

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

PSYCHOPATHY.

(Continued from page 14.)

8. On such cases I am not competent to offer an opinion: nor should I value any opinion that did not proceed from a scientific expert who was acquainted familiarly with the special case on which he was asked to pronounce judgment. For here we approach a very definite source of error. Cancer is a perfectly defined disease, and any practised eye can tell with surety under the microscope whether a particular formation is cancerous or not. But uneducated eyes cannot, and a lay opinion is valueless. Now medical science pronounces the true cancer, when in an active state, to be, to all intents and purposes, incurable. If, therefore, a well-defined case of cancer, vouched for as such by competent opinion, were really cured psychopathically, that would be a tremendous fact. But observe, it must be clear that the growth is really cancerous, and nothing but an expert opinion on the formation of the cells which compose it can determine that point.

9. So that when it is said that cancers have been cured, the first question is, Were they cancers at all? This applies, in a degree, to all diseases; but the cancer is a crucial case. Before I can say that such and such a disease is cured, I must be able to say that it existed. And more, I must also be able to say that the means used effected the cure; that is, that the ordinary restorative processes of nature, so beneficent in their operation when left to themselves, did not effect by their action what the Psychopath claims as his work. I must know both whether the alleged disease existed, and secondly, whether the alleged treatment cured it; and thirdly, whether the patient might not have conceivably got well from other causes.

10. These are obvious sources of error which must be eliminated before any trustworthy opinion can be given on a particular case. And even when these points are cleared up, we ought to know, further, whether any previous treatment has been adopted; and if so, when, and under what circumstances; with what results, if any; and how long it has been abandoned. For it is clear that A's treatment may really produce the cure that B claims as his own, or that A and B combined may have nothing to do with what is a mere restorative effort of nature. It is considerations such as these that make it hard to get at the exact truth in any given case of alleged healing. And the difficulty is enormously increased by the atmosphere of emotional enthusiasm by which such cases are surrounded. It is held that careful investigation implies doubt, and want of faith is sin.

11. There is, however, no reasonable doubt that the gift

of healing or alleviating disease, and so of lightening the terrible load of human suffering, is a real fact. Its results cannot but be beneficent. Though I am scientifically curious as to the means, and a little disposed to be sceptical about some cases, I am not the less thankful for the results that are produced, whether by imagination or will, mesmeric or magnetic power, or by spiritual agency in any form. That a proportion of cases are real cures none can doubt, though there may be various opinions as to the methods. All, however, is not due to mere imagination. That there is a real and absolute virtue communicated to a mesmerised article is proved by such cases as that recorded by Mr. Atkinson,* when a mesmerised glove that had been used by an ailing patient conveyed a distinct effect to Mr. Atkinson. He "had to remove the unhealthy influence or contagion" before it could be charged afresh with healing power. Moreover, a glove purposely sent unmesmerised was invariably detected. There is, therefore, evidence that both curative and vitiated magnetism can be traced by their effects; and Mr. Atkinson is entitled to say that his processes produced the effects recorded, and that such effects were not due to other causes, or to mere natural effort.

12. Serjeant Cox, whose mind was fertile in theories, considered that the cure is effected by directing the attention of the patient to the ailing part.† Passes, when used, serve, in his opinion, to do this, and so increase the flow of nerve-force or vital-force, or whatever it be called, to the affected part. He would have maintained (I suppose) that the anointing with oil, and concentrated attention in prayer, had the same effect. As a result of this stimulated flow of vital-force, the impaired action of the functions is roused to renewed activity. The restorative processes of nature are set in action, and thus he would account, *inter alia*, for the cure of Miss Martineau's malignant ulcer. Whatever grain of truth there may be in this, like many of the late Serjeant's all-round speculative theories, it does not cover the facts.

13. I have hitherto considered almost exclusively such cases as can be referred to the action of the spirit of man or to natural causes. There are, however, many recorded cases which range themselves under a different category, and seem to postulate the action of a governing and controlling spirit from without. Such is that well-authenticated case of the cure of Mrs. Skelton.‡ There the spirit that habitually controls a medium wrought what certainly is a remarkable cure. Many such cases are on record. Others there are, too, which (like the Bethshan cases) assume a slightly different, and more distinctly religious, complexion. Such are those of which Mrs. Oliphant gives a specimen in her *Life of Edward Irving*.§ The "Ariso, and stand upright!" of the young mechanic, with its instantaneous effect, had within it a witness to the action of a power not his own. In Biblical phraseology, "He was filled with the Holy Ghost." Still more extraordinary and impressive was the cure of Miss Fancourt.|| Such are many of the cures recorded of Dr. Newton. "The Modern Bethesda" is full

* Gregory's "Animal Magnetism," p. 245.

† "What am I?" Vol. II. p. 208.

‡ *Medium*, February 27th, 1880.

§ Shorter's "Two Worlds," p. 229.

|| *Ibid.* p. 230.

of cases which no deduction for possible exaggeration can entirely get rid of, and which are either true in substance, or wicked and detestable falsehoods.

14. Here, again, we come upon a factor, the power of faith, to which we find it hard to assign an exact value. In all cases such as those which we are now considering it seems that faith is a necessary prerequisite, as it was in Christ's miracles of mercy. "O, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." What is this mysterious quality, and how does it operate? The answer to these questions is, so far as I am concerned, one of "the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God"; but I cannot deny the incalculable potency of what I can no more understand than a child can fathom the action of any of the forces of nature. I only know that in some cases results seem to be attained by its power that, in my present state of ignorance, appear miraculous, but which are not less real because I am unable to explain them. It seems to me, however, dimly probable that there is a connection traceable between the power of faith and this same imagination that is so potent. The act of faith may, and possibly does, exalt and stimulate the imagination and set its power in action.

15. I do not know to which of the many committees of the Society for Psychical Research it would naturally fall to investigate this interesting subject. It may be that before these lines see the light, Bethshan will have been visited by some of its indefatigable members. But whether there or elsewhere, that which may rightly claim to be a purely beneficent work—possibly the only *unmixed* good that Spiritualism can boast of—should have its merited attention. And, unless I am very wrong, the present state of medical science is more favourable to such an investigation than at any previous time with which I am acquainted. For doctors are less wedded to pill and potion; they drench us less with nauseous drugs; and they are disposed—only *disposed*, or perhaps, *not so entirely indisposed*—to give nature a chance, and to rely on her recuperative processes, while they direct a greater measure of attention to hygienic conditions of health. For all which one desires to be duly thankful, and to ask now that Psychopathy may have a chance.

M. A. (OXON.)

SPIRITUALISM AT HOME.

Mr. Morell Theobald has favoured us with a copy of a paper read by him, on the 11th inst., before the Literary Society, at the Rev. Morlais Jones' church, at Lewisham. We should have liked to publish the paper *in extenso*, but our space enables us to give only an abridged report, which is valuable, however, as containing interesting facts, such as are being sought for still by many outside the movement; and, coming as they do from a man of experience and calm judgment and veracity, we commend them to the consideration of our readers.

"Twenty years ago," said Mr. Theobald, "my stepmother and I put our hands upon a small three-legged table, standing in the middle of the room. After a few minutes, the table began to oscillate. Subsequently it moved along the room to the door, and knocked repeatedly and violently against it, when somebody present opened it. The table then moved across the hall to the foot of the stairs like a thing of life: next by a circular movement, which we had to follow, it ascended stair after stair until it reached the top flight. With our fingers still lightly on the top, it descended in a similar manner, until it regained its first resting-place, in our dining-room. There was what we recognised as a *new force*; but that was all. Subsequent experiments with the table evoked *intelligence*, so that by oscillation or rapping we could, by repeating the alphabet, get letters indicated which when written down formed a continuous sentence, frequently involving no little difficulty to us in separating into words. I will now skip over some years, during which time, having satisfied myself of the reality of the phenomena, and getting as yet

very little else after the first wonderment, I allowed the matter to sleep."

Mr. Theobald goes on to relate how, passing through much sorrow, and losing three children, one after the other, the spiritual *rappor*t was again established, as is so frequently the case when the need appears sorest. But we will give his own words.

"And as we sat lonely and watched, there came a sound we had well-nigh forgotten: it was only like a bodkin tapping on the table! We recognised the old spirit-raps, and had patience with them until they grew in number and variety, and until each little one had his own *distinctive* rap. As we chatted at meals their raps chimed in affirmatively or negatively to what we said.

"On my way home one evening I had been reading Dr. Carpenter's theory of explanation, and as I sat down to the tea table, I told my wife and children what the doctor's 'dominant ideas' were. We were then almost startled by our unseen group joining in the conversation by raps. Taking up the cue, I said to the invisible band, 'You seem interested, but can you prove Dr. Carpenter to be wrong?' Three distinct raps gave their affirmative reply. I now suggested that we should all lean heavily upon the table, which we did from all sides, and one of the boys sat upon it! when lo, as easily as possible, the table was lifted off the ground to about the height of nine inches, first on one side and then on the other, and so kept in position (this heavy dining-table) for some minutes. Our conversation continued then for some time intelligently, by means of raps.

"About this time it was no unusual thing when I stood up to carve to have the table suddenly moved completely away from my reach, and on my asking it to come back for it to do so, and then pin me tightly to the wall. Vulgar? very! but it was an immense amusement to our children as they were told that our little group used our dining-room as their *play* room! All these phases of the phenomena, you will remember, mixed in, naturally and unsought, with *daily life*! On another occasion the locks of the dining-table leaf were unfastened by invisible hands, and the leaf lifted up and down continuously until my wife put her hand upon the top of the lively leaf, when it was gently lifted up high *under* her hands and tilted on to the floor, and so left upright by the side of the table—all this in full light and presence of all."

Mr. Theobald speaks then of other forms of mediumship and of the teachings of Spiritualism which he received through them. The phenomenon of direct *virid voce* communication he thus refers to:—

"It was while sitting with the family around the table and with Mr. and Mrs. Everitt we had our first communion by means of the *direct* spirit voice. We had commenced the sitting by reading and prayer, when we put out the light and sang in darkness. While singing the room was suffused (I am not exaggerating) with most delicious perfumes,—different kinds succeeding one another. The interesting part to us was that one of my children could then *see* the spirit forms and what they were doing. He said, 'Pa! there's a spirit with different coloured waters—Oh! she is throwing some on us; now another colour,' and so on; and as he spoke of different colours came different scents. These scents were perceptible on articles in the room on the following day. Soon after came star-like lights, floating over the table. These could reply to questions as we put them, by opening and shutting or darting about.

"Having thus become comfortable (if I may so speak) in the dark we heard a tremulous indescribable approach. It ceased by the head of the table, took up a small tube, as we ascertained by being touched by it each in turn, and then spoke. With this began my first acquaintance with the spirit of John Watt, engineer formerly, and a most intelligent spirit now. With him I have had, not two or three, but *scores* of conversations, some in the presence of scientific men whose names you would know. On this occasion I was too surprised to say much. I asked John Watt how he manufactured the voice out of nothing (for to me it was a voice out of darkness) and received his laughing reply! But still I was silently puzzling it out, and he saw it though I said not a word to any one; for on leaving he threw down the tube in front of me, and when we lit up the lamp I found also, just before me on the table, a piece of direct writing *replying to my silent queries*."

Mr. Theobald then gives one or two other conversations which took place in the presence of the Everitts. On one occasion it was interesting from *little* voices of the children, one after another, speaking, which they did by John Watt's help. After this sitting he looked as usual on the previously marked paper

for writing, but ascertained that there was none, put the paper in the speaking tube, turned out the lights, and left the dining for the drawing-room close by. Soon the raps came on the drawing-room table, while the friends were sitting about "or playing on all fours with baby on the hearth rug." By the raps they were told that the invisibles had put some direct writing in the other room. On going they found the piece of paper as they had left it in the tube, but with this message now on it: "Unity, peace, love, and harmony dwell here. We, a loving band, surround you. May the peace of God the All-Father be with you evermore." This they were told was written by their spirit friends after the company had all left the room, and there was no other explanation of which they could conceive.

Mr. Theobald concluded a highly interesting paper by claiming (1) that a new force had been found to exist, which we call psychic; (2) that this force was governed by intelligence which was not that of the persons present in the flesh, but of the spirits of those who were once living in our midst; and that (3) of this identity proofs are constantly forthcoming.

The discussion which followed was begun by Mr. Ames, who said he lost no opportunity of opposing Spiritualism wherever it was brought forward, and he read from copious notes previously prepared, which, of course, failed to touch the facts adduced. The next speaker's remarks afforded a specimen of the materialistic sneering with which the so-called religious people receive any exposition on this subject, but with all his sneers against the material nature of the phenomena and their uselessness, he in the same breath asked for others equally material and quite as foolish. Several speakers, however, were fairer in their criticism, and shewed a docile interest. The only reply really given to the unanswerable facts adduced by Mr. Theobald, put into plain English, would be "You are either a fool or unworthy of credit." This is the usual one, now that "the devil" has ceased to be relied upon: but it will "have its day and cease to be." Facts carefully recorded are still wanted, and these can be had in any number. Get facts admitted, and the *curi bono* question will take care of itself.

STRAY THOUGHTS ON CURRENT TOPICS.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Let me congratulate you on having given to your readers in the first issue of "LIGHT" in the year 1883 such excellent subject matter. I sincerely hope that the year so auspiciously begun will gain brightness with age, and I pray that before it is numbered with the past we, the Spiritualists of the land, may be honoured for our faith, and admired for our consistency and courage. I am strongly of opinion that the past has been a time of sifting, and trial of strengths and virtues, and though many have been called, but few indeed are chosen.

"Our Better Moments," by Herbert Edward Wallace, Esq., is an excellent little poem, and indicates that genius (or susceptibility to angelic teaching) is a family gift. The articles on "Theosophic Teachings," "Materialisations," and "Prophetic Dreams," are remarkable, and well worth perusing, but Mr. Martin F. Tupper's "Spiritualistic Reminiscences" are, in my opinion, by far the most interesting records of pre-natural phenomena that have appeared in your pages for many a day. Then, too, the charming manner of your correspondent pleases the mind, and lulls to rest the critical and combative faculties; and though we may draw conclusions entirely opposite to those suggested by Mr. Tupper, we feel more inclined to offer other and convincing proofs of spirit-presence than to abuse him for want of spiritual discernment.

Last evening, just before "LIGHT" was placed in my hands, I was scanning the pages of one of my favourite authors, and had made a marginal note against this observation of Cicero's:—"The force of reason in disputation is to be sought after rather than authority; since the authority of the teacher is often a disadvantage to those who are willing to learn; as they refuse to use their own judgment, and rely implicitly on him whom they make choice of for a preceptor."

Having read the interesting narrative of Mr. Tupper, and reflected a few moments on the effect of such wonderful experience on his mind, I once more turned to Cicero, and was struck with the appropriateness of the remark which I have just quoted to Mr. Tupper's case. And perhaps I may be allowed to observe that thousands of Materialists and religionists are in exactly the frame of mind Mr. Tupper appears to be in. They are over-awed by authority. The Materialists, misinterpreting the teachings of Tyndall, say there is no God, nor

future life. The religionists, misinterpreting Divine or angelic teachings, say that spiritualistic phenomena are only too true, but of the devil, devilish. Both Sadducee and Pharisee are under the blighting influence of authority; "they refuse to use their own judgment," and decline to accept the conclusions which reason imperatively demands should be made. I have, during the last six years, personally observed this infirmity of mind in scores of well-meaning intelligent men and women, and have much deplored it. I suppose people cannot well help themselves. No doubt it is a fault of organisation, an excess of caution or timidity, which disqualifies its subject from investigating facts in nature which demand for their recognition and appreciation more than ordinary courage, patience, and self-sacrifice. And at this moment there comes to my mind an observation of Huxley's, in his lecture on William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood; an observation for which I admire the man, and from my heart wish him the enlightenment which is ours. After speaking with pride of the heroes of the Commonwealth, and the statesmen and poets of Elizabeth's age, Elliott, Pym, Hampden, Milton, Burleigh, Strafford, Cromwell, Spencer, Shakespeare, and others, he adds, "I am of opinion that the memory of the great men of a nation is one of its most precious possessions." Yes! but how much more ennobling is the belief that we are daily subject to the influence of the personal presence of these men? Is it not ten thousand times more a cause for rejoicing that we have by our sides in our struggle against ignorance and prejudice the spirits of these great men, now made perfect by years of spiritual enlightenment? Revere their memory if you will, but give me the force and wisdom which springs from the interblending of kindred mentalities. And, continues Professor Huxley: "If William Harvey had been a dishonest man—I mean in the high sense of the word, a man who failed in the ideal of honesty—he would have believed what it was easiest to believe—that which he received on the authority of his predecessors. He would not have felt that his highest duty was to know, of his own knowledge, that that which he said he believed was true, and we should never have had those investigations, pursued through good report and evil report, which ended in discoveries so fraught with magnificent results for science and for man." What Spiritualist cannot see that if a man like Huxley could be brought to take an interest in our movement he would become as enthusiastic a disciple as he is a profound scientist? He evidently possesses a heart as well as a head, and this is sadly wanted in an age of "shells"! Surely, sir, it is as great a work to bring immortality to light, to demonstrate by scientific methods the deathlessness of man, as it was to prove the circulation of the blood? And those who have toiled against oppressors, and resisted authority with as unflinching a determination as was displayed by Harvey himself, are deserving of some consideration at the hands of men like Huxley and Tyndall. Depend upon it, Spiritualists who have worked in this cause in singleness of heart and purity of aim will, before many years have passed, receive the grateful appreciation of their repentant countrymen.

I wonder if it ever occurred to Professor Huxley to give serious attention to the works of his greater countryman, Sir Humphrey Davy? If so, it would be interesting to discover what are his opinions on the views propounded in "The Proteus." Sir Humphrey is singularly in accord with mesmeric knowledge on the physiological aspect of Spiritualism.

Some time ago, when discussing the phenomena of Spiritualism with a medical gentleman, he declared his inability to comprehend how knocks were produced and articles of furniture moved without contact with human hands. Wishing to know what I might have to contend with, I asked, "Do you believe that the spirit of man (what we Spiritualists call the man himself) survives the shock of death?" "Certainly I do," was the reply. "Then you must be a spiritual being now residing in a tabernacle of flesh?" "Granted," was the reply. "What is your weight, doctor?" "About ten stone." Then I put this question, which, so far as I have been able to discover, is a question that cannot be answered outside of spiritual science—that is, outside of the knowledge we obtain within the borders of modern Spiritualism—"If, doctor, you are an ethereal being now, animating, for the time being, a material body weighing about one hundred and forty pounds, how can you move this weight (the weight of your own body) any easier than the spirit-body of say, Dr. William Harvey, could move a table weighing one hundred and forty pounds?" After a moment's reflection he made this reply: "Do you know I never looked upon the subject in this light before! I cannot answer you!"

Now, though physiologists, generally, are ignorant on this point, there are a few who, having made it a study, are prepared with something like a satisfactory answer to the question, How do we move ourselves? And the reply to this, in my belief, explains the *modus operandi* of most of the spiritual phenomena we are familiar with.

Sir Humphrey Davy writes as follows:—"The volumes of elastic fluid inspired and expired, making allowance for change of temperature, are the same, and if ponderable agents only were to be regarded, it would appear as if the only use of respiration were to free the blood from a certain quantity of carbonaceous matter. But it is probable this is only a secondary object, and that the change produced by respiration upon the blood is of a much more important kind. Oxygen in its elastic state has properties which are very characteristic; it gives out light by compression, which is not certainly known to be the case with any other elastic fluid, except those with which oxygen has entered without undergoing combustion; and from the fire it produces in certain processes, and from the manner in which it is separated by positive electricity in the gaseous state from its combinations, it is not easy to avoid the supposition that it contains, besides its ponderable elements, some very subtle matter, which is capable of assuming the form of heat and light. . . . I know there have been distinguished physiologists who have imagined that, by organisation, powers not naturally possessed by matter were developed, and that sensibility was a property belonging to some unknown combination of unknown ethereal elements. But such notions appear to me unphilosophical, and the mere substitution of unknown words for unknown things. I can never believe that any division, or refinement, or subtilisation, or juxtaposition, or arrangement of the particles of matter can give them sensibility, or that *intelligence* can result from combinations of insensate brute atoms. I can as easily imagine that the planets are moving by their own will or design, or that a cannon-ball is *reasoning* in making its parabolic curve."

Now what if we accept this physiological view as a correct one. Would it not explain much of the phenomena we are acquainted with? Electricity can be nothing but "*subtle matter*;" and no matter how it is produced, mesmeric science has assured us that the natural action of the human body (its own endowed methods of casting off effete material and assimilating to itself what is necessary to its preservation) does elaborate a fluid whereby the indwelling spirit, by means of nerves, muscles, and bones, controls the body physical. And whilst with most of us sufficient vital fluid is elaborated to ensure perfect health, it may be that some are capable of elaborating more than enough. If so, what is to prevent spirits, angels, and gods, utilising the fluid for various phases of mediumship? Pure minds and pure living connect us to gods; foul minds and filthy bodies to fiends. Verily! there are more things in Heaven (in spirit-life) than are dreamt of in the philosophy of Mr. Tupper.

If scepticism demand an analogy, I will give the following. By a natural process, not deemed wonderful *because ice are familiar with it*, ice (a material almost as hard as granite) may be converted into invisible steam, and from invisible steam back to ice again. This is transmuting ponderable matter into force, and force into ponderable matter again. Is this not identical with materialisations? The vital fluid is derived from matter, and by a natural process *unknown* to us, is crystallised, or solidified so as to be visible, as white and solid as a block of ice. And just as by the application of heat to ice we may see the substance disappear from view in the form of vapour, so have thousands of Spiritualists, myself amongst the number, seen a materialised body in a séance-room slowly dissipate like a stream of vapour of water until not a vestige remained to shew where an animated, intelligent human being had recently stood.

Sir, I am afraid I am encroaching on your valuable space. I have just written as thoughts came to me, and find I have not taken the direction originally intended. I wished to give Mr. Tupper some of my own experience in clairvoyance—experience which could leave no doubt as to who or what produces the phenomena called spiritualistic, but I have failed in my endeavour, and apologise for offering so poor an article for publication.

T. C. E.

MR. AND MRS. WORTLEY, who have been for many years devoted to the cause of Spiritualism, gave a house-warming and dance at their new residence in Plaistow, on Thursday, the 11th inst. There were present several well-known Spiritualists and an exceedingly pleasant evening was spent.

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN IN LONDON.

Reception at St. Andrew's Hall.

On Friday evening, January 12th, the members and friends of the newly-established Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum gave a reception to Mrs. Hardinge Britten, at St. Andrew's Hall, Newman-street, Oxford-street. Mr. Sandys Britton, president of the Lyceum, occupied the chair, and explained the principles on which the Lyceum had been formed, and the purposes which it was intended to accomplish; after which Mr. Thomas Shorter, Sig. Damiani, Mr. J. Freeman, the Rev. Mr. Bengough, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, and Mr. Richard Wortley, spoke in support of the following resolutions:—

"That this meeting of friends of the cause of Spiritualism rejoices in the opportunity afforded by the visit of Mrs. Hardinge Britten to London, to gratefully acknowledge her continued devotion to the practical work associated therewith, which, in America, England, and elsewhere, owes so much of its success to her commanding eloquence and generally powerful and zealous support; and to express the hope that so valuable a life may long be spared to the world."

"That, in the opinion of this meeting, the general principles and methods of the newly-organised Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum promise, if sustained and developed with energy and prudence, to promote alike the diffusion of sound views upon the duties of the life of this world, and the general recognition of the spiritual truth that the strictest regard for those duties is the fittest preparation for the next stage of existence; and we congratulate the association upon having secured the valuable inspirational support of Mr. J. J. Morse as lecturer."

"That, whether the human agency for the promulgation of the truths and teachings of Spiritualism be sought in the individual, in the family, or in societies—by trance, or other mental influences, or by any form of physical manifestation—it is incumbent upon us all, at all times, humbly and gratefully to acknowledge the essential value and importance of the intervention and co-operation of the world of spirits, in every effort to further human progress."

Mrs. Hardinge Britten and Mr. J. J. Morse responded to the resolutions; the addresses being followed by vocal and instrumental music contributed by the Misses Withall, Miss Katherine Poyntz, Mrs. Percy Britton, Mrs. Williams, Miss Heath, Mr. E. A. Tietkens, Mr. C. Alexander, and the Lyceum Choir; and Miss Allan also favoured the company with a recitation.

Sunday Service.

The second of the Sunday evening services inaugurated by the Metropolitan Spiritual Lyceum, was held on Sunday evening last in St. Andrew's Hall, Newman-street, Oxford-street. There was, as on the previous occasion, a very large attendance. After the service, an address was delivered by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, on the subject, "What do we know concerning the origin and destiny of man?"

Mrs. Hardinge Britten, after a brief introduction on the importance of the topic, said that there are two sources whence knowledge respecting it is sought—religion and science. Religion represents the universe as a piece of mechanism created. God, it is said, created all things very good, but, at the same time, brought into existence a spirit of pure malignity, stronger to tempt and destroy than the All-Father to preserve for good. Hence man fell and involved the entire race in total depravity. Then there came the curse of the Flood, the restitution of the race, the inevitable succession of degradation; then the Divine Incarnation, and the vicarious Atonement—those who accepted being saved, and those who rejected suffering endless perdition. This is what ecclesiasticism says; but ecclesiasticism does not know it. Science has other teachings with regard to man and the planet on which he dwells. The planet is one of a line of fiery worlds, revolving round the central mass. These worlds sprang out of the arms of the sun, and returned to those arms as obedient satellites. We have grown and blossomed in the gardens of infinite light and glory, and we shall march up the steps of time until the matter of which our world is composed decays and dies. All planetary bodies consist of matter vitalised by force. Geology teaches that our earth was once like the flying spectres that flit across the midnight sky; she has become crystallised into an obedient satellite moving round the parent sun; she has become consolidated until her surface, rifted and rent by internal fires, forms vast chasms and abysses whence flames shoot up into the thick murky air, as yet unlighted by sun, or moon, or star. The spirit of the Great Builder brooded upon the face of the fiery sea, and called forth a new element—the flood. In the metamorphic rocks we trace the alternate struggle of those two world-builders—the fire and flood—until a new factor appears, an animated form, a living thing, a spirit of life, a creature that *thinks*. Even the gelatinous

masses that float in the seas are endowed with thought. Every creature that procures its own subsistence, chooses its own locality, repeats its own existence, and provides for it, manifests the first element of thought—and thought is spirit, and spirit is the next world-builder. The sublime trinity upon which suns and systems are founded is matter, force, spirit. We pass onwards to the age of molluscs, and then to the times of monstrous reptiles; nature alternately expressing herself in the infinitely little and the infinitely large. We pass through many chambers, until we come to a sudden break of which we still preserve the mementoes in the carboniferous system. The ancient forests, and all the vast masses of tropical vegetation, were factors in purifying the air; all opening their leafy mouths to drink in the carbonic acid gas that must have filled the air and been fatal to the life of higher existence. Thus the atmosphere was prepared for the sun-beam and the star-beam until higher, and nobler, and fairer forms should come. The vast mass of vegetation is torn by upheavals, and buried in catacombs, but not lost. The creature is yet to come who shall break open those catacombs, trace the mystery of their formation, consume the mineral, and drag it forth into the open air to be converted into mimic suns. Everything is a prophecy. There shall yet be a mind that shall comprehend mathematics, and find it taught by the mathematician ant: geometry, and shall understand it by the geometrical bee: and other sciences that have been in like manner foretold by lower orders of beings. At length man appears, when the earth is ready for him. It is only because he is the last of forms—the microcosm in whom is all force, power, and thought—that there is any real difference between him and the poor mollusc. Gradually he ascends the heights of knowledge, by a process of evolution. We see no schoolmaster, no priest; but there is the eternal germ of intelligence within, and this is gradually unfolded. He cannot soar to the supreme heights where the eagle's wing cleaves the sky; but by the power of his spirit he can build himself a castle of hydrogen and silk, and soar away higher than ever an eagle's wing has gone; he cannot float on the heaving billows of the seas, like the Leviathans of the deep, but by the power of his spirit he can build himself a metal house and sink deeper than ever plummet line sounded, and explore the mystery of the pearl and coral kingdom beneath; he cannot track his way, like the swallow, across the pathless ocean, but he can take the little magnet and make it do the work for him, and reveal to him the mystery of Arctic and Antarctic regions, and put a girdle of knowledge from pole to pole. He can make the sun-beam paint his pictures, and the poor man's cottage may now possess reproductions of the costly works of art which in olden times were beyond his possession. He can gaze upon the starry heavens, and speculate upon their being the homes of the angels of light; but, then, by the aid of his spirit, he constructs a second eye through which he beholds whirlpools and clusters of stars, marvellous constellations with ten thousand worlds unknown to him before. He can turn back the tides and alter the course of rivers. He can avail himself of the noble printing press, and by the power of cheap literature, scatter it broadcast over the world, making humanity one grand bond of brotherhood. All power, all knowledge, is his, but he stands baffled by the mystery of his own soul, the very power that thinks and examines, the mighty masterful spirit that has explored the heavens, sounded the ocean, rolled back the tides, and turned night into day,—the real man. But at length the light seems to go out like a lamp untimely quenched, and the man is "dead." Why does he speak no more? Why does he not awake? What has come to him? He is dead. Is that the last of it? Shall there be no resurrection, no life beyond? Alas! science only answers, "The light has gone out, the fire is quenched, the man is departed, and that is the last of it." But we ask, especially we ask for those whose life has been a burden, those who have toiled like beasts of the field, for those who have groped in darkness, for the crippled and the maimed, the wretched and the forlorn,—we ask for them, Is there no better land? not alone for the power and the glory, but for the beauty, the love, and the kindness? It is at this point that the Spiritualist comes bearing the standard of that other and better world. There comes a knocking at our doors, and though it is a tap no louder than the beating of a butterfly's wing, we open, and the immortals come in, and they proclaim that there is no more death. Spiritualists, you know not the great and sublime meaning and purpose of your dispensation. Science and religion are both at fault; they only tell us what they believe, not what they know. All we ask for is proof. Our desire is to continue this chain of

knowledge, to pass the last milestone and enter the glorious temple of the science of spirit. We have cried, "Lord, let Thy Kingdom come," and at this point the gates are flung wide open, and we realise that the triumphant march of spiritual existence is continued throughout all eternity. We ask, What is death? Science says it is the quenching of the light, but does not tell us what is the hand that quenches. I ask why has the fire gone out? Why has the heart grown cold? Who has done it? I tell you that force has gone out of the body, and that is death. The spirit has gone out and carried the force with it. The disintegration of death is the withdrawal of that which makes the life; and if I can find the thought clothed upon by the force I account for the real man. Here it is that I find the force knocking on my tables, moving my chairs, projected in viewless waves upon the mesmerised subject while never a mesmeriser is in sight,—all those phenomena which you call derisively dancing tables and vibrating floors. If science sees matter in motion, it is bound to explain it, or it is disgraced, and those who move it shall take their place and prove the teachers of a spiritual science which the materialist cannot comprehend,—a science which tells us what is the destiny of man, which shews us the white feet of the immortals still treading the heights of progress, the dear hands of the beloved beckoning us forward, the same men, the same women, that left us but yesterday, with hearts burning and throbbing with a higher and a more glorious life, all living on, and living for ever! We marvel why this great, starving, seething Babylon does not crowd round the spirit circle and stand waiting at the portals of life and knowledge. But perhaps it is as well. The process of growth is slow. It took the Great Gardener millions of years to make a daisy. When we remember this we bend the knee and cry: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." All is well with the Great Spirit. It is enough that we know our destiny. We know that there are moral penitentiaries and spiritual infirmaries in the land of life beyond for the unhappy ones at the lowest round of the ladder. We know that if a man dies he lives again. That is the teaching of our spiritual science. Force is the spiritual body. The viewless spiritual essence of thought and intelligence is not force. We see that force departing from the physical body, and we find it returning to rap upon our tables. We take the ground, then, that all creation is a divine trinity—matter, force, spirit; that the totality or sum of this is the Unknown, the Unknowable, which our spirits bend before as Father; that the form that has departed from us has left an angel behind; that the air is thick with these people; that "over there" justice shall be done, and everything righted. We do not speak of a cunningly devised doctrine, but of that which we do know in the voice of twice told ten thousand returning spirits. You believed Columbus when he brought back the key that unlocked the New World, because he brought the swarthy inhabitants of the distant land with him. So should you believe us when we return with legions of the spirit country beyond the grave, with all that you have known, and loved, and trusted, all declaring that the destiny of man is to live for ever.

On Sunday evening next, the service will be conducted by Mr. J. J. Morse.

PROPHETIC DREAMS. To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The narrative contributed by Mr. H. Spicer in your last number is one of the most remarkable of its class which has ever been published. Presuming it to be, as it professes, an account of actual occurrences with real names and localities, its value would be immensely increased if the exact date was given, so that an investigator could refer to the records and reports of the said assizes at Exeter. Possibly your correspondent can furnish this, but if not, it would be well worth a search, which could easily be done without any serious amount of labour.—I am, yours faithfully,
January 14th, 1883.

A STUDENT.

A SIGN OF THE "TIMES."—In its obituary notice of the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, the *Times* says: "Those who believe in omens will be struck by the curious coincidence that three weeks ago, during Divine service in the church at Dunham, the escutcheon fell from the monument to the late Earl of Warrington, whose title is now extinct, and was shattered to pieces." The second title died with the late Earl, whose death was thus presaged.

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN will lecture at Liverpool the first and third Sundays of February, March, and April. January 21st and 22nd, Belper:—February 11th, Rochdale:—February 25th, Belper:—March 11th, Leeds:—March 25th, Bradford.—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 particulars, see Lyceum advertisement on front page. For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53 Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT."

4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,
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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.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return postage.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES

OF THE NEED OF A SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

For some years past I have had in my possession a body of evidence from private families bearing upon the different subjects which the Society for Psychical Research was founded to investigate. This evidence has hitherto been unpublished, and some of it must still remain so, as it was given with that distinct understanding. Even in many of the cases that I am at liberty to publish, suppression of names and places has been strictly enjoined. To the general public the value of the evidence is thus somewhat impaired, but to those who have confidence in my integrity I do not think the evidence should be any the less valuable on this account. So far as collateral inquiry could throw any light on the statements or the credibility of the witnesses, I have endeavoured to leave no stone unturned, and no case will be published that has not, in my own mind, reached a certain "figure of merit."

Testimony on behalf of phenomena transcending the common experience of mankind requires to be both unexceptionable and abundant. The sanity and moral character of the individual, the corroborative evidence of eye-witnesses, and the consistency of the various narratives, are the chief points to be determined in ascertaining the trustworthiness of any evidence for improbable events. Some mental allowance, in the way of addition or subtraction, usually the latter, must be made for the prepossessions or bias of each witness. The "personal equation" to our judgment, being as real a quantity as the "personal equation" to our eyesight; how much must be allowed for this no two readers will agree. A near approach to the right value in any given case would probably be found by selecting fifty devout readers of "LIGHT" and fifty devout readers of the *Saturday Review*, ascertaining the algebraic sum of the various plus and minus quantities put down by each reader, and dividing this sum by 100.

I cannot undertake to reply to the criticism which some of these narratives may evoke; but at the same time fair, intelligent criticism, whether friendly or hostile, is most desirable. In the light of such criticism let us carefully read again the original narrative, and ultimately and indelibly stamp it with the figure of merit that it deserves. For the sake of uniformity shall we say that 100 represents, in our opinion, absolutely unexceptionable evidence in any given case and 0 absolutely worthless evidence?

I am not permitted to give the name, nor even the correct initials, of the writer of the following remarkable narrative. But I am personally acquainted with him, and he is well known and much respected by all who have

spoken to me about him; in particular by a Nonconformist clergyman of high reputation, and who happens also to be a personal friend of my own. It was at this friend's house I had a long interview with the writer, who was deeply affected with the unhappy consequences of the sittings six years previously. As the result of my inquiries, observation, and cross-questioning, no doubt whatever was left in my own mind of the entire trustworthiness of the narrator, who, I may add, was, until recently, a merchant in the City. The singularly prosaic, unimaginative quality of my informant's mind would have rendered his invention of the accompanying narrative almost a greater psychological wonder than the actual occurrence of the facts he describes. I give merely his letters bearing on the case; they were received by me at the close of the year 1876.

Monkstown, Dublin.

W. F. BARRETT.

CASE I.

INEXPLICABLE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

MY DEAR SIR,—I enclose the notes of my experiences which I promised you. They were written from memoranda made at the time, and are accurately correct in all respects. —Believe me, yours truly,

W. D.

Some eight years ago I had a few experimental sittings in my own house with some friends, obtaining the usual results, table-turning, lifting, raps, &c. This decided me upon trying to thoroughly investigate the matter, and I had a number of sances with friends, and also with professional mediums. These were held in various places and under a variety of conditions, the results being as follow:—

I was firmly convinced that the results obtained were apart from any direct action of the medium, who had no control whatever over the nature of the manifestations, or the electrical or other conditions required to produce them. I was not, however, convinced of the supernatural character of the manifestations, and felt that it was impossible to thoroughly establish any conviction as to the action of the medium, unless I obtained similar results in my own circle, without the presence of any professional medium, and under conditions rendering imposture impossible. Such an opportunity offered itself six years ago [that would be 1870].

I was staying at the seaside (Lowestoft) with my wife, a young lady, and a gentleman, an old and intimate friend. All these, especially my wife, were unbelievers who ridiculed the whole thing. We decided, however, upon trying what results we could obtain.

We sat in a drawing-room, on the first floor, with the door locked and the key in my pocket. We turned down the gas, but there was a full moon shining full upon the windows, and the whole room was light enough for us to see one another, and, in fact, everything that was around, and in the room. The table was an oblong, heavy walnut table. I will call my friend F. and the young lady A.

First Evening.

The usual manifestations took place. The table moved about the room. A match-box was brought from the other end of the room. Communication was held by raps, I calling out the alphabet, and many questions were answered. F. was declared to be a medium. The mediumship of others present declared doubtful. The only message given, except replies to questions put, was "I am in love!"

Second Evening.

The above manifestations were repeated, but the answers were fuller and more coherent. Lights were visible floating about the room especially over the heads of my wife and F. F.'s name was spelt. My wife's name was spelt, and she was declared to be a medium. F. complained much of being touched, his hair pulled, his clothes dragged, &c., and during the whole of our sances this was constantly the case. He said he felt "cold hands" on him. Incidentally I may observe that during all these manifestations, and afterwards, except when our circle was forcibly broken, we never ceased to hold hands tightly, not merely laying them on the table, as is often the case.

A. was touched on the face and hands. F. asks for a book to be brought, which was instantly done, a book from another part of the room being thrown on to the table before him. I ask for further proof. F.'s chair is suddenly dragged from under him, his foot laid hold of, and he is thrown down on the floor, still holding my wife's hand, but without the slightest noise or injury

On turning up the gas, we find him in a trance, the book hanging in an impossible position (so far as gravitation goes) upon his knee. His watch and a ring (which latter was on the finger of the hand my wife still held) were on a sofa at the other end of the room, a large one. A small key fastened upon the swivel of his watch-chain had disappeared. After a few minutes he recovered, I having lifted him on to a sofa. He thought he had been asleep, felt quite well, and was unconscious of what had taken place or that he had been on the floor. When we sat again a message came, "I love F." On asking who it was, the reply was, "Katie." This so annoyed him that we discontinued sitting. Lights were frequently appearing during the evening, and at one time a broad collar of flame was seen round my wife's neck.

Third Evening.

I placed a paper speaking-tube on the table, but "they" refused to use it. My wife asks for a book. A French work was brought to her from under a pile of other books in the room. She happens to be very fond of French. She asks to have F.'s watch-key, lost the night before, returned. It was at once thrown on to the table before her. A. is touched a good deal. The tube is floated about the room, and then thrown down on the table. In consequence of the annoyances, pinches, &c., F. asks to sit out. He goes into a recess of a bay window, within sight of us all, sitting in a wicker chair which creaks loudly at the slightest motion, and begins to smoke. We then continued. My wife is violently shaken and agitated. A figure appears, a woman in dark clothes, gliding gently from behind me. She passes A., and takes hold of F.'s chair (left by the table), moves it out of the way, and, gliding round the table, approaches my wife, who, on feeling the hands of the figure upon her, screams, and I turn up the gas. We all then saw the figure distinctly, and we can also swear that F. remained in the chair looking out of the window. He did not see the figure. A rustling noise accompanied its progress.

F. rejoined the circle. By my request he asked for flowers for the ladies. Immediately two bunches of cut *hot-house* flowers, double stocks, &c. (it being October), were placed in front of the ladies. F. sat with his feet round the legs of his chair to prevent its being dragged away, and wore Wellington boots. He called out "they are taking my coat off." He was thrown down, my wife holding his hand tightly. His coat was off, his boots were on a sofa *ten yards* away, his handkerchief tied in a knot, and in another place.

We sit again, and I ask for something from home, but am refused.

F. asks for something from home, becomes violently agitated, is thrown into a trance, and a photograph of a young lady is on the table in front of him. My wife takes it up, and on his recovery, which took some fifteen minutes or so, shews it to him. He puts it into his pocket, bursts into tears, and says, "I would not have had that happen for anything."

[The photograph was the only existing copy of a portrait of a young lady he was once engaged to.* It was in an album, in a drawer, with two locks over it, in his house in the West End of London. On our return to town, it had disappeared, and his wife, being quite ignorant of our having had sésances, told us that at that very hour a fearful crash occurred in his bedroom, and brought every one in the house up to inquire the cause.]

My wife asked him to shew her the photograph; when to his dismay it had disappeared from his pocket. A number of other minor manifestations occurred of which I took no notice, and all through the sésances whenever anything happened F. became violently agitated. We decided not to sit again, but he was so upset the next day at losing the photograph that my wife suggested sitting once more to try and recover it.

Fourth Evening.

My head was violently struck, as if by a sofa-pillow thrown, or some soft substance. An object passed over our hands and crossed the table, feeling soft, like feathers. F. asks for fruit and flowers; more flowers are brought, and *apples*, the only fruit of the season which we had not in the house.

A. asks for something of hers. Her pocket-book is brought from another table.

My wife asks for something. F. is thrown down instantly, and on the table is the photograph lost the night before.

Instead of recovering quickly, F. has alternate fits of unconsciousness and raving delirium, which last for five hours. He is then sensible, but very weak. The next day he begged

* If I remember aright Mr. D. told me it was the death of the young lady that ruptured the engagement.—W.F.B.

my wife to destroy the photograph, which she burned in our presence. F. has a mild attack of brain fever, and from that day has never been the same man. He is periodically visited in the night, annoyed by noises, apparitions, tricks, &c., and would be a lunatic but that my wife and I have extraordinary power over him at such times, and take care to be with him a good deal.

On our return to London, my house was subject to noises, knockings, &c., constantly, and is so still at times. My wife has seen figures, and the tricks constantly played upon her were most annoying.

Often I have seen an article of jewellery disappear as soon as placed upon the table, and be found afterwards in most unaccountable places. We were touched, sprinkled with water in the night, and it was only when we gave up the entire subject that the annoyances ceased. Even lately a singular noise has followed me to Bournemouth and Hastings, and to a friend's house at Camden Town. F.'s nervous system is shattered.

During these sésances there was no possibility of imposture, and the people concerned were thoroughly reliable and incapable of it. I have omitted a great deal of the detail of our sésances, giving merely the main facts.

In a further communication, dated September 29th, Mr. D. says:—

"My wife has continued to be annoyed at times, and is now, by noises and appearances; and she tells me that prayer is the only means of lessening the annoyance. I am only occasionally troubled myself, but *lately* a very singular noise has persecuted me constantly, following me to Hastings, afterwards to Bournemouth, and to the house of some friends. I have quite convinced myself that reading, talking, or even thinking upon the subject in some way gives the influence far greater power. It is now six years since we had our last sésance, and still my friend, who was so seriously affected at the time, suffers at intervals most acutely. In his case the peculiar manifestations seem to return frequently with almost their former power, and the least allusion to the subject affects his brain and nerves. The influence which is exerted over him by my wife and myself is almost incredible. An old friend of mine, Dr. R., who had studied such cases, told me some time ago that his reason would depend upon his being near us when these attacks came on, and I believe that such is the case. The unpleasant results in our case, and the experience of other friends, have convinced me that the influence is a dangerous one, and to be avoided."

In a final letter, dated December 2nd, Mr. D. states, in answer to my further inquiries:—

"F. is *thoroughly* reliable, and though a singularly sensitive man, is straightforward, honest, moral, and *quite* incapable of trickery or deceit. A. is a young girl, timid, *not* clever, and I would answer for both of them. We were staying in apartments. The only other people in the house were A.'s father and mother in the dining-rooms, old friends, and they were quite ignorant of what took place above. I myself locked the door, pocketing the key on each occasion. . . I took F. to Dr. R., an old friend, and a very eminent physician, who said his nerves were shattered, and that he would never thoroughly recover, whilst his retaining his senses depended upon us. Not the least remarkable thing is the extraordinary influence exerted over F. by both my wife and myself, especially the former. When his attacks come on he cannot sleep at night, and the only cure for them is sleep. If he lies down on a sofa it is sufficient for my wife to sit beside him to send him to sleep at once. . . Probably mesmerism might do him good. It would not do for you to see him, however. For five years the subject of Spiritualism has not been mentioned to him. Any casual allusion to it, by a stranger even, causes him violent agitation, and brings on these attacks. . . My wife also has often told me on going home, 'You were talking upon the forbidden subject at such an hour to-day,' which was true, although she could have had no means of knowing except by her nervous sensations. . . I have avoided referring to many minor physical manifestations that occurred, and also to our sensations during the sittings, an effect being produced as of a powerful electric current circulating all the while. I do not wonder at any one doubting the facts; but if you could have witnessed the effect of the manifestations on F., and have felt yourself the singular sensations produced by them, you would have seen the *physical impossibility* of deception so far as any human creature was concerned."

Cases such as the foregoing shew that where a certain

nidus exists, psychical influences can be as potent and dangerous as the contagion of small-pox or scarlatina. Scientific inquiry into these phenomena will be tedious and may be hopeless, but I do not think it has anything to fear. On the other hand, there is a large amount of evidence to shew that Spiritualism in sport may become obsession in earnest—attaching whatever meaning we like to these terms.

W. F. BARRETT.

A PERSONAL OR IMPERSONAL GOD?

I desire to make some comment on an utterance of "M. A." (Oxon.) in a recent number of "LIGHT." I hold that writer in the highest consideration for the fairness, the candour, and the lucidity of his intellect. His calmness is judicial, and his moral nature is quite as excellent as his intellectual. Therefore it is that I was both surprised and disappointed at his attitude of apparent indifference on the great and momentous question of "A Personal or Impersonal God." It is the greatest of all the questions that can haunt or agitate the human soul.

"M. A." (Oxon.) appears to me quite at sea on this question. He makes what seems to me a portentous blunder in regard to the very meaning of the word "personal." He asks, "Is the human body the highest conceivable shrine of spirit?" This question at once shews that his mind is labouring under a strange confusion. He views the word "person" as implying or involving a bodily configuration. This is, if I may say so, a rather vulgar use of that word—as when we say, "Had you any money on your *person*?"—making that word synonymous with "body." Now, in speaking of God as a Person, we leave that question in entire abeyance. It is all too mysterious for our comprehension. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for us, we cannot attain unto it. God must be able to communicate with matter, and originate force to impel it and to sustain it, for matter is inert in its own essence; but how or in what shape or form it enters into His structure we cannot imagine. But, as I said before, this question must be wholly left. The question of personality is distinct from that. That term is here used in its scientific or metaphysical sense, which is wholly mental. When we assert that God is a Person we mean that He is an Ego—that He has a will—a conscience—and, by the nature of the case, that He has an unique existence which entirely differentiates Him from His creation, but which creation reflects His glory and majesty and shadows forth His moral qualities.

Again, when we say that God is Impersonal we mean that He is not an Ego, that He has no will—no moral judgment—no preference of one thing or one quality more than another—that He, or rather *It*—has no self-consciousness—is, in fact, not aware of His own existence. In one word, an impersonal mind is an impossible conception. We have no experience, and there is no producible instance, of an impersonal mind. Personality is at once a most mysterious yet a most familiar and intelligible idea. Each one of us has only to turn his gaze inwards, and then he will know what a "person" means. You are yourself and nobody else. You have a will and a conscience of your own, which fences you off from every other human being; you are conscious of your own existence as an unity—in a word you are an Ego. Now a God who has none of these attributes is inferior to ourselves. He cannot be a Mind, a Will, or a Conscience—in truth He is no God at all. Personality is the first and last word of metaphysics, of morals, and of mind.

If there be a God, He *must* be a Person. There is no alternative between admitting the Divine Personality and blank Atheism.

G. D. HAUGHTON.

[I am obliged to Mr. Haughton. It seems to me that I was undoubtedly wrong, and that he is probably right.—M. A. (Oxon.)]

THE DOMESTIC GHOST.

There are occasionally phenomena which, with every appearance of being ascribable to natural causes, defy the most careful scientific scrutiny—a class of incidents which, belonging to houses rather than to their occupants, attain proportions too great to admit of our assigning them to the operation of any natural law to which conjecture has yet pointed its unstable finger.

It is almost unnecessary to observe that, if a perfectly spotless reputation in the matter of legendary ghosts be required, the haunted homes of England may be reckoned by the score. Very many of these have figured in the graphic pages of Mrs. Crowe, Mr. Owen, and others, and varying conclusions—with which it is not my province to interfere—have been drawn from these stirring narratives. Very many more have been wisely left to their own local fame, as deficient in the credentials needful for their admission within the pale of printed history. Of the residue I may be permitted to record a few, possessing the double characteristic of recent occurrence and direct authentication. Such was a certain little ray or spectre of light which, for many years, haunted the mansion in which the late Thomas Andrew Knight, the correspondent and associate of Sir Humphrey Davy, was born.

The appearance of this lustrous little visitor greatly disturbed the inmates of the house, who were not reassured by witnessing the repeated discomfiture of Mr. Knight's persevering attempts to discover its origin. He himself, becoming piqued in the pursuit, gave incessant chase to the mystery with all the perseverance of a true philosopher. It seemed that this domesticated *ignis fatuus* was accustomed to appear in a bedchamber on the second floor, and dance about the apartment, or remain motionless, without being apparently influenced by anything the spectators might do. In many different positions, Mr. Knight surveyed it accurately, without being able to detect any angle by which light could possibly be conveyed to that point. Few men were better qualified than he to investigate natural phenomena, and especially that class which ought to have included the luminous visitor I have described.

The lady to whom I am indebted for the next example Mrs. Cholmeley Dering, was the sister of the gallant Colonel De Lacy Yea, slain before Sebastopol. I give the narrative almost in her own words:—

On the 14th May, 1865, she was on a visit to some friends who inhabited a large mansion near Weymouth. The house was very old, and had peculiarities of construction which—to make the story clear—must be explained. The great drawing-room upstairs was a singularly shaped apartment, having the door in one corner, and opposite to a large window opening on the balcony. On the left of this door was another, opening into a very small apartment, formerly used as an oratory. In this, a window, divided in the centre by a stone mullion, looked down at a great elevation upon a flagged courtyard. From the oratory were no means of exit save through the drawing-room. The door of the drawing-room opened on to a small landing, having the old winding stone staircase on the right, and, opposite, a wide corridor on which open all the bedrooms. A young relative of Mrs. Dering's, now Mrs. Cameron—who was also a guest in the house—being somewhat indisposed, had been reclining all the morning on the sofa in the drawing-room, and it was late in the afternoon when Mrs. Dering, going to the room, met her relative quitting it. A few words passed, when Mrs. Dering's eye was caught by the figure of a man—tall and grey-haired—slowly passing along the drawing-room towards the door of the oratory.

"I inquired," continued Mrs. Dering, in relating the story, "who was the stranger that had been with Charlotte in the room. She denied, with much surprise, that any one had entered. Conceiving, however, that she must have

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been mistaken, I remained, after she had left me, where I was, fully expecting that the man I had so distinctly seen would come out. At last, losing patience, I entered the room. No one was visible. My first idea was that he was a robber, who proposed to conceal himself somewhere about the rooms, and I consequently resolved to watch him. Observing no place of concealment in the drawing-room, I went at once to the oratory, and, cautiously unclosing the door, looked in—half expecting to find myself grasped by the discovered marauder. No one was there! I then re-examined the drawing-room, without avail, and going out on the landing, but still watching the door, I called to one of the young ladies of the house, and asked her, laughingly, if she had ever seen a ghost in the house?

"Never," was her reply. "But you know that there is one!"

"I had never heard so, but I now declared that I had certainly seen it, and but a few minutes since.

"My friend laughed, and said: 'You don't mean to say you have seen the old man?'

"What old man?"

"Our ghost."

"I described his appearance, and my friend, apparently much struck, proposed a still more rigid search, which we made, but with no better result than before. I am not what is called a believer in ghosts. I never before saw anything I could not account for; but this I *did* see, and, looking straight into a well-lighted room, I cannot conceive that I was the subject of any optical delusion. The face of the figure was averted, but so natural and palpable was the apparition that the last thing that occurred to me was that it might be 'a dream of the feverish brain.' That evening a party dined at the Hall. I was taken down to dinner by the rector of the parish, who, in the course of conversation, happened to remark on the antiquity of certain family seats in that part of Dorset, adding, with a smile, that more than one of these boasted the distinction of a domestic phantom.

"Even under this roof,"—he continued; but checked himself.

"A tall, grey-haired man, with a low-crowned hat, who visits the oratory?" I asked.

"You have seen it," rejoined my neighbour, and changed the conversation.

"I subsequently became acquainted with a strange history connected with this old mansion. In Hutchin's History of Dorset, or rather in an earlier edition of that work, now exceedingly rare, it was recorded that the mansion was, in 1660, possessed by a Mr. Rickard, who, on his death-bed, requested his wife to send for the reverend rector of the parish, Mr. Bound, and to leave him alone with him. His desire performed, the dying man directed his friend's attention to the foot of the bed, and inquired: 'Do you hear what that old man is saying?' Mr. Bound could only look at him with amazement, but was requested to take pen and paper and write what he was about to hear. Mr. Rickard, then, with the manner of one following the dictation of another seated on the bed, proceeded as follows:—

"In the year 1665, 90,000 persons will perish in London, of one disease. In the succeeding year, there will occur such a fire in London that the lead on Paul's roof will pour down like rain. On the 11th June, 1685, a person will land west of Weymouth who shall cause great bloodshed and calamity, and involve many leading families of the West in trouble and ruin. And in proof of this, though you are now thought to be in a dying state, you shall to-morrow be well enough to leave your bed, and walk on your terraces. While there, you will receive three unlooked-for visits, one from a person in Jersey, one from a gentleman from Ireland, and one from your own son, whom you believe to be abroad, and had not hoped to see again."

"On the following day the sick man was really so much better that he was able to walk on his terrace as foretold. An old friend arrived from Ireland. Another landed at Weymouth from a Jersey vessel; and finally, young Rickard, who had travelled day and night to reach his father before he died, drove hastily to the door. This extraordinary statement was signed by Mr. Rickard, and the Rev. Cuthbert Bound, and verified before two of the county magistrates—Colonel Giles Strangways (an ancestor of the Earl of Ilchester) and Colonel Coker—and was communicated to the historian by the Rev. R. Bingham, from a friend in whose family a copy of the original deposition has been carefully preserved."

The following incident was related to my sister by one of two young ladies who, with their parents, were residing in a large old mansion near Payerne, on the road from Lausanne to Berne.

Payerne was once the residence of Queen Bertha of Burgundy, whose remains yet rest in the vaults of the church she founded, and the little town played no undistinguished part in the old Catholic times. The two young ladies, daughters of the proprietor, occupied a very large chamber, their beds being placed at either end. On a certain night, in 1861, both being awake and engaged in conversation, the room being very light from the moon, the elder sister suddenly beheld a figure gliding through the apartment.

It was apparently that of a monk, with the cowl thrown back, exposing one of the most fearful countenances imagination can conceive. It absolutely froze the girl's blood with horror. Unable even to utter a cry, her fascinated gaze followed the motions of the terrible visitor as he seemed to stride in the direction of her sister's bed. The latter, appearing to become suddenly conscious of the spectral presence, rose on her elbow—then, uttering a loud shriek, gathered the bed-clothes over her head. The phantom seemed to spring upon the bed, but in that act disappeared. The spell of his presence thus broken, the elder sister jumped from her bed, and running to her companion, clasped her in her arms, sinking on her knees at the bedside. Such was the degree of horror experienced by both that they actually retained this position for four hours, without daring to trust their tongues with what they had witnessed. At length, as the slow day-light crept into the chamber, the elder forced her lips to ask, "Why did you scream?"

"Did you see him?" was the rejoinder, the speaker adding that, having closed her eyes for a moment, she opened them on a figure in a monk's frock, with a countenance like (she used a German expression denoting the Father of Evil) and thereupon shrank back shuddering into the bed. Investigation shewed that this apartment had always been known by former occupants as the "Monk's Room," and that a tradition existed that a diabolical murder committed by a monk had, at one period, affixed a stigma upon the mansion which time had nearly washed away.

It may not be unworthy of remark that the scene of domestic disturbances is most frequently laid in some old dwelling, often not entirely clear of ghostly imputations, even before some special event attracts to it special attention. In Germany and Switzerland, where wood is largely used in building, creaks, thumps, and concussions of every description are, particularly in edifices beginning to suffer from the infirmities incident to longevity, as plentiful as wasps in peach-time. A curious example occurred, some years since, at Vienna, where the then British representative—Lord A. Loftus—rented a noble old palace, L

One fine suite of rooms had been for several years disused, and, although his lordship had been rather emphatically recommended to allow them to remain so, the exigencies of a large establishment compelled their re-occupation. In a short time the German domestics began, one by one, to quit his lordship's service. Very soon, a certain amount of uneasiness commenced to reveal itself in the British element. It was known that extraordinary sounds were

prevalent, day and night, in the newly-opened suite, and that such a panic existed among those who inhabited it that no domestic ever voluntarily entered the doors alone. Lord A. Loftus' own study was situated in the haunted suite, and he very quickly satisfied himself that the amount of disturbance had by no means been exaggerated. The night-hush would be suddenly broken by dull, dead blows, such as caused the whole house to vibrate from roof to cellar, dealt upon the wall; noises above like the flinging together heavy articles of furniture; noises below like the rumbling of laden wains. Once, so fearful a crash occurred that Lord A. actually leaped from his chair, imagining that the house was coming down. In writing of these facts to his friends, he declared that the noise could be compared to nothing but the sudden collapse of the roof and walls. Yet nothing was disturbed, nor did even a grain of dust succeed the shock. Lord A. averred that he had passed whole nights moving about the mansion, pistol in hand, unable to believe such very material sounds to be other than the work of some designing person, and resolved to detect him. It was, in the end, found necessary to close the haunted suite, as scarcely a servant could be induced to enter it. Comparative tranquillity succeeded; but as a haunted reputation, like the dry rot, is usually ineradicable by anything short of the destruction of the building, the noble lord was not sorry when an opportunity occurred for effecting an honourable retreat. This L. Palace is perhaps the oldest in Vienna, and is very substantially built, the red pine being largely used in the framework and interior fittings of the mansion. When it is added that the mysterious sounds almost always recurred at night, and at those periods of it at which atmospheric changes are most sensibly felt, those who have dwelt in old houses may perhaps recall experiences of a kindred sort, though scarcely so strongly accented as those which disturbed the diplomatic musings of Lord A. Loftus.

It is not, however, to memorable mansions alone that these things occur. A friend and correspondent writes to me from Sardinia as follows:—

"What I have to relate has happened in a house by no means adapted to the presumed taste of restless spirits. It is no feudal castle, no dilapidated, many-chambered baronial hall, nor is any bloody tragedy, to my knowledge, interwoven with its history. It was, in fact, quite a new house, not long completed when I entered into possession. There are three rooms in front—the north (my bedroom), middle, and east room—and two others at the back. The ground floor was divided into stores, and there is a room and kitchen above. Each door, beside the usual lock, has a double bolt—at top and bottom. I had not long occupied the house when I began to hear unaccountable sounds—footsteps crossing the closed rooms, doors opening and shutting, &c., &c. At first the old housekeeper, then my only other inmate, would remark in the mornings: '*Signor Padrone, lei era forse infacenduto jeri notte, si è caricato tardi!*' (Master, you were working hard last night, to have gone to bed so late!) At length, however, it became a familiar household affair, and little notice was taken of it, except on occasion of some particular performance. One night, after retiring to my bedroom, I was startled by an authoritative rap-tap-tap at the door opening into the middle room.

"*Chi è?*" (Who is there?)

"No answer, but an emphatic repetition of the summons.

"*'Brigands!'* was the suspicion that crossed my mind. '*O rispondi, o non apro.*' (Reply, or I do not admit you.)

"A heavy footstep crossed the middle room, and visited the two others, both the doors, which I had left bolted, opening and re-closing in turn. Convinced now that robbers had invaded my dwelling, I seized my revolver and rushed out. On the stairs I met the old housekeeper, armed with a large carving-knife. She had heard the doors opened, footsteps following, and voices and movements, as of several persons, below, and, true to her training (the old dame had sailed with her husband in a privateer), had hurried to lend assistance. Ah, however, was now again as still as death, every door secured exactly as they had been left. A few days later a young military officer, commanding the detachment stationed near, who had lately lost his wife, and was for a few days my guest, observed one morning, 'You were very busy all last night.'

"He had heard me, as he thought, arranging papers, opening and closing drawers, &c., to such an extent as to prevent his sleeping. I told him I had retired to bed immediately, when he quietly replied: '*Forse mia povera moglie venuta a visitarmi.*' (Perhaps my poor wife came to visit me.)

"The old woman at length suggested to me that these disturbances might be occasioned by the house not having received the customary benediction, and, to remedy this, took advantage of my temporary absence to have that ceremony performed. She had, in addition to her little piratical excursions (for I doubt the privateer was not much else) taken part in the Zanina revolution, in which the celebrated Ali Pacha lost his life. She had been schooled in firmness and resolution, and was certainly no bigot. The intervention of the priest was, I have reason to believe, suggested by her simply as a means of getting rid of our nocturnal disturbances. Whether the result was due to its efficacy or not I cannot tell. It is a fact, however, that we had no further trouble with our ghost."

HENRY SPICER.

"SHELLS."

At the risk of appearing irrepressible, I shall ask the editor to allow me to add this word of *illustration* to what I have said as to the impossibility and absurdity of divorcing what Theosophists call "the fourth and fifth" from what they call "the sixth and seventh principles" in human nature, or, in simpler terminology, the lower animal self from the higher spiritual self—at least in the manner they propose—by *setting them apart, each with a separate existence of its own*. A vigorous, determined, energetic man, who will fight his way perseveringly through all obstacles has also the characteristic defects of his good qualities, while the easy-going, amiable man has the characteristic defects of his. But are not these too inextricably implied in one another to admit of the good qualities being set on one side, and the bad qualities left to roam about by themselves on the other? The whole man may, indeed, be so transformed that the badness of his qualities—which is simply *defect*, as the profoundest philosophers have seen—may disappear, all that is valuable in all his peculiarities being absorbed and assimilated by the higher man he has become; but then, when this becomes true, there is no "shell" left—there are no defects left behind just as they were to "give tests of identity," and pretend to be the man himself! The man may, indeed, have infected *others* with his defects, but these others are not "shells"; they are persons.

But how are my anger, my pride, my ambition, my lasciviousness, my impatience, going to exist without me, or even bottled up by themselves in a different compartment of me, in one of the simultaneous members of a double consciousness? These involve the highest faculties of my spirit—though in a condition of limitation and distortion; they are, moreover, necessary to the self-formation of that spirit through withheld experience and self-suppression; by developing, and then suppressing them, is character moulded. To say that they can be detached from me and exist by themselves, is surely an assertion that savours of lunacy.

I may be unduly angry in my disappointment at the frustration of a most noble, beneficent, and self-sacrificing scheme. How does an Adept or Theosophist, then, propose to *detach* this anger, and give it a self-centred life of its own apart from what is excellent and spiritual in me? Surely this is very childish! How ever could my concupiscence be separated from me, seeing it implies the exercise of most of my other faculties? My love of beauty is by no means an evil, but, if you take the Platonic view, quite a spiritual thing, only in this case intemperate, misdirected. And how is my concupiscence going to remain when my love of beauty and other higher faculties essential to concupiscence are taken away?

Therefore, it must be evident that the bad, or foolish, habits of a man are assuredly incapable of forming to themselves a body belonging to them, exclusively, which body may be dropped, and remain behind as an astral corpse, when the habits themselves are renounced. Moreover, the tests of identity given do not involve merely the bad or foolish characteristics of the beings who give them, but seem far more general and mixed in character. Such an *Ahrimanic*, purely diabolical "shell" is a difficult conception indeed! especially as badness and folly are not *integrating* powers. It is, of course, easy to say there are a myriad species of this shell. But even if an automaton so successfully simulating intelligence were at all conceivable, *which I deny*, the whole man, with his mixed nature good and bad, is concerned in producing the ethereal body, and it must go along with him, though of course, according to the predominance of good or bad within him, will its character be, the perfectly good man alone attaining to the *angels*, or *celestial* body. No astral corpse, however, is likely to be left behind for the reasons already given. On the contrary, the psychical will more probably be *changed* into the pneumatical body. Apparently even the *physical* body of our Lord was so changed.

RODEN NOEL.

LETTER FROM MR. D. D. HOME.

We make the following extracts from a letter addressed by Mr. D. D. Home to the editor of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* :—

"My long silence must not be attributed to a want of interest in you or the noble mission to which you have so generously devoted your life. My health alone prevents my taking an active part in the struggle for truth *versus* error. In all probability my day's work is finished and I wait for the shadow that precedes the never-fading light, in the home where envy, malice, and untruth are unknown.

"I still hope to compile the third volume of my 'Incidents,' and I know it will be interesting from the correspondence I will give from those who have played an important part in modern Spiritualism.

"It is a consoling and pleasant thought in reviewing the past of my eventful life to know that I have endeared many noble and truth-loving hearts to my mission as well as to myself.

"We were in St. Petersburg the past winter, and it gave me pleasure to meet with my old friends of 1858, all giving me the heartiest of welcomes. As a rule these keep aloof from the modern movement, inasmuch as the abuses so rife elsewhere have brought discredit to the cause.

"If an outline sketch, chosen from the many which in all probability will never be known occurring in my life, can give pleasure to your readers, I will give it for the beginning of a New Year which I trust may bring less of malice, hatred, and unjust persecution than has been manifested the past few years to men who, like yourself, fight manfully to protect a great truth, and demand that justice be rendered. I have followed with deep interest the touching incidents where the influence of spiritual agency, or the objects of their solicitude, were alike unknown to me, and these incidents being oft recurring, and always correct, render any other explanation than a living, active, and intelligent power, impossible.

"The winter of 1868 I was in Glasgow, giving 'recitations from the poets.' In making a call, my friends observed that I had a 'weary look,' and they pressed me to remain and they would have an early dinner to suit my convenience, as I dined early to have my voice in trim for the evening's work. I was about to accept their hospitality when a distinct impression came, saying: 'Return to your hotel; you can bring consolation and comfort to one who requires both.'

"At 2 p.m. I reached the hotel, and on entering the 'coffee room,' 'John,' a talkative, old-fashioned Scotch waiter, carefully closing the door, and cautiously approaching me, with 'mystery' written on his honest face, said:

"Sir, there's been a leddy here speering for ye."

"He hesitated, as if to study the effect of such an announcement, and seemed surprised when I said:

"Well, John, who was the lady, and what did she say?"

"Ech, sir," says John, "she was an elderly, and na a young leddy, an she was verra freendly like. She jest said: 'Is Mr. Home in?' An I said: 'No, mem; but as he recites the nicht he's sure to tak his denner at three punctual, and yons his table ready. Waud ye believe, sir, that the freendly leddy jest said: 'It's verra weel, jest put a cover for me; I'll hae my denner ne him, though he does na ken me.'"

"At three the lady came and from the moment we met she has proved herself a true and good friend. The introduction was simply, 'Mr. Home, I came this morning from Edinburgh for the sole purpose of appealing to you, to render me and my beloved husband, who is aged and in all probability will soon pass away, a great service. My husband, as you will find when you see him, is endowed with the most learned and brightest of intellects, but to my unutterable sorrow he is an avowed atheist.' [I must here add that Dr. D. has occupied for more than forty years one of the highest positions in the Medical Department of India, and he was a relative of Sir James Simpson.] Mrs. D. continued, and told me that her husband had consented to see me if I would visit him, and as my engagement terminated in Glasgow I went to Edinburgh the following day. Not only was the grand intellect fully convinced by overwhelming evidence of spirit identity, and by the, at that period, constantly recurring physical phenomena, but almost his last words were to his wife: 'You will tell Dan that I thank God and bless the day he came to us, for comfort and peace has been given to my last hours.'

"Your dear friend and brother for the truth and nothing but the truth, "D.D. HOME.

"Nice, France, November 15th, 1882."

PROPOSED CONCERT AND BALL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to draw the attention of your readers to the forthcoming concert and ball in aid of the "LIGHT" Distribution Fund? An advertisement, with full particulars, will be found in another page. Next week we shall be able to publish the names of those ladies and gentlemen who have very kindly consented to sing.—I remain, yours faithfully,

FRANK EVERITT.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

QUEBEC HALL.

The usual Sunday evening services are still being continued in this hall. Mr. MacDonnell lectured last Sunday on "The Doctrines of the Churches at variance with the Teachings of their supposed Founder." The room supplied a number of questioners and speakers, and the lecturer had to stand the fire of half-a-dozen for a full hour. So long as he holds firm to his position—Christ only for Christians, and individual common sense as umpire, he "need not be afraid of ten thousand set against" him. The attendance was good, but not so full as usual, owing, no doubt, to an excellent counter-attraction.—*Communicated.*

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Wednesday evening, January 10th, the annual meeting of the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society, was held in the large hall at Weir's Court, Mr. Jno. Mould in the chair. Considerable interest was manifested in this meeting, inasmuch as for some considerable time a strong spirit of opposition has been shewn to the method adopted by those who for some years have held the reins of government over the Society. Mr. Mould, on taking the chair, proceeded to criticise a printed circular which he held in his hand, and which had been presented to Mr. H. A. Kersey by a large body of the members, requesting him to allow himself to be nominated as president of the Society for the ensuing year, with the object of raising it from the present state of chaos and discord, and once more gathering together the scattered energies, which have been dissipated during the last few years of disruption. The secretary then read the report for the year, which shewed that the Society was still indebted to the treasurer something over £30. Two items of the report brought forth a strong discussion. One stated that a "party" was seeking power at the present annual meeting, whose desire and influence would tend to make the Society a centre of atheism. On the motion of one of the members this item was expunged from the report by an overwhelming majority as altogether false. The other item, stating that certain inexperienced individuals had interfered in the management of the séances to their detriment, was also expunged from the report by a large majority. Prior to the election of the executive, the anticipation of defeat led to the majority of those of the old executive who had been nominated retiring from the chances of a contest. The result is that the new executive are a complete change, and comprise several of the old and well-tried workers, who for some time have been driven from an active share in the movement. Mr. H. A. Kersey was elected president; Mr. Thompson, vice-president; Mr. Kay, Mr. Frost, and Mr. Wilson (some time ago expelled from the committee) as secretaries; Mr. Gillespie, librarian; and Messrs. Coltman, Wilson, Bristol, Bell, Burton, Thompson, and Smedley were chosen on the Committee. The result was received with general satisfaction by those present; and Mr. Kersey, we are glad to say, met with general congratulation upon his victory, in the hope that his efforts to reform the Society, and to restore it to its former position, will be crowned with success.

GATESHEAD.—On Sunday evening last Mr. Ashton, of Byker, gave the members of the Gateshead Society a very eloquent and able address, in which he expressed his views in regard to the influence of the movement upon the Church. Mr. Burton occupied the chair.

HETTON.—On Sunday evening Mr. W. H. Robinson, of Newcastle, gave an admirable lecture to a large company upon "Spiritualism and Hebrew Legislation." Mr. Clonor filled the chair.

NORTHUMBRIA.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J.H.—Next week.

J.D.—Necessarily stands over for our next issue.

E.K.—If you will kindly send us your name and address in confidence we shall be glad to publish the interesting narrative which you have enclosed in your note. We shall also be obliged if you will communicate to us the address of the writer.

AN ASTROLOGICAL SWINDLER.—A man giving the name of John Hartwell was charged at Birmingham on Monday with obtaining money by false pretences. Over two hundred letters which he had recently received were found upon the prisoner, many of them containing money. He had advertised "news from the invisible world," and evidently found it profitable. We must share the surprise of the Bench that so many fools could be found in the kingdom as was shewn by the letters.

THE GHOST OF MYLES JOYCE.—It is reported that the "ghost" of Myles Joyce, who was recently executed for being an accomplice in the Maamtrasna murders, has been seen in the vicinity of Galway Gaol, where he was hanged. On Saturday last a soldier of the 12th Regiment was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment, for having left his post while on duty outside the gaol, he alleging that he saw the ghost of Myles Joyce. It is needless to add that "his story was disbelieved."

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

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

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; W. Crookes, Fellow and Gold Medallist of the Royal Society; C. Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, the eminent Naturalist; W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E., Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Dr. Lockhart Robertson; *Dr. J. Elliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; *Professor de Morgan, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London; *Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., sometime Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; *Dr. Ashburner, *Mr. Rutter, *Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., &c., &c.

*Professor F. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of "Transcendental Physics," &c.; Professors G. T. Fechner, Scheibner, and J. H. Fichte, of Leipzig; Professor W. E. Weber, of Göttingen; Professor Hoffman, of Würzburg; Professor Perty, of Berne; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg; Professors Hare and Mapes, of U.S.A.; Dr. Robert Friese, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, Astronomer, &c., &c.

LITERATURE.—The Earl of Dunraven; T. A. Trollope; S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Captain R. Burton; Professor Cassal, LL.D.; *Lord Brougham; *Lord Lytton; *Lord Lyndhurst; *Archbishop Whately; *Dr. R. Chambers, F.R.S.E.; *W. M. Thackeray; *Nassau Senior; *George Thompson; *W. Howitt; *Serjeant Cox; *Mrs. Browning, Hon. Roden Noel, &c., &c.

Bishop Clarke, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, U.S.A.; Professor W. Denton; Professor Alex. Wilder; Professor Hiram Corson; Professor George Bush; and twenty-four Judges and ex-Judges of the U.S. Courts; Victor Hugo; Baron and Baroness von Vay; *W. Lloyd Garrison, U.S.A.; *Hon. R. Dale Owen, U.S.A.; *Hon. J. W. Edmonds, U.S.A.; *Epes Sargent; *Baron du Potet; *Count A. de Gasparin; *Baron L. de Guldenstubbé, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H.J.H. Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; H.S.H. the Prince of Solms; H.S.H. Prince Albrecht of Solms; *H.S.H. Prince Emile of Sayn Wittgenstein; Hon. Alexander Aksakof, Imperial Councillor of Russia; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; M. Favre-Clavairoz, late Consul-General of France at Trieste; the late Emperors of *Russia and *France; Presidents *Thiers and *Lincoln, &c., &c.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS, writing to the editor of *Licht, Mehr Licht*, April 10th, 1881, in reference to phenomena which occurred in Paris through the Brothers Davenport, said:—"As a Prestidigitator of repute, and a sincere Spiritualist, I affirm that the medianimic facts demonstrated by the two brothers were absolutely true, and belonged to the Spiritualistic order of things in every respect. Messrs. Robin and Robert Houdin, when attempting to imitate these said facts, never presented to the public anything beyond an infantine and almost grotesque parody of the said phenomena, and it would be only ignorant and obstinate persons who could regard the questions seriously as set forth by these gentlemen. . . . Following the data of the learned chemist and natural philosopher, Mr. W. Crookes, of London, I am now in a position to prove plainly, and by purely scientific methods, the existence of a 'psychic force' in mesmerism and also 'the individuality of the spirit' in Spiritual manifestation."

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER, AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bedroom, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation is absolutely impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butleroff, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to my view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, December 6th, 1877.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct sances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex; the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful sance.

The first indications of success usually are a cool breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held *over* but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means; if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.