you. I disclaim all responsibility. I am but the medium through whom they operate, and if you let them cheat you the fault is yours, not mine."

In conclusion, I beg respectfully to say that the publication of exposures of mediums without a word of explanation is likely to injure Spiritualism. As a proof of this the alleged exposure is now going the round of the provincial press. The harm done is incalculable.—Yours truly,

FRTZ.

Manchester, September 16th, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In your issue of the 16th inst., under the heading "Miss C. E. Wood Exposed," two communications appear. As one who is familiar with Miss Wood's mediumship, having attended scores of her sésances, I shall, with your permission, make a few remarks upon the subject. I proved the facts of physical mediumship for myself many years ago, and as I believe there is no royal road to knowledge, either in this or any other department, except the old, well-worn road of persistent application and hard work, I shall not engage in any controversy with any person upon the subject, believing such a course to be entirely useless. All I wish to do is to point out what evidently your two correspondents, in common with probably many more of your readers, entirely lose sight of.

I have no desire to pose, either as the accuser or defender of mediums in general, any further than the facts I have slowly and carefully gathered will warrant me, but at the present crisis, and in view of the experiences I and others have gained, to remain altogether silent would seem a general injustice. I speak that only which I know.

Nine or ten years ago I was thoroughly sceptical upon the subject of Spiritualism. There is no need to enter into details how I was led to inquire into it—suffice it to say that once introduced I made up my mind to collect all the evidence available, but to *suspend judgment* until I was certain of the facts one way or the other. I plodded on over twelve months, attending on an average three sésances per week. Sometimes the evidence in favour of the genuineness of the physical manifestations seemed very good, but still there was for a long period something wanting, or some weak point in the evidence which prevented me being thoroughly satisfied. Indeed, at times, things, I thought, looked extremely questionable. I was, however, never either unduly elated or discouraged, and I tried to keep in such a frame of mind as would hinder me either praising or blaming the mediums. The result was, I was gradually but surely forced back, as it were, from every position that I had taken up as a sceptic. The evidence in favour of the genuineness of the physical manifestations accumulated, until at last it was of such a character that it could not be gainsaid, and now, having "built my house upon the rock," any number of exposures, real or alleged, are powerless to disturb me, for my knowledge is grounded neither upon one particular sitting nor upon one particular phase of the manifestations, nor even upon one particular medium, although I have received from a certain medium the most abundant, the most varied, and the most conclusive evidence of any, and that medium was Miss Wood. The evidence I had was of such a character that nothing depended upon the honesty or good faith of the medium, because *she was in view* all the time most of the experiments were being conducted. I have had sittings with perhaps half-a-dozen different physical mediums, but with Miss Wood it has happened that I have had a greater number of sittings than with any other, and observed through her mediumship almost all the different phases of physical manifestations. Miss Wood is the medium who at Peterborough recently is reported to have been "exposed." Let me see to what conclusion on the subject my garnered facts will lead me. With Miss Wood as medium I have on several occasions seen the "form" and the medium, clearly separate and distinct, but both in view together—that is, at the same instant, and in a light sufficient to make sure of what I am now recording—the "form" moving about altogether independent of the medium. With Miss Wood as medium I have had direct writing

in full light. I have known furniture moved in her presence, a chair come from the opposite side of the room, and this in a strange room where she had only come a very few minutes previously, and where she was never alone for a single instant, and no thought had been entertained of holding any sitting there. I have no theory to offer as to the origin of these and scores of similar occurrences transpiring in the presence of Miss Wood and other mediums, but I do affirm this (having proved it)—that they have some origin altogether above or apart from the normal powers of such individuals. Conjuring will *not* explain what I have witnessed in Miss Wood's presence, one hundredth part even of which with the various tests employed I cannot repeat here, but the best test, I consider, as to materialisation is the presentation of the "form" with the medium in view as I have already related.

With a medium repeatedly proved genuine as Miss Wood has been, I must pause before I commit myself to the theory of the Peterborough friends, that the sésance which they report was a fraud deliberately planned by Miss Wood. In the light of my experiences with that medium I shall not accept the conclusion to which they have come, because their solitary and crude experiment proves nothing when set side by side with the results of so many others, more carefully conducted, inasmuch as the medium in the other experiments to which I have alluded was not a factor in the problem at all. For myself, therefore, I feel quite sure that if Miss Wood was out when the seizure was made, *she did not come out*, she was brought out in an unconscious state by the controls. In view of what I have stated, this is a far more reasonable supposition than the other, if we once admit the presence of powers foreign to the medium. The Peterborough sésance is another instance of the evils of promiscuous circles. The conditions presented to the controls were probably such as rendered it impossible to produce a genuine materialisation; so, yielding perhaps to the mental pressure of the circle for a "manifestation," the medium was draped and sent out instead.

We do not know what influences surround sensitives in such an atmosphere, and when an exposure takes place under such conditions Spiritualists have themselves to blame. It is an "exposure," doubtless, but in a good many cases not an exposure of fraud on the part of the medium, but an exposure of ignorance on the part of the sitters or those arranging the circle. If Miss Wood was the "artful trickster" that the Peterborough sitters have styled her, there would be a grand opening for her, à la Maskelyne and Cooke, free from the worry, free from the suspicion, the kicks and cuffs, that attach to her present position. The evidence for or against materialisation is *not to be had* by such methods as that adopted at Peterborough, but out of the seeming evil done good will come if mediums and sitters alike will sternly set their faces against holding sittings where the conditions make such results possible. The real fact is that Spiritualists as a rule have not given, and are not willing to give, the necessary time, &c., to develop manifestations with the medium in view. There has been quite a feverish anxiety to have "manifestations." Of course, results are to be had quicker and more regularly by secluding the medium, and, with here and there a few exceptions, that has been all that has been aimed at. The order of the day has been—"Let us have these startling appearances by methods involving the least expenditure of time—as quickly and as often as possible, and let us get as many as possible of our friends and neighbours in to see the wonderful things;" and the pliable natures of mediums have had to float with the stream. If the splendid results I have previously referred to have been witnessed in the past, they are to be had again, and I believe regularly too, instead of fitfully, if set about in earnest. There has been far too great a desire to attract public attention to our experiments. The bulk of the public are not prepared for anything of the kind. They have too often swarmed into the sésance room and hindered all real progress, because many of them have never given the subject one half hour's serious thought, but looked upon their visit to a circle as a means, perhaps, of killing a little time, and have gone away again probably more sceptical than they came (if such individuals have any right to the title of sceptic) and thus an all-round injury has been done.

Whether I have, or have not, given the true explanation of what occurred at Peterborough, time and a fuller knowledge of the laws which govern so-called Spiritualism perhaps will reveal; but in the meantime I feel assured (with all due deference to the opinion of your two correspondents) that I am much nearer the truth than they are, and I cannot but express my regret that they have allowed themselves to speak of Miss Wood as they have done. However, I have no fear but that the time will come when they will see cause to reverse their, what I cannot term other than much too hasty opinion. I never knew Miss Wood to shirk a test of any kind. She has several times submitted to be searched, and re-dressed in clothing not her own; and no mere conjuror is capable of producing the same results as those which occur in the presence of Miss Wood, that is, if placed under precisely the same conditions. To Miss Wood, and all other good and honest mediums, I would add, "Do not be discouraged," for "The wrong may reign a little while, as round and round we run, Yet ever the truth comes uppermost, and ever is justice done." Newcastle-on-Tyne, September 18th, 1882. J. WALTON.

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 F. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

THE EVILS OF DARK CABINETS.

We had written at some length, on what we hold to be the duty of all earnest and sincere Spiritualists at the present juncture, when a sad disgrace has fallen upon the cause which is to them so dear and sacred. But the pressure on our space has compelled us to omit, or rather, perhaps, to defer, much that we had intended to say in our present issue. The reports which we gave last week of the alleged exposure of Miss Wood at Peterborough have brought us a large number of communications, and we have felt it best to print as many of these as possible, that our readers may be placed in full possession of the diverse views which are entertained on this very unpleasant question that has thus been forced upon us.

As our readers will observe, there is amongst our correspondents a very general opinion that Miss Wood is—notwithstanding all that has been said—possessed of very remarkable powers as a medium; and, from facts which have come to our own knowledge, we are disposed to think so too. But then, if she was really guilty of a premeditated and conscious fraud at Peterborough, the unfortunate questions arise, What is the source and nature of the temptation which leads mediums from time to time into the commission of such gross acts of wickedness? And what measures can be adopted to save both mediums and sitters in future from the recurrence of such infamy and disgrace? Nor are the same questions much less pressing, even should it be conceded—as Miss Wood herself asserts, and as many of her friends are disposed to believe—that at the time of the recent seizure she was utterly unconscious of the degrading work in which she was engaged. Even if this were true few people could be expected to credit it, and the necessity of saving Spiritualism from unmerited disgrace must outweigh all other considerations.

Both our esteemed co-worker, "M.A. (Oxon.)," and Mr. J. S. Farmer, the able editor of the *Psychological Review*, have, as our readers are aware, long and earnestly advocated the total abolition of the practice of placing the medium in a dark cabinet out of view of the sitters, except under very special circumstances; and we are strongly disposed to agree with them that herein lies the sure remedy for the evils we so much deplore. Acting on this conviction we have, since our last issue, conjointly with Mr. Farmer, after anxiously considering what should be done in the present emergency, issued the following circular with the view of taking counsel with some of the most experienced Spiritualists in London and the provinces:—

4, NEW BRIDGE-STREET,
LUDGATE-CIRCUS, LONDON, E.C.

16th September, 1882.

In view of recent events, it seems to us that the time has now arrived when it is incumbent upon all who have the welfare of Spiritualism at heart to consider carefully and thoughtfully the present state of affairs. That during the past few years the movement has suffered, and the facts of Spiritualism have been damaged and discredited, in the eyes of investigators and the public generally, through the exposures, real or alleged, arising out of circles for "form manifestations" with professional mediums, to which the public have been admitted, no one acquainted with the true circumstances of the case will, we think, venture to deny. The reason for this is not far to seek, and a careful study of the question has led us to the conclusion that the conditions peculiar to such circles are mainly respon-

sible for these deplorable results. We therefore suggest that, in the interests of all concerned, and having regard to the position of the movement before the public, it is desirable that definite action should be taken in the matter.

The question is a grave one, and undoubtedly requires a wise discretion in dealing with it. To this end we solicit the advice of those who are well known as tried and experienced Spiritualists.

It is proposed that a carefully worded statement shall be drawn up and sent out to societies and individual Spiritualists all over the country, earnestly inviting all concerned to united public action, such action to have special reference to a reconsideration of the methods of investigation usually adopted.

Seeing that experience is shewing the only really satisfactory conditions to be (1) the medium in full view, and (2) a sufficiency of light for careful observation, we think such a statement might contain a caution against the evil results of dark and cabinet sittings with professional mediums as at present conducted, and also against admitting the public to dark circles of any kind. It might, moreover, draw attention to the fact that in the seclusion of the medium, and in the absence of sufficient light for careful observation, a premium is set upon fraud; that these conditions seem to harbour and invite deception, buffoonery, and delusion; that by their adoption we expose mediums to temptations to which we have no right to subject them; besides, in great probability, sapping their health and exposing them to unknown perils. It should also, we think, point out the want of confidence which these methods induce between medium and sitters.

On the other hand it should, we think, indicate and recommend the adoption of methods which are not open to those objections. That such are possible we are reasonably assured, but after all the question is—In view of the continued obloquy and contempt brought upon Spiritualism by "Exposures," is it wise to continue methods tending in every case, sooner or later, to such disastrous results?

In asking your advice and criticism we believe that only by some such action will a revival of interest in the subject be brought about, and public confidence in the movement be restored.

We shall esteem it a favour if you will kindly let us know your views with reference to this matter by return of post, despatching your reply so that it will reach us, at latest, by Tuesday, September 19th. If unable to write more fully, a simple "Yes" or "No" on a post-card, in general approval or the reverse, will be welcome.—Yours faithfully,

E. DAWSON ROGERS, Editor of "LIGHT."

JOHN S. FARMER, Editor of "PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW."

This circular has brought us a large number of replies, favourable, with but rare exceptions, to some such course of action as that which we ventured to suggest. Next week we propose to publish a selection from our correspondents' letters. In the hurry of despatch we overlooked the names of some friends to whom copies of the circular should rightly have been forwarded. We can only record our regret, and express the hope that all friends who desire to do so will send us a short statement of their views as speedily as possible.

The usual monthly meeting of the Council of the Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, was held on Tuesday evening, when attention was naturally directed to our circular, and we are glad to be able to report that the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

"That this Council, having had before them the circular recently issued by the Editors of 'LIGHT' and the *Psychological Review*, resolves to appoint a committee to consider the question of the most satisfactory conditions to be observed at physical sances, with the view of eliminating all chances of fraud, whilst affording the best opportunities for the production of phenomena; that the committee consist of the following members: Mr. F. Podmore, Mr. M. Theobald, Mr. D. FitzGerald, Mr. J. J. Morse, Mr. John S. Farmer, and Mr. E. Dawson Rogers; and that the committee be empowered to invite the co-operation of any other Spiritualist, whether a member of this Association or not."

MR. CHARLES BLACKBURN, of Blackburn Park, Didsbury, near Manchester, who has devoted very generous services to the cause of Spiritualism through a long series of years, was on Tuesday last unanimously elected an honorary member of the Central Association of Spiritualists.

The premises of the Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C., have just been re-opened, after undergoing thorough cleaning, repairs, and decoration. Arrangements are in course of completion for the Fortnightly Monday Evening Discussion Meetings for the season 1882-3, and members desirous of contributing papers are invited to communicate with the secretary without delay.

MEDIAL INSPIRATION.

As Mr. George Barlow, in his letter in "LIGHT" of the 2nd September, says that his thoughts are merely tentative, it induces me to believe that he has given them publicity in order to draw forth the thoughts of others on the subject of "Is it Mediumship?"

His tentative thought has acted as a medium in this instance on my thought, as it no doubt will do on that of others; and since he compares the human mind to a piano, or an Æolian harp, to continue that comparison, each will respond to it according to the quality of tone of his instrument. And does not this very comparison almost reply to his question while responding to his touch? The music is *in* the instrument, not in the hand of the performer, who can put nothing into it that is not there already, although according to his ability he may draw forth the richest, sweetest, and most heavenly strains from the harmoniously strung chords of the perfect instrument.

But the comparison is even more complete than this; for, strange to say, although every melody that ever existed, or that ever will exist, and every conceivable harmony, and, alas, discord also, is contained within that instrument, it cannot come forth alone; it must be played upon to be drawn forth. Here, then, you have the "*mediumship*," which may be compared to the breeze playing on the Æolian harp. Without the breeze the harp is silent. The breeze bloweth where it listeth, and no one can tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; and so also it is with the thousand touches that awaken the deep soul of the poet. Who can say *whence* and *whither*? All we know is that each and all do their work. But once put into action who can tell where they will stop for good or ill? Only this we may believe, that all work together *for good* under the direction of the Divine Ruler. Besides, to insure this result to each, He has given a heavenly guide, or guardian, to warn and encourage and keep in order the various strings of each precious instrument. Following out the same comparison we might call this guide the tuner, who plays a very necessary part in the harmony of each instrument, but his real name is "CONSCIENCE."

Thus, then, we may all be compared to harps more or less perfectly in tune, and our delight, as our duty, should be to chant the praises of the Great Creator, the Father, to whom we all owe our existence, and of whom, as children, we each inherit the every attribute. And this at once negatives the idea that our praise is to take exclusively the form of psalm-singing. Rather is it our bounden duty to endeavour to exercise each of those Divine attributes to the honour and glory, and, therefore, in the praise of our Heavenly Father. For the principles of every science are *in the soul*, and through them we are enabled to recognise them again in the elements of nature, from which we have the sciences of hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, &c., &c. Thus does the power of music or harmony in the soul, with which that of the poet is so closely allied, awaken a sense of the universal harmony, and discover the same science in the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies; so that at last the soul in its progress comes to recognise but one science, which is above all, through all, and in all, and exclaims with fear and trembling, but at the same time with solemn joy, "*I and My Father are One.*" And this is to have the truth, or Christ, revealed in one's self.

Mr. Barlow, like a true poet inspired by the harmonies of the universe, understands that deep in his own being lies the music, which any passing impression may serve as a *medium* to awaken and draw forth in rich harmonies without the extraneous aid of any dead poet. As I am no believer in *chance*, those impressions are, as I think, induced by his own guiding spirit, or rather, guardian angel, for the very purpose of his soul's development; for each time he exercises his Divine gift he widens and augments the strength of his own personality—and perfection is only to be attained by development and unfoldment from within, and not by any accretion or addition from without—until the time shall come when that personality shall be swallowed up in the sense of *identity*, and he too shall feel that he and his Father are One!

I cannot refrain in this place from quoting a beautiful passage, clothed in language as lofty as that of Holy Writ, from one of the appendices to that noble book, "The Perfect Way," which has come so opportunely as a gospel of interpretation at this, "the time of making known" (because it is the very end of the dispensation), to declare to us the hitherto hidden mysteries concealed under the veil of "the letter which killeth," and which, if *inspired*, must certainly have been so by the very

Spirit of Truth, the Comforter. I trust the few verses I shall take the liberty of quoting will induce Mr. George Barlow, and those who believe with him in the innate powers of our own personality, to read the book for themselves.

1. "You ask the method and nature of Inspiration, and the means whereby God revealeth the Truth?"
2. "Know that there is no enlightenment from without: the secret of things is revealed from within."
3. "From without cometh no Divine Revelation: but the Spirit within beareth witness."
4. "Do not think that I tell you that which you know not: for except you know it, it cannot be given to you."
5. "To him that hath it is given, and he hath the more abundantly."
6. "But you breathe out that which is within you: you utter that which you have learned."
7. "None is a prophet save he who knoweth: the instructor of the people is a man of many lives."
8. "Inborn knowledge and the perception of things, these are the sources of intuition: for the Spirit of the man instructeth him, having already learned by experience."
9. "Intuition is inborn experience: that which the Spirit knoweth of old and of former years."
10. "Do not think that I tell you anything you know not: *all cometh from within*; the spirit that informeth is the spirit of the Prophet himself."
11. "What then, you ask, is the MEDIUM: and how are to be regarded the utterances of one speaking in trance?"
12. "God speaketh through no man in the way you suppose; for the Spirit of the Prophet beholdeth God with open eyes. If he fall into a trance, his eyes are open, and his interior man knoweth what is spoken by him."
13. "But when a man speaketh that which he knoweth not, he is obsessed: an impure Spirit, or one that is bound, hath entered into him."
14. "There are many such, but their words are as the words of men who know not: these are not prophets, nor inspired."
15. "God obsesseth no man: God is revealed: and he to whom God is revealed speaketh that which he knoweth."
16. "Christ Jesus understandeth God: He knoweth that of which He beareth witness."
17. "But they 'who, being mediums, utter in trance things of which they have no knowledge, and of which their own Spirit is uninformed: these are obsessed with a Spirit of divination, a strange Spirit, not their own."
18. "Of such beware, for they speak many lies, and are deceivers, working often for gain or for pleasure sake: and they are a grief and a snare to the faithful."
19. "Inspiration may indeed be mediumship, but it is conscious: and the knowledge of the Prophet instructeth him."
20. "Even though he speak in an ecstasy, he uttereth nothing that he knoweth not."

We all remember the conduct of St. Paul, as recorded in the XVI. Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, who, strange as it must appear to the uninitiated, was *grieved*, and turned and commanded the "Spirit of divination," in the name of Jesus Christ, *or God in us*, to come out of the damsel, although it had witnessed to the truth of the teachings of the Apostles. Surely this conduct on the part of St. Paul is a witness to the truth of the teachings of the present Gospel of Interpretation.

MARIE CAITHNESS.

It appears to me that the question of Medial Inspiration raised by Mr. George Barlow, in "LIGHT," September 2nd, is a very broad one—as broad as the universe—and that his view of it is one-sided and narrow.

I do not believe that anybody's brains *originate* anything, or that any human being may lay claim to an *original* thought. A thought may be *new* to the thinker, and new to all who receive it from him; but not on that account *original*. Every poem that any poet may ever write, already exists: every piece of music, every painting, every beautiful statue, or grand invention, that may ever delight our ears, or eyes, or add to our future comfort, or happiness, is already in existence in the world of mind or spirit, waiting for some mortal, temporarily lifted above his fellows, to be in a condition to receive it and transmit it to others. When lifted into the highest condition possible to it, each mind is opened to what we call "*inspiration*," which inspiration is given forth externally according to the mental idiosyncrasies of the thinker. It may be in the form of poetry, music, painting, sculpture, or mechanical invention. Each mind draws from the infinite fount exactly what is suited to it, or what it demands.

All minds are linked together by the subtlest sympathies, attractions, or affinities. We cannot think a thought without

setting in motion a current which must impinge upon some other mind, or minds, either on earth or in the Spirit-world, and draw a response, or be passed on like an endless electrical current; and as the world of mind or spirit is infinite, so are the varieties and combinations of thought infinite and inexhaustible. Thought is the most refined quality of cosmic force generated by the human brain; each brain generating according to its genius: if the individual be pure, high, spiritual, so are the thoughts, and *vice versa*. The spirit of man selects (in the body *unconsciously*) the material of thought desired at the moment, and gives it forth as a new creation, whereas it is but another one of the infinite varieties of forms which thought may assume.

Thought is like the air we breathe: we are always taking it in and giving it out; but we do not originate the air, neither do we the thought. According to Swedenborg there is a correspondence between the lungs and the mind, and between the air and thought. God is Spirit: we are in an ocean of spirit, and can originate nothing. We receive, assimilate, and recombine in giving forth, and thus appear to create. In so doing we are just as active and happy as if we did create.

A sense of personality is very delightful to the egotistic man. There are infinite grades of personalities. The higher and more spiritualised the personality, the less does it love itself, or seek its own greatness. It longs to lose itself in the Great Whole, and enjoy the highest of all perfections, that of being one with God. But that does not prevent a Spirit in the flesh, however exalted and great he may appear to his fellows—which is but being nearer to God, and possessing *more of God* in himself—from striving ever to receive and bring forth more of the Divine, which divinity is expressed in the beauty of thought, action, life; so that to lose one's personality does not imply inaction, nonentity, or annihilation, but that all is infinitely increased. Sooner or later man discovers that *this* is "the highest prize of being," and the "one goal" alone for which he was created, or projected.

There is no doubt that an immense amount of poor rubbish has been fathered by mediums upon certain individual great minds which have gone before. But these things are the errors of the infancy of Spiritualism. We shall grow out of, and some of us have already grown out of, the little self-flattering folly of thinking that we have to do only with the great who have passed from earth. I think with Mr. Barlow that "this sort of self-deception does a great deal of harm"—harm to one's self, and harm to Spiritualism, by making it appear ridiculous. It is certainly *far better* to cultivate one's "own especial gifts to the full"; and, unfortunately, but few mediums have understood how important and indispensable self-cultivation is to *them*, of all beings on the earth; for their aim should be to be *lifted* to the highest mental or spiritual companionship in that ethereal world to which *only* the Spirit may penetrate; and not to be merely the empty, ignorant shell, or instrument for crafty earth-wanderers to inflate with their second or third-rate thoughts and stupid verbosity, under some assumed name of note. But, as I said before, these are the errors of infancy; the first steps are always necessary; having made them we are able to go on and correct our errors.

To be lifted into that companionship is not only to be "impressed," but to see, to hear, to converse with, nay, argue with, and discuss many a knotty point. It is also, with the gladness of an *appreciative* companionship, to *consciously* receive the thoughts of another mind, and transfer them to paper, possibly to give them forth to others, *not* as inspiration, though the soul may thrill with a responsive elation, as if, as we express it, inspired,—but as the dictation of a separate mind. Better *without a name*, for in heaven earth-names and personalities are lost.

Shakespeare does not "wander about to impress the brains of mortal singers"; but the same fount of divine inspiration at which he drank is open to others, and if they be able to be lifted to it, an answering, sympathetic mind *may* give an extra impetus to their power of thought; or probably aid their own spirits so much more powerfully to separate from the body that they really feel they can "hardly bear," in the physical frame, the up-rushing of their own freed spirit. They *feel* what they say, but if ignorant, they mistake what it is. Or [again, the ethereal companions of one's Spirit may pour into listening ears the musical strains of their own poetical thoughts, overwhelming the temporary resident of earth with the supernal joy of diviner conceptions than commonly fall to his lot below. Shakespeare's divinely spiritualised brain (had it not been so he could not have written as he did)

generated thoughts whose power is still felt; the current he *set* in motion has never yet ended. It impinges upon many minds. When lifted into the highest spiritual state, they recognise the mental power which was the generator of those shapes of loveliness, and call it Shakespeare; though that which filled Shakespeare, as individual Spirit, has doubtless long been absorbed into the Great Whole, and the earth personality become non-existent. The same current of thought, however, entering other brains, may be expressed in a form of weak puerility compared with the majestic grandeur of Shakespeare's thought.

The Spirit is perfect, and contains in itself *all powers, all gifts, all talents, all capacities*; but the body, and these much-vaunted "brains" of ours, limit the *expression* of the Spirit. How often do we not feel in ourselves a sense of greatness we cannot bring forth, and chafe inwardly over the restraint imposed by the incapacity of the body? But it is the constant striving of the Spirit within to bring forth some of its infinite capacities and powers, which is the secret of all talent, all genius, all greatness.

Mr. Barlow's own Spirit, in moments of so-called inspiration, *ascends*. He is in his highest earthly condition when his "Muse" sings the songs which have delighted and sympathetically lifted so many. He might be Shakespeare come again, but he is Shakespeare's brother, following in the path Shakespeare and other divine singers have trod before him; drinking at a fount all souls without exception may drink at, if their "brains" permit, in the poor old earthly shells, and vehicles which the diviner part of them uses temporarily. Whilst Mr. Barlow lingers delightedly, with swelling soul, over that fount, pleasing himself with a sense of proud, and *tant soit peu* egotistic isolation, may there not be a few companion minds delighting themselves also in harmonising with his thoughts, and thus adding to the power of a strain which *they*, at least, know is caused by the inflowing of the great Infinite Divine Spirit of all beauty, taking that *form* of expression in them? That proud attitude of mind which will admit nothing but the work of its own unaided spirit—"I myself do it all; my *own spirit alone*; my genius, which needs not the aid of *Spirits*!"—which decries mediumship, not reflecting upon all that abused word *may* be made to mean, such an attitude is *truly* "self-deception," and not to be desired.

The narrow boundaries of one's own "little world" crumble and separate to admit of broader circumferences of being, when we can recognise that we are members of a divine solidarity extending from heaven to earth, and that by thought we spiritually breathe in unison, as with the vast lungs of one body. We lose all sense of isolated existence, and no longer strive for the little greatness of a self-centred growth, but, occupied with different aspirations, grow from a new centre, which is *God within us*, expanding and broadening to spiritual dimensions, which our small bodies and the daily scenes of earthly life cannot limit. We receive from other divinely-inspired minds, and give forth in our turn, without question or cavil as to *origin*, spontaneously producing in harmonious response to the One Spirit, and rejoicing, as with a sense of illimitable life, in that feeling of union with other minds, which forbids the egoistic assumption of self-originated powers.

When our brother, the *man-singer*, takes a few more upward steps, for we judge from his printed words he has not yet taken them, he will feel how great and illimitable is the joy of that freedom which is to be found in the final yielding up of one's "individual soul" to be *self-lost* in the Infinite Absolute Spirit.

(ONE OF THOSE "WOMEN-SINGERS.")

September 11th, 1882.

MR. THOMAS WALKER.—In the course of a letter sent to Mr. J. J. Morse, by Mr. George Spriggs, the well-known Cardiff medium, who is at present in Melbourne, Australia, that gentleman records the following item with regard to Mr. Thomas Walker, who has recently renounced his mediumship and turned over to the Materialists. Mr. Spriggs writes:—"I do not know if Mr. Terry told you about Walker, but he is a turn-coat. He stated last Sunday (July 23rd) in his lecture that he did not believe in Spiritualism, and had no hopes of a future life. He says his former state (as a medium) was only due to excitement and ignorance." Yet Mr. Walker distinctly proclaimed his mediumship while in this country; he must either have spoken falsely then, or is doing so now.

When the heart is out of tune the tongue seldom goes right,

"THE PERFECT WAY" AND ITS CRITICS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Permit us space in your columns for a few words in reply to the strictures of Dr. Wyld and Mrs. Penny upon the above book.

"The Perfect Way" neither is, nor purports to be, a "new" Gospel in the sense implied by your correspondents. On the contrary, it is expressly declared in the preface that "nothing new is told, but that which is ancient—so ancient, that either it or its meaning has been lost—is restored and explained." Its mission is that simply of Rehabilitation and Interpretation, undertaken with the view, not of superseding Christianity, but of saving it.

For as the deepest and most earnest thinkers of our day are painfully aware, the Gospel of Christendom, as it stands in the Four Evangelists, does *not* suffice, uninterpreted, to satisfy the needs of the age, and to furnish a perfect system of thought and rule of life. Christianity—historically preached and understood—has for eighteen centuries filled the world with wars, persecutions, and miseries of all kinds; and in these days it is rapidly filling it with agnosticism, atheism, and revolt against the very idea of God. "The Perfect Way" seeks to consolidate truth in one complete whole, and by systematising religion to demonstrate its Catholicity. It seeks to make peace between Science and Faith; to marry the Intellect with the Intuition; to bring together East and West, and to unite Buddhist philosophy with Christian love, by demonstrating that the basis of religion is not historical, but spiritual,—not physical, but psychic—not local and temporal, but universal and eternal. It avers that the true "Lord Jesus Christ" is no mere historical character, no mere demi-god, by whose material blood the souls of men are washed white, but "the hidden man of the heart," continually born, crucified, ascending and glorified in the interior Kingdom of the Christian's own Spirit. A scientific age rightly refuses to be any longer put off with data which are more than dubious, and logic which morality and philosophy alike reject. A deeper, truer, more real religion is needed for an epoch of thought and for a world familiar with biblical criticism and revision;—a religion whose foundations no destructive agnosticism can undermine, and in whose structure no examination, however searching, shall be able to find flaw or blemish. It is only by rescuing the Gospel of Christ from the externals of history, persons, and events, and by vindicating its essential significance, that Christianity can be saved from the destruction which inevitably overtakes all idolatrous creeds. There is not a word in "The Perfect Way" at variance with the spirit of the Gospel of the "Lord Jesus Christ." If your correspondents think otherwise, it can only be because they are themselves dominated by idolatrous conceptions in regard to the personal and historical Jesus, and cannot endure to see their Eidolon broken to pieces in the presence of the Ark of the Mysteries of God.

It is just those who *have* fully accepted, and who comprehend the Spirit of, the old Gospel, who are ready and anxious to hear what the promised Spirit of Truth has yet to reveal. But the world at large never has accepted that Gospel, and cannot accept it for need of that very interpretation which our opponents deprecate. If the Spirit of Truth be really charged to "shew all things," such exposition will certainly *not* consist in a mere reiteration, in the same obscure, because symbolical, terms, of the old formulas. But if they elect to close their minds against any elucidation of sacred mysteries other than that provided by a Behmen or a Swedenborg, they virtually quench the Spirit and fossilise its revelation.

Despite the eulogy of Dr. Wyld, Mrs. Penny's letter is altogether inadequate to its intention. Like the utterances of conventional pulpiteers, it is profuse of phrase and meagre of explanation. Terms such as "the water of life," and "the painful mysteries of our own nature," are used wholly without indication as to their meaning; and the sense in which it speaks of "the Lord Jesus Christ" is left entirely to the reader's imagination. Surely she must be aware that these oft-repeated expressions have failed of their proper practical spiritual issue, precisely because they have lacked the interpretation necessary to render them intelligible, and that until they are so explained the world's conversion is not to be hoped for. But, as it seems to us, Mrs. Penny is one of those who, contemning knowledge, postulate as the condition of salvation a faith which is divorced from understanding, and which, therefore, is no true faith, indefeasible and constant, but a blind, mechanical assent, born of mere wilfulness, and liable at any instant to fail and fall away.

The secret, however, of the opposition made in certain circles to the doctrine set forth in "The Perfect Way" is not far to seek. It is to be found in the fact that the book is, throughout, strenuously opposed to idolatry in all its forms, including that of the popular "Spiritualism" of the day, which is, in effect, a revival under a new guise and with new sanctions of the ancient cultus known as Ancestor-Worship. "The Perfect Way," on the contrary, insists that Truth is accessible only through the illumination, by the Divine Spirit, of man's own soul; and that precisely in proportion as the individual declines such interior illumination, and seeks to extraneous influences, does he impoverish his own soul and diminish his possibilities of knowledge. It teaches that "Spirits," or "Angels," as their devotees are fond of styling them, are untrustworthy guides, possessed of no positive or divine element, and reflecting, therefore, rather than instructing, their interrogators; and that the condition of mind, namely passivity, insisted on by these "angels" is one to be strenuously avoided, the true attitude for obtaining divine illumination being that of ardent active aspiration, impelled by a resolute determination to know nothing but the Highest. Precisely such a state of passivity, voluntarily induced, and such veneration of and reliance upon "guides" or "controls," are referred to by the Apostle when he says: "*But let no man beguile you by a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.*" And precisely such exaltation of the personal Jesus as "The Perfect Way" repudiates and its opponents demand, is by the same Apostle condemned in the words: "*Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*"

This, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter. God, with "Christ," is in the man who, purifying his spirit after the secret of the Christ, aspires prayerfully and fervently. And it is to this interior spirit that he must look for illumination and salvation, and not to any outside "angel" or fleshly Saviour. Attaining such illumination for themselves, our critics will be able both to recognise the source and to verify the teachings of our book for themselves. For, thus invoked, the Divine Spirit will "bring all things to remembrance" for them, even as it has for us. Opinions will be merged in knowledges. And, instead of limiting the Spirit by the form in which its past revelations have been couched, they will be able to discern, in all its plenitude, the Spirit *through* the form. Your correspondents referred to have, clearly, not yet recognised the *source* of the teaching to which they take exception. They will find it fully described in Part I. of Appendix III. If the divinity of this utterance is beyond their power of recognition, argument in their case is hopeless, and no avenue exists through which Divine truth can reach them. God grant it may not be so.

THE WRITERS OF "THE PERFECT WAY."

CURIOUS CASE OF CLAIRVOYANCE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Can any of your readers offer an explanation of the following peculiar form of clairvoyance?

All my life I have been a vision-seer, but of late years a fresh and further development has taken place which puzzles almost as much as it interests me. Most frequently this power is exercised when I am quietly disposing myself for sleep: that is between two and three a.m.; I never sleep before. Suddenly, being quite awake, I find myself amid totally different surroundings, it may be far away in a foreign land, in the busy street at *noonday*, on board ship, in a humble cottage or a palatial residence, in a tropical forest or, seemingly, the Arctic regions. Wherever it may be, *I am there*, can walk about, and touch and scrutinise the persons and things, just as I would if really present in the flesh, only more rudely, perhaps. And yet, *although I am there, I am in my body also*; as a proof of which I have, on occasions, my sister being awake, spoken, and told her where I am, what I see and am doing in the *other place*. Another curious feature is that I cannot go or see where or what I would. Wishing or willing has no effect, therefore it cannot be imagination; moreover it comes spontaneously, startlingly so sometimes, and is so vivid and real, so comprehensive and detailed. Occasionally I have afterwards realised these spiritual wanderings, in the flesh—years after, but have recognised the scene and personages immediately. I may add it is most agreeable to me. I have never seen anything unpleasant.

Will anyone kindly give me some ideas respecting this? But, please, don't take me for a great medium, for that I am not. At present I am visiting a friend, and should be glad to receive any replies addressed to I, Castledine-road, Anerley Park, S.E.

CAROLINE CORNER.

WEIGHING MATERIALISED FORMS.

We have had various records published of the weights of human forms, which purport to be the temporary materialised forms of departed Spirits, amongst the most valuable of which are the accounts published in the *Harbinger of Light*, and quoted by "M.A. (Oxon.)" in "LIGHT" for April 29th last. It is with the hope of assisting in the elucidation of these phenomena that I venture to give you the following, which I extract from notes made by myself at the time, and although ante-dating the Melbourne sésances by a year, yet confirm their results. I will describe the sésance first.

On Sunday morning, February 27th, 1881, I had an excellent opportunity of observing and recording these phenomena. The sésance was held in the rooms of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society. Miss C. E. Wood was the medium on the occasion. The test conditions observed were, that the medium was seated on a chair placed in a small closet, securely fixed in a corner of the room, the solid walls of which formed two sides of the closet, and the other two were formed by a wooden framework on which fine gauze was stretched and securely fastened by both nails and glue, all the fastenings of which, of whatever description, were made from the exterior, one of the gauze sides being made like a door with its hinges on the outside, and it was fastened on the outside by two screws. The base of the closet was the floor of the room, and the closet reached to the ceiling above. Green baize curtains were drawn across the corner of the room, about two feet in front of this closet, and everything behind was coloured black, to make it as negative as possible. There were no trap doors or shifting boards, and any person fastened within it was, we confidently feel assured, unable to extricate himself without leaving very marked signs of it behind him. We rely on this the more surely as we know that it was constructed under the instructions of the committee; and as it was kept locked when not in use, no one had access to it. All those present were so placed as to be in full view of each other, and between the door of the room and the test closet, the room door being fastened on the outside, and shutters fastened at the window. The room was lighted by a gas burner fixed inside an ordinary square street lamp suspended from the ceiling and glazed with double glass, one of which was amber and the other ruby colour, in order to effectually filter the chemical rays from the light, as these are stated to hinder the process known as materialisation. The light was well diffused around the room, so that although dim, every person and every thing could be seen,—a considerable advantage over that of concentrating the light as sometimes adopted.

On the morning in question there were eight persons present, and, the medium having been duly fastened in the test closet, we arranged ourselves in the following order:—Mr. Jacob Haydock, of Newcastle, Mr. John Gibson, of Newcastle, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Gibson, of Bishop Auckland, Mr. and Mrs. John Markham, of Seaham Harbour, Mr. Frank Everitt, of London, and myself. The weighing machine (one of Howe's platform machines) was at my end of the circle, and I took charge of it, and was kindly assisted by Mr. Everitt, who sat next to me and checked the weights. After the usual preliminary waiting, which occupied about an hour, a form came from behind the curtains. After manifesting to the friends, we invited it to be weighed. It stepped on to the machine, and I adjusted the weights till the balance was obtained. It then retired behind the curtains and signalled for us to read the indicator. Not being able to do this with accuracy without more light a match was struck for that purpose, and quickly extinguished again. This "form," which we will call Form "A," was thus weighed four times successively, and the time occupied between each weighing was not more than five or six minutes at the utmost. (For the readings of the index see further.) A small child-like form, "B," next favoured us with its presence (said to be called "Pocha," and a "guide" of the medium). This little form did not venture to be weighed, but after greeting those present it went and stood near the other end of the circle and purported to melt away. I did not see this clearly, because I concentrated my attention to see if anything went back into the curtains; but Mr. Haydock and Mr. Gibson both state that it was very complete; they were near to it and should be able to judge. Certainly, I could see nothing go into the curtains. Something white was left lying on the floor where it disappeared, and Messrs. Haydock and Gibson stated that it was a shawl or garment of

some kind, which had not melted when the form did, but was left there. We decided to let it remain, and watch the result. Very shortly Form "C," much taller than either of the previous ones, came from the curtains, and went and stood on the white garment before named. And now occurred what astonished me, for I watched it narrowly. The form stood apparently motionless and erect. It certainly did not reach down with its hands, and its feet I could not see moving, although the skirts of its dress were short enough to display them. And yet, as it stood there, the white garment appeared steadily and quickly to dissolve away. The semblance was as if it were by some magical process absorbed up, into, or on to, the figure standing on it, and reminded me most forcibly of the doings of the Indian fakirs that I have read of but never seen. When the operation was complete the form walked away, and nothing could be seen on the spot. I was greatly interested in that manifestation, and should much like to see more of it. The form then came to the machine and was weighed three times in a similar manner to the first. After Form "C" had finally retired, Form "D," much taller and larger than any of the others, came from behind the curtains, and having briefly manifested its presence, it was also weighed. On this one retiring we next heard the screws which fasten the test closet being plainly withdrawn and they were thrown out on to the floor. The door of the test closet was heard to open and then the sound as of a heavy chair being drawn from the closet; the curtains parted, and the medium, sitting on her chair in a deep trance, was apparently pushed out of the curtains, chair and all. In a few seconds the curtain was drawn away from the wall nearest to me and something white and tall was seen behind, but as I did not see the whole of the outline I could not say that it was that of a human figure, but it might have been. Anyhow it was quite away from the medium, who was, as stated, sitting entranced on her chair before us all. This terminated the manifestations, and the medium shortly awoke from the trance, and the sésance ended.

For the purpose of easier comparison I have grouped the weights obtained together; they were as follows:—

Form A weighed,	1st time,	43 lbs.	} Hour of day not recorded for these first five weighings.
" "	2nd "	31½ "	
" "	3rd "	29½ "	
" "	4th "	24 "	
Form C weighed,	1st "	36½ "	} HOUR OF DAY.
" "	2nd "	46½ "	
" "	3rd "	96 "	
Form D weighed	...	101¼ "	... 12.33 p.m.
			... 12.47 p.m.

These weights are for practical purposes correct, but they are only approximately so, as the variations in the weight of the forms at times made it somewhat difficult to record them. Twice the oscillations of the graduated beam were so great that it was impossible to ascertain the result with anything approaching accuracy till a period of comparative quietude ensued. The forms stood fairly on the machine whilst being weighed, in full view of all, and entirely free from contact with anything else, and they readily altered their position to oblige us when we suggested its advisability.

After some of the sitters had left, and Miss Wood, who was still seated on the chair as pushed from the test-closet, apparently returned to her normal state, I asked her to mount the platform and be weighed; this she readily assented to, when to my great surprise I found variations in her weight similar to those of the forms, and she registered only 68½ lbs. My first impression was that she was larking, and having, somehow, a little fun at my expense, as it was well-known that her normal weight was about 97 or 98 lbs. Having reseated herself in the chair saying that she felt exhausted, I went and spoke to her and asked her not to trifle, as such would debar us from much of value in her medial powers. She assured me that she had not done so, and I invited her to be weighed again. On so doing I found the same fluctuations, but her weight had increased to 79 lbs. during the brief interval of not more than ten minutes. Knowing that her Spirit friends had the power to vary the weight of material objects, I concluded, I now think too hastily, that such was the cause, and bid them good morning. Subsequent reflection, however, shewed me that this may have been caused by the return to the medium of the psychic force employed to produce the manifestations, and I regret not having watched it more narrowly, and, if such was the case, ascertained not only the quantity returned, but also the period of time required for its restoration to its owner. About a week subsequent to this I weighed Miss Wood, in her

normal state, on this same machine, and found her weight then to be 99½lbs. A slight change in her attire may account for the two pounds additional to her reputed weight. I had hoped to have been able to confirm these results by further experiments, but the opportunity has not offered.

Like the Melbourne friends, I found that "a form seems to possess no fixed weight, but will rapidly lose pound after pound, even while standing motionless upon the platform of the weighing-machine"; but my experience shewed that it could gain as rapidly as it lost weight. I had to chase it, as it were, up and down the graduated lever until I could catch it at a momentary lull, and it was precisely similar when I weighed the medium afterwards, except that the tendency then appeared to be towards increasing weight. One of the peculiarities of the Melbourne experiments is that they obtained their greatest weight first, and worked, with slight variations, steadily down to the least weight, whereas ours were nearly the reverse. Form "A" began at 43lbs., and worked down to 24lbs., whilst Form "C" reversed the process, beginning at 36½lbs. and finishing at 96lbs., and Form "D" reached 101½lbs., thus exceeding the weight of the medium in her usual attire, and obtaining the greatest weight at the final weighing.

The foregoing experiments appear to confirm the hypothesis of "M. A. (Oxon.)" that these forms are in a state of constant flux and reflux, and the singular variations in the medium's weight evidently point to the medium as being the centre from which this force flows; but if so, it also shews that it is not restored to the medium so quickly as some suppose, and perchance may take as long, or longer, to obtain in the first instance.

The question is,—as the form grows heavy does the medium grow light, and *vice versa*? or if not, what does take place? It would much advance our knowledge of this subject if both medium and form were weighed at the same time, but if so, two machines should be used, and both of them should be self-registering, in order that the more delicate fluctuations might be obtained, and the precise moment of their occurrence should be carefully recorded in order to enhance the value of the register. By this means we might be enabled to measure this peculiar form of energy with some amount of precision, and ascertain some of its nature, laws, and effects. I hope the Society for Psychical Research, recently formed, will experiment in this direction, and clear the matter up for us.

Newcastle, August, 1882.

H. A. KERSEY.

P.S.—Since writing the foregoing, I am informed that there has been a so-called exposure of Miss Wood at Peterborough. I have only to add that it does not in any way effect the séance which I have described, where the tests were such as to exclude fraud, and the phenomena at which, I think, were incapable of simulation. I know nothing of the Peterborough fiasco but what appeared in the Press, and, if described correctly, I should say that the conditions there imposed were not test conditions.

September 18th, 1882.

H. A. K.

CLAIRAUDIENCE AND CLAIRVOYANCE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—On the morning of August 3rd, 1870, I was awoke by hearing, clairaudiently, the following words: "The blood has been shed." I was then already aware that the commencement of the German and French war was imminent, but I had heard of no telegram giving the news that the fighting was actually begun. However, in the *Daily Telegraph* of that day, Tuesday, August 3rd, the news was published, which I copy from that journal, having preserved the newspaper cutting. It is as follows:—

"(By Telegraph.)

"(From our own Correspondent.)

"Metz, August 2nd, 3.55 p.m.

"An important engagement has taken place to-day at Saarbrück, resulting in the victory of the French."

On Saturday morning, September 9th, 1882, I was awoke, at about 7 a.m., by seeing, clairvoyantly, the face of a dead man. I felt impressed that it was that of a soldier, and that fighting was going on; and I prayed, as I am wont to do, for that soul.

About a quarter past eight on the same morning, Saturday, September 9th, before I was called, being unwell, I was again woke up by the following words, in French:—

"Autour de toi, Arabi,

"Autour de toi,

"Il y'a de joie."

(Around thee, Arabi, around thee, there is joy.) Arabi, we are told, is a Frenchman.

In the *Daily Telegraph* of to-day, September 11th, I find:—

(From our Special Correspondent.)

Kassassin, September 9 (via Ismailia, September 9), 11.50 a.m.

"About seven a.m. the enemy attacked the camp of Kassassin in force, shelling us heavily."

This, we know, was the first attack of importance made by the enemy, and it was commanded, it is said, by Arabi himself.

I hope Spiritualists will pray for the souls of the brave deceased soldiers, as well as for the living,

W. R. TOMLINSON, M.A.

MRS. NICHOLS' SEANCES.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In reply to "Investigator," I have to say that the terms of our proposed séances are left entirely to the members of our circles, with the exception that those who are in needy circumstances are requested to give nothing; all others, if they get what they consider of value, will estimate the worth for themselves.

The arrangements are simply these: Each member will come at 7 p.m. punctually; and we advise, as a preparation for good manifestations, temperance, and a bath before the séance.

I remarked that "a man might be unfitted for his daily, hourly work by giving up his cigar or his ale"; that is, by giving them up for a day. I have cured too many patients of disorders caused by taking opium, tobacco, tea, coffee, and other drugs not to know the fact that severe suffering for days, and sometimes weeks, is caused by abstinence from poisons. I have seen veritable "mania a (tea) potu," in tea-drinkers who abstained; and abstinence from opium and tobacco causes still greater suffering. Time is required to free the system from poisons, which, as long as they remain, persistently cry for more.

I know several persons who have been rescued from dreadful nervous disease, by coming into circles where the controlling Spirits counselled abstinence from narcotic poisons. Suppose a man or woman in good faith, who is in the habitual use of tea, coffee, or tobacco, is overworked, and has no time to stop to be ill for one day, to say nothing of a week or a month. Shall I shut such an one out from conviction of continued life, when that very conviction would bring a condition of mind required to abstain from the "evil one"? I was once a tea-drinker. I left it and suffered severely. I then took to coffee. I found it quite as injurious as tea, and when I left it I did not suffer quite as keenly as when I gave up tea.

Time is required for a change of habits, and transitions are painful. I was once dining with a lady whose high position enabled her to bring together the poles of opinion. Dr. Andrew Clarke was next me at table. He ate only brown bread and slices of cold beef. He said, "If I had time I could come to digest vegetables as you do. But I have no time to make the change. My stomach has got used to the bread and meat, and will not digest vegetables." The transition would have required rest from wearing labour, which he could not command.

If I give a man evidence of life beyond the grave I give him something to live for, and he begins soon to ask, "How can I live so as to make time and eternity most comfortable?"

If we are to live to old age in a house, we do our best to make it a home. So of life beyond the grave. Only a fool will live badly when he really believes he must live right on, whether he will or not. There is no committing suicide, I take it, when we get in the Spiritual world.

Now I want "Investigator" to be assured that I do not advocate taking tobacco, or drinking beer, or telling lies, or getting into "business" that obliges men to do all these to keep up with their fellow men.

If the man on the treadmill does not keep step, he breaks his legs—and the poor convicts and "men of business" have a care of their legs, and of their families, and of their credit among men.

There is a way out of evils, and the first step in this way is to convince men that they must live, whether they like it or not, straight on through eternity. When I know that I must live, the next question is—HOW?

September 15th, 1882.

M. S. G. NICHOLS.

P.S.—The number of applicants for admission to our séances is surprisingly large, and what is more surprising is the very large number who are accepted. So fine a company of persons it has

not been my good fortune to meet in many years. It will take months to reach the later comers, unless we can increase our number of séances. This may be done, but even then many must be patient a good while.

SEANCE WITH MISS WOOD.

Mr. J. N. Greenwell has kindly supplied us with a report of a séance held with Miss Wood during the past week in Quebec Hall, twenty-three persons being present, but the pressure on our space prohibits our publishing his statement in detail. Miss Wood, he says, was taken into a room by the seven ladies present, and was divested of all her own clothing and dressed in dark materials provided for the purpose, the ladies giving the assurance that after having searched and dressed Miss Wood there was not a single thread of white about her. She was next tied with stout twine, each arm being secured to the chair and then carried to the top of the cabinet, and thence to a vacant chair in the circle. Another cord was passed round her waist, and secured in like manner to the chair. The tying was done by request by a gentleman who was an entire stranger and a sceptic. The Rev. A. J. R. then with his own private seal and sealing-wax secured every knot. The séance having begun, "Pocha" soon controlled, and conversed, expressing her conviction that she would be able to materialise. After sitting for some time in a subdued light, a form from three to four feet high came out from the cabinet, displaying a large amount of white drapery.

After "Pocha" had been out some time she retired, when Mr. Greenwell and a few others distinctly saw a "form" draw apart the curtains. It was almost as tall as the cabinet, which was fully six feet high. At the close Miss Wood was again examined by the two gentlemen who secured her, and they testified to the fact that neither seals nor tying had been tampered with. The facts, as above recorded, are attested by most of the persons present, but two ladies and a gentleman objected to give their names for publicity, and two gentlemen, for reasons not stated, declined to sign the report.

We have thought it right, in consideration of the question which occupies the minds of some Spiritualists as to whether Miss Wood is really a medium or not, to give the above report, but are disposed in future to refuse publicity to any séance for physical phenomena with a professional medium who is not visible to the circle during the whole of the sitting.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON AND THE COUNTRY.

GOSWELL HALL.

Sunday morning last at this hall was spent in an interesting conversation on the cause of Spiritualism in general, and the best mode of furthering its progress. If the suggestions made take a practical form good must result therefrom. In the evening the hall was well filled to hear Mrs. Mary S. Durrant, her subject being "Remarks on Séances held with Miss Wood, with special reference to Mr. Frank Podmore's Criticism in 'LIGHT.'" Previous to the address Mr. Greenwell, *by request*, read the letter in question, to enable the audience to more closely follow and better understand Mrs. Durrant's position. The lady explained what she had witnessed at several séances with Miss Wood, and the tests that were imposed, and I am sure it will be admitted by almost all who were present that her case was a good one. The séance held with Miss Wood, on Wednesday, the 13th inst., was also described. A report of this may be seen above. A reply to Mr. Podmore which she sent to "LIGHT," but was not published, was also read, and the correspondence thereon. The letters on the Peterborough exposé she also submitted to analysis, and the weak points and contradictions were clearly shewn. Mr. Podmore certainly came in for his share of severe criticism, and his utter inability to speak authoritatively on the séance in question was asserted. A large tract of ground was covered as to the position of Miss Wood as a lady and an honest medium, and a sketch of her probable future action was given. In support of Mrs. Durrant's contention as to the séance which Mr. Podmore described, Mr. C. P. Allen pledged his honour that it was not, and could not be, Miss Wood personating "Pocha," and that all Mr. Podmore's "fishing-rod" and other explanations were absolutely valueless. He, however, gave that gentleman credit for being an honest sceptic and earnest investigator. The sympathies of the audience were decidedly with Mrs. Durrant and the lady whose cause she espoused.—RES-FACTA.

QUEBEC HALL.

On Sunday evening last, the 17th inst., this hall was filled with an overflowing audience, assembled to listen to a "trance address" from Mr. J. J. Morse, the subject of which was, "Inspiration, Diabolical and Divine." The argument of the lecture was that "inspiration" was not necessarily confined to its purely religious aspects, nor only receivable from the Spiritual world. The sources of inspiration were considered to be alike in the conditions of culture, as expressed in art, science, literature, morals, and Spiritual progress, as well as in the principles of nature, as impressing and inspiring the thinkers of life ;

while the effect of the inspiration due to personal action—*as* influencing and directing the life and conduct of those around us—was forcibly and clearly discussed. Dealing with the question in relation to inspiration received from the spiritual state, it was insisted that such inspiration did descend upon humanity ; and as inspiration results in the evolution of truth—when the source of that inspiration is good—it was contended that it became, in that sense, divine. The evil side of the question was ably presented, and the possibility of vicious conditions of society and individuals exercising a pernicious inspiration was carefully and candidly expressed, while the possibility of such perverted inspirations coming from the Spirit-world was clearly enunciated. The lecture closed with an eloquent peroration on the importance of living a pure life, cultivating the highest mental, moral, and spiritual development, with the constant exercise of the will against all that was lowering to humanity, by which means we should be "armed in proof" against the possibilities of diabolical inspirations, and best fit ourselves to receive that inspiration of truth which is the voice of God. Messrs. Wilson and Iver MacDonnell spoke in high terms of the lecture, in which sentiments the crowded audience heartily concurred, and the general opinion was that the lecture was a most able and suitable one, and that Mr. Morse's "guides" had afforded a pleasure to their auditors that could not be too often repeated.—COR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday morning and evening last Mr. John Hall, of Gateshead, addressed the friends at Weir's Court. We are sorry to hear that Mr. Wilson, secretary of the N.S.E.S., has been compelled to resign his office. Mr. John Hare, editor of the *Herald*, has been appointed in his place.

Miss Wood.—We had no little surprise this week through the Miss Wood "Episode," which is causing a great amount of controversy. With the mass of thoughtful persons in our movement here, the conviction is that whether she has been tempted to act fraudulently, or whether she has been unconsciously used under the influence of unfavourable conditions, yet they have had the most ample proof under the most stringent of tests to satisfy them beyond doubt of the genuineness of her mediumistic gifts. I should advise that in future, for the equal protection of medium and sitters, at all physical séances the medium be exposed during the whole of the sitting to the full view of those present. I have urged this mode of procedure upon Spiritualists from press and platform for several years, and in the face of these exposures the advice has been steadily rejected. But the time is rapidly nearing when it will be absolutely necessary that the old methods will have to be entirely rejected and the above suggestion carefully considered and adopted. It would be the salvation of our movement and give the highest possible satisfaction to investigators.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday evening last Mr. J. G. Grey, of Gateshead, lectured on "Spirits" to a large audience, at the rooms of the G.S.I.S. He delivered a stirring and energetic address. Mr. Joseph Stevenson occupied the chair.

ASHINGTON.—Last Sunday afternoon and evening Mr. Henry Burton, of Newcastle, lectured upon "Toleration" and "The Religion of the Future." The lecture dealt with both subjects in so thorough a manner as to call forth the warm appreciation of those assembled, and a majority of the friends expressed their great pleasure at the healthy and energetic lectures to which they had just listened.

We are glad to state that at The Felling, West Pelton, North Shields, Hetton, and Sunderland, the movement of Spiritualism is going on favourably, and the societies are making slow but steady progress. News comes to me rather late from those places or I might be able to give more than this passing glance at the good work being done in those districts.

NORTHUMBRIA.

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

- Sunday, September 24.—Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Lecture, Mr. Wilson. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. J. J. Morse. (See advertisement.)
 " September 24.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Iver MacDonnell. (See advertisement.)
 Monday, September 25.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m. (See advertisement.)
 Monday, September 25.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 6.30 p.m., Special Committee Meeting on Séance Conditions.
 Wednesday, September 27.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 8 p.m., Members' Free Séance.
 Tuesday, September 26.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Wilson. (See advertisement.)
 Thursday, September 28.—Dalston Association. Usual Weekly Meeting of Members, 7.30 p.m.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: Sunday, 24th, Goswell Hall; also October 8th and 22nd. CARDIFF: Sunday, October 18th. KEIGHLEY: Sunday, October 29th.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[Advt.]