

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

No. 112.—VOL. III.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The world is the poorer this disastrous year—so young, yet so full of sorrow and distress—for the withdrawal of many great men. Its opening hours saw the release of one who was great among statesmen, and whose singular honour it was to stand out in a national crisis as the saviour of his country. "Poor Doré" is gone. Why (parenthetically) do people speak of those who have advanced into a presumably higher state of being as "poor"? Poor in what? It is we who remain in this state, and lament our own great loss, who are poor; but they can hardly be the worse, and are, we trust, much better for their deliverance from the burden of the flesh. And now Wagner is gone. Probably no man of our generation more distinctly shewed the divine mark of Genius than he. Erratic it was—genius like his does not conform to petty rules, and is not governed by conventionalities; but none, surely, will deny that his was a master-mind, and that we are the richer for his work, as we are assuredly the poorer for his loss. Like all men of genius, he seems to have had his flashes of inspiration outside of that which he received in his own proper work. There all genius is inspiration. But he had his premonitions too. While directing a concert in honour of his wife's birthday, he suddenly laid down his bâton, saying, "I shall never direct an orchestra again, nor compose any more." Being asked his reason for so dire a prophecy, he replied, "I shall die before the spring comes," and now, before the flowers of earliest spring gladden us, his spirit is free. "His body lies in state, beneath its pall of cloth of gold." What of that master-spirit that has left the worn-out tenement?

Psychopathic notes continue to pour in. From the evident interest taken in the subject I feel sure that I may quote a case which has reached me from a private source, before I direct attention to the remarkable records of mesmeric healing, and of surgical operations during the mesmeric sleep of the patient, which are little known to the present generation. It is most surprising that records of the amputation of limbs, such as were recorded by observers whose qualifications are beyond doubt, and whose honesty is unimpeached, should have faded out as they have. The study of the reports of the Mesmeric Hospital is full of interest and instruction. There can be no fair cause for doubt that nature has endowed man, or some men at any rate, with a gift that is lamentably neglected. But before I go into this question, I will give a case of healing by a lady in private life, whose name I have no authority to make public. This lady is a Spiritualist, and attributes her gift to spirit-power, but from the great prejudice against the subject in her family, she spoke of it as "Mesmerism." I quote the case from among others in a private letter addressed to myself.

"We had a coachman who had been with us since he was a lad. Some seven or eight years ago, he had for several months been suffering from failing eye-sight. One morning in London he said to me with much emotion, that he feared he should have to give up his situation, his left eye having become so blind that it was quite useless to him, and he feared to drive me through the crowded streets of London, lest an accident should befall me. He added that he had had advice from several medical men to no purpose, and he had that morning consulted a chemist, who told him he feared it was a bad case, and he dared not interfere in it. My grown-up daughter was in the room, and I said in French to her, that sooner than lose a valuable and attached servant, I would try what I could do, if she would remain in the room. I then had him sit down, and made passes over his left eye, when he said, 'It feels like pins and needles going through it.' After a few minutes he said, 'Why it is not so dim as it was.' Feeling tired, I then told him to come again to me in the afternoon, when I again made passes and breathed over the eye, with increasing success. I regularly continued this for four or five days more and more successfully, until his left eye was not only completely restored, but his right eye thoroughly cleared also. He resumed his duties at once as coachman through the London season, and ever since; being still with us, with perfectly good eye-sight. I have since cured a fellow Spiritualist in a similar manner of a medically acknowledged cataract of a very bad type, and it has never returned."

A volume of Reports of the London Mesmeric Infirmary, 36, Weymouth-street, Portland-place, extending from 1849 to 1869, furnishes abundant and striking evidence of the value of mesmerism as a curative agent, and of its efficacy as an anæsthetic. Scattered up and down in the records of these twenty years, are cures of neuralgia, nervous pains and disorders, chorea, sciatica, and similar ailments. This one would look for, but other and more serious diseases yield to the same treatment. One remarkable case is that of inflammation of the shoulder-joint, in a boy of eleven years of age. The case was sent by Dr. Elliotson to Professor Ferguson, of King's College. He pronounced it one of slow inflammation, and recommended blistering, and cod liver oil. The shoulder was extremely tender to the touch, "the weight and dragging of the arm were insupportable," and the "disease threatened to produce devastation of the shoulder-joint, suppuration, exfoliation, and all the sad results of scrofulous disease of joints." Dr. Elliotson sent the patient to the Mesmeric Infirmary on the 22nd of March, 1854. Mr. Gardiner mesmerised the shoulder daily with instant effect. By the 13th of May the boy "could move the shoulder in all directions, allow it to hang down, and bear it to be pressed upon, and the arm to be moved in all directions by another person." Dr. Elliotson sent the patient to Mr. Ferguson, who wrote back that it was "indeed highly gratifying to see such a favourable change in a case which looked so alarming." There can be no mistake about such a cure as this.

Other cases of organic disease, or functional affections—I exclude nervous ailments for my present purpose—are very numerous. Inflammation of the eyes, asthma, abscesses, tumours, dropsy, paralysis of limbs, epilepsy, skin diseases, rheumatic and gouty affections, sprains, hemiplegia,—one case, in which the patient could not walk without the aid of two sticks, dragged his right leg, and could not bend it, was perfectly cured in six weeks—chronic bronchitis, hæmaturia, chronic pericarditis, quinsy, chronic ophthalmia with

ulceration, and nebulous opacity of the cornea (a case of Mr. White Cooper's, of extreme severity, cured absolutely in six months by daily mesmerism)—these are among the diseases which are recorded as having been treated with perfect success. Many of the cases are remarkable in a high degree, and all are recorded with complete precision by properly qualified observers. I might quote dozens where unquestioned cures of unmistakable disease were wrought. But I may, perhaps, do better if I first point to one of several cases where surgical operations were performed painlessly on mesmerised patients. I have before me a pamphlet of Dr. Elliotson's, in which he records, among other cases, one which may serve as a specimen.

The patient was a labourer, six feet high and forty-two years of age, who had suffered for nearly five years from neglected disease of the left knee, "the interior of the joint of which was found after amputation to be deeply and extensively ulcerated." He was mesmerised by Sir (then Mr.) William Topham, and the limb was removed by Mr. W. Squire Ward, surgeon, of Wellow Hall. "Mr. Ward, after one earnest look at the man, slowly plunged his knife into the centre of the outside of the thigh, directly to the bone, and then made a clear incision round the bone to the opposite point on the inside of the thigh. . . . The placid look of the man's countenance never changed for an instant, his whole frame rested, uncontrolled, in perfect stillness and repose; not a muscle was seen to twitch. To the end of the operation, including the sawing of the bone, securing the arteries, and applying the bandages, occupying a period of upwards of twenty minutes, he lay like a statue." Nor was this perfect repose interfered with when Mr. Ward "twice touched pretty roughly and with the points of the forceps, so that he in fact pricked, the divided end of the sciatic nerve." After the man had been removed to another room he stated, in answer to Mr. Topham, "I never felt any pain at all; only once I felt as if I heard a kind of crunching." The crunching, no doubt, was the sawing of the thigh bone.

M.A. (OXON.)

THE ROYAL GIFT OF HEALING.

The power of healing disease by a virtue conveyed through the hands has been known in all times and in all parts of the world, as testified by the histories of nations and by the narratives of nearly all travellers among primitive peoples. Exercised in the past by kings and priests, it was regarded as proper to them in their presumed divine character. Thus Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, Act 4 Sc. 3) puts this into the mouth of the king's physician:—

" * * * How he solicits Heaven
Himself best knows; but strangely visited people,
All swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures.
* * *
* * * For the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction."

But when subjects and laity were found to be similarly endowed it became clear that it was a gift belonging to our common humanity.

It is interesting, nevertheless, and instructive to learn what this power has done by royal hands.

In France history speaks of several kings conspicuous for the gift of healing, from Clovis downward. Philippe I. is named as one who lost the gift through the irregularities of his life. Some kings, we are told by Heylin in his *Cosmographie*, before exercising it prepared themselves by fasting. Philippe de Valois healed 1,400 sick people; Louis XIV. 1,600, using the formula with each "*Le Roy te touche, Dieu te guerisse!*" ("The King touches, may God heal thee!")

In England several kings from the time of Edward the Confessor, used the power. The so-called miraculous gifts of some of them are spoken of by Jeremy Collier. Malmesbury relates that a woman afflicted with scrofula was cured by the king rubbing her neck with his fingers—a royal precedent for this mode of healing. John of Gaddesden, chief Court physician,

when he found he could not cure certain patients submitted them to the king for touching. Clowes, Queen Elizabeth's physician, speaks of scrofula as a disease repugnant to nature, but curable by the royal touch. Evelyn, in his diary, March 28th, 1684, writes that: "So many were taken to be touched that each was required to have a certificate, and so great was the concourse of people with children at the surgeon's door for certificates that six or seven were crushed to death." The *London Gazette* for October, 1686, announced that the king would heal weekly, on Fridays. Wiseman, in his work on surgery, alludes to cures of King's Evil by the touch.

But as if to make it manifest that the efficacy of the touch was not specially royal, in the reign of the same king, Charles II., appeared Valentine Greatrakes, curing by the hand not only King's Evil but many other so-called intractable diseases. He published a book at Oxford, entitled, "An Account of Marvellous Cures Performed by the Stroaking of the Hands, by Mr. Valentine Greatrakes." This book was dedicated to the Hon. Robert Boyle, and contained the testimonies of persons of eminence in Church and State. It was reprinted in 1723.

Among kings the power seems to have varied in degree as we, in the present day, find it vary among us subjects. Some of them seem to have been advised to strengthen the power by a preliminary fast; the fasting of one was of nine days' duration. What was a royal fast we are not informed; surely not abstaining from food; perhaps it was taking fish, eggs, brown bread, and milk, instead of red meats and wines. Greatrakes himself could not, perhaps, have had a better dietetic preparation for his healing work; and modern magnetisers and mesmerisers might fast with advantage in a similar way.

After Greatrakes, one named Leverett, a gardener, announced himself as a healer; but he was not equal to extensive work, for he complained that "after touching thirty or forty sicke he felt as much goodnesse gone from him as if he had been digging eight roods of ground."

The kings who touched and rubbed, Greatrakes and Leverett, magnetisers, mesmerisers, and healers of subsequent and the present times, are they not all of one category? All of us may have the power to heal; some may be more largely endowed than others; each may have it of a particular degree and quality.

In many cases one touching or application is enough, but in very many others, repetitions more or less frequent are found necessary.

It astonishes many who have suffered from ailments which have come on quickly to find how quickly they have passed off under the action of the human magnetic or mesmeric force (*fluid*). This has been when they have been particularly reactive to the force, or susceptible. For illustration:—A lady, at times, comes to me, who is constitutionally subject to attacks of excessive morbid sensitiveness. I lay my hand, in mental prayer, upon her head, and tranquillity of the nervous system follows on the instant. If a suffering fellow-creature comes, I always pray mentally to the Heavenly Father for power to heal; for His is the power acting through us who make no claim to any special divine quality. A clergyman came with such derangement of the nervous system that his duties were impossible to him. A few mesmerisations restored his equilibrium, and he returned to his pulpit. Another came limping in with bad gouty pain; after a short treatment he rose, shook his limbs, and then danced about, saying, "This is not clerical, friend Didier, but it is joyful and thankful." A lady came recently with erysipelas of the face; her nose was very much swollen. Her troubles vanished at the end of one sitting. I have just received news from one who was pronounced to have his left lung consolidated in consequence of inflammation. I mesmerised him a few times during one month. He writes that he continues quite well.

Happier results from the too much disregarded human magnetism could not follow the historically-vaunted royal touch than those which abound in the experience of all mesmerisers.

In this work of healing beneficent spirits may co-operate, and some mesmerisers say they are conscious of it. This is quite credible and reasonable to those who believe, as I do, that there is an interblending of the spiritual with this sphere of being.

ADOLPHE DIDIER.

10, Berkeley-gardens, Kensington.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.—A sufficient number of male candidates to form two circles for preliminary investigation, are now before the Council, who will be glad to receive immediately the names of a few ladies.

STRAY THOUGHTS ON CURRENT TOPICS.

The Value of Organisation.

It is a maxim familiar to us all that "Union is Strength"; and by virtue of belief in the maxim, and by social necessity, organisations have sprung into existence, whose objects have been the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena, the expounding of spiritual philosophy, and the dissemination of the literature of the movement.

Now I venture to assert that these objects are good and useful ones, and I have frequently been perplexed and pained at the inconsistency which, whilst working zealously for Spiritualism in a particular direction, unmercifully condemns all methods not associated with its own. Is not organisation strength? Is it not better than want of organisation? No man of sense will dispute the point.

That organisation is absolutely necessary was proved in the past, and is being proved to-day, and a statement of how Spiritualism has developed itself in this town will show some of the causes which led to the establishing of a society.

About three years ago Spiritualism in North Shields was under a cloud. It had but few followers, but few defenders, and I think only two or three "circles." Since then much progress has been made. A few pious men and women (as earnest as pious) commenced the investigation of its phenomena in a proper frame of mind. They soon became convinced of the reality of spirit-communion, and this great fact so gladdened their whole being, that since that hour they have steadily pursued their upward course untroubled by the threats of former companions, and unawed by the voice of priestly authority. The fear of death was dispelled; and with enlightened vision they beheld all things made new; the Gospel of Jesus being at last to them a message of love and peace. It has interested and pleased me exceedingly, and is a cause of profound thankfulness, to hear men and women rapidly approaching their allotted term of three score years and ten, say: "Thank God for the light and blessings which Spiritualism has brought me. I was like one walking in darkness; the teachings of the churches and chapels never gave me such hope of immortality, such a glimpse of the 'life beyond the river.' Now I can understand the Gospels, and can appreciate the teachings of Paul."

Sir, this is no exaggeration. These remarks I have heard again, again, and again, and it is well to let them come to the front sometimes as an answer to the oft-repeated inquiry:—"What good is there in Spiritualism?"

Well, several additional circles were established in our midst; but one, the chief circle, grew to such dimensions as to make the inmates of the small house in which it was held, somewhat alarmed for the comfort of the sitters. The sitters, too, with commendable consideration, began to fear that they were intruding on the domestic comfort of their hosts, and thus it came to pass that a suggestion was made to hire a room to be used solely for investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism and engaging in devotional exercises. Thus was the Society born.

Unprejudiced minds will admit the difficulty of holding séances in small rooms overcrowded with enthusiastic sitters. Under such conditions physical comfort is impossible, and harmony exceedingly difficult of acquiring. It may be said—"Break up the large circle, and hold séances in several homes instead of in one." Here we are confronted with difficulties known only to the poor. Some member of the circle who would gladly offer his premises for holding a weekly service, is precluded from doing so because he is possessed of only two rooms, and the partitions are so thin that the presence of unfamiliar men and women would disturb the sleeping children. Another has three rooms, but the aged parents who live with the family are prejudiced against Spiritualism, and filial respect moves the children to be silent on a theme they long to expound. Another member has a sick wife; a wife has a sick husband; a son dare not broach the subject to his parents; and in hundreds of other different ways, easy enough to conceive, many true-hearted Spiritualists are prevented from carrying out their wishes. Under these circumstances what is to be done? Break up circle-sitting? Forego spirit-communion? Or go from door to door asking permission to sit with the inmates? Or as another alternative, shall they purchase the weekly literature of the movement, and read of spirit-communion they must never enjoy; and of phenomenal wonders they are doomed never to witness? Really, sir, I have no patience with people who can view Spiritualism from no other standpoint than that which leads to the advancement of their

own particular interests or hobbies. Organisation is absolutely necessary to diffuse abroad a knowledge of spiritual phenomena, philosophy, science, and religion, but like all things connected with and inter-penetrating human affairs, it is not an unalloyed blessing.

We Spiritualists may boast as we please about freedom of thought, and may profess to esteem a man for what he is intrinsically worth, rather than for his worldly possessions; but I have found, to my great regret, too much consideration given to those who are only great in worldly wealth. Spiritualists, as a rule, have not strength of mind sufficient to move them to elect to the highest offices men super-eminent in moral and spiritual qualities. The chief desire has seemed to be to elect men who occupy the best social positions, and are best able to subscribe to financial projects. And yet my experience has shewn me that the truest manhood of England is to be found amongst those who earn their living by the sweat of their brows.

My heart, Mr. Editor, went out in affection the other evening to one of these, a man earning about twenty-six or seven shillings a week, with which he supports himself, a wife, and several children. We had assembled for devotion, and my friend offered up a beautiful prayer, in which the following passage occurred:—"O Thou Infinite and All Merciful Father, we thank Thee for the blessings of this life, for Thy bounteousness and ever-loving care. Thou hast been with us and guarded us in the past; O be our Father, Friend, and Guide in days to come. Teach us to approach Thee with grateful hearts, and in a spirit of humility to ask the aid of Thy holy ones, the angels, who execute Thy will by ministering to the wants of their mortal brethren. And in every trial to which Thou mayest think fit to subject us, O teach us to recognise the hand of a watchful Parent teaching His children their strength and weakness; and thus may we grow in wisdom, blessed by the influence of Thy abiding love."

Sir, this prayer, coming from one barely able to keep body and soul together, struck me as a splendid example of true manhood; such manhood as, if a soldier, would conquer the world with a leader like Cromwell; if an inspired speaker, would work as Paul and Jesus did, and unhesitatingly die their deaths, if necessary; but if constrained by circumstances to the drudgery of a mechanical life, would strive to see in every gleam of light which brightened the darkness of his lot the smile of an angel, the presence of his God.

If societies are in need of representative Spiritualists, let them choose men of this stamp—men good in disposition, rather than remarkable for the swollen state of their dollar bags. Not that one should object to riches, or inveigh against the owners of England's broad acres, but if the richest man in the community be chosen to occupy the highest place of honour, let it be plainly seen by all that he is as good as he is rich. In conclusion, I would add, for the sake of peace and harmony let the term of office for which officers are elected be as brief as possible, so as to distribute the burdens and honours of societies as widely as possible. This will prevent complaint of overwork, or the presuming of one man above his fellows, and check the tendency of societies to split up into two hostile camps, like the great political parties of the State.

Yes, sir! organisation is a necessity of our cause, and let us aim to make it a success by teaching each unit to work for the interest of all, rather than for his own personal comfort or glorification.

North Shields.

T.C.E.

THE OTHER SIDE.

Father, when my life is over, and I stand upon the shore,
With the dear world all behind me, and eternity before,
In that ocean, O my Father! must I plunge for evermore?

Father! life is sweet, and sweeter is the sense that I am Thine;
Can the love I bear Thee perish, or can space that love confine?
If my soul can die and lose Thee, how, Eternal, art Thou mine?

Could a finite thing created in the bounds of time and space,
Could it live and grow and love Thee, catch the glory of Thy face,
Fade and die, be gone for ever, have no being, know no place?

No, my soul will not believe it; Thou'rt in me and I in Thee.
I will listen to the message that my own soul brings to me,
Shamed that Faith should ask a token, doubt her own eternity.

When that ocean closes round me, let what will, O Lord, betide;
Though the dear world fade behind me, Thou wilt guard me,
Thou wilt guide;

Thou wilt still be with me, Father—with me on the other side.

E.B.

SPIRIT INTERCOURSE AND ITS LESSONS.

By the Author of "The Life Beyond the Grave."

It is one of the popular delusions that Spiritualism begins and ends with table-rapping and other wonders, and it often takes some time before the new convert to Spiritualism can interest himself in anything higher. We are all naturally prone to be selfish, and our first question is usually "What personal advantage can I gain from this Spiritualism?" Thus inquirers run from one clairvoyant to another to have their fortunes told or to be advised how they can make money. Others go from séance to séance intent upon seeing some new marvel.

All who thus pursue Spiritualism from selfish motives invariably come to grief. The advice they receive turns out to be bad, or phenomena prove to be fraudulent which at first were beyond all doubt genuine. This is the reward of all who abuse Spiritualism. It was never intended to benefit us in material affairs nor yet to gratify a morbid curiosity, but to elevate our thoughts and purify and ennoble us; to lead us nearer to the Christ-life. It teaches us that there is a life beyond the grave, and what the nature and conditions of that life are; but its chief aim is to induce us to lead better lives here and thus better prepare ourselves for the life to come.

I have for twelve months or more attended weekly séances at which no physical phenomena whatever have been witnessed—nothing but clairvoyance and trance-mediumship, and séances of this kind seem to me best calculated to benefit the sitters.

For the benefit of non-Spiritualists it may be as well to observe that the medium is a respectable, pure-minded young woman, quite incapable of any dishonesty, and the spirits "possess" her precisely in the same way that spirits possessed men in the days of Christ and the Apostles, when we read of Christ carrying on a conversation with a possessing spirit. The spirit of the medium is either temporarily withdrawn from the body or mesmerised into a state of unconsciousness, and the spirit controlling simply uses her bodily organs for the purpose of speaking to us. Since, of course, the spirit has parted company with its own physical organs, it follows that in order to make itself heard in the world of matter it must temporarily borrow a material body from a medium. This is the rationale of trance-mediumship. The medium after the séance knows nothing whatever of what she has said or done.

At these weekly gatherings the teachings of the spirits have been of the highest and purest description, corresponding to the lofty morality taught by Christ; but without one scrap of "doctrine." Such lessons in charity, kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, unselfishness and purity, as we have received from these holy messengers, accompanied usually by soul-inspiring prayers to the Most High, could only come from the pure and the good in the spirit-world, and would for ever set at rest in the minds of all who heard them any doubts as to "whether Spiritualism is of God," or is not "forbidden in the Bible," &c.

In order to obtain pure and holy influences like these it is necessary to keep the circle select, and exclude all whose spirit surroundings are impure or likely to be inharmonious. Thus only can successful séances and truthful messages be obtained.

The greatest lesson which we have derived from these séances seems to be from observing how much time is devoted by the spirit guides of the medium to raising their darkened and unhappy fellow creatures on the other side. Scores of unhappy men and women ("spirits," of course, and invisible to us) have been brought to this circle and have listened in rapt attention (so we have been afterwards told) to the addresses delivered by the bright and lofty spirits who have controlled and spoken through the medium. Often when we have wondered how any good could be done to others by our small weekly gatherings, our spirit friends have said, "If you could see the tearful faces of those unhappy ones who gathered round, and listened to the words of comfort and hope the medium has uttered, and could read their thankful hearts and see what happiness has been bestowed, what hopes have been raised, what darkness of despair, has been illumined by these words of love, you would not think the time has been wasted although on your side you may have seen nothing."

We have had murderers, suicides, drunkards, thieves, libertines, and harlots brought to our gatherings and spiritually raised. At first they have been full of hatred, revenge, gloom and doubt, but under the sweet and loving influence of the bright spirits conducting the circle, their hearts have been gradually touched, and as their aspirations have become brighter

they have one by one been allowed to control and speak through the medium, and have poured out their confessions of sin, suffering, and repentance, and have been invariably taught that they must pray to God for help and must then seek out those they have wronged and obtain their forgiveness; and that in order to raise themselves to a happier condition, they must, above all things, busy themselves in raising those beneath them or their late companions.

Invariably the first duty that a repentant sinner seems to be enjoined to engage in is to *win over some of his late companions in evil*. It seems to be one of the great laws of spirit-life that the high and bright spirits are really less fit and less able to raise the lower and darkened ones than are those who are nearest to their own level. The latter seem better able to understand their needs. How true this law is in our own world! The poor criminal can be more easily touched by a man who has been reformed from his own ranks—who has felt and suffered as he has and can sympathise more closely with him—than by the refined scholar from Oxford or Cambridge. Hence it is that working men prefer Methodist preachers and men from their own station in life. So it is in spirit-life; the high and bright ones always work through intermediaries, and thus it is that Christ is not personally visible to any in the spirit-world whom we communicate with, though his influence is felt everywhere.

The great work, therefore, in the next life whereby people "get on," is helping to raise those below them. Therein lies their happiness, and thereby alone do they improve their surroundings.

Another great lesson that our spirit circle has taught us is that every darkened one can be touched by the power of love. Thus, if it is a woman who has fallen and is grovelling in sin, in vile thoughts and evil companionship, there is almost always some purer and brighter one who is drawn by the all-powerful attraction of love to try and raise the unhappy one. With men it is almost invariably the one who is destined to be his counterpart, his eternal companion in spirit-life. Not until these are united in love (which can only be by the lower one being raised to the level of the brighter one) can they be perfectly happy. Occasionally it is a sister or a mother, but whoever it is, there is invariably some angel bending over the sinner trying to raise him or her.

The great lessons which our circle has taught us may be summarised as follows:—

That no mere creed is of the slightest avail in the next life in promoting our happiness. The one thing that can alone raise us in the next life is leading a good life here; and we cannot better illustrate a good life than by pointing to the exhortations of Christ in the Four Gospels.

That mere belief in Christ's Atonement will not in the least do away with the necessity of wiping out our sins, in personal repentance, in acts of compensation to the injured one, or in forgiveness for wrongs suffered; and not until every wrong has been thus atoned for by ourselves can we rise in the life beyond the grave.

THOUGHT-READING AS AN AMUSEMENT.

By F. Corder.

From "Cassell's Family Magazine."

The statement that this extraordinary power is attainable to some degree by almost every individual will probably be received with surprise and incredulity, yet such is the fact. Incomprehensible as this mysterious phenomenon is, it is so easily produced that it is singular that it has only so recently attracted notice. The marvels of mesmerism and clairvoyance (which seem to be in some sort related to this) are best left in the hands of scientific and duly qualified men, being dangerous things for the ignorant to meddle with; but thought-reading is a simple matter which can hurt no one, but may afford to many some hours of interesting and novel recreation. It is as a novel amusement for social evenings that we here intend to describe some of its simpler phenomena.

First, to enlighten such of our readers as have never seen any thought-reading, or heard it described, we will give an example. Two persons are *equally* concerned in the result; one of these fixes his mind wholly and absorbingly upon some object, say, which he either sees actually, or in his mind's eye. The success of the experiment depends much upon the thinker's power—a power sometimes to be acquired, and enormously to be developed by practice—of concentrating his mind upon the *one* idea.

The other person—the reader—who has his eyes usually bandaged, so that no external objects may distract his attention, grasps the thinker's hands (the two sitting face to face, and as closely as possible), and holds his own mind as blank as possible. If he have any gift of receptivity he will soon, sometimes instantly, see in his mind's eye the form of the object, more or less vaguely, and then perhaps all its details. The appearance of an object, written words, figures, colours, may all be discerned with marvellous accuracy after a little practice, the chief condition being that two people who by experiment find that they suit one another well, should develop their powers by practice, and not try much with others.

But now to clear the ground by some very simple preliminary experiments, which conclusively prove that one mind may affect another by the simple exercise of the will. Let one person, as subject, stand passively, with closed eyes and relaxed ancle-muscles, ready to fall in any direction. Let two others stand, one before and the other behind the subject, with outstretched arms, and rest the palms of their hands as lightly as possible against his sides, neither supporting nor pressing him. Now, if these two firmly and simultaneously will the subject to fall in a certain direction when he lets himself go, ten to one he will fall as they wish. The direction is best determined by a fourth person, who should stand in such a position as to be invisible to the subject, even if his eyes were open, and should indicate "forwards," "backwards," "right," or "left" by a silent gesture. Of course the sceptic will say that the subject is unconsciously pressed over on that side. Well, then let the sceptic try.

The second experiment is of the same nature, but brings us nearer to thought-reading proper. The subject is blindfolded and taken out of the room. The rest of the company then decide upon some act for him to perform—to touch or move a certain article of furniture or the like. Two steady-minded persons then fetch him in, and place each a hand on his shoulder, taking care neither to impede nor direct his movements. They keep their minds firmly fixed on wishing him to perform the appointed act. The success of the experiment will then be more or less complete according as those concerned are fitted for the business of Reading or Thinking. These two experiments form a fund of amusement for a family party which is not too juvenile or noisy; for we cannot too strongly impress upon would-be experimentalists that all matters of this kind require to be undertaken in a sober and unexcited frame of mind, levity and laughter being fatal to success.

In early experiments in actual thought-reading, the Thinker, who will probably find unexpected difficulty in concentrating his mind on one thing, had better think of actual and simple objects, placing them on a small table close to him, so that he sees nothing else. The Reader, too, will find a difficulty in allowing his mind to become blank at will, and may scarcely be able to refrain from guessing, or wondering, what the object may be. The slightest exercise of the brain in this way is probably fatal to success. A sheet of bright-coloured paper is said to be the easiest thing to guess, and a row of figures the most difficult, though our own experience does not quite corroborate this. When a good Reader and Thinker have been found, many astounding experiments may be successfully undertaken, a few of which we will here enumerate.

1. Completely unknown objects may be described, written words and even sentences discerned, the position of a hidden article indicated, or any desired act performed by the experienced Reader.
2. Some person may pinch or otherwise hurt the Thinker in any part, and the Reader will experience a feeling of pain in a corresponding place.
3. Any flavour, however delicate or peculiar, tasted by the Thinker can be detected by the Reader.
4. The preceding experiments, as well as many others, are rendered far more marvellous when accomplished *without contact*. In fact, after a little practice, a good Reader can succeed equally well when the Thinker is at a distance of some yards.

We must here particularly impress upon our readers one thing. *Thought-reading* is a misnomer. *Mental picture-reading* is the real name for this power. When, for instance, the Thinker has fixed upon a word or a number he must not keep the mere *idea* of it in his head, or repeat it perpetually to himself; he must *see* it in his mind's eye, as if written up in chalk letters, for it is only by the faculty of *inner sight*—if there is such a

thing—that the Reader reads. Thought-reading is very fatiguing to both parties concerned, but especially to the Reader, who should beware of too long-continued exercise of his powers. We have spoken of both in the masculine gender for convenience, but according to our own experience, men make the best Thinkers and women the best Readers. This may not be an universal rule, however.

There remains but one thing more to say. Every one who sees these phenomena will ask—does ask—"What explanation do you—does science—offer for these marvels?" The answer is very simple, and may be given in one word—None.

THE MAGNETESCOPE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—With regard to the "Magnetoscope"—pronounced by your correspondent, Dr. Wyld, to be "dead and buried"—I am able to announce, with pleasure, that it has merely enjoyed what we hope may prove to have been an invigorating slumber; a work on the subject having been for some time in preparation, by a physician in Edinburgh, to whom all the memoranda, instruments, &c., of the late Dr. Leger, were delivered by that gentleman's executors.

Possibly, the meeting referred to by Dr. Wyld, as having taken place at Brighton, under the auspices of a physician of eminence, may mean the series of experiments made by Dr. Madden and W. Sharp, Esq., F.R.S., with a view of testing the influence of various substances—gold, iron, arsenic, &c., upon Dr. Leger's instrument.

Dr. Madden (a homœopathic practitioner, at Brighton) had, at first, warmly advocated the invention, and performed with it, in public, many surprising experiments. Subsequently, however, a doubt arose in his mind whether the unconscious exercise of muscular power was not a larger element in the matter than had been believed.

The remarks and observations of the two gentlemen, though unfavourable to Dr. Leger's views, were made in a true philosophical spirit, were published by him in their own words, and welcomed as a means of eliciting a deeper attention to the analysis, and more careful appreciation of the surrounding circumstances. He merely complained that the experimentalists had not separated his chaff from his wheat, and, on the failure of one or two experiments, taken upon them to pronounce the whole unworthy of scientific investigation.

To meet their principal objections, Dr. Leger remodelled his instrument in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of its being influenced by muscular force; and this had not long been completed when his premature death withdrew the subject from public notice.

To the questions of your correspondent, Mr. J. T. Young, I can only say that if he will refer to the "Philosophical Transactions" for 1759, and the experiments of Robert Symmer, and Cigna, he may modify his opinion as to silk being a non-conductor.

The only use of the magnetoscope's non-conducting arm (as explained in my former letter) to prove that the electric current alone supplied the motive power—the touch of the operator's finger on the immovable disc setting the pendulum or the conducting arm in violent motion, while the other remained still.

In reply to "W. W. C.," I cannot inform him where a magnetoscope, as remodelled by Dr. Leger, can be obtained, ready made. During that gentleman's life, the instruments were constructed and sold, under his direction, by an agent whose name I cannot recall. Their price was about two guineas.

HENRY SPICER.

MESMERIC CLAIRVOYANCE.—Professor Barrett has sent us particulars of another very interesting and well-authenticated case of clairvoyance. It will appear in our next issue.

C. A. S. CONVERSAZIONE.—The next *conversazione* at 38, Great Russell-street, will be held on the evening of Monday week, March 5th, when it is expected that some matters of interest will be brought before the meeting.

GHOSTS!—We remind our readers again of the circumstance that, at the Fortnightly Discussion Meeting to be held at 7.30, on Monday evening next, at the rooms of the C. A. S., 38, Great Russell-street, Mr. Podmore will read a paper on "Ghosts." Mr. Podmore has been so fortunate as to collect some valuable information on the subject, and his paper therefore may be expected to have a special interest.

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

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GENERAL GHOST-LOGY.

"It is an interesting inquiry," writes the pious and eloquent author of the *Protoplast*, "how far we are warranted by profane and sacred history to believe in the visitation of departed spirits in visible form. Whatever may be said of the credulity of the vulgar, men of great intellect have, almost invariably, been believers in what are commonly called supernatural appearances; and I never met a person of any strength of mind who set aside the mass of evidence which has accumulated on the subject."

Even though these apparitions, occurring in close relation to passing events, may have their origin in the unhealthy action of the brain, yet they may be used by the Omnipotent for a manifested purpose and a special end. In this manner it may be surmised that the disturbed brain of the unhappy Saul produced an image of Samuel, the Almighty using this circumstance as a means to make known the coming judgment;—a more reasonable explanation than that the spirit of Samuel was directly sent—since, in the latter case, he would not have murmured at the mission—"Why hast thou disquieted me?" &c.

God still works wonders, but by natural means; nor need we be apprehensive that, in dwelling on these means, our faith in the illimitable power which created the laws by which it works will be weakened. As is the sameness of elementary matter to the chemist, who, while using the affinities of elementary substances for each other, never can transmute them, so, by whatever new and wondrous path we approach the Eternal Source, the end is the same—a something existent, insoluble, never to be demonstrated. The keen-sighted hero who discovered that Providence generally sided with the big battalions, was, after all, not much in error—merely overlooking the predestinating hand that beckoned those great battalions to the field.

Vast as is the amount of knowledge the labours of fifty centuries have gathered in, an infinite harvest yet remains to reap. Has any science even ventured to imagine a limit to its sphere of search? Is, for example, the animal kingdom exhausted? Combinations of matter, new to us, are constantly producing new forms of life. Even with some whose generations have long been denizens of this globe, we are yet imperfectly, if at all, acquainted.

So late as 1868, there was added to the Zoological Gardens, and still exists there, a huge animal—the hairy-cared, two-horned rhinoceros (*R. Lasiotis*), never previously known, and of which no part or portion was to be found in any museum, at home or abroad.

Mr. Henry Lee, writing of the marine monster known as the sea-serpent, of which twenty-three appearances (some testified on oath) have been recorded, concludes an able paper in these words:—

"I think it by no means impossible that gigantic animals, unknown to science, may have their *habitat* in the greater depths of the sea, only occasionally coming to the surface,

and, further, that there may still exist, though supposed to be extinct, some of the old sea reptiles whose fossil remains tell of their magnitude and habits, as well as others of species unknown even to palæontologists."

And the popular physiologist, Dr. Andrew Wilson, asks:—

"Is there anything more improbable in the idea of a gigantic development of an ordinary marine snake into a veritable giant of its race, than in the production of cuttle fishes, which, until the last few years, remained unknown to the foremost pioneers of science?"

Another distinguished naturalist, long resident in Central Africa, has assured us that, in the trackless wastes and forests, stretching south and east, there will be unquestionably found animals hitherto unclassified by the zoologist, not excepting the "fabled" unicorn.

So, in the rich abundance of the vegetable kingdom, how little is revealed, compared with what lies hid, of the powers and properties of those innumerable structures, every one of which, we have reason to believe, has its especial adaptation to the ever-changing, ever-recurring needs of man! The treasury of nature seems never the poorer for the perpetual drain. So will it probably remain, until the laborious pursuit of knowledge is lost in the light of infinite wisdom. Yet it is good for us to gather up the fragments of that benign feast with which creation began, and he that would restrict the search by arrogant announcements that in such and such a walk there is nothing more to find, is false to his fellow-workers, false to nature, false to God.

Seeing then how limited is our acquaintance with things of lower nature, it is strange that any new suggestion having reference to that complex structure, man himself, and seeming capable of analysis, should be so frequently received with disfavour. The discoverer of a new organ in the material human frame would be hailed as a sort of benefactor to his kind. How much more does *he* deserve who demonstrates powers hitherto latent in the nobler part of man! On what principle is examination deprecated? If an assumed discovery be beneficent, how much may not be lost! If noxious, the bare denial of its existence is but a feeble remedy. Let those who desire to promote legitimate inquiry bear in mind that a broad distinction lies between cases of mere cerebral excitement and such as I have hitherto treated of. Hallucinations are as fully recognised, if they are not quite so common, as colds in the head. Few of those who might have noticed the twitch or toss of the head peculiar to an eminent counsel (it was, I believe, Mr. Bodkin), were aware that it was engendered by a perpetual vision of a raven on his left shoulder. A gentleman, not long since residing in Broadway, New York, transacted business daily under the immediate supervision of his deceased great-uncle, who, in a laced coat and ruffles, occupied a large easy chair, placed expressly to receive the honoured vision, without whose company, Mr. R. declared, he could not, after a time, accomplish his day's work in comfort.

Intense application has frequently produced delusions of this kind, and when no relaxation has been afforded to the over-taxed brain they have become permanent. Similar results have attended extreme grief, or long continued anxiety. Often, if a sense is not subjected to actual delusion, it is quickened to an inconceivable degree. I once heard a lady, in a mixed circle, relate a curious experience of her own, which bears upon this question.

She had one day attended afternoon service at a little country church in the neighbourhood of the house at which she was visiting. Owing to some private sorrow which oppressed her mind, she found unusual difficulty in following the sacred ritual. In spite of herself, the rebel thoughts would perpetually revert to worldly crosses and cares, when, happening to raise her eyes, she saw—clearly and sharply written on the white panels of the singers' gallery, which

but the moment before were black, the text: "*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*" While yet gazing on the reassuring words, they began to fade away, and presently became completely invisible.

Pondering on this strange occurrence, and unwilling to doubt the evidence of her own eyes, she repaired to the church on the following day, and, placing herself in the same position as before, fixed her gaze intently on the gallery. Nothing was to be seen! She then ascended to the gallery itself, and examined the panel closely. Presently she was enabled to distinguish the forms of certain letters which had evidently once composed a text, since painted over. The closest scrutiny could not have revealed a continuous meaning, had not her impression of the previous day guided her to the conclusion that the text she had seen so distinctly had actually at one time been painted on the face of the gallery.

There are instances in which the collision of two ardent and impressive natures, dwelling, for the time, upon a common object, has produced similar phenomena. That very blunt and homely proverb, "One fool makes many" may be not wholly devoid of a certain philosophical significance.

It was, I think, in 1848, that an occurrence took place in a rural locality, though within ten miles of the metropolis, which came more immediately under my own observation. A large landed proprietor, not very far from London, had, for his head gamekeeper, a man named Hunt, a big powerful fellow, who had served in the army, and was rather noted in the village in which he lived for his daring, reckless character, evinced more than once in the petty wars of a preserve peculiarly exposed to the forays of the modern moss-troopers of London. Village scandal whispered that Mr. Hunt and his lady lived not always on the happiest terms; that the gentleman's habits were—to use a gentle term—indomestic, his affections flighty, his attentions discursive,—a certain rustic belle of the neighbourhood being, moreover, confidently pointed at as the principal cause of those family dissensions which were hurrying Mrs. Hunt to a premature grave. However that may have been, it did so happen that the poor woman became very ill, and, after a short interval, expired.

That rigid system of economy, hinted at by Hamlet as possibly pervading his royal mother's household, prevailed likewise in that of Mr. Hunt; for, within two days of his wife's decease, he and his innamorata were made one. They had been married about a month, when, one night, after retiring to rest, an eager tapping was heard outside the lattice. Imagining it was some traveller who had missed his road, the lady got up, went to the window, opened it, and dropped, with a piercing shriek, upon the floor.

"What now, girl? What's that for?" growled her lord.

"Your wife! your wife!" screamed the girl, wringing her hands, and pointing, as if fascinated, to the open window. "There! you can see her! There—there!"

"Nonsense, you frightened fool!" said her affable lord. "Go, look again, and shut the window, can't you?"

The woman, however, persisted, and although (being, as the neighbours afterwards assured us, a "plucky wench") she soon recovered some composure, nothing could induce her to close the window, or to return to bed. At last, with an angry oath, Hunt got up and approached the window. The next instant he staggered back, white as a sheet, and in strong convulsions! His wife, scarcely less agitated than himself, had to obtain assistance,—and it was some time before the man was sufficiently himself to tell his story. He had, he solemnly averred, seen his deceased wife standing within a foot of the lattice, in the dress she usually wore, and gazing full in his face!

So utterly was the man's courage prostrated by what he had seen, that he was, for hours, like one suddenly struck with frenzy. The scene was described as terrible, in the

extreme, to those to whom Hunt's fearless character was most familiar. Seated in a chair, his gigantic frame quivering from head to foot in a sort of *agon* of horror—he perpetually wrung his hands, repeating:—

"My wife! my wife! She is come back to punish me for my sins! What shall I do? What shall I do?" &c.

Nor could the presence and reasonings of the neighbours, whom his new wife had called around them, prevail, for many hours, to restore him to anything like his former self. She, on the other hand, had completely regained her self-possession, and repeated, in a perfectly calm and collected manner, her profound conviction that it was the spirit of her deceased predecessor, and nothing else, that had occasioned their alarm. Six weeks later, Hunt was thrown from his horse, which, by trampling on his face and head, injured him so severely as to endanger his life—an accident of which the apparition was at once pronounced to have been the harbinger.

The story lingered in the village records for many a year, and I remember being invited, during a shooting visit to the neighbourhood, to visit the very cottage, and be introduced to the very lattice-window, made celebrated by the ghostly visitation.

In connection with the general subject of these illusions of eye or ear, I do not know that any incident has puzzled me more than that with which I will conclude this paper. It is simply inexplicable on the basis of any theory hitherto suggested, while to doubt it is to believe that several gentlemen of high intelligence and stainless honour have united in the invention and dissemination of a gross and most circumstantial falsehood.

Some twenty-five years since, curious rumours were afloat, relative to a certain old family seat, of which it is not permissible to state more than that it was situated near Frome, Somersetshire. Despite its ghostly reputation, however, it was never without occupants, nor did the rumours I have alluded to cause any diminution in the number of visitors who were constantly availing themselves of the owner's hospitality. The circumstance most frequently associated with the rumours aforesaid, was that on almost every night, at twelve o'clock, a certain something—only describable as a *sound*—entered one of the corridors at one end, and passed out at the other. It mattered not who might be present. At certain seasons, almost as regularly as night succeeded day, the strange sound recurred, and was precisely that which would have been occasioned by a lady wearing the high-heeled shoes of a former period (nay, of this!), and a full silk dress, sweeping through the corridor. Nothing was ever *seen*. It so happened that my brother met, at a dinner-party, one of the more recent ear-witnesses of this phenomenon, and the following account is almost in the latter's words:—

"I was visiting two years ago, at a house near Frome, when my attention was attracted, one day at dinner, to a conversation that was going on relative to the haunted character of B. House, near Frome. When informed of the details, I learned that a particular corridor in the mansion was, almost every night, the scene of an occurrence that had hitherto defied all explanation. One of the party present had himself been a guest at B., and, being sceptical and devoid of fear, requested permission to keep vigil in the haunted gallery. He did so, witnessed the phenomenon, and frankly owned that nothing on earth would induce him to repeat the experiment.

"My curiosity being thoroughly roused by the manifest belief accorded by all present to this gentleman's story, I obtained an introduction to the proprietor of B., and received from him a ready permission to pass a night, or more, if desired, in the haunted spot. I was empowered, moreover, to select any companion I chose, and accordingly invited an old friend, Mr. W. K.—who happened to be shooting in the neighbourhood—to accompany me. K.,

like myself, was disposed to incredulity, and was positively assured either that nothing unusual would occur on the night when two such sentries were on duty, or that we should have no great difficulty in unearthing the disturbing spirit.

"The family were from home, but, having authority to make any arrangements we pleased, K. and I proceeded to B., intending, at all events, to devote two days to the experiment. *This* was not to be carried out! We dined early, and, in order to make certain of the clearness of our heads, drank nothing but a little table-beer. It wanted yet several hours to midnight when we took up our position in the corridor. It was of considerable length, with a door at each extremity, and one or two at the side. As the watch was to be a prolonged one, and it was necessary to keep awake and alert, we had brought some cards, and now, combining business with pleasure, we placed our table so as completely to barricade the passage—our two chairs exactly filling up the space that remained, so that no mortal creature could possibly press through without disturbing us. We also placed two lighted candles on the floor, near the wall, at two or three feet from the table, on the side from which the mysterious footsteps always approached—and, with two life-preservers within reach, our preparations were complete.

"We played picquet, and then *écarté*, till the house-clock sounded midnight. Mechanically, we dropped the cards, and gazed along the dim corridor. No sounds followed, and after a minute or so, we took up our cards, when K. observed, with a yawn, that as the visitor never came after twelve we might as well finish the game and retire. I looked at my watch, and found that the house-clock was fast. It wanted yet three minutes, and we accordingly waited.

"Exactly at the time specified the door at the end seemed to open and re-close. A conviction, not easy to describe, was upon our minds that *something* had entered. Another instant and the silence was broken by a tapping sound, as of a light person, wearing high-heeled shoes, quietly approaching us up the gallery, each step more distinct than the last, as would be the case under ordinary circumstances. It was a firm, regular tread—light, yet determined—and was accompanied by a sound between a sweep, a rustle, and a whistle, not comparable to anything but the brushing of a stiff silken dress against the walls.

"How K. and I looked, as the sounds advanced, as it were, to storm us, I will not pretend to say. For myself, I was petrified with amazement; and neither of us, I believe, moved hand or foot. On—on—on—came the tap and rustle. They reached the lighted candles on the floor, and passed them without even disturbing the flame. Then the tapping ceased, but the invisible silken robe seemed to rise, brushing the wall on both sides close to our heads. Then the tapping re-commenced on the *other* side of the table, and, so receding, made its exit at the other door. There had not been even a shadow at which to grasp or strike. It was sound alone."

Such was the history; and I feel, as I have said, that any attempt to explain this phenomenon to my own satisfaction, and that of others, would be perfectly futile. It was understood that, on one occasion, a nurse in the family was compelled, one night, to pass through the corridor at the witching hour, leading with her a little girl *who was deaf and dumb*. While doing so the sounds passed. The child shrank back in the utmost terror, struggling and moaning to get away. Nor could she ever be induced to enter the corridor again without evincing the most frantic alarm.

The mansion of B. remains in the occupation of the same family; but certain modern improvements have greatly changed its aspect since the occurrence of the incident I have mentioned.

HENRY SPICER.

"CONFESSIONS OF A MEDIUM."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The footnote under Mr. Riko's article (I have his consent to name him), in your issue of the 3rd inst., induces me to ask permission for a few remarks in your columns; and I sincerely hope the impartiality of "LIGHT" will be such that my reasonable request will be granted.

Scientific men like Crookes, Zöllner, and others, have rendered great service by demonstrating the reality of phenomena in a rational way. Others may be also useful in bringing their experience before the Spiritualists, and exposing the John King business of certain well-known individuals who advertise their names as mediums. And this, in our opinion, is what the author of the "Confessions" did.

It is not the question whether he acted properly in the past, when he came to the knowledge of the way in which the so-called manifestations were produced by the famous medium (F). The only questions to be considered are: Did the author tell the truth? and did not he turn to the right path in abandoning a career which fills every man of character with the utmost disgust?

That he tells nothing but the truth, as far as regards the Continent, we *know*. Correspondence from people belonging to the fashionable class in different places lies before us, and confirms the author's narrative in every detail; and are we to consider that while he tells the truth as regards the Continent he is lying in regard to England? We are not disposed here to accept such an explanation. That it is not agreeable for dupes to learn from the Press in what way the famous medium imposed upon their credulity we must admit; but let it be borne in mind that, even in this case, private interest ought to be sacrificed for public benefit.

Has not every inquirer for some time past observed how various mediums, one after the other, after having been exposed, have finished their career by leaving "the spirits" on the stage in the form of muslin, beards, and phosphor oil? Is this not the chief and only reason why the flood of miracles, by which spiritualistic organs were overflowed, has now been stopped? Let us have moral courage enough to answer in the affirmative.

And now, as regards the author's resolution to turn his back towards tricks and tricksters, and to warn the public against them. Should not every honest man applaud such a step? Was there left any other way for the author to settle the account with God and his own conscience?

When I, therefore, congratulate the author of "Confessions" on his work I am but expressing the feelings of a number of inquirers here; amongst whom the book is well-known and duly appreciated.—Enclosing my card, I remain, dear Sir, respectfully your subscriber,

The Hague.

J.

CURE OF DIABETES.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I will feel greatly obliged to any of your correspondents who will furnish me with authentic information as to the cure of a *genuine* case of diabetes mellitus through any "mesmeric" or "healing" agency. The disease is recognised as incurable by the profession, running its own course according to circumstances. It appears to me that if one-tenth of what we hear of the cure of functional nervous diseases is true, diabetes ought to come within the range of possible cure; since it is pretty clear that, if the disease can be traced to disorder of nerve-centres at the top of the spinal cord, it is a near neighbour to diseases directly amenable to *vital treatment*.

If any gentleman has personal experience in this matter he will greatly oblige by communicating with the undersigned, as a friend and patient of his might thereby be benefited.

Trusting you can find space for my question,—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. E. P.

P.S.—Can anyone tell me if the *Zoist* records a cure of diabetes?

February 17th, 1883.

SPIRITUALISM AND INSANITY.—The psychological phenomena which present themselves in certain phases of mediumship, claim the attention and profound study of the scientific physician; for they suggest the cause and the remedy for a large class of mental derangements which hitherto have only been consigned to incurability in lunatic asylums.—*Dr. Chararain*.

PERSONALITY AND THE UNIVERSAL MIND.

By John G. Purdon, M.B.T.C.D.

Sir Isaac Newton, in the queries at the end of his "Opticks," after offering what he considered to be fair and reasonable suggestions as to the ultimate constitution of the material universe, concludes as follows:—

"Now by the help of these Principles, all material Things seem to have been compos'd of the hard and solid Particles above mentioned, Variouslly associated in the first Creation by the Counsel of an intelligent Agent. For it became him who created them to set them in order. And if he did so, it's unphilosophical to seek for any other Origin of the World, or to pretend that it might arise out of a Chaos by the mere Laws of Nature; though being once form'd, it may continue by those Laws for many Ages. For while Comets move in very eccentric Orbs in all manner of Positions, blind Fate could never make all the Planets move one and the same way in Orbs concentrick, some inconsiderable irregularities excepted, which may have arisen from the mutual Actions of Comets and Planets upon one another, and which will be apt to increase; till this System wants a Reformation. Such a wonderful Uniformity as the Planetary System must be allowed the Effect of Choice. And so must the Uniformity in the Bodies of Animals, they having generally a right and a left side shaped alike, and on either side of their Bodies two Legs behind, and either two Arms, or two Legs, or two Wings before upon their Shoulders, and between their Shoulders a Neck running down into a Back-bone, and a Head upon it; and in the Head two Ears, two Eyes, a Nose, a Mouth, and a Tongue, alike situated. Also the first Contrivance of those very artificial Parts of Animals, the Eyes, Ears, Brain, Muscles, Heart, Lungs, Midriff, Glands, Larynx, Hands, Wings, Swimming Bladders, natural Spectacles, and other Organs of Sense and Motion; and the Instinct of Brutes and Insects can be the effect of nothing else than the Wisdom and Skill of a powerful ever living Agent, who being in all Places, is more able by his Will to move the Bodies within his boundless uniform Sensorium, and thereby to form and reform the Parts of the Universe, than we are by our Will to move the Parts of our own Bodies. And yet we are not to consider the World as the Body of God, or the several parts thereof, as the Parts of God. He is an uniform Being, void of Organs, Members or Parts, and they are his Creatures subordinate to him, and subservient to his Will; and he is no more the Soul of them, than the Soul of a Man is the Soul of the Species of Things carried through the Organs of Sense into the place of its Sensation, where it perceives them by means of its immediate Presence, without the Intervention of any third thing. The Organs of Sense are not for enabling the Soul to perceive the Species of Things in its Sensorium, but only for conveying them thither; and God has no need of such Organs, he being everywhere present to the Things themselves. And since Space is divisible in *infinitum*, and Matter is not necessarily in all places, it may be also allowed that God is able to create Particles of Matter of several Sizes and Figures, and in several Proportions to Space, and perhaps of different Densities and Forces, and thereby to vary the Laws of Nature, and make Worlds of several sorts in several Parts of the Universe. At least, I see nothing of Contradiction in all this."

To the above I venture to add:—

Man's personality comes with and by the unity of apperception.

God's personality as a conception of the reason is subsequent to the establishment of the intuition of self.

The human organism with its inseparable mode of expressing motion (subjectively recognised as change in time), is the structural counterpart of the unity of apperception. But the organism as superficially viewed, i.e., when beheld as object by the aid of the outward eyes, supplying us only with results and not with process, we have given us but a surface view of the unity of apperception; and hence we are, as it were, outside of our own personality, regarding it as object—as one.

Hence, if the personality of God is not out of all relation with that of man (and we are taught by Revelation that it is not), God must intuitively with what we would call, for want of a more exact mode of expression, the infinity of apperception; when, to continue and complete the analogy, His organism would be the integral, not of those objective facts and changes perceivable in Nature (which are but the inversions and transformations of our several organic conditions under the glamour of the sense organs and the forms of sensuous intuition), but of selves; that is to say, of a spiritual community, from our conditioned point of view. Thus the organism of God is an assembly of an infinite number of similar units, with subjective value in terms of an inner life—of life within a life; an idea which we can directly understand only by inclusion, or, symbolically, in the recognition of the fact that the human organism is compounded of a practically infinite number of separate units, which may be spiritual monads separately lost in that great statistical fact—the unity of apperception.

How a single personality may realise itself as the universal consent of an infinite number of others is a mystery which reveals itself best when there is a perturbation or conflict, and when, through alteration in the plan of opposing forces, a subject is seen to usurp the place of the legitimate ruler, or when in extreme cases that which was an ordered assembly becomes transformed into a legion of disorderly beings.

Our question is one of the substantiality of cause and the permanence of formal law. It can only be consistently handled after the analogy suggested by the mathematical form of the laws of thought. The person is the integral or sum from one aspect and the differential or constituent element from the other. It is in fact the unit of will; that is to say, will either to command or to obey. Infinities are not all of one order, but may be the infinitely great to that of a lower order, and the infinitely small to that of a higher order; since we must not forget that in mathematics all quantitative expression including infinity is relative. And so in considering the personality of God after the analogy of human personality, if we take all the perturbations of the latter into consideration we shall find in the changes which, as a permanent substantial reality (permanent within certain time limits, at any rate) it may undergo through its alternation as *quantum* from infinity to unity, and *vice versa*, a possible indication of the nature of that transcendent personality which yet was preserved when it became flesh and dwelt among us.

Newton does not in the above-quoted passages apply the term person to God, but he implies his belief that God is a person in the same sense that he himself is a man, and he rests content in the belief that the method of investigation pursued by him in the reduction of natural changes to law and order will be found, from the very constitution of the mind itself, to be applicable to all questions raised by the inquisitive faculty, which rests upon no less noble a basis than the principle of causality.

"As in Mathematics, so in natural Philosophy, the Investigation of difficult Things by the Method of Analysis ought ever to precede the Method of Composition. This Analysis consists in making Experiments and Observations, and in drawing general conclusions from them by Induction and admitting of no Objection against the Conclusions but such as are taken from Experiments or other certain Truths. For Hypotheses are not to be regarded in experimental Philosophy. And although the arguing from Experiments and Observations by Induction be no Demonstration of general Conclusions; yet it is the best way of arguing which the Nature of Things admits of, and may be looked upon as so much the stronger, by how much the Induction is more general. And if no Exception occur from Phenomena, the Conclusion may be pronounced generally. But if at any time afterwards any Exception shall occur from Experiments, it may then begin to be pronounced with such Exceptions as occur. By this way of Analysis we may proceed from Compounds to Ingredients, and from Motions to the Forces producing them; and in general from Effects to their Causes, and from particular Causes to more general ones, till the Argument end in the most general. This is the Method of Analysis: And the Synthesis consists in assuming the Causes discovered and established as Principles, and by their explaining the Phenomena produced from them, and proving the Explanations."

It is evident from this passage that Newton would have pushed forward into the region of causes as far as the limits of his thinking power would have permitted, if only Nature had supplied the data for his work. He would have trusted the inborn strength of the human mind to arrive at a correct induction and would not have hampered himself by fine-spun and childish disquisitions as to the proper significance of the term *cause* which has offered so many obstacles to the advancement of philosophy at the hands of verbose system-builders. By cause he meant *Vera Causa*, or true and sufficient means of accounting for a given phenomenon otherwise than by mere words and guesswork; an explanation which should justify its use through the results of its application, or be otherwise valueless. He regarded God as cause after the analogy of natural causes, and he did not scruple to consider Him *Vera Causa* of the universe, founding his belief upon the principle of causality though not in so many words.

God as spiritual cause has always manifested Himself through man; the question of the personality of God can only be approached through a full understanding of the nature of the personality of man, presented under its most generalised conditions; and this seems to be the task most germane to the genius of modern Spiritualism regarded as a branch of natural science.

(To be continued.)

TO A NOVICE IN SPIRITUALISM.

Extract from a Private Letter.

"As was to be expected the first book on Spiritualism did not altogether convince you. Wallace's little book of 200 pages makes a very admirable beginning, being a kind of alphabet of the subject, but he does not get much beyond preliminaries. From Wallace one gathers hardly more than that here is a subject at least worthy of careful investigation; one would not so readily gather that modern Spiritualism is a great philosophy and a great religion. *But this is true.* If you were living within easy reach of me I should be glad to talk you into, at least, some conception of its greatness. . . . You can have yet simply no conception whatever of the infinite scope, of the infinite beauty, of the infinite love, of this great religion, as revealed by its accredited seers and teachers, Andrew Jackson Davis being chief. It is as great as the world is, and as beautiful. It is the religion (being inclusive of all others) which will yet bind in its golden embrace all the nations of the earth.

"I will only add that there are two books which it would be very important that you should read. The first (simply as introductory to the other) is, "Letters on Animal Magnetism," by the late Professor Gregory, of Edinburgh University, a book almost as fascinating as a novel, giving an account (with examples) of the so-called superior or clairvoyant condition; the spiritual and bodily condition of Swedenborg and Davis. The second, one of the most wonderful books in the world, is, "Nature's Divine Revelations," by Andrew Jackson Davis, dictated from the higher condition. No man can read this book (unless, indeed, he be intellectually and morally undeveloped) without being unspeakably advantaged, both for time and for eternity.

"Concerning this great book, one writer truly said: 'Never have there been presented at one view a cosmogony so grand, a theology so sublime, and a future destiny for man so transcendent. In science, in religion, and in morality, it is a book which will be welcomed with rapture by the most enlightened, the loftiest, and the purest minds.' And concerning Davis when in the 'superior condition,' another writer (having personal knowledge of him) said: 'I have seen him in states of mental elevation which transcended all history or knowledge, states when earth had apparently no secret, and the future no marvel, which he did not see and know.'" H.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.

ST. ANDREW'S HALL, 11, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET, LONDON.

All who have followed intelligently the present series of lectures at this hall, will be prepared to learn that, in speaking on Sunday last upon the subject of "Humanity: Its Death," the controls of Mr. Morse again brought into prominence their own subtle and suggestive idea of the Divine qualities represented by Humanity, so that the arrest or eclipse or decay of these qualities, with the antecedent conditions and immediate consequences of the operation they thus variously described, and not the death of the human body, formed the basis of the brilliant and effective discourse delivered on that occasion before an exceptionally appreciative audience. Of the transition of man from the earth stage to the advanced spiritual capacity and surroundings of the after life, the lecturer said no more than sufficed to echo the sentiment of the hymns sung, and of the charming poetical outburst of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, so appropriately read during the service, that "There is no death." Let us, in like manner, at once dismiss from our present consideration that perfectly simple and natural process which can be a source of apprehension or disquiet only to those in whom the death of Humanity, in its truer sense, is unhappily, in large measure, already an accomplished fact. For the higher principles of humanity there is always the emphatic assurance of sustained life and continued progress. The ascent may, indeed, be regarded always as spiral in form, involving occasional appearances of decline; and there is too frequently arrest of growth, when life is obscured and darkness palpable; but the conditions which favour these death-like phenomena are, on the one hand, indicative simply of a momentary check in preparation for a vigorous rebound, and on the other, where more real, are less and less suggestive, as the ages roll onwards, of the presence of the substantial elements of decay. Periods of rest or interruption of progress are also recuperative in many ways. Out of prostration is born an energy always equal to the re-assertion of life, and without resistance and seeming disaster it is open to doubt whether an adequate development of spiritual power, needful for the perfection of being, is not distinctly retarded. With hushed voice we were then, as though individually, asked, "Does Humanity live, or is it dead now?" Death is present or near where blind fanaticism rules, where art and culture are ruthlessly repressed, and wealth, place, and power, or sensual enjoyment, absorbingly pursued; where military or political tyranny and wrong intercept and eventually crush out the finer and more beautiful qualities of our nature; but where order, justice, and love prevail, and intellectual proclivities are systematically encouraged, there the transfusion of the Divine qualities is going on, and Humanity lives and thrives

in delightful luxuriance. The prevailing characteristics of social life to-day,—especially of Metropolitan life—are not very hopeful. Still, the healthful action of the higher principles of being is largely maintained by an ever-increasing army of Irreconcilables who, decrying injustice, unflinchingly and persistently, in season and out of season, protest against it manfully. God forbid that such protest, and the resulting disturbance of attenuated conditions, should ever fail to keep alive the steady flame of Humanity; it is a happy reflection that that only which is truly commensurate with the dignity of human life is enduring. The work of these reformers who would impetuously urge forward the qualities and needs of the better life, is usually very unpopular, frequently received with howls of indignation by the contented few, and with indifference by the ill-informed multitude, and when, as sometimes happens, we erect monuments to their memory, after having had time to discover how right they always were, it is not quite certain that we mean anything more than that we are glad thus to be done with them. These troublesome people, however, understand the gospel of self-sacrifice, acknowledge the bounden duty of everyone to help his neighbour, and while affirming the right of all to be happy can themselves find peace only in the happiness of others. If you, individually, are deficient in this feeling, the goodness of the life of Humanity is enfeebled in you—grows small by degrees and beautifully less—and presently, the crowd around you being similarly affected, the finer elements of human nature are extinguished: death has arrived. Remember always that the first principle of human development is to do good to others as you would have good done unto you. If this grand primary principle is disregarded, and we are left in unregulated possession of our intelligence and cunning only, the results cannot fail to be lamentable and terrible, the cohesion of society to become impossible, the brotherhood of man a myth, the spirit of Humanity a suicide, when of its own weakness the world will relapse into barbarism. Happily the providences of God are wiser than the judgments of men. It may not always seem so; but we habitually narrow our views and then distort the proportions of the picture; for it may well happen, and does not infrequently occur, that the consequences of the death of a section of Humanity are fruitful in blessing for the survivors, and form an instructive lesson to later generations everywhere; while to the unhappy examples of temporary failure there is provided subsequent opportunity, when translated to another sphere, to recover all the essential elements of the higher life. There are many diseases in the social and political and religious framework of the world to-day, and he is a wise physician who probes thoroughly, brings the symptoms to the surface, and thus expels the morbid elements. The first symptom of the approaching death of Humanity, at any period, is despotism in some form: that is the initial stage of decay, for it narrows the sympathies and hampers, restrains, and perverts life and thought. Then, seeing the spiritual condition of to-day, separately and strictly regarded, with its mixture of dry, dull formalism and imposing and delusive ritualism—with the multitude indifferent and very many careless, and the routine duties of all directed to cement social position—it is not surprising that Materialism is apparently triumphant, nor that the prevalent feeling should be that the Power, whatever it may be, which sustains us in this world, may be trusted to perform the same office in another: if there is another! The spirituality of the existing agencies for the furtherance of the religious life of the community is conspicuous by its absence, and the energies of their corporate work apparently directed mainly to the maintenance of their several creeds. Briefly and sorrowfully it must be said that the Church at large has forgotten its functions, has forsaken Heaven and closed, as far as they may be closed, the avenues for inspiration, denying in practice the intercommunion of the two worlds, excluding the spirit and exposing the dry bones of Humanity. The Church should, undoubtedly, represent the spiritual evolution of the race; if it is unequal to this, the death of Humanity is only a question of time. A Divine providence, however, interposes, and there is always, in arrest of decay, an evident incursion of spiritual forces; a fresh departure is certified and the true life is saved. In the form of modern Spiritualism a powerful and mighty upheaval is conspicuously at work in this direction now, supplying something more than convincing proofs of immortality; for it feeds the whole spiritual nature and brings the external daily life of man into harmony with the internal qualities of the Divine Humanity. As a faint strain of music, as a gleam of sunshine, is this heavenly messenger brightly and beautifully piercing the mist of selfishness and wrong, heralding the perfection of a serene life, displacing the mourning drapery by a garland of roses, and giving to all the assurance that if death is imminent anywhere there is also the promise of renewed life. On its bier, weeping friends, let us to-night leave this Humanity; our next address shall be directed to the more cheerful topic of its Resurrection. S.B.

QUEBEC HALL.

On Sunday evening Mr. MacDonnell drew a large audience to hear his address on "Mesmerism," and witness some experiments, which were quite successful and very interesting. The lecture, however, was neither so argumentative nor so philosophical as we expected, but was perhaps best suited to the room, as it

gave a sketch of the origin of the science, and was accompanied by severe strictures on the opposition of the scientists of this and the past generations. After the address the speaker magnetized Mr. J. Hopcroft, who easily passed into the trance state, and held debate with several in the room. An unbeliever present proposed physical tests on the subject, which were refused, and the moral evidence of credibility of the witnesses insisted on. The evening proved to be highly interesting, and it was approaching ten o'clock when a conclusion was effected. We should be glad to hear Mr. MacDonnell again on some special department of this important question, and should like to see a wider range of experiments produced, as we are sure that his former studies and experience would enable him to speak with great advantage to students.

LIVERPOOL.

Last Sunday Mrs. Hardinge Britten delivered two orations in Rodney Hall, Rodney-street, being the opening services at this beautiful hall, where the Society will hold its meetings for the future. The subject in the morning was, "Mediumship and Mind-reading," and the discourse was listened to with breathless attention by a most appreciative audience. In the evening the hall was crowded, many being unable to gain admittance. The discourse was in reply to the Rev. J. H. Skewes' sermon on Spiritualism delivered at Holy Trinity Church on January 28th. The address, which, with questions and replies, occupied an hour and a-half in delivery, was listened to with the closest attention; and although many passages were of a very caustic character the audience seemed to be quite in sympathy with the speaker, whose inexorable logic left no loophole of escape for those who might have come to oppose or criticise. Mrs. Britten will speak for the Society on the first and third Sundays of each month for some time to come.—J. L.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—Mr. De Main, of Howden-le-Weir, lectured at the rooms of the N.S.E.S. on Sunday evening last, to a good audience. Treading on the old lines of transcendentalism, he gratified the audience with a telling address. Mr. Oyston of Howden-le-Weir, presided, and made during the evening some excellent remarks. It is pleasing to note that since the election of the new committee the attendance has greatly improved, the debt has been considerably reduced, and new members are steadily coming in. We observe that at the last meeting of the members of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, upon the motion of our celebrated townsman, Sir William Armstrong, our friend and fellow Spiritualist, Mr. Joseph Skipsey, the poet, was unanimously elected an honorary member of that institution. Our northern lyricist has of late earned a wide and well-merited reputation, spreading beyond his own country. Lately Messrs. Bogie and Son, of London, published an excellent edition of Mr. Skipsey's poems, which some short time ago we had the pleasure of reviewing in our Newcastle Press. They will rank with the best lyrics in our language. Some of them, especially "The Bereaved," "Hell Broth," "The Mystic Lyre," and others we might mention, have scarcely their equals in our language. We would recommend every Spiritualist to read them; they will amply repay perusal. We do not possess a poet in connection with Spiritualism who is in any way his equal.

GATESHEAD.—Last Sunday evening Mr. T. P. Barkas addressed a large and intelligent audience at the rooms of the G.S.E.S., on the occasion of the anniversary of the opening of their present place of meeting. The subject of the lecture was, "God in Nature." The lecturer endeavoured to shew how man the finite was everywhere surrounded by infinity of extension and infinity of duration; and that he was furthermore surrounded by an infinity of intelligence, the which he considered a necessary existence, as the only possible answer to the "why" of the universe of law, everywhere pervading the universe of being. The address was interspersed with scientific illustrations, which gave great pleasure and instruction to the company. Mr. H. Burton occupied the chair. We are glad to announce that the Gateshead committee have resolved to hold their annual tea and concert on Easter Monday. We hope our Newcastle and country friends will do their best to encourage them by their generous support. Mr. H. Burton will lecture on Sunday evening next.

DISTRICT MEETINGS.—The North Shields Society had Mr. J. G. Grey, of Gateshead, on Sunday, when that gentleman lectured to a crowded meeting. The rooms at this place are getting far too small for the audiences, and the members are seriously entertaining the notion of removing to a larger hall as soon as they can get one.

HETTON-LE-HOLE was visited by Mr. J. W. Thompson, of Sildon, who lectured to a large audience on Sunday evening upon "Humanitarianism." The cause is prospering very much at this place.

CRAMLINGTON.—The cause of Spiritualism is spreading so rapidly here that the friends have been compelled to engage one of the largest lecture rooms in the locality. There is every prospect that our movement in the North is breaking forth to a new and vigorous life, as the dark clouds of the past few years are being rent, and a spiritual Spiritualism is being unfolded.

NORTHUMBRIA.

ROCHDALE

Sunday, the 11th inst., was a red-letter day for the Rochdale Spiritualists, the occasion being the visit of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten. The morning was taken up by an experience meeting, which was held at the Society's regular meeting-room. Mr. and Mrs. Harper, of Birmingham, happened to be present, and both of them contributed to the edification of the meeting. Mrs. Harper referred to her experiments upon mesmerised subjects, who had demonstrated clearly that in that condition they had passed beyond her own will, and proved the transition of the spirit to places far distant, and evinced a knowledge which they did not possess in their normal state. Mr. Brown, from Middleton, a Spiritualist of twenty-four years' standing, also narrated some very interesting experiences. For the accommodation of the friends from a distance tea was provided, of which a considerable number availed themselves, and this arrangement proved beneficial to the Society in a pecuniary way, as well as a convenience to the visitors.

In the afternoon, at the Central Stores Assembly Room, Mr. Charles Parsons presided, and Mrs. Britten lectured on "The Church of the Future." During her discourse she said the Church failed to meet the demands made upon it for food to suit the requirements of the soul. It had not helped the people on the way to Heaven, nor had it made a wicked age any better; yet, there was a longing for spiritual bread; and people were wanting to know what the spiritual realm of existence is. Was there need of a Church? this was the first question. Some who called themselves Spiritualists, and who knew that the immortality of the soul is a fact, and who had listened to the message from the spirit-world, said there was no need of a Church. They were apt to say they had the light in their own homes and thus was no need of Church organisation. But those who thus argued were wrong. The Church never had died and never would. It was man's spiritual home, and he could not do without it. We were all members of one Divine body. We could not separate ourselves from one another, and we needed the magnetism of the great assembly which was so requisite to bring down the true Pentecostal fire on our heads and make us speak the common language of love. Humanity must build up the one grand Church of the future, which must not be one of creeds, and dogmas, and ceremonials; each one must be a stone in the building, and do his or her share in bringing about the true Pentecostal spirit. The people made up what is known as public opinion, which is but the echo of God's voice, and should yet be the foundation of the Divine Church of the future.

In the evening Mrs. Britten spoke on six subjects, chosen by the audience, the first being a verse in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus relative to a gulf being fixed, thereby preventing what is termed communion with departed spirits. The passage was ably dealt with, Mrs. Britten pointing out its parabolic signification, and utterly repudiating the popular teaching. In dealing with "The efficacy of prayer," she first addressed herself to the popular sense of the term. She held that prayer was the aspiration of the whole heart, the recognition of the weakness of men and of the supremacy that is above and around us. The third subject was in the form of a question: "If Spiritualism is the only way to truth and happiness, why did it not come to light until thirty or forty years ago, and if it was so, what about those who had died before its revelation?" The lecturer said Spiritualists never claimed this; but that Spiritualism underlies every form of religion. The Church had been at fault because it offered the people the body without the soul, the husk without the wheat, the form without the substance.

Several other questions were asked and ably answered, and many in the audience spoke in high terms of the splendid oratory to which they had had the opportunity of listening.

Collections were made at the close of the lecture, the result in every way proving the advantage of the voluntary system over that of making a small charge as on former occasions. Spiritualism is beyond all doubt an established fact in Rochdale. It is well-known that many in the higher walks of society are secretly investigating, and sooner or later the brave ones, when they have ascertained the truth, will proclaim it at the front. (Communicated.)

We are glad to observe that the *Christian Commonwealth* finds it necessary to remind its readers that the Rev. Joseph Cook's statements are to be received with "considerable caution." We can hardly express our surprise that this warning should be necessary, when we remember Mr. Cook's extraordinary statements with reference to Spiritualism.

THE DEATH OF HERR WAGNER.—The correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in an article detailing the manner of this eminent composer's death, says that from many accounts that are now forthcoming Wagner had some premonition that his end was drawing nigh. When conducting some of his own music for the master and pupils of the Marcelllo Academy at Venice, which they were to perform on the occasion of Frau Wagner's birthday last Christmas, he exclaimed, "I cannot conduct any more, nor shall I ever compose again. 'Parsifal' will be my last work." This alarmed those present, who gathered round him, and asked him why he spoke so despondingly. "I shall die soon," he replied, "I have been convinced of it for some time, and am so now more than ever."

THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC PHYSICAL SEANCES.

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

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

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

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

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

We are chiefly concerned, however, with what are known as public or promiscuous seances for physical manifestations.

These have been of late years generally marked by the following characteristics:—(1) The seance has been conducted in imperfect light, or in total darkness. (2) The medium has been isolated from the circle, by being placed either in a cabinet or behind a curtain. (3) The sitters have been, either wholly or in part, unacquainted with the subject and with each other. (4) There has not unfrequently been a manifest want of harmony, consequent upon differences of opinion as to the nature and value of the tests employed.

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

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

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

Edwin Adams, Cardiff
 W. P. Adshhead, Derby
 Alexander Aksakof, St. Petersburg
 G. P. Allan, London
 W. R. Armstrong, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 R. Baikie, M.D., late H.E.I.C.S., Edinburgh
 *T. P. Barkas, F.G.S., Newcastle-on-Tyne
 Frederick A. Binney, Manchester
 *Anna Blackwell, Paris
 John L. Bland, President of Hull Psychological Society
 Hannah Blundell, Manchester
 John James Bodmer, London
 Hugh Booth, Sowerby Bridge
 Eliza Boucher, Minehead
 Colonel Joshua Brayn, Jersey
 Emma Hardinge-Britten, Manchester
 William Brown, Burnley
 Henry Burton, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 Alexander Calder, London
 †Robert Redgrave Cann, Harleston, Norfolk
 Robert Scammell Clarke, Hon. Sec. Plymouth Free Spiritual Society

John Colley, Hon. Sec. Birmingham Christian Spiritualist Society
 John Cowie, Dumbarton
 John Crake, Houghton-le-Spring
 William Day, Ipswich
 James Dawbarn, London
 Thomas Dawson, Hon. Sec. Gateshead Spiritualist Society
 David Duguid, Glasgow
 T. H. Edmonds, Sunbury-on-Thames
 W. Eglinton, London
 †J. Crossley Eno, Dulwich
 Thomas Everitt, London
 John S. Farmer, London
 Lewis Firth, Hon. Sec. Rochdale Spiritualist Society
 Richard Fitton, Manchester
 Charlotte FitzGerald, London
 D. G. FitzGerald, M.S.Tel.E., London
 Elizabeth FitzGerald, London
 Hannah Ford, Leeds
 †George Forster, Hon. Sec. Seghill Spiritualist Association
 H. E. Frances, Hon. Sec. Brixton Psychological Society
 William Gill, Brighton
 Henry Goodchild, Hon. Sec. Middlesborough Assoc. Spiritualists
 Thomas Grant, Maidstone
 G. F. Green, London
 Joseph N. Greenwell, Hon. Sec. Dalston Association
 S. C. Hall, F.S.A., London
 Mrs. F. V. Hallock, Chiswick, London
 *William Hardy, Hon. Sec. Sheffield Psychological Association
 Samuel Hayes, Hon. Sec. Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
 Georgiana Houghton, London
 H. T. Humphreys, London.
 Berks T. Hutchinson, L.D.S., R.C.S.L., Cape Town, South Africa.
 Hugh Hutchinson, President Islington Home Circle
 John Enmore Jones, London
 H. A. Kersey, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 W. F. Kirby, London
 Edward Larrad, President Leicester Spiritualist Society
 John Lamont, Liverpool
 P. G. Leymarie, President Soc. Sci. d'Etudes Psychologiques, Paris
 J. E. Lighthown, Hon. Sec. Manchester and Salford Soc. Spiritualists
 R. W. Lishman, Hon. Cor. Sec. Central London Spir. Evidence Soc.
 "M.A. (Oxon.)," London
 Iver MacDonnell, London
 John McG. Munro, Hon. Sec. Glasgow Association of Spiritualists
 Thomas McKinney, Peterborough
 C. C. Massey, London
 *William Miall, London
 William Morris, London
 J. J. Morse, London
 Hay Nisbet, Glasgow
 Roden Noel, London
 W. G. Pickersgill, London
 Thomas Pinky, Durham
 Richard Pearce, London
 Cornelius Pearson, London
 *Edward R. Pease, London
 *Frank Polmore, London
 *Thomas Pole, Clifton
 *Charles Poole, Hon. Sec. Yorkshire District Com. of Spiritualists
 John Pringle, Hon. Sec. Hetton Spiritual Society
 S. R. Redman, London
 George Ridley, Hon. Sec. North Durham Spiritualist Society
 A. J. Riko, The Hague
 W. C. Robson, Newcastle-on-Tyne
 James Robertson, Glasgow
 E. Dawson Rogers, London
 George Rogers, President Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
 John Rouse, Croydon
 Adam Rushton, Minister, Macclesfield Society of Spiritualists
 Rev. Dr. Sexton, London.
 †Thos Shorter, London
 J. Bowring Sloman, Plympton
 S. T. Speer, M.D. (Edin.), London
 M. A. Stack, London
 Lucia C. Stone, Bridport
 Edith L. Stone, Bridport
 Morell Theobald, London
 Ellen Miall Theobald, London
 A. Teague, Hon. Sec. South African Spiritual Evidence Society
 E. A. Tietkens, London
 I. Thompson, Manchester
 *E. Louisa Thompson Nosworthy, Liverpool
 Charles Tomlinson, London
 George Tommy, Bristol
 Jno. P. Turner, Leamington
 Mary Wainwright, London
 †Alfred Russel Wallace, F.R.G.S., Godalming
 E. W. Wallis, Nottingham
 *Rev. W. Whitear, London
 A. S. Winchester, San Francisco.
 W. Winlow, Hon. Sec. Ashington Spiritual Society, Northumberland
 Oswald Wirth, Paris
 George Wyld, M.D., London
 J. F. Young, Llanelly

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

- Is of opinion that public miscellaneous seances for physical manifestation should be altogether discontinued.
 † Would prefer that the word "conscious" should be omitted from the last sentence of the second paragraph.
 ‡ Is of opinion that public miscellaneous seances and professional mediumship for physical manifestations should be altogether discouraged.
 § Is opposed to all public seances, whether in the light or the dark, unless the conditions are favourable to a complete investigation.