

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

THE GOD-IDEA.

PART TWO.

In writing last week about the God-Idea, I said that the limitation of Personality as applied to the Supreme was a mere human conception, and that the consensus of Spirit Teaching inclined to a refined and spiritualised Pantheism. I am fully conscious that this will not commend itself to all my readers; and that to some it may seem as irreverent to dispute the existence of a Personal God—by which is understood a God in human form—as it does to a late *Quarterly Reviewer* that the author of "Eece Homo" should express himself somewhat similarly in his recent work, "Natural Religion." Such a doctrine, he protests with abundant energy and much iteration, is neither natural nor religious. And he more than hints that during the sixteen years that he has been waiting for the fulfilment of the promise held out in "Eece Homo," "that Christ, as the creator of modern theology and religion, will make the subject of another volume," the author's faith has suffered shipwreck. That most pestilent book ever vomited up from the jaws of hell, as it occurred to a distinguished and representative Evangelical to describe a most reverent inquiry into the bases of revealed religion, adorned with a style almost without parallel in its fascination—this work of the devil has had its poisonous effect, and "at last we are put off with a farrago of science and culture, a pseudo-religion, from which Christ and God have been ejected to make way for Humanity and Nature." It is needless to say that I accept no such criticism as fair and true. I may, perhaps, illustrate what I have said before by some account of the natural religion which has so alarmed the *Quarterly Reviewer*.

I may say at once that it differs materially from those conceptions which have been propounded by previous thinkers. It is not on the lines of Clark, Butler, nor Paley. It has little affinity with Voltaire or Rousseau, or with the speculations of Professor Jowett or Professor Max Muller. Nor does the author need for himself the eirenicon he propounds. He says of himself that he "can conceive no religion as satisfactory that falls short of Christianity." But he sees around him an increasing number of able and profoundly earnest persons who have lost their hold on the old faith, "to whom Nature alone appears to be real, and

who look upon the knowledge of the laws of co-existence and succession in natural phenomena as the only knowledge within human reach." These men are moulding the thought of the age, influencing the public, "while they pursue their various ideals in a science, an art, a philosophy, a general culture from which God is ostentatiously excluded." I may demur to this sweeping allegation, but I have repeatedly expressed similar sentiments in discussing the future of Spiritualism as a religious and educational influence. The old faith, with all its pile of human accretions, has lost the power that was born of the simplicity and sincerity of its Founder, and an effete and tyrannical ecclesiasticism, with pretensions that would be ridiculous if they were not dangerous, imposes on the intellect and conscience of mankind a burden that it is impossible to bear. So far the author says in other words what I have been long saying myself from quite another standpoint.

The author of "Eece Homo" agrees further with my contention that this dethronement of God is more apparent than real. It is not God that is obliterated from His universe by the most honest and capable students of its mysteries, but only that anthropomorphic idol that human speculation has erected where no image should intrude. It was the Bishop of Peterborough, in one of his most eloquent sermons, one delivered before the British Association when it met in his diocese, who spoke of the High Priests of Science standing with bowed heads and veiled faces before the mysteries that confronted them. Our author in like manner sees the agnostic scientists of to-day standing humbly before Nature as the priest stood humbly before his God. "Both earnestly protest against human wisdom. Both wait for a message which is to come to them from without. Religion says, 'Let man be silent, and listen when God speaks.' Science says, 'Let us interrogate Nature, and let us be sure that the answer we get is really Nature's, and not a mere echo of our own voice.' . . . Both agree in denouncing that pride of the human intellect which supposes it knows everything, which is not passive enough in the presence of reality, but deceives itself with pompous words instead of things, and with flattering eloquence instead of sober truths."

To these men *Natural Religion* appeals with a demonstration, as Mr. F. W. H. Myers well puts it, "that their argument lies deeper than their differences, that the enemy of all is the same; that for the most part they are both looking at different sides of the shield, *whether they worship the Unity of the Universe by the cold sober light of His power and reality, or in the golden radiance of His love.* And thus the author claims for all forms of enthusiastic admiration of truth, beauty, goodness, the title of religion, which he deems theirs by right both of logic and of history, and urges all parties to march side by side, so far at least as they may, in the self-elevating culture which is itself a worship—in the actively beneficent civilisation which is the missionary aspect of the higher life.* Nor will the author by any means allow that the most agnostic questioner of Nature may not be a purely religious man.

These men, he contends, whose whole life is the pursuit of religious truth, deceive themselves when they proclaim themselves agnostic. In a remarkable passage this is elo-

* A New Eirenicon. Collected Essays of F. W. H. Myers.

quently stated. "When men, whose minds are possessed with a thought like this (above stated), and whose lives are devoted to such a contemplation, say: 'As for God, we know nothing of Him; science knows nothing of Him; it is a name belonging to an extinct system of philosophy,' I think they are playing with words. By what name they call the object of their contemplation is in itself a matter of little importance. Whether they say God, or prefer to say Nature, the important thing is that their minds are filled with the sense of a power, to all appearance infinite and eternal; a power with which their own being is inseparably connected, in the knowledge of whose ways alone is safety and well-being, in the contemplation of which they find a beatific vision. Well! this God is also the God of Christians." I confess that this idea of the union of man with Nature and of his safety in so far as he is in harmony with her laws, comes on me with a sense of abiding satisfaction, such as is not derived from anything not inherently true. The man who spends himself in the patient interrogation of Nature, by observation and experiment; who ponders on the mysteries of life and being that surround him; who meditates and communes with Nature in the silence of the Alpine solitude, or is elevated and purified by entering into harmony with her in her softer and more lovely moods, is, in every true sense of the word, a worshipper. So, too, is the artist, be he a Wordsworth, who has learned, as few else have done, to interpret the mind of his God; a painter, who fixes for us some of Nature's subtlest beauties; or a musician, who entralls us with such of her grandest harmonies as he has learned by patient listening to some of her many voices. These all worship, and they do not worship the graven images of man's device.

Such men, too, are fitly described as Theists, who possess a theology: so our author thinks. It matters little by what term they be described. Their attitude is essentially the religious one, and the less theology they burden themselves with, the more free will they be. "I do not say that it is good or satisfactory to worship such a God; but I say that no class of men, since the world began, have ever more truly believed in a God, or more ardently, or with more conviction, worshipped Him. Comparing, then, religion in its fresh youth with the present confused forms of Christianity, I think a bystander would say that, though Christianity had in it something far higher, and deeper, and more ennobling, yet the average scientific man worships just at present a more awful, and, as it were, a greater Deity than the average Christian." What then is the atheist? Is there any one left to bear the name? And what is the criticism that must be passed on this bold utterance? These are questions that must be deferred till next week.

M. A. (OXON)

The *Shields Daily News* of August 2nd contained a little poem on "Inspiration" by the well-known Spiritualist Mr. John A. Rowe, of North Shields.

Alexander Pope, said a short time before his death, "I am so certain of the soul's being immortal, that I seem to feel it moving within me."—*Spence's Anecdotes*.

Last Saturday's issues of the *Spectator* and the *Saturday Review* contained notices of the recent experiments of the Psychological Research Society. The former was written in a fair and calmly scientific spirit, very different from the animadversions of the latter.

EARTHQUAKE AT ISCHIA.—One of the incidents narrated by the survivors is that the performance which was going on at the theatre at the moment of the calamity began with a mimic representation of an earthquake. It is also stated that Signor Cappelli, a member of the Italian Government, who was stopping at the *Sentinella*, happened a few minutes before the catastrophe occurred to have expressed annoyance because an English gentleman staying in the hotel was playing a funeral march on the piano. Amongst the corpses found at Casamicciola was that of an English gentleman, who at the time of the disaster was playing the piano. He was found seated in a chair.

SOME RECENT EXPERIMENTS IN "THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE."

Directed by Malcolm Guthrie, J.P., and reported by James Birchall, to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, during its seventy-second Session.

Considerable attention has been given to the kind of experiments known as "Willing" and "Finding," in which a person, blindfolded, performs a definite series of actions, or finds some object under the supposed mental direction of another with whom he is placed in personal contact. These operations are apparently affected by the skilful interpretation of the voluntary or involuntary muscular indications given by him who appears to direct the other's movements, and do not require any further explanation.

Suppose, however, that the operator, fixing his eyes intently upon some object, is able by simple contact to transfer the image of that object—its colour and form—to the mind of the other, it is plain that there is room for further inquiry; and still more so if the person who is blindfolded can, without contact, perceive the form and colour of the object as clearly as before—the picture being, to him, "a vision as sensible to feeling as to sight."

The following series of experiments, made in the presence of reliable witnesses, some of whom are members of this Society, point to the conclusion that there is a field open for such further inquiry.

The experiments originated with a party of lady friends trying to think out numbers and words. They were then taken up by Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, who had, before this, found his son possessed, at times, of the faculty of seeing objects, blindfolded "in form as palpable" as if they were before his own vision. Since then they have been conducted by him, with my assistance, and the occasional presence of Professor Rendall, Principal of University College, Dr. Carter, and Messrs. Davies and Steel. Care has been taken that sufficient safeguards should surround each experiment; that the blindfolding of the subject should be secure, and that where contact was permitted it should be confined to the clasping of the hands, or the simple touch of the fingers. In the large majority of the cases, the objects were placed behind the sitter, but in full view of all in the room. They have been kept in Mr. Guthrie's special custody, and he has never shown them except at the moment when each one was required. On one occasion I produced some objects prepared by myself, which could hardly have been anticipated by any of those present.

I have attended five sittings in town, and two at the residence of Mr. Guthrie, and the ladies before alluded to have been present at all but one. Fifty-two experiments have been made—of which fifteen were failures, and the remainder either wholly or partly successful. One of the subjects displayed the possession of a marvellous power of intuition; as she failed only six times out of thirty-five, while she was correct in all the fifteen experiments made without contact.

The following is an enumeration of the experiments as they were made with each subject:—

I. Miss R—h in contact with Miss J—, or Miss R—

The six failures were:—

1. A number—"17"—was said to be 16.
2. Only the first figure on a bank note was deciphered, and at the second attempt.
- 3 & 4. A horse-shoe shape of blue silk on white satin, and a ring of white silk on black satin, could not be seen.
5. A bright steel door key, while pronounced to be bright, was thought to be a silver brooch, and
6. A red ivory ball was declared to be yellow.

The successful experiments were:—

1. A red circle of silk on black satin, seen as "a round red spot."
2. A triangle of blue silk on black satin described as

"blue—like a diamond—yet not a diamond, but like as if it were cut off, and pointed at one end."

3. A key—correctly named almost on the instant.

4. A watch—said to be "bright and round," but thought to be "a button."

5. A square of pink silk on black satin, said, almost instantly, to be "pink and square."

6. A gilt cross—described as "yellow"—thought to be "a cross," and when asked which way it was held, replied correctly "the right way."

7. A piece of white cardboard, cut out in the shape of a jug, elicited the answer, "I cannot see any colour—looks all light—is it a cup? There is a handle—Oh! it is a jug."

8. A similar cardboard shape of a five-barred gate was declared to be of "the same colour as the last—seems to be all lines—with another line across them—so—(drawing a line diagonally)—do not know what it is—seems to be nothing but lines."

9. An electro-plate egg-cup was described as, "Is it a narrow stem? Goes on till it gets wide. Is it a wine glass? Seems bright—seems to be silver."

10. A toy, in the shape of a white cat, with black stripes radiating from a dark-coloured back. Not seen distinctly, nor the form deciphered, but said to be, "White all round—like with a black centre, and crimped in and out."

11. Six of diamonds. Answer, "It is yellow—square—it is a card. Red—cannot tell how many spots—seem to be two or three, one over the other—diamonds—cannot see the number—card seems to be moving about. It is the seven of diamonds."

II. The experiments with the same Miss R—h, sitting apart from the rest, and without contact, were remarkable.

1. A gold cross was almost instantly said to be "yellow," and pronounced to be "a cross."

2. A red ivory chess knight was thus described. "It is red—broad at the bottom—then very narrow—then broad again at the top. It is a chessman." When asked to name the piece, said she did not know the names of the pieces.

3. A half-crown, shewn by Mr. Birchall, on the spur of the moment, was described as, "round—bright—of no particular colour—silver—a piece of money—larger than a shilling, but not as large as—" Here the subject was unable to say more.

4. A diamond of pink silk, on an oblong of black satin. Only the colour of this was seen, the subject stating that she could not make out the shape, as it seemed to be moving about. The object was held in the hand of Mr. Guthrie somewhat unsteadily.

5. A red cloth-bound book, large quarto. Colour again seen, but not the shape.

N.B.—This was not at the same sitting as the preceding case, nor at the same time.

6. A yellow paper knife. Described as yellow—asked if it was a feather, but presently said, "It looks more like a knife with a thin handle."

7. Mr. Steel's Exchange pass ticket was correctly described as, "Square—longer one way than the other, and of a dark reddish colour."

8. A pair of scissors. Answer: "It is silver—No—it is steel—It is a pair of scissors, standing upright."

9. A diamond of blue silk on black satin. Answer: "Is it blue? Is it a diamond?"

10. A dark green circle of silk, on black satin. The colour seen, but not the shape.

11. A terra-cotta pipe, glazed at the mouth. Answer: "Is it yellow? Does not seem to be all yellow—only one part of it. Can't see the shape well—all confused—do not

know what it is. Seems to be a lot of stems. It looks like this (tracing an oblique line in the air) with claws." (The subject here shaped her fingers like claws.)

N.B.—The stem was joined to the bowl of the clay pipe by a carved bird's claw.

12. A small toy dog, coloured light-brown, with tail extended, and in the act of leaping, elicited a more remarkable answer, but not at the same sitting. The subject was: "Is it green?—I can see something like as if it had a lot of branches. Can't count them. Look too many. Like a long stem—so—(tracing a horizontal line in the air)—with things down (tracing lines downward). Looks to be of a lighter colour now—not green, as at first. It looked like a tree at first—now it looks like some kind of an animal. Can't see any more."

13. A dark-crimson apple was described as, "Round—of a dark-red shade—like the knob off a drawer. Is it an apple?"

14. An orange, next shewn, was immediately detected. "It is not another apple. It is an orange."

15. An electro-plate spoon was said to be "very bright. Either steel or silver. Is it a spoon?"

III. Miss E—, in contact with Miss R—h (the previous subject).

1. The word, "*Via*," letter by letter. *V* was given at the first answer; *i* at the second, *h* being first named; and *a* at the second, after *z* was suggested.

2. The word "*Res*." Each letter was correctly given at the first answer. "Q" and "F" were afterwards shewn, and answered correctly at once.

3. The word, "*Puella*," given by Professor Rendall. *P* answered at the second trial, *Q* being first named. The remaining letters were each named at the first trial.

4. A yellow silk cross, on black satin. Failed when in contact with Mr. Birchall; but when placed in contact with Miss R—h, answered: "It looks light—yellow like—seems like a lot of rings—Is it round? Cannot see any shape."

5. The word, "Tom," was next attempted by Miss E—, in contact with Miss R—h, on the understanding that she was to read the word at once, without spelling it. Answered: "Are there three letters? One is an 'O'; one is a 'stroky' letter—is it 'T'? Oh! it's 'Tom.'"

IV. Miss J— in contact with Miss R—h.

1. Ten of spades, named correctly almost on the instant.

2. Three of hearts. Failure—eight being named.

3. Five of spades. Failure—six and four named.

4. A bright green silk oblong on black satin. Answer: "Is it square? Is it green?"

5. The same green oblong, with two spots of black silk placed on it. Answer: "There are four corners—It is long—black—I can see a lot of black, but it is rather mixed—Is it a card?" When asked how many spots there were, supposing it were a card, replied "Three."

6. Six of clubs and a square of scarlet silk on black satin. Both failures.

7. Seven of diamonds, and an amber-coloured cross of silk on black satin. Both failures.

V. Master Guthrie, in contact with his father.

1. Six of diamonds. Answered, "Six," and then releasing his hands, traced the shape of a diamond in the air, saying, "Diamonds."

2. A white ivory chess castle. Answer, "Castle in chess."

Both the above objects were held at some distance behind the percipient.

3. The word "tram" was then written in plain print capitals, on a blackboard, in front of Master Guthrie, but none of the letters were deciphered.

4. A red circle of silk was then shewn on black satin. This also was a failure.

5. The queen of diamonds, next shewn, was at first said to be the queen of hearts, but immediately corrected,— "No—not hearts—diamonds."

VI. Another sitting, held at the house of Mr. Guthrie, at which Dr. Carter and Mr. Steel were present, also proved a failure on the whole, the novelty of the surroundings and the presence of strangers apparently unfitting the subjects for the experiments. Miss R—h, however, before mentioned, succeeded, in contact with Mr. Birchall, in localising three pains, two imaginary, and one real. The latter, caused by the grip of a strong wooden letter-clip, fixed upon the little finger of Mr. Birchall's left hand, was distinctly described by Miss R—h, as a pain caused by the "grip of something," but was said to be in the thumb of the left hand.

VII. A sitting, at which I was not present, may here be mentioned, in conclusion. One afternoon (13th April), Mr. Guthrie, without giving previous notice, asked the ladies to allow the Rev. H. H. Higgings to see their experiments. They were all busily engaged at the time, and were therefore somewhat fluttered by the suddenness of the call. The venerable and philosopher-like appearance of our friend still further awed them, and the consequence was that all their experiments ended in failure.

Note on Mr. Birchall's Report, by Malcolm Guthrie.

Having read an article by Mr. F. Corder on the subject of "Thought-reading" in the February number of *Cassell's Magazine*, in which this faculty was spoken of as well recognised and not at all uncommon, I determined to try experiments with my son, a fair and sensitive boy of ten years of age. Much to my surprise I found that when blindfolded he was capable of describing objects upon which my gaze and attention were concentrated. As he seemed to dislike the experiments I discontinued them; but having heard that some young ladies employed in my place of business, while imitating Mr. Bishop's achievements had discovered that they possessed the faculty of declaring numbers thought of by other persons, I asked for the assistance of Mr. Birchall, the hon. sec. of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, in order to prosecute an inquiry into the matter in a scientific and careful manner.

At the time we commenced our investigations all that had been done was confined to the finding and willing games under contact, and to the reading of numbers, with one or two attempts at words. We immediately devised a new series of experiments the young ladies had never heard of before, such as colours and shapes, objects, and outlines, the subject being in contact with a companion who seemed to have the power of transmitting impressions. Afterwards contact was abandoned, the patients being blindfolded and isolated, and the object placed behind the back; every care, of course, being taken to prevent communication. The experiments under these circumstances were more uniformly successful than before and the results were such as to satisfy Mr. Birchall and myself of the genuineness of the fact of Thought-transference.

The great value of this series of experiments to ourselves lies not so much in their extraordinary character as in the circumstance that I have been cognisant of them directly and indirectly *ab ovo*. Every stage, both before and after the commencement of our investigation has been reported to me by a third and independent party behind the scenes. Each new kind of experiment has been sprung as a surprise upon the young ladies, and the results have caused them as much genuine astonishment as ourselves. For the *bona fides* of the experimenters I am able to vouch with the greatest confidence, having known all concerned for periods of from six to ten years.

Since the first report was prepared a number of new experiments have been tried, including the description of objects gazed at and then concealed before the entry of the subject into the room, and then only thought of or imagined by the company; short sentences or quotations, objects such as toys *in motion*; and what has given the greatest amusement of all, pictures of historical scenes, &c., imagined from memory. An account of these will be given in due course when the experiments have sufficiently accumulated, as for want of time they have been discontinued during the summer months. One of the young ladies possesses in a remarkable degree the power of describing, and indeed of feeling pains experienced or imagined by any one having hold of her hand.

ESSAI SUR L'HUMANITE POSTHUME ET LE SPIRITISME.*

Some account of this book, which has been often referred to lately, may interest the readers of "LIGHT." M. D'Assier is an author, apparently, of some reputation and attainments in the sciences of language and natural philosophy. The title of the present book may seem somewhat misleading, since in M. D'Assier's view there is not, properly speaking, any posthumous humanity at all, or at least he does not discover any evidence of an altogether distinct principle of life in the facts and phenomena which he recognises. We have sufficient warning of this upon the title page, whereon the author's purpose is defined to be "to bring within the compass of the laws of time and space phenomena of the posthumous order, hitherto denied by science because it has been unable to explain them, and to enfranchise people of our epoch from the enervating hallucinations of Spiritism." Putting aside the concluding sentence as containing assumptions perhaps not warranted, M. D'Assier's object is thus that of all who address themselves to these inquiries in a scientific disposition. He refers at the outset to the obstinate denial which facts of a rare or extraordinary character have usually encountered at the hands of men of science. That history is well known, but M. D'Assier shews the necessity of recapitulating it.

"It might be supposed," he says, "that such lessons would not be lost, and that persons calling themselves serious would shew in future more circumspection in their systematic denials. No such thing." In the case of aerolites, for instance, to all the evidence adduced, the celebrated Lavoisier, speaking in the name of the French Academy of Sciences, replied with this curt refutation, "There are no stones in the sky; none, consequently, fall upon the earth." "For thirty years," says M. D'Assier, "I had laughed at this reply of Lavoisier, without perceiving that I invoked just the same argument myself in regard to certain phenomena not less extraordinary than the rain of stones." He cites instances in which his antecedent bias led him to the contemptuous rejection of testimony coming under his own immediate notice; and then describes the later experience which induced a more serious consideration of the subject. Having lost his sight, and otherwise suffered severely in health during the war of 1870, he resorted in the following spring to the waters of Aulus, and finding great benefit from them, he took up his residence at that place. It was then and had been for many years the scene of certain strange disturbances, as to which M. D'Assier was able to make personal inquiry.

"Since the death of the late proprietor of the springs" (in 1855), "the thermal establishment was nearly every night the theatre of scenes of this character. The custodians did not dare to sleep alone. At times the bathing places resounded in the middle of the night as if struck with a hammer. On opening the rooms whence the noise proceeded, it immediately ceased, but recommenced in an adjoining hall. Blows were struck upon the partitions, the steps of some one promenading in the garden room were heard, objects seemed flung against the floor, &c. My first feeling on hearing these accounts was, as usual, incredulity. But finding myself daily in contact with persons who had themselves been witnesses of these nocturnal scenes, and conversation turning often on the subject, certain peculiarities at length arrested my attention. I interrogated the superintendent of the gardens of the establishment, different persons who had passed the night in the hot rooms, all, in short, who could give me any direct information on these mysterious events. Their replies were identical, and the details so circumstantial that I was reduced to the dilemma of either believing the witnesses or of supposing them to be mad."

The result of his interrogations recalled similar circumstances of which M. D'Assier had formerly heard. Knowing the localities and the witnesses, he set himself to institute further inquiries, and at length, he says, he was compelled to surrender to the evidence.

"I then perceived that I had been as absurd as those whom I had so long been ridiculing, in denying facts which I pronounced impossible, because they had not occurred under my own eyes, and because I could not explain them. This posthumous dynamic, which, in certain points, seems the antithesis of ordinary dynamic, caused me to reflect, and I began to conceive that in certain rare cases, the action of the human personality might continue for some time after the cessation of life."

* Par M. Adolphe D'Assier. Paris. 1883.

M. D'Assier's book, numbering 305 pages, is largely filled with accounts, which he considers authentic, from various sources and authors, his object being, as he tells us, to collect a sufficient number, as specimen cases, for comparison and analysis. "In each of them," he says, "there is a mysterious agent revealed by manifestations the most strange and various. Declining to admit any supernatural cause, I inquire if there does not exist in living nature a principle, hitherto little known, which in certain cases and within certain limits can act as an independent force. I find that principle not only in man, but even in the higher species of animals, so that in truth the posthumous humanity is but a particular case of posthumous animality, this latter presenting itself as an immediate consequence of the living world.

"The study of this principle leads me to that of the magnetic fluid, which appears to be its generator. I then analyse the different manifestations of this factor of psychology, especially in mesmerism, and I find the explanation of a crowd of phenomena, which when known only by their marvellous aspects, seem related to theology, or to her younger sister demonology. Disengaged from that supernatural interpretation, the personality from beyond the tomb appears in its proper physiognomy, and one discerns the origin of ghosts (*des ombres*), their physical and moral condition, and the fate reserved for them."

In this outline, but a brief reference can be made to accounts cited by the author, such particulars only being adduced as will suffice to make the application of his theory intelligible. The first case described is that of the Abbé Peyton, who died forty-five years before M. D'Assier collected the evidence, and who was reputed to have for a long time haunted his parsonage-house at Sentenac, promenading the rooms, taking snuff, repeating his prayers, and behaving in all respects like the living man. The evidence was carefully examined on behalf of M. D'Assier by the schoolmaster at Sentenac, several of the witnesses being still alive. One had sat up in the house with the mayor of the commune to investigate. While discoursing on the superstition of the villagers, they heard a noise in the room above, the sound of chairs being moved about, and of footsteps, which then descended the stairs to the kitchen. Thither, armed, the witnesses followed, posting themselves at the door. They saw nothing, but heard the steps in the room, and the sound of snuff-taking. Without opening the door, the ghost appeared to pass into the parlour, and was heard to promenade it. The investigators followed into that room, but again saw nothing, and their search throughout the house revealed no explanation of the phenomenon. Subsequently the apparition was seen, under circumstances detailed at length, by two other witnesses on different occasions. M. D'Assier finds it to be a very common feature in accounts of *revenants* that they resume the habits of life.

He next speaks of the case of Mr. X., who for several years haunted the house he had lived in. The apparition was seen at different places, on one and the same evening separately, by three witnesses who had known the deceased, each of whom was interrogated personally by M. D'Assier. Each had come face to face with the ghost, who appeared dressed just as in life, and was recognised distinctly. Such visible apparitions M. D'Assier considers rare. "The manifestations most usual with the posthumous personality," he says, "appear to be divers sorts of noises, sometimes of a very disturbing character, and usually at night. One hears, but sees nothing, not even the projectiles flung against the walls and floors. Sometimes, however, these nocturnal scenes are accompanied by particular circumstances which designate the author." Instances of this are then given in interesting but lengthy accounts, which I necessarily omit. Especially, M. D'Assier describes fully the disturbances at Aulus, already referred to, which lasted seventeen years, from the death of the late proprietor of the baths to their demolition in 1872. It is, however, a significant fact, which naturally confirms M. D'Assier in his belief that the "posthumous personality" is only a temporary phenomenon, that these disturbances became gradually feebler, although there were slight survivals of them even in the new baths, as late as 1877.

One frequent characteristic in the numerous accounts collected by the author is the sound of the smashing of crockery or glasses, which are afterwards found uninjured in their usual places. Another is the attempt of the unseen agent to draw the bedclothes off persons sleeping. These are features occurring also in some cases of which evidence has recently been adduced in this country. Coincident and recurrent peculiarities of this sort, in quite unconnected accounts, are a certain indication of authenticity, and may throw light on the question of

significance, should the facts themselves at length compel recognition. The connection of the disturbances with the deceased appears established in a number of cases which M. D'Assier's personal researches have contributed to the literature of the subject, as well as in those he quotes from already published sources. The hauntings begin immediately, or very soon, after a death in the house, or of a person who had long resided in it. They are indicative of the character of the deceased, lasting sometimes for many years, with different degrees of frequency and violence. They become intermittent and gradually cease, but in a few cases recur after an interval even of years. Now and then the *revenant* is found to have a definite object—as the discovery to a relative of hidden savings—having accomplished which, it does not return. But more usually there seems no other purpose than an automatic impulse, as it were, to resume the habits of the past daily life. This automatism, so little consistent with the intelligent life which it simulates, suggests rather a posthumous somnambulism than any consciousness of existence under new conditions. So of apparitions, at or near the time of death. We are all familiar with alleged cases in which the influence of a strong affection is the apparent motive and may be the effective cause. But in others this feature is less evident. Here is one for which M. D'Assier vouches. His informant, a lady whom he names, says: "I was a young girl, in bed with my sister, who was older than myself. We had put out the candle, but the fire gave a feeble light. Turning my eyes towards the fire-place, I saw, to my great surprise, a priest sitting before it and warming himself. He had the bulk, the features, and the figure of one of my uncles who lived in the neighbourhood, and who was an arch-priest. I at once called my sister's attention to the figure. She looked and also saw it, and recognised our uncle. Terror seized us, and we cried 'Help' with all our might. My father, sleeping in a neighbouring room, was awakened by our cries, jumped up in haste and soon arrived with a candle in his hand. The phantom had disappeared; there was no one but ourselves in the room. Next day, we learned by a letter that our uncle the arch-priest had died that same evening." There is here no suggestion of a special attachment, nor was the attitude of the ghost at all expressive of any solemn purpose. Those who think, by the-by, that ghost stories are invented, or imagined in accordance with superstitious predisposition, should explain why the accessories are sometimes so little consistent with conventional ideas on the subject.

M. D'Assier cites cases of the instantaneous passage of the "personalité posthume" across continents and oceans at the time of death. "They move," he says, "with a marvellous rapidity, comparable to that of electricity and light." The identity is sometimes guaranteed by the clothes in which they appear, as in one case by a waistcoat of very peculiar pattern, afterwards discovered to have been worn by the deceased in America, where he died, his ghost being seen in France. Sometimes, as in this case, and in the following, from the author's own experience, they come to announce their death; and this may be to the seerawake or in dream. On the night of the 12th January, 1868, M. D'Assier, being in Spain, dreamed that a friend, whom he had left ill at Paris, appeared to him with the face of a corpse. Two days later he received a letter from that city announcing the death of his friend on the night of the 12th January. In dream the apparition sometimes speaks, which is otherwise exceedingly rare. Such was the case in a remarkable instance related to the author by his friend Victor Pilhes, one of a few republican patriots who nobly withstood the violation of the constitution in 1849, and suffered many years' imprisonment in consequence. M. Deville, who had been released in 1854, appeared to Victor Pilhes in a dream, on the night of the former's death, and said to him, "You are one of the men whom I have loved best in my life, I come to bid you a last adieu! I am about to die."

M. D'Assier says that he had long regarded such cases as mere coincidences, till the quantity of good similar evidence which his inquiries elicited made that suggestion utterly untenable.

C.C.M.

(To be continued.)

SPIRITUALISM IN THE PULPIT.—A correspondent writes:—"The sermons of Mr. Haws and Mr. Limpus have, I hear from various quarters, startled people, and made them think. If they and others would now and then preach upon the same subject, I do not know anything better calculated to advance Spiritualism."

TEMPORARY OFFICES OF "LIGHT."
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TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their séances.

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Light :

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11TH, 1883.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor of "LIGHT" is out of town, and correspondents are therefore asked to exercise a little patience if their communications have not in every case immediate attention.

THE REPORT ON MESMERISM BY THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The third part of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* contains the first report of the Mesmeric Committee, which consisted of the following gentlemen, the asterisks indicating that those so distinguished were specially responsible for the report:—W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E.*; Edmund Gurney, M.A.*; Frederic W. H. Myers, M.A.*; Henry N. Ridley, M.A., F.L.S.; W. H. Stone, M.A., M.B.; George Wyld, M.D.; and Frank Podmore, B.A.* Hon. Secretary.

The report commences by pointing out that the work of the Mesmeric Committee differs to some extent from that appropriated to other Committees of the Society, inasmuch as in Mesmerism, unlike most of the subjects which have been included under the designation of Psychical Research, investigators have been both numerous and intelligent; the ground has been traversed and retraversed; the literature of the subject already forms a small library, and the evidence, if impartially studied, appears to be harmonious, and on many points complete. Notwithstanding this, scientific writers have united in ridiculing the pretensions of the mesmerists—at first attributing all the phenomena to trickery and delusion, and subsequently admitting many of the facts, but explaining them as within the domain of well-recognised psychological or physiological laws. And if we compare the scientific utterances of to-day with those of half a century back, we shall see that the discredit of mesmerism, as such, has been distinctly on the increase. The reason for this they explain as follows:—

"The main cause of the increasing incredulity and contempt shewn towards mesmerism, as such, has been, not an error, but a truth, or at least a partial truth,—the discovery, namely, of a real means of explaining many of the facts, without resorting to any 'mesmeric' hypothesis. The credit of this discovery is due to a countryman of our own, the late Mr. Braid, whose name deserves a wider reputation than it has received. He shewed, by a long and admirable series of experiments, that mere fixation of the eyes in a strained position was often enough to throw the subject into a condition in which many of the

phenomena attributed to mesmeric influence could be easily produced. Similar experiments have been lately conducted by Professor Heidenhain, of Breslau, whose conclusions are decidedly in advance of anything contained in the standard treatises on physiology.* His explanation wholly rejects 'expectant attention,' 'dominant ideas,' and all mental factors whatsoever, and refers the phenomena to what is practically a wide extension of the range of 'reflex action.' He conceives that, in the hypnotic condition, stimulation by word or gesture of the lower sensory centres in the 'subject's' brain, instead of passing on in the usual way to the higher portion of that organ and there giving rise to consciousness and volition, passes by a direct path to the immediate centres of motion, and there gives rise to automatic responses, which may take the form of mimicry or of unconscious carrying out of simple orders. In his view, the opening of this direct path, with its result of a certain and involuntary response, is due to *inhibition*, brought about by monotonous sensory impressions of the functions of those higher cortical centres which are associated with choice and reasoning, and which normally control the lower motor centres. It will thus be evident that anything of the nature of a specific effluence or influence in mesmerism is rejected in our day by Heidenhain, as it was by Braid forty years ago. Hypnotism or induced somnambulism, whether accompanied by consciousness or not, has been regarded as covering *the whole ground*, and thus, in proportion as it has become more and more orthodox to admit many of the facts commonly known as 'mesmeric,' has it become more and more heretical to attribute them to 'mesmeric agencies.'"

The Committee do not, however, think that the great divergencies arrived at by different observers are necessarily to be attributed either to prejudice or credulity, but rather in a failure to realise the immense variety of the phenomena which these abnormal states present to the student. But this conflict of opinion does, they think, necessitate renewed and careful experiment. In this fact the present Committee finds its *raison d'être*.

By using the term Mesmerism they do not mean to involve any theory or particular explanation of the facts. They say:—

"While for convenience sake we have adopted the most general name, we must state at once that we anticipate, as we advance, the necessity of limiting and specialising the meaning of the word 'mesmerism.' For since the term 'hypnotism,' as just explained, is confined to phenomena which may be produced *without any special influence or effluence* passing from the operator to the subject, and has been adopted as a complete designation of these phenomena by those who emphatically deny that any such influence or effluence can exist, it will be natural for us, if we come across further facts to which the 'hypnotic' hypothesis proves inapplicable, to describe these facts as *par excellence* 'mesmeric.' And, as we have seen, it would be no unfair description of these two classes of alleged phenomena, to say that the line between them is the line which, so far, recognised science has not overstepped: by the science of this country, at any rate, at the present day, 'hypnotism' is pretty widely acknowledged, and 'mesmerism' almost universally rejected."

Some preliminary experiments are thus described:—

"Before recounting our more consecutive experiments, we ought to mention that we have tried on several occasions to influence various persons—boys of from twelve to twenty years old, in the manner described by Braid, but, hitherto, with little success. The method is as follows: The person to be operated on is placed in a comfortable position in a chair. Perfect silence is observed, and every precaution is taken not to distract the attention of the patient. He is then bidden to look at a coin, or other bright object, held about fifteen inches from his forehead, in such a position as to produce in his eyes a slight inward and upward squint. Braid states that he found the great majority of the persons on whom he operated susceptible to this method. We, on the other hand, have only had even partial success in one case, that of Mr W. North, late Lecturer at Westminster Hospital. As a full account of this experiment will be published elsewhere, it will be sufficient here to state that Mr. North, after gazing intently for upwards of half-an-

* A summary of the views advanced by Heidenhain is to be found in Dr. McKendrick's article on Mesmerism in the *Encyc. Brit.* Ninth Edit. Other important psycho-physiological investigations into this hypnotic state are being carried on in America, France, Italy, and Germany, as well as in our own country. We hope to notice these on a future occasion.

hour at a bright copper disc, succeeded in bringing himself into a condition in which some of the phenomena observed by Braid and Heidenhain were successfully demonstrated, namely, (partial) insensibility to pain, extreme muscular irritability, and a deadening of the mental faculties. Equally characteristic was Mr. North's very imperfect subsequent recollection of what had taken place."

The rest of the phenomena described in the report were preceded by the conditions ordinarily associated with mesmeric influence. We again quote from the report:—

"But the rest of the phenomena here described were preceded by the conditions ordinarily associated with mesmeric influence. They were observed, for the most part, in a willing and intelligent young man of twenty, Fred Wells by name—the son of a baker in Brighton. Other youths have also been tried, and some are now under experiment. The operator in every case has been Mr. G. A. Smith, of Dulwich, S.E., and lately of Brighton. Mr. Smith's method with his 'subjects' is as follows: The subject is placed in the chair, with his hands in his lap, and he is told to direct his attention exclusively to a coin or other bright disc of metal, which is placed in his hands. Mr. Smith, meanwhile, draws his hands, at intervals, slowly downwards across the subject's head and face, always in the same direction. His hands, generally, do not touch the surface of the skin, nor even approach very near to it. After a time varying from two to twenty minutes has been thus occupied, Mr. Smith raises the subject's head, closes the eyes, and presses his thumb on the forehead between the eyes. He then bids him open his eyes. If the boy succeeds in doing so without difficulty, the whole operation is repeated; and if on a second trial no effect is produced, the subject is dismissed. But it not infrequently happens that the boy, when told to open his eyes, finds himself unable to do so, or only succeeds after many efforts. Mr. Smith then strokes the muscles at the corner of the mouth, and, after a short interval, both eyes and mouth being closed, he is told to open them. If the subject is a good one, he fails to do this, and it is very strange to watch the contortion of his features, and his evident vexation, whilst he endeavours to thwart the mysterious influence which has sealed his lips and eyes."

The "influence of suggestion" while the subject was in the abnormal state just described was well marked, and the Committee appear to have pretty well satisfied themselves on this point in various ways.

"To suppose that the multifarious gestures and movements, performed in support of the characters which they are bidden to assume, are parts of a conscious and deliberate scheme of deception, would be to attribute to the half-educated boys who formed the subjects of these experiments, a sustained capacity for acting a part, as well as rare genius for mimicry and power of self-control. Moreover, that the hallucination is, in most cases, complete, is the more readily perceived by its incompleteness on certain occasions. Sometimes the reasoning faculties are but partially subdued, and the boy offers a half incredulous resistance to the suggested impression. A very striking instance of this kind was the following. Mr. Smith dangled a handkerchief before a boy, telling him that it was a baby. The boy listened, but half convinced, and smiled incredulously. But he was gradually overcome by the idea suggested, and taking the handkerchief, laid it carefully across his arms, in orthodox nursery fashion. No sooner, however, did Mr. Smith divert his attention, than reason began to assert itself again. The boy discovered an unusual deficiency in his nursing; he kept furtively looking round, with most genuine anxiety and hopeless bewilderment, to discover the head of his baby. In the midst of his perplexity he was recalled to his proper senses, and joined with us in laughing at his own discomfiture.

"The illusion, however, is generally untroubled by any doubts. On one occasion, for example, Wells was given a candle, which he was assured was a sponge-cake. He broke it in pieces, remarking that it was very stale, and actually ate about an inch and a-half of it. Shortly afterwards, he began to feel the effects of his unusual meal; and, when pressed, flatly declined to have any more of 'Mr. Gurney's sponge-cakes.' On another occasion, he ate salt greedily, when told that it was sugar; and rejected sugar in great haste under the impression that it was cayenne pepper. When white pepper was blown up his nostrils, he being under the impression that it was mignonnette, not only

did he not sneeze, but his eyes did not water to any appreciable extent, a fact which was ascertained by opening the lids. Other experiments intervened, and no sneezing occurred until some ten minutes afterwards, when he was given common salt, and told it was snuff. He smelt at it and then sneezed violently, with the characteristic spasm, for some little time. He drank a spoonful of vinegar with much relish, believing it to be cream, and subsequently ate a slice of bread and mustard as plum-cake, eagerly asking for more."

Various other experiments of a similar character were tried, but for these we must refer our readers to the *Proceedings*.

Equally satisfactory were the results in the more controverted and controvertible thesis of the "Community of Sensation," *i.e.*, a transference of sensation from the operator to the subject. This phenomenon, they point out, is closely allied to those which have occupied the attention of the Committee on Thought-reading, the difference being that in the former the percipient is in the mesmeric sleep whereas in the latter he is in his normal state. The experiments were conducted as follows:—

"Fred Wells was placed in a chair blindfolded, and Mr. Smith stood behind him. Wells was then sent into the mesmeric sleep through passes made by Mr. Smith. Some part of the latter's body would then be pricked or pinched tolerably severely—the operation lasting, generally, one or two minutes. Perfect silence was observed throughout, except for the simple and uniform question: 'Do you feel anything?' This question was asked by Mr. Smith, as the subject appeared not to hear any other speaker. In the first set of experiments Mr. Smith held one of Wells' hands, but this was found subsequently to be unnecessary, and the later experiments were performed without contact of any kind between Mr. Smith and the sensitive.

"*First Series, January 4th, 1883.*

- "1. The upper part of Mr. Smith's right arm was pinched continuously. Wells, after an interval of about two minutes, began to rub the corresponding part on his own body.
- "2. Back of the neck pinched. Same result.
- "3. Calf of left leg slapped. Same result.
- "4. Lobe of left ear pinched. Same result.
- "5. Outside of left ear pinched. Same result.
- "6. Upper part of back slapped. Same result.
- "7. Hair pulled. Wells localised the pain on his left arm.
- "8. Right shoulder slapped. The corresponding part was correctly indicated.
- "9. Outside of left wrist pricked. Same result.
- "10. Back of neck pricked. Same result.
- "11. Left toe trodden on. No indication given.
- "12. Left ear pricked. The corresponding part was correctly indicated.
- "13. Back of left shoulder slapped. Same result.
- "14. Calf of right leg pinched. Wells touched his arm.
- "15. Inside of left wrist pricked. The corresponding part was correctly indicated.
- "16. Neck below right ear pricked. Same result.

"In the next series of these experiments Wells was blindfolded, as before; but in this case a screen was interposed between Mr. Smith and Wells; and there was no contact whatever between them. During two or three of the trials Mr. Smith was in an adjoining room, separated from Wells by thick curtains.

"*Second Series, April 10th, 1883.*

- "17. Upper part of Mr. Smith's left ear pinched. After the lapse of about two minutes, Wells cried out: "Who's pinching me?" and began to rub the corresponding part.
- "18. Upper part of Mr. Smith's left arm pinched. Wells indicated the corresponding part almost at once.
- "19. Mr. Smith's right ear pinched. Wells struck his own right ear, after the lapse of about a minute, as if catching a troublesome fly, crying out: 'Settled him that time.'
- "20. Mr. Smith's chin was pinched. Wells indicated the right part almost immediately.
- "21. The hair at the back of Mr. Smith's head was pulled. No indication.
- "22. Back of Mr. Smith's neck pinched. Wells pointed, after a short interval, to the corresponding part.
- "23. Mr. Smith's left ear pinched. Same result.

"After this, Mr. Smith being now in an adjoining room, Wells began, as he said, 'to go to sleep'; and said that he

'didn't want to be bothered.' He was partially waked up, and the experiments were resumed.

"24. Salt was put into Mr. Smith's mouth. Wells cried out, 'I don't like candle to eat' (an idea possibly suggested by the word 'candle' having been mentioned in his hearing a few minutes before).

"25. Powdered ginger, of a particularly hot description, put into Mr. Smith's mouth. Wells presently exclaimed, 'I don't like hot things; what do you want to give me cayenne for?'

"26. Salt was then again placed in Mr. Smith's mouth. Wells exclaimed, 'Why do you give me nasty hot sweetmeats?'

"27. Wormwood in Mr. Smith's mouth. Wells cried, 'Makes my eyes smart: don't like mustard.'

"It will be noticed that in these last two experiments, the taste of the ginger apparently persisted, and obscured all later sensations.

"28. Mr. Smith's right calf pinched. Wells was very sulky, and for a long time refused to speak. At last he violently drew up his right leg, and began rubbing the calf.

"After this Wells became still more sulky, and refused in the next experiment to give any indication whatever. With considerable acuteness he explained the reasons for his contumacy. 'I ain't going to tell you, for if I don't tell you, you won't go on pinching me. You only do it to make me tell. Then he added, in reply to a remonstrance from Mr. Smith, 'What do you want me to tell for? they ain't hurting you, and I can stand their pinching.' All this time Mr. Smith's left calf was being very severely pinched."

They sum up results thus:—

"Out of a total of twenty-four experiments in transference of pains, the exact spot was correctly indicated by the subject no less than twenty times. Two out of the four failures had been anticipated, previous experience having shewn that the experiment rarely succeeded when the infliction consisted in pulling the hair. There remain, then, but two failures unaccounted for, and in only one of these cases was a *wrong* indication given, the boy merely remaining silent on the other occasion. It would be hazardous to draw any positive conclusions from the results of the four trials with *tastes*. But we shall hope to continue our experiments in this direction at no distant date.

"It is obvious that the impressions here recorded as having been transferred by sympathy from operator to subject might conceivably have been conveyed by a code, with less difficulty, at any rate, than in the case of the diagrams given in our report on Thought-transference, where, nevertheless, our precautions may appear to have been more elaborate than *here*. But the fact is that we never attempted these experiments in 'mesmeric sympathy' until we had satisfied ourselves of the genuineness and completeness of the 'mesmeric sleep.' That state was, as we think, tolerably unmistakable; nor did any one circumstance occur during the whole course of our experiments which threw any doubt on its reality, or on the perfect integrity of the operator."

The third point dealt with by the Committee is that of Rigidity and Anæsthesia. They say—

"More distinct and definite testimony to the genuineness of this induced condition is to be found in our experiments on *anæsthesia*. We satisfied ourselves, by a great number of carefully-varied experiments, that it was possible to induce in the subject: (1) either a general insusceptibility to pain inflicted on any part of his person—and this state generally existed even while he was acutely sensitive to pains inflicted on the *operator*: (2) or an anæsthesia of some specified part of the subject's body, chosen by ourselves. Thus, a limb or a portion of a limb, after being stroked two or three times by the operator's hands, would assume a condition of perfect rigidity, in which pinching, pricking, burning, or strong electric shocks might be applied without producing the slightest protest or sign of pain."

The general conclusion is summed up in the following paragraph and with which our notice must end.

"We have dealt thus far with three main phenomena connected with the mesmeric state, viz: (1) The dominance of a suggested idea; (2) transference of sensations, without suggestion, from operator to patient; (3) induction of general or local anæsthesia. The *first* of these three theses is, we believe, on the high road to universal acceptance. The mass of recorded testimony to it is enormous; the experiments are not difficult to

repeat; and the discussions of physiologists are beginning to turn on the explanation rather than on the existence of the phenomenon. The *second* thesis is, of course, much more keenly contested. We think that we have added something to the facts recorded in its favour, and we have every hope of adding more. This mesmeric sympathy is, as we have suggested, entirely consonant with our experiments in Thought-transference in the normal state; and as we learn more of the philosophy of the subject it may be hoped that the two inquiries will throw reciprocal light upon each other. The *third* point—the production of anæsthesia—has been already established by Esdaile and others with what seems to us even overwhelming completeness, and is to a certain extent admitted by many exponents of modern physiology. But here we come face to face with one form of what must now be accounted as the fundamental problem of the whole inquiry. Is this anæsthesia produced by mere expectant attention exercised in a particular state of the nervous system? Is it (in somewhat different terms) the culminating example of the dominance of a suggested idea? Or is it, again, the result of the inhibition of certain sensory centres in consequence of prolonged stimulation of the peripheral extremities of the nerves. This is the explanation given by Heidenhain, and, with some modifications, previously by Braid; but it only covers the cases where the passes have been accompanied by actual contact, which in our experiments has by no means always been the case. Or is it, lastly, the result of some specific effluence from the operator which may act without actual contact, independently of the subject's knowledge or expectation? It is on this question that we are now concentrating our attention; and it is only fair to say that our results point strongly in the direction of the *third*—the least antecedently probable, the least generally accepted explanation. But the question of this specific influence—of *mesmerism*, as opposed to *hypnotism*—is too complex and important to be approached in a fragmentary manner. It admits of direct investigation in several ways: and we prefer to defer the publication of results until a more complete reproduction of the experiments of others, with added tests of our own, may have afforded a wider basis for discussion.

A PRIVATE SITTING WITH CECIL HUSK.

On Tuesday, the 31st July, I had at my house a sitting with Mr. Cecil Husk. Some persons of distinction were present. It was exceedingly satisfactory. I saw and heard spirits whose comparatively freed souls had been earth-dwellers in the flesh: felt as well as saw hands, "shook" them: singularly sweet music was played on a sort of stringed harp. My accordion was played; my bell was loudly, repeatedly, and continuously rung; voices were audible, not only close, but in distant parts of the room: they joined in the singing; four small drawers were emptied, and the contents strewn on the table; two glass fern vases, very delicate in construction, were removed from a side board, and placed on a table before us; there were several other manifestations.

But some of your readers will say all these are trivialities; so they are; but none the less, they carry conviction of the presence in close communion with us of spirits, whose abode (from which they are permitted to issue) is in another sphere, and are therefore proofs of the holy truth for which Spiritualists contend, the continuity of life, existing in bodily form, after the "natural" body has been laid in the grave. I see no reason why I should not accept the frequently and solemnly uttered, "God bless you," of these spirits. I should have accepted it while they dwelt among the "living."

There is no doubt that Mr. Husk is a medium of high order. I believe him to be incapable of deceit, but if he were not guided by integrity and right principle, imposition was rendered impossible by the watchfulness of eight persons, far beyond the suspicion of credulity or lack of intelligence, actuated by a spirit of scrupulous—I will say suspicious—inquiry.

None of the friends I had known in "life" manifested themselves to me; but I believe it will not be so if I sit again with the medium. I am not, however, disposed to wish for their appearance—to my sight. I had conclusive evidence that some of such friends were present—very near to me.

I know few mediums, being well satisfied with the mediumship of Mrs. Fox Jencken (who was present on the occasion I have described). It amply suffices for my needs, for much instructive and pure enjoyment. Yes, it is enough for me, for my comfort and happiness. But I think it my duty to add to the testimony—more effectually given to you by others—that the mediumship of Mr. Husk cannot fail greatly to influence and add power to the cause we advocate, which we believe to be a blessed cause, for the glory of God, and the veritable well-being and well-doing of man.

S. C. HALL.

August 1st, 1883

REVIEW.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS. By "M. A. (Oxon.);" Author of "Psychography," "Spirit Identity," "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," &c., &c. London: The Psychological Press Association, 38, Great Russell-street, W.C., and E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane. 1883. 10s. 6d.

THIRD NOTICE.

In accord with the reverential spirit characterising the "Teachings" of "Imperator," our specimens shall commence with passages relating to "The Holy Anointed One."

"M. A. (Oxon.);" inquired as to the nature of the Lord's human body, and regarding the spiritual significance of His life. This is what "Imperator" taught in reply:—

"It is sufficient to say that the incarnation of an exalted spirit for the purpose of regenerating mankind is not confined to a single instance. The special salvation which mankind derives from these special saviours, is that which at the time it stands in need. These special incarnations you will know more of hereafter. For the present we say only, that they are in degree different from that of ordinary men, even as among men there is every grade of nationality in the body: some gross and sensual, others refined and ethereal.

"The human body of Jesus was of the most ethereal and perfect nature, and it was trained and prepared during thirty years of seclusion for the three years of active work that the Spirit had to do.

"You err in supposing (the thought had crossed my mind how disproportionate the preparation for the work!) that the work done by an incarnate spirit is to be bounded by the span of its earthly existence. It is very frequently, as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, the after effect of the life that is the truest part of the work. So, though the work was begun during those three years, it has been carried on ever since. It was the union of the majestic with the humble which was the note of His life. Majesty and meanness* combined. The majesty shone out at seasons—at His birth, at His death, at intervals during His life, as at Jordan, when the attesting voice of spirit sanctified His mission. Men knew of Him all His life through, that He was not as other men; that His life was not to be bound by social ties; though the harmony of the social circle was pleasant to Him. Men knew this, and your Bible gives you, in this respect, a most imperfect idea of the influence He exercised on all who came near Him. . . . In the case of most incarnate spirits, who have descended to minister on earth, the assumption of corporeity dims spiritual vision, and cuts it off from remembrance of its previous existence. Not so with Him. So little did His ethereal body blind the sense of spirit, that He could converse with the angels as one of their own order, who was cognisant of their life, and remembered His own part in it before incarnation. His remembrance of previous life was never blunted, and a great part of His time was spent in disunion from the body and in conscious communion with spirit. . . . His life, but little hampered by the body—which, indeed, was but a temporary envelope to His spirit assumed only when it was necessary for the spirit to come in contact with material things—was different in degree, though not in kind, from the ordinary life of man—purer, simpler, nobler, more loving, and more loved. Such a life could never be understood aright by those who were contemporary with it. It is of necessity that such lives should be misunderstood, misrepresented, maligned, and mistaken. It is to a degree with all that step out from the ranks, but especially with Him. . . . Had the full life of Jesus been completed on earth, what vast, what incalculable blessings would men have reaped! But they were not fitted, and they pushed aside the proffered blessings, having but just tasted them. They were not prepared. So with all great lives. Men take from them only that which they can grasp, and leave the rest for after ages; or they push them impatiently aside, and will have none of them, and after ages worship and revere a spirit incarnated too soon."

"Imperator" shews

How the Festivals of the Church of Christ are celebrated in the Spiritual World.

"They who outside the Church have refused to keep fast and festival are not wise. They cut themselves off from a portion of the truth. But the Christian Church keeps in memory of its Head, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascension, Whitsuntide. Those are the landmarks in the Christ-life, and each

* Does the word *meanness* quite convey the idea? Might not "Imperator" have found, perhaps, some happier word to express humility of estate?

represents an event in His life, with a hidden spiritual significance.

"The Christmas Festival of the Birth of the Spirit on the plane of Incarnation typifies Love and Self-denial. The exalted spirit tabernacles in flesh, abnegates Self, animated by Love. It is to us the Festival of Self-denial.

"The Epiphany, the Festival of the manifestation of this new light to the world, is to us the Festival of Spiritual Enlightenment: the shining of the True Light that lighteth everyone that is born unto the world: not the currying of it to men, but the uplifting of the Light, so that they who can see may come to it.

"The Fast of Lent typifies to us the struggles of Truth with Darkness. It is the wrestling with the Adversaries. The recurring season shadows forth a constantly recurring struggle. It is the Fast of conflict; of wrestling with evil; of the endeavour to overcome the world.

"Good Friday typifies to us the consummation of the struggle, the end that awaits all such conflicts in your world—Death: but Death in Life. It is the Festival of Triumphant Self-Sacrifice; the realisation and consummation of the Christ-life. It is no Fast, but a Festival of Triumphant Love.

"Easter, the Festival of the Resurrection, typifies to us the perfected life, the risen life, the glorified life. It is the Festival of Spirit, conquering and to conquer; of the risen-life, enfranchised and set free.

"Whitsuntide, which Christendom associates with the Baptism of the Spirit, is to us a Festival of great import. It typifies the outpouring of a large measure of spiritual truth on those who have accepted the Christ-life. It is the Festival which is the complement to Good Friday. As human ignorance slays the truth that it cannot receive: so, as a consequence, from the higher realm of spirit, comes a blessing on those who have embraced what the world has crucified. It is the Festival of the outpoured Spirit, of increased grace, of richer truth.

. . . "As it was necessary to destroy, so is it to conserve. Even as He, the Lamb of God, the Saviour of men, rescued Divine Verities from Jewish ignorance and superstition, so do we rescue Divine Truths from the crushing weight of man's theology. As He, the Great Teacher of the Nation, unloosed the struggling souls, and released them from the dominion of spiritual evil; so do we set free the spirit from the bonds of human dogma, and bid the enfranchised Truth to soar so that men may see it, and know that it is God."

Here is what "Imperator" teaches regarding The Occult Means employed by Spirit to Influence Men and the Qualities needed for Intellectual Mediumship.

"Others, again, are intellectually trained and prepared to give to man extended knowledge and wider views of truth. Advanced spirits influence the thought, suggest ideas, furnish means of acquiring knowledge, and of communicating it to mankind. The ways by which spirits so influence men are manifold. They have means you know not of by which events are so arranged as to work out the end they have in view. The most difficult task we have is to select a medium through whom the messages of the higher and more advanced spirits can be made known. It is necessary that the mind chosen should be of a receptive character, for we cannot put into a spirit more information than it can receive. Moreover, it must be free from foolish worldly prejudices. It must be a mind that has unlearned its youthful errors and has proved itself receptive of truth even though that truth be unpopular. More still, it must be free from dogmatism. It must not be rooted and grounded in earth notions. It must be free from the dogmatism of theologies and sectarianism and rigid creed. It must not be bound down by the fallacies of half-knowledge which is ignorant of its own ignorance. It must be a free and inquiring soul. It must be a soul that loves progressive knowledge and that has the perception of truth afar off. One that yearns for fuller light, for richer knowledge than it has yet received; one that knows no cessation in drinking in the truth." (p. 35.)

. . . "We select, then, such a soul as we can best find, and prepare by constant training for its appointed work. We inspire into it a spirit of love and tolerance for opinions that do not find favour with its own mental bias. This raises it above dogmatic prejudice, and paves the way for the discovery that truth is manifold, and not the property of any individual. Store of knowledge is given as the soul can receive it; and the foundation of knowledge once laid, the superstructure may be safely raised. The opinions and tone of thought are moulded

by slow degrees, so that they harmonise with the end we have in view.

"Moreover, a perfect truthfulness and absence of fearlessness and anxiety, are the steady growth of our teaching. We lead the soul to rest in the calm trust on God and His spirit-teachers. We infuse a spirit of patient waiting for that which we are permitted to do and teach. This spirit is the very reverse of that fretful, restless querulousness which characterises many souls. Given these high endowments, fitting man for the communion with supernal intelligences, there is still even for him

The Trinity of Antagonism of the New Life.

and he has to reflect upon the purpose of the struggle which has to be waged with that antagonism.

"The struggle is severe," remarks the pupil, and one hardly knows what to fight against." "*Begin within,*" replies the Spirit Teacher. "The ancients were wise in their description of the enemies. A spirit has three foes—itsself; the external world around it; and the spiritual foes that beset the upward path. These are described as the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Begin with self—the Flesh. Conquer it, so that you are no longer slave to appetite, to passion, to ambition; so that self can be abnegated, and the spirit can come forth from its hermit cell, and live, and breathe, and act in the free scope of the universal brotherhood. This is the first step. Self must be crucified, and from the grave where it lies buried will rise the enfranchised spirit untrammelled, free from material clogs. This done, the soul will have no difficulties in despising the things which are seen, and in aspiring to the eternal verities. It will have learned that truth is to be found in them alone; and seeing this, it will maintain a deathless struggle with all external and material forms, as being only adumbrations of the true, too often deceptive and unsatisfying."

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

Esoteric Buddhism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have this hour arrived home after a most charming visit to Longleat, Warminster, and Edington, in the county of Wilts, where I greatly enjoyed the magnificence of the place and scenery, and felt deeply interested in it as the county where our Great Alfred burnt the cakes in the cottage and afterwards defeated the Danes in a great battle.

This being Monday, and you requiring communications to reach you by Tuesday morning, must be my excuse for replying *very briefly* to the three letters in the number of "LIGHT" for July 28th, which attack my letter in your previous issue.

In the first place, I must beg of your readers not to regard these opinions as the general reflection of the Theosophic mind; because I have by letters and by words received from leading Theosophists many expressions of approval of my letter.

I am accused of shewing "bad feeling" and "bad breeding" and "vulgarity of tone," and my letter is said to be "offensive and disgraceful," and "superficial and flippant," and worthy of "indignation and contempt."

Now these are very strong expressions, and yet—while regretting that I should have hurt the feelings of those I personally respect—I receive them with the utmost calmness, and would only suggest that their use confirms my view, that materialists cannot possibly be Theosophists.

My good friend, Miss Arundale, seems to have misunderstood me; for when I said that "incorrigible Buddhistic and other lunatics were cast into the dust-bin of the moon," I was merely expressing Mr. Sinnett's view, and I never for one moment meant to imply that either she or Mr. Sinnett would go there.

But while on this point I would beg to be permitted to ask Mr. Sinnett why the moon, which has always been associated with love-making and romance, should be appropriated by "Esoteric Buddhists" as the place of final extinction for the wicked *Buddhists*? Because, of course, Christians, of whom Mr. Sinnett cannot be expected to know much, assert that their wicked souls do not go to the moon.

Mr. Sinnett says that "only the least respectable" opponents of Christianity ridicule the sacred belief of others.

If this be true, what does he say of Madame Blavatsky, a lady from whom he, second hand, receives most of his Buddhistic teaching, and who for years in the *Theosophist* cast rough abuse and ridicule on Christianity?

I submit that the three letters which now attack me are no reply to my former letter, and I call on Mr. Sinnett to point out one word in my epitome of his system which I did not receive either from himself or his book.

I will also take this opportunity of asking Mr. Sinnett to explain the process of "the Soul's disintegration in the Moon."

I can understand the disintegration of matter, for matter is molecular, and the chemist can separate the molecules, and present them in, say, four phials, labelled carbon, oxygen, nitrogen and hydrogen, as the exact equivalents of the said matter.

Now, if Koot Hoomi can likewise produce a disintegrated soul in, say, four phials, then I will most humbly apologise for my ridicule of his teaching, and reverently accept him as the prince of philosophers. But it is not fair to accuse me of vulgarity and bad taste because I do not worship a being of whose existence I have no proof, and who, if he exists, seems to me to teach a doctrine which is not only most untheosophical, but most absurd, and most pernicious.

Finally, notwithstanding Mr. Sinnett's objection to my using initials which can be recognised, I beg permission again to subscribe myself

G. W., M.D.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I am directed by the President and Council of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society to correct Dr. Wyld's allegation respecting the philosophical views entertained by its Fellows.

The publications cited by Dr. Wyld in support of his charges do not constitute a profession of faith by the Society, nor is the Society committed by them to any form of doctrine whatever. The present President of the British Branch would not have accepted office in anybody professing "Atheism."

The conditions of Fellowship in the Theosophical Society do not exclude any form of exoteric belief, nor bind to any special doctrine. We are pledged only to study and investigate, and not necessarily to accept and endorse. Not authority, but reason is our guide.

But we are bound to avoid using unfriendly language towards one another, and especially towards teachers whom some among us regard with peculiar veneration and affection. It is not then on account of Dr. Wyld's religious opinions, but because of the breach of brotherly *convenances* occasioned by his conduct, that his continued fellowship in the Society is regarded by us as undesirable.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

W. F. KIRBY,

Sec. London Lodge T.S.

P.S.—So far as the Society is concerned, this letter closes the correspondence on the subject.

"Divining Rods."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I should esteem it a favour if your correspondent "C.S." would communicate with me in regard to his article on the above subject, because I am extremely desirous of obtaining further information on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, about the Swedish experiments and the publications to which he refers.

The Society of Psychical Research has already collected a considerable mass of documentary evidence bearing on this subject, chiefly through the kind assistance of Mr. E. Vaughan Jenkins, of Cheltenham.

It has also undertaken a number of experiments upon the alleged occult power of "dowsers," as users of divining rods are commonly called.

Some of these experiments are still in progress, and therefore I am unable to state that conclusive results have been obtained from them.

I am anxious also to get information as to the extent to which the various geological formations of the country are productive of water, since on this point depends the value of much of our evidence.

I shall be glad to receive communications from your readers on any of these points.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

EDWARD R. PEASE.

17, Osnaburgh-street, Regent's Park.

August 7th, 1883.

THE PROPOSAL TO CIRCULATE "SPIRIT TEACHINGS."—MR. Edmonds' suggestion has brought us one or two communications on the subject. The following letter speaks for itself, but before moving in the matter we desire to know more fully the wishes of our readers:—"To the Editor of 'LIGHT.' SIR,—We have been reading 'M.A. (Oxon's)' beautiful work, entitled, 'Spirit Teachings.' It has given us much pleasure, and we think with your correspondent (Mr. T. H. Edmonds), that if circulated freely it could not fail to do good. Should the plan be carried out my daughter and self will subscribe £1 each.—I am, sir, yours truly, AGNES F. MALTEY."

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Business for Ensuing Week:—

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14th.—Finance Committee Meeting, at 6 p.m. Council Meeting at 6.30 p.m. THOMAS BLYTON Hon. Secretary, pro tem.

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