

Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

As an instance of good testimony to the reality and convincing character of form-manifestations such as those which Slade obtains, I may quote from a private letter addressed to me some years since by a very cautious and capable observer. I had asked Epes Sargent about his own experience in this matter, and he had said that a common friend was better able to answer me than himself. His personal experience had been slight, and his conviction was that of a student of evidence rather than that of an investigator who had been forced into assent by personal experience. Our common friend writes to me, "Mr. Sargent tells me that you are inquiring about good evidence of materialisation. How I wish you could have seen with Slade what I have. The face of my lovely sister-in-law was as real and natural in appearance as ever in life. Her beautiful hair hung in soft ringlets, just as it used to do—Slade had never seen her—and at my request she turned the back of her head that I might see how she wore it, just as she did when in the body. The lips moved too, and spoke words of warning in a message to a relative; and the lovely white hand came and rested just over me, with a bright star in its palm. She had in life the most beautiful hands I ever saw, and these were exactly like them."

In another case a quilt was hung across a corner of the room, and Slade lay on a sofa deeply entranced and in full view. These were the only preparations. My correspondent thus describes what took place. "A young man who had fought throughout our war, and had returned unhurt, only to die of bleeding from the lungs shortly after, came to me and my sister. He put his arms about me, and kissed me on the forehead, his heavy white drapery hanging over my head and shoulders. He sat down on a chair beside me, then stood upon the leaf of the table, which could not have supported the weight of a little child—he was six feet high—without tipping over; and upon the medium's groaning and moving, as he lay entranced on the sofa, this tall, strong-looking form collapsed instantaneously, with an electric snap and rustle, and disappeared like a flash of lightning from our sight. It was altogether the most thrilling experience I ever had. . . . I have no more doubt about materialisation than I have of the simple rap, nor would anyone who had seen what I have. Slade's are the most satisfactory manifestations, because he uses no cabinet or curtain; i.e., to conceal him from the observer; but they are less substantial than the forms which I saw through the mediumship of Mary Andrews, of Moravia." Certainly this record is impressive enough; and the lesser materiality of the forms is a point in their favour, viewed as matter of evidence. The sudden disappearance "with an electric snap," reminds me of Dale Owen's account of Mr. Livermore's experience. There would seem to be various methods of materialisation. Slade's shadowy and apparently imponderable forms are like those which used rarely to appear in the presence of D. D. Home, and are quite unlike the material bodies whose "too too solid flesh" seems little inclined to melt, though it does somehow vanish or is transformed.

Mrs. Andrews writes me from Germany in interesting confirmation of the cases of transference of thought, some of which have recently been published:—

"Bonn, September 16th, 1882.

"One of the cases (mentioned in a recent number of 'LIGHT' of apparent, or so-called, 'mind-reading,' reminded me

of an incident which occurred in my family more than twenty years ago. We were in trouble at the time, my youngest boy, an infant, having died under very painful circumstances. My second boy slept with me, and Launcelot, the elder (four years old), in the room with his aunt. In the evening, after he had fallen asleep, she went to have a séance with a mediumistic friend. This friend was controlled by an Indian Spirit, who talked some time with my sister, and rebuked her for giving way to grief for baby's loss. After she returned home, she seated herself (it was summer) by the open window in her bedroom, and was thinking about the Indian who had (as she believed) spoken with her, and of the Indians generally—in whom we have both always felt great interest. As she sat thus meditating, the child began to toss uneasily in his sleep, and his aunt moved her seat to the bedside, and patted him gently to soothe him, when all at once, still sleeping, he exclaimed—'Oh, Auntie! See all those Indians; where did they all come from?' My sister was herself inclined to believe that he had seen, in his sleep, those Spirits whom her thoughts and the influence of the medium had brought near her. But—who knows?"

Who knows? Yet, as (I believe) there is not, and has not been any direct evidence of objective mediumship, we must not import it into the discussion. It seems just a case in which a particularly earnest and inquiring mind influenced unconsciously one to which it was closely and affectionately related, and which was then in a specially susceptible condition.

The writers of "The Perfect Way" have addressed to their Reviewer in the *Theosophist*, in return for "the frank recognition accorded to their book," an equally frank criticism of his methods and statements. They tell him that "both the fifth lecture and the second appendix, as indeed the whole motive of the book, seem altogether to have escaped his notice." They accuse him of "flagrant misrepresentation," and the paper in which he writes of "the double fault of an inaccurate description of the subject [of the work under review] and of a defective presentation of occult doctrine." They tell him that he, "like many others, has rejected Christianity without ever having reached its esoteric significance;" and they conclude by rating him freely and at length for his opinion of women, which, after all, is only that they are, to a great extent, governed by sentiment as opposed to logic. These amenities of criticism are addressed to a Reviewer who, we had been not indistinctly told, embodied some of those "fragments of occult truth," which the Adept Brothers vouchsafe to us: "small crumbs" (as another writer of singular force and uncompromising boldness elsewhere calls them) "that fall from our masters' tables," "painfully doled out glimpses of the hidden higher knowledge." How will the "Masters" regard this audacious criticism, which to the logical mind, not much governed by sentiment, is effective in proportion only to its truth, but which shews a healthy determination to use the quality of logic in dealing with matters where sentiment is utterly misplaced?

The latter criticism to which I have referred is a trenchant and most able protest against the methods of instruction adopted by the Adept Brothers. The writer, who signs himself "H. X.," speaks as one having authority, and must evidently be a specially-instructed person, since he is described in a "Protest" which follows his letter, as "one to whom positively exceptional favours were shewn." His criticisms have wrung the heart of the editor, and are published only in deference to "the pleasure of our Masters themselves," and "under a strong personal protest." It would not interest my readers to have before them the various arguments which assail the position taken up by the Brothers, than which, "H. X." says, "from my point of view, from the point of view, I believe I may say, of every educated European gentleman, nothing can, in certain respects, be more unreasonable and unsatisfactory." But there are many of us who have been saying and thinking what he so well puts, and it is at least interesting to know that one who thinks it well "to accept the Brothers as they are, and

make the best we can of them," is not so far hoodwinked or deluded, or psychologised (or whatever the proper term to be used is), as to be afraid to shew that he maintains intact his right of private judgment. The "Protest" against this outspoken course is signed by a dozen "Hindû Chelas of the Himalayan Brothers," and opens with a characteristic statement:—"We cannot help having for our Masters that boundless devotion which the Europeans condemn as *slavish*."* After this we need not trouble much about their protest. But it is instructive to note that "H.X.," who has had rare opportunities for judging, who seems to be himself a Chela or pupil, living (I suppose) the prescribed life of rigid asceticism, has thoroughly satisfied himself of the real objective existence of these Brothers, and, spite of all his criticisms, thinks it worth while, within certain limits, to devote himself as one of their followers.

This is a point to be reckoned with in following out the clue to that tangled maze through which it is so hard to make way. But when we admit their existence, and accept "H.X.'s" statement, that these Adept Brothers do "unquestionably possess knowledge entirely hidden from us," it is still a question whether the further statement, that "their systems and their traditions are opposed to our ideas of right and wrong, and it is, to me, still doubtful whether we shall ever be able to get any good out of their teaching at all commensurate with the expenditure of time and energy that is involved," should not make all inquiring minds seriously pause before committing themselves to anything more than a candid examination of the claims made. To yield obedience or devotion, slavish or partial, to that which is "opposed to our ideas of right and wrong," is manifestly dangerous, and almost certainly immoral.

The *Whitehall Review* prints at great length a "Ghost Story told to the Queen," shortly before Prince Albert's death, by the Marchioness of Ely. Her Majesty is said to have replied that "she did not believe in such things." She desired, however, that the story should not be mentioned before the Prince, *as he did*. The story is told by "a rector and rural dean in the late Established Church of Ireland, and a J.P. for two counties." He thinks that "the long-disputed fact is proved that impalpable Spirits not only appear, but can exert very great force, and also possess weight and voice." They do, under certain circumstances. He further thinks that "this goes to prove the possibility of those evil Spirits called up by the table-turners (!) exercising force and power." They do, assuredly. But why necessarily "evil"? The *petitio principii* is characteristic. The story is good, but of inordinate length.

Mrs. Oliphant, who, I believe, avows the authorship of "A Little Pilgrim," the first part of which I noticed in these columns, has completed her story, and is about to issue it as a volume. The conclusion, in which "the little pilgrim goes up higher," is not so successful as the first part; but the story is charmingly told, and is of special interest to Spiritualists. *Macmillan's Magazine*, in which it appeared, contains this month a paper on "Thought-Reading," and a singular narrative by a clergyman of the Church of England, for whose *bona fides* the editor vouches. It is, therefore, unnecessary to say that he writes about Spiritualism. That always necessitates a voucher of sanity and respectability. I shall refer to these papers hereafter.

M. A. (Oxon.)

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.—Part I. of the Proceedings of this Society will, we hear, be in the hands of the publishers, Messrs. Trübner and Co., Ludgate-hill, in the course of the coming week. It will contain the opening address of the President, H. Sidgwick, Esq., delivered at the first General Meeting of the Society; a report of the Committee on Thought-Reading, by Professor Barrett, Mr. E. Gurney, and Mr. F. W. H. Myers; and a valuable appendix to that report, in which Mr. Barrett supplies a large amount of information of the most interesting character. Members of the Society will, we believe, receive copies of the Proceedings free of charge.

MR. W. TOWNS will attend on Wednesday evenings at 54, Netherwood-road (near Addison and Uxbridge-road Stations), in order to afford facilities to those who desire sêances with him.

EVERY time a man breaks a Divine law, he adds a thorn to the rod which he puts into pickle for his own back.

* The italics are not mine.

SUPERSENSUOUS PERCEPTION & PROPHETIC DREAMS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have on many occasions narrated to friends the following dream. Perhaps it may interest "C. C. M." and some others of your readers:—

I had the dream about thirteen years ago. At that time I was living in the North of London, a short distance from the lady who is now my wife. She had, on the morning following my dream, to go to the City early, and I had arranged to meet her and walk there with her.

My friend, Mr. C. of the dream, had been married somewhat less than a year. He and I were clerks in the same office, and though I often saw Mrs. C. before she was married I had not seen her since. I knew she was not robust and feared she would fall a prey to rapid consumption, but I had no reason to suppose my fears were shared by my friend. Since his marriage I had heard him express no concern as to his wife's health, nor had I any reason to suppose her health was worse than when I last saw her.

I dreamt that I was walking towards the City with the lady above referred to, and said to her, "I dreamt last night Mr. C.'s wife was dead," and then narrated, in detail as follows, what was thus a dream within a dream. I was at the office and was wondering why C. had not arrived, when I heard his footsteps in the passage which led to our rooms. I noticed that he walked slowly, and fearing something was amiss I raised myself to look over a partition which separated my desk from the door, and as he entered I saw that he was wearing a deep hat-band. He came into the office and walked past me to his own room, his face white with grief. After a moment or two, during which I and the other clerks wondered together what had happened, I went into his room and found him sobbing, his face buried in his hands. In reply to my anxious inquiry he said, "My wife is dead."

Such was my dream, and it was literally fulfilled. In the morning I walked to the City with Miss — as I had arranged, and mentioned my dream, though it did not at the time make much impression on me. C. frequently did not get to the office till half-past ten, and when I arrived there this morning the fact that he had not come did not at once recall my dream; it was not till about a quarter to eleven that it burst on my mind, with a strong presentiment that it was about to be realised. I said to one of the other clerks, "I hope nothing is wrong with C. I dreamt last night that his wife was dead." A jesting reply sent me back to my desk. In a few minutes C. came. I heard his footsteps, looked over the partition and saw the deep hat-band, and then his white face, and a minute later he spoke the sad sentence, "My wife is dead." When he woke up that morning he found his wife sitting up in bed—dead. Apparently she had awoke in the night feeling ill, and had sat up to drink some water from a glass on a table by the bedside, and died whilst raising the glass to her lips.

I have had other singular dreams. On one occasion I knew that one of my father's vessels was shortly expected to arrive in London from St. Michael's, and I intended to look out for the news of her arrival, so that I might go on board for oranges. One night I dreamt that I was in the train riding to the City, and was folding over the newspaper when my eye fell on the heading "Shipping Intelligence," and on looking down the column I found the announcement of the arrival I expected. This was exactly realised the next morning.

My wife is a good dreamer and often has forecasts of little events in our daily life. One day she said to me, "I have been thinking a good deal of Mrs. S. lately, and wondering why I have not heard from her. Perhaps she has moved. I dreamt last night that I was visiting her, but it was not at their house in — Street." And she described, as she saw it in her dream, the house and entrance, and also the way the furniture was arranged, and the new articles bought consequent on the removal. Shortly afterwards she had a letter from her friend asking her to call on her at her new home. When Mrs. Pearce went she found the house, entrance, and furniture precisely in accordance with her dream.

R. PEARCE.

Holders Hill, Hendon, N.W.

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

THE MISSION OF "THE PERFECT WAY."

In the letter I addressed to "LIGHT," concerning the great importance of the mission of the book called "The Perfect Way," which is now so much occupying public attention, I incidentally mentioned two other books belonging to the same mission, viz., the inauguration of the new dispensation we have now entered upon, which has come in this "fulness of time," in the name of the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, to shed light and happiness on earth, by taking of Christ's and shewing it unto us in a new light, thus interpreting many dark sayings of old, whose deep interior meaning has been so long hidden from the eyes of those not yet prepared to receive them, and opening the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, as Christ judged it wise to open them only to three of the disciples of His day.

On opening one of those two books to which I alluded, this morning, the one so beautifully named "Morgenröthe," by Mr. John Pulsford, its author, I did so accidentally at page 151, and my eyes rested on the following passages, which I cannot help accepting, like the *Sortes Biblicæ* of old, so very appropriate do they seem, to add to the words I wrote you in reply to the views held and expressed by Dr. George Wyld and Mr. Penny, in reference to me, that the teachings of Christ as recorded in the "Letter of the Word" (which killeth) should be sufficient for His true disciples for all time.

I beg of you to afford me space to place a few of these inspired passages before your readers who may not yet have heard of the treasures of hidden love and wisdom in store for them contained in this little volume, as well as in the pages of "The Perfect Way."

The chapter is headed with the words of Christ, "I go to prepare a place for you," John xiv. 2. Commenting on these words, the author says:—

1. "It is our Lord's humility to hide things too great for us in the simplest words. His brief sentence covers centuries on centuries of growth and arrangement. 'I go now to form My Kingdom, a new kingdom in the Father's universe.' The universe has been created, and is still enlarging, to meet the requirements of new comers. As new structures are constantly raised on earth, and new grounds laid out, for the coming race; so has the universe grown.

2. "God's past is great, but His present is greater. Our present is so much blossom and fruit, moral vigour and loveliness, wealth and harmony, from the seed of the past. But out of the glorious present, a *far more glorious future* is evolving. Father everlasting, Thou art always preparing new heavens and new earths, which are richer than the old. Thus Thy Name unfolds and unfolds. So that Thy children everywhere are immensely greater in hope than in experience. Their hope is inspired by the riches of Thy infinite, endless resources.

"New days and new eras are for ever coming; new plants, new beasts, and new men, with new virtues in them; new flowers of exquisite form and richer colouring; new fruits of fairer bloom and finer flavour; and new babes of a lovelier type and of greater promise, are coming and to come. In larger and larger measure, Joy is shed from the bosom of Love.

"Sons and daughters, open your bosoms to the new waves of joy which are flowing to you from the God of Love, and the joyous heavens; for in your new joy, your new, holy, joy-nature shall grow the faster.

3. "When going up into His own higher and more influential condition Jesus said:—'There are already many mansions in My Father's house; many peopled regions; many forms of society. For throughout the immensity of the heavens no single society is precisely like any other. Like the stars, societies are innumerable, and all of them arranged in Divine order. But among them all there is no place, no society, precisely adapted to My need, and your need. I go to found a new kingdom, to lay out new territory, and to people it with a new order of humanity, after the order which I have made, and established, in My own humanity.' How could there be a kingdom or people in the heavens representative of our Lord's work before that work was done? How should any place, or society in the universe be fitted to manifest forth the new harmony, before the nucleus of that harmony was complete in His own glorification and ascension? . . . 'There were kingdoms of innocence and holiness, kingdoms of wisdom and love, kingdoms of great glory and happiness; but no kingdom of redemption, no kingdom which celebrated victory over evil and evil powers, no kingdom that embodied and manifested every possible contrariety of nature and experience, in a triumph of reconciliation. None of the existing angelic kingdoms, therefore, were large enough, or many-sided enough, to represent the marvellously intense and complex conditions which the Lord Jesus has built into His human nature, and was about to generate and build in our natures.

"I go to prepare a place for you."

5. "I have not organised society on the earth. It must

be organised first in My Father's house, in the centre of the Heavens; and thence it shall be organised on earth.

"As in Heaven so 'it shall ultimately be 'on earth.' I am a New Beginning, because I am the First of a New Order of Humanity.

6. "Let me ask: If myriads were liberated, and organised into new society, immediately on our Lord's entrance among the departed generations, who can compute the result of all the centuries which have elapsed since His Ascension?

"If I hear the voice of the Lord, from His New Kingdom which, through these nineteen centuries, He has been forming and arranging in the heavens, and in Hades, He is speaking on this wise: 'I see multitudes on multitudes of those who are called by My Name, instead of receiving me in the power and glory of My New Kingdom, are holding to tradition, and abiding in their nature-born humanity. They will have the past, but not the present. They are stationary. They know nothing of My 'Now,' nothing of My 'new things.' They are always contemplating conditions as they were ages ago; and not conditions as they are to-day. As I am they do not imagine Me. Still less do they take into account the immense armies and forces which are arranged in order under Me. The whole Church on earth is rapidly dividing into two irreconcilable classes; those who are receiving the breath of My Living Power, and the power of the great organisations of new men and women who live in Me, and are co-operating with Me, to bring down the larger truth of the heavens, with its greater liberty, and its riper joy, into the earth.

"Do they suppose that in a thousand years I do nothing? Do they think that when men get 'where I am,' and directly under My influence, they make no progress? How is it possible that My disciples on earth can doubt that I am ever leading thousands of millions of the human race more and more into Divine order? How is it that they have not believed My words? I said plainly before leaving the earth, 'I am going now into the world of intenser life to arrange the forces of My Kingdom, and then to bring down these forces into the souls of men on the earth.'

"Has there been no progress in your own world during the last century? Rather, have there not been very striking and wonderful advances in many directions in the last fifty years? How is it possible that men should doubt that far greater progress has been made in human society, of which I am the centre? The unparalleled quickening of thought and invention in your own day is from this source. The energies of My Kingdom are moving in all centres of your earth. They are greatly affecting the mineral, elemental, political, and ecclesiastical worlds. Nothing escapes their causal influence. They are profoundly stirring the souls of men and women in all nations. To many classes they are causing perplexity and alarm; to others they are giving new delight. They are demanding and making more room in the hearts and minds of men that they may come more fully, and develop My purposes of love to the race."

"Let the old Faiths be admonished that this day is past, that they must be resigned to the owls and the bats. The potencies of our Lord and His glorious Kingdom are in the air, and are shaking all old things, that things which cannot be shaken may prevail.

7. "It is altogether incredible that the conditions of our Lord's Divine Humanity should be built up into the societies of vast numbers of men and women in the Heavens, and not exert a very great influence upon the men and women of the earth. The fact is, the secret influence is marvellously telling on the souls and brains of our age. The new wine is everywhere bursting the old bottles. The life that is now waving in upon us, from the bosom of our kindred above, is generating larger sympathies, and a new expansion of thought. The pressure begets general excitement, haste, and expectation. The New Heaven, the Kingdom, which our Lord has formed, is intimating by a thousand signs that it is moving to take possession of the earth; to take possession of it, as summer skies take possession of field and garden and, by the diffusion of glory, create summer and harvest. The earth is the Lord's, He has redeemed it; and He will have equilibrium between His Kingdom above and His Kingdom below. 'The Kingdoms are but one.'

8. "I go to prepare a place for you." He was going then, but not now. Now He is *returning*. 'I go to receive My Kingdom and return.' The words which He is speaking to-day are: 'I have received My Kingdom, and I have organised it; I have filled myriads of myriads with My glory. They all partake of my desire to descend. I in them, and they in me, make one descending Spirit.' There are some among you who have received the New Breath, and are marvellously lifted and enlarged. They have the sense of new youth, new freedom and delight; new vigours, new hopes, and new beauty will be led forth as from a secret well, in all those who welcome the New Breath. They will be characterised by buoyancy of spirit, and new charms of character. Or, to quote the words of the beloved Seer, the receivers of the New Spirit of Life from Heaven shall be 'adorned as a bride adorned for her husband.'

"Come from the four winds, O Breath, and open the secret fountains in all human bosoms. Open to us our interior roominess, yea, open us more and more interiorly, until Paradise and the glory of God meet our view."

The eloquent passages I have quoted at such length describe so perfectly the present state of feeling between the, alas! opposing armies of the disciples of Christ, "those who hold to the traditions of the past, and those who feel in themselves the new vigours, as from a secret well, of the New Breath," that little remains for me to add, except to say, that after the coming of the Bride, (whose advent is Now, as it was given to me to prove in the two articles I wrote* at the end of 1881, so long announced as the "END OF THE WORLD," because the end of that dispensation) and as soon as the Heavenly Marriage is consummated, the Divine Child, or Son of God, may be expected to be born. In other words, the new order of Being, the Divine Humanity, or Manifestation of the sons and daughters of God, not as of one, but as of many, will be due; and this more perfect race is destined first to humanise, and finally to divinise the earth.

MARIE CAITHNESS.

INSPIRATION AND THOUGHT-READING.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I must confess that "Cantab's" explanation of "the nature and method of inspiration" has quite baffled my limited powers of comprehension. Let me analyse his exposition, although in conducting this analysis I may, in these days of "exposures," expose my own incompetence.

"Cantab" tells us that, "Even where, under the overshadowing of some separate Spirit—often, it may be, of one of his own past selves—he finds fresh and valuable knowledge, it is due, not to actual suggestion proceeding from such entity, but to the fact that under such magnetism he is lifted into a sphere of his own system not ordinarily accessible to him, and enabled to regain the forgotten perceptions and recollections of his own soul."

So that, according to this philosophy, "inspiration" is merely the revived remembrance of some "fresh and valuable knowledge" which we have allowed to escape into oblivion, although under these circumstances it is difficult to understand how this knowledge can be properly termed "fresh." This revival of learning is due, it appears, to the magnetic action of a phantom of one of our past selves; and this phantom is represented to be an entity. I should like to be informed how many of our "past selves" or "entities" are in existence; and why the spheres of our own systems are not ordinarily accessible to us? Why should these spheres of our own systems be more accessible to the phantoms of our past selves than to the realities of our present selves? This inspiring agency is not always, but often, the result of the magnetism of a phantom of a past self; it is sometimes traceable to "the overshadowing of some separate Spirit." Who is he? He cannot be a stranger, as according to "Cantab," true inspiration is not derived from "strangers."

I am afraid I must give up this Cambridge philosophy in despair. Am I really, Mr. Editor, as stupid as I look?—Yours, &c.

TRIDENT.

London, September 30th, 1882.

SPIRITUALISM IN BIRMINGHAM.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I ask you the favour of reporting progress on the part of the Birmingham Society of Spiritualists. For some time past we have occupied a room in Oozell-street. This was quite unsuitable to our purpose in many ways, and we have consequently removed to Castle Rooms, Snow-hill; and have now a fine room centrally situated, capable of seating 300 persons, and intended for lectures and Sunday services. Sunday evening last was our opening night. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Harper occupied the platform, their discourse being on "Spiritualism: Phenomenal and Communistic." The lady took the lead, and in a clear, impressive, and pathetic manner, secured the attention of her audience. She was followed by Mr. Harper in his usual eloquent style. We had a large and intelligent company, who fully appreciated the change. Our removal was notified publicly by Mr. Harper at our last meeting in Oozell-street. We have also taken a room permanently at No. 1, Minorics, Bull-street, in the heart of Birmingham, which we intend to devote to the sale of progressive literature, and to circles for investigators, and for developing our own mediums, open to all comers, each day and evening, with a committee of nine good workers—Mr. J. R. Hiel, President; Mr. R. Harper, Treasurer, the oldest Spiritualists we have. You will, I am sure, wish us success. Thanking you in advance,—

THOMAS KENDRICK, Secretary H.S.S.

* Published in *The Medium and Daybreak*, of December 2nd and 9th, and those of December 31st and January 6th, 1882.

A HAUNTED HOUSE.

The current number of *Macmillan's Magazine* contains, under the title of "No Fiction," a remarkable story of a haunted house. The name of the narrator is not given, but the editor says that it is known to him; that the writer is a clergyman of the Church of England; and that there is "every reason to be satisfied of his entire *bona fides*."

Early in January, 1879, clerical duty called the writer into the north-west of England, and in the midst of a heavy fall of snow he and his family took possession of the official residence provided for them—an old stone house of one storey; roofed in part with ancient stone slabs, in part with modern slates. Soon after settling down, two of the sons who slept in the same room, were disturbed night after night by loud noises on the roof as of a boy running about upon it "with hob-nail boots." Every search was made for the offender, but he could never be found, and an examination of the roof shewed the "white mantle, smooth and glistening, untrodden by so much as the foot of a tom cat," and yet, "Boots," as the unwelcome visitor came to be called, continued his annoyances undiscovered. One evening the family were disturbed by tremendous blows on the cellar door—and yet it was impossible, so far as could be found, that these blows could have been made by human hands; and the same night the family were awakened by the apparent dripping of water in the bed rooms, the dripping coming faster and faster till it increased to a little stream; and yet there was no sign of water in the morning. The writer had thought that a sudden thaw had set in, but "everything was as hard as iron." But we must let the writer tell the rest of the story himself, only premising that he speaks of his sons as Primus, Secundus, and Tertius, in their order of seniority.

When Tertius was being tucked up that night he asked his mother, "Who was that person who came and looked at me after I was in bed?"

"Stillwater (the servant), I suppose."

"Oh, no. It was an old woman, and she had a funny cap on."

"You dreamed her, dear."

"But I hadn't been to sleep. And I turned my head to the wall, and when I looked for her again she had gone away."

"You must have been half-asleep. Now go to sleep quite, and finish the dream."

The next night Primus began—

"Mother, I wish you would tell that old party not to come into my room without knocking. I had just got into bed, happened to glance across to the drawers, and there she stood, coolly looking at me. I was disgusted, and turned my back upon her. Presently, I looked out of the tail of my eye, to see what she was doing, but she'd cut."

"You don't know who it was?"

"No. She looked like one of the charwomen—Boots's mother, I daresay. These people are cool enough for anything."

My wife called to Stillwater, to ask if Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Jones had been in that evening. She was answered that no one had been.

Night after night we were roused by the voice of this or that child. Their mother always went to them, and always found them sleeping peacefully; though, a minute before, there had been sobbing and moaning. It was bitterly cold, and I persuaded her not to go at the first call. Then there was whimpering on the stairs.

One night, we had both been lying awake for some time, listening to what seemed like cautious steps, first on the landing, and then in our room itself. We had tried to persuade ourselves that it might be mice. But no; there were distinct steps, as of a person walking. Yet, though we followed the sound with our eyes, we saw nothing. Suddenly, there was a howl of anguish, like the cry of a large animal in pain. It thrilled us with horror, for it came from our daughters' room, though it was not possible for it to be their voices. When we reached their bedside, they were calmly sleeping; and were not even roused by our entrance with the light.

"If you please, ma'am, may I have my sister to sleep with me?" said Stillwater to her mistress.

"Are you afraid to sleep alone?"

"No, I am not afraid."

"Then why do you wish it?"

No answer; only a very earnest look.

"Why! Stillwater, you look as if you had seen a ghost," said her mistress laughingly.

"Yes, ma'am, I have," she replied, very quietly.

"And what did it look like?"

"Like Mrs. X—, just as she was of afternoons."

"It was no doubt a dream, and you will probably never have such another."

"No, I am sure it was not a dream. Besides, I have seen her twice before, when I was walking about."

"Really! Stillwater, for a sensible young woman you are very full of fancies."

"It was not a fancy; either of the times, ma'am. I did see her, I did indeed. I hope you will believe me."

"Yes, I quite believe that you *think* you saw Mrs. X—. You may have your sister to sleep with you."

Now, it is not a pleasant thing for any man, still less for one of my profession, to confess that he has felt "creepy" on account of certain inexplicable sounds. But, as this is a perfectly true account, I am compelled to acknowledge that it happened to me again and again, during the time of my dwelling in the Old Lodge. And I also declare that my wife and I were perfectly well in health; and that we had never before been the victims of similar terrors. Furthermore; though we spoke of the noises, we, at first, abstained from mentioning our sensations to each other.

After an hour's sleep, I would be aroused; as if at the command of some person, unseen indeed, but certainly in the room. Then a small something, say a marble, would be gently dropped, more than once, on the carpet, close at my bedside; sometimes on the floor-cloth, just outside the open door. Then the marble would be gently rolled on the boards of the room, and up against the skirting board.

It was an immense relief when, one night, we encountered each other's eyes as we lay listening, and both made a clean breast of our terrors. Yes, nothing short of that word will do. We agreed that the first sufferer should wake the other. But my wife found it not always possible to carry out this determination. "What did you hear?" I asked her once.

"The chest of drawers was dragged over the floor," she replied. "I am thankful you spoke to me, for I have for some time been trying to wake you, but was not allowed. In fact, I have been kept perfectly motionless."

I had heard precisely the same sound, yet the drawers did not appear to have been actually moved. The sounds were so distinct that we always connected them with some special article. Now, it was a chair, or the towel-horse, that was moved. Now, it was the loud snapping of a thick stick in the hall. Now, it was a violent blow on the hall table, struck as if with my own walking-stick, which I remembered to have left there, and which I found there in the morning. Once, the heaviest book on my writing-table appeared to be dropped, as if from the height of a man, on the floor-cloth in the hall. Then a smaller one. I always myself shut the doors of the rooms leading into the hall.

Of course I tried in every way to account for the mystery; but, after a time, I could only resign myself to lie awake and wonder. The nights were bitterly cold. On one occasion, when there had been a persistent dropping of nuts in a corner of the room, I jumped up, in desperation, and held the light close to the spot. In a second the sound was behind me. I whisked round, but—tapping to the right of me, tapping to the left of me, tapping in every direction, without a second's intermission. No sooner did I look towards one spot than the dropping of nuts was at the other end of the room. It was as if some mischievous elf were enjoying himself at my expense.

Our boys had gone to spend a day or two with some friends, and their mother, not liking the look of the empty room, had closed the door in passing, giving it a push, to make sure that it was fast. That night we heard the door shut with a tremendous bang. Even had it been left open, there was no wind to move it.

Another night, when we had been awoken in the usual way, there was an agreeable variety in the entertainment. A delicate, flute-like sound proceeded from the closed dining-room. Again and again, a distinct and long-sustained musical note, as of some small pipe. Then the fifth of that note, then the octave, repeated many times; then the seventh and octave, over and over again. We were greatly puzzled. The piano was not in that room. And the sound certainly suggested a wind instrument of sweet tone.

I went down early next morning, and found to my surprise, a concertina lying on a table. I lifted the handle, and there came forth a long-drawn note, the very note I had heard in the night. My wife called out to me from up stairs, "That's it! that's it! What is it?"

Without attempting to disentangle her speech, I held up the concertina.

"Oh! that is Phil's. He must have left it behind. But it was the very note; there is no doubt of it."

We locked the thing up in its box, and put it inside a book-case; and next night, we were treated to a repetition of the musical notes, only muffled.

It was not only during the night that the noises were heard. For instance: I was reading by the fading afternoon light, when a chair on the other side of the room seemed to be moved from its place; so that I instinctively turned my head to see who had entered the room. Again, I was about to go down the cellar steps, in the afternoon, when I heard a heavy pickling pan dragged along the stone floor below. I quite thought some one was down there; but, as usual, there was no one to be seen, and the pan was in its place.

At eleven o'clock a.m., my wife and Stillwater were on the landing. The girl was telling her mistress that she had heard Mrs. X—'s voice the evening before. Her mistress told her she was giving way to fancies.

"But Mary Jones heard it too. She had just brought in

the eggs, and stood listening to the singing in the drawing-room. Then I heard Mrs. X—'s angry voice again, on the stairs, and Mary said, 'Who's shouting?' I said I didn't know, and she said, 'It must be the missis. Lor! how angry she is to holler like that. Doesn't she like 'em to sing?'

"In an old house like this," began my wife, "there may be many noises caused by—"

Suddenly, a noise, as if a shower of small pieces of the ceiling came down sharply on the floor-cloth, caused mistress and maid to start back in affright, and involuntarily to look up. There was not a crack to be seen. Then the two pairs of eyes searched the floor in every direction; their owners cautiously standing within the shelter of two doorways. Not a morsel of any kind could they discover.

"What was that, Ma'am?" inquired Stillwater, fixing her sleepy gaze on her mistress.

"I cannot tell," was the only reply that occurred to that intelligent lady.

One morning the post brought me orders to "move on." Instead of grumbling, I hailed them with delight. For we seldom got a decent night's rest, and my wife's nerves were beginning to be weakened by the constant strain upon them.

The Old Lodge had been for years in the charge of Mrs. X—, who had borne the character of a highly respectable old lady, with the drawbacks of being somewhat misanthropical and very avaricious.

I am perfectly aware of the ridicule with which stories of this nature are generally received. I can only repeat that I have related an absolutely true experience, for which I am utterly unable to account. I have no theory on the subject. I have always felt a strong distaste for so-called Spiritualism. I perceive the inconsequence and even childishness of my story; and yet, it will always remain, to the story-teller, a serious fact.

THE LETTERS ON THEOSOPHY.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I hope from the considerable preface by your esteemed correspondent "M.A. (Oxon.)" to "A. P. S.'s" second letter on Theosophy which recently appeared in your journal, that the glamour of the Theosophists is not creeping over him, as hitherto he has held the balance fairly between the two parties, Spiritualists and Theosophists.

This letter lays down the general principle that accidents and suicides "can communicate with us through mediums, and that which communicates is the real entity of the once living man." These are divided into the *bad* and the *good*. Of the *bad* he says: "Cut off in the full flush of earthly passions which bind them to familiar scenes, they are enticed by the opportunities which mediums afford them to gratify these vicariously." Of the *good*, he says: "They are as much beyond the reach of temptation in the shape of mediumistic currents after death as they would have been superior in life to the common incitements to crime. Even they have to wait before they can be spiritually re-born; but they wait in a dreamless sleep beyond the regions of this earth-life and its attractions." So "to this complexion have we come at last" that none but *BAD* accidents and suicides communicate through mediums. Curiously enough, in the same number of your contemporary the *Medium*, there is a communication from A. J. Smart, of Melbourne, late of the Cardiff circle, on the subject of Communicating Spirits, in direct contradiction to this, and coming as it does from one who also "knows" is entitled to as much weight in that respect as "A. P. S." who says that he "knows."

Speaking of the objections of some against materialisations, Mr. Smart says: "The pressure is also contributed to by the theosophical Occultists who follow one of the favourite methods of the rigidly orthodox 'Christian' in depreciating the nature, character, and motives of those who manifest. Considering the meagre opportunities the Spirits have of rebutting this, compared with the advantages their censors possess, they occupy a most unfair position. I can only say emphatically that I bear in memory many recollections of those whom I have met in the materialised form, which more than sufficiently refute the sweeping depreciations of the Occultists. Only recently I have witnessed many evidences of such kindly interest in the welfare of those with whom these visitors from beyond the veil have come in contact, such spontaneous manifestations of sympathy and good feeling, of regard and wish to serve, as, when exhibited by those in the flesh, at once stamp them, not only as possessing the ordinary qualities of humanity, but a large development of the very best; and what more can be required—by what else do we or can we judge?"

The article is worth reading in connection with this letter, No. 2, which reminds one of the title of a book seen on the railway bookstalls, "Too Clever by Half."

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.

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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.

A WORD TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

The numerous letters which we have again thought it our duty to publish, that all sides of the question may be fully and fairly ventilated, have made it abundantly manifest that there is, even amongst experienced Spiritualists, a great divergence of opinion as to Miss Wood's guilt or innocence. The question is a tender one, and is made all the more so by the warmth with which it is debated. Some would seem to think that all who, in the face of recent events, yet believe in the medium's innocence, must of course be hopelessly credulous; while others, again, including so trusted an observer as Mr. Alfred R. Wallace, as we gather from his letter in this week's "LIGHT," maintain that the circumstances attendant on Miss Wood's seizure afford no evidence whatever of her conscious deception.

All this points to the conclusion that the question is not to be settled by any form of controversy; and—seeing, moreover, that we need our space for other matters—we must therefore ask our correspondents henceforth to leave the discussion of Miss Wood's guilt or innocence, and to give their attention to more profitable work. An intelligent circle, sitting for the pure purpose of the accurate observation of phenomena produced under the most satisfactory conditions, and directing their energies to the elucidation of the perplexing problem of the relation of the "form" to the medium and of the medium to the "form," would sooner or later do more towards a solution of the difficulty than any amount of newspaper disputation. That such a circle can be formed—of a fairly representative character, and composed of men who have no other object than the discovery of the simple facts—we cannot reasonably doubt; [and Miss Wood's offer recently published in our columns leads to the hope that she herself will be ready to aid in so desirable a work.

"THE PERFECT WAY."—LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

DEAR SIR,—We Spiritualists have certainly to bear a great deal of misapprehension from the outside world. The majority of the misconceptions do not, after all, much trouble us, as our superb vantage-ground really precludes us from sentimental injury, and we can afford to listen with unruffled minds to any and all sarcasm respecting our intellectual strength, abiding the time when we shall be the teachers—they the taught; in the meantime studying earnestly ourselves to qualify us for the future great inquiry. On the intellectual plane we cannot, therefore, descend to the level of one-sided material philosophy, but on the moral plane there is but one standard, and on this one I think we have just cause for decided complaint, and I venture to suggest that Spiritualists as a body, and as individuals, should protest against the most unwarrantable and libellous imputations on our body in a recent letter in the *Times* by a Mr. Carl von Buch. With regard to the subject of the letter, he may say what he pleases; but with regard to the honour of Spiritualists as a body, and of the C. A. S. as a society, he may not say what he pleases! We will bear, as I said, every aspersion on our intellectual capacities, for we know better, but we will not bear *any* on our moral capacities, and the writer of the letter has no more right to speak of our "jargon," by which we cover up our sins, nor of the honourable members of our Council, and of the subscribing members of the C. A. S. as "knaves and dupes," than we should have to assail the Geo-

graphical Society and its subscribing members, if the last expedition to discover the North Pole were stranded on the ice, and the public, instead of having its curiosity gratified by knowing all about the Pole, only learned some more details about the ice. We are an honourable and investigating society, and because we have disappointments in our researches we do not choose to be called "knaves and dupes" in consequence, and I consider that Spiritualists would be justified in quitting their peaceful habit of disregarding outsiders, and of calling this writer to strict account for his most unjustifiable libel.

May I intrude yet a few moments on your valuable space to touch upon the sad subject, the cause of Mr. von Buch's last letter—the deceptions of Spirits, if not the deception of mediums? This has been the sore, the crucial subject absorbing much thought and erudition on our side. What is the result that is usually arrived at? None! simply confusion and mystery. It has seemed all in vain; and the pages of "LIGHT" for the last year or so, and all other similar organs, have been full of the extreme difficulty which the most earnest and careful Spiritualists have had and still have in arriving at any conclusion respecting the mysteries of Spirit communion. A few weeks ago I saw, with most extreme regret and utter surprise, a letter from the admirable pen of Mrs. Penny, in which she speaks of "The Perfect Way" in a tone, to me, most deeply to be regretted, because it may possibly have the deplorable result of preventing students of Spiritual writings from reading this most striking work. I can only urgently entreat anyone who has been so influenced to judge for themselves, and to use their own gifts of reason. In this very book there is a most remarkable chapter, and I would earnestly beseech all truth-seeking Spiritualists to study it with the whole force of their intellects, for whoever comprehends that chapter will have a key wherewith to unlock the mysteries of this very subject now so sorely tormenting the intellects of earnest Spiritualists. This chapter is Lecture III., on "The Various Orders of Spirits, and how to discern them." In the whole of Spiritual literature yet published we have had no such key given to us. As to Mrs. Penny's mistake that "The Perfect Way" professes to be a new Gospel, it is simply the mistake of one who has not read the book, and I feel anxious lest the many admirers of her excellent letters should in consequence deprive themselves of the spiritual nutriment they will find richly in the very remarkable messages of this work of re-naisance. As an artist I know the lovely period is dawning on the dark night of ugliness—the material correspondence which indicates the bright light which is dawning upon the world through the lips of those messengers whose mission is now beginning.

No new Gospel is published, but light is shining in the darkness—i.e., on our misconceptions of the preceding ones, and to each of us Spiritualists is the torch handed. The writers of "The Perfect Way" are unrolling the scroll for us, and through its pages Spiritualists will unravel many of the mysteries which surround them, and they will, in its pages alone, be instructed for the first time into the illusions of the astral plane. When these are understood such lamentable histories as we have read in Spiritual records regarding public and private sances will be simply impossible.

Life is indeed worth living; it is, intellectually, so profoundly interesting. No living man or woman who has opened their minds to "Isis Unveiled," or "The Perfect Way," can but rejoice in their own existence.—Faithfully yours,

ISABEL DE STEIGER.

The Studios, Holland Park-road.

A MEETING of the Council of the C.A.S. will be held at 38, Great Russell-street, on Tuesday evening next, and as some important matters will come up for consideration it is desirable that there should be a good attendance.

THE winter course of meetings of the Central Association of Spiritualists will be opened by a conversazione on Monday evening, November 6th. We mention the fact thus early that our friends may keep themselves free from other engagements.

A CORRECTION.—To the Editor of "LIGHT."—Sir,—In quoting from my reply to the circular recently issued on dark sances, &c., I am referred to as secretary to the Goswell Hall Committee, which, not being the case, I am sorry to say is arousing the ire of one or two individuals. I am hon. secretary to the Dalston Association, and shall feel much obliged if you will make the correction in your next issue, and oblige yours very truly, JOSEPH N. GREENWELL. 15, Pakenham-street, King's Cross-road, W.C., October 1st, 1882.

MATERIALIZATION AND EXPOSURES.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Allow me to say a few words on an aspect of this question which none of your numerous correspondents have dwelt upon sufficiently, but which appears to me to lie at the very root of any sound judgment on the matter.

It seems to be admitted by Spiritualists generally that there is such a thing as genuine materialisation, by which is meant the appearance of visible and tangible human forms, in the presence of a medium, which are yet not ordinary human beings; and that this is the case when such forms are witnessed by several persons at once, the medium being at the same time visible, or when the body of the medium can be felt, or, still more clearly, when these forms are seen to come into being and to vanish away again in proximity to the medium. Hundreds of Spiritualists have witnessed some of these phenomena, as I have myself. They have occurred with a considerable number of different mediums, under the most varied and rigid test conditions; and with none, perhaps, more frequently, for a longer period, and testified by more trustworthy witnesses, than with Miss Wood.

But with most of these mediums, similar forms in all respects to those just referred to also appear under less perfect test conditions, that is, when the medium is concealed from view, and usually fastened in some way supposed to prevent the possibility of voluntary or involuntary personation. In some of these cases what appears a good test is obtained by the form being palpably larger or smaller than the medium, sometimes confirmed by exact measurement; or by the medium being found in a state of trance and in his or her usual dress a few seconds after the white-robed and, perhaps, bare-footed form had disappeared in the cabinet. Yet in none of these cases, usually deemed quite satisfactory, have we any proof that the form was separate from the medium, because it is known to all investigators that mediums can be loosed from any bonds or from clothing, and re-introduced into them, and that the medium's body can be *transfigured* and made to assume a totally distinct aspect, and much larger or smaller dimensions, than those natural to it. The elongation of Mr. Home, and the American medium (Mrs. —), whose body was found to be absent from the cabinet in which her clothes remained, while forms of men, women, and children successively came out of it, will occur to the memory of all acquainted with Spiritual literature.

Now in all these phenomena conditions determine the nature and character of the manifestations; when the conditions are highly favourable forms can be produced apart from the medium; when less favourable they can only be produced by releasing and transfiguring the medium; and the latter is in many cases only one degree less marvellous than the former. Of this latter class I have seen very many examples with several different mediums, tested either by close examination of the countenance, by seeing the medium a few seconds after the form had retired, by accurate measurement of the form and of the medium, or by a rigid search of the medium's body and surroundings immediately after the séance, when no particle of the copious draperies and headdresses of the forms which had appeared could be found; yet I think it not only possible, but highly probable, that in some or all of these cases the form *was* the medium, transfigured, under conditions which rendered it a marvellous exhibition of super-human agency.

Now if in any of these latter cases the form had been violently seized and found to be the medium, free from bonds and divested of a portion of his or her clothing, that fact would not in any degree have affected the genuineness of the phenomenon as regards the medium; but if this had been done before the tests above enumerated had been applied the opportunity of getting such tests would have been lost, and an undesired stigma thrown upon an innocent person. But we may go further than this, and maintain on substantial grounds the extreme probability that if a form is seized which is really distinct from the medium, yet the result may be that the form and the medium will be forcibly brought together, and a false impression conveyed that the form *was* the medium.

For what do we know of this most stupendous phenomenon of a more or less solid, visible form being produced, except the constant conditions under which it appears and the uniform statements of the agencies who produce it? Whenever the form is seen in process of formation it grows, or seems to grow, out of the body of the medium or in close proximity to it. To depart, it goes back to the medium. A common phenomenon is the

temporary return of the form to the medium "to gain strength." A well attested phenomenon is, that marks made on the form or injuries done to it appear on the body of the medium. In the case of Dr. Monck, food taken by the form reappeared in the mouth of the medium, visibly to several witnesses altogether above suspicion. The weight of these forms fluctuates greatly, and there is some evidence to shew that the weight of the medium is simultaneously diminished. These facts all prove a most intimate and real connection between the form and the medium, a connection utterly beyond the powers of our material science to understand; and what applies to the *matter* of the forms seems to apply equally to the *matter* of the drapery in which the forms usually appear. We are *told*, also, that the forms are produced mainly from the body or aura of the medium, and that they must return to it or injury will result. And this is so likely in itself, and so accordant with all the facts we can observe, that we are bound to accept it, at least till we know more of the matter.

Yet those who think the reality of materialisation can be tested by seizing the form and keeping it away from the medium, must ignore all these considerations, and believe, apparently, in the teeth of all the evidence, that the forms are real independent entities, who come from some other world, who have no connection whatever with the medium (except as somehow helping them to come to us), and who can be kept by force away from the medium for our examination and amusement! And, what is to me more strange still, a considerable number of advanced Spiritualists, including many who are looked up to as teachers of the unenlightened, adopt this improbable and unfounded hypothesis, and cry out with horror at the immoral imposture, either of the medium or of the beings who produce the phenomena.

It is my deliberate conviction—accepting the reality of these phenomena as witnessed personally and as narrated by a crowd of competent observers, and deducing from them the obvious and close material and spiritual connection of the form and medium—that the fact of a person seizing the form and finding the medium, is not and cannot be a proof of fraud, but is, in all probability, the *natural and inevitable effect of trying to keep apart two beings who are really one, and who cannot be rudely interfered with without danger to the human body, whose abnormal organisation supplies the material for the temporary materialisation of these marvellous existences.* If this were only one out of many alternative deductions from the facts and teachings before us it would be both cruel and unwise to choose always the least favourable interpretation, and as a consequence of doing so to attach the stigma of imposture on persons who have for many years borne a good character, and who are known to be true and powerful mediums. But when, as I maintain, this hypothesis is the only one which the facts directly support, it follows, that the only "exposure" made is of the incapacity of experimenters who deal with the greatest mysteries of an unknown universe as if they were mere questions of terrestrial mechanics.

So far as I remember, every medium for materialisation, however perfectly their powers may have been tested, however good their character, has been subjected to accusations of fraud on somewhat similar grounds to those now alleged against Miss Wood. The fact that whenever a form has been seized it has been found, *after a struggle of some moments' duration*, to merge into the medium, lends additional support to the view here advanced, since on the mere doctrine of chances there ought to have been, by this time, at least, one genuine form seized, if such a capture is possible. I have shewn reasons for thinking it *not possible*, and I believe that, even where the medium and form have been seen separate, a forcible seizure would result in their speedy amalgamation.

I feel sure that many who have studied these phenomena most closely will be satisfied that my views are in harmony with the facts taken in their entirety; and I have thought it now opportune to explain my reasons for them (however briefly and inadequately), because, if accepted, they will afford the best antidote to the crude notion that "seizing" a materialised form can ever test its genuineness.

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

P.S.—I will add one word more of practical suggestion. It has been asserted by one of your most eminent and esteemed correspondents, that "not one person in fifty can tie a woman so that she cannot get out of the bonds by normal means, if she is a practised trickster." This I entirely dispute. There are three portions of the body from which a close band cannot possibly be slipped—the neck, the waist, and the ankle. Tie a tape firmly and closely round a woman's waist, knot it hard

behind over a piece of card, and seal it to the card, then carry the ends either to a chair, or any other piece of furniture, and tie and seal again, and though the person will be not the least inconvenienced and the hands free, no trickster in the world can escape from the tape, and then replace herself in it again, even if she were in the light instead of being in darkness. If, under these conditions, a form appears, and afterwards the medium is found secured as at first, we have positive proof of superhuman power. We have no proof that the form was not the medium; that we can only get by seeing or feeling the two simultaneously; but the above simple mode of tying is absolute security against the bugbear of trickery by genuine mediums. —A.R.W.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—There are some considerations which have not been touched upon in the discussion of certain recent occurrences and which seem to me to deserve being brought forward.

There is, I think, some danger of a sort of hysterical epidemic manifesting itself among Spiritualists not at all conducive to the preservation of that calm, dispassionate state of mind which is the only one fitted for the investigation of delicate and complicated phenomena. At one time we are bewildered by the publication of descriptions of most marvellous phenomena, but of the real nature or even genuineness of which, the amount of accompanying evidence is lamentably imperfect. Suddenly or periodically, some alleged "exposure" comes, and forthwith systems of rules are to be laid down, and a sort of censorship of investigation to be established.

A great want of dignity is thus exhibited, and the whole subject assumes a position ridiculous, or worse, in the eyes of outsiders and of many more or less interested in it.

It is of course open to societies to adopt what rules they please for their own investigation, and if they think well, to recommend their adoption by others, and for any conclave or body of individuals to do the same, although the latter is, I think, a course of procedure open to considerable question. But it is absurd to attempt to impose any limits on perfect freedom of action, or for any society or body to lay down general laws. It is quite easy to imagine the most perfect and indisputable tests of the genuineness and identity even of materialised Spirit "forms" being given at a circle where darkness prevails, where the medium is hidden from view, and where the sceptical element is present.

It may, however, neither be wise nor prudent to publish such experiences to the world; even to the Spiritualistic world. A Spiritualistic journal, should, I think, rigidly decline to publish reports of a large number of sésances held under the conditions and arrangements which so frequently prevail, without the most explicit statement that no opinion is thereby expressed or implied as to the nature or genuineness of the phenomena described. And in taking part in sésances of the kind alluded to, I would ask leave of the medium to explain to the sitters that no professions were made as to the nature of phenomena which might occur.

If this were done, it seems to me that all parties would be placed in a much fairer position towards each other than they have frequently been, and in some cases at all events, the word "exposure" could not have been used. English law, and English public feeling, assume a prisoner at the bar to be innocent until proved to be guilty. I submit that the cases in which evidence has been so sifted that a judicial verdict of guilty could be returned in the alleged exposures of mediums, are far less numerous than is generally taken for granted.

It sometimes appears that a steady rise in the barometer is followed by a wet day, or a continued fall by an unexpectedly fine one, and we say "the glass has deceived us." We have deceived ourselves by wrongly interpreting certain facts. Somewhat similarly we may deceive ourselves among these occult phenomena which at present seem to become more perplexing and complicated the more we search into them.

The moral seems to be, persevere in collecting facts, and do not lay down conditions which may prevent the facts appearing; and, equally important, do not mistake the nature of the facts when you have them. Thus it may be hoped our knowledge will gradually increase.

EDWARD T. BENNETT.

October 1st, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I wish to urge the claims of common sense in regard to the phenomena of materialisation.

Mr. Podmore, in his now historical letter, set forth at length an imaginary sceptic's impressions of a sésance with Miss Wood. We now know that the sceptic would have been right, and all

those hearty believers who were then so wrathful really ought to have the grace to admit that they have been credulous dupes. For even Miss Wood has come to the conclusion that dark sésances are favourable to fraud.

Regarding materialisations in general, a sceptic would first of all remark that they are extraordinary phenomena, exceedingly difficult to credit, and that he is bound by every moral and scientific law to believe in their existence only upon abundant and unimpeachable evidence. He would proceed to ask whether such a thing as trickery was ever suggested as an explanation, whether fraud on the part of the mediums might be suspected.

I should be obliged to answer that I cannot name a materialisation medium who has never been detected in imposture.

He would reply by asking whether materialised forms, when seized, have been ever known to prove to be the medium dressed up.

I must answer that in every case known to me this had occurred.

He would ask under what conditions sésances are held, and I should be obliged to reply that the usual conditions, in every detail, are such as positively invite fraud.

He might ask if mediumship in private family circles is not above suspicion.

I should reply that even in private families deception of the grossest kind, without any assignable motive, has been detected.

He might ask me what I had seen myself; and I should reply that I have seen a good many "Spirits," some of them obvious frauds, and none that I consider to be probably genuine.

He would then inquire what evidence there was for these extraordinary phenomena; and I should be forced to reply that the only evidence known to me is that a few acute and honest persons, and a good many other persons, who, though honest, are quite the reverse of acute, state that mediums (in nearly all cases proved to be skilful conjurers) have produced materialisations, which they, the acute and not acute on-lookers, consider genuine.

He would reply that common sense commands him to consider it probable that the few acute persons have been deceived by clever conjurers, rather than to believe in the existence of phenomena so extraordinary and inexplicable.

And perhaps the sceptic may be right in generalities, as he has been proved to be in a special instance.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

EDWARD R. PEASE.

17, Osnaburgh-street, London.

October 2nd, 1882.

CONFIDENCE FROM A VISION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Some years ago I was placed in *sonnambulic rapport* with a lady at a great distance, Pesth, I being here in London. The question to be solved was whether there were any means of restoration for her from a grave illness. I perceived by clairvoyance that she was prostrated by the effects of fever, and that magnetism would restore her. The patient was of the aristocracy of Hungary, Baroness P. I was asked to undertake the magnetisation myself, and as the Baroness was known to me as an adherent to magnetism, and had previously consulted me, I, having faith in what I was told had been the *sonnambulic dictum*, consented, and went at once by express. On my arrival I found the patient so very ill and exhausted that I thought it not possible for her to recover. In my state of fatigue I could not think of magnetisation. Previous to seeking repose I expressed my fears privately to her son. When left alone, such a feeling of hopelessness and depression came upon me, and sorrow that I had come so far to find myself hopeless to do any good, that I wept. I sought sleep in vain. But, after awhile, a beautiful vision appeared to me. There stood before me a Spirit, or angel, who said to me: "Why so grieved and hopeless? You saw her recovery through magnetism. Magnetise, then, with your usual composure, and with faith!" The vision and the words had the effect of tranquillising and strengthening me. I felt as if I, myself, had been magnetised; my composure and confidence were restored. The vision faded away, and I slept. When I awoke in the morning I felt quite myself. I went to the patient, and magnetised with perfect composure and fullest confidence in the healing power given to me. She was made better and better by each magnetisation, and was soon well enough to permit my return to London. I received letters afterwards, always confirming the permanence of her restoration.

10, Berkeley-gardens, Kensington.

ADOLPHE DIDIER.

MISS WOOD AT PETERBOROUGH.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Having read the correspondence in last week's "LIGHT," I think it will only be doing an act of justice to Miss Wood to add my testimony to her genuineness. I have sat with her about a dozen times, and am quite sure she could not have herself produced what I have seen. She has been a guest at our house; last time she stopped a fortnight. I have seen her undress before and after a séance, and I have never seen a piece of muslin or anything else white that she could clothe herself with. I have had sceptics, and they have been quite satisfied that it could not have been Miss Wood. We have had her sealed with peculiar seals, and we found them every time intact. On one occasion she was tied with knots, which none but the gentleman who tied them could undo, and to have got out she must have cut the tape and knots, and yet we found them just as they were tied. We also saw two forms at once. One of the forms grew and dissolved before our eyes. One, moreover, was much taller than Miss Wood. At another time the form came through the curtain, not out of the opening. Could Miss Wood have dissolved the curtain? Wishing Miss Wood every success in the future, and hoping she will keep a brave heart, which all mediums require,—I am, yours truly,

36, Southgate-street, Leicester.
September 25th, 1882.

ANNIE L. COTTRELL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Having investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism for upwards of twelve years, sat at many hundred sêances, and at a greater number of Miss Wood's than most persons, and subjected her to some of the most stringent tests she has ever been under, I hope you will not consider me out of place in claiming a portion of your space to express my views upon the late exposure, and to give a short recital of my experience of her mediumship. There are investigators and investigators; methods of investigation and methods of investigation; theories and theories as to the true nature of the phenomena presented to us.

The commonly accepted theory of form manifestations is that those forms are built up by Spirits from atoms of matter collected from the sitters and medium, which the superficial investigator thinks should dissolve at his touch, forgetting that a form which has taken from one to two hours in building up for presentation, might require a proportionate time to disintegrate; and when upon seizure the medium is put into his hands by the operating power he plumes himself with the conviction that he has exposed the tricks of the said medium, when probably if the subject was thoroughly understood the only trick of the performance rested with himself.

Another theory as to the nature of those manifestations, not so common as the foregoing, but obtaining with all the most thoughtful and scientific investigators, is that the phenomenon witnessed is a transfiguration or projection of the material form of the medium. Granting this—and we think it the most reasonable explanation from the mass of evidence we have, in cases of careful investigation—it may be easily understood why the form upon seizure is found to be the medium; and, as in the case of the conjurer, who can with his appliances dupe the most practised eye, so it is more than equally possible that those subtle agencies, operating behind this physical phenomenon, may in the twinkling of an eye, infinitely quicker than the possibility of visual perception, and in the face of the most rigid testing, cause the form to absorb itself with the medium or the medium with the form. I have had partial evidence of this in my investigations, and with more time and means at my disposal, should have amply satisfied myself thereon. Suffice it to say that all my observations and testings, and those of others I have spoken with who have judiciously examined the same, go to prove the strong probability of this theory.

That there are cases when the medium is directly presented before the sitters there is no dispute. Sometimes these are knowingly to themselves, and are acts of deliberate deception. (Such cases I am acquainted with.) When they so act they deserve the most retributive chastisement that follows. But there are cases when the medium may be brought out while in trance and independent of his willing, probably by tricky and undeveloped Spirits (for undoubtedly our sêances are visited and influenced at times by Spirits of this kind), out of the body as well as by those in the body. Yet in most instances the cause may be deeper seated than this. Is it not highly probable that at a circle composed of antagonistic elements, prejudiced against

the fact, believing the medium to be an impostor, and present with the deliberate intention of making an exposure, the influence of the power controlling may just be sufficient to entrance the medium, and as in the case of mesmerism, when by the stronger will of a more powerful adept the subject may be transferred to the control of the said person from that of the first operator, may not the antagonistic wills of the sitters, intent upon seizure, and already suggesting the presentation of the medium, so far obtain the mastery over the conditions as to control the medium and, unconsciously to themselves, produce the exposure they are so intent upon? Certainly these are but theories that may or may not be explanatory of the *modus operandi* of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, as the facts thereof are far from being satisfactorily fathomed, they may be as tenable as others.

I am fully satisfied that one or other of these theories will amply explain the supposed "exposure" of Miss Wood. I know well, with thousands of others, that the genuineness of her mediumship is beyond dispute, it having been established by the most thorough and complete system of tests that could be adopted, in order to negative her power as an active conscious factor in the manifestations. Indeed, she is one of the last persons I know in professional mediumship who need be induced by any temptation to commit herself in this regard. Considering the phenomena she has had under the severest testings, it were absolute stupidity, then, for her to dream of so enacting, and I must acknowledge that I read the account of her accusers with a large sprinkling of doubt, when they said she had refused so simple a test as the one stated, inasmuch as I have never known Miss Wood to object to any test within the bounds of decency. In the face of this, I feel bound to accept her statement in preference to that of her accusers.

Before persons pose themselves as expositors of fraud in regard to this subject, they should fully understand the phenomena, withholding judgment until after repeated and varied scientific methods are exhausted, sufficient to give satisfactory data from which reasonable conclusions may be drawn as to the how and why thereof, and not jump to rash conclusions, from what may, after all, be but seeming and not positive fraud. Otherwise they presume to what none possess, a skilled and perfect knowledge upon the most wonderful problems ever given for man to solve, whilst around its infant years the wisest are groping for light. Surely, as is the case with Miss Wood, when a medium is willing and desirous of being thoroughly tested, we should repeat our tests until we make it impossible for the medium to impersonate. Moreover, this willingness to be amply tested should be a sufficient protection for the medium against a half-fledged knowledge of these subtle phenomena, and against that want of honour which would agree to conditions with the settled intention of breaking them.

We are satisfied from our knowledge of Miss Wood that she is an honest girl and a genuine medium, and with a fair field for the expression of her gifts, without favour or patronage, I feel certain that her integrity will ever come uppermost.

Should I not trespass too largely upon your space, I shall conclude with the description of a test under which I have had phenomena through Miss Wood's mediumship. We, at the time a company of doubters, took her into a room provided by ourselves, and in which she had never been prior to the sêances. She was seated on an ordinary wood chair in a corner of the room. Through the wall we had driven an iron holdfast, which came through the back of the chair, and to which we locked an iron band, which we placed round her waist. We stuffed the keyhole of the lock with paper, and carefully sealed it over. We then secured the chair to the floor with a cord, which we brought round her limbs and over her knees, unravelling the ends of the cord and fastening them separately together, and sealing them over. Then we placed her hands in two bags of flour, sewed them together and round her wrists, sealing several points. We then secured her hands with tape to the cord round her limbs and to the iron band round her waist, sealing every knot. Altogether we had her sealed in ten places, and used black, red, and chocolate-coloured wax, which we variously mixed. Thus we made "assurance doubly sure." The results of our sittings under this test were as follows:—On one occasion we had a white ball rolled from the cabinet to the centre of the circle, about the size of a large human hand, which began to oscillate, and moving in a spiral fashion, enlarge itself until it took the form of a tall, slim female figure, which we gently felt, and which answered our questions by intelligent noddings of the head. On another occasion, under the same test, we had a

form present itself, similar in form and size to the medium, which, at our request, succeeded slowly in dematerialising itself while it kept its full height, becoming so vapoury and transparent that we could distinguish objects through it which we held for that purpose. Eventually it resolved itself into thin air. During both these séances I may state that "Pocha," at intervals, though with a weak voice, articulated intelligently through her medium. The séances speak for themselves. I defy any conjurers to place themselves under the same conditions and do anything whatever.

In conclusion, I may state that prior to Miss Wood leaving Newcastle, during the early part of the summer, she had made arrangements with a company of us to sit for the purpose of developing the phenomena, with herself in full view of the circle and with good light, and had not the call upon her services been so great, we should by this time, I have not the slightest doubt, have had satisfactory results. I only hope that wherever her lot may be cast in the future, she will submit herself to these conditions, to this intent. I have, on several occasions, seen the forms presented while she has been in full view of the sitters, and why should it not occur again, and why should not this method universally obtain, and let us have done with dark sittings and cabinet testings? It would give infinitely greater satisfaction to investigators, thwart imposition, be a protection to the medium, and annul the vocation of the séance detective.—
Yours truly,

HENRY BURTON.

3, Clifford-street, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—About two years ago, in company with a few friends, who through my instrumentality had become deeply interested in modern Spiritualism, I occasionally visited the circles held in Newcastle by Miss Wood and Mrs. Esperance; but the conditions under which the séances were held were so undesirable that in August, 1880, I wrote to a contemporary as follows:—

"Of what use are bolts and bars? Do screws and clamps, and locks and wards, prevent personation if the controlling Spirit is not superior to trickery? I may be told that if the medium be brought out of a cabinet after having been securely locked up in the presence of investigators and by the hands of sceptics, this phenomenon is itself proof positive of Spirit or supermundane power. I grant that it may be so considered, and I admit that it is so, but what is to prevent the sceptic shifting his doubt from one object to another? He now suspects that accomplices help to, or altogether, produce manifestations that he is unfit to investigate. Such a man had better investigate for a time at home, where a few exhibitions of Spirit-power by his own fireside would tend to engender a spirit of humility beneficial alike to himself and others. By all means have a test at 'form' séances, but let us follow the wholesome example set by Mr. Wright's circle: have the medium visible in our midst—*visible to all*—and, if the cabinet be retained, let it be solely for the use of the Spirits materialising.

The frivolity common to materialising séances, the insufficiency of light, and the admission of almost any class of investigator, inevitably bring disaster to mediums and unmerited disgrace to the cause.

A few weeks after the above letter was written, Mrs. Esperance was seized by a sitter with the result known to all—her friends deserted her and fled!

At this juncture a medical gentleman of this town who had for some months been attending Mrs. Esperance's séances, expressed confidence in her mediumship, and implored her for her reputation's sake, and for the cause she loved too well, to give a private séance under such conditions as he and a few friends wished to impose. After a little hesitation she consented, and after being thoroughly searched by several ladies in a private house, a séance was held in the drawing-room, with the result that her mediumship was triumphantly established.

With reference to the capture of Mrs. Esperance, I spoke somewhat as follows in public in her defence, and what I said then I repeat now:—

"There is a mystery about materialisations that none of us, at present, can solve. But if we *really* believe that Spirits clothe themselves with matter temporarily borrowed from the sitters and medium] (but principally from the medium), it behoves us to be very careful and cautious in forming opinions and expressing them concerning these so-called exposures. I ask you, who believe in materialisations, to suppose that the medium in whom you repose confidence, and through whose instrumentality you have to-day witnessed remarkable phenomena, is securely locked in the cabinet. I ask you to assume that a form appears outside the cabinet, at the same moment that an almost identical form is sitting unconscious inside the cabinet:—Which of the two human, or human-like forms, is

Miss Wood? And if the figure outside were seized (assuming this to be a genuine materialisation) does any sane Spiritualist think it could turn out to be any other than the medium, Miss Wood herself? Do you suppose it possible to catch and retain in physical bondage the Spirit-form of one who has passed through the change called death? No! It seems to me that we are called upon by the necessities of the case to believe that the physical form in the cabinet is somehow instantaneously dissolved and united to its captured elements outside, and thus 'exposures' betray our ignorance of the laws governing the manifestations rather than the dishonesty of the medium."

I do not think, sir, that the alleged exposure of Miss Wood will produce the slightest effect on the minds of progressive and thinking Spiritualists, and it is beyond doubt that she is a genuine medium. Nevertheless I think it a pity that mediums have to tramp the country to earn a bare pittance, and the thought is suggested whether it is not advisable that mediums should be employed by a central representative body of Spiritualists, who shall direct their movements and provide for their physical wants, rather than permit these gipsy-like methods to develop themselves, and bring honourable men and women into avoidable disgrace. For the past few years the vicarious sufferings of Spiritualists have been terrible, and it is high time to purify our methods and morality. "*Let there be light!*" both at séances and, mentally and spiritually, at all places of meeting. If scientific men should think proper to investigate the phenomena it would perhaps be desirable for them to sit in darkness or semi-darkness, for they, unlike the masses, understand that the disintegrating power of light will probably hinder the chemical process of materialisation, but at promiscuous, public, and private circles there should be light. I sincerely hope that the action you may take in this matter will bring about a reformation in the methods of circle-sitting, for I have known a genuine medium to simulate phenomena for the purpose of supplying himself and family with the necessities of life.

T. C. E.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—When a few weeks ago your correspondent, Mr. Podmore, brought upon himself a perfect avalanche of letters and a good deal of abuse, for having ventured to suggest the bare possibility of trickery with regard to Miss Wood's mediumship, I was sorry my many engagements that week prevented my coming a little to his rescue, by writing that the only fault I found with his letter was the half expressed or implied belief of the genuineness of materialised "forms" that appeared under any such conditions; and one would have thought that what has happened since the publication of his letter would have convinced all your angry correspondents that even my extreme view of the case was the right one. But no. So great is their faith that it has scarcely received any shock from the fact of Miss Wood having been discovered, for the second time, personating the "form" that came out among them while Miss Wood, as they believed, was securely fastened to her chair in the cabinet; and as they must give some explanation of the admitted fact that it was Miss Wood that was grasped, when it ought to have been "Pocha," they say it might have been the Spirits who provided the muslin with which she was draped, who extricated her from her fastenings and brought her out of the cabinet, making her also kneel down to personate a child's form, with its readiness to receive "sweets," and bestow kisses; and the "pattings" and "strokings" of its "diminutive" hand, and pretty, child-like ways generally.

And now is it not time that these "materialisation" séances were either done away with altogether, or carried on under conditions that would make all trickery absolutely impossible, which may very easily mean the same thing? Let those who have evidently no objection to be imposed upon (who seem, indeed, to rather like it, since they try how easy they can make it, by refusing to believe in trickery even when mediums are caught in the very act) go on with their "cabinets" and "dark séances," their "tyings," and "sealings"; but let those who object to being made dupes protest against everything of the kind. And what can be so absolutely simple as to make conditions absolutely perfect? I have been told that nothing would satisfy me as to the genuineness of such manifestations, but I altogether deny the charge. A few months ago I went to a séance for "materialisation";—and only because the gas was not turned down, and the medium sat so close to the curtain that her feet were visible just outside the opening of it, I turned to the friend who considers me such a hopeless sceptic on the subject, (while I think him an equally hopeless believer) and said, "I will believe in every 'form' that comes out now,—that it is a 'Spirit form'"—for I happened

to be quite close enough to the cabinet (which I had seen prepared) to be able to keep strict watch and guard on the rather substantial boots that belonged to the medium. Well, we sat for just two hours, and those boots never moved, and no "form" ever appeared. I never much expected one! At the end of about an hour and a-half, I found it rather dull. I got tired of "Gathering at the River" and "Marching to Emmanuel's Land," (and watching the boots) and suggested that we should leave; but we were told that our doing so would "break the conditions." But I really think they might have got on just as well with the "conditions" in pieces as they did with them whole. I do but give this experience to shew the extreme simplicity with which these séances might be managed, and where the manifestations (if there were any) would be quite satisfactory. (Of course, if a "form" had appeared I should immediately have inspected the boots, to make sure that the medium was still in them.) To dispense with the cabinet altogether would be still better. But we are told the cabinet is necessary for the "condensing of the medium's aura" which would be too diffused if he sat *without* it. It sounds curious, but as I never dogmatise upon subjects of which I am as profoundly ignorant as I am of "auras," I should simply say to the medium, "Then your cabinet must be of glass or have windows in it, which, while it would be equally 'condensing,' would enable the spectators to see what was going on inside it." If told, as I probably should be, that Spirits require darkness for their operations, again I would not dogmatise; but as I know a dishonest medium would require darkness for his operations, I should use my own judgment as to which had been at work when I saw the "form" that would presently emerge from the cabinet, and while others might conclude that a figure as substantial as their own, and clad in as earthly garments, a figure, or "form," that walks and talks, and kisses, and lifts chairs, and gives every possible sign of materiality, is in reality the medium's "condensed aura," I should conclude, being blessed with a little common sense, that it was the medium himself, whose simple "operation" had been to assume the disguise, which in the darkness or the dim light (which is another of the required "conditions") might easily escape detection. Really, I scarcely know which is the greater marvel—that anyone should dare by such a shallow trick to pretend to such a stupendous miracle, or that there should be found intelligent men and women who could have been deluded by it!

But the play is nearly played out: exposure after exposure has so thinned the ranks of mediums for "materialisation" that I think in all London there remain but two of any note. I could name them, but I will not, and will advise them rather to give it all up before some Mr. Cade shall again "break conditions" with the same invariable result. One of your correspondents suggests that the "salvation of the cause depends upon a better management of the séances." It depends upon nothing of the kind. The salvation of Spiritualism is its truth—a truth that no dishonest mediums, and no unwise defence of them, will ever have power seriously to affect.—I am, Sir, S.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. William Paynter's somewhat flippant reply to my distressful question—which, by the way, was not addressed to Mr. William Paynter—can be accepted as a satisfactory answer only by the "trickery-at-any-price" section of Spiritualists. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that promiscuous circles were no longer "allowed to profane," &c., and that mediums were absolutely secure from "the coarse instincts of seizers," and from the "dissecting knives" of students, does it follow that simulation and trickery would entirely disappear? I should say certainly not, though the *detection* of them might—a consummation which to some minds would appear to be equally desirable. Why, so far from Mr. Paynter's suggestions meeting all the requirements of the case, it must be obvious to every candid mind that they would serve merely to strengthen the almost perfect immunity at present enjoyed by the vulgarest cheat when surrounded by persons whose gullibility has almost degenerated into complicity. The very widest opportunity would be afforded for the manipulation not only of muslin but of the masks, beards, and phosphorus bottles which, as a very lengthened acquaintance with the subject enables me to state, have been frequently employed by professional mediums.

By all means let us hear what the "ladies and gentlemen who have attended thousands of sittings with Miss Wood" have to say on her behalf. The protection of *honest* mediums, even when appearances may be against them, is a matter that every true Spiritualist must have at heart. Only, on the other hand,

let it be clearly understood that Spiritualism itself—as a public movement—as well as Spiritualists, most emphatically need protection against fraudulent mediums, and the hysterical imbecility which gives to them encouragement and support. These have already all but killed Spiritualism in its exoteric aspect, as a movement appealing to the intelligence of all truth-seekers amongst the great masses of our brethren who toil for daily bread. Instead of the knowledge of immortality, they have obtained a knowledge of the deceit which is in our midst; and they observe with a smile that many in our ranks are not only sorry, but angry, that deception should be exposed.

I wish it to be understood that I do not conclusively condemn Miss Wood, but that I side with those whose claim to be considered brother Spiritualists I have no reason to doubt, and who believe they have obtained clear evidence of fraud. I side with them, amongst other reasons, because I know how virulently they will be attacked by reason of their honesty and courage in being true to themselves and to Spiritualism. Personally—although in the single séance I have ever had with Miss Wood I thought there was much to justify a certain amount of suspicion—the evidence I have obtained is wholly insufficient to form the basis even of a private conclusion affecting the character of a fellow creature.—I am, &c.,

DESMOND G. FITZGERALD.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In your leader in "LIGHT" of 30th ult. you ask, "If it be true that Miss Wood has been in the past a successful medium for materialised 'forms' whilst sitting outside the cabinet, in the light and in full view of the circle, how is it that these conditions have been allowed to give place to darkness and isolation?" As I was honorary secretary to the Newcastle Society at that time, permit me to reply. It is a fact that Miss Wood was successful as you describe, but, although shewing considerable signs of improvement, a section of the members considered the phenomena thus obtained weak compared to those obtained with the medium isolated, and consequently clamoured for a return to the old system. In this they were joined by some of the Executive, and after a stout resistance they gained the day.

As one of the minority, I extremely regretted this decision, arrived at by the too impatient desire to see the forms dancing about and as active as human beings, combined with the wish to thus meet again their arisen friends. The affair demonstrated to me the undesirableness of the movement being directed by inexperienced, although well-meaning, men. No one should be permitted to hold office till he has had considerable experience.

If such mediums would act wisely they would select their own conditions and sit outside, in full view of all, if only for the sake of their own reputations.—Yours truly,

H. A. KERSEY.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, October 2nd, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. Charles Blackburn's well-known generosity, energy, and long service in Spiritualism, must entitle him to speak with some authority on matters connected therewith. Yet, good and true man as he is, it is evident that in some special cases he allows his feelings to run away with his judgment.

In his letter on page 436 he says, in effect, that if Miss Wood can give you a satisfactory test séance, you ought never to let a word against her appear in your paper for the future, or I suppose criticise her actions in the past.

Now, sir, my fourteen years' hard-working experiences in Spiritualism force me to object *in toto* to the spirit and intention of his letter: First, because he would pass final judgment on a person or thing, from one set of experiments, and secondly, because he would prevent free discussion on the very subject he wishes to impose upon us.

I know nothing at all of Miss Wood personally, and cannot, therefore, say one word for or against her mediumistic honesty. But this *I do know*, that plenty of [dishonest] mediumship is paid for as genuine, when if detected, as would sometimes appear, the immediate resource is, "Oh give me a special trial, and see if I can't give satisfaction and proof." Of course they can, and at the trial they give it, and this secures them a certificate backed by some of the best names in our ranks, who from kindly feeling and thoughtlessness generally make out that the particular medium is possessed of all the virtues under the sun, especially

mediumship ; and on this they trade, very frequently dishonestly, for years afterwards.

Mr. Blackburn also says that Miss Wood challenges investigation, and speaks about her being willing to stand or fall thereby. We have a splendid opportunity here. Let the challenge be accepted ; but to my mind, whatever the results they would be utterly valueless, unless the trial extended over a month or more, and sittings were demanded of her quite as frequently as she had previously been in the habit of offering them to the public. If this were done it would soon be seen if mediums could accommodate all comers at all hours, for the sake of a fee, as most public mediums profess to do.

JOHN ROUSE.

Maude Villa, Jarvis-road, Croydon.

October 2nd, 1882.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Blackburn's question I may say the form purporting to be "Pocha" was wrapped in muslin all the time. The face was not seen by any one, consequently I cannot say whether or not it had a black face ; but Miss Wood's face and arms were of the natural colour when seized. I will take the liberty at the same time of assuring Mr. Blackburn that I never lent myself to the breaking of conditions or to assist at Spirit-grabbing ; all the credit or discredit belongs to Mr. Cade. I am at a loss to understand how a gentleman in Mr. Blackburn's position in society, and with his experience, should accuse a stranger of what he has not done.

Our ignorance and want of experience have been a good deal commented on by some of your correspondents, but our ignorance did not bring the muslin which I have in my possession to the circle ; and our inexperience did not tie it up in a form suited for wearing on the head ; nor conceal it in Miss Wood's dress. I notice that your correspondents who blame us have little to say about the muslin in the possession of Mr. Cade and myself. I do not question Mrs. Mary S. G. Nichols' truthfulness as to what she has seen, but she has not seen what we have, and I should like to know how she reconciles the fact of this muslin being found in Miss Wood's dress, with the belief in Miss Wood's honesty as a woman. I do not raise the question of mediumship.

As I said before, I did not in any way lend myself to the detection of the fraud, but having witnessed it, I considered it my duty to make it known. Spiritualism is not mortal, it cannot die. Spiritualism is in no more danger than the law of gravitation. No good can come of backing up deceit. Zeal which is without knowledge and is wanting in discretion, can never aid a good cause. The cause of truth, which is synonymous with the cause of Spiritualism, needs no such help.—Respectfully yours,

ROBERT CATLING.

Mr. T. P. Barkas, of Newcastle, has addressed the following letter to the Editor of the *Peterborough Express* :—

"SIR,—I have, on some scores of occasions, sat with Miss Wood for the development of what are termed spiritual manifestations, and, as the result of the investigations I have been privileged to make through her mediumship, have reason to believe that she is a genuine medium, and that phenomena occur through her which cannot be accounted for by reference to ordinarily recognised physical or psychological laws, and can only be accounted for on the hypothesis that there are laws and forces of a physical and psychological kind that are not recognised by science, and that a satisfactory explanation of alleged spiritual phenomena can only be obtained by a large extension of the recognised laws and forces of nature. The description of the séance which took place in Peterborough is, I have reason to believe, a fair and impartial one from the standpoint of your reporter. I have witnessed similar phenomena through Miss Wood's mediumship at many séances, and at all the séances they substantially resemble each other. I have no fault to find with the general description, but I take exception to the inferences which your reporter has deduced from the occurrences that took place. I have no doubt whatever that the form seized by Mr. Cade was a material form, and that that material form was closely physically related to the medium. I have seen the reputed Pocha on many occasions ; I have felt both her hands and feet ; I have sat with her in good light when she has had her arms round my neck, and her cheek against mine ; I have had my arm round her shoulder, and have no doubt that for the time being she was a temporary material form. I have seen the same form, after embracing me in the manner described, disappear in the middle of an open room, vanish, in fact, into a kind of vapour, and finally disappear altogether, and that not in the presence of illiterate and incredulous persons, but in the presence of several of the most learned and scientific men of one of our leading Universities. I have been present at séances when Miss Wood was firmly screwed into a closed cabinet, the screws

being fixed from the outside, and inaccessible from the inside. From that closed and screwed cabinet I have seen materialised forms of men, women, and children walk forth ; I have weighed those forms by means of scale and steelyard, and have found them to vary in weight from 10lbs. to 70lbs. Whether the form known as Pocha be the materialised form of a Hindoo girl, or be merely an astral form of one of the elementaries recognised by occultists, is an open question, but that such a form and many others manifest themselves through the mediumship of Miss Wood when she is firmly screwed in a closed cabinet from which no person can by ordinary means escape without manifest injury to the cabinet, I have no manner of doubt whatever. All that your correspondent records may be perfectly true as it presents itself to his mind, but he appears to be unaware of the well-known fact in spiritualistic circles that the materialised forms are for the most part obtained from the mediums, and must find their way back to the mediums either in an orderly or a disorderly manner. If they be allowed to return to the medium in a quiet, orderly manner no injury results, but if driven back by force, as Pocha was, on being seized, considerable injury to the medium would be the result, and I am not surprised to learn that she was in a semi-unconscious and fainting condition during the remainder of the night. The lesson deducible from this fiasco is to avoid promiscuous séances where ignorant and dishonest sitters break conditions and risk the lives of mediums, but to let the investigations be conducted by a limited number of highly educated and honest ladies and gentlemen, who, without any foregone conclusions, will investigate the phenomena, and ascertain what are the real facts in relation to them."

WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

LONDON.

- Sunday, October 8.—Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Members Séance. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Hyde.
 „ October 8.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. MacDonnell. (See advertisement.)
 Monday, October 9.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m. (See advertisement.)
 Tuesday, October 10.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Wilson.
 „ October 10.—Central Association of Spiritualists. 6 p.m., Finance Committee Meeting. 6.30 p.m., Council Meeting
 Wednesday, October 11.—Central Association of Spiritualists, 8 p.m., Members' Free Séance.

PROVINCES.

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

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- E. J.—His London address would be of no service to you. We believe he has already left.
 C. C.—We hope to have room for it next week. Lately, as you will see, our columns have been crowded with correspondence, which we could not withhold, but of which we begin to think we have now had nearly enough.
 "ANXIOUS."—You need not be "anxious." All will come right. It is possible she may not have been conscious. We cannot pretend to decide. Read the letter of Mr. Alfred R. Wallace in the present number. It would be far better to keep the medium always in view.
 S. F. (O.)—We agree with you most completely. All honest Spiritualists should unite to discourage promiscuous public dark circles. In the séances of private families, on the other hand, darkness is often desirable as conducive to successful manifestations ; and in such cases no harm can come of it.

THE DIVINING ROD.—The French Director of Fine Arts has incurred no little ridicule by allowing the divining rod to be used at St. Denis for the purpose of discovering the Cathedral funds said to have been secreted in 1793. Madame Caillavah, armed with a rod having a small tube containing some secret composition bequeathed her by a wizard, directs the operations. Nothing has yet been found. Indeed, there are people who doubt whether a treasure was ever buried in the Cathedral, and who believe that if it was it did not long remain there. The old lady is in indigent circumstances, and it seems that thirty years ago she contributed to the expense of similar but fruitless explorations in the ruined Abbey of Argenteuil. Her sincerity appears unquestionable, and she asserts that the divining rod acts only when held by a person who has "the fluid." She is now awaiting permission to dig in proximity to the tomb of the Prince de Condé, who died in 1830.