

# Light:

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"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

### PSYCHOPATHY.

1. The healing of disease by "the prayer of faith," to which I have recently alluded, suggests some attempt to survey the general subject of healing and of spiritual power as a curative agency. It is very necessary to define and to clear away confusion in the use of terms. Spiritual power may be that of a spirit *in* or *out* of a body. The influence may be that of the unaided human spirit; or it may be that of those unseen beings who impinge upon our lives in a way and to a degree of which most of us have very little conception. It is extremely hard to say where external spiritual influence does not come in; but some cases, at any rate, need not be referred to any action other than that of the operator.

2. If we attempt to estimate the curative processes of the human spirit, we shall find that the great motive power of spirit in man is the *Will*: and judging from its effects in other ways it may be expected to be great here. It is, in fact, the great energising power. Another potent faculty is the *Imagination*. Combine the Will of the operator with the Imagination of the patient, and you set curative agency at work, nor is there any bound to the conceivable action of these potent principles. If Will does not avail (in the language of Eastern hyperbole) to move mountains, it is the most powerful agent, and we know so little of its action as to be unable to set bounds to it. What can Imagination not do in a negative, receptive, meditative mind? The physician can tell what the effect of the imagination of the mother is over the very form and features, and even the mind and disposition, of her unborn child. It can imprint marks on the body; alter and even maim its configuration; paralyse or dwarf the mental faculties. Most of us are familiar with the tragic ending to the practical joke perpetrated by some medical students on one of their number. There was a mock trial, sentence of death by the guillotine, a sham execution, a wooden knife, and some trickling warm water for the blood that was supposed to flow. Imagination did the rest, and the young man was taken up dead.

3. Other less tragic narratives point the same moral. I remember reading, though I cannot now tell where, of a gentleman who, being on a visit and sleeping in a strange room, suddenly awoke with the horrible conviction that he had swallowed his set of false teeth. They were not in the place where he usually put them; sure enough, they were fixed in his throat. He rapidly shewed every symptom of obstruction of the larynx; and his breathing became so embarrassed that a doctor was summoned. It seemed impossible that he should survive till his arrival, when an inquisitive on-looker chanced to turn his eyes to the dressing-table, and there were the teeth resting safely in a corner. The

gentleman, in the confusion of his first waking, had forgotten the strange room, and imagination had fastened on a possibility that he had no doubt nervously contemplated before, and had elaborately choked and nearly killed him. In another case a more excitable patient, who had got the same fancy, ran hastily to the house of a doctor with all the symptoms of suffocation. He was out, and she ran off to a neighbouring physician. Before she reached his house she fell dead. As the body was being prepared for burial the missing teeth dropped from the dress, in a fold of which they had become entangled.

4. This action of Imagination is rendered more potent when, for instance, Will acts upon it, as in the case of suggestion to a sensitive who has been brought by a previous course of treatment under the will of a mesmeriser. Gregory, in his "Animal Magnetism"\* mentions a case in which a mesmeric subject was told, while in a conscious state, that a handkerchief, moist with water, had been dipped in chloroform. He knew perfectly well that it was water in which the handkerchief had been steeped, yet he could not resist the suggestion, and was influenced as if by the anæsthetic. When he came out of the sleep he put the handkerchief in his pocket, but even then fell asleep every few minutes till it was removed. Here obviously the imaginative faculties were in an abnormal state.

5. The effect of this excitation of the imaginative faculties in the cure of nervous ailments presents no difficulty to the mind. I entertain no doubt that nervous headaches, neuralgia, and kindred ailments, even when obstinate and of long standing, are so cured; just as little doubt as that the enthusiastic patient often fancies they are cured when the relief is only temporary and passes with the wave of enthusiasm that the imagination has excited. The alleged cures at Lourdes and Knock must be discounted considerably on this account, but no one can read the narratives, written mostly by unbelieving witnesses, without a conviction that there is, as our friends say of Spiritualism, "something in it"—a large substratum of truth. The sticks and crutches are piled up in a corner of the chapels to attest the miracles, as they were in the ante-room of Dr. Newton, and of the Zouave Jacob, when these two healed the sick in our faithless Metropolis; and as, for aught I know, they may be still in the rooms of our modern Psychopaths, as they certainly are at "Bethshan," according to the correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

6. This effect of stimulated nervous energy under the exciting influence of religious enthusiasm is a perfectly well-known fact. Science knows its influence both on mind and body. It is at the root of revivals, and mental epidemics of all sorts and kinds—e.g., the preaching epidemic in Sweden.† Fear, it is equally well-known, can effect the most marvellous results in giving, for example, temporary power to bed-ridden persons to get out of the way of danger, real or imaginary. Anyone who has been in an excited crowd knows how soon fear spreads into panic, and liberates a force that reason is powerless to control. These are familiar facts; and in these Imagination, enthusiastically

\* (p. 251.)

† *Vide*, "Two Worlds," chap. xxvii. p. 290.

stirred, or influenced from without by Will, does demonstrably relieve and sometimes cure nervous ailments, and give more or less permanent relief to those chronic diseases, such as rheumatism, and even partial paralysis, which are not to be classed with affections of the nervous system.

7. Can it cure more than these? Can it deal with such ugly facts as tumours, ulcers, and cancers? Can it reach phthisis, and remove tubercles from a diseased lung? There is evidence that it can. Miss Martineau was cured of a malignant ulcer by mesmeric passes after medical science and orthodox treatment had entirely failed. Mr. Thomas Shorter bears very strong testimony to the cure of a large tumour. Our *Pall Mall* correspondent gives, on the authority of Mr. W. E. Boardman, a case of the alleged cure of phthisis which seems to have been deeply rooted. A carpenter, named Newman, who resides at Dorking, and who suffered from that disease, remained a week at Bethshan, and was completely cured. This is now six months ago, and he is following his trade with no relapse. Further, it is stated by various witnesses, that cancers have been treated psychopathically with complete success.

(To be continued.) M. A. (OXON.)

### DIRECT SPIRIT WRITING.

The following message was given by direct writing—that is, without physical contact—at a séance at which Mrs. Everitt was the medium. The circle was composed of Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Everitt, Mr. and Mrs. R. Pearce, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Pearce, Mr. Morell Theobald, and Mr. R. Gale. Though the message consists of more than five hundred and fifty words it was written, as nearly as could be estimated, in about five seconds. It was said to have been given from, though not written by, John Locke:—

*'Nescio quomodo inheret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam aurum futurum, idque in maximis ingenuis altissimisque animis existit maxime et apparet facillime.'* \*—Cicero.

"One of the best springs of generous and worthy actions is the having generous and worthy thoughts of yourselves. Whoever has a mean opinion of the dignity of his nature will act in no higher a rank than he has allotted himself in his own estimation. If he considers his being as circumscribed by the uncertain term of a few years, his designs will be contracted into the same narrow span he imagines is to bound his existence. How can he exalt his thoughts to anything great and noble who only believes that after a short term on the stage of the earth sphere he is to sink into oblivion and to lose his consciousness for ever? For this reason, so useful and elevated a contemplation as that of the soul's immortality cannot be resumed too often. There is not a more improving exercise to the human mind than to be frequently reviving its own great privileges and endowments, nor a more effectual means to awaken an ambition raised above low objects and little pursuits than to value yourselves as heirs of eternity. It is a very great satisfaction to consider the best and wisest of mankind in all nations and ages asserting as with one voice this their birthright, and to find it ratified by an express revelation. At the same time, if you turn your thoughts inward upon yourselves you meet with a kind of secret sense concurring with the proofs of your immortality. You have therefore a good presumptive argument from the increasing appetite the mind has for knowledge and for extending its own faculties, which cannot be accomplished, as the more restrained perfection of the lower creatures may, in the limits of a short life. Another conjecture may be raised from your appetite to duration itself, and from a reflection of your progress through the several stages of it. You complain of the shortness of life and yet are perpetually hurrying over the parts to arrive at certain little settlements or imaginary points of rest which are dispersed up and down in it. What happens when you arrive at those imaginary points of rest? Do you stop your motion and sit down satisfied in the settlement gained, or are you not removing the boundary and marking out new points of rest to which you move forward with the like eagerness, and which cease to be such as fast as you attain them; like the traveller who should fancy that the top of the next hill must end his journey because it terminates his prospect, but he no sooner arrives at it then he sees new ground and other hills beyond it, and continues to travel on as before? Therefore all may observe that, as fast as the time wears away, the appetite for something future remains, and since the Divine Being has implanted no wandering passion, no desire, which has not its object, futurity must be the proper object of the passion so constantly exercised about it; and that this restlessness, this grasping after somewhat still to come, is the spiritual influx which the mind of man has of its own immortality. To be continued."

\* There inheres in minds, I know not how, a certain presentiment, as it were, of ages to come, and it exists chiefly and appears most readily in the largest natures and most lofty minds.

### FACTS ABOUT MATERIALISATION.

The search for facts goes on with a patient perseverance worthy of much praise. There are "a many" Gradgrinds in our midst. For thirty-three years I have observed and recorded. There are few phenomena of the kind called spiritual that I have not seen. I have not witnessed the fire test, but two of my friends have had it, and have handled fire as scatheless as if it were water, or their own flesh.

The question now comes to us, What are the uses of the many facts presented? Take the one fact of materialisation. The first materialised form I saw was an infant of two or three years, which remained visible only a few moments. The next was a girl of perhaps twelve years. She came to me and took my hand, and kissed it, and said: "I love you. I love your hand that gives." She stayed for many minutes, and subsequently I got well acquainted with her. The next I saw was my own child, of fourteen years when she passed away. She came to me, knelt at my feet, took my hand and kissed it, but could not speak. Subsequently she came and spoke, and wrote, and drew pictures as in life. Once she brought a canary bird, and said she would try to bring one that she could leave with me. It was at my first sitting with Harry Bastian that she came, in a good light, her own sweet self, her white robe girdled, without corset, as in life, and the canary bird with her. For the last months I have seldom sat with Mr. Bastian without her materialised form appearing.

With W. E. I have seen a form who shewed himself plainly, who spoke a great deal, who sat at table, ate and drank with us, and served five persons with their food and drink as a servant would pass them about. He remained in form about two hours.

Another spirit whom I saw with Katy Cook, cut, or allowed me to cut, I forget which, a piece of some inches from her robe and then appeared to create the material to supply the vacancy by passing her hand over the hole. She sat by me, I felt her pulse, and conversed with her. She threw her arms around my neck and kissed my cheek. She remained in form about two hours. Now, to what do these facts point? Clearly to me they betoken that, as we make our lives harmonious with one another and with our spirit friends, by obeying the law of love, our friends will not only shew themselves to us for a few moments, or in rare cases like these I have mentioned for two hours, but they will be able to come to us for longer or shorter visits, as we need to see them, to have their counsel in words and their sympathy in deeds. If our friends can appear full formed, with normal pulse, with eyes that see, and ears that ear, and tongues that speak, and if they can remain an hour or two in rare cases, may we not hope that conditions may be sought and found that will make these cases less and less rare?

If a man, a woman, or a babe may be materialised, and I have seen them all in times too numerous to mention, why may not a bird, or animal? Many think that the birds and animals that have been materialised have been imported, living, from the outside world. But our spirit friends describe to us our dead pets, and say they are with us. Again and again, I have had this done—for instance, a spirit, speaking in the presence of a medium who knew nothing of my past, said: "Your dog that was poisoned by the boys when you were a little girl, is here, and the bird whose leg your husband chanced to break, and which he afterwards accidentally killed, is here, and all your pets are here." All these facts about my pets were true. Now, I do not know that a bird or a dog can materialise; that is a fact that I have not yet observed. If any one has evidence bearing on this subject, I hope it will be given us. If we can influence conditions by our own good conduct, and bring our friends back to us, surely Spiritualists ought to be the best behaved people in the world. Where would be the sting of death if we could lay down our life in this world and take it up again at will, as our Blessed Lord could do? And if we love and serve Him, shall we not be like Him?

Love keeps all law, not the love of self, but the love of the neighbour. The law of purgatory is, that we cannot serve or save ourselves, except by serving and saving others. We may see by this what we have to do to bring our loved ones to our hearts, and also to our homes, in material form. I think we ought to begin by respecting mediumship, and by being just to this great gift. I would no more have people medium-ridden, than I would have them priest-ridden. If we defer to mediums unjustly, we spoil them, and give bad spirits the command of them. But if we seek the rightest right for ourselves and them, we promote pure mediumship, and do a heavenly work in the world. For thirty years I have helped mediums, and few have been better rewarded than I have. My record of phenomena and teaching is truly wonderful.

MARY S. G. NICHOLS.

## MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN IN LONDON.

## Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum.

The promoters of the Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum, which has recently been established under the presidency of Mr. Sandys Britton, must have been gratified by the success of their first public meeting, held on Sunday evening last, in St. Andrew's Hall, Newman-street, Oxford-street. The floor of the spacious hall was well filled, and Mrs. Hardinge Britten, who delivered the opening address of the series, met with a very hearty reception.

Mrs. Britten's subject was "Spiritualism in the Nineteenth Century." There is not a religion, she said, that has ever stirred the heart of man, that has not been founded on Spiritualism. Besides the special movements which have been crystallised into religious faiths, there are many evidences of outpouring from spiritual powers in the past. Many of such movements, from the twelfth century to the present, have partaken of a spasmodic, contagious, and epidemic character, falling for the most part on the ignorant and least imaginative of the people. Examples may be found in the Irish, American, Swedish, German, and French revivals. The Spiritualism of the present day does not partake of this character; it is the fruitage of the ages, the modern Messiah coming in obedience to many an advent voice crying in the wilderness of materialism and superstition. The first of the advent voices proclaiming its arrival was Swedenborgianism. Swedenborg was a representative man of the race, and his speciality was to open the gates of the life beyond, and to create that mighty revolution in religious sentiment which excluded the strange and fantastic doctrines of ecclesiasticism, and pointed to the life hereafter as the next step in advance of the life present. Had there been many seers illuminated like himself, Swedenborgianism would now have been the religion of reason and of humanity. The next great advent voice of Spiritualism is the progress of science, which has mounted step by step from the visible to the invisible until it stands baffled alone by the power by which it examines itself, by the very soul which questions. Another of the waymarks of Spiritualism bears the dread name of Atheism. Up to the time when the French Encyclopædists and philosophers dared to proclaim the duty of reasoning and of thinking, religion had been dealt out at the pleasure of the priest alone, in the form of ecclesiastical dogma. It was then that the pitiless logic of the materialist began to demand strong reasons for the affirmations of ecclesiasticism, and she was speechless. "If God spake with men in olden time, why not now? If angels walked on earth in Jerusalem, why not in Europe?" Those voices have never been silenced; the echo of their demand has come down the ages still unanswered. Then another voice came from the East, from the dry bones of the dead nations, upon which the winds of civilisation were beginning again to breathe, from cave-temples, and ruined cities, and upheaved dynasties, speaking of older ecclesiastic systems, and demanding evidence of the originality of that system that was claiming to be the only revelation to man. But still no answer came. Then came the discovery of electricity and magnetism, realising the dream of the philosopher's stone. Then came Mesmer, as another John the Baptist, shewing that all the correlated forces of matter are concentrated and sublimated within man himself, that the life principle is a reality, that it is transferable, that it is an imponderable, invisible substance, that it can be conveyed from body to body, and, projected by will, can alter the molecular condition of the diseased organism. But there still remains the question—What becomes of this great mystery that quivers before us and traverses space, and is the soul of the universe, and the life of man? The electrician and the mesmerist cannot answer the question. Then comes clairvoyance, another marvellous foot-print in the desert. Thirty-five years ago Alphonse Cahagnet sought to become a master of spiritual things, and when the spirits of his *lucides* brought back tidings from afar, he rejoiced to think that his materialistic theory was strengthened. "Here," he said, "is expounded all the philosophy of miracle; there is a life power in man that can transcend matter and can take note of its most secret and imponderable elements." But then he found his *lucides* passing from his grasp, speeding away beyond the limitations of his knowledge, passing into a world of which he knew not, and bringing back tidings of a fair land and a glorious people, of a happy country where no hearts were breaking, and no dark clouds over-shadowed the sun. They declared that these were the people that once lived on earth,

and that had now taken their next step in the upward path of eternity. At first he thought the *lucides* were hallucinated; but there came to him witnesses on all sides confirming their testimony, and he was compelled to acknowledge that the questions which his earnest reason had propounded were answered, that the *Elleir vite* was found, that the gates were no longer ajar, but were thrown wide open, and the question was for ever answered, "If a man die, shall he live again?" These revelations on the Continent synchronized so closely with the same class of manifestations in America, England, and elsewhere, that it became evident that a universal pentecostal outpouring was pervading the entire world. But for such an outpouring the light of religion would have been wholly quenched. Spiritualism came as a growth, step by step, as the last link in the chain of a great scientific revelation. It came in obedience to the cry of the advent voice proclaiming that the Messiah who should unite the long divorced elements of religion and science was at last at hand. It was received with persistent opposition; but every proclamation of imposture, deception, fraud and hallucination has always been met by spirit power with fresh revelations, fresh potencies, and fresh swords wherewith to do battle with the ghosts of dead arguments. Every sense has been appealed to, and unless science advances into this new path she is disgraced. In every direction the spirit-power has been equal to the new demand made upon it, and instruments have been raised up from all ranks of the people. The work is not a merely human one; it is the work of God and His angels. Spiritualism is not the contagion of a strange magnetic force in the air; it is not an atmospheric epidemic, but it is a science and a religion. Science is the fundamental basis of order in the universe; it is God's law, and Spiritualism is the science of sciences. It is a religion. Religion is the revelation of the Supreme Being, and it consists of three elements,—God, the great First Cause; immortality, the effect of life; and a standard of life practice by which man shall outwork the laws of his being. The first religion was when man, standing by the side of the open grave, followed the parting spirit into the brighter and better land with a consciousness that there is no death. Religion is that which speaks to the soul of the savage and of the saint in the still small voice of conscience. Beyond this we have only forms and modes of expression. But, it may be asked, what can rapping spirits bring to us of such a religion as this—the knowledge of God, immortality, and a perfect standard of life practice? They come to us with the voice of affection and appeal to the heart, and by strange and wonderful monitions bring to us the conviction that the spirits of those that love us and that we have loved are in our midst. Little signs and tokens hidden away in the heart, pet names, old-remembered words,—when these are sounded out by the dancing tables and vibrating floors, after the form we have loved has crumbled into dust and ashes,—such memories convince us that there is no more death, that the spirit lives, that the spirit is the man, and not the broken tenement that has been hidden away in the earth. The world may despise it, but it is a grander and holier sermon than has been preached for eighteen hundred years. But you question further, and you say, "O Spirit! tell me of God:" and the answer comes "God is a Spirit." Now I know the Grand Man of the universe; I know the Engineer that guides the fiery stars; I know the Captain that steers those barques of light on the ocean of eternity; I know the mighty Statesman that has made the laws of the universe; I know the supreme Architect that has built up this glorious world; I know what the spirit is, and so I know God—who is the Spirit. No Spiritualist who has ever clasped hands with the spirit of man from the beyond; no Spiritualist who has ever recognised the fact that the soul lives and preserves all its powers or potencies; will ever more walk alone, need ever more doubt the existence of the Grand Man of the universe. That is what these rapping spirits do for the first great element of religion. Then as to the second element, the most ignorant and undeveloped spirit that has spurned the dust and lived beyond the chemical disintegration of death, proves the fact of immortality; and when it is confirmed by ten thousand legions of returning spirits, we may be said to know the fact for ourselves. As to the third element, you open your Bibles and point to your texts, and you remind me that for eighteen hundred years there have been revelations given to man in the beautiful and simple words of the Golden Rule—that the sweet voice of the Master has come down the ages, ever sounding out the eleventh commandment, which may be summed up in one word, "Love." And still the world is full of crime,

and wrong, and hate, of legalised murder and war, and still the journals of the day are disgraced with the ghastly lists of crime, and men, women, and children of this great, rich Babylon are this night walking outcast in your city streets, not knowing where to lay their heads, and obliged to wait for the pitiful dole of charity to find the crust that is to keep them from starvation. Surely we ask for something more than the tender and gracious words that Jesus spoke : we ask for a motive to make us obey them, to incorporate them into our lives. And now we have it. All returning spirits—returning under conditions that prevent the possibility of collusion,—proclaim that they are happy or miserable in precise proportion to the good or evil they have done on earth. Every returning spirit is in judgment even as he has obeyed or disobeyed, and is thus an illustration of the doctrine of personal responsibility. Let us accept the revelation. If you go to the telegraph operator's room you do not stand before the marvel of the electric sounds, or the ingenuity of the battery, or the means by which electricity is made the world's post-boy ; but you wait for the message ! The phenomenologists of the present day, who call themselves Spiritualists, are no Spiritualists until they listen to the message. Those who rejoice in the marvels of Spiritualism and accept its facts are but Spiritists until they advance into the grander, broader field where Spiritualism becomes a religion. It is at the point where they listen to the message, where their hearts burn and their spirits are lifted up in a great psalm of rejoicing for this glorious light,—it is at this point alone that they become Spiritualists.

Mrs. Britten's discourse—of which we have been able to find space for only a mere outline—was characterised by great power and eloquence, and evidently met with the fullest sympathy and appreciation of her audience.

#### Central Association of Spiritualists.

On Monday evening the members and friends of this Association gave Mrs. Britten a very cordial reception at their rooms, 38, Great Russell-street. The company present on the occasion included :—Miss Arundale ; Mr. E. E. Arnsey ; Mr., Mrs., and Miss Allan ; Mr. E. Bertram ; Mr. Sandys Britton ; Mrs. Angelo Bezzi ; Mr. J. J. Bodmer ; Mr. J. Bowman ; Mr. D. Barrett ; Mrs. S. Carter ; Mrs. Chaplin ; Miss Corner ; Miss Nina Corner ; Mrs. E. Combes ; Mr. F. Collingwood ; Miss K. Crooke ; Signor Damiani ; Mr. J. G. Dyne ; Mrs. A. Darling ; Mrs. Edensor ; Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Everitt ; Mr. F. Everitt ; and Mr. and Mrs. Desmond G. FitzGerald ; Mr. Jno. S. Farmer ; Miss Godfrey ; Mr. Geo. Gill ; Mr. J. N. Greenwell ; Mr. G. F. Green ; Miss F. Gregory ; Mr. S. C. Hall, F.S.A. ; Mrs. Heckford ; Miss Houghton ; Mrs. and Miss Hope ; Mr. R. Hopton ; Miss M. Hopton ; Mr. A. Howe ; Mrs. Kate Fox Jencken ; Mrs. E. M. James ; Mr. J. A. Kenrick ; Rev. W. Miall ; Mrs. H. Michell ; Mr. J. Malcolm, F.R.C.S. ; Mrs. Malcolm ; Miss A. E. Major ; Mr. and Mrs. Morse ; The Lady Helena Newenham ; Mrs. Noakes ; Mrs. Orrock ; Mr. C. Pearson ; Mrs. S. Pearson ; Mr. A. Powell ; Mr. and Mrs. R. Pearce ; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson Rogers ; Mrs. C. Rice ; Madame de Steiger ; Mrs. and Miss Sainsbury ; Mr. Thos. Shorter ; Miss Shorter ; Mrs. Schweitzer ; Mr. M. Theobald ; Mr. and Mrs. Warren Thompson ; Miss F. E. Till ; Mr. and Mrs. Vance ; Mrs. M. L. S. Williams ; Mr. E. W. Wade ; Mrs. Western ; Mr. D. Younger ; &c., &c., &c.

The first part of the evening was devoted to introductions to Mrs. Britten, and to the interchange of friendly greetings between herself and many old friends, whom she had thus the pleasure to meet once again. Mr. E. Dawson Rogers then took the chair, and on the part of the Council of the Association, tendered to Mrs. Britten a cordial welcome, which was heartily endorsed by Mr. S. C. Hall in an earnest and eloquent address.

Mrs. Britten shortly afterwards, under control, gave the following answers to written questions, which had been sent up to the chairman :—

*Question.*—The past few years have been times of unrest, transition, and strife—the reflection, we are told, of strife in the spiritual world. During this period, practical work in Spiritualism has been almost impossible. Is this state of affairs passing away, and what do you see in the near future ?

*Answer.*—We must take exception to the promises. There are methods operating from the world of causes which affect humanity, and are received according to the light possessed. All the foundations of religion proceed from the effect of some mighty psychological, but individual, mind. Around this

mental power are clustered the various satellites of thought that cannot attain to the single individual's power. Thus are sects formed. As long as the psychological impress of one mind remains effective in the world, the power of that mind becomes a focal point, around which all the followers group. As long as that influence remains potential, so long does the sect remain. When any one of the followers of the leading founder transcends his power, he takes the place of the original leader and becomes the founder of another sect. The aim of Spiritualism is to disintegrate these associative movements, to deal with the atoms and not with the mass, to throw humanity upon its own personal responsibility, to make each one a priest for himself before the Lord. Until this is accomplished, the present phase of spiritual revelation will not cease. We do not discourage associative movement for temporary purposes ; it is needed to eliminate power, and to produce the fruitage of purpose. When this is effected, association must break up. This being the purpose of Spiritualism, we do not acknowledge any incoherence in the movement, any mistake in carrying out the purpose. Those who have attained to the higher or second stage of existence, have laid their plans in conformity with what they know of human nature. Fear not, nor be discouraged, nor pronounce failure on the disintegration of every movement that has effected the work of the day. The prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," is for ever being answered. In the work of each day, each true and faithful worker is receiving his daily bread.

*Question.*—What may be regarded as indubitable evidence that the phenomena, admittedly attributable to some force other than that of the conscious agency of the medium or "sitters," are produced by departed human beings ?

*Answer.*—There is no crucial test by which you can arrive at the conclusion you seek, until you are in a position to exclude the action of your own individualised spirits. You yourselves, as spirits, possess all the powers of the disembodied ; these are only phenomenal, and more potent, because they are freed from the encumbrances of matter. You are in germ the highest angel and the mightiest archangel moving around the throne of the great central Sun, and unconsciously you are expressing these potencies on everything with which you come in contact. Do you suppose that in the assemblage of spirits, embodied and disembodied, there is not an inevitable commixture of powers ? The mightiest spirit embodied may transcend all the power of the disembodied present. Therefore, there is no crucial test at present but experience. As you remember that at each end of the telegraphic wire there must be intelligence to give and to receive, and as you study the limitations and influences of matter, you will begin to find a clue to the science of Spiritualism. You desire to go into the very Shechinah and grasp the Holy of Holies, before you have learned the way to mount the steps. Those steps are science. You have not learned the first letters of the alphabet of a true spiritual science. When you arrive at this, you will recognise the difference between the spiritual influence produced by the embodied, and the spiritual influence produced by the disembodied, or dematerialised spirit. You will recognise this only by experience. Your speaker, even without the aid of scientific training, is now able to recognise the entry, the departure, or the presence or interference of the various spirits which group around each person selected as the mouthpiece for the expression of spiritual thought. It would be impossible to communicate the power or the possibilities of this sense of discernment. It is a question of experience, and the sense will be sharpened only as you study spiritual potencies and powers. Why not come together in masses ? Why not come together in the solemn assembly, and in the Pentecostal hour, and study each other, and learn the mystery of character and comprehend the nature of that sphere which each of you gives off in your daily and hourly intercourse ? We can offer you no royal road to this knowledge, and were we able to do so, we would not deprive your souls of the strength that, as gladiators in the mighty arena of spiritual forces, you are called upon to exercise.

*Question.*—Is it possible for a spirit to bring a medium out of a cabinet and to pass him or her off as a materialised form without being conscious of the false impression that is thus conveyed to the circle ?

*Answer.*—The spirits that are operative in producing the changes in ponderable matter are the masons, the carpenters, the bricklayers, the mechanics of the movement ; they are not the philosophers ; they are simply the workmen, and by the gross characteristics of their bodies they are nearer to matter and more capable of operating upon matter than the more sub-

limited spirits who should explain to you the philosophy of the movement. The spirit desiring to produce a certain phenomenon rarely questions the effect that it may have upon the minds of those present; it performs its special mission without any reference to the opinions that may be entertained thereon. It is thus possible that spirits may unintentionally delude, but we will not admit that any spirit wilfully deceives you without the presence of higher, mightier, and purer minds around who desire most earnestly to awaken you by phenomena to the philosophy of the movements produced. Hitherto you have not sought to comprehend that philosophy; you have been too well satisfied with the production of the phenomena; you must go over your footsteps again and not be too hasty to condemn that which does not assimilate with your peculiar views of what you call truth; you must take the phenomena piece by piece and examine them for yourselves. At present you scarcely appreciate the vast difficulty of the spirits working in the light at one end of the telegraph and mortals receiving the message at the other end in total darkness. When you can take part in these operations, and learn the conditions under which you may draw the line of demarcation between the human and the spiritual, you will see that there is far less intention of fraud and imposition than you now believe. Your spirit friends meet with you as those that are arrayed on the stage. You expect that the curtain shall go up and the drama be performed; and the spirits desire to satisfy you whether the conditions are there or not; thus they unintelligently in some instances, and unintentionally in all, often assist in producing phenomena of a confused and heterogeneous character. But be assured there is more of spiritual intention behind these strange movements than you have hitherto given credit for.

*Question.*—Why is there apparently a lull in the production of physical phenomena just at the time when scientific people are asking for demonstration of the facts?

*Answer.*—How did the phenomena arrive? They arrived when multitudes came together all over the world in eager, earnest groups, seeking them in a receptive attitude by the formation of circles, by patiently waiting, by deep, earnest study, not by cold, lifeless gatherings, not by the mere subscription of names, not by apathetically waiting for marvels or powers, but by the earnest, faithful heart put into the work, sitting day and night, waiting earnestly for the Pentecostal fires, like tongues of flame, to fall upon the heads of the seekers. Until they gather together in that earnest spirit your scientists who ask that the power shall come to them in their own fashion will fail. They must commence like little children; they must seek for the power and take it captive as they would the kingdom of Heaven. When they do this and form themselves into earnest groups for faithful investigation, the power will be in the midst of them.

*Question.*—Speaking generally, is the outlook satisfactory for a course of teaching which shall reserve the investigation of phenomena until minds and hearts are reached by the abstract soundness of the principles inculcated?

*Answer.*—As was enunciated last night, Spiritualism is a science and a religion. Those who are satisfied with the phenomena are Spiritists only. Those who listen to the message, who wait for the spirit voices, learn that God, who is a Spirit, can only be comprehended when man knows what spirit is; when a man has proved that spirit is the Alpha and the Omega, that matter is the phantasmagoric dance of atoms, that spirit alone is real and that the source of all spirit is the God before whom man bows his knee and worships, he has the first element of spiritual religion. When he can stand as yon white-haired prophet (Mr. S. C. Hall) has stood to-night and can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," the Redeemer of knowledge from ignorance, the Redeemer of eternity from time, of immortality from mortality, he has the second element of religion. When man can say, "I am making my sphere. My acts, my deeds, my words, are building my house and weaving my garment; the kingdom of Heaven is within me and the kingdom of hell is there also, and I shall never find either unless I take it with me,"—when a man applies this to his daily life and practice, he has the third element of religion. All associations, all gatherings, all courses of teaching that make for this sublime religion are good. They are no failures. Even if they last but a day, fear not; they do their work, they sow a seed that shall never be plucked up, for it is the seed of immortal and Divine truth. Any course of teaching, even in the lowest whisper, of this redemptive doctrine is working for the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and can never

be lost. Therefore we bid God speed to every such effort. God's blessing is on it whether we ask it or no. There are no failures before Him; the failures are only in human opinion. When you trust to the Infinite and do the work according to the best powers entrusted to you, you have done enough to give Him back with usury the ten talents that He has lent to you.

*Question.*—What is the best course for a writing medium to adopt if he desires to get rid of an unwelcome, lying, scribbling control who persists in interfering with an important communication which is being given by a good spirit?

*Answer.*—Is the questioner sure that it is a lying control that interferes? Is he certain that the good spirit whose mentality he believes is also the operator—is he certain that he is the operator? The higher the spirit and the more sublimated the mind, the more sublimated the spiritual body; consequently, the highest communications require the aid of medium spirits, and there are points in the action of every phenomenon when the force becomes dissipated, when the controlling power is lost by the breaking up of the conditions under which the phenomenon proceeds. When this is the case the medium spirit, or the operator who is attempting to express the mind of another, appears to be the more idle, mocking interpolator that your question suggests. But in very many instances when the force fails and the mere mechanic at work is left to himself, he expresses his incoherence in what you deem to be an interference. There are chains of existence from the highest to the lowest, and the presence of some antagonistic or neutralising magnetism may at times interfere with or break up the conditions under which phenomena are produced. The good and the true is always around you; it never fails; the right hand of mortality is always grasped by the guardian angel of good, but the various operations by which the telegraph is conducted are so little understood that you often find a breaking up of the circuit interfering with the communication, and you attribute it either to fraud or malice. Dismiss this from your mind. Go out into the street and search for rogues and you will find villain stamped on every face you look into; search for the good and the true and you will find a friend at every street corner. You are too apt to colour your views with that which you receive from your own idiosyncrasies. Lift up your mind to supernal heights, and you will find that the supernal and nobler manifestations of spiritual science will dawn upon you.

*Question.*—It has been frequently observed that great calamities come in groups—that, for instance, if a great fire occurs, it is followed by others in rapid succession. Is there a spiritual cause for this, and, if so, what is it?

*Answer.*—Aye, there is a spiritual cause. You are now touching upon a phase of science that is tabooed, and that was ill-understood even in the days of antiquity. We speak of that which is contemptuously termed astrology. "The heavens are a book," says Isaiah. Who has read it? You physicists claim that every atom of matter influences every other in the universe, and yet from this universal sphere of inter-dependence you would exclude the magnificent groups of suns, the whirlpools of stars, the clusters of burning lights that throb and pulsate through the universe with one unbroken chain of life! Can you exclude your little dewdrop in space from the universal sum of this influence? Impossible. The universe is built upon geometrical and mathematical principles, and nothing can be plucked away or destroyed without marring the whole scheme. The visible universe is the shadow or expression of the invisible, and that which affects the casket or temple in which I dwell must have a moral and spiritual correspondence within. Therefore it is that the mind is disposed to crime in certain contagious conditions of the atmosphere; that receptive minds are disposed to inventions in certain receptive conditions of the atmosphere. It is in this sense that there are certain inevitable conditions of collusion in the atoms of matter which tend to produce combustion, which tend to produce wars, and all the various accidents, as you term them. They are the procedures of inevitable law. When you understand that all the changes that are for ever transpiring in the magnificent march of the fiery hosts produce inevitable results upon earth, you will begin to comprehend that astronomy and astrology are kindred sciences, that astronomy consists of sums and figures, and that astrology puts life into them. The tendency to repeat certain events upon earth, to produce certain exhibitions of criminal or saintly purpose, is the result of a correspondential movement in the vast army of breathing worlds that are marching from one eternity to another. When man, by the sublimer powers of his soul, masters the meaning of the scheme, he will be at no loss to understand what conjunctions of the starry bodies will operate with malignant or benignant force upon the earth, and he will be enabled to prepare remedial measures against these so-called accidents. When occultism is thus made a science, and its dreams are verified, man will indeed become the master of the situation.

On Sunday evening next, under the auspices of the Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum, Mrs. Britten will deliver an address at St. Andrew's Hall, 14, Newman-street, Oxford-street, on the question, "What do we know concerning the origin and destiny of man?"

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"  
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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.

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PROPHETIC DREAMS.

(Continued.)

The difficulty of applying any theory of explanation to authenticated cases of this description must be admitted to be insuperable. The phenomena are not recollected images, for nothing in the remotest degree connected with them has as yet come within the cognisance of the seer. Nor are they chance creations of the brain, inasmuch as they hold undeniable relation with events about to occur. Nor are they objects to be reached by the most speculative magnetic theory, since the operation of such agents awaits—and then survives not an instant—the dissolution of the union between soul and body. One thing, at least, is sure—that the matter contains, within its many extraneous folds, that germ and principle of truth, which sceptics, from Lucian downwards—irritated and baffled by the falsehoods and absurdities of credulous narrators, and still more credulous hearers—flung away, without analysis, with the lumber in which it was enveloped. There is something harassing, both to sage and fool, in an unsatisfied doubt—an unguessable riddle. Blind old Homer is said to have died, broken-hearted, from inability to solve an enigma proposed to him by a fisherman!

It is enough, there are no commissioned wonder-workers now, and even that daily miracle, the conversion of the fleshly heart, is wrought in silence and secrecy; but is it just to conclude that because the Almighty Ruler has seen fit to close one channel of connection (that of direct miracles) between Himself and the material world, He has abolished also that intercourse which there seems reason to believe existed in the elder time, between the world of spirits and of men? As revelations of this description had not the same object as the Christian miracles—that of bearing testimony to the illimitable power of the God of justice and of mercy—(Abraham, in the parable of Dives, seems to hold their testimony less efficacious than that of recorded writings), their continuance was not essential to the unity of the new dispensation. The subject engaged much attention among the early Fathers of the Christian Church, and, if these agreed in nothing else respecting it, they were at least unanimous in attributing the wonder to a non-natural source. It has been wisely said that God's works are not to be brought to the tribunal of His natural laws, and that physical impossibilities have often been spiritual certainties. Let us now proceed to illustration:—

Mr. Drayson, a young undergraduate of Cambridge, had been reading, during the long vacation, at the quiet little town of Exmouth, where, as many readers will remember, the river Exe is crossed by a ferry communicating with the Starcross station on the Great Western railway. For this purpose, a boat remains in constant

attendance, from dawn to dusk. One night, between twelve and one, the young man suddenly awoke with the impression of having been addressed by an imperative voice, saying, with such distinctness that the last word still rang upon his ear:—

"Go down to the ferry!"

Thinking it an ordinary dream, Mr. Drayson composed himself again to sleep, when a second time the command was repeated, with this addition:—

"The boatman waits!"

There was something in this second voice which it seemed to the young man's mind impossible to disregard. He did, however, combat the inclination, reasoning with himself for some minutes on what he tried to consider the absurdity of rising in the dead of night, at the bidding of an imaginary voice, to go to a ferry where no boat would be found (for the ferryman resided at Starcross), upon an errand of which he knew nothing. His efforts, however, to dismiss the idea were unsuccessful. Sleep, he felt, was impossible. At worst, it would but be a walk to the ferry and back, and none but himself need be aware of that little excursion. Finally, he sprang up, and, not to leave time for more self-arguments, dressed rapidly and set forth. Approaching the ferry, he heard, to his great astonishment, the boatman's hoarse voice hailing him impatiently through the darkness:—"Well, you've kep' me waiting long enough to-night, sir! Here I've been stopping for you nigh an hour!" The man had, it appeared, received his summons also, but did not attribute it to any unusual source. Finding no passenger on his own side, he concluded that he had been hailed by a passing boat, and directed to go over.

Arrived at Starcross, a further idea or impulse, which seemed to have its origin in the former, took possession of Mr. Drayson's mind. "*Exeter!*" "*Exeter!*" "*Exeter!*" began to reverberate, as it were, in his mental ear like a summoning bell. His impression *now* was that at Exeter would be fulfilled the purpose—whatever it might be—of his strange nocturnal mission. To Exeter he accordingly proceeded, reaching that city about dawn. Here, however, all impulse, or impression, abandoned him, and, wandering aimlessly about the streets, he began to blame himself for the readiness with which he had yielded to what was, perhaps, an idle fancy, finally resolving to return home by the next train. Meanwhile, the shops and houses began to shew signs of life, and, passing an hotel, the young man went in and ordered breakfast. The waiter was very slow in bringing the repast, but explained the delay on the plea that the Assizes, then proceeding, had filled the house to overflowing. Drayson took but little interest in the subject, but observing that the waiter regarded it as an event of considerable importance, good-humouredly encouraged him to continue the theme, and was not a little amused by the man's description of the cases already disposed of, together with his own views of those yet remaining to be tried. Upon the whole, the waiter's entertaining volubility ended by inspiring his listener with a portion of his own interest in the matter, and accordingly, instead of returning to Exmouth by the next train, he strolled about till the court opened, and then took his place among the spectators.

The case just commencing appeared to create unusual interest, the prisoner at the bar, a carpenter, being arraigned on a capital charge. The chain of evidence against him, though circumstantial, seemed complete, and a conviction inevitable. There was, in point of fact, no opening for a defence, unless the accused were in a position to prove the Crown witnesses mistaken in his identity, and establish an *alibi*. Asked what he had to say, he quietly replied:—

"It is impossible I could have committed this crime, because on the day and at the hour alleged by the witnesses I was sent for to mend the sash-line of a window at Mr. Gibson's house at Meadowbank." Here he paused for a

moment, then continued: "There is but *one* person in the world who could prove that I was there, but I don't know who he is nor where to have him looked for; and even *he* might have forgotten it all by this time. No, stay. I *know* he would remember me, for a particular reason. But, there! it can't be helped. The Lord's will be done!" concluded the poor fellow, appearing to resign himself to his fate.

All this time young Drayson had been listening with profound attention to the proceedings, and, as the prisoner finished his sad and hopeless address, he started, and gazed earnestly at him. As his eyes dwelt on the gloomy, toil-worn face, a chain of circumstances—one by one, link by link, trivial at the time, but now bearing on the liberty, if not the very life, of a fellow-creature—came back to his remembrance.

Some months before, Drayson had gone to pay a morning visit to a friend at Meadowbank. The latter was from home, but, anxious to see him, Drayson resolved to await his return, and went into his friend's library, in search of a book to beguile the time. Here, however, he had found a carpenter making some repairs about the window, and, in place of reading, he stood for some minutes watching the man, and conversing with him about his work. While doing so, something was said that he desired to remember, and took out his note-book to make a memorandum, but found he had lost his pencil. The carpenter, observing this, handed him his own—a short, brown, stumpy, article, with square sides—saying that "if he might make so bold, the gentleman was welcome to it."

All this flashed back to the young man's mind, as clearly as if it had occurred but the day before. Hastily turning to his note-book, he at once found the very entry he had made—date included—written in the thick but faint lines produced by the carpenter's pencil.

He instantly made known to the court his wish to be examined on the prisoner's behalf, and, being sworn, deposed to the above facts, clearly identifying the prisoner, as well as the pencil, which the man produced from his pocket. The jury were satisfied, and returned a verdict of acquittal.

It is difficult to meet a sufficiently-authenticated case of this description, otherwise than with the simple confession that God's ways are not as our ways, and that it may be His pleasure, as it is within His power, to suffer His ministering angels to speak in this mysterious tongue to the souls He has selected as the earthly instruments of His Divine will.

HENRY SPICER.

### A PREMONITION OF DEATH.

The following case of apparently objectless premonition, or "death warning," occurred to a lady who is a friend of my mother, and with whom I am sufficiently well acquainted to express the highest opinion of her earnestness and truthfulness. I feel certain that the lady in question would be willing to afford opportunities for verification and authentication to any member of the Society for Psychical Research or other investigator who might be specially interested in the class of frequently-recurring phenomena to which the case belongs. I give the account in her own words, as noted soon after the occurrence by which the premonition was verified.

DESMOND G. FITZGERALD.

#### FATAL ACCIDENT: SINGULAR PREMONITION.

On the 18th of July last, I had the following dream, which was strangely and painfully fulfilled or realised on the 26th of the same month—eight days afterwards.

I dreamed I was walking on the edge of a steep cliff facing the sea. Dear Fred and a strange gentleman were a few steps in advance of me, when Fred suddenly slipped down the side of the cliff, and, as he fell, gazed with a look of the most intense earnestness and anguish as into my very soul. I remember afterwards turning to the stranger and asking him his name.

He replied: "My name is Henry Irvin." I said: "Do you mean Irving, the actor?" to which he answered: "No, not Irving the actor, though I am something after his style." I then said: "Now that I look at you, I see the same expression in your face that I have often noticed in the photographs of Irving exhibited in shop windows." After this I awoke, feeling terribly anxious about poor Fred, an anxiety which prevented me from again sleeping that night.

On going down to breakfast next morning, I asked John (Fred's eldest brother) where Fred then was. He replied that his brother was at Manchester. I said that I had had a most distressing dream about him, and that I should be so glad to see him again at home. (Fred, it may be as well to say, was travelling partner in the firm of the three brothers.) John observed that he was sure to hear that day from Fred; but my dream impressed me so forcibly that I made him promise that, on arriving at his office, he would telegraph to me should there be no letter. There was, however, a letter from Fred at the office; and I consequently received no telegram, and made my mind easy for that day. Each succeeding day I inquired where Fred was, and when he was coming home; John saying: "He is not at the seaside (near any cliff), so you need not worry; he is now at Leeds." A day or two after this, however, John received a letter from Fred, stating that he purposed going to Scarborough for a week's holiday. Upon this I begged John to write asking him to return home at once, and said that I should myself do so that very day; but something interfered and I did not so write.

On the morning of the 23rd, about five a.m., I was between sleeping and waking when some person (a man) seemed to pass the side of my bed, and to say in a loud voice, "You have not done with trouble yet." After hearing this I became quite conscious. When, shortly afterwards, I met John at breakfast, I told him this dream or vision also, saying, "I think the man's voice was that of your father," being in my own mind quite convinced that this was the case. John replied, "How you worry about the stupid dreams! That is how you went on about Fred some days ago when he was enjoying himself all the time. He wrote to me yesterday to send him ten pounds, saying that he was enjoying himself immensely, and that the weather was glorious."

On the 26th, the proprietor of the Grand Hotel, Scarborough, telegraphed to say that an accident had occurred (poor Fred was dead at the time); but John kept this sad news from me as long as he could. Another telegram then came to John's office to say that "all was over"; and John returned home in a terrible state of mind informing me that an accident had happened. I exclaimed: "I know it all; don't tell me any more; I have always warned him against riding strange horses." At this time I had not been informed as to the nature of the accident; but it was suggested that he might have fallen from the "lift" at the hotel, or that a chandelier might have fallen and hurt him. John and I then set off at once for Scarborough, where we were received by Willie, the second brother. At York, however, I had obtained a copy of the *Leeds Mercury*, and in it I read the following account:—

#### "SCARBOROUGH.—SAD DEATH OF A GENTLEMAN VISITOR.

"An accident of a melancholy character, and which, unfortunately, has been attended with fatal results, occurred on Wednesday evening to a London gentleman named F. S. It appears that on the afternoon of that day, the deceased, along with a casual acquaintance named Deverell, who is staying at the Castle Hotel, went for a ride on horseback along the beautiful Forge Valley. When near Ayton, the deceased was somewhat in advance of his companion, and it is surmised that his horse shied at a white gate. Anyhow, he was thrown on the road, and the horse galloped away. His companion, on getting up to him, dismounted, and a passing carriage was utilised to convey Mr. S. to his hotel, where, notwithstanding the best medical aid was at hand, he expired, three hours after the unfortunate occurrence, it is supposed from concussion of the brain."

After the inquest, Fred's companion in the fatal ride called upon us and accompanied us to the spot where the accident occurred. This gentleman sat opposite to me in the carriage, and the first time I really looked him in the face I perceived in it the same expression I had observed in the stranger I saw in my dream. Upon this I inquired, "Is your name Henry?" to which question he replied in the affirmative. I then told him about my dream, mentioning that the man I saw had said that his name was Irvin—not Irving, though he was something "after his style." He then said: "That is most extraordinary; I am con-

nected with the Volunteers, and give recitations at Wimbledon and elsewhere. Sometimes we give private theatricals, when I am always introduced as Henry Irving, jun."

These forewarnings are most strange and interesting; for though, as in the present case, the object is not evident and the misfortune is not prevented, they seem to afford evidence of a sympathy extended to us by those who are in other states of being, that certain things are foreknown, and that, in fact, "coming events cast their shadows before them." They seem to throw a light upon some of the mysterious problems of this lower world; and are, perhaps, specially worthy of note at a time like the present, when a flood of doubt is rolling in upon us and sweeping away the ancient landmarks. It may be well to carefully consider such cases when they are duly authenticated, eliminating from them what may appear dubious, but reverentially considering whether the facts embodied in them may not be a portion of God's revelation to us of the reality of a future existence.

(Appended to my original account of my dream are the signatures of John S. and Henry D. as well as my own.)

It may be interesting to add that, some time before the accident occurred, I happened to be in a certain picture-shop when I was addressed by a person who was to me a perfect stranger, and who never, so far as I am aware, had seen me before or made himself acquainted with my name or those of my sons. His name, as I afterwards ascertained, is Alsop, and he is known to many Spiritualists as a "medium." What he told me was that "all my thoughts would be engaged with William and Frederick." I was then under some anxiety in reference to the former. I asked Mr. Alsop whether he thought that some accident would happen, to which he replied that he could not tell, adding that "there was much trouble in store for me; but that God would give me strength to go through it all." I have since questioned Mr. Alsop as to this incident; but the only explanation he can give is that he was impressed to say what he did by a powerful influence which came upon him when I entered his place. I mentioned the incident at the time to Willie and poor Fred, but they only laughed and made fun

#### WONDERINGS.

Thou hast gone and left me, darling; canst thou hear the words I say?

Or is speaking all unneeded where thou now hast found thy way?

Is my heart spread out before thee? are its thoughts as plain as speech?

Or is love all unavailing to thy spirit's home to reach!

Canst thou see the joy and gladness which are hid behind my tears,

When I think thy journey over, over all thy doubts and fears?

Canst thou hear my heart beat to thee, firmly, truly, as of yore?

Does God's love to me dwell in thee as it used to do before?

Can this world be all too lowly for thy newly ravished eyes?

Has thy nature changed, my darling, or has Heaven made thee wise?

Dost thou turn away in sorrow, now thou readest me aright,  
From the heart whose sin and weakness once were hidden from thy sight?

Are the holy dead around thee, whom we loved together here?

Does no thought of those who mourn thee, dim thy new-born gladness there?

Can thy love to me have faded, that was once so strong and free?

No! my feeble heart still claims it, by the love it bears to thee!

With my tears I will not grieve thee, but my joy shall make thine more!

Shall I grudge that thou before me shouldst have reached the further shore?

God be with us still, mine own one—thee above and me below,—  
And the heaven that is around us I with thee shall one day know.

E. B.

PROFESSOR BARRETT gave a lecture on "Thought-reading, True and False" on the evening of the 4th inst., at the London Institution. Of course in what Mr. Barrett said there was little that would be new to our readers; but to his audience the subject was evidently an attractive one, and the place was densely crowded. Mr. Barrett described the experiments which had been made in so called THOUGHT-READING, in so clear and forcible a manner as to secure the deeply interested attention of the large assembly.

#### THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS.

##### More about the "Shell."

In view of what I suspect to be the growing impatience of many of your readers, I am very unwillingly compelled to prolong this controversy. I have followed Mr. Noel's many articles with the attention and respect due to all that he writes; yet it seems to me that what I have still to encounter are rather misapprehensions, than arguments raising definite issues between us. And these misapprehensions are not only of what I meant, but sometimes of what I said. I may have to refer to several instances of this. Thus in regard to the "shell," Mr. Noel says, "The simple question is—*Can bodies think?* Yes, says 'C.C.M.'" Yet I never did say so: I never suggested it: I never supposed it; and it is, I believe, altogether wide of anything taught in the doctrines we are considering. To follow Mr. Noel's criticism passage by passage with the view of vindicating my own exposition would be a tedious process, through which, probably, none of your readers, if not Mr. Noel himself, would accompany me. But the objections shewing wherein former statements are most open to misconception, I will attempt to meet them by some further elucidation, rather than by controversial insistence on any form of words. Mr. Noel has referred to "Fragments," No. V., in the November *Theosophist*, and thinks that the writer has there shifted his ground with regard to the "shells." "We now hear of the members of a dual consciousness, one of which is the shell." Now I cannot do a better service to the idea I wish to render intelligible than to copy most of the passage in question as a text for further comment.

"The permanent entity is that which lives through the whole series of lives. . . . Broadly speaking, it will in due time—though at some inconceivably distant future as measured by years—recover a recollection of all those lives, which will seem as days in the past to us. But the astral dross, cast off at each passage into the World of Effects, has a more or less conscious existence of its own, which is quite separate from that of the spiritual entity from which it has just been disunited. The intensity of this consciousness varies very greatly; from absolute zero in the case of a person whose life has been so supremely good and spiritual that he has engendered no low affinities, to full consciousness in the case of entire absorption by the astral principles of all the expiring life's recollections and affinities. The destiny of the astral reliquiae in either case has been the subject of abundant discussion of late, but the point to which attention may be specially called now is the mystery of dual consciousness, on the comprehension of which the comprehension of the actual course of events must depend. Occult pupils are taught to realise the possibility of dual consciousness by practically developing it during life, exercising the inner clairvoyant faculties on one set of observations or ideas, and the physical senses, with their appropriate intellectual faculties, on another set of observations and ideas at the same time; but to ordinary people the double perceptions rarely come by nature; not, at all events, with any such intensity as to render their character apparent. On the other hand, the possibility of dual consciousness in life is not beyond the range of ordinary imagination; and by dwelling on the notion it is not difficult to realise the way in which one human individual, as we know him in life, may divide up into two conscious individuals at death, neither of which is in any way a new invention, while each is distinctly conscious (so far as its consciousness is distinct at all) of identity with the late physically living entity."

Now I will ask the reader to connect this account of the shell consciousness with the notion I have already put before him of the shell as a subtly material organism, similar to, though not the same as, the physical body. Mr. Noel has throughout treated the subject as if this psychical body and its consciousness were inseparable ideas; and when he finds expressions attributing consciousness to the shell, he assumes us to mean either that consciousness is inherent in the shell without the presence of any integrating principle, or Ego (the fallacy of all materialism), or if not this, that the shell is, after all, only the manifestation of the true individual, though phenomenal, consciousness, and will therefore pass away when that consciousness is withdrawn, or at any rate be utterly incapable under any conditions of "simulating" the personality which has ceased to animate and direct it. But we are to conceive the shell in exact analogy to the physical body; and as the latter is the organism or functional expression of the physical life, so the former is, when moved to activity, the medium by which the phenomena of the psychical life are elicited and manifested. The true

question, the answer to which is the answer to the whole of Mr. Noel's arguments on this head, is—Can the psychic organism be moved or excited to functional activity otherwise than by the presence and energy of the Ego which constructed it? Now throughout these teachings, a two-fold condition of the shell has been considered, and we have only to understand this to see that there is no "shifting" and no inconsistency whatever in the accounts, but a perfectly intelligible exposition. We are repeatedly told that in the vast majority of cases there is no immediate and total withdrawal of the Ego into a subjective, or quasi-subjective, state, at physical death, the intervals varying according to the moral and spiritual progress of the individual. In the meantime the shell is animated by the Ego, and its consciousness is the (lower) consciousness of the Ego, just because this consciousness is the affinity to the habits of which the shell is the material organ. The spiritual disengagement of the Ego is not complete, though it is proceeding more or less slowly, while it is still under the influence of the coarser habits of thought and feeling which have become organic; hence its dual consciousness. Its spiritual tendencies abstract it, withdrawing more and more of the total consciousness into that relatively subjective expression with which the shell has no concern—a higher organism we must conceive it—while what remains in the earth-sphere still pulsates in the shell. To understand this condition, the conception of the dual consciousness is essential; but it is not the doctrine of the shell regarded as the mere astral corpse of the individual. That is its state when the consciousness of it is at the "absolute zero in the case of a person whose life has been so supremely good and spiritual that he has engendered no low affinities," and in the other and more frequent case when the battle of the higher and lower dispositions has been fought out, and nothing remains in consciousness to which the shell can give appropriate expression.

What then remains? Why, a body. But what sort of a body? Follow the analogy. What is a physical corpse? An organism, inanimate indeed, but of which the parts and functional structure are still for some time so complete and so disciplined to their offices, that a galvanic shock can reproduce the phenomena of their living action. Being composed of grosser elements, and subserving grosser purposes, its disintegration is relatively rapid. But now I will ask the reader to refer back to my description, defective as it is, in "LIGHT" of November 18th, of the shell as a psychic organism, remembering that we have positive and irrefragable evidence of its existence in the phenomena of spontaneity, and then to conceive what must be the comparative permanence, consistency, and susceptibility to appropriate excitement from without of such a "corpse." It has absolutely no integral consciousness, and, therefore, I call whatever phenomena of life are elicited from it by the psychic attractions of living persons simulated phenomena, and I maintain that this is entirely consistent with the Adept teachings, and these with each other. Take the following passage from the September *Theosophist* of last year—Letters on Esoteric Theosophy, No. 1:—"The confusion in the case of the shells arises from the fact that just as a certain perfume lingers for long around 'the vase in which roses have once been distilled,' so there is a reflection of the late personality inhering in its shell. There is, as nearly as possible, no consciousness while the shell is left alone, but drawn within the current of mediumistic attraction, the ethereal man is temporarily inflated by vitality drawn from the medium, and a spurious semblance of an individuality—which may very likely profess itself that of the man to which it once belonged—is thus created." It is so difficult to say when the shell is actually quite "dead" that the writer cautiously says "next to no consciousness." And it must further be borne in mind that the shell which is not quite dead is by so much the more likely to drift into magnetic currents—the inconceivably subtle attractions of psychic influence—and, therefore, that case is put more prominently forward in these teachings. Hence, also, one of the warnings against the Spiritualistic practice of inciting and revivifying a consciousness which retards the progress and elevation of the deceased. For though the loving memory of a friend belongs surely to his higher life, we are not satisfied with this, but insist on "tests of identity," which must usually mean the re-awakening of the objective associations—many of them trivial or egotistical—of the personal life on earth. We cannot start such a train of ideas without also stimulating an interest in them—the very interest which is keeping down the spirit, that is diverting the consciousness to objects which nature herself has declared over and done with for it.

To the shell as an astral corpse, I cannot understand any metaphysical objection. To this corpse as an organism of psychic modes, once constructed by the living Ego, no greater difficulty belongs than to the conception of a dead physical organism. The possibility of bringing it into contact or *rapport* with the inner senses of a medium depends on laws and subtleties of nature which we Occultists are endeavouring to learn; and which you, philosophers and Spiritualists, may fairly doubt and question, but cannot rationally deny. And that such *rapport* would result in, or rather be, the eliciting of phenomena of apparent consciousness, seems to follow from the very conception of a psychic organism. But all depends on our ability to conceive such an organism in analogy with the physical body, and, thus as separable from the integrating and self-conscious Ego. Mr. Noel here seems not very clear. For he first says, "though physical habits may exist in the complex notion we name a body, mental and spiritual habits do not;" but then after recognising the modification of character by will, he adds, "And it is quite true that all this comes back on us from outside." That gives us the notion of a body of some sort. But Mr. Noel "does not conceive it probable that we can ever get rid of all this, at least of the essence, inner meaning, and moulding power of all this." But it is not the "moulding power" that "comes back on us from outside," as the spontaneous tendencies, the thoughts, feelings, desires, imposed on consciousness by a reactive basis quite other than the originating energy of the Ego, of which itself is the result. If it is true, as Occultism asserts, that our thoughts are the modification by spiritual energy of a highly rarified element, then we can easily conceive how the association and exquisitely subtle concatenation of these thought-forms may become an organic basis of spontaneity, which yet is not quite "wrought into the very substance of our own selves," as Mr. Noel thinks. For herein lies the might of spirit, that it can repel this spontaneity, and constructing an expression of its deeper life in a more interior, yet still objective organism, can "shuffle off" the old "shell." According to our old way of thinking (or no thinking), which is still that of nine people out of ten, there was an immediate leap from "matter," just as we know it, to pure spirit. Spirit, however, though the source of all manifestation, is subjective, and in itself inmanifest. Spiritualism and Occultism (and, indeed, modern science, with its hypothesis of the luminiferous ether), agree in conceiving a subtler matter; and Spiritualists, as Epes Sargent points out, have been called "grossly materialistic" for simply postulating (as did nearly all the Platonic idealists) other bodies or "vehicles" of individual spirit than the physical one.† But they probably agree with Mr. Noel in supposing the spiritual body to be created (formed) by involuntary, rather than by voluntary, energy. Nor do I say that this is not the case (so far as our present voluntary energy is concerned) as regards the connate dispositions already organised at our birth. But what our psychical body is at our maturity, and afterwards at our physical death, that, for the most part, is what our voluntary energies in this life have made it.

Against the shell as really conceived by me Mr. Noel invokes "a sense of humour." Well, I cannot argue against that; I can only say that it would be rather of the quality which "vanquished Berkeley by a grin," and refutes idealism by a stamp of the foot or a thump upon the table. The list of "the funniest doctrines" which have once exercised a "general sense of humour," and which have come to be recognised as true, or as approximate to truth, is rather extensive. Possibly in the vibrations of the "astral light" might still be detected echoes of the laughter which resounded over "educated" Europe when the notion of the inhabited Antipodes was first propounded!

Conformably to the principle I have followed in this paper, of rather making Mr. Noel's objections the occasion for what I hope is a clearer statement than pulling the objections to pieces in detail—if I could—I may ask leave to similarly deal with the other related topics. So that if these ideas possess any interest at all for the readers of "LIGHT," its space will not be wasted in mere and endless controversy, but be bestowed upon an earnest and sincere attempt to make them somewhat intelligible.

But I cannot conclude now without expressing some regret that Mr. Noel should have denounced the "monstrous and materialistic theories" of a book which he has not read, in prompt contempt of my simple and surely reasonable protest against applying those terms to ideas which we have not studied and perfectly comprehended. For several kind and generous expressions as regards myself I am very grateful; and I wish that my appreciation of the ability and power displayed by my opponent could be equally pleasing to him.

C. C. M.

\* The ancients recognised several "vehicles," or bodies of different degrees of attenuation suited to, and expressive of, the different states of the spirit, the *σώματα ἀνθρώπων* being the highest of these vehicles. Of this, and perhaps of all psychic "bodies," there would be no static manifestation, but only dynamical (in the moment of objective energy).

† I am, of course, not suggesting that Mr. Noel has reproached them on this account, though I still think him quite wrong in supposing that Epes Sargent or any intelligent Spiritualist, ever confused the spiritual body with the spirit.

## EXPERIMENTS WITH NERVE-FORCE.

The *Journal du Magnetisme* (Paris) has re-published in its pages the essay of Dr. Baréty, of Nice, in which he details the experiments which he submits to the leading scientific *Académies* of the Continent. His essay has for title "The Physical Properties of a Particular Force of the Human Body, Radiating Neuric Force, commonly known as Animal Magnetism." We have in previous numbers referred to Dr. Baréty and his useful experiments, by which he demonstrates that a force is emitted by human beings, notably from the eyes, hands, and lungs. He has demonstrated that some individuals emit more of this force than others, and that some receive or re-act to it more than others; among the former are those who are known as magnetisers, and among the latter are those whom magnetisers call sensitives.

Dr. Baréty has found that he has the power of emitting or radiating this force, and he has had some decided sensitives under his professional care, upon whom he has been permitted to make the experiments which he publishes.

Among the objects experimented upon by the re-active aid of his sensitives, Dr. Baréty enumerates various metals, shellac, &c., which accumulate the force, whether from the eyes, the fingers, or the lungs, and re-emit it under conditions which he specifies. His experiments shew that it can pass through various substances—folded papers, and fabrics of various kinds, cushions, doors, walls, &c.;—such substances also accumulating and re-emitting it. He finds that mirrors, tables, thread, twine, needles, thimbles, plants, clothing, &c., are conductors of it.

Water, he finds, accumulates it, but does not allow it to pass through; it passes through a dry glass tumbler to the sensitive's hand or other part under experiment; but if water—no matter how little—is poured into the tumbler, the force accumulates in the water and does not pass.

The substances enumerated have the property of accumulating the neuric rays for a variable time, and of re-emitting them; the conditions of which re-emission are still under investigation. Dr. Baréty has found that neuric properties, communicated to inanimate objects, can be withdrawn by the person from whom the neuric rays emanated applying the palm of his hand to such objects.

The body of a person who does not possess, in a positive radiating degree, this neuric force, may be a good conductor of the rays; for example, Dr. Baréty placed between himself and his sensitive a third person, who was one of this neutral kind, and directed him to point at the sensitive's hand; no effect was produced until Dr. Baréty breathed upon the free hand of the neutral person, when the sensitive immediately exhibited re-action. There was the same result when two neutral persons, each holding a hand of the other, were interposed.

There exists, he says, in the neuric rays from the lungs, a property capable of exciting effects differing from those obtained from rays emitted by the eyes or fingers. This he has proved by the rays from his lungs bringing on re-action when directed upon the sensitive through a closed door, a wall of brick, a wall of stone, a block of glass, &c.; they have acted similarly when reflected in the same manner as luminous rays, from a mirror. Magnetisers, he says, waken their subjects by blowing in their faces or eyes, and Dr. Baréty says that he does the same; but such neuric properties of the breath as he particularises have never, he says, been established until now.

Dr. Baréty says that the intensity of the neuric rays can be augmented by adding to the number of radiating fingers or eyes. He has ascertained this by many experiments, some of which he relates, and he infers that neuric batteries might be formed, analogous to electric batteries, of a variable number of elements.

The intensity of the radiating neuric force remaining the same in a given operator, its effects upon the sensitive subject will vary in degree according to the sensitive's impressibility.

The intensity of the neuric rays is also affected by the distance of subject from operator. In the subject who has principally served in Dr. Baréty's experiments, re-actions could be excited in the open air of a garden in two or three seconds, at a distance of four paces.

A similar observation applies to their velocity of motion. He caused a third person, neutral as to neuric force, who could excite no neuric phenomena, to place the end of a piece of twine, twenty yards long, in the sensitive's hand, which Dr. Baréty had previously breathed upon, himself to go the length of the twine, keeping hold of it. No effect upon the sensitive was produced. But upon Dr. Baréty breathing upon the neutral's free hand, he observed, watch in hand, that an effect was produced in thirty seconds. Repeating this experiment he found that he could even bring on the somnambulist sleep. This experiment was varied with greater lengths of twine, and it was found that the neuric force, in the open air, passed along the twine, sometimes, at the rate of twenty-five yards in twenty seconds. The force passes well also along wands of all kinds, vegetable stems and branches; holding any of these at one end the force travels to the other; if held in the middle it travels to both ends.

## CAN DECEASED FRIENDS VISIT US?

Swedenborgian (or New Church) periodicals are not, as a rule, very generous in their treatment of Spiritualism and Spiritualists; and it is therefore all the more pleasant to us to be able to give to the *New Jerusalem Messenger*, of New York, the credit of publishing the following letter:—

"EDITOR OF THE MESSENGER:—In your issue of October 11th, J. H. asks, 'Do recently deceased friends visit us?' He requires the answer to be given in the letter of Swedenborg's writings, for he warns us that he 'wants no man's inferences.' But Swedenborg's writings consist largely of statements of general principles and their analysis. The way being indicated, deductions are generally left to the reader. Legitimate inferences are therefore a necessary part of the study of his writings.

"The Lord's teachings are all enunciations of general principles illustrated by parables. He taught His disciples in parables, 'but without a parable spake He not unto them.' Here, too, is exercise for the mind, for the spiritual man, thought, deduction, application. Inference is a necessity of the case. Swedenborg lays down the principle, repeated often and again, that in the spiritual world sameness or similarity of state is the equivalent of presence or proximity in space. Guided by this rule, we can understand the transfiguration of Christ before, and His re-appearance to His disciples for a period of forty days following, His crucifixion. At the Ascension He simply passed from the spiritual sphere into the divine, which His disciples had no power, because they had no faculties, to discern. Thereafter He came to them, as He promised and as He also comes to us, by His Spirit, and by a more interior way.

"One of a family, linked together by strong ties of affection, dies. It is not a violent presumption that the state of all remains substantially the same, for an indefinite period after, as before, the event. The longing for communication is natural, indeed irresistible, and is presumptively mutual. Now no human mind ever yet comprehended death in the sense of destruction. It does comprehend life, growth, development, continued existence, but death, annihilation, nothingness never. The mind has no power to grasp the thought, and shrinks back from it in horror. Therefore to the mind the propositions of creating something out of nothing, or of something being reduced to nothing, are alike unintelligible. Faith in life after death has its basis, and inheres in the constitution of the mind itself. Therefore at death the wonder to the mind is not that the departed spirit does in some way signify its presence, but that it does not do so more sensibly. This, however, is natural to our material modes of thought.

"Swedenborg's rule is proved by facts of common experience, properly interpreted; or the testimony of multitudes of people, otherwise credible, must be set aside. What are called 'testimonies' at 'experience meetings,' or indeed any religious assembly where personal experiences are related, are in point. Their universal tenor is to the effect that in some mysterious way the soul becomes conscious of being uplifted, a burden removed, a joyous consciousness communicated. This is called 'getting religion.' It is possibly an influx from a strong, congenial, spiritual sphere.

"The Spiritualists offer a great variety of evidence of spirit communication and physical demonstration of their presence. It will not be forgotten that the Lord met the requirements of 'doubting Thomas,' and satisfied even him of His identity by a physical manifestation. Now, whatever may be thought of the conclusions reached by all these people, there can be no doubt as to the absolute sincerity of their belief in the reality of the manifestation experienced or witnessed by them. Would not a broader view of the whole question find they are both right as to the manifestation? Are not both illustrations of Swedenborg's rule, differing only in quality or degree?

"I believe there are experiences in the lives of most people, not often related, but such as to convince them that departed friends have been with them. What may be called the common, almost universal, expectancy of such things is proof akin to that which hunger furnishes of the existence of food; as the fins of a fish, the feathers of a fowl, prove that there are elements proper for their employment—the one to float, the other to fly.

"We were a family of four. Our little boy died. It would be impossible to convince us that he has not been with us very often, but once certainly. The proof is in the nature of the holes in the hands of the Saviour, which satisfied even Thomas."

"Wichita, Kansas,  
"October 26th, 1882."

"S. E. JOCELYN."

## PROPOSED CONCERT AND BALL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The proposed concert and ball will take place on the 31st inst., at Claremont Hall, as before. The tickets will be 1s. 6d. single; 2s. 6d. double. There have been numerous inquiries respecting the ball, and there is every reason to believe it will be a very enjoyable one. The proceeds will be devoted to the aid of "LIGHT"; so the support of your readers will be duly appreciated. Next week the arrangements will be more complete and will be advertised.—I remain, yours faithfully,  
26, Penton-street, N.,  
January 8th.

FRANK EVERITT.

## THE LATE MRS. S. C. HALL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As one who enjoyed the privilege of Mrs. S. C. Hall's friendship for many years before she became what is termed "a Spiritualist," allow me to correct an error in Mr. Tupper's statement published in "LIGHT" of to-day. Mrs. S. C. Hall was always a believer in the truths of Revealed Religion, lamenting, with pity and Christian charity, the doubts and difficulties she herself had never known, whenever she encountered them in others. In those days—I am speaking of nearly forty years ago—I never conversed with her husband on the subject of religion as I often did with her, but, as an opinion, I must be permitted to say that I do not believe he was ever a materialist. I know that he is now a Christian Spiritualist.

Trusting that you will find space for this brief vindication of the memory of a dear friend, I am, Sir, yours obediently,

CAMILLA CROSLAND.

Blackheath, January 6th, 1883.

## THE FESTIVE SEASON AT BELPER.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As I see a great many accounts of what good church members have done for the poor at the festive season of Christmas, and I know the list of benefactions ought to be, and would be, swelled very considerably, if our Spiritualist friends were as prompt to report each other's doings as church organisations are, permit me to offer, through your columns, a record which ought to be considered as equally just and appropriate in point of time and place.

On Saturday, December 30th, a party of some 150 aged poor widows were entertained at Mr. W. P. Adshead's Hall, at Belper, with a good and bountiful tea, after which they were each presented with a loaf of bread and a piece of the seed cake not consumed at the meal. The expenses were all borne by the Brothers Adshead, Mr. Smedley, and a very few *heretics* of the Spiritualist persuasion. I had heard of the intention to get up such a meeting, and offered to be the first subscriber to the expenses. When I arrived at Belper on Saturday afternoon I found my subscription had been paid. I was politely requested to keep my money in my pocket, and to contribute instead what some of our friends contemptuously designate as "talk." This I did, and rejoiced to see the aged, worn faces of the assembled crowd, looking out pitifully from shabby old bonnets, accompanied by patched and threadbare garments, brightening up under said "talk" into smiles and tears, and finally, joining their poor withered hands, and old crutches, into a grand cheer of genuine happiness, as I concluded this same "talk." The scene altogether resembled a gleam of sunshine on a dark and clouded path, and was one which I would not have missed for the sake of avoiding all the bitter sneers launched against "professional talkers." Meantime, I found that good Mrs. Smedley, sweet Louie Adshead, Mrs. Whelan, Mrs. Hitchcock, and a number of other dear loving women, girls, and "boys," especially those of a larger growth, had been busy all day cutting bread and butter, getting planks for tables, and wearing themselves out generally to make the meeting very pleasant. With aprons on, or coat-sleeves tucked up, these un-Christian Spiritualists waited on their poor guests, and when they had cleared away—working like Trojans to do so—they sang them songs, made them speeches, and infused an element of joy and gladness over their poor downcast hearts, which will certainly last them till next year.

I heard that Mr. Wm. Adshead intended to regale some hundreds of poor street children with soup, and loaves to carry away, on New Year's Day. At night I listened to the beautiful bells of Belper "ring out the old, ring in the new," and I fancied their sweet liquid tones rang out to every kind hand there, "God bless you, God bless you!" I may have been mistaken. Perhaps they said to every hand that withheld its blessing from the poor, "Go and do likewise." I know not, but I am quite sure the joy bells of the better and brighter world rang out that blessing, and its echoes will not cease until they are clearly heard in each one's "welcome home!" On Sunday—the true New Year's Eve—my lectures were preceded by naming two precious little ones—consecrating them on earth and in Heaven by mortal and spiritual names, and heralding them into the glorious faith which teaches "the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the soul, personal responsibility, and eternal progression."

Hoping to live in that faith here and hereafter, I am, Mr. Editor, yours for the truth,  
JANUARY 5th, 1883.

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

MRS. HARDINGE-BRITTEN'S LECTURE APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: St. Andrew's Hall, Newman-street, Oxford-street, W., January 14th.—Address, The Limes, Humphrey-street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—LONDON: St. Andrew's Hall, Newman-street, Oxford-street, W., January 7th, and every Sunday evening during January, February, and March, and also on Sunday, April 1st.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.

## SPIRITUALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

## NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—Mr. T. P. Barkas lectured to the friends at Weirs Court, on Sunday, December 31st., upon "Evidences of Design in Nature." The discourse was a remarkable exposition of those advanced principles concerning the problems of life and nature which are being discussed by the thinkers of the time. On Sunday last, on account of the friends being disappointed by the non-arrival of the expected speaker, an experience meeting was held, at which several persons gave interesting narratives of their views and experiences in connection with the movement.

GATESHEAD.—Our Gateshead friends are looking pretty healthy at present. The activity of their leading officials, and the energy of their young men, promise to make the society of some worth before many years are over. On the last Sunday of the Old Year, their president, Mr. H. Burton, gave to a goodly audience an excellent and appropriate address upon the season of the year, and the lessons to be learned from the retrospect and prospect presented on such an occasion for consideration. On the Tuesday evening following, a concert of a very successful character was held, the proceeds being devoted to the furnishing fund, which as yet is not quite free from debt. We are glad to say the hall was comfortably filled with an appreciative audience, who enjoyed very much the many excellent songs rendered by the vocalists, who gave their services on the occasion. Mr. R. Thompson presided at the pianoforte, opening with an admirable selection, which was highly appreciated. Mr. R. W. Thompson sang "The Village Blacksmith," and other songs, with great effect; Mr. C. Martin gave an admirable selection from "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures"; Mr. F. Sheppard rendered a popular comic song with surprising effect. His sisters, the Misses Sheppard, sang with pleasing effect, the elder singing the "River Idle," with great sweetness, and the younger, "The Three Old Maids of Lea"; the Misses Martin performed a pianoforte duet with considerable ability, and the elder one favoured us in a pleasing manner with "In the Gloaming." Master Martin gave the "Darkies' Jubilee" very cleverly, and Mr. Martin sang a broad Tyneside ditty, "The Cachuca," in a fashion that convulsed the audience. Mr. H. Burton officiated as chairman, and did his best to keep the meeting in good spirits. We also had the pleasure of the presence of Mr. W. H. Lambelle, from South Shields, who made an excellent little speech, in seconding Mr. Dawson's proposition of thanks to the entertainers. About ten p.m., the younger portion of the company cleared the floor, and enjoyed themselves for a couple of hours in dancing. A refreshment stall was provided in the ante-room, by Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Shield. On Sunday last Mr. Henry Lacroix occupied the platform with his experiences of the movement in America and Europe. Afterwards he called several persons from the audience, and instructed them in the best methods they could employ to develop their mediumship as far as he could see and understand their speciality in that regard. Next Sunday Mr. Ashton, of Byker, will lecture.

NORTH SHIELDS.—Substantial progress is being made by our good friends at this place, their Sunday evening gatherings being generally larger. On Sunday evening, December 24th, the President of the Gateshead Society gave an admirable lecture on "The Immortality of Man." During the week they had a social gathering of a pleasant and agreeable description, and on the Sunday following an excellent New Year's address from Mr. Thomas Dawson, of Gateshead.

NORTHUMBRIA.

## GLASGOW.

The annual meeting of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists was held in the Hall, 164, Trongate, on Sunday last, the 7th inst. Mr. Findlay, in the absence of the President, occupied the chair. The treasurer's report shewed a satisfactory balance on hand. The following were elected office bearers for the current year:—Mr. James Walker, President; Mr. James McDowall, Vice-President; Mr. James Robertson, Hon. Sec.; Mr. Findlay, Treasurer. Committee: Messrs. Griffin, Broadly, Barker, and McKenzie.

## TORQUAY.

We quote the following from the *Devon County Standard*:—"When associations composed of unprejudiced and learned men are formed in the country for the purpose of investigating Spiritualism, and when such associations admit that there are matters connected with Spiritualism which are not to be explained away by attributing them to trickery and 'hanky-panky,' it certainly looks as though Spiritualism were not altogether a gigantic humbug. In Exeter Spiritualism is being carefully and thoughtfully investigated by a great many intellectual people. Plymouth also has its numerous believers in spiritualistic manifestations; Dartmouth is the home of more than one Spiritualist; and Torquay possesses a 'medium' or two. We do not know whether any of our readers would care to investigate for themselves these alleged means of communication between the present and the unseen world, but should they feel inclined to do so we might be able to indicate the course to be adopted by them in order to attain this object."

# THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC PHYSICAL SEANCES.

Circular issued by the Central Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

Few Spiritualists can have failed to note, with regret, the deterioration which has of late years taken place in the conditions under which physical phenomena have been sought in public séances.

These conditions—so favourable to fraud on the part of dishonest mediums, and so calculated to excite suspicion in the minds of observers—have led to the most disastrous results. We are not speaking without full warrant when we say that there is hardly a public medium for physical manifestations in this country against whom, at one time or other, charges of imposture have not been brought. We fear that in some cases no reasonable doubt can be entertained that fraud of the grossest kind was really perpetrated; while in other cases there is reason to believe that—whatever may have been the appearance to inexperienced spectators—there was no conscious deception on the part of the medium.

But in either case the name of Spiritualism has been brought into discredit, and we are forcibly driven to the conclusion that other methods of procedure must be amended. We must demonstrate our abhorrence of imposture by disavowing and discouraging all conditions which do not plainly shut out even the suspicion of its possibility.

Obviously these remarks can have little reference to family circles, which are naturally held sacred by those who regard them as affording opportunities for veritable “communion with the dead.” But it is open to grave question whether—even in the case of family circles—*inquirers* should ever be permitted to make their first acquaintance with Spiritual phenomena by introduction to séances held for physical manifestations in the dark, or where a cabinet is used for the seclusion of the medium.

We are chiefly concerned, however, with what are known as public or promiscuous séances for physical manifestations. These have been of late years generally marked by the following characteristics:—(1) The séance has been conducted in imperfect light, or in total darkness. (2) The medium has been isolated from the circle, by being placed either in a cabinet or behind a curtain. (3) The sitters have been, either wholly or in part, unacquainted with the subject and with each other. (4) There has not infrequently been a manifest want of harmony, consequent upon differences of opinion as to the nature and value of the tests employed.

These conditions, usually found in combination, effectually preclude careful and dispassionate investigation; open wide an avenue to fraud; suggest suspicion of its presence even where it does not exist; and in many cases, we fear, expose the medium to very injurious influences.

Such conditions should be allowed to prevail no longer. “Mixed” circles should be as little mixed as possible—mere wonder-seekers, and men whose moral atmosphere is known to be impure, being carefully excluded. Above all, darkness should give way to light. In the early days of Spiritualism public dark circles were the exception, and there is no need for them now. There is abundant evidence that, with mediums of the present day, satisfactory phenomena, including even “form” manifestations, can be obtained without isolation—the medium, where a cabinet is used, being placed near, but *outside of it*, and in full view of the sitters. But even if this were not so, it is neither wise nor honourable to expose mediums to the risks which have been shewn to attend séances held under the conditions that have of late been prevalent; and it were far better that we should have no public manifestations of physical phenomena than that they should be sought under circumstances which, to say the least, inevitably conduce to suspicion.

In view of all these considerations, believing that fraud is not of the essence of this confessedly obscure subject, but rather an accident dependent on faulty conditions of research; feeling that Spiritualists have the remedy for the evil in their own hands, and that without its conscientious application they cannot hope to maintain a fair reputation before the world; we earnestly recommend—*That in all public circles held for physical phenomena, the medium be so placed, and in such light, as to be continuously under observation by each member of the circle.*

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Thomas McKinney, Peterborough  
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John Pringle, Hon. Sec. Hetton Spiritual Society  
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E. W. Wallis, Nottingham  
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W. Winlow, Hon. Sec. Ashington Spiritual Society, Northumberland  
Oswald Wirth, Paris  
George Wyld, M.D., London  
J. F. Young, Llanelly

[Persons wishing to have their names added to the above list are invited to intimate their desire to the Resident Secretary, Mr. Thomas Blyton, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.]

\* Is of opinion that public miscellaneous séances for physical manifestations should be altogether discontinued.

† Would prefer that the word “conscious” should be omitted from the last sentence of the second paragraph.

‡ Is of opinion that public miscellaneous séances and professional mediumship for physical manifestations should be altogether discouraged.

§ Is opposed to all public séances, whether in the light or the dark, unless the conditions are favourable to a complete investigation.