

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe.*

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[The Editor of "LIGHT" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

A correspondent informs me that "The Economy of Human Life," which I noticed on the 1st inst., is not, as it professes to be, the work of an ancient Brahmin, nor is it translated, as alleged, from an Indian manuscript. My correspondent possesses a copy (and that not of the original edition) published in Brook-street, Derby, in 1816, by Henry Mozley. It is the production of Robert Dodsley, the well-known author, and the means adopted to promote its sale were of the same questionable type as the story of the apparition of Mrs. Veal, in "Drelincourt on Death," which has taken in so many wonder-hunters. I can only say that the sentiments contained in the little volume, whether Eastern or Western in origin, are pure and beautiful, and worthy of all commendation: albeit the moralist must condemn the means selected to attract attention. When critically examined the tone of the aphorisms is palpably Western.

"The Ghost-hunting Society" (as the *Fall Mall Gazette* always calls a society which has a proper name of its own—I wonder would it call the Entomological Society, "The Beetle and Bug-hunting Society?")—has found favour in French eyes. M. Darmstetter, in the *Parlement*, deplors the tendency of the age to make light of things spiritual, and to bound human knowledge and interests by what is material and objective to the senses. This, he thinks, is a re-action from the "debauched mysticism of the last two or three thousand years," but he finds it unworthy of any science properly so called. "It would be wiser," he says, "if science, instead of sneering at it, would study the subject; but it is afraid of being accused of Spiritualism, and therefore enshrouds itself in haughty ignorance." That has been the ostrich-policy of the past, but it is rapidly giving place. Facts are stubborn things.

The Spiritualists of America are endeavouring to organise themselves, with what success remains to be seen. At the outset, however, the desire for organisation is not unanimous. Moreover, the experience of the past is not encouraging. Even when Spiritualism was in its purely phenomenal stage, and when those who dealt with it were chiefly concerned with externals, it was practically impossible to organise with any hope of permanent success. Attempts in that direction, however patiently and discreetly

made, were only partially and temporarily successful. There was a lack of cohesion, a tendency to individualisation that seemed to hinder all efforts at external union. Spiritualists had arrived at their convictions by such different methods that they regarded the broad subject very variously. Many, if not most of them, had come into a new sphere of liberty, from one where they had been tied and bound and subjected to a discipline against which they had finally revolted. They were in no humour to bind themselves again by any fetters. For these, among many other reasons, Spiritualism has never organised with real success.

From one point of view this has been its weakness. Union is strength if it be real, and a want of real union would necessarily imply a want of strength. But it was *uniformity* rather than *union* that was found to be practically unattainable. The whole complex scheme of spiritual thought and action which we loosely call Spiritualism, is disruptive, reformatory, and consequently, in its first methods of operation, destructive. The old must be changed; improved where that was possible, uprooted and got rid of where no hope of improvement remained. In any case the agency was not conservative in its apparent action, though frequently it was more so than a careless observer would imagine. But, be this as it may, the action of Spiritualism on human thought has been and is increasingly to throw down barriers of dogma, to clear away accumulated under-growths, of tangled thought or prejudice, to let in light and air and to prepare the ground for a new crop. No one method has been uniformly employed to effect this great change. Each individual soul has been approached by the means best suited to arrest its attention and awaken its dormant life. Infinitely various have been the agencies employed, and as a consequence the experiences of Spiritualists are as various as the complexion of their several minds, and the inner necessities of their individual souls.

To organise these newly-awakened individualities into a symmetrical body, animated by one mind, and acting on one plan, was an impossibility. It was apparently not desired by those who directed this great attempt to reform and influence human thought. Some cause or other frustrated the wisest plans, and led the most zealous advocates of organisation to feel that they were in the presence of a problem that could not be solved by the methods found applicable to similar ones that were not complicated, as this was, by the action and will of unseen spiritual intelligences. It became evident that whatever might be done in the future, when the seething was over, and the disturbing causes grew less active, the present was not the time for a hard and fast organisation. The attempt was one that it was well and wise to make, but it was also well to abandon it when it failed of a reasonable measure of success.

And if the attempt at organisation was without success then, its chances have not grown stronger now that Spiritualism has passed into a new phase of its existence. No careful observer can fail to see that this is so. The first feelings of mere wonder, and sometimes of awe, have to a great extent passed away, to be succeeded by a more philosophical and perhaps truly religious, though by no

means theological attitude. Spiritualism, instead of crystallising into an independent form, has shewn a strong tendency to animate, modify, and influence other forms of thought. In the political terminology of the day, its method is *permeation*. It is toning down the harsh and crude lights and shadows of popular theology. Witness the breadth of view, the increased charity and tolerance, the loosening of rigid dogma, the large flexibility of belief, that characterise the best modern religious thought. It is leavening the literature of the day, and turning men's minds to the discussion of subjects which, a few years ago, would have interested no one, or which would have been held to be settled for ever by a text from the Bible, or a dogmatic definition of faith by the Church. Witness, among many such, a remarkable disquisition in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century*, by Mr. Norman Pearson, on the state "After Death." Witness the discussions in the various public journals on such phenomena as the Psychical Society has yet addressed itself to. All this is dispersive, not concentrative. Modern thought is permeated by the new ideas before it is aware of either their source, their nature, or their tendency.

And this method of imperceptible permeation is eminently characteristic of the working of Spirit. It is hard indeed to think how spiritual workers could have been supposed to act in any other way. It has been so at all times, when, as in the days of the Christ, an effort has been made to influence human thought. The wind, He explained to one of His inquirers who was best able to understand the similitude, is traceable only in its effects. Its action is unfettered, its origin and destination unknown, but its potency is evident. So with the action of spirit. What was true then is true still. It was not till centuries had passed away that the teachings of the Christ were crystallised and His followers organised into a church. It will apparently be long before this latest attempt to renovate and guide human thought is similarly embodied in an organisation that can act successfully as the medium of its spiritual influence.

I have been so long absent from home, and out of reach of books and papers, and deprived, which is worse, of that repose which is necessary for thought, that I have necessarily omitted to draw attention to many very interesting papers, such as that of Mr. Norman Pearson's to which I referred above, and to which I hope to recur next week. I trust I may then also acknowledge the comments made on my notes on "The God-idea," and shew that I have not altogether failed to profit by the correspondence which it was one purpose of my brief and imperfect notes to elicit.

M.A. (Oxon.)

A NEW CATALOGUE OF WORKS ON SPIRITUALISM AND THE OCCULT SCIENCES.—We have now before us the proof sheets of the autumn catalogue of new and other works published and sold by the Psychological Press Association, and have been requested to draw attention to it. This we gladly do and can say that we do not remember to have seen one more complete than that in question. It not only contains a list of the English standard works on the subject, but includes nearly every book or pamphlet published in America, and in the French, German, Spanish, and Italian languages, while to facilitate business, arrangements are being made to keep a stock of most of the books enumerated. The catalogue, which consists of 32 pp., will be sent post free on application.

"Think well of the dead" is a saying of deeper meaning than the world imagines. The writer was solicited by a communicating spirit to cease entertaining certain injurious thoughts about him. Our thoughts in the body are as perceptible to some spirits as words used to be to them when they were in the body.—*Harbinger of Light*.

STRUGGLE OF TRUTH IN EMERGING INTO LIGHT.

The unfolding of great Truths would appear to run ever upon the same divinely appointed lines; thus is it, that history is said to continually repeat itself. What has been the fate of a great Truth in one century, and of its apostles, disciples, and martyrs, we may safely anticipate will once more be its fate and the fate of its followers, in the succeeding centuries; the names of the actors, of course, changed, the manifestation of the truth changed, but the principle unchanged, and unchangeable, by which Truth Universal is ever being evolved.

Of this observation a noteworthy example may be found, if we compare the history of the unfolding of the modern manifestations of "Spiritualism" with that, in the last century, of their precursor, herald, and indeed, in one sense, of their mother, Mesmerism or Animal Magnetism.

The following extract, relative to the progress and persecution of the beneficent discovery of Dr. Mesmer, is taken from the forthcoming first volume of "Pioneers of the Spiritual Reformation," by Mrs. Howitt-Watts, from the Life of Kerner, where reference is made to Kerner's last book, "Researches after Memorials of Mesmer."

From the perusal of this extract, a salutary moral cannot fail to be drawn.

Something Regarding Mesmer's Followers and Opponents in Germany, also Regarding the Gradual Development of Animal Magnetism.

Through Puységur's investigations Animal Magnetism assumed a new phase during the time of Mesmer's sojourn in France. Puységur resided at Strasburg, from whence his doctrine spread itself throughout Germany. Puységur was the first experimenter who, quitting the simple magnetic influence upon the patient, assumed that Somnambulism and its power of inward contemplation alone, constitutes its healing power. A sick boy, his patient, in whom Somnambulism had unfolded the faculty of inward vision, had led him to these conclusions. In Somnambulism Puységur believed that he had discovered the veritable magnetism; and in this spirit gave publicity to his own discovery.

Upon Mesmer's return to Germany he found that these new ideas had spread throughout the land, and this circumstance again greatly embittered his life. Regarding what he considered the dangers of Somnambulism and the somnambulist treatment, Mesmer has written many papers which betray a wounded and suffering nature.

Affecting is it thus to observe two great discoverers and benefactors of the human race, through the narrowness of vision inherent in humanity, or through its unconquered egotism, thus blinded to the relative importance of the truth of each other's system, and through this pitiable blindness retarding the calm development of universal truth, of which each possessed a portion, and of which each believed himself the devoted servant.

From Strasburg, where Puységur's sect had arrived, Mesmer's doctrine was brought to Bremen. Lavater, giving his allegiance to Puységur's system, had received magnetism on the altogether mystical and religious side. Certain friends and imitators of his having exaggerated his views, the whole subject was exposed to the ridicule of the incredulous and of the utterly ignorant, and thus the very wildest ideas were entertained by the public of magnetism and magnetisers. Lavater, upon his appearance at Bremen, was greeted in the papers by would-be witty comic songs of a most disgusting and silly nature. That Lavater's own views regarding magnetism, were clear, philosophical, and calm, various passages in his writings bear testimony.

The circulation through Germany of the unfavourable opinion passed upon Mesmer's discovery by the French Academy, damaged Mesmer's reputation immensely; for especially in that age did Germany, not alone as regards dress and manners, but also in matters of opinion, follow the French nation with a pitifully servile imitation. Thus the opinion of a body of men, supposed by their learning and wisdom to be able to embrace and comprehend the whole of the laws of the world, was regarded by Germany as the utterance of an oracle. This feeling existed to so great an extent, that no one dared to defend Magnetism through the terror of being calumniated. The very

name of Animal Magnetism was tabooed. Dr. Eberhard Gmelin, of Heilbronn, a contemporary of Mesmer, an intellectual investigator of his discovery, and to whom we owe the possession of six volumes of conscientiously recorded experiences, and much valuable theoretical matter, regarding Magnetism, already, in the year 1787, has said in one of his volumes, that he would prefer to call his magnetic researches, "Experiments in the Power possessed by Human Nature by means of the living Human-Touch," owing to the unconquerable objection in the public mind to the term "Animal Magnetism." In fact by calling one of his works, *Materials for Anthropology*, he thus gave way to the public prejudice against Mesmer's nomenclature.

Gmelin was a man in whom no qualification failed to render him a thoroughly competent observer of this subtle power of nature. His observation succeeded in awakening a lively interest in the subject; and that he was an enlightened and thoroughly experienced physician, as well as a clear-seeing psychologist, not even the most prejudiced opponent could deny. His works were full of instruction, even for the unbeliever, and although they might not always work conviction, they prepared the way for it. Before Reil and Humboldt's experiments, in 1778, Dr. Gmelin wrote about a fluid within, or rather upon, the nerves, bearing much relation to electricity, and which he termed *nerve juice*, or *nerve ather*; and, in 1793, after the publication of Reil's excellent writings and Humboldt's galvanic experiments, he published other important observations.

Neither did Wienholt in Bremen fare much better than Gmelin, in the opposition which he encountered from the learned world. He, in the years 1803 and 1806, wrote upon the subject of Animal Magnetism, at great length, in a sober, searching, and philosophical spirit, and proved it to be a special power of nature, and an extraordinary healing medium. But he also, for a certain time, bore reproach and was utterly misunderstood. Within fifteen years, however, Wienholt treated, either directly himself or through others, eighty sick persons. The greater number of these were cases which he either beheld abandoned by medical art, or which could only hope for a protracted cure: cases of various kinds of diseases, inflammatory as well as chronic, nervous as well as other tedious maladies. There were individuals of almost every age and rank, and of both sexes, married and unmarried; and the magnetic treatment affected these patients in the most remarkable manner. In some of these cases the improvement was only temporary, in other partial, in others—and these not a few—the cure was complete. Wienholt made use of electricity combined with Animal Magnetism in his experiments. In these cases the sleep-waking condition excited the greatest surprise, and became the chief stumbling-block.

During the period of Gmelin's and Wienholt's activity in this field of labour, Animal Magnetism attained, through the discovery of galvanism, to more respectful consideration in the learned world. Already, and principally through Gmelin's researches—to which we have already referred—the existence of a so-called life-atmosphere around the nerves, was believed to exist. This supposition was rendered more probable by Reil's excellent work upon the nerves, and at length was clearly demonstrated by Humboldt's galvanic experiments with animal-fibres; and thus was Animal Magnetism brought nearer to physical science. Equally favourable were the observations of Spallanzani and Fontana. On every side, old conventional opinions and doctrines which had taken deep root, were seen to be attacked and destroyed by new opinions and doctrines, and thus people at length accustomed themselves to inquire with more equanimity into Animal-Magnetism, and gradually discovered that it really did contain some truth.

Through Schelling's Nature-Philosophy, other worthy minds were encouraged to cast off the chains of the old systems, and take higher flights through the illimitable realms of nature. Thus the arrogant tone of the would-be-all-wise was not so universal, and practical physicians who formerly had been opposed to Magnetism, even deigned to operate by its means. The men who at that period principally accepted the Mesmeric theory were K. E. Schelling, W. Hufeland, Klug, Wolfart, Fr. Hufeland, Kuntzmann, Petzold, Nasse, Muller, and other physicians in Berlin. At a later period followed that remarkable man whom, comparatively speaking, we have only lately lost, Dr. Ennemoser; and who has given forth to the world, both practical and theoretical works upon the subject. Also Eschenmayer has been an invaluable labourer in the field. Dr. Karl Passavant, of Frankfort, we have also to thank for his *Researches into Life-Magnetism and Clear-seeing*, which has become a classi-

cal work. Also Count Zappari, and his unfortunate countryman Count Mailath, have both earned our thanks through their peculiar conception and development of the Mesmeric doctrine.

It is especially through the exertions of the above-named men that Mesmer's discovery enjoyed a triumph, already before the death of Mesmer; although at a period when personally he was entirely forgotten, and now (in the year 1856), forty years after his death, a yet greater triumph exists in the appearance of magnetic table-turning, and of Reichenbach's discovery of the odylie light and force. (In 1883, however, more marvellous has become this triumph, through the ever unfolding confirmation of the truth of Mesmer's discovery, as demonstrated by the varied phenomena of Spiritualism: that fuller development of occult force, the dawn of which Dr. Justinus Kerner was one of the first to proclaim.)

It ought not to surprise us, that Mesmer was not comprehended by the learned men of his day, seeing that he was through his views of nature, forty years in advance of his age. Nevertheless it is almost inconceivable that during all these years of the progress of magnetic inquiry, personally, Mesmer should have been forgotten, and this not alone by his opponents, but by those who honoured and practised his doctrine. Throughout the numerous volumes of the writings of Gmelin and Wienholt upon Animal Magnetism, between the years 1787 and 1805, you may seek in vain for the name of Mesmer. And with other writers it is the same. They well knew what persecution and contempt Mesmer had drawn upon himself, by the expression of opinions which were the same as their own; nevertheless, nowhere throughout these writings does one meet with one single expression of sympathy with Mesmer: nowhere a defence of him. It seems as though they dreaded to touch upon that name of "Mesmer," so hooted at by the scientific world. Not one of these writers took the trouble to search out the discoverer of that power of nature which they were themselves thus developing and defending, in order to become personally acquainted with him: to know what kind of a man he was: to hear from his own lips the explanation of his theory: to learn from himself the practical part of his doctrine: to be shewn by himself his magnetic manipulation; in short, to drink of the knowledge which they sought at its very fountain head.

Mesmer, during the greater portion of his later life, took no part whatsoever in the discussions of the scientific world; took no interest even in the magnetic labours of his followers. He dwelt in the most perfect retirement at Frauenfeld, a blessing to the sick and the poor of that neighbourhood. He appears, however, to have deeply sympathised with the great political changes occurring in Europe.

Various of Mesmer's friends in France sought to recall him into their midst from Switzerland, representing to him that his ideas would never be comprehended in that country, and seeking to induce him to publish his writings in the French language. Nevertheless to France Mesmer did not return.

Mesmer was already an old man of seventy-eight, when a circle of his zealous disciples in Berlin applied to him by letter, through Reil and Wolfart, to visit them, in order that they might hear his doctrine explained to them by himself. Throughout the rest of Germany, at this period, Mesmer personally was as one dead. It is easily understood that Mesmer, who had in his earlier life declined a similar invitation, now, in his old age, and when he was weary of scientific discussion, did not accede to his friends' desire. We have reasons, however, to believe that from this application of his Berlin friends resulted Wolfart's invaluable edition of Mesmer's writings. With the greater portion of his fortune, Mesmer had lost in France the whole of his papers. Nevertheless, in the later years of his life, during his solitude, Mesmer employed himself with marvellous patience in re-writing his ideas and experience in French.

MRS. HOWITT WATT'S FORTHCOMING VOLUME.—In answer to correspondents we are requested to state that this work is now all but complete, and that it will be published almost immediately. We have seen the proof sheets and believe it to be a volume almost unique of its kind.

CHARITY makes the best construction of things and persons; and is so far from being an evil spy, a backbiter or a detractor, that it excuses weaknesses, extenuates miscarriages, makes the best of everything, forgives everybody, serves all—and hopes to the end. It moderates extremes, is always for expedients, labours to accommodate differences, and had rather suffer than revenge, and is so far from exacting the utmost farthing that it had rather lose than seek its own violently.—WILLIAM PENN.

REMARKABLE SEANCES.

No. II.

On Friday, July 18th, 1869, I attended a sitting at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, 26, Penton-street, Pentonville.

There were present, the Countess de Medina Pomar, (now the Countess of Caithness), Miss Anna Blackwell (the well-known translator of the writings of Kardec), Mr. Nisbet, of Glasgow, and Mrs. Nisbet (the two first named accompanied us to the house), and Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

The room in which we met was small, and the evening was intensely hot; so hot that the usual window curtains had been removed; the atmosphere was, therefore, unfavourable, and more than an hour passed before manifestations commenced.

The peculiar manifestations associated with the medium—Mrs. Everitt—are what have been termed “audible voices,” that is to say, voices apparently human, so far as tone and language are concerned; heard, not in isolated words, or detached sentences, but in conversations continuing during an hour or more, uninterruptedly. These sittings are always in the dark; indeed, there must be total darkness. A paper tube is to some extent a necessary accompaniment of these sittings; the spirit who speaks is understood to speak through it. I say to some extent, for on this occasion (and on a previous occasion), at my request, the spirit spoke for some minutes without the tube, telling me this: “The tube is not necessary; but we condense in it the breath of the medium, and we are thus able to use her for a longer time; we do not, as some think we do, speak by her lips.” When the spirit spoke without the tube, it was the same voice, only it had lost the peculiar tone it had received in passing through the tube.

The spirit who spoke by the aid of the medium called himself “John Watt.” His language was remarkably refined; there was no taint of vulgar intonation or common phraseology such as we almost invariably meet in persons of comparatively humble condition, and uneducated. On my remarking this, and asking him had he been in a high or low position while in this life, he replied, “I was in what you would call a low position. I was a mechanic engineer, but I have progressed greatly since I left earth.” I asked him how long ago that was. He answered, “Of your time is it thirty-two years, and I had been thirty years on earth when I was called from it.” The voice was clear, each word, in a loud whisper, being distinctly heard, the enunciation neither slow nor rapid, but somewhat emphatic and impressive.

Why darkness is a requisite, and why a tube should be an auxiliary at such sittings, I do not know; but in all such cases both seem to be requisites.

While the party was being arranged round the large square table (and the arrangement was not a matter of chance, but was made by some unseen power, dictating by heavy raps), we were directed, still by raps, to read the 6th chapter of the Acts, which I did, and then to pray, which we all did—silently, but, I believe, fervently. My own prayer was mainly that God would keep us from all evil influences, and give us only the influences of the holy and the good. After waiting more than half an hour, the medium became entranced. She was apparently rigid, her eyes were closed, and she seemed to have lost all *will*. She was moved, seemingly by no power of her own, to seat herself upon another chair, about a foot from the end of the piano. Leaning sideways over the end of the instrument, she made passes, as though magnetising it. No sooner had she ceased to make passes over the piano, than we distinctly heard the strings vibrating, and producing soft, wild snatches of sound, like the distant tones of an *Æolian* harp. All this time the medium sat passive, her hands on her lap, distinctly visible by the light of a candle, at a distance of a foot from the piano.

The candle was then extinguished, and we heard a

tramp of measured footsteps in all parts of the room; and presently a whispering voice sounded from the direction of the medium—“The blessing of God and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you, dear friends: I fear I shall not do much to-night, the atmosphere is unfavourable: I cannot see you clearly: the room is full of mist.”

The persons present each and all, then questioned the spirit, “John Watt.” It would occupy too much space to give in detail the conversation that ensued. To some of our questions the spirit replied “I do not know,” to others, “I am not permitted to answer that.” To one lady he said, “You desire to know too much of too many things in Spiritualism: you are like the butterfly that goes from flower to flower and gets nothing.”

Mrs. Hall then asked him if he prayed in the sphere in which he was; he answered, certainly, prayer was continual with them, not in phrases, but in spirit; and he quoted—repeating them slowly, and with remarkably grave emphasis—the two well-known verses by James Montgomery:—

“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed:
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

“Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear:
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.”

Not remembering at the moment the authorship of the verses, I asked him by whom they were written: he did not know.

Among other things James Watt told us, that persons should never come to sittings in dresses of silk: silk being a non-conductor of electricity; dresses should be of cotton or wool.

On a previous occasion I had asked him as to the form he now had: he said it was the body he had on earth spiritualised—a spiritual body. “But,” I said, “if you had been hunchbacked while on earth, how would it be now?” He said, “I should have no hunchback here; but if I were visible to you (which I could be, though not with this mediumship), I should appear to you with a hunchback in order that you might recognise me.” I had asked him if I had known him on earth, whether I should know him in his present condition. On that occasion he brought with him a little Indian boy who told, in a boy’s small voice, a touching story of his sad experience, and death by violence on earth, and of his present happy state. Several times during this sitting, we saw lights in various parts of the room: they resembled that which is given out by the glow-worms, but one was much larger, apparently six inches in length. I asked John Watt to explain them; he said he could not do so then, he must soon leave us, for the medium was becoming exhausted, but before he left as he hoped we should hear the music he knew we all desired to hear.

It was explained by Mr. Everitt that his wife’s guardian spirit sometimes brought with her several child-spirits who played on the piano that occupied one part of the room. He fervently hoped that manifestation might be given to-night. We waited patiently. The candle was then directed to be lit, and we saw the medium seated as she was when she first occupied the chair—rigid; her eyes closed, and apparently unconscious; the tube on the top of the piano; her right arm leaning on the piano, supporting her head.

The light was again extinguished, when sounds issued from the piano: the keys seemed to be lightly struck several times, though the cover was down. It was an ordinary cottage piano, the top was covered with books, a heavy inkstand, and two candlesticks. It was subsequently closely inspected by me and others. To have removed the top in order to set free the front, would have been a work of time and noise; some of us were seated within two feet of it, the room being very small.

Suddenly we heard a faint, sweet melody, not played on the keys, but on the wires; the melody continued for full five minutes; those present who were musical described it as of great beauty and originality: sometimes loud, sometimes soft—dying away at length into a murmur of sound, and leaving an echo, so to speak, of inexpressible delicacy and sweetness.

Mrs. Hall said, that the touch on the keys of the piano was like a child's touch—picking out one note after the other—but the playing on the wires was that of an accomplished player, who understood melody, harmony, and expression.

John Watt, when it was over, said, "I am very glad you have heard that music." Mrs. Hall asked, "Have you music where you are now?" "Oh," he said, "music infinitely more beautiful than that."

He told us the guardian spirit of Mrs. Everitt had told him that morning why she was specially permitted to attend upon her (her name was Anne Blower). "This morning Anne told me what made her wish to be with Mrs. Everitt. When she was a little girl at school, Anne was her teacher, and as teacher recommended all the girls to get a book, and set down in it all good and evil thoughts, all good and evil actions, that occurred to them, or that they had done. There were a few girls who got the books, and began attending to their teacher's advice; but all except one failed in the perfect truthfulness that was required. They did not enter what was against themselves, only what was in their favour, but Mrs. Everitt had put down everything—she was perfectly true, and that won the heart of Anne so much, that she desired to be with her, 'to help her, because she was, and is true.'"

After that John Watt said, "I must go now; but not without my prayer: May God and our Lord Christ bless you, comfort you, help you, and give you happiness in this world, and in that to which in due time you will come. May His light guide you; and His help be with you here and hereafter. Amen."

The sitting closed, the candles were lit: and the medium was found exactly as I have described her.

I have merely related the facts as they occurred during the two hours occupied in the sitting. I could, of course, add much. We asked at least fifty questions; to most of which the spirit gave not only intelligent, but singularly terse and sensible replies.

Fraud was out of the question; it was a sheer impossibility that a human hand could have played on the wires of the piano, removing and replacing the top and front, and the books and other things on the top.

The medium was (I do not speak it disrespectfully) not an educated person; she could not play on any musical instrument; she has never, under any circumstances, received payment for the exercise of her gift; she is the wife of a humble, though highly intelligent, man; and in no way could he or she be benefited by these manifestations; indeed, the contrary is the fact.

But I say fraud was impossible on the five occasions I witnessed those manifestations—accompanied by several persons as scrupulously, nay, as suspiciously inquiring as myself.

Such sittings, and some even more astounding than these, were of frequent occurrence in this house. But two of these sittings, quite as remarkable, took place in my house. Moreover, I trust I shall induce belief that there are few persons so utterly abandoned to evil as solemnly to ask God's blessing on a pre-arranged and pre-determined fraud, that a man and woman respected in all the relations of life, good parents and citizens, could be so entirely wicked as blasphemously to implore God's aid and then wilfully to devise a profitless cheat.

I am sure that they themselves believed in these mani-

festations as truly as Martha and Mary believed in the raising from death of Lazarus their brother.

And I do not for one moment hesitate to express my entire conviction that these manifestations were real, true, holy, and emphatically for good.

(Signed)

S. C. HALL.

We who were present at the sitting on the 18th July, testify to the accuracy of the above details.

(Signed)

HAY NISBET.

HELEN NISBET.

C. W. PEARCE.

Signed also by

THE COUNTESS DE MEDINA POMAR, AND
MISS ANNA BLACKWELL.

A GHOSTLY NARRATIVE COMMUNICATED BY A. M. H. W.

The Ghost of Peter Pearson.

From a letter of a lady residing at Derwent Bank near Broughton, Cumberland, to a relative.

"Jane Pearson, a minister amongst us" (the Society of Friends), and a native of Broughton, whose name is probably mentioned in the "Journal of James Dickinson" (also a minister and a native of these parts) with whom I believe she sometimes travelled "in the ministry," lived here with her brother, a "Friend" of the yeoman class.

Peter Pearson, her brother, died and was buried in the old burying-ground between Maryport and Broughton (still belonging to "Friends" and planted with trees), known by the name of "the Sepulchre."

Jane Pearson and her sisters continued to live here, inheriting, in common with some other member or members of the family, the land left by Peter.

Some time after the death of the latter, a neighbour, who, whether sailor or not I cannot say, had been over sea and did not know of Peter Pearson's death, landing at Maryport, set off to walk home to Broughton, some four miles or less.

It was a moonlight night, and on passing a gate between the Sepulchre and Broughton, the man saw Peter Pearson standing by the gate, exactly as he had often done. He felt, of course, no surprise, but made some remark to him, on which Peter Pearson said, "Wilt thou tell my sister Jane I wish to speak to her here, and I wish her to come immediately?"

I suppose it would be about fifteen minutes' walk from the village. The man went on, and gave the message, which was received with astonishment, but with no fear, by the intrepid Jane, who had already retired to bed. She merely replied, "Very well," dressed herself and went to the place indicated and remained some time, to the surprise of her family, who, however, do not seem to have questioned her much. They were probably accustomed to receive Jane's movements as right, without reason asked or given.

A short time afterwards a field was sold by Jane, and a sum of money paid by her to the person from whom her brother had bought the field, without further explanation than that it was owing to him. But she had not known this till the night in question.

It was said by her family that "Jane returned home in a very solemn and weighty spirit," but gave them no explanation or account of what she had seen or heard, only that she "believed it was right for her" to act as she did about the field.

This was told to me as a child by an aunt of my own on passing said Sepulchre—not as a wonderful story, but as a simple and undoubted fact, and as such I heard it, and believed it. . . . I never heard the story again that I remember, and never asked any questions about it, but was greatly impressed with it, and am sure that this was what I heard, and as I heard it.

NUMBERS OF "LIGHT" WANTED.—To complete sets we require a few numbers, as follow: No. 105 for January 6th, 1883; No. 106 for January 13th, and No. 128 for June 16th, 1883. Full price will be given for any copies sent to our office.

CELESTIAL WISDOM.—"Confide to God that thou hast from Him! Oh, thou soul weary of wandering! Confide to the Truth that which is from the Truth within thee, and thou shalt lose nothing; and thou shalt again blossom forth from thy blight, and shalt become healed of all thine infirmities, and that which thou hast lost shall be compensated to thee and renewed; and shall no more remove from thee, but shall perpetually remain and continue with thee, as God perpetually is; and remains."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

TEMPORARY OFFICES OF "LIGHT,"

38, GREAT RUSSELL STREET,

BLOOMSBURY, W.C.

(Entrance in Woburn Street.)

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.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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Light :

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND, 1883.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor of "LIGHT" will esteem it a favour if readers and subscribers will make a point of introducing this journal to the notice of those who are interested in the subject discussed herein from week to week.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE C.A.S.

In order to avoid misconception and to correct the erroneous statement recently made by a contemporary that the C. A. S. had closed its doors, we think it well to put the more salient facts before our readers.

The announcement which appeared in the *Herald of Progress* that "the support is insufficient to maintain it (the C. A. S.) any longer" is quite unwarranted, and partakes more of the nature of gossip, than that of sober fact. It is quite true, we believe, that the Council of the C. A. S. find themselves just now in pecuniary embarrassments, from the fact that a good many members, on whose subscriptions the Council felt themselves justified in relying, have failed to keep their engagements; but this difficulty will no doubt be surmounted. The present position of the C. A. S., however much it is to be regretted, is doubtless the necessary out come of the transition state through which public Spiritualism in this country has passed during the last few years, and there can, we think, be little doubt that the work of the C. A. S. on the old lines is complete, and that to serve the present and future requirements of the movement, a somewhat different line of action is needed to that which has obtained in the past. None recognise this fact more thoroughly, nor are any more alive to the vital necessity of a change of action, than the present Council of the C. A. S., and, we need hardly add, they are thoroughly determined to conform their methods to the new state of things, and do all in their power to make the Association a still greater power in influencing public opinion than has ever been the case. The best work of the C. A. S. has been done very quietly. Yet its influence has probably, for that very reason, been the more marked, and we have little doubt, that under favourable auspices, and a wise modification of

method, it will still be able to present a good record of its work to the friends of the movement.

It must also be remembered that from the onset the C. A. S. has had to contend with adverse influences, such as do not, except in very rare instances, beset other organisations of the kind. From the first, the Executive had to reckon with petty jealousies and needless opposition; and even now, late in the day as it is, we hear of attempts about to be made still further to divide the public forces of Spiritualism, by the proposed establishment of other reading rooms and a library, in the immediate vicinity of the C. A. S. premises.

This we look upon as not only unwise, but very unfair. Unwise in that the C. A. S. has attained a position and possesses a library, which any new organisation could not hope to attain or possess for many years to come, and the only outcome of any present effort, independent of the C. A. S., would be somewhat to drain that Association without producing any corresponding benefit; and it is unfair, seeing that it hampers the Executive of the C. A. S. at a time when they are using their best energies to meet the wants of the public.

Surely no new effort in this direction is necessary until the C. A. S. closes its doors for good, or has proved incapable of meeting the public needs.

Briefly and plainly then, the C. A. S. has not shut its doors through the support being insufficient. The rooms have only been closed, as is usual, during the vacation of the secretary, and at a time of year when very few Spiritualists are in London and when the number of calls made at the rooms are reduced to a minimum. Long before the winter's work commences, however, the rooms will again be opened, and we hope that under new auspices the C. A. S. will shew that it has still work in plenty to accomplish.

The foregoing is written on our own responsibility, but we thought it best in the absence of the secretary to make some such explanation with the view of preventing as far as possible any misapprehension.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

For some time past we have increasingly felt the arduous nature of the task we have assumed in the direction of a paper like "LIGHT." Undertaken, as it was, as a labour of love, and as a not altogether unimportant tax upon time and leisure which would otherwise have been devoted to relaxation from the cares and anxiety of business life, our duties are by no means lightened by the receipt of communications of extraordinary length. It is very perplexing to us to have to deal with them at all. They are, no doubt, in many cases, of sterling value, and the subjects on which they treat of absorbing interest to a few of our readers. The majority of these, however, complain (we think, with some show of reason) that special subjects are often allowed to monopolise too large a proportion of the space at our command. There is no doubt that this question of the length of contributions requires consideration; and, holding as we do, that an author can divide what he has to say, so as to complete any one branch of his subject in from two to two and a-half columns, we hope all concerned will take it in good part when we say that for the future we must absolutely decline even to consider the suitability of any communication for these pages, if it exceeds the stipulated length. By taking a little trouble, an author can, as a rule, very easily split his subject up into two or more sections, and make each of them complete in itself. In these circumstances, we think we may fairly ask for the co-operation of our contributors and correspondents, resulting, we hope, in mutual advantage, and certainly in our personal appreciation of any consideration shewn in this direction.

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.—A special meeting of the Council of the C.A.S. will be held on Tuesday evening next, at 6.30 p.m. The business is urgent, and it is earnestly hoped that members of the Council will make a point of attending.

A UNIVERSITY INVESTIGATION.

A letter of interest has been addressed to the *Revue Spirite* (August) by Prince D. K. It is here condensed:—

A work has just appeared here in St. Petersburg, in the Russian language, by M. Aksakoff, well known as editor of the spiritual review, *Psychische Studien*, published at Leipzig. It is entitled "Scheming Unmasked: A History of the Investigation into Mediumistic Phenomena by the Physical Society of the University of St. Petersburg."

Certain members of the University formed a Society for Psychical Research. On the motion of M. Mendelef, the Professor of Chemistry, this Society appointed a committee in the early part of 1875 to investigate and report upon the alleged physical facts of Spiritualism. The committee consisted of twelve professors of the University, M. Mendelef being president, and, prominent among them, the professors of physics and mechanics.

Messrs. Aksakoff, Boutlerof, and Wagner, as recognised Spiritualists, were invited to join the committee, as members, and this they consented to, in the hope of giving practical direction to its work. The protocol of the committee, thus constituted, unanimously agreed to May, 1875, had three articles: 1st, that the committee should hold forty sêances within the ensuing twelve months, and that the results should then be discussed and reported upon; 2nd, that copies of all notices, programmes, and minutes of business should be furnished to every member of the committee; 3rd, that each member should have the right to deliver his opinion before the drawing up of the report.

In order that the committee might enter upon its work intelligently M. Aksakoff furnished it with the standard books upon Spiritualism, and then, at his own charge, visited England and Germany to engage suitable mediums. At the recommendation of Mr. William Crookes and others he secured the attendance of three excellent mediums, the brothers Messrs. P. and Mr. C.

With Messrs. P. the committee held four sêances, in November; and in June following, four with Mr. C.

The animus of the committee soon revealed itself by its withholding copies of notices, programmes of business and minutes, from its three Spiritualist members. Finally in violation of its protocol, it abruptly closed the investigation after the above mentioned eight sêances.

After the four sêances with the Messrs. P., namely in December, 1875, Professor Mendelef gave a public lecture in which he anticipated the committee's report. His lecture, in matter and manner, afforded a strong instance of the bad feeling and bad faith animating some men of science in approaching spiritual phenomena.

Then, after the sêance with Mr. C., namely in March, 1876, the committee anticipated by two months the time fixed by its protocol, and ignoring their fellow-members, Messrs. Aksakoff, Boutlerof and Wagner, signed the fallacious report which appeared in the *Golos*, No. 85.

Those of our public who had looked forward to a real investigation were indignant, and protested against the report. Their protest was signed by 130 persons of recognised position, and was published in St. Petersburg, in the *Moniteur*.

To this Professor Mendelef replied by a coarsely-written pamphlet, in which he said that he thought the subject unworthy of investigation, and that Spiritualists were imbeciles, and mediums charlatans.*

A review of the whole proceedings was then written by M. Aksakoff, the result being the present volume, the publication of which has been delayed by circumstances

beyond his control. He shews, with documents in hand, that Professor Mendelef exhibited throughout as much want of real science as of good faith, and that the committee's report was a tissue of misrepresentation.

M. Aksakoff makes his criticism the occasion of stating the case of spiritual manifestations in general, and the conditions for studying them. Without advancing any theory, he finally states the conclusions to be rationally drawn from them. Altogether, his book is a valuable contribution to our literature.

HAUNTED HOUSES IN HUNGARY.*

Kornel Albranyi, complaining of the superstition of the Hungarians, says that not only our country folk, to whom all things in nature are mysterious; not only that part of our aristocracy who withdraw from the busy world, and bury themselves in their ancient castles, but many even of those who take part in public life and in learned movements, standing on the height of modern science, clothed with its distinctions, and filling high offices of state, are inclined to mysticism, and in private and family circles recount superstitions and incredible stories. And they do this with such positiveness, such definiteness as to persons and dates, that an unbeliever will rather smile in silence than dispute with the assertors. Of those cases in which these particulars are given, and living persons play a part, the following are repeated by the writer above named:—†

On one of the immense Slavonian estates of Baron P. is an old castle, which, of all his houses, has the finest park and is the most splendidly situated and furnished. Nevertheless, it was for a very long time uninhabited. Even the household servants were withdrawn from it. In the year 185—Lieut.-Colonel W., being in the neighbourhood, was much surprised at the desertion of the rich and noble castle. On asking the cause he was told that the castle was under a curse, and was haunted nightly by a ghost. The officer laughed, but having then no leisure to remain, travelled on. Some time after he met Baron P., and the conversation turned on the haunted castle.

The Baron confirmed the statements made, and said that he could do so from his own experience. He described the mysterious noise which every night filled the large halls, and said that nothing would induce him to pass another night in that castle. The Lieut.-Colonel was a bold soldier, and declared that if he found himself again in the neighbourhood he would spend a night all alone in the house. He asked concerning the traditions connected with it. But those which Baron P. mentioned to him suggested no explanation of the haunting. No drama, still less any tragedy, not even an exciting episode, was among them.

The conversation naturally turned on other stories of ghosts and hauntings. For just at that time it so happened, or was said to have happened, that in a Bohemian castle of Prince Schwartzburg, three officers had undertaken an adventure similar to that proposed by our Lieut.-Colonel. They also would see the ghosts which caused nocturnal disturbances. They accordingly betook themselves to the castle, dining and remaining together until midnight. They then separated, each going to his room, and wishing one another good luck with the ghost. In the morning the servants sought the officers in their rooms, but found none of them there. After long search, one was discovered lying dead on the ground in the armoury; the second, huddled up in a dark corner of the corridor, was likewise dead. The third lay senseless on the further bank of the moat which surrounded the castle. He must have fallen down from the height of the second floor; yet his body shewed no trace of injury. He was brought back to life, but never more

NOTE BY TRANSLATOR.—When the brothers Petty returned, they told friends in London that this committee, excepting Messrs. A. B., and W., treated them evidently on the assumption that mediumship was a kind of trickery, and that the committee had to find it out. The brothers expressed their sense of relief from having to sit with a dozen men of this sort, by saying that if they had had the option of being shot, or continuing the sêances, they would have preferred the shooting.

* Translated from a transcript in "*Licht mehr Licht*," of September 2nd.

† "Kornel Albranyi im P. L." is the only reference given in the German newspaper. I do not know to what publication those letters refer.—TR.

recovered his senses. He was mad, and died soon afterwards. The names were given, which are well-known in the Bohemian nobility.

Lieut.-Colonel W. was not deterred by this horrible story. After some weeks he went into Slavonia and passed a night in the haunted castle. He had his bed made up in the great hall, in which the nightly disturbances were usually at their height.

He was in bed when they sought him on the following morning, asleep as if stunned, and his face shewed traces of what he had gone through during the night. But on awaking, he came at once to his senses, immediately asked for ink and paper, and wrote a letter to the proprietor of the castle. In this he said he had kept his word, had slept in the house, and that something had happened of which he could not give a clear account. One thing, however, he recollected,—that someone had said to him that in a certain recess in the chimney of a bedroom (a particular description here followed) a *skeleton* would be found in the wall. And if this skeleton was taken away, laid in a coffin, and buried with funeral rites, then would no ghost any longer trouble the castle.

On receipt of this letter, Baron P. at once set out for Slavonia, and made search according to the directions given. And all happened as indicated in Colonel W.'s letter. At the place described, the skeleton was found in the wall. It was placed in a coffin, consecrated, and buried. All was henceforth quiet at the castle, and Baron P. usually resides there with his family at this day.

Not less interesting is a second case, of which the Szabolcs county is the scene. On one of the estates of the L's, at Th——, stands the hereditary castle, where, about a hundred years ago, a predecessor of the family employed a certain foreign artist to paint a fresco in the great hall. The artist painted the living members of the family of L. in fantastic groups, and finally also himself. He laboured long at the fresco, and as he was making the last strokes, the scaffolding on which he had so long stood gave way under him, and he was killed immediately by his fall. Since then, the family of L. from generation to generation have heard the ghost going about in Th—— Castle during the midnight stillness; the steps resembling those of the fine, elegant shoes worn by the artist. Strangers sleeping in the house were awakened by a mysterious noise, and could not get to sleep again. And if the family went for a walk in the garden on a summer evening with their guests, it often happened that one of the latter pointed with surprise to the upper storey of the building, and asked, What figure is that? All would look up and see no one, and he who spoke would see the figure no longer. The footfalls at night are most frequent on the narrow wooden staircase leading to the upper storey. There were guests, and even members of the family, who could not believe but that the sounds were caused by living men or animals. The staircase was strewed day by day with the finest ashes, that the traces of the footsteps might be detected. They then watched for the next nightly sounds. These were repeated, and distinctly heard by the watchers, the steps advancing up the stairs and then going down again. Certainly it must be the footstep of a living man, and the marks would be left on the ashes. They went immediately with a candle to look, but the ashes were found undisturbed.—*Trautenauer Wochenblatt*, v. 13th August, 1883.

M. Adolphe Didier, who, with his brother Alexis, was so well-known years ago as a clairvoyant, and who has been an occasional correspondent to our pages, has, for family reasons, returned to his native country. During a residence among us of nearly forty years, he has acquired the respect and regard of all who knew him. He will be happy to receive old friends from England at his residence, 5, Rue du Mont Dore, Boulevard des Batignolles, Paris.

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.]

Christian Symbolism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It is as satisfactory as it is unusual to find a Catholic priest among your correspondents, because it supposes an amount of courage and independence which may lead to better things. But at the same time, it does not seem right to allow his startling assertions to go unchallenged.

In his first letter, he tries to prove the doctrine of Re-incarnation by the words of "Jeshua," (why not Jesus?) to Nicodemus. To do this he takes unwise liberties with the sacred text, substituting *fire* for "spirit," *flesh* for "water" and *physical facts* for "earthly things." Now earthly things are by no means necessarily physical facts, however well the phrase may sound for the writer's purpose. Spirit does not mean *fire*. "He shall baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Water is well known to be a symbol of truth, or purification, for it is by the truth that we are purified. But if he will turn to the first chapter of this Gospel, he will see that the children of God "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" or as St. Peter has it "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God." There is not then in these words to Nicodemus, a thought or suggestion of incarnation,—nothing could be more diametrically opposed to our Lord's teaching, who spoke of a *spiritual*, not a natural rebirth.

Nor is there any more evidence in the saying that "Elias is come already." The Baptist came, it is said, "in the spirit and power of Elias." If another reformer should arise in the spirit and power of Savonarola, it would be rather a far-fetched conclusion that it was Savonarola himself come down from Heaven! If the "Catholic Priest" can discover this dogma in the expression, "the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering;" or, that those who are raised from the dead "shall not die any more;" or, that such as are pillars in the temple of God shall "go no more out;" or, that the "dead are blessed who die in the Lord, because their works follow them;" or, in that it is said, "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, return, ye children of men,"—it is only another illustration of the well-known fact that anything may be proved from Scripture if only men apply their ingenuity thereto under the influence of a powerful preconception. Another instance of this is the bold assertion that Jesus taught that the wicked should go away into "after corrective punishment." He taught nothing of the sort, as every reader of the New Testament should know.

"The Protestant," says our friend, "may teach three Gods, but the Catholic Christian Church does not." To say so is a "monstrous injustice." I am afraid both Churches swim (or sink) in the same boat, because the former got its dogmas from the latter. The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds are accepted by the Catholic Church, are they not? In the latter we are told, "There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost." Here are three distinct Divine Persons. Now, in no intelligible sense can three persons exist in one individual, because a person is an individual. Three Divine Persons, then, must be three Gods; and, moreover, the people are taught to worship each distinctly and successively. And to say the Three Persons are One God, does not mend the matter: it only shews the absurdity and insincerity of such a saying coming after such a definition. It involves a contradiction in terms, and this Cardinal Newman acknowledges, while professing to believe it.

In the second letter "A Catholic Priest" tells us that "the Sacrifice of the Mass is not a bloody sacrifice, but a bloodless and pure oblation." What then becomes of the doctrine of Transubstantiation? The Church defines that the substance of bread and wine after consecration is changed into the real Body and Blood of Christ. Many a man and woman for denying this has received his death at the hands of the "Christian Catholic Church." If the definition is true, it is a bloody sacrifice. If the writer says it is false, he is doubtless right, but for all that he places himself in the position of those whom the Church calls heretics and enemies of God.

He speaks of those who at the Communion partake of the "body of God." What is meant by the body of God? He tells us—"i.e., the Divine substance, also the universe, the Church or Bride of God." Having partaken of and appropriated all these, he goes on to say, "And by the blood of God, i.e., the Divine Spirit manifested in form astral fluid which pervades all things, also the Divine Spouse who lifts up His Bride to union with Himself." Here we must remember that the poor laity are deprived of these advantages—they can have nothing to do with the "Divine Spirit" or the "Divine Spouse," for *the cup is denied to the laity!* Or does "A Catholic Priest" ignore the commands of the Church, and approve of Communion in both kinds? If so, I congratulate

Several important matters having been kept waiting for some weeks through the pressure on our space in connection with the correspondence on this subject, and that on "Esoteric Buddhism," we are reluctantly compelled to close it next week.

him sincerely, but all the same he lays himself open to the anathema pronounced against heretics.

Most Spiritualists, who are Protestants, and most Englishmen, who also delight to call themselves by this name, will look upon the Reformation as the emancipation of the human mind from a thralldom which made progress impossible. On the other hand, our friend informs us that "at the so-called Reformation the spiritual was cast out for the material" (we have always thought that the material was cast out that the spiritual might have free play); "the invocation of the departed, for the glorification of heroes; the intercession of Maria, for the supremacy of the devil." Since neither the "invocation of the departed," nor the "intercession of Maria" are matters of revelation, their abolition is a subject of thankfulness. But that the devil rules supreme over Protestants, we knew by infallible authority long ago! S. C.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have read with interest the letters in your journal on Christian Symbolism, signed "A Catholic Priest." His views and explanations are ingenious, and may commend themselves to certain minds. But let your readers beware of accepting them as "the true doctrine, the mystic truth contained in the rites and ceremonies of the Christian Sacrifice, &c." These words have an authoritative ring, and might even be construed as containing a tacit accusation of dishonesty on the part of other accredited teachers of the Catholic Church, especially when taken in connection with the phrase, "which I fear they (your readers) will not be able to find thus elucidated in any book at present."

As an individual opinion, expressed as such, your correspondent's idea of the signification of the rites of the Holy Mass is interesting; but from the attitude he has taken up I think with "E. M.," though probably with far different feelings, that the prophecy "he will no longer be able to sign himself 'A Catholic Priest,'" will soon be realised.

No thinking Catholic can doubt that the Mass is full of mystery; but also, no true child of the Church will dispute that the way to the comprehension of that and of all the mysteries of the religious life is through the regeneration of the heart and life rather than through the subtleties of the intellect. Humility, self-abnegation, contempt of the world and its honours, love of the Cross and of the Crucified, penance, mortification, and true charity, these are the thorny paths by which Holy Church guides her children if they would enter into Life, and to such the Spirit gives teachings which cannot be uttered; the results only are to be seen in their lives and in their works. Were this not so, and were the learned only able to know the true doctrine, where would be the poor, the humble, the lowly-minded, and the ignorant (as the world counts wisdom), whom the Church gathers in ever-increasing numbers, and with such motherly tenderness, to her bosom, and whom Jesus Christ has declared to be "blessed"?

The tone of "A Catholic Priest" might lead some to believe that the truth is being kept back from all but a favoured few, and that he is now making it known for the first time; whereas it is only his own interpretation of certain ceremonies which he has put forward with so much show of authority.

K.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The letters of "A Catholic Priest" perplex me. The signature, taken in its natural sense as ordinary readers will take it, implies that the writer is a priest of that Church which exclusively calls itself Catholic, and which is presided over by the Pope. If this be so, the sentiments contained in the letters are very noteworthy, and are likely to expose the "Catholic Priest" to authoritative censure. If, however, he owes no obedience to Rome, the signature is misleading, and calculated to give readers a false estimate of what he says.

A PERPLEXED READER.

Pantheism versus Theism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—*"M. A. (Oxon.)"* occupies so prominent a position in the sphere of Spiritualism, and especially before the readers of "LIGHT," that we are naturally anxious to ascertain his exact opinions. Or if his opinions on the primal question of all are rather hazy and ill-defined—if he seems tracing a zigzag path, and returning on ground which we thought he had abandoned, still we desire to know that fact. However the case may be, it is comforting to feel assured that his honesty is sterling—he is true as the day; but if his mind is wavering, his language, to be true, must be wavering also. And such it seems to me to be on the question of the Personality of God. He gave at least a partial adhesion to the views contained in a letter of mine which seems remembered, but now he takes up quite different ground, and to my surprise coolly assumes that the Personality of God means His figure and outward similarity to the human form. It was the purpose of my letter, to which he seemed to assent, to eliminate that topic altogether as one utterly beyond the reach of the human faculties, and to concentrate attention exclusively on the indications of Thought, Purpose, Will in the universe, as proving that God is an *Ego*, or in other words, a Person.

Yet *"M. A. (Oxon.)"* now quietly assumes the exact contrary, without producing a single argument to shew that per-

sonality consists solely in the outward form and organisation. We do not so use the term in regard to ourselves. When we speak of Prince Bismarck as "a great personality" we surely do not refer to the height of his stature, but to his great intelligence, his over-mastering spirit, his tenacity of purpose, his commanding will. Nor do we blunt the force of the argument for design, and purpose, and goodness in creation by asking "What is the mode of the Being of God?" His attributes beam forth no less resplendently, and impress our minds, though we are utterly bewildered in attempting a solution of this question. Our minds are not to be cheated out of their inmost convictions by propounding an insoluble problem of another kind. Our perception and belief of the fact is not to be made dependent on our comprehension of the means.

Our weekly Mentor now seems to revert to a "refined and spiritual Pantheism." But however "refined," and however "spiritual" Pantheism may be, the real question is—Is this Pantheism possessed of a Mind—Thought and Will? Moreover, how does our author define Pantheism? Is it, as the term seems to imply, "the sum of all that exists—of things evil as well as of things good"? Does it mean the indivisible units of all that exists? In my humble opinion it is a mere jargon which begin in confusion of thought, and can only end in utter bewilderment.

I hold with an able and profound American writer, that "the Divine Being and the Divine Personality are inseparable in thought. We do not know God first as simple existence by the evidences of His power and skill, but we know Him primarily and directly as a Person. The personality of man has its foundation in that of God, and is the ground of the relations ship and communion between them. It is only by postulating the Personality of God that we can have any knowledge of God, while it is only through the realisation of the personal element in man—that is, through the deeper knowledge of himself—that man comes to the knowledge of God. The more strongly the human personality is developed the more clearly is the Divine Personality apprehended. The ages in which the consciousness of God is strongest are not the darkest and most barbarous, but rather the most prosperous and enlightened."

Pantheism is only a bright name for Atheism: "hiding the grossness with fair ornament." G. D. HAUGHTON.

Christian Spiritualism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I cannot refrain from stating through your valuable columns, how I unhesitatingly and cordially endorse every word contained in your correspondent's letter ("*A. E. Major*") published in "LIGHT" of 1st inst.

I will not attempt to enlarge on your correspondent's views, but still I may be permitted to add my testimony, and state that I know by a long experience that all who appeal to our loving Heavenly Father for assistance and guidance, will surely receive it, provided the request is made with humility, in sincerity, and in truth.

"Ask, and ye shall receive, knock, and it shall be opened unto you," will be true to the end of time.

God is no respecter of persons: *all may come*; the highly educated and the ignorant, the poor equally with the rich of this world, the old and the young, have all the same blessed right of appeal to the Throne of Mercy.

In my humble opinion, one of the greatest errors of the present time is, that we are too prone to trust to our own personal strength and knowledge, and too ready to worship our noble selves instead of our Creator and the Author of all life. This error, I am afraid, is common amongst Spiritualists. I attribute this to the want of careful and serious examination by those who have been blessed with the heavenly knowledge of communion with the departed spirits, many forgetting the solemn advice, *try the spirits*, to know if they are from God.—Respectfully yours,

A JERSEY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST.

Jersey, 6th September, 1883.

Anæsthetics and Clairvoyance.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the last number of "LIGHT" "*M. A. (Oxon.)*" has some sensible remarks on "*Hibbert on Apparitions*" with especial reference to the experiences of Sir H. Davy with nitrous oxide, in which he felt as if "*nothing existed but thought.*"

In my "*Theosophy*"* and again in my pamphlet on Clairvoyance, I attempt to work out this idea, deriving my material from my own experience and from that of very many others when under the influence of anæsthetics.

The grand facts are that, when under the complete influence of anæsthetics the body is as dead, for you may cut it to pieces, without producing any pain, while at the same moment the mind seems to itself to be outside the body and revelling in the most ecstatic visions and delights.

I beg again to draw the attention of your readers to these great facts, because they seem to me to demonstrate the existence of the soul as a reasoning faculty, independent of fleshly organisation, and if so, they go to prove that the soul lives when the body is dead.

If this can be maintained, then the demonstration of the existence of the soul is as provable as the complex structure of

* Trubner.

physical compounds is provable by chemical analysis, and if so, then we have a psychology amenable to exact science.

It is true that many who take anesthetics have thereby no psychic experiences, but a large proportion have these experiences, and with an intensity of vision which reduces all organic vision to comparative blindness.

Those who have had such experiences know that the soul exists and that it is an immortal essence.

Probably, there are not fewer than 30,000 such anæsthetic experiences in the world yearly, and if medical men would tabulate these experiences the scientific results might soon transcend in importance all other discoveries known to man.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

Mr. Sinnett's reply to Mr. Kiddle.
To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Having been travelling about for the last few weeks, I only received "LIGHT" of September 1st, on my arrival here yesterday evening. I hasten to acknowledge the letter signed "Henry Kiddle," commenting on the practical identity of some passages in one of my adept teacher's letters, published in the *Occult World* with certain others in the report of Mr Kiddle's lecture. Original manuscripts to which I should wish to refer in connection with this matter are in London, and until I return thither at the end of this month, I can only say a few words on the subject. I now have heard of the alleged plagiarism for the first time. I have no recollection of having received the letter Mr. Kiddle appears to have addressed to me. If such a letter reached my office in India and escaped my attention while I was burdened with the immense correspondence I had to deal with there as editor of a daily newspaper, I must apologise to Mr. Kiddle for the oversight, and regret it on my own account, as it would have been much easier for me to have dealt with the question raised, while still in India, than it is here.

For the moment all I can say is that as printed in the *Occult World* (a copy of which I have just succeeded in obtaining here for reference), I notice that the passage referred to by Mr. Kiddle is introduced by my revered friend with the expression "Plato was right," which seems to point to some origin for the sentences immediately following, that may have lain behind both the letter and the lecture. To obtain a further explanation of the mystery from India will take time, but meanwhile I may point out that the path leading to acquaintanceship with the adepts, is always found strewn with provocations to distrust them; for reasons very fully detailed in my books: their policy at present is rather to ward off than to invite European confidence. We, who are keenly desirous of penetrating to a comprehension of their philosophy, must be prepared at every turn to find traps set for our suspicions; as regards the matter before us it seems to me, in any case, hardly worth being regarded as a trap. Scarcely anyone who has realised the grandeur and sufficient completeness of the esoteric teaching, as already disclosed in its broad outlines, will be inclined to take notice of the relatively trivial question now brought up. That might have claimed attention when the *Occult World* came out; it is rather out of date now, that those of us who held steadily to our purpose have, by disregarding incidents that seemed to repel confidence in the beginning, got beyond them so far that in the retrospect they look merely ridiculous.

Wiesbaden, September 15th.

A. P. SINNETT.

The Late Mr. C. F. Varley and His Contemporaries.
To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to the obituary notice in your paper of the late Mr. Cromwell Varley. While according all honour due to the illustrious dead, it is just to avoid even indirectly denying any of that which belongs to the living; and for this reason I beg your leave to correct the account given by your writer of Mr. Varley's connection with the Atlantic telegraph,—an account which would mislead all but the best-informed of your readers.

The first Atlantic cable was successfully laid on the 5th of August, 1858. It was one of the most arduous engineering tasks of modern times; and my father, Sir Charles (then Mr.) Bright, received the honour of knighthood chiefly as having been the engineer in charge of it. He was assisted by Mr. Canning (since Sir Samuel), Mr. Henry Clifford, Mr. Woodhouse, and Mr. Everett. The chief electrician was Dr. Whitehouse, and the manager the well-known American, Mr. Cyrus Field. This cable subsequently failed through defects in the manufacture—a matter over which those in charge had no control. In the *Illustrated London News* of the 4th of September, 1858, and other contemporary journals, full descriptions of this earliest Atlantic cable will be found.

As telegraphic engineering developed itself, particularly in the departments of paying-out machines and of insulation, the difficulties of laying and maintaining subsequent cables have been greatly diminished. In these improvements, the late Mr. Cromwell Varley took a considerable share, I believe. The notices of him which have as yet been published certainly cannot be said to err on the side of too great fulness or too great praise for his varied and indefatigable researches, and of the useful part which he has played in electrical science.—I am, sir, yours obediently,

September 6th.

J. BRAILSFORD BRIGHT.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

MR. GERALD MASSEY'S LECTURES.

Mr. Gerald Massey gave the second lecture of his course on Sunday in St. George's Hall to a large audience, his subject being "The Non-Historic Nature of the Fall of Man, and what it meant as Astronomical Mythos and Physiological Fable." The lecturer remarked that it is important to note that primitive man did not begin by personifying the elements in his own likeness. His process was one of objective comparison. He represented one mode of force by its equivalent in living form. The howling darkness by the black jackal, storm-wind by the angry blowing ape, the lightning bolt by the serpent's sting, the water flood by the hippopotamus, and thus the elementary gods were zootypes, the living zootypes of the most ancient totemic heraldry. Seven of these were continued as chronotypes, or tellers of time, and starry stations were assigned to them as intelligencies to men. In Egypt the eight great gods are described as those who once dwelt on the summit of Am-Smen, and as Am means a residence in a paradise, this was literally the paradise of the eight great gods on the summit, one form of which was the Mount Meru. From this summit fell the seven, in consequence of their failure in keeping time. Whatsoever figures had been made out of the constellations would begin to lose shape in the course of Precession. The Mount of the Seven Steps would gradually sink and be submerged in the celestial waters. Hence the myth of the mount that disappeared at the time of the Deluge, with Eden on its summit. Hence also the Fall of the Seven (who failed to keep time) in the various forms of the mythos. The Fall of the Seven preceded that of the primal pair, who were traced by the lecturer to the great bear and dragon, and were shewn on the Assyrian monuments as male and female, sitting one on either side of the typical tree of seven branches. Mythology makes no pretence to a primal human pair or a first man. The mythmakers were shewn at work as primitive but perfectly sound biologists in expounding the natural origins of the race, not of the individual first man. The lecturer argued that every current superstition and fetisitic belief had a natural origin and a true interpretation once; but it is only by tracing their genesis and development that it is possible to combat and overthrow false versions. The true nature of the physiological fable and its version of the human fall was known to the earlier teachers of the hidden wisdom. This crops up in books like the Apocrypha. In these it is declared that error and darkness had their beginning together with sinners, but through wisdom (or the learning to know better) the ways of them which lived on the earth were reformed, and mankind were brought out of their fall and saved through wisdom. Such was the doctrine taught by the Gnostics.—The discourse occupied upwards of an hour and a-half in delivery, and was frequently applauded. The third lecture of the course will be given at the same time and place next Sunday.—*Echo*.

ROCHDALE.

On Sunday, September 16th, Mrs. Groom, of Birmingham, occupied the platform of the Rochdale Spiritualist Society, both afternoon and evening, Mr. Peter Lee presiding. The room was full to overflowing on both occasions. The choice of a set subject or of a series of questions was left to the audience. The latter course was adopted, and Mrs. Groom's controls dealt with the whole in a concise and very pleasing fashion. The evening subject was, "Does Spiritualism meet the requirements of the age?" Mrs. Groom's controls of course replied in the affirmative. The religions of the past had failed; they were being weighed in the balance and found wanting, and the spiritual philosophy was fully calculated to meet the varied wants of humanity. There was abundant proof that there was a want of humanity unsatisfied, and this need could alone be supplied by the teachings of Spiritualism. None of the Churches had utilised the spirit power which they held had been amongst them; in fact, they rejected truths on which their fabrics rested. The creeds and dogmas of the Churches had failed to cope with the materialism of the age. Materialism asks whether there be a God which smiles at one nation and curses another when asked to do so. This idea was not suitable for thinking minds. The crimes done in the name of Christianity were severely noted, particularly that of hanging men for murder. It was affirmed no assassin could go direct to Heaven from the hangman's noose but must descend to the lowest spheres and there remain till he had "paid the uttermost farthing." In the after life, sometimes the murderer incited spirits in human form to do similar deeds. Spiritualism taught that we should not hang these men, it being argued that if we made them fit to die before execution they were fit to live. Spiritualism proved there is no death, that man lives for ever and is destined to progress. Creeds and dogmas did not do this; consequently, the spiritual philosophy was right, and creeds and dogmas were wrong. After each discourse Mrs. Groom gave excellent impromptu poems on words chosen by the audience and which were highly appreciated. In addition to these she gave several clairvoyant tests, all of which were recognised. The most remarkable was a test to a widow, whose husband's dying words were quoted, and acknowledged. Mrs. Groom's visit, ranks among the most important incidents of Spiritualism in Rochdale, and the best evidences of the interest taken in the subject are the large and intelligent audiences which went to hear her and testified their satisfaction by liberal giving to the collections.

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