

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Gotha.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

I receive from various sources newspapers containing attacks on Spiritualism, or reports of debates in which it figures. My correspondents request me to answer these attacks, or notice these discussions. May I be pardoned if I say that it does not seem to me at all worth while to waste time and space on chronicling the fact that the Young Men's Christian Association of Little Pedlington thinks Spiritualism a "dangerous delusion," a "device of the devil," or "a sign of the times"? By all means, if it pleases them. Nor can I think it necessary to repeat over and over again the vapid and fatuous nonsense which some persons are moved to utter about a subject of which it is charitable to suppose they are ignorant. For example, I have before me the report of a sermon published in the *Protestant Standard*, a paper which I had not before met with. The sermon is reported at length, and is headed, "Spiritualism in Its Coffin! Nailing Down the Lid! Great Sermon by the Rev. J. H. Skewes." Someone, it seems, has sent Mr. Skewes a copy of rules and regulations for conducting a circle. The reverend gentleman objects *in limine* that there are no such rules in the Bible! This intelligent criticism is supplemented by another of extreme acuteness. Mr. Skewes reads in his rules the fact that "sultry heat, extreme cold, and thunder and lightning" are not favourable conditions for eliciting phenomena. Back he goes to his Bible. What! he cries, there is not a word of this here. Why, Abraham talked to angels when it was too hot to leave his tent! Moses and Elijah were present in the midst of thunder and lightning on Horeb and Sinai; and "*Jonah, in the stomach of the whale, must have been sadly cold and uncomfortable, and yet he, and all these, received the most striking manifestations from the invisible world.*" Prodigious! Jonah holding a séance in the whale's belly! But my readers will hardly want a reply to such tenth-rate twaddle. What manner of man must he be who can seriously utter it? How are they to be pitied who are condemned to listen to it!

The Rev. Joseph Cook is apparently unable to leave Spiritualism alone. The weathercock now points to acceptance of Zöllner, "a Biblical demonologist," as he is pleased to call him. Mr. Cook wants Zöllner's experiments repeated; and thinks that it has not been proved that slate-writing is not a trick. There he mistakes, and makes a common confusion. It has *not* been proved that some experiments in slate-writing are not tricks. It *has* been definitely and conclusively proven that some others were not produced by trick, and cannot be counterfeited by sleight of hand. This mental jumble is common. Let Mr. Cook take heart. The Society for Pyschical Research is quite as anxious to repeat experiments as he is to have them repeated.

Professor Barrett's last case of mesmeric clairvoyance, in itself very striking, is additionally valuable for some critical remarks made by the gentleman who communicated it to him. The clairvoyante was, we are told, "very sensitive and highly nervous" as a child, and had undergone "two severe attacks of brain fever." "As far as my experience goes (says the narrator) *I do not think there is ever any real clairvoyance unless the brain has been acted upon in a singular manner.*" This startles me. Brain fever, I believe I am correct in saying, is a disease of rare occurrence, and surely all clairvoyants have not been so afflicted. A sensitive child may no doubt shew symptoms of brain disturbance and excitability, but my experience does not lead me to accept without question a statement so sweeping as that I have quoted. It is, however, an interesting subject of research to which attention may well be directed.

The sister of the lady in question, confirming the narrative of Mr. C., adds: "My sister does not now take these long journeys in her mesmeric sleep, as it makes her feel weak and languid for a day or two afterwards." And Mr. C. states that the powers of vision are impaired by a high wind or electrical disturbance; and paralysed by a snow-storm. This is, in some degree, the case with psychics. A disturbed atmosphere (*pace* Mr. Skewes!) is decidedly antagonistic to the production of psychical phenomena; and an *excessive* depletion of "the psychic force or power," by whatever name we are to call it, is a source of great lassitude and weakness, even to the extent of causing temporary inability to use the lower limbs. It is as though the spinal column could not support the body; and as if the power of movement were in abeyance. When this passes off, usually after sleep, there still remains frequently a sense of weariness and disinclination for exertion physical or mental. This occurs, in my experience, after an exhausting sitting, analogous to the "long journeys in mesmeric sleep" of the clairvoyante. Is there, then, any reason to believe that the faculty of abnormal vision is similar to the psychic's abnormal faculties? How does the clairvoyante see so accurately as to draw a ground-plan of a place to which she had never been? How does the snow-storm paralyse the power? It is intelligible to me that electrical or atmospheric disturbance may upset the subject herself, and so interfere with the conditions under which her powers can act; but the snow-storm will not do that. Are we to gather that it formed a material obstacle to her vision?

I am relieved from writing anything like an adequate notice of the whole scope of Mr. St. George Stock's book,\* by the fact that the philosophy expounded in it has been exhaustively and most ably dealt with by a more competent hand. My few superficial notes aim at nothing like completeness, nor seek to do elaborate justice to what is unquestionably a serious and valuable addition to the literature of Spiritualism. And this is a fact, in spite of the various essays of which the volume is composed having already appeared in the pages of certain magazines. Such publicity is ephemeral, and one constantly desires that a striking article may be preserved in a more permanent form. This

\*"Attempts at Truth," St. George Stock, Trilbner & Co., 1882.

is especially the case when a writer is possessed by a particular spirit, which finds expression in various lines of thought, in themselves connected, but dis severed by the accident of publication. This is so, as the author says in the essays which compose this volume. They are, as he "feels or fancies," pervaded by "an organic unity."

I, however, am concerned, and that only slightly, with such of them as deal explicitly with Spiritualism. I do not presume to intermeddle with the high philosophy which the *Spectator*, in reviewing the book, has so strangely muddled; nor do I pretend to say to which of the various schools of thought between Positivism and Pantheism—if indeed those be the poles—the author should be referred. But I am by way of being a guide-post, and in the exercise of that humble but useful function, I may point out to my readers that they should not miss such instructive essays as "The Bearings of Spiritualism," "Materialism and Modern Spiritualism," and especially "A New Religion." In singling out these, generally, and the last especially, I must plead guilty to having selected from a book, the whole of which has special charms, both philosophic and literary, that expression of thought which most coincides with my own. I am the more glad to do so that the conclusions, identical with those at which I have arrived, have been reached independently, and, I may add, because I strongly believe that they are not only true in themselves, but are largely over-looked or ignored.

It is, indeed, one of the strangest things to an acute observer, not so much of Spiritualism as of those who concern themselves with it, to notice how completely most of them seem to miss the significance of the subject with which they deal. Each finds in it, no doubt, what he can assimilate, but how strange is it, surely, that the digestive powers are so weak, and the range of appetite so small! Mr. Stock has seen this from the first. I remember in days that now seem very old, how he wondered at the strange want of appreciation of the far-reaching possibilities of Spiritualism. He has seen, and has done much to point out, how portentous is the problem that it presents. And he has rightly grasped one of its grandest and most ennobling conceptions, that man by his life on earth builds for himself his future home, and enters on its possession after death, "exactly what himself and society have made him." In his powerful review of Mr. Stock, "C.C.M." points out that Christianity concerns itself with the regenerate life in man, and not with his future state. This is so, and Spiritualism does much the same. It does, in effect, what Christ did for Judaism. It re-states in terms of to-day what long usage has made familiar and trite. And it proves its case by evidence which the age seeks.

Mr. St. George Stock, with his power of insight, will see, as they whose eyes are open must see, how Spiritualism, considered as a concrete whole, is fulfilling its mission. It has passed through the stage when men merely gaped at it, and came away, some bewildered, some angered, some satiated, some wanting to see more of this strange thing. Its facts have passed out of the domain of wonder, through trial of furious criticism, to that of general acceptance. One of the notes of Mr. Stock's criticism is his absolute acceptance of the phenomena called spiritual as *proven facts*. It now remains to formulate a philosophy which shall include these facts in orderly arrangement, and shall give some *rationale* of them. I will not say that Mr. Stock has made any large contribution as yet to that philosophy: it may be expected that he will do so in the future. But he has unquestionably shown Spiritualists a right method of appreciation of the magnitude of the subject with which they deal, and has given us some valuable critical hints for our guidance.

I was mistaken in saying that the experiment made by Dr. Slade with the needle of a mariner's compass was thought then to be new. I find in Zollner's "Transcendental Physics"\* that as far back as 1867 Fechner witnessed a similar experiment with one of Reichenbach's sensitives. "He caused the sensitive to move a finger to and fro before one of the poles (not over the glass but in front of the case) and thereby the needle began to oscillate, as if an iron or magnetic rod had been similarly passed before the same pole." He tried the same experiment himself, but the needle remained motionless. He satisfied himself, further, that no trick was employed to deceive him. And, lastly, he repeated the experiment in the presence of Professor Erdmann.

I have not had much opportunity of judging of the intelligence of the paper which represents the penny wisdom of that party which has been inadequately described as stupid. That is, no doubt, a libel on many intellectual, though possibly, narrow-minded persons. But though I would by no means use such a term in sweeping reference to a highly-respectable body of men, which includes within it both Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill, I am bound to say that it very appropriately and adequately describes a review of certain publications of the Psychological Press Association which appears in *England* for March 3rd. The writer, who evidently makes acquaintance with the alphabet of Spiritualism for the first time, has got hold of some directions for holding séances, and advice to inquirers. In the course of these directions it is incidentally stated that "increased light will check noisy manifestations." "If this," says the Reviewer, "is not utter nonsense, it is impossible to say what is." Well, the statement is one of fact, for which I am not responsible, any more than I am for the action of light in photography. The Reviewer's criticism lies ready to his hand, if he is anxious to pursue his quest of "utter nonsense."

M. A. (Oxon.)

#### TRAVELLING IN SPIRIT.

My mother was confined to her room with an illness which proved to be her last. I was several miles from her, at a place where I lived with my husband and children.

It was an evening in midsummer, when feeling depressed and weary, I lay down to rest, with my youngest child, an infant, asleep by my side. I shut my eyes, and when I seemed to open them I was lying on a couch in my mother's room, with the little one in my arms.

She was looking at me, and I at her, but neither of us spoke. Then the babe began to cry. I felt in darkness for a moment, and then found myself back in my own room, and should have thought it had been a dream, but for the following circumstances. The child looked very pale, and my husband remarked that I seemed over-fatigued, when I joined him downstairs. It was raining hard, and had been for the last half-hour. It was then about half-past eight in the evening.

The next day I received a letter from my mother enclosing a money order, asking me why I left so suddenly the night before with baby; and if we had got wet with the rain; also that she had not heard me come in, but saw me lying on a couch at the foot of her bed!

I went the next day to see her; when the servant asked me if I had called the day before in the evening about eight o'clock, as my mother declared I had; and she was much troubled at my leaving in the rain without an umbrella.

My mother put the same question to me directly I saw her, saying, "I saw you and baby lying on that couch. The child was asleep. You were looking at me, but you looked troubled, and both of you very pale. Then the child began to whimper a little, I looked away for an instant, and then I saw you had gone. It was raining fast; so I rang for the servant to send for a fly to take you to the station; but she said no one had seen or heard anything of you, or your child." I then related to my mother the circumstances above mentioned. She said it was "spiritual communion." She died within a year. J. C.

\* English Translation, by C. C. Massey. Second edition, p. 24.

MARRIAGE OF MISS FLORENCE TEBB.

On Saturday afternoon last, 10th inst., a reception was given by Mrs. William Tebb, at her residence, 7, Albert-road, Gloucester Gate, Regent's Park, previous to the marriage of her daughter, Miss Florence Tebb, with Mr. W. F. R. Weldon, on Wednesday, 14th inst. Among the friends who were favoured with invitations were :—

Miss Arundale Mr. von Arntz, Mr. and Miss A.W. Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. Beurle, Mr. Thos. Blyton, Dr. and Mrs. Campbell, Mr. Guy Campbell, Dr. Collins, Mrs. Coombes, Miss Christie, Miss Martha Christie, Miss Mildred Drew, Miss Christabel Drew, Miss Susan Drew, Mrs. John Edensor, Miss Ellis, Miss Evans, Colonel Earle, Mr. and Mrs. Fleuss, Miss Gale, Rev. Mr. Galloway and Mrs. Galloway, Mr. Hewetson, Mrs. Hewetson, Miss E. Hewetson, Miss Hewetson, Master Alfred Hollins, Mrs. Harvey, Miss E. Harvey, Mr. Harvey, Miss F. Hill, Miss K. Hill, Miss Houghton, Mrs. E. M. James, Miss Lister, Miss M. Lister, Mrs. Robert Leighton, Mr., Mrs., and Miss Lewis, Mrs. Lowe, Miss Major, Mr. and Miss Peale, Miss Philp, Mrs. Petman, Mr. Cornelius Pearson, Mr. E. R. Pease, Mr. Frank Podmore, Miss Mazzucata, Miss Price, Mr. and Miss Shorter, Mr. Sidley, Mrs. Cady Stanton, Lady Coomara Swamy, Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Tebb, Miss Eleanor Tebb, Miss M. A. Tebb, Miss J. C. Tebb, Miss Annie Tebb, Mr. R. Haden Tebb, Mr. A. E. Tebb, Mr. Ernest A. Teitkens, Mr. Tompsett, Mr. A. Vacher, Mr. and Miss Ward, Mr. Walter Weldon, F.R.S., Mr. W. F. R. Weldon, Mrs. Western, Mr. and Mrs. White, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Mr. Birkenell Young.

A room was devoted to the display of the numerous and costly presents to the bride, which were much admired by the company. Vocal and instrumental music was contributed by several students of the Normal College for the Blind, Mr. E. A. Teitkens, Miss Florence Tebb, and others.

The marriage was celebrated on Wednesday morning, at St. Mark's Church, Albert-road, Regent's Park. A large number of friends were present to witness the ceremony, and the family and intimate friends of the bride and bridegroom afterwards breakfasted at 7, Albert-road, Gloucester Gate.

MR. TOWNS' TESTIMONIAL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to add to your notice in *"LIGHT"* of 10th inst., concerning the above, that the committee have placed a number of tickets at my disposal for the meeting at Neumeyer Hall, on Wednesday, the 28th inst., at which Mr. Towns' testimonial is to be presented? The prices of the tickets are 5s. for numbered and reserved seats; 2s. 6d. for reserved seats, and 1s. admission. Trusting my supply of tickets may be too small to meet all applications,—I am, yours &c.

J. J. MORSE.

4, New Bridge-street, Ludgate-circus, E.C.,  
March 13th, 1883.

OBITUARY.

Raised to the glorious Spirit-land, on the 15th March, 1883, from his father's residence, Highfield, Henry Brayn, Lieutenant R.N., second son of Colonel Brayn, Jersey, in the 33rd year of his age. "His end was peace."

The river and the ocean passed,  
The tranquil haven reached at last!  
Rest, dear one, with the happy rest,  
With those whom love of God has blessed.  
Landed, not stranded, on the shore,  
Where winds and waves can harm no more.

London, March, 1883.

S. C. HALL.

THE S. P. R.—For the information of members of the Council of the S. P. R., we may state that it has been arranged that a meeting of the Council shall be held on the first Tuesday of every month at 4.45 p.m., at 14, Dean's Yard, Westminster.

PHOTOGRAPHY.—We have had the pleasure of inspecting some of the ingeniously contrived photographic apparatus of Mr. Walter Lawley, of 78, Farringdon-street, E.C. His tourist's companion is an extremely useful article for those who go in for amateur photography; and we can imagine nothing more enjoyable than the possession of one of these compact cameras during a walking tour, by which the traveller is enabled to obtain permanent records of the finest pieces of scenery through which he passes, and which have never yet been photographed. The cheap rate at which it is sold, and the excellence of its workmanship, should cause it to be an indispensable portion of the holiday-maker's luggage during the forthcoming summer.

WORK AND WORSHIP.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I trust you will permit me to protest against the misinterpretation of the Bishop of St. Alban's teaching given by "M.A. (Oxon.);" in your last number. The Bishop never intended to suggest that we might neglect the most careful and diligent cultivation of the soil, and trust to Providence for bread. His meaning, which I should have thought was plain enough, is evidently, that in all our works we rely too much upon our own skill, strength, and science; and that we fail to seek the Divine aid of the Almighty to bless, ennoble, and magnify our labours.

This truth, which the Bishop endeavours to inculcate, appears to me to be the most simple and sublime which can be offered for the acceptance and guidance of man. It is in fact the foundation of religion—the key-stone of faith—and without it the superstructure of our minds would be plunged into the lowest depths of infidel materialism. To ignore it is to sin most grievously against the highest principles of Divine government.

Prayer is certainly the most precious privilege ever vouchsafed to suffering humanity; but I can conceive nothing more despicable than a string of lazy, importunate, good-for-nothing, begging-letter petitions addressed to the Deity.

"Work and Worship" must go hand in hand if we would make true and real progress in this world, and deserve the assistance of our beneficent Father. This idea seems to me to be the most instructive, felicitous, worthy and practical in the whole range of religious and philosophic teaching.—Yours, &c.

London, 10th March, 1883.

TRIDENT.

THE JEWS AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In "C. C. M.'s" article in your last number, there is a remark quoted from Mr. St. George Stock, "that Judaism, during all its earlier history, had a doctrine of God, without any doctrine of immortality whatever." On this point allow me to give your readers an extract from my book "Pith" (Trübner and Co.):—"The Old Testament Scriptures do not teach the immortality of the soul, in definite, positive, and unmistakable terms. I believe the cause of this vagueness to be, that the immortality of the soul was in the estimation of the Jews regarded as so indisputably an elementary matter of fact—something so entirely taken for granted and considered settled, as not even to require its affirmation; any doubt on the subject would have been considered as the aberration of lunacy. To state the doctrine in so many words in their sacred books, would have seemed to the Jews as ridiculously superfluous as it would appear to us if the Parliament of England were, in an educational Act, to announce that the English alphabet consisted of 26 letters. As the Jews knew nothing about the state of the soul after death, they were very properly silent on the point."

What a deal of time it takes for an idea to reach the public, especially when it proceeds from such an obscure source as that of your humble servant,  
NEWTON CROSLAND.  
London, 10th March, 1883.

THE MAGNETESCOPE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. Spicer's reference to my letter on the construction of the above instrument is not satisfactory, inasmuch as he does not touch upon the most important part of my objection, viz.: "What prevents the fluid running to earth as the supporting pillar is not insulated?" and it will never turn aside from an easy and direct path to move a pendulum suspended from an arm.

As to silk being a non-conductor, we do not care to go back to 1759 for information, as it is well known to every electrician that there is not such a thing as a perfect non-conductor, but cocoon (undyed) silk is a good non-conductor for all that may be said to the contrary, but requires to be dry before it can be relied upon. I am positive the instrument cannot work if made as described. Many of the readers of "LIGHT" would be glad to have such an instrument if it could be proved to be what is represented.—Yours truly,

J. F. YOUNG.

Llanely.

A Cornish correspondent informs us that a discussion on Spiritualism has recently taken place at Truro. It was opened by the lady of a distinguished church dignitary, and thought-reading was spoken of as an established fact.

## DR. S. B. BRITTAN.

For some days it has been in my heart to write a few lines about that great and good man Samuel B. Brittan, who, but lately, passed into the heavens. His name was known all around the world. I should think that any reminiscences of him, from one who knew him intimately, would prove acceptable to those who have read his books.

And now, to begin—if I were asked what ought to be the product of the spiritual philosophy in manhood, in character, in brain, and heart, I should name our friend. Among all the men I have known, in every rank and condition of life, none could measure with him in these respects, according to my thought.

Brittan was by nature an independent thinker, endowed with courage to follow his logic, indifferent as to where it led. That great light which focalised first in the little village of Hydesville, America, fell on him, when he was alone. He received it through his own mediumship. I have had the story from his own lips, and would that I could tell it as eloquently, but I cannot. At that time he was pastor of a thriving church, beloved by everybody, and noted as a pulpit orator. His wife was a lovely and most beautiful woman. A young family was growing up around him. A great future was springing up before him. He had the elements in him of a great leader. He was sure to become the foremost man of his denomination. He knew as well as any man could know what the acceptance of the new truths implied; for he was a sincere man, and to accept the new truths was to give them voice. Then, he must go forth from his "Eden," and his friends would abandon him; and no man ever had a truer love to his friends. Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, said, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision;" but then, Paul had no wife and family. Now, I can think of no nobler instance of self-abnegation, of sublime trust in the following of what the mind apprehends to be just and right, than the course pursued by this man. He walked into his pulpit and preached as usual. At the close of the sermon he announced how a great light had come to him; and that at once he must leave the pulpit. There was much weeping, because his people loved him much; and then like Abraham he went out, "not knowing whither he went." There is much of the pathetic in this incident; it was the great soul impelled by the stress of honest conviction to peril all his interests in daring the unseen.

Let me pause here, and speak of some whom I envy. In after years there were those who generously contributed towards helping Dr. Brittan in his work. When, three years ago, he entered upon his duties as "editor at large," one gentleman contributed five hundred dollars, renewed it at the end of the year, and, I believe, gave the same amount as a testimonial last autumn. The name did not appear. But what a privilege that, to be able to hold up the hands of such a man!

Brittan struck his work without loss of time; and made himself felt throughout the length and breadth of the land. A close observer, a sharp student, with mind all open to the heavenly powers, he at once became a positive force. New evidences of the Divine truth of Spiritualism came to him continually. He threw his whole life into the movement. As a clear and convincing writer, as a ready off-hand speaker, none could excel him. Controversy came early, but in this he delighted; and it mattered not to him whether it was by tongue or pen. One debate, in a weekly newspaper he published, lasted over a year, his opponent at last confessing his defeat. Then there were debates from the public rostrum, each speaker being limited to half-an-hour, continued from day to day.

I think the crowning work of his life was in what he did as "editor at large." For years the secular Press had freely admitted to its columns articles prejudicial to Spiritualism, often written by clergymen alarmed at the spread of this new gospel. Brittan answered these attacks; and, let me say it to the credit of American journalism, there was a disposition shewn for fair play, in general, and his answers were printed. I believe they have recently been issued in book form by Colby and Rich, of Boston. If one wishes to know just what material was in this man let him read this book. He never left his enemies a foot of ground to stand on. Masterly work this was indeed, and work too, I believe, that will live.

It was my good fortune to know Dr. Brittan on the footing of an intimate friend. For years he was a welcome and beloved guest at my house; and never was man more welcome at any hearthstone. The sunshine seemed always to come when he came. A tall man, straight as an

arrow, with a face the kindest, he had a bearing that would have graced any court in any age. He was naturally a gentleman. It was a privilege to entertain him. When he went away we felt as though we had met with a loss; and yet we were conscious of being richer than when he came. Troubles he had, and many; but he seldom referred to them; and when he did it was always in a cheerful way. The great overlying fact of that future world which girts us in seemed always to possess him. He evidently lived in both worlds. I have stood by him in moments of deepest sorrow; when the sweet friend of his youth passed into blessed life; when his noble son, Angelo, faded out into the day. He was crushed; but he never complained. The man seemed to be able to interpret fully just what death means, and to feel that his loved ones were a-near.

Well, he has found the light and life he longed for. It was a brave fight he made and sweet is his victory. I want to throw this bit of laurel on his tomb. It is not much; but it will be seen by thousands who knew him; and it will help to turn their thoughts anew to what is divine in man.

C.D.L.

## PLANCHETTE WRITING.

A correspondent, signing himself "T.P.B., Lieut. R.A., F.R.A.S.," gives in *Knowledge*, of March 2nd, an interesting case of Planchette writing. The writer says:—

"Some time ago I began trying experiments with it (the Planchette) having at the time the full conviction that, where no trickery was involved, the writing was done by unconscious action of the hands of the person who rested them on the machine; but this plausible solution, if correct, would entail new ideas of brain action which would be very curious. I had the fortune to have a lady friend for whom the Planchette wrote wonderfully well at all times, so that I was able to try some curious experiments. On placing her hand on the instrument (which I made myself by drilling a hole in the rim of a small plate and inserting a pencil) and asking a question, the answer was written with wonderful celerity, even faster than ordinary writing, and generally very legibly, though in various handwritings none in the least resembling in formation of letters (which I consider a curious point) that of the operator herself. The lady herself did not know what had been written till she had read it. On more than one occasion the information conveyed was known only to myself or to some other person in the room, and therefore, on the hypothesis of involuntary action, could only be explained by a sort of Thought-reading.

"But the experiment I would particularly call your attention to is this. I had several times mesmerised the lady in question, and as usual in such cases, when asleep she could answer any questions proposed, but had no knowledge on awakening of what had happened in the trance. (By the way, I found that, if she had lost or mislaid things in her waking state she could generally say where they were when asleep.) I thought of the experiment, therefore, of causing her to place her hands on the plate when asleep. On asking a question, an answer was written as usual, and before reading it myself, I then asked her what had been written, with the full expectation that she would be able to say. She could not, however! Now this would seem to prove that the words written were not evolved either from the brain in its normal state, or from its peculiar condition in the mesmeric sleep. We must therefore either allow a third state not yet investigated, or come at length to the idea of external supernatural agency, which I am most unwilling to admit.

"A strange point I have observed about the writing of Planchette is, that its character is generally totally opposed to that of the operator. Thus I have seen the most terrible oaths written under the hands of people who would almost die sooner than use such language themselves."

The writer seems to be finding out, as Cahagnet did, that mesmerised subjects oftentimes pass away from under the control of the operator and enter a new state, of which the idea of "external supernatural agency" is the only possible explanation. This is so frequently the case, that mesmerism has been called the vestibule to Spiritualism; indeed, we are inclined to believe that many of the perplexities and anomalies which surround the subject to-day will be cleared up or explained by its aid. We should be glad to see a series of experiments in this direction undertaken by competent and trustworthy observers.

We hear that the Duke of Argyll, whose scientific attainments are of no mean order, has been making experiments with a view to ascertaining whether space possesses a fourth dimension or not. No particulars have transpired, but it is a noteworthy fact that such inquiries are being made. A scientific man in France has also been prosecuting researches in the same direction.

## THE "POLTER-GEIST" AGAIN AT WORK.

In the *Nottingham Journal* for March 5th, 1883, appears the following curious paragraph headed:—"Mysterious Affair at Worksop.—Spirit Rapping Extraordinary"—:

"The town of Worksop was in an uproar on Saturday, consequent on the circulation of a report that the household goods of a man named Joseph White, a well-known dealer, were being smashed and removed by an unseen agency. All day long crowds of excited persons wended their way towards the part of the town called the New Building ground, where White's house stands—a semi-detached building in St. John's-road—drawn thither by the exaggerated accounts of the mysterious occurrences. It appears that on Thursday night about eleven o'clock, the family, with the exception of the husband, Joseph White, and the boy George, were partaking of supper, when three raps came at the door leading into the yard at the back of the house, which were immediately repeated as though answered by some persons standing inside the room. Other noises were heard on the stairs, as though certain articles were being thrown down. On examination being made some clothes pegs were found at the foot of the stair; and next morning the boy George, who was in bed at the time, was charged with endeavouring to frighten the people downstairs. He protested his innocence, and the matter dropped. On the following night, the husband being at home and George in bed, as they were preparing to put out the light similar raps were heard, and a corkscrew came rattling downstairs. Immediately the cups and plates upon the table began to rattle, and a cut glass salt cellar was violently hurled against the yard door. A few minutes afterwards it again bounded against the door and was broken to pieces. Then the ornaments on the mantelpiece were agitated, and the pictures on the walls shook on their hanging strings. It was now midnight, and nearly all the crockery in the cupboards had been broken by being dashed to the floor. All the articles were thrown in the direction of the door, and when that was open the cup of milk, the knives, &c., were precipitated into the yard. White sells milk; and the milk cans went up and downstairs twice or thrice, but strange to say, no one was hit or in any way injured. Black coals, but burning hot, came downstairs, and the whole house was like a demon's den. The household removed into the relative's next door, taking several valuable things with them. On Saturday night a crowd of men occupied the house, and no further manifestations took place."

Should any reader of "LIGHT" desire light regarding the not infrequent exhibition of power manifested, off and on, by the class of noisy and mischief-loving spirit called by the Germans "Polter-Geist"—he may—should he be so fortunate as to possess the volumes of the *Spiritual Magazine*—consult with advantage Vol. V. (for the year 1864.) There will be found an extraordinary amount of "*The Persecution and Expulsion from his Paternal Home of M. Joller, late Member of the Swiss National Council, by Disorderly Spirits*," translated from the narrative of M. Joller. These hauntings by cruel spirits, who destroyed the furniture, and rendered the life of M. Joller and his family utterly wretched, finally, as stated above, drove the family from their ancestral home. This occurred close to the Lake of Lucerne, in 1860-62, at Stans. The writer visited, in 1870, the desolate and still uninhabited house. In Vol. VI. of the *Spiritual Magazine* for 1865, will be found three articles, collected from numerous sources, ancient and modern, of "*Stone Throwing*," and the throwing about of furniture by the same class of spirits. The reader would also do well to consult Chapter XXXVIII. of "*The History of Modern American Spiritualism*" by Mrs. Emma Hardinge, for an astounding narrative relating to this disagreeable class of phenomenon—"A circumstantial account of the *Spiritual Phenomena witnessed in Ashtabula County, Ohio*." In the same "*History of American Spiritualism*" should be found the details of the frightful persecution endured by Dr. Phelps, about the time of the commencement of the "*Rochester Knockings*." Regarding the experiences of Dr. Phelps, we read in Howitt's "*History of the Supernatural*" ("*Progress of Belief in America*," Vol. II., p. 175):—

"They (the knockings) appeared in the house of a Doctor Phelps, at Stratford, Connecticut—a man of the highest character for intelligence and worth; they frequently cut to pieces the clothes of one of his boys; they threw down glasses, porcelain, snuffers, candlesticks, or dashed them against the windows. He threw open his house to the observation and inquiry of all visitors, but no one could account for what was thus destructively going on. He says, 'I have seen things in motion above a thousand times, and in most cases where no visible power existed by which a motion could be produced. There have been broken from my windows seventy-one panes of glass, more than thirty of which I have seen broken before my eyes.'"

W.

## GHOSTS AT OXFORD.

In the new number of the *Oxford Magazine* there appears the following extraordinarily precise story, authenticated by the editor, of ghostly appearances seen by two undergraduates as lately as last Christmas in one of the colleges in the academic city. The *Oxford Magazine* is the latest journalistic venture for calling forth the current thought of the eldest of the Universities, both among the Dons and the undergraduates; and the appearance of such an article, in such a journal, is eloquent as to the tendency of opinion in our halls of learning:—

## "A STRANGE EXPERIENCE."

"Last Christmas Vacation had well begun; we two were almost alone in College, enjoying the strange quiet which comes over Oxford when the bustle of term-time is over. Our rooms were in an outlying part of the College—in an annexe built some two centuries back, and approached from the quadrangle through a tortuous passage, very puzzling to a stranger. The building almost abutted on the east end of the chapel, and we sometimes thought that it must cover the site of the graveyard of the old monastery, out of the wreck of which the College had risen. There were three stories in the block, two sets of rooms on each story. The 'oaks' of the top rooms were sported, the owners perhaps had been glad enough to escape from their garrets in the roof. My friend's room was on the ground floor, and mine just above it; the other rooms were also empty.

"We were reading hard, grateful for our escape from the busy round of distracting engagements; perhaps, if anything, we were getting torpid in the almost unbroken peace. It was the Ethics that we were reading, a work which does not keenly stir the imagination. In fine, the last thing in our minds was the mystery of the undiscovered country. And as we were neither of us specially credulous, the spirits might have chosen more profitable victims.

"One night about eleven as I was reading by the fire, I was startled by two sharp, loud raps on the inside of the door of an unfurnished room, opening into the larger one in which I was sitting. Now I had been in the room some terms and knew them at most hours of the night and day. Rats there were certainly, but their scramble was familiar. There had never been a noise like those raps before. Perhaps I had imagined them; at any rate I would wait until I heard them again. So I turned my thoughts back to Aristotle, and merged my own identity in that of the anonymuncles whose views the philosopher summarises only to explode. Rap, rap on the door again; no mistake this time certainly, and there was a little asperity, I thought, in the sound. Up I jumped with my lamp, hurried across the room and threw open the door, which had been so strangely knocked at. The room was empty; the window sash had been nailed down and the ventilating pane was shut. No way of escape anywhere, for the only access was through the door I had just opened.

"This was the first obtrusive manifestation that had troubled me. I must admit that long before, when I first went into the rooms, I had noticed that more people passed my door and went up the staircase than ever came down again. But this grew so common that it had ceased to concern me any more than the fowls in the yard below or the carts in the street beyond it.

"Next day, I had forgotten the unexplained noises of the previous night, and, if the intention of the visitant, ghostly or otherwise, had been to excite me, the attempt had been unsuccessful. However, that afternoon I chanced to go out on business about half-past four, leaving my lamp lighted on a little table by the side of my arm chair in front of the fire, so that my seat, on to which a strong light was thrown by the shade, almost faced any one who came in from the staircase. I returned to College at five, ran up the stairs and flung open my door. To my surprise, I saw an old looking man sitting in my chair. I was convinced that he was there, but had no time to form any distinct idea of his dress or countenance, as in a moment he had faded out of his place and I found myself standing in the doorway with the room empty before me. This was something new; the spiritual inhabitants of the College had never shown themselves before in living memory. Here clearly was a region for the Psychical Society to investigate. So I went down stairs to my friend who was reading below, and told him of my hallucination. As he listened to the account, he had the expression of a man who is hearing a striking corroboration of an idea, hitherto scouted as ridiculous. 'Do you know,' he said, when I had told my story, 'this very morning I came suddenly out of my bedroom about eleven o'clock' (his bedroom door, which opened into his sitting-room, faced the fire, the door into the outer passage being in the nearest left-hand corner of the room), 'and saw what I took to be a woman in a long dark dress kneeling down with her back to me on the right-hand side of the fire; she vanished instantaneously—as you say, faded into the air, but I am certain I saw her. Yet I decided not to tell you lest you should laugh at my imagination—but now one's first impulse is to connect the two apparitions.'"

"However, nothing further was seen by either of us, though we both were eager to witness more or, at least, to discover some plausible explanation—but nothing threw light on the difficulty. We had neither of us experienced that form of self-deception previously, and neither since that time has seen anything of a like nature. We can only shrug our shoulders and let the story pass into the dim limbo of the unexplained.—T."



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## PIÈCES JUSTIFICATIVES

## OF THE NEED OF A SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

## CASE VI.

## MESMERIC CLAIRVOYANCE.

In the hope of being able to put the subject of clairvoyance to the test of direct experiment, I wrote in 1877 to Mr. Coates, who was then lecturing on mesmerism in different parts of England, and whose skill and power as a mesmeriser I had heard spoken of highly. Mr. Coates came for some time to Dublin, but was unsuccessful in obtaining any clairvoyant sensitive during the time he was here.\* All the ordinary mesmeric phenomena were, however, readily produced by him in my presence; on one occasion I asked Mr. Coates to endeavour to mesmerise an attendant, who was wholly ignorant of what was about to occur, and had never seen, as I subsequently ascertained, any mesmeric experiments. No word was spoken beyond my telling the man to submit to be tried. In a few minutes complete rigidity of one arm was produced, then rigidity of the whole body; resting the man's head on one stool and his heels on another, not only was the whole body inflexibly supported, but I was able to stand upon the man's chest. Throwing a handkerchief over the man's eyes, I silently directed Mr. Coates to demesmerise the man, and after a few backward strokes, the body became limp, and fell to the ground. Several other experiments were tried which convinced me that so far from "expectant attention" being an explanation of what I had seen, it had absolutely nothing whatever to do with it, though I do not deny that this hypothesis may be a *vera causa* in certain quasi-mesmeric states. Mr. Coates told me he had had one striking case of clairvoyance in his experience, and I begged him to give me as minute and accurate account of it as he could. He did so, and I append it herewith, leaving each reader to form his own judgment on the "figure of merit" it deserves.

W. F. BARRETT.

Monkstown, Dublin.

"During the course of a lecture on mesmerism delivered by me at Blackburn, Lancashire, a young woman (a factory girl) was found susceptible, having been drawn upon the platform out of the audience by the usual mesmeric pass. I found her very sensitive and easily 'biologised.' Afterwards I mesmerised her at the Peel Institute, Accrington, where I subsequently lectured.

"Finding that she was willing to sit for the development of higher phenomena, I again mesmerised her at Accrington on Sunday morning, the 4th October, 1875. Her great anxiety had rather a retarding influence than otherwise, and it took me some time before I could produce a deep mesmeric sleep. I then asked her to visit, in her sleep, her friends in Blackburn. She did so and described her house, or rather lodgings, and the people with whom she lived, and addressed me as if actually in their company.

\* A similar want of success attended Mr. F. W. H. Myers and myself in our engagement of another mesmerist in London, who for some months tried in vain to induce the clairvoyant state. The testimony to the reality of the phenomena is, I feel, far too weighty to be overborne by such slight and ineffectual attempts as these, instructive as they are.

"I then called her back and desired her to examine the parlour of the hotel in which we were sitting. She did so, and at first complained of a dark fog or haze surrounding her. I then blindfolded her with cotton wadding and a handkerchief, and again called her attention to the room, when she declared she saw more clearly than before; the fog or haze seemed to disappear, and she became conscious of the possession of perceptive powers unknown to her before. I asked her how she felt and what she saw. In reply she stated that she felt well enough and would not like to come out of the state she was in, and further that the things she saw (describing them) *pressed themselves upon her*. She did not see as when awake, and could not explain how she saw further than that they pressed themselves upon her; this she said when I looked at any particular article.

"I then directed her attention to the table we were sitting by, asked her to tell me what it was like, and what was on it; this she accomplished without difficulty and seemed greatly elated at her success. At this period of the sitting I awoke her to give the brain a rest, by changing the current of occupation and ideas.

"In the afternoon of the same day I mesmerised her again, and her clairvoyant faculty seemed to make rapid progress at each successive sitting. Having thrown her into the sleep, I commenced at that point of inquiry where I had left off at the morning sitting. I then requested her to fix her attention upon me, and desired her, without verbal communication of any kind, to make certain movements, and she did as I mentally wished.

"I now asked her what I had in my hand. 'A silver cased hunting watch, unopen.' Right. 'What was the time by it?' Answer: 'Quarter to five o'clock.' Right. A variety of other questions were asked, and in all instances fairly answered. I then requested her to go to Liverpool, and tell me when she got there. In a few moments the answer came, 'I am there now.'\* I desired her to tell me what she saw, whereupon she described to me the alterations going on at the Lime-street Railway Station—since completed—St. George's Hall, Brown's Library, &c., and other public places. I then requested her to visit my residence in Liverpool, and tell me what she observed. After describing several streets and conspicuous objects that appeared to her on the way (all of which were described accurately), she eventually came to my house, described the railing in front, the number of steps leading up to the door, letter-box, and plate. She then entered the house, described the hall, the rooms upon the ground floor, and a lady sitting in one of them, mentioned her appearance, and what she was doing, viz., 'She had a work-basket beside her, and an antimacassar in her hand and across her knee.' I was much astonished at this, as I knew it was not my wife's custom to be at needlework on Sunday. Then, recalling what articles of decoration were upon the back parlour mantelpiece,—vases, shells, mirror, &c.—I asked her to look at this particular portion of the room, and tell me what she saw. She did so, and told me the things accurately. But she insisted that there were two pictures in the room more than I was aware of. She described them to me, and informed me where they were hung. I argued the matter with her, and told her she must be mistaken; but she continued most positive in her assertion. I called her back from her somnambulistic visit to Liverpool, and then awoke her. In her normal condition she had no recollection of what took place in the sleep.

"The sequel now remains to be told. I immediately wrote to my wife in Liverpool and asked what she was doing that afternoon from about half-past four to half-past five—giving her my reasons for making such a request, but at the same time not informing her of the details of the sensitive's vision. The reply proved that the clairvoyante was substantially correct. Mrs. Coates did a most unusual thing that afternoon—namely, took out some unfinished needlework, and amongst the rest was an *antimacassar*, which she looked at and determined to finish next day. In my letter I said nothing about the two new pictures described by the clairvoyante; but, on the following Sunday, having an opportunity of paying a flying visit to my home, I found, to my surprise, that there hung, in the places indicated by the clairvoyante, the two identical pictures she had described. These pictures had been purchased during my absence from home, and placed in their present position a few days before the sitting occurred at Accrington."

\* The sensitive had, it seems, been in Liverpool three times previously at the Whitsuntide holidays, as is the custom with the factory operatives in the adjacent towns; but she had never been to Mr. Coates's house, nor had she any but a vague knowledge of the town.—W. F. B.

## PERSONALITY AND THE UNIVERSAL MIND.

By John E. Purdon, M.B.T.C.P.

(Continued from page 113.)

I feel satisfied that the introduction into metaphysic of the relative infinite, as a working formula, is necessary to correct and supplement the negative and doubtful positive inferences forced upon us through the limitations imposed by the laws of our mental constitution. By this method of thought, the transformation of metaphysic into mathematical physis, as it were, we can escape from the negation of God in nature, on the one hand, or the blind acceptance of the dictum of a too assertive foreign personality on the other; the proof of the one position and the disproof of the other alike depending upon the imperfection of our instruments of thought when the attempt is made to use them outside their legitimate sphere. As long as we think under the conditions of our bodily organisation we are obliged to express our thoughts in the artificial and arbitrary mode by which, through our ignorance alone, the mind is obliged to conform to the plan of the grosser motions of our bodies acquired in the mere introductory stage of existence, when the preservation of the body is, in the Providence of God, the first of all considerations; and this when we feel convinced that waste both of time and energy is the result, not to mention the actual errors of commission, against which it is impossible to guard from the nature of things. "The laws of thought, in all its processes of conception and of reasoning, in all those operations of which language is the expression or the instrument, are of the same kind as are the laws of the acknowledged processes of mathematics," says a great logician; and if to this we add that the matter of language, i.e., the instrument of the expression of thought, is still that identical matter of the senses which we weigh and measure, and which attracts itself mutually throughout the universe according to the law of the second degree, which is also the law for the expression of the principle of contradiction, (which affirms that it is impossible for any being to possess a quality and at the same time not to possess it), we can, I say, see that while thought may be so far universal in form, yet in the world of appearances it cannot be instantaneous except in terms of a mind which is no longer an aggregate of lesser minds communicating with each other *seriatim* (and so thinking in time), but a mind whose formal expression of unity is that same law of universal gravitation, which is instantaneously active, and which does not take time to travel from world to world in the depths of that space which Newton himself, on other grounds, called the form of the boundless uniform sensorium of God.

Personality, as formal expression of the reality and sameness of substantial cause, is not conditioned in time, except in so far as, for thought, the soul whose unity it affirms, depends upon formed matter for its manifestations of activity; the motions of which, of course, involve changes in time, and which indeed they may be said to constitute. In other words, Personality is essentially timeless. This is the most certain of all facts, for it is that of existence itself, and so far the personalities of God and man come within the same category. It would appear that granting the existence of a Personal God, that acknowledgment necessarily and logically carries with it an acknowledgment of a state or condition of human activity free from all conditions unessential to the manifestation of the finite in contra-position to, and correlation with the Infinite; and this we can conceive to take place if the human personality is to be preserved, and to be made an object of thought before the actual change has taken place, only in the simplification of the expression of thought, whereby it would be made more comprehensive in one sense, while in respect to time it would be more condensed, through removal or modification of those formal conditions which are unessential to the existence of a soul. And this view, which is founded upon the hypothesis of the preservation of the personality, can be subjectively and symbolically realised in the supposition of any actual increase in our physical and mental powers; for it amounts to no more than that of the falling away of the present material order of affairs, the universe of appearances, including the body itself and the outward eyes, which for the opened internal sense would no longer see as through a glass darkly. It is needless to say that any notion of future, or rather other, existence which does not postulate the personality, is mere word-making, and can mean nothing. But again, it is a

matter of tremendous importance that with the personality in the other state still arises the question of the personality of God; that is, really, the question of God or no God, for an impersonal God is a contradiction in terms and means nothing. The questions of God would still face us in another state of existence, and that is simply equivalent to saying that He is equally relative to all states in which man is man. I therefore refuse to defer the question of the existence of God to any hypothetical future state, preferring to face it now when it is of most importance to those who come after me, and who may be swayed by my beliefs and by my example; and therefore seeing in the assertion of a Man a claim to partake in the essential nature of God, I seek to find something which is common to God, that Man, and myself, something which is, or may be, common to all three. That I find in the fact of personality, and nowhere else. Natural religion can supply us with a generalised view or cosmical theory of the Personality of God; but Christianity alone has asserted that the Personality of God is not different from our own, which, though ever present, will not bear definition in any other terms than those of subjective realisation.

I conclude, therefore, that I must find God through self, and that therefore I must find Him as a Personal Cause, or not at all, for God does not exist in nature objectively, nor is He to be found by analysis. He is neither the sum total of objective existence, nor is He the conclusion of a syllogism. The world for each of us, each, at any rate, of the same species, is an appearance, the same real appearance or manifestation of Divine and Infinite power, and this creation is for each of us, through and with our organism, and given in the unity of apperception, as I remarked before. Only so far as my knowledge of my own powers enables me to influence that world can I do so; and this limitation when removed still permits the equation of cause and effect; for corresponding to the degree of freedom to operate on external natural objects, must always exist the realisation of that orderly manifestation of power in the mind of some spiritual being, except we indulge in the wild speculation that nature is so constituted as not to permit any possibility of disorder, no matter how changed the appearance produced by a *vera causa*. Any such hypothesis would no more than express in other terms the fact that all change is effected on the lines laid down by a Perfect Being to the exclusion of all finite beings as intermediate agents, a supposition which would materially interfere with our conception of free personality, to save which I have advanced the intergradient conception of the relative infinite.

This idea also helps to save us from the very dangerous position of *solipsism*, as it has been called, or that of sole occupancy of the universe, a startling conviction of the truth of which forces itself upon the original metaphysical thinker when he first realises the close relation in which the Personality of man stands to that of his Father and Creator.

(To be continued.)

## IF TRUE, WAS IT CHANCE?

The following incident is given in Dr. W. Smith's Memoir of J. G. Fichte, prefixed to his translation of the popular works of the latter (Tribner, 1873), p. 127. "While a French garrison still held Berlin, one of his (Fichte's) students revealed to him a plan, in which he himself was engaged, for firing their magazine during the night. Doubts had arisen in his mind as to the lawfulness of such a mode of aiding his country's cause, and he had resolved to lay the scheme before the teacher for whose opinion he entertained an almost boundless reverence. Fichte immediately disclosed the plot to the Superintendent of Police, by whose timely interference it was defeated. The same young man who acted so honourably on this occasion afterwards entered the army as a volunteer in one of the grenadier battalions. At the battle of Dennewitz his life was preserved in a very remarkable manner. A musket ball, which struck him during the fight, was arrested in its fatal progress by encountering a copy of Fichte's 'Religions-lehre,' his constant companion and moral safeguard, which on this occasion served him likewise as a physical *Ægidus*. On examining the book, he found that the ball had been stopped at these words (p. 249)—'Denn alles, was da kommt, ist der Wille Gottes mit ihm, und drum das Allerbeste, was da kommen konnte'—(for everything that comes to pass is the Will of God with him, and therefore the best that can possibly come to him)".

C.C.M.

## "UNCONSCIOUS MEDIUMSHIP."

By F. J. Theobald.

What is mediumship? What are the laws which govern it? Why are not all people mediums?

These are amongst the first questions put by investigators of the wonderful subject of Spiritualism. By means of spirit-writing, my spirit-friends have told me that medial gifts lie latent in every human being. They compare them to telegraphy, the wires being in order and capable of use when mediumship is developed. But in a vast majority of cases, because of the long prevailing disbelief and antagonism to all supernatural matters, these telegraphic wires are out of order and unusable.

One of our veteran Spiritualists said to me a short time ago, when speaking of the difficulties of investigating these most marvellous and intricate subjects, that "mediumship, whilst beyond the ken of exact science, is not beyond the reach of reverent observation. But," she added, "the Spirit which bloweth where it listeth, must be waited on, not dictated to." One thing only do we know with certainty—i.e., that this is the power which supplies the link in the magnetic chain, connecting the two worlds—the natural and the supernatural—and by placing the unseen intelligences *en rapport* with us in the body, enables us to receive communications in various ways.

This is no new power; for there is no form of mediumship, now well-known amongst Spiritualists, but what has its parallel, or counterpart, in the experiences given of the men of old; not only throughout the sacred records, but in the ancient history of all past ages. Throughout the Scriptures these experiences are spoken of as "from the Lord," or "from the angel of the Lord." The New Testament gives, in our Saviour's life on earth, an unbroken testimony to the intimate connection between us, in the body, and our spirit guides, who are sent to us as "ministering spirits." \* Thus we learn that the lives of all eminent men and women, through all past ages, down to the present day, if read in the light thrown upon human experience by the knowledge of Spiritualism, are full of intensely interesting accounts of what we may call "*Unconscious Mediumship*." Great discoverers, eminent poets, prominent statesmen, &c., furnish numerous remarkable proofs of being led by a superior power. Ignorant scepticism and superstition have done their best to stifle the recognition of this fact; and, consequently, infidelity, agnosticism, and dense materialism were growing rampant everywhere, when happily this strong influx of so-called "Modern Spiritualism" came into our midst irresistibly. Latent medial power has been developed universally and simultaneously throughout the world; bringing undoubted proofs of the existence of an unseen universe; of the close presence of those dear ones who have passed "within the veil"; and thus presenting a "new basis of belief in immortality," which cannot be overthrown by the densest materialism. At last, the scientist is met on his own ground, and supplied with scientific proofs, irresistible and incontestable. For *tangible, solid facts*, accumulating almost daily, now take the place of mere theory, and confound even the most persistent doubter.

William Howitt's invaluable work, "*The History of Supernaturalism in all Ages*," shews how these mediumistic gifts have been always in our midst. The Romish Church accepts them. Its mediums are "saints," whose lives and spiritualistic experiences are carefully recorded; and the priests or other functionaries of that Church guard the fact of mediumship with tenacious care, denying its exercise to the laity. A relative of my own, who was a Roman Catholic priest, once said to me, "Yes, F., I believe in Spiritualism. In the Church 'tis from God; out of it from the devil!" Poor fellow! before many weeks had passed away he was called to his spirit home. Shortly afterwards he came, and, writing through my hand (by spirit-power), told me how his eyes were then, at least, open to the fact that the good of Spiritualism was by no means confined to the Romish Church; but, as he said, "The Orders did me good; they helped me, if they could not help you."

Our Protestant Church, on the other hand, repudiates these gifts. "He has a devil"; "it is all witchcraft"; "the necromancy denounced in the Bible"; Spiritualists are "afflicted with diluted insanity"; "beneath notice"; "candidates for Bedlam"; "all mediums are of a low moral type"; "dishonest, crafty," &c., &c.—such choice denunciations are

specimens of the kind of reception mediums meet with from the orthodox party of the present day. And yet the fact remains—as we Spiritualists well know—that "*unconscious mediumship*" exists, and usually forms a beautiful characteristic in the lives of the most eminent Christians! How little do these good people suspect that it is, indeed, by means of the little understood, and (by many of them) the much deprecated power of spiritualistic mediumship, they are themselves brought so closely into communion with the high spheres of angel life. It is with the hope of drawing the attention of such true followers of Christ to a knowledge of their own real condition, as spirit mediums, to enable them to judge more wisely and to cease their antagonism to the important subject of Spiritualism, that I offer the following record of instances of "*unconscious mediumship*" in the lives of a few of Christ's own children.

Instances of "*unconscious mediumship*" are of frequent occurrence amongst the poor and uneducated classes. Mr. D., a friend, who has for years been minister in a small, rustic village, about thirty miles from London, tells me that several of the poor people in his congregation used to relate to him most beautiful visions, dreams, or supernatural experiences which came to them. Although until recently he knew nothing of Spiritualism, which now makes all such things clear, Mr. D. never attempted to argue them out of what he felt to be real truth, and of great good to them. One circumstance of great interest he related to me, saying that it was much talked about at the time it happened, some few years ago; and he can, with many others, testify to its truth.

Mrs. A., an eminently good old lady, living in the village—one who had for years been subject to beautiful visions—was slowly sinking. A good man, living near, was visiting her one day, talking with her. She was telling him of her great happiness and her confident hopes for the future, when all at once her countenance brightened, and holding up her hand, she exclaimed: "Hark! What lovely music! Can you not hear it?" "No," he replied: "I hear nothing." "Open wide the casement," she exclaimed, "then you *will* hear it!" And surely, to his intense astonishment, he did, as he declares, hear the most exquisite music, upon acceding to her request to throw the window wide open, and yet it was of a character that made it impossible that it should come from an external source! Mrs. A.'s daughter inherited her good mother's medial gifts, and so freely spoke of her experiences that, unhappily, the poor woman was at last placed in an asylum by those about her, who, being ignorant of the subject of Spiritualism, attributed her visions, &c., to hallucination and insanity. Mr. D. tells me he never saw any reason why she should be thus treated, for upon all points but the one—which we understand to have been "*unconscious mediumship*"—she was acknowledged to be perfectly sane.

One good old Christian, who served in our family as nurse for many years, became much interested in Spiritualism as soon as she knew of it, in connection with our home experience. As she remarked, it explained to her many strange incidents in her life, for she proved to be a remarkable medium. She told us that many times when in trouble she had been cheered and helped by the appearance of a bright, beautiful spirit. This spirit would speak to her audibly, usually quoting some text of Scripture especially adapted to her need. These experiences came to her when wide awake, sitting in her room, or even whilst walking in the street. One very remarkable instance occurred to her when a child. She was walking near Shoreditch Church, when a spirit stood before and spoke to her a few loving words of good and appropriate advice. As she was watching the vision with great astonishment, a lady—a perfect stranger—who was passing at the time, suddenly stopped, and speaking to the child, said, "You heard that voice, my child, did you not? Never forget what the spirit told you. Now, run home to your mother!" The audible spirit-voice is of frequent occurrence at our spiritualistic seances or among mediums, but it was very remarkable for this vision, out of doors, in a bustling London street, to be seen by two people, strangers to each other.

I think perhaps it will not be out of place to relate a little incident which took place when Nurse Ford (as we called her) was staying with me whilst I was keeping house for a cousin during her absence from home. One of the children had been suffering from neuralgic face-ache for a fortnight, and all our efforts to relieve it had proved useless. Early one morning (at four o'clock) I was suddenly completely aroused out of a sound sleep by a spirit-voice, saying loudly and clearly, as from the bedside: "F., get up directly; go and give Teddy, Chamomilla 200." In

\* For details on this point, see "*Spiritualism in the Bible compared with Modern Spiritualism*."—Price 2d.; Allen and Co., 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, E.C.



an instant I was out of bed, and, taking my medicine chest in my hand, ran up to the poor child, and gave him the prescribed remedy. In a very few minutes he was sound asleep, and on awaking in the morning was so far well that a little mesmerism given during the day (which had been as useless as other remedies before) completed the cure.

When I saw Nurse Ford she said to me :

"Ah, Miss F., God sent you to Master Teddy in answer to my prayer. I had been up and down to the poor child all night, and felt so distressed at his cries that at last I prayed very earnestly that God would send help quickly. And as I prayed I heard you open your door and come up to him, and then he was quiet, and I knew my prayer was answered."

A few times in her life Nurse Ford received some beautiful visions, or dreams. They puzzled her much when she received them, being highly symbolic. But even to her uneducated mind the explanation was clear when the literal interpretation was given to her some months later, and when the vision had passed from her mind, only to be recalled by its fulfilment.

(To be continued.)

### SUCCESSFUL SEANCES WITH MISS WOOD.

A few of us in connection with Spiritualism at Newcastle, lamenting the undignified and disastrous results ever recurring through the unsatisfactory, and oftentimes loose, methods under which phenomena are sought, have for some few years strongly recommended that all mediums should be seated at séances in full view of the sitters. Not being able to enforce those views on the majority, and circumstances not permitting us to act independently, we have, until recently, been unable to satisfactorily experiment in the same direction. However, since the return of Miss Wood from the South, we have been so far fortunate as to succeed in having a course of séances with that lady, which, after many failures, and the exercise of much patience, have had results better than many of the friends anticipated.

The séances have been held in the house of a lady in Northumberland-street, who has kindly devoted her dining-room to our purpose for several weeks past. The room is about 17ft. broad by about 23ft. long, the fire-place and door being at extreme ends from each other. We improvised a cabinet in the corner of the room at the left of the fire-place. It was put up for, and taken down after, each séance. The light was modified by covering the globe of a chandelier furthest from the cabinet, with a thin light brown paper, which permitted us to have a good sized jet of gas, which, through the medium of the paper, diffused a dusky grey light over the room, enabling the sitters to comfortably distinguish each other and to easily observe every motion of Miss Wood, whom we had seated about a foot from the cabinet, after dressing her in a white jacket and placing a white antimacassar over her head. Each evening we commenced our sittings about 8 p.m., and concluded them about 10 p.m.

The first séance, held on January 26th, was without results.

The second séance was held on January 30th. The medium, under control, was removed four feet from the cabinet, and the curtains, by some invisible power behind them, were stretched forward until they touched the person of the medium.

The third séance was held on February 2nd. We attached a piece of white paper to the centre of the outside curtains to better distinguish their movements. The medium was again removed to about four feet from the cabinet, and the curtains from within were pushed out to the knees of the medium, and a stick placed in the cabinet was stretched forth from the aperture.

The fourth, fifth and sixth séance were, in phenomena, a repetition of the above, with one exception. We insisted upon the control leaving the medium seated where we had placed her—a foot from the cabinet—as we thought that at the distance of four feet the prospect of phenomena such as we desired would be almost *nil*—for the present at least.

At the sixth séance, on February 16th, we had a somewhat remarkable experience. We had sat for about an hour and three-quarters, when a "report" occurred inside the cabinet about as loud as that made by an ordinary cracker, which startled some of the ladies. Pocha thereupon took possession of her medium, and told us that they had just about succeeded in building up the power required preparatory to making themselves visible to us, when by a movement of the curtains from

within a ray of light had "fallen upon their battery" and exploded it, annulling the probability of results for that sitting.

The seventh séance, held February 20th, was a most satisfactory one. After all our waiting and watching, patience and perseverance triumphed, and we obtained the results desired. We had sat for about an hour and a-half, enjoying ourselves as best we could by singing and conversing, when, from the left aperture, the medium being in full view all the while, a small form appeared, and, with some difficulty, moved outward towards the right of the medium. After making a few intelligent motions in answer to the inquiries of the sitters, the form retired behind the curtains, and in the space of a few minutes made its appearance at the right aperture of the cabinet, and moved forward about two feet from the curtains. The little form then began to speak to us in a faint and broken voice, but quite intelligible to those at the end of the circle. For a short time it moved backward and forward between the medium and cabinet, and finally disappeared. During the time the small form was visible, which purported to be that of Pocha, the guide of Miss Wood, it was quite distinguishable and distinct from that of the medium.

The eighth séance, held February 23rd, was fairly successful, the light being good and the medium between nine inches and a foot from the cabinet. After sitting for about two hours, Pocha made her appearance from the left of the cabinet, moved to the right of the medium, and in a short time returned back to the cabinet, and disappeared behind the curtains. This form, like that at the previous séance, was clearly distinguishable from the form of the medium.

The next séance was unfruitful of phenomenon; but the tenth séance, held March 6th, was a most successful one. The light was so good as to enable the sitters to distinguish each other easily, and Miss Wood, who was dressed in a white jacket, was very clearly visible. After sitting for about an hour, a chair which we had placed at the right of the cabinet and against the wall, on which we had put a small bell and a paper tube, was dragged by some power from within the cabinet until it disappeared behind the curtains. The bell was afterwards thrown from the cabinet, and for some time we could hear a great deal of noise going on behind the curtains as if the chair was being violently knocked about. This we found to have been the case at the end of the sitting, the chair having the appearance of being rudely dealt with, as a piece of the back was knocked off. After sitting for a few more minutes the curtains at the left divided and a form about five feet three inches in height, clothed in very white-looking garments, shewed itself clearly to all present, and stood at the aperture, a distance of two feet from Miss Wood, who kept motionless all the while. The curtains for about a foot from the floor at the aperture where the form appeared, did not open. This enabled those of us who sat directly opposite to the right side of the medium, to clearly discern from the floor upwards, so far as physical vision could aid us, that the form and the medium were completely separated from each other. After remaining at the division of the curtains for a few minutes the form retired and the séance concluded.

We consider those séances to be highly satisfactory, and believe that if we could have been favoured for some time longer with the presence of Miss Wood in Newcastle, the results of such sittings as those (with the medium outside the cabinet, and visible to all the sitters) would have enabled us to procure most remarkable phenomena.

We shall yet have a few more séances with Miss Wood, which, if productive of phenomena worthy of notice, I shall report in due course.

HENRY BURTON.

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

P.S.—Mr. Kersey and Mr. Thompson, President and Vice-President of the Newcastle Society, together with other well known Spiritualists, as Messrs. Colman, W. C. Robson, Mrs. Hammerbon, and others were present at the above séances. Any further information regarding the above can be had by writing to the above address.

THE METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.—It was announced from the platform of St. Andrew's Hall, on Sunday last, that the evening of Sunday, April 8th, is to be reserved for "Questions and Answers." The audience and all interested in testing the fact, as well as the quality and resources, of cultivated trance speaking are invited to attend with written inquiries of general interest, guaranteed by the signature of the writer, and under cover. The papers will be opened in the presence of the audience, and the occasion be known as a "ballot night."

## OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN S. FARMER.

## The "Banner of Light."

Our Boston contemporary contains much of interest. Mr. J. J. Morse contributes the thirty-third instalment of a bright and gossip series of "Echoes from England." Why, however, does he characterise the recent action in regard to dark and cabinet séances as a "scare"? Surely he will admit that there was a deep-rooted and widespread evil to be eradicated. We fail to see any "scare" in the matter. On the contrary, it appears to us that the whole position was thoughtfully and earnestly considered, and the signatories to the circular (of which he was one) were not people to attest anything without duly weighing the matter. We look upon the result as the surest indication of the soul of good upon which Spiritualism is based that has come to light for many a long month. The sore was an ugly one, but the pruning knife was used by a zealous hand tempered with discretion.—The Secular Press Bureau, under the presidency of Professor Henry Kiddle, *vice* Professor S. B. Brittan, now among "the greater number," continues to do good work on its own particular lines. This time the attack made on Spiritualism by the Rev. W. D. Faunce is answered in the paper where it originally appeared—the *Washington Chronicle*. The clerical denunciation appears to have been of the usual stale and threadbare kind—a sort of Quixotic windmill fight. When will the religious teachers of the people learn to distinguish between "things that differ," and recognise the fact that Spiritualism offers them aid in the direction where they most want it, and which they can obtain nowhere else? It is certain that the absence of evidence such as Spiritualism supplies constitutes a very vulnerable point in their armour of defence against the onslaught of materialism. Even to demonstrate that matter is not all that is contained in the universe is something, and that can surely not be counted entirely antagonistic to the things of the spirit.—Extracts are given from an article in *Harper's Monthly* for February, detailing some of the psychological experiences of J. G. Whittier. The author, Mr. G. M. White, says that the Quaker poet has admitted to him that he is sometimes able to read the thoughts of persons in the same room with him.

## "Medium."

"'Zöllner' on Spirit, Matter, Time, Space, the Fourth Dimension," a discourse through Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond, is the *pièce de résistance* this week. Some of the illustrations used remind us very forcibly of Zöllner's lines of thought, *e.g.*, those drawn from astronomy, in which science the professor was a distinguished and enthusiastic observer. It is pointed out that nearly everything is impossible if measured by one man's experience, or even by that of the wisest man, or that of the whole world, if experience were all. No one has seen the stars made or grow, and yet who would declare them impossible when they are filling space with their presence? So with many of the realities of spiritual existence. We cannot discover their why or wherefore, yet indications are not wanting that they exist.—We are glad to notice that our young people are catered for. The tone of "Lonely Little Lara" is healthy and well adapted to young minds, to say nothing of much that will interest children of larger growth. Much that is of sterling worth can be inculcated by means of fiction, where other means would fail to arrest the attention. Upon the whole, the number is a very interesting one.

## GOD CALLS OUR LOVED ONES.

With silence only as their benediction  
God's angels come,  
Where, in the shadow of a great affliction,  
The soul sits dumb.  
Yet would I say, what thy own heart approveth,  
Our Father's will,  
Calling to Him the dear one whom He loveth,  
Is mercy still.  
Not upon thee, or thine, the solemn angel  
Hath evil wrought;  
Her funeral anthem is a glad evangel—  
The good die not.  
God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly  
What He hath given;  
They live on earth, in thought and deed as truly  
As in His Heaven.

WHITTIER.

## SPIRITUALISM AND SCIENCE.

On Monday evening next, at 7.30, Mr. J. W. Slater, editor of the *Journal of Science*, will read a paper before the members and friends of the C.A.S., 38, Great Russell-street, on "Spiritualism from a Scientific Point of View." The admission will be free, and it is very desirable that there should be a large attendance. Mr. Slater, though not a Spiritualist, has always claimed for Spiritualists a fair and impartial hearing; and the members of the C.A.S. ought in return to give an attentive ear to what he has to say from his own standpoint as a man of science.

## SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON &amp; THE PROVINCES.

## METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM,

ST. ANDREW'S HALL, 14, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET, LONDON.

"The Coming Priest," as exhibited here on Sunday last by the controls of Mr. Morse, has to be approached in the manner oratorically dear to the friends of the still robust Head-Master of Parliamentary finance, whose Budget methods of the recent, but already fading past, invariably covered a preliminary discursive review of the situation, a critical analysis of alternatives, a summary, and then—the resolution. In like manner was introduced "The Coming Priest." The subject has a past and a present aspect, each of which must receive intelligent attention before the certain future can be appreciated. Priesthood is not necessarily priestcraft; and however much of latent tyranny there may be in the social ostracism which assails the critic of this department of human activity, there is a degree of toleration of differences of opinion, and of freedom of expression, which protects us from the burnings of the "days of the long ago." For the purposes of this review we may wisely disregard the contentions of opposing parties; but the elementary point of intrinsic value in all such inquiries must be kept well in mind if judgment is to command or to deserve respect; and special circumstances of time and degree should always be fairly considered; for that which was valuable, and perhaps essential, 2,000 years ago, is not, as a mere matter of course, appropriate now, while it may become distinctly antagonistic in much less than 2,000 years hence. It is quite true, however, that when exceptional powers, prerogatives, or privileges are claimed, there is more than ordinary reason to bring the test-question to the front, and ask, is there an *adequate* return of good? Are the sacrifices, or is the surrender of the community demanded by the necessities of the case? If the unbiassed general intelligence replies in the negative, the claim should be resisted and the institution or function suppressed or modified. It is scarcely necessary to say, from this platform, that man is a spiritual being, that his spiritual powers enable him to sustain relations with other spirits, and that these powers and relations, allied with the higher spirituality of their source, of their God, are the heritage of every man, past, present, and future. Now the spiritual nature of some persons is more pronounced than of others; they are in consequence more competent to judge of the needs and qualities of spiritual life, and that characteristic is at once the true element and abiding foundation of fitness for the priestly office, and the rational justification for its conditional existence. With the fact, however, comes the risk. These exceptional persons, being few in number and relatively strong in influence, soon discover that they inspire a degree of awe which requires, from them, only a moderate indulgence of craft and cunning to presently convert into fear and dread, from which standpoint a mighty force is drawn either for uplifting or for debasing humanity. The vocation of the spiritual guide or priest is to train his pupils or hearers for a happy future; but there is and always has been, arising out of the varied conceptions of different nations of the character of that future, an infinite diversity of method in the work. The priest of Eastern lands, of the teeming millions of India and China, of the interior of Africa and elsewhere, as well as of European civilisation—whether gorgeously robed ecclesiastics or simple fanatics at the street corner—are all engaged in the endeavour to solve the mysteries of life and being, and all, when not shams, are deserving of respect. They are representatives of one or another aspect of truth which, in prince or beggar, is alike deserving of honour, for truth is the voice of God, and he who gives it utterance is God's best priest. Using the phrase in no invidious sense it may be said that in greater or less degree the priest exists by reason of the ignorance of those whom he teaches, while his pretensions differ widely from those of the secular instructor, for he claims a lien upon your conscience now and hereafter, and insists that you must accept his views of truth and no other. If you can persuade him to come down from his pedestal, and be satisfied with the grade and character of the poet, or artist, or other secular teacher, and, discarding his affectation of ranking as intermediary between God and man, to stand or fall upon his own merits, discharging his duty as guide, and leaving results to your awakened or educated conscience, you will, said the lecturer, most emphatically, "be doing the world most signal service." Let the priest thus learn to be manly, honest, brave and open first, and minister next. Having conceded that under certain conditions and with certain reservations spiritual teachers are needed, it must be added all the same, that you have within you the power of educating your own spiritual qualities, and you must remember that your present life and character, not the priest's, nor your own fancies or beliefs, shape and determine your future. In a certain sense indeed—and the risk is a real one—the priest may be regarded as a grievance. His functions lead him to dwell upon the future of life, and he does so until a species of mania is developed in himself; but if character and work and effort are to determine your future,—and that is indubitably true,—your most urgent concern is how to compass the obligations of the *present*. If, however, your higher nature is to express itself, you must clear the lower to aid the growth,

and this is a purely spiritual process. When this is achieved you will find yourself under constraint to mix with and work for the world, to share and bear its trials and failings, to teach the miserable of the better ways, and of the present-day necessities of life and progress. Bear in mind that you are each and all physical, intellectual, and spiritual agents, with qualities related to things immortal, and that by living up to a high standard you do truly become sons and daughters of your God. Whence and when will appear this coming priest? Shall we look to Sinai or burning bush or palace wall for an intimation of his presence? From none of these will he come, for only when priestcraft is dead, ecclesiasticism buried, and creeds and rituals forgotten will he appear—"not as a discrete embodiment but as a concrete expression." Every cultivated spiritual nature and upright man and woman is the coming priest. With higher conceptions and sounder judgment each shall labour for the good of others to his own perfection; with glory around and Divine Providence within, each shall breathe of the melodies of the music of the spheres, not as of a poet's dream, but as a blissful and assured reality. Hail then to the coming priest, to God manifest in the perfection of humanity, when His priest shall be every son and daughter of man.

The readers of the above abstract will be better enabled to appreciate the comprehensive grasp of the ideas of the eloquent guides of the lecturer,—especially as they are grouped around the selfhood of man and the development of the innate divinity of his nature—by again referring to the Humanity series as summarised in recent numbers of "LIGHT."

#### BLACKBURN. Exposure of a Medium.

Mr. R. Wolstenholme, 4, Preston New-road, Blackburn, writing on the 6th inst., gave us an account of a suspected fraud, expressing at the same time the regret of the Spiritualists of Blackburn that duty made it imperative on them to ask that the report should be published. The narrative, slightly abridged, is as follows:—

Last week the members of the Blackburn Psychological Society held a series of sances at their rooms in Darwen-street, with a view of obtaining the phenomena known as "spirit-materialisations," and engaged Mr. Michael Chambers, of Gateshead, near Newcastle, a well-known "physical medium," to give six sittings for that purpose. The conditions imposed were very stringent. The medium was placed in a cabinet, of which the back, one end, top, and bottom were composed of wood put together with screws from the outside—the front and one end being covered first of all with strong wire netting one and a-half inch mesh, mounted upon a wood frame, and over the netting was a fine black gauze, thus rendering it impossible for any but the very smallest particles of matter to pass through. Bells and various musical instruments were placed on the floor immediately outside the cabinet, and the whole was closed in by a green baize curtain hung about half a yard from the cabinet. Six gentlemen were appointed to examine the arrangements at the opening and close of each sance. On Monday the results were nil as regards materialisation, and a certain "Lottie," understood to be the medium's familiar control, stated that with conditions so severe as those imposed, it would be some time before the phenomena sought could be obtained, if at all. This gave rise to considerable discussion in the circle and it was ultimately decided to remove the gauze for the two following nights and then restore it for the remainder of the week. On Tuesday evening the gauze was accordingly withdrawn, but still no spirit forms appeared and "Lottie" announced that a perfect harmony had not been established between the medium and the sitters, and that to effect this it would be necessary for the medium to leave the cabinet for one night at least and sit in the midst of the circle. Consequently on Wednesday evening the cabinet was abandoned and the medium was placed in a chair in the centre of the circle, the bells and musical instruments being placed within easy reach. A certain process of tying the medium to his chair was gone through but in a somewhat perfunctory manner, for this being merely a preliminary sitting for the purpose of getting up power, so to speak, it was not considered desirable to be very exacting in the matter. And as if to reward the sitters for the confidence displayed an abundance of phenomena was showered upon the company. No spirit forms made their appearance, but of course there seemed to be a tacit understanding that none were to be expected that evening. The jingling of bells, snatches of tunes upon a tiny piano, and various other trifles of that sort amused the circle until closing time, when it was announced by the control that the medium must sit in their midst for one night more. To this proposal many of the sitters would have fain agreed, but several of the sterner sort set their faces strongly against the proposal, and when Thursday evening came round the medium was led reluctantly back to the cabinet but under the relaxed conditions that the wire netting was removed and the black gauze only secured the cabinet. A rumbling and tumbling within the cabinet, distinctly heard above the singing of the circle, certain faint and indefinite notes of music from behind the curtains, and "Lottie's" gossip were all that rewarded the patience of the circle on the fourth night. Before saving the control gave orders to sit in the same manner on the

following evening, and on Saturday to wind up with a grand amalgamation of all the forces in the circle with the medium in their midst. On examining the cabinet at the close of this sance several suspicious circumstances were noted by one of the examiners, but as he could not be quite certain about them he kept his thoughts to himself, but determined to make quite sure of the fastenings on the following evening. Accordingly on the Friday evening everything was done that ingenuity could devise to guard against imposture, although the medium remained in blissful ignorance that any suspicion was entertained against his good faith. The sance proceeded as before; strains of instrumental music were added, and a bell was rung vehemently, keeping time to the tune the company were singing, and the general enthusiasm was raised to a high pitch. Presently the sound of the bell and the instrumental music died away, the company being exhorted to continue to sing. At length silence was asked for, and the circle were given to understand that the spirits were building up nicely, and might be expected out before long. Finally "Lottie" informed the company that there had been three forms out but they were of rather too ethereal a substance to be visible to any but persons of the keenest vision, but if the sittings could go on for another week they were certain to get amazing results. Lights were then turned up, and the examiners called on to see that all was right. It was then found that the gauze had been tampered with during the sance. A hole 11 inches long had evidently been made in the gauze about 18 inches from the floor to allow the medium to reach the musical instruments, and had been rudely stitched up again by the medium, but the dog-teeth of his work were such a contrast to the neat running stitch of the lady who had sewn it, that everyone present was convinced that the whole performance was an unblushing and withal clumsy imposture. A demand was made that the medium should be searched, but he declined to submit to "so great an indignity." He was accompanied to his lodgings and there admitted having a needle and thread in his possession, having procured them to repair a certain part of his garments, and might possibly have done the act under the influence of the spirits, but was utterly unconscious of it. It need not be said that this explanation was rejected with scorn; and that Saturday morning saw Mr. Michael Chambers en route back to Newcastle, whither a report of his imposture would speedily follow him. The Blackburn Spiritualists declare themselves to be by no means dismayed or discouraged by this in one sense untoward result, feeling that the exposure of imposture is the next best thing to obtaining genuine phenomena, and that until their ranks are purged from imposture Spiritualism will remain under a cloud in England. They avow their intention to proceed with their investigations and will spare no pains or expense, providing they can secure the services of a medium who will submit to sit under the test condition of a cabinet constructed of wire netting and muslin gauze.

[If our friends at Blackburn will read the report, given in this week's "LIGHT" at page 129, of sances held with Miss Wood at Newcastle, they will find that there is a much better method of obtaining satisfactory phenomena than that which they have themselves adopted. To seclude a medium from observation so completely, as was done in the case of Michael Chambers at Blackburn, was little better than a direct invitation to fraud. Had he been made to sit in the light from the very first his pretensions to mediumship—if they are really nothing but pretensions—would have disappeared long ago.—Ed. "LIGHT."]

#### NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE.—On Sunday morning last, Mrs. E. W. Wallis, lectured in an able manner from the N.S.E.S. platform, upon "Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism." In the evening she discoursed most pathetically on "Love Stronger than Death," and on the Monday evening addressed an attentive and intelligent audience on "How to make the best of both Worlds." Mr. Kersey occupied the chair, and Mr. Thompson, vice-president, proposed, and Mr. J. Robertson, of Glasgow, seconded a vote of thanks to the lady and her guides for the interesting and instructive discourses she and her guides had delivered to them. The motion was carried with acclamation and suitably responded to. Apropos of my statement about Michael Chambers, in last week's issue, I may state that the friends at Blackburn have been sorely aggrieved at a most degrading exhibition of that supposed medium's dealings with them, the cabinet they placed him in having been as deliberately and wilfully tampered with as were the screws in the Newcastle cabinet (which case I reported at the time), which led to his removal by the then committee. His doings at Newcastle, Windy Nook, and the Felling have driven numbers of zealous investigators from further examination of the subject, and caused us, who are doing our utmost to benefit the movement in the North, to bear an unnecessary amount of reproach and bitter opposition, which might be avoided if those doubtful friends to the movement who extol and advertise him, were to be ruled by a regard for the fair fame of Spiritualism.

GATESHEAD.—Last Sunday evening Mr. J. G. Gray lectured on the "Utility of Spiritualism." The subject was handled by the lecturer in his usual energetic and earnest manner. At the end of his discourse he gave an inspirational poem, which appeared to gratify some of those present. Mr. Burton occupied the chair. On Easter Monday the annual tea meeting will be held.—NORTHUMBRIA.

## TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Is it Conjuring?

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

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

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

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

## ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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