

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.)"

I took occasion, last week, to note some very suggestive remarks of Hudson Tuttle's on the subject of "Trance-mediumship." The current number of the *Harbinger of Light*, just received from Melbourne, contains a letter from him on the general subject of mediumship. The Spiritualists of Australia are craving, it seems, for some good and well-known medium, through whom they may be pretty sure of "seeing something." Mr. Tuttle advises them "not to wait for the coming of some remarkable personages. They may not come, and should they, the chances are you will be disappointed." He has "watched with great interest the effects of public mediumship, and has contrasted it with that of home growth." "I am," he says, "in favour of the latter. While public mediumship has its place, and has accomplished a great work, I think the home circle is the more appropriate place for satisfactory investigation." It must be so in the nature of things. The conditions of mediumship are most delicate. Every form of psychic influence present in the circle is filtered through the medium; and it is not to be expected that the full delicacy of sensitiveness should be preserved after prolonged association with the mixed influences that pervade a public circle. The wonder is, not that the fine edge of sensitiveness is dulled, but rather that it does not become utterly unserviceable.

Hudson Tuttle is perhaps a little over-sanguine in saying that "it would be difficult to select six or eight persons, without securing at least one whose sensitiveness would develop into noteworthy mediumship." I should have put the proportion at a much lower rate. But there can be no doubt in the mind of an experienced investigator that for the observation of what are called (rather disparagingly, perhaps, to those other phenomena on which, as a secure foundation, the fabric of Spiritualism is based)—for the observation of the higher phenomena the home circle is the place. The conditions are more favourable for the delicate little bits of evidence of the presence of those whom we have known, and whose ways we are familiar with, than the publicity of the mixed circle. And it is these little undesignated touches which come home to the observer with a conviction that no manifestation of power, however awe-inspiring, could rival. Not though the house were shaken, as of old, with a power incalculable and full of terror, is the

inquirer so impressed as by the sound in his ear of that old familiar name known only to himself and to some who have gone before. A searching criticism may detect in the evidence so given a flaw that spoils its full completeness; but, so long as the human heart is what it is, those voices from a buried past will come home with a force and completeness that is all their own. And, though I am far from denying that these bits of evidence are got in public, it is in the privacy of the home circle that they find their appropriate place.

But this is, perhaps, not exactly all that our Australian friends want. There are in the world a number of sceptical folk whom their friends want to convert. The desire, if natural, is mistaken; but it exists. The mental attitude of such is not favourable to the delicate evidence I have been discussing. A powerful physical medium, through whose psychical powers some demonstration of a force and intelligence can be given, is more to the point. They do not want, they will not take the pains to meet and wait for, what is required. So it comes to pass that a fully developed medium, who can usually be depended on to get such evidence, is sought for. This, too, is what a Society wants: though for my own part I think that such a Society as our own for Psychical Research might well experiment in both directions. It might secure a physical medium and conduct with him such an exhaustive course of experiment as it has already done in thought-transference and mesmerism. And such a course should be long and thorough, or it will fail of its full value. If, alongside of this, a home circle could be formed of those who can give time and can meet regularly, and who are not bent merely on exploding what they have conceived to be a fallacy or a fraud, I should expect results in both directions. But patience and time are needed, and most of us are scarce of both.

The *Theosophist* contains a long, very acrimonious, and quite unconstructive article on the *St. James's Gazette* review of "Esoteric Buddhism." The writer of that article says that I "greeted it with open arms"; that it "received a ready hospitality" in "LIGHT"; that I "hold out a threat on behalf of Dr. Rhys Davids of bringing forth 'his own private resources of Buddhism'"; with much more of the same sort of stuff. I should not for a moment think it worth while to make reply to what is mere petulance beyond reach of any argument, but the writer by implication, if not directly, accuses me of "traducing," and generally (for the language is not very precise or coherent) of maligning, Theosophy. I have done nothing of the kind. A slight exercise of memory would, I should have thought, suffice to recall many occasions when I have shewn anxiety to gain a fair recognition and hearing for claims that I did not fully accept. As for my poor note on the clumsy badinage of the *St. James's Gazette*, it has evidently been taken seriously, with no idea that I was poking fun at the critic and not at the Theosophists. But these are very uninteresting matters, and I notice them only to repel an imputation that I assuredly have not deserved. I cannot but regret, too, that in re-producing the protest of Theosophists, which was addressed to this journal, the editor should have appended a remark so uncalled for as this: "It remains to be seen whether 'LIGHT' will have the fairness

to publish the above protest." Such flings and such language as is contained in the article under notice will be best ignored for the future.

Mr. Lillie's "Popular Life of Buddha" is, in effect, an attack on Dr. Rhys Davids, whom Mr. Lillie rather unkindly describes as "a very hard-working Pali scholar. . . but a confused and untrained thinker." There will be war in Heaven over that very frank utterance. For Dr. Rhys Davids is of the elect, and the mantle of the *Saturday Review* enshrouds him. Mr. Lillie says that Dr. Rhys-Davids says—which is a little second-hand in the way of information:—

1. Buddha preached Atheism.
2. He denied the immortality of the soul.
3. He was a Materialist.

Furthermore he states that Cinghalese Buddhism is the primitive faith; and that about the date of the Christian era a spurious Buddhism arose "which proclaimed a belief in God." Against this somewhat pronounced programme, Mr. Lillie takes up his parable. He demolishes agnostic Buddhism, and makes light of Dr. Rhys Davids as a misguided Comtist. There can be no doubt that Dr. Rhys Davids colours with his own preconceptions what he reads. A man who finds in Buddhism, "Atheism, annihilation, and the non-existence of the soul," has brought with him what he discovers. This, I am aware, is the modern method. The ancients, so we are now taught, did not know their own minds. It is the business of the higher criticism to read into their works that which is lacking in them:—not a soul, for the higher criticism knows nothing of soul:—but that pure and elevating gospel of matter, not uncombined with fog, which is a familiar sign of the present times. According to Mr. Lillie, Dr. Rhys Davids is very successful in supplying fog. Mr. Lillie's book will command deserved attention.

Mr. Hiram E. Felch, who dates from 16, Brattle-square, Boston, U.S.A., records in a recent number of the *Banner of Light* some instances of materialisation, which are as striking as any that I have met with. The medium was Mrs. Ross, of Providence, R.I., the place was Lake Pleasant, and the date August 27th of this year. The light is declared to have been sufficient for exact observation. The medium sat in a small room separated by a curtain from that in which the circle, one of the members of which was Dr. Slade, was seated. After various figures had appeared, the narrative is thus continued:—

"The curtain was again drawn aside, revealing the form of a woman, and I was gratified to receive a request to approach it, when the spirit appeared to express satisfaction, and at once said, 'Oh! my dear, dear brother, you know me now,' and then repeatedly kissed me. The spirit again spoke, thanking me for acts in the past. It said, 'I have long desired to come; brother, you are—' and here the spirit seemed to lose power, but reaching back, touched the medium, which evidently renewed her strength, and continued—'you are loved by your spirit-friends. Father is here, and we send love to all.' This speech was given word by word, slowly, all the time the spirit having her arms around my neck, while I had my arm around her waist. The eyes of the spirit were bright, and the movements of the features natural. She referred to subjects known only to ourselves, and in every way endeavoured to impress upon me the reality of spirit-return. After assuring me of the love of my spirit-friends she slowly dematerialised, having her arms around my neck, while my arm was around her form—in a moment all was gone, leaving my arms empty. That this spirit was my sister, Sarah C. Dunbar, formerly of Winthrop-street, East Boston, I have no hesitation in asserting. She passed from earth some years ago, but never, before this occasion, had she been able to fully shew herself, having often tried, and I have no doubt but that her spirit left her home in the 'better world' to banish all doubt from my mind, so that I

should never again question the immortality of the human soul."

The teaching of the Quietists has been lately revived among us by the publication of some extracts from "The Spiritual Guide" of Molinos,* with a preface by one who perhaps has more sympathy with them than any living man of mark—Mr. J. H. Shorthouse, author of "John Inglesant." Quietism, substantially identical with the doctrine of the great mediæval Mystics, dates back to the latter part of the seventeenth century, when Miguel Molinos proclaimed at Rome his central doctrine, so near akin to the chief doctrine of Buddhism, and was crushed by the Inquisition. His constant theme was the necessity for perfect internal repose, not as in itself the highest good, but as a necessary step to perfection. Therein he differed from the Eastern doctrine. He regarded the soul distracted by the turmoil of the world, concerned chiefly in battling with surrounding dangers and temptations, as incapacitated for real development and growth. In a state of calm alone does the soul become conscious of the spiritual power that directs the universe, and is filled with a holy joy as it enters into communion with them. This state is reached only by absolute abnegation of Self. Not only must the outward life be regulated in accordance with the principles of morality: but the inner and true life must be nurtured by meditation, and regulated by the sacrifice of every selfish wish or aim that could introduce a discordant element or even a disturbing influence into the presence-chamber, where perfect peace should reign. This rare state is the rest after conflict; the result of victory over temptation; the final triumph over obstacles placed designedly in the way by spirit-guides and instructors, lest arrogance, self-confidence, and pride make pure Quietism impossible. Mr. Shorthouse's preface sets forth his belief that Quietism as a doctrine is appropriate to an age which is witnessing an arrogant reign of Intellect, and a decay of Faith. The publication of the book, and its recommendation by a popular writer, is at any rate a sign among many of the quickening of the spiritual life, and of the more definite conception of spiritual things which this generation is also witnessing.

"M.A. (OXON.)"

MISS LOTTIE FOWLER.—This well-known medium leaves London for a short provincial tour on Tuesday next, after which she proceeds to America on family business. She goes first to Glasgow for three days, thence to Edinburgh, and then on to Newcastle. Friends in other places can obtain appointments by addressing her. Address up to Monday, the 3rd inst., to 60, Mount-street, Grosvenor-square, W.

MATERIALISM v. SPIRITUALISM.—One striking fact should have some weight with materialists. It is that while thousands of materialists, from the observation of facts, become Spiritualists, no Spiritualist, acquainted with these facts, has ever been converted to Materialism. What a man has seen, heard, and felt, he knows, and argument about its impossibility is useless.—*The Spiritual Record*.

WAS IT PROVIDENCE?—The following interesting extract is from a letter recently to hand from Mr. Bedford, a Staff-surveyor under the Queensland Government, to whom we had sent a parcel of Wesley's sermons on "Good Angels." Referring to this pamphlet, and the use he was making of it, he says:—"It was indirectly the means of saving my life. I received my mail while in the field at work, and had just finished perusing it, and was pondering over what Wesley said about spirits saving in many cases from sudden death by impressions, and was walking down the surveyed line towards where my men were felling a very large tree, when I was strongly impressed to step on one side. I disobeyed it for a few minutes, when it came so strongly on me again that I could not disregard it, and in stepping on one side the tree fell right where I was standing, grazing my heel as it fell. Another second I should have been crushed to death, and previously neither I nor my men had any idea the tree would fall my way, as it was leaning slightly the contrary direction." This is what would ordinarily be called a special interposition of Providence, but we Spiritualists know that Providence works by deputy, and that the agents in such instances as this are disembodied spirits.—*Harbinger of Light*.

* "The Popular Life of Buddha." May be obtained of the Psychological Press Association.

* "Golden Thoughts." Glasgow: David Bryce, 1883.

"WHO ARE OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES?"

A PATCHWORK FROM BÖHME.

III.

"We have shewn you already concerning the seven forms of the Centre of the Eternal Nature, where every form is a several well-spring of nature; in like manner out of every form, out of every well-spring, go forth *spirits*, according to the multiplicity of essences and properties, every one according to its kind." ("Threefold Life," chap. iv., par. 37.)

It is curious how absolutely blind we may be to the freight of a sentence for which we have no prepared ground: it may be read repeatedly and yet lodge no idea in the mind. This is particularly the case when we read writings so loaded with obscurities as Böhme's necessarily are (*could* the riddle of the universe, if it were explained to us, be solved in simple language?) I suppose I must have passed over these words "*Out of every form go forth spirits*," at least a dozen times before—only a year ago they suddenly lit up a labyrinth of puzzles for which I had never found a clue. But I had found and held fast the Scriptural sayings that caused these puzzles, and so when the light flashed in, there was proof of its being true light, ready at every point on which it fell. And just this is the advantage of the blind faith so often scornfully spoken of; it fixes words of revealed truth in the mind, and holds them there until intelligence can overtake belief: whereas if only what can be understood is retained, the measure of understanding is too likely to become the test of what we can believe to be true, and then the superstitions of ignorance stultify us more and more.

I read in the Bible of the enemies of the soul, of the powers of darkness, of spiritual wickedness in high places, and without any cavil, asked myself, How can God allow them to be powers? Why are they enemies? How did spiritual wickedness get into high places? and this tempting of the devil, even supposing that myriads of evil spirits form the enemy of mankind, how is it effected when, so far as self-consciousness goes, we are, for the most part, our own tempters? But having fully grasped Böhme's doctrine as to the soul of man being existent in the mutual interaction of the seven Spirits of Eternal Nature, having for the root of its *manifested* life the three first "tormentive forms" of that nature,—the fourth *fire* for its first essential life in nature; and the three last forms for the blissful evolution of that life, with a will acting in its fiery life free to allow either form or property of nature to elevate itself above the rest in its own abyss; free to "imagine into" either, to draw with all the magic magnetic strength of the will towards either,—then these few words, "*Out of every form go forth spirits*," explained to me more than I had ever hoped in this life to understand.

To say that a man has no worse enemy than himself, meaning by such words that he permits and indulges what is evil in himself, is therefore to utter a very foolish, ignorant, and cruelly misleading notion. For what *is* man? A being who consists as to *nature* [of his anti-naturing original I do not speak] of these seven forms of Eternal Nature, which extend through all created worlds and cause all manifestations of spiritual life: hence his own abyss of being is in a very mysterious but terrible sense contiguous to that of *all* others, and limitless in potentiality. What is more awful still, man made in the likeness of God has no equal in the spiritual world in this prerogative—he alone among all creatures is a denizen of what Böhme calls the three principles, *i.e.*, the dark world, the world of light, and the world of ultimated essences; (corrupt and mixed in the nature of our earth, but pure and glorious and truly substantial in the region from which our world of nature derives;) so that

spirits native to those three principles all desire the agency of man, for "all would be creaturely;" even, so Böhme tells, "the Deity hath had a longing to see the wonders of the Eternal Nature and of the innumerable essences in substance and in corporeal things. ("Threefold Life," chap. iv., par. 26.) All seek the agency of a being who can represent their dominant desire in ultimates.

In the commonest instincts of human nature this longing to realise internal life by external shews itself; witness the efforts of an angry person to get some one else into a rage; of rough strong men to promote a fight; of greedy or frivolous characters to further the gluttony and vanity which they cannot themselves indulge. Now in the dark world where true substance is impossible to attain, this eagerness for *embodied* representatives is presumably very strong.

In the seventh form of Eternal Nature, the substantiality, all the other forms find their completion and rest, and this, one may suppose, is one reason for the effort of the spirits in each principle or property to find ultimatum, *i.e.*, embodiment in man.

"The desire of the dark world is after the manifestation, viz., after the outward world, to attract and draw the same essentiality into it, and thereby to satisfy its wrathful hunger." ("Signatura Rerum," chap. ii., par. 35).

For every fire in the spiritual as well as in the material world needs substance to maintain its strength. Let us pause a moment to think what the will of an angry person is;—anger, that so common ripple on the surface of life's tremendous depths!—in connection with the following passage: "The Spirit of God worketh in love and anger. For it is the spirit of every life; it is in everything, like as the things will and property is; for one property receiveth another; what the soul willeth, that willeth also the same into which the soul turneth itself: it is all magical: whatsoever the will of a thing willeth, *that* it receiveth." ("Fifth of Great Six Points," chap. viii., pars. 48, 49.) Remembering also that "the original nature, first, and radical principle or constituent essence of the soul without the light of God is as mere a devil or infernal dragon as Lucifer himself is." ("An Epistle of J. Böhme's," par. 11.)

Any one meeting the eye of man or woman when wrath bursts into utterance, must have instinctive consciousness of this, little as the oppressive or agitating influences of rage are understood. And not only one dragon in human guise confronts us then,—not *one* bosom devil animates us when our wrath blazes out: in either case, a multitude of spirits who go forth from the well-spring of nature in the property of wrath, combine to emphasize the provocation and keep up the fire. This is quite as certain as that the least brawl in the street quickly attracts a circle of eagerly sympathising spectators; and, if we but knew what we were about when we allow an angry look or word or gesture to escape us, we should suppress the first movement of indignation as anxiously as we remove gunpowder from risks of accidental ignition.

"We have good and evil in us, into which we frame our willing, the essence thereof become stirring in us, and such a property we draw also from without into us."
"If we lead ourselves to the good, then God's Spirit helpeth us, but if we lead ourselves to evil, then God's fierce wrath and anger helpeth us; what we will, of that property we get a leader, and thereunto we lead ourselves. And yet it is not the Deity's will that we perish, but His *anger's* and *our will*."—("Fifth of Six Great Points," chap. viii., pars. 52 to 54.)

Mr. H. G. ATKINSON, writing from Boulogne-sur-Mer, says:—"LIGHT" seems to me to be the only good journal on the psychological side of Spiritualism—all that I care for. I find Spiritists here firm believers, quite tired of Spiritism. Spiritism is not Spiritualism, nor religion, nor poesy, nor elevating sentiment.

WONDERS.

From the Records of the "Wizard of the North."

(Continued from page 513.)

The Polter-Geist.

Thus were the Commissioners, two nights alone excepted, persistently harassed until they were finally driven out of their lodgings in the King's palace. Skipping the detail of the disturbances of the following ten nights, we give the culmination of the annoyance.

"October 30. So well they had past the night before, that this night they went to bed, confident and careless; until about twelve of the clock, something knocked at the door as with a smith's great hammer, but with such force as if it had cleft the door; then entered something like a bear, but seemed to swell more big, and walked about the room, and out of one room into the other, treading so heavily, as the floor had not been strong enough to bear it. When it came into the bed-chamber, it dashed against the beds' heads some kind of glass vessel, that broke in sundry pieces, and sometimes would take up those pieces, and hurl them about the room, and into the other room; and when it did not hurl the glass at their heads, it did strike upon the tables, as if many smiths, with their greatest hammers, had been laying on as upon an anvil; sometimes it thumped against the walls as if it would beat a hole through; then upon their heads, such stamping, as if the roof of the house were beating down upon their heads; and having done thus, during the space (as was conjectured) of two hours, it ceased and vanished, but with a more fierce shutting of the doors than at any time before. In the morning they found the pieces of glass about the room, and observed, that it was much differing from that glass brought in three nights before, this being of a much thicker substance, which several persons which came in carried away some pieces of. The Commissioners were in debate of lodging there no more; but all their business was not done, and some of them were so conceited as to believe, and to attribute the rest they enjoyed, the night before this lasts unto the massive bitch; wherefore, they resolved to get more company, and the massive bitch, and try another night.

"October 31. This night, the fires and lights prepared, the ordinary keeper and his bitch, with another man persuaded by him, they all took their beds and fell asleep. But about twelve at night, such rapping was on all sides of them, that it wakened all of them; as the doors did seem to open, the massive bitch fell fearfully a yelling, and presently ran fiercely into the bed to them in the truckle-bed; as the thing came by the table, it struck so fierce a blow on that, as that it made the frame to crack, then took the warming-pan from off the table, and stroke it against the walls with so much force as that it was beat flat together, lid and bottom. Now were they hit as they lay covered over head and ears within the bed-clothes. Captain Carelesse was taken a sound blow on the head with the shoulder-blade bone of a dead horse, (before they had been but thrown at, when they peeped up, and mist;) Browne had a shrewd blow on the leg with the backbone, and another on the head, and every one of them felt several blows of bones and stones through the bed-clothes, for now these things were thrown as from an angry hand that meant further mischief; the stones flew in at window as shot out of a gun, nor was the bursts less (as from without) than of a cannon, and all the windows broken down. Now as the hurling of the things did cease, and the thing walked up and down, Captain Cockaine and Hart cried out, In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, what are you? What would you have? What have we done that you disturb us thus? No voice replied. (as the Captains said, yet some of their servants have said otherwise,) and the noise ceased. Hereupon Captains Hart and Cockaine rose, who lay in the bed-chamber, renewed the fire and lights, and one great candle in a candlestick, they placed in the door, that might be seen by them in both the rooms. No sooner were they got to bed, but the noise arose on all sides more loud and hideous than at any time before, insomuch as (to use the Captains' own words) it returned and brought seven devils worse than itself; and presently they saw the candle and candlestick in the passage of the door, dashed up to the roof of the room, by a kick of the hinder parts of a horse, and after with the hoof trode out the snuff, and so dashed out the fire in the chimnies. As this was done, there fell, as from the ceiling, upon them in the truckle-beds such quantities of water, as if it had been poured out of buckets, which stunk worse than any earthly stink could make; and as this was in doing, something crept

under the high beds, tost them up to the roof of the house, with the Commissioners in them, until the testers of the beds were beaten down upon, and the bedsted-frames broke under them; and here some pause being made, they all, as if with one consent, started up and ran down the stairs until they came into the Council Hall, where two sat up a-brewing, but now were fallen asleep; those they scared much with wakening of them, having been much perplexed before with the strange noise, which commonly was taken by them abroad for thunder, sometimes for rumbling wind. Here the Captains and their company got fire and candle, and everyone carrying something of either, they returned into the Presence-Chamber, where some applied themselves to make the fire, whilst others fell to prayers, and having got some clothes about them, they spent the residue of the night in singing psalms and prayers; during which, no noise was in that room, but most hideously round about, as at some distance.

"It should have been told before, how that when Captain Hart first rose this night, (who lay in the bed-chamber next the fire,) he found their book of valuations crossed the embers smoking, which he snatched up and cast upon the table there, which the night before was left upon the table in the presence amongst their other papers; this book was in the morning found a handful burnt, and had burnt the table where it lay; Browne the clerk said, he would not for a 100 and £100 that it had been burnt a handful further.

"This night it happened that there were six cony stealers, who were come with their nets and ferrets to the cony-burrows by Rosamond's Well; but with the noise this night from the Mannor-house, they were so terrified, that like men distracted away they ran, and left their haies all ready pitched, ready up, and the ferrets in the cony-burrows.

"Now the Commissioners, more sensible of their danger, considered more seriously of their safety and agreed to go and confer with Mr. Hoffman, the minister of Wotton, (a man not of the meanest note for life or learning, by some esteemed more high,) to desire his advice, together with his company and prayers.

"But certain it is, that when they came to fetch him to go with them, Mr. Hoffman answered, that he would not lodge there one night for £500, and being asked to pray with them, he held up his hands and said, that he would not meddle upon any terms.

"Mr. Hoffman refusing to undertake the quarrel, the Commissioners caused all things to be removed into the chambers over the gate-house, where they staid but one night. This is well known, and certain, that the gate-keeper's wife was in so strange an agony in her bed, and in her bed-chamber such noise, (whilst her husband was above with the Commissioners,) that two maids in the next room to her, durst not venture to assist her. But affrighted ran out to call company, and their master, and found the woman (at their coming in) gasping for breath; and the next day said, that she saw and suffered that, which for all the world she would not be hired to again."

Scott himself believes that the Woodstock haunting was "a singular piece of phantasmagoria which was certainly played off upon the Commissioners of the Long Parliament conducted by means of the secret passages and recesses in the ancient labyrinth of Rosamond." He believes that in a tract, also much read at the time, entitled "*The Secret History of the Good Devil of Woodstock*," the true explanation of the mystery is to be found; that in short, the whole was a clever hoax played off by the author of the said tract, Joseph Collins, called "Funny Joe," who declares that under the name of Giles Sharp he had hired himself as a servant to the Commissioners. This tract Sir Walter, however, tells us that he himself had not been able to discover at the British Museum, although he, through "the kind assistance of the keepers, had recovered the two original pamphlets, which contain a full account of the phenomena at Woodstock in 1649," and which he has given *in extenso*.

The details of the Woodstock hauntings are in their character so entirely in accord with phenomena repeatedly recorded in well authenticated narratives of *Polter-geist* disturbances taking place in many lands and in various times, both ancient and modern, that the student of this strange class of phenomena may be permitted to pause before he accepts the proffered explanation of "Funny Joe" as the veritable one, or indeed before he is fully assured, of the existence of "Funny Joe" himself.

It may be worth a little trouble to the reader curious in such

matters, to compare the above narrative with some of the very strange histories of the *Polter-geist* disturbances, as collected by Mrs. Crowe in the *Night Side of Nature*, and by Howitt in the volumes of the *Spiritual Magazine*.

In the *Night Side of Nature*, by Mrs. Crowe, chapter xvi. *The Polter-geist of the Germans*, p. 127, Routledge's sixpenny edition, the most remarkable cases recorded are the so-called Stockwell Ghost, 1772. A mischievous ghost, at Bayswater, a haunting occurring at the time Mrs. Crowe wrote her book something earlier than 1848. A case at the house of a Mr. Chare, in Devonshire, 1810. The case of the celebrated Drummer of Tedworth, (in the seventeenth century). At Keppock, near Glasgow, 1670. At the house of Gilbert Cambell, at Glenluce. A terrible case at King-Croft, in Kirkcudbright, 1695. A place inhabited by an Evangelical Bishop called Schotterbeck, 1659. At Aix-la-Chapelle: case of a house quite uninhabitable on account of fearful disturbances. Extraordinary account quoted from Kerner from narrative communicated by Councillor Hahn, in 1828, of what occurred in the Castle of Slawenick belonging to Prince Hohenlohe in Silesia. Case occurring in a house rented in 1835, by a Captain Molesworth.

For facts given by Howitt in *Spiritual Magazine*, in vol. v. 1864, see extraordinary narrative translated from the German of expulsion from his paternal house of M. Joller, late member of the Swiss National Council, by a haunting of the *Polter-geist* character:—these disturbances, of a most persistent and annoying character, occurred at Stans, on the Lake of Lucerne, in 1860-62. Also vol. vi. (1865), contains three articles entitled *Throwing of Stones and other Substances*, collected from a variety of sources ancient and modern. Also p. 245 *Landahls Parting Tokens*. For *Polter-geister* in America refer to *Modern American Spiritualism*, by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, New York, 1870.

SPIRITUALISM IN GERMANY.

[Translated from "*Psychische Studien*" for November.]

"A correspondent from Böhrsdorf, near Wilsdruff, Berlin," says the *Leipzig Journal*, "writes concerning the continually spreading, and, in regard to Psychology, the thoroughly scandalous* Spiritualism. Every Monday almost, Spiritualistic sances are held at this place. The chief persons are a saddler and a smith. How little these people are to be convinced by palpable reasons of the futility of their proceedings, is evident from the following incident. At one of the sittings, a 'spirit' declared himself, through the medium, to be that of a German student who had been upon a journey. He gave an address as that of his mother at Berlin. To this they were to write that he could not return from his vacation tour in Italy, because he had been murdered. Thereupon, the saddler Beuthner sends accordingly to the address given by the 'spirit,' and of course the letter was returned through the post-office, the lady named having no existence.†

"The incident, however, got abroad in the village, and messieurs the spiritists have naturally been finely laughed at. Yet instead of giving up their nonsense, they explain 'that it was a mischievous spirit, that had led them astray! Enlightenment of the nineteenth century!' We may inform the enlightened reporter [adds *Psychische Studien*] that investigators of Spiritualism have long been seeking the solution of similar problems, but not with mere scorn of such serious experiences of the soul-life, whereby many indeed without deeper instruction are deceived."

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN'S FORTHCOMING BOOK.—A special notice to subscribers will be found in our advertisement columns.

BOOKS, PAPERS, &c., RECEIVED.—*All the Year Round*, Christmas part; *The Science Monthly*, December; *The Spiritual Record*, December; *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*; *The Banner of Light*; *The Herald of Progress*.

* "Why not also instructive"?—Ed. *Psychische Studien*.

† The editor of *Psychische Studien* refers in a note to a similar circumstance reported in that magazine, June and July 1874. An address at Dresden had been given by a supposed spirit through a celebrated American medium, and was found to be false. The editor points out that this experience is paralleled in dreams and somnambulism, and comments on the folly of making it merely the occasion for ridicule and unqualified denial, instead of recognising its psychological interest and significance.

"BEYOND THE SUNRISE."

Toward the close of a windy, wintry afternoon, in New York City, not a great while ago, two middle-aged women—friends they were, mediumistic withal—talked together as they often had before, about Spiritualism. They believed in the existence of the spirit-world, and doubted not that it is the inward, the really living world. In addition to their own spiritual experiences, they were familiar with Spiritualist literature, and were personally acquainted with many of the writers, speakers, mediums, and other prominent actors in the Modern Spiritualist movement. While they talked, and their hearts burned, it occurred to them that it might be a good plan, and yet better in the execution, to have Sunday evening receptions—reunions of friends, especially of those interested in Spiritualism, and that the relations there of personal experiences and of well-authenticated facts, would promote agreeable social intercourse, and develop spiritual and mental improvement. "You and I," said one to the other, "have had too many singular experiences not to know that there is a border-land, a mystic country, where matter ends and spirit begins; or rather, where both meet and mingle. We know that spirits, both in and out of the body, do convey impressions of intelligence and affection under favouring circumstances."

Certainly the plan was feasible: for Alice and Phoebe Cary, under no better circumstances, had often made their pleasant parlours the favourite resort, on Sunday evenings, of many a gifted genius, of poets and literary celebrities. In those gatherings the sisters had at times read their own poems before their emergence the next morning to the public eye through the columns of the *Tribune*. There Horace Greely had freely conversed on religion, politics, and reforms; and there at times had Charles H. Foster, with his senses delicately attuned to voices and impressions from the spirit-world, awakened wonder and reflection among visitors by his marvellous spirit proofs and "miracles."

The longer the New York ladies discussed their project the more promising it appeared. "We will begin this very evening," said one of them; "my old-fashioned square drawing-room is spacious—it will hold thirty people without being filled. We will invite our friends to come and see us, and hereafter on Sunday evenings, to them then and there we will open the shut doors of our inner lives, and find the entrance to others." With them to plan was to execute. Subsequently on Sunday evenings throughout that winter, came together in that old-fashioned parlour, warmed by a grate full of glowing coals, selected and discreet friends, among them Prof. Angus, Dr. Carolus, Mme. Honor; some there were whose real names are now famous and will live long in history; and there, in the quietude and confidence of innocence, truth and friendship, they interchanged thoughts, anecdotes and personal experiences in respect to earth-life and spirit-life, and the interblending of the two worlds. There, too, at times they were favoured with the conscious presence of invisible friends, spiritual beings, whose communion they desired. Certain of the stories and occurrences in that private New York conference, demonstrating

"There's a land that is fairer than day,"

the originators of those Sunday evening meetings have recently published in a handy volume. Though the real names of the parties in many of the narrations are not disclosed, yet the characters are so truthfully drawn, that not unlikely quite many readers will see through their *incognito* and rightly guess their identities. The authors assert that all the occurrences narrated in their book are strictly true. Some of them, especially the Professor's story of the midnight spiritual manifestation of his bride that was to be, and the mid-day fulfilment of it, after a terrible rail-road accident, which revealed the parties, each in *propria persona* to the other, are intensely interesting.

Doubtless a perusal of the volume will brighten up more or less clearly, according to the spiritual insight of the reader, the shrouded, silent pathway through which all earth's travellers must enter into spirit spheres. It illustrates the progress made by Bunyan's Pilgrim, as long ago he walked through the wilderness of this world. It discloses the track of the "Celestial Railroad" described by Hawthorne; the "Scenes in Another World" portrayed by George Wood, the "Undiscovered Country" sought for by Howells, and reveals glimpses caught by Miss Phelps through "Gates Ajar," yes, even "Beyond the Gates."

To many thoughtful minds and loving hearts, church-members and free thinkers, old and young, the observations of the two New York travellers, "Beyond the Sunrise," are adapted to afford confirmations not less strong than proof of Holy Writ, of the radiant shores, the beautiful cities, and the homes, bright and fair, which await multitudes of earth's pilgrims in the Summer-Land.—A. E. G., in *Banner of Light*.

* "Beyond the Sunrise. Observations by Two Travellers." New York. Can be obtained through the Psychological Press Association, 38, Great Russell-street.—(See also v.)

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 sances.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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

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 subjects discussed herein from week to week.

Light:

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st, 1883.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The general meeting of this Society was held at 11, Chandos-street, Cavendish-square, on the afternoon of November 22nd. The President, Professor Henry Sidgwick, opened the proceedings with a few remarks, in which he emphasised the importance of extending the area of experiments in Thought-transference, in order to multiply the number of persons of unblemished character which those who deny the genuineness of the phenomena must logically conclude to be "in the trick." Mr. F. W. H. Myers then congratulated the Society on the extension which had actually taken place, and which had shewn the faculties involved in Thought-transference to be much commoner than had been at first supposed; and he described in detail a series of experiments made by himself and Mr. E. Gurney, in conjunction with Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, J.P. of Liverpool, on the communication of tastes. These trials had the advantage that the knowledge of the impression to be communicated was confined to these three gentlemen, and the hypothesis of collusion by a code of signals was thus excluded. The experimenters used a great variety of substances, and in a large majority of cases the substance which one or other of them had in his mouth was correctly named or described by the "subject." Mr. Guthrie followed with an interesting account of the manner in which the experiments with these particular "subjects" had originated; and he exhibited a large number of diagrams which they had been enabled accurately to represent by a transference of the impression of the original from the mind or brain of the experimenter, without spoken word or contact of any sort. Many of these results had been obtained by Mr. Guthrie himself, others by some member of the Investigating Committee of the S.P.R., when experimenting alone with one of the "subjects," information by collusion being thus as effectually precluded as information through the ordinary sensory channels. Professor Balfour Stewart then pointed out how illogical is the rejection of these facts as *contradictory* of known biological

laws, they being clearly only an *extension* of science, such as has been again and again exemplified in its other branches. Finally Professor Barrett described some trials which shewed the extraordinary degree to which "muscle-reading" could be carried; and also recounted a long series of very careful experiments, strikingly exhibiting the power which a mesmerist can sometimes exercise over a "subject" by silent willing. Other papers were deferred for want of time.

AN EASY EXPERIMENT.

Through the kindness of Dr. Anna Kingsford, I have lately been made acquainted with some essays upon Dream, by Dr. Carl du Prel, a German author of philosophical and scientific repute. These writings appear to me of sufficient psychological value to call for an English translation, which I hope may result from a correspondence in which I am now engaged with the author. But my present object in writing to "LIGHT" is not to give a general account of Dr. du Prel's speculations, but to call attention to a fact which he cites from another author, which should, I think, as well as the hypothesis offered to explain it, be made the subject of an independent investigation by the Society for Psychical Research. As, moreover, the investigation is within the competence of anyone who has access to a sleeping child—I suppose it should be a child—it seems better to make the suggestion publicly that there may be the more experiments. The apprehension—not wholly unfounded—which is prevalent as to the effects of mesmerism has doubtless prevented the accumulation of results in thousands of private families, which would otherwise have contributed to popular acquaintance with that science. But the proposed experiment seems perfectly free from objection, while its success would soon establish a very important psycho-physiological fact, not, indeed, (as I shall shew) wholly new to scientific experience, but which is very far from being already recognised, still less appreciated.

Dr. du Prel quotes the experiment (from Dr. Arnold Wienholt's "Heilkraft des thierischen Magnetismus"), in confirmation of an hypothesis which has an important place in his speculations concerning dream. He believes that the greater part of man's individual being belongs to what, in relation to our psycho-physiological existence, must be called the unconscious. But the "threshold" of consciousness is not a fixed limit; in sleep and in some abnormal states it is pushed back, and by so much as this is the case is our horizon extended, and a larger portion of our total nature included within our realised individuality.

Then, also, we come into transcendental *rapproches* with the universal nature with which we are veritably one, and we attain also a measure of time whereby a vast experience may be transacted in what corresponds to a moment of physical existence. One consequence especially, and it is that to which I am now calling attention, results from the removal of the threshold. Not only our subjective life, but our sensibility to the finer impressions of external forces is restored—not given—by sleep. With the advance of the threshold during our "waking" life, this sensibility retreats behind it; that is to say, it is temporarily merged in the aptitude for grosser perceptions.

"According to physiological laws, weaker excitations are suppressed for consciousness by stronger ones. But let these coarser impressions of sense be interdicted by sleep, then will the finer susceptibilities of the organism revive. Thus Wienholt proved, by experiments upon his perfectly healthy children, while asleep, the existence of forces of nature which never make their impressions felt during waking life. He made passes over the face and down the neck of his son, fifteen years old, with an iron key, at the

distance of half-an-inch, without ever touching him. After a few such passes, the boy began to rub the place, and made uneasy movements. He, Wienholt, made similar experiments upon his younger children, with lead, zinc, gold, and other metals. In far the greater number of cases the children averted the parts of their bodies operated on, or rubbed them, or pulled the clothes over them. But the most remarkable impression resulted from approaching the metal to the ear." Dr. du Prel observes (in conformity with many facts which he elsewhere adduces) that doubtless Dr. Wienholt's children experienced dreams somehow corresponding to the sense-impressions made upon them; a supposition which could be tested by waking the child before the recollection could be lost. But the important fact to verify is the exalted sensibility. That might be accounted for either by supposing with Dr. du Prel a subtle force acting directly on the physical organism from the object perceived; or upon the hypothesis suggested some years ago by Dr. Richardson,* of a "nerve atmosphere," that is to say, extra-organic sensibility.

I said that the fact is not wholly unknown to men of science. In an article by Dr. Arthur Gamgee, F.R.S., in the *British Medical Journal*, October 12th, 1878, describing some experiments at Paris by Professor Charcot, it is said:—"But the most singular fact observed in connection with the cataleptic condition was the following. If, whilst deeply sleeping and cataleptic, anyone (*sic*) stealthily approached one of his fingers to within a short distance—about half an inch—of the patient's skin, as for example of the palm or back of the hand, she instantly awakened with a cry of 'Ah!' evincing by its tone evident mental anguish, if not actual physical pain."

I am not aware how the learned gentlemen who were present at Professor Charcot's experiments accounted for this fact, or whether they considered it of sufficient importance to call for further investigations.

C. C. M.

TRANSITION OF MRS. CROWELL.

From the last *Religio-Philosophical Journal* to hand we regret to learn of the departure to the higher life of the wife of Dr. Crowell, of Brooklyn. The transition was not altogether unexpected as will be seen from the following letter written by Dr. Crowell to Colonel Bundy, two days previous to the event:—

"DEAR COLONEL AND MRS. BUNDY,—My dear wife can now remain with us but a very few days at the most and may pass to the better land at any moment. She is unconscious and her life is fast ebbing away.

"Thanks to the assurance that our knowledge of spiritual truths brings us in this hour of trial and sadness, our affliction is deprived of its keenest pangs—those arising from doubts of the future. We know she is only going before us and that she very soon will return radiantly happy to assure us that her love has survived the ordeal of death.—Fraternally and sincerely,

"EUGENE CROWELL.

"Brooklyn, Nov. 2nd, 1883,"

The *Journal* remarks:—

"Dr. and Mrs. Crowell have passed a long and happy life together; they have the assurance that in death they will not be parted. While the solemn change of death is not to be lightly regarded, yet it need not be dreaded nor the departure unduly mourned."

It then concludes with the following words from Mr. S.C. Hall's tribute to his wife as contained in his "Retrospect of a Long Life," than which we ourselves can find nothing more suitable to close with. He (Mr. Hall) said:—

"In a word, I know that those who are called 'the dead' do not die; that they are merely removed from the earth-sphere into some other sphere—to one of the 'many mansions' of which our Lord emphatically speaks—the first, but not the only, removal; and that under certain conditions which, at present,

we cannot comprehend, much less control, the soul that has left earth can, and does, communicate with the soul that remains on earth.

"I add these lines from a small poem—'Hereafter':

'Change there will be, as flowers from branches burst;
But I shall see thee—as I see thee now;
Yet more resembling what thou wert, when first
I kissed thy smooth cheek and unwrinkled brow:

'As in the glory of thy early prime:
Through all thy earth-life: bright at every stage:
THE SOUL IS NEVER OLD: and knows not Time;
GOODNESS IS BEAUTIFUL AT ANY AGE.

'Together still: if one have earlier birth
In Paradise, divided, and yet near:
Though one in Heaven may wait for one on earth:
A guiding, guarding spirit: THERE AS HERE!"

ANOTHER "GONE BEFORE."

A warm and earnest Spiritualist has very recently left earth for Heaven—Colonel Joshua Brayn, of Highfield, in the island of Jersey.

About a year ago, he asked me to write for him a few lines such as his family might print on the "memoriam" card that would announce his departure. I *did* write the lines, of which I append a copy; and his family *have* printed them on a memorial card they sent me.

IN MEMORIAM.

"When a good man is called from earth,
To have, in Heaven, a second birth,
And hear the loving Master's voice:
Millions of brother-saints rejoice!

The "welcome" words we also hear:
(Earth-friends who pay the tribute tear)
"Good, faithful, servant, enter thou!"

He is not gone who leaves us now:
The good man chants a joyful hymn,
In train-bands of the Seraphim!"

I did not know this good man personally; but I did know his moral, social, and intellectual worth; that he was emphatically good in all the relations of life; his heart "open as day to melting charity," earnestly and devoutly desirous to do as much as he possibly could do, for the glory of God and the Heavenward progress of man.

When I wrote the lines, I had little idea that he would go before me; who was so much his senior in years.

I shall probably receive communications from him while I continue earth-bound; for I held him, and hold his memory, in strong esteem and respect.

Yes; another of my friends has preceded me through the dark valley into that sphere where there will be no sorrow or suffering. The links are falling fast from the chain that binds me to life. I quote from my friend, Tom Hood, "I am so near Death's door, that I can almost hear the creaking of the hinges."

Happy are those who know

"There is no death: what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portal we call Death."

I have thought it right to preserve this slight memory of the "good man," Colonel Joshua Brayn, while tendering the "usual condolence" to his (for a time) bereaved family, and myself mourning for the absence of a valued friend, who has passed into higher life from the sphere on which rest

"Shadows, clouds, and darkness."

Happy are they who have a foretaste of Heaven by doing God's work on earth.

S. C. HALL.

MR. D. D. HOME.—Full length portrait of Mr. Home, painted by Pickersgill, R.A., for sale.—Apply to Mr. John S. Farmer, 38, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury, W.C.

* *Medical Times*, May 6th, 1871.

SPIRITUALISM & OUR ORTHODOX LEADERS.

BY F. J. THEOBALD.

II.

M. Lacroix.

(Concluded from page 501.)

M. Lacroix was—like all true Christian Spiritualists—“reverent in his researches,” having a “great dislike to the spirit-rapping soirées in America and the exhibitions of clairvoyance in England.”

This clear testimony to the great value of Spiritualism, coming from the orthodox camp of the London Missionary Society, is really refreshingly in contrast to the bitter denunciations many of our Christian brethren pronounce against us.

The fruit of this belief in the inter-communion between the two worlds on M. Lacroix was, as his daughter declares, “pre-eminent peace,” and an earnest desire to live unspotted from the world, knowing that thereby he would be “fitted to see God.”

In the March of 1859 M. Lacroix heard, as he said, “a distinct voice from Heaven say to him, ‘Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.’” He had been somewhat enfeebled in health for some few months, but was by no means in any precarious condition, so as to have reason to anticipate a speedy removal. But calmly and wisely, he so far heeded the spirit-warning as to obey the injunction without delay. Preparing a most clear and elaborate statement of his own affairs and of all other funds in his hands, he explained the whole to his wife, and shewed her where every book and balance was to be found. Before four months had passed he had gained his spirit home.

The account of these last days on earth is most touching. His joy in the anticipation of his passing on was calm and deep. There was “no doubt,” “no fear,” but “perfect peace,” for “Jesus was always near.” As the end of his earthly sufferings approached, his son-in-law writes:—“For two days he was very silent, and then frequently mentioned that he had seen and conversed with his dear friend, Dr. Morison, who, quite unknown to all in India, had died in London three weeks before.” He also spoke of another dear friend (in the spirit-land), saying that he had “seen him, too, and had had much talk with him.”

M. Lacroix was just sixty years of age when he passed away. Upon a marble tablet raised to his memory are the following words:—

“As a preacher to the heathen he excelled;
As a pastor he was greatly beloved;
As a man of undoubted integrity, wisdom, and benevolence,
He was implicitly trusted;
As a Christian he was universally honoured.”

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.—Our readers will find fresh information respecting this new Society on p. 529.

A TRANCE MEDIUM AMONGST THE WESLEYANS. — At the conclusion of the usual evening service at the Methodist Free Church, Ironbark, Sandhurst, on Sunday, September 16th, a young man, named Richard Keast, approached the communion table, and falling into a trance saw, and described to the astonished congregation, a vision of Heaven. The form of the vision is in harmony with the doctrines of the church with which in all probability the mind of the sensitive was imbued. From the description of the onlookers, he was evidently in the ecstatic condition; his countenance being transfigured by the psychological impressions. A lengthy account of the matter appears in the *Bendigo Independent* of the 18th ult., and a writer in the *Advertiser* of the following day suggests the utilisation of the spiritual influx by the church. It seems that both minister and congregation were deeply impressed with the occurrence, which they look upon as supernatural, and intend to assist the young man to qualify himself for a preacher. A study of some spiritualistic literature relating to trance and clairvoyance would be of considerable service to them, by shewing that the only requisite is favourable conditions to educe the latent powers of the sensitive.—*Harbinger of Light.*

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

SECOND SERIES.

This series of Spirit-Teachings, like the former, is made up of selections from a great mass which have been automatically written during a series of years. They are selected on no other principle than that of printing what has been valuable to the person for whom they were originally given, in so far as this can be done without trenching on what is merely of personal and private application. The latter consideration excludes a great mass of what would otherwise be interesting and valuable matter. The phraseology has been preserved, as far as possible, intact, names only being omitted. The series follows directly on the first, from which, indeed, it is separated only by the accident of its publication in another journal, and after some considerable interval of time. The publication is resumed in deference to many repeated requests.

M.A. (OXON.)

No. XLIV.

[The fondness of spirits for anniversaries led me usually to expect some sort of retrospect at the close of a year. On the last day but one in the year 1876, I had had some conversation about the then condition of Spiritualism, and its relations to what was at that time making a stir—Occultism. Imperator, from the very first time that I had any talk with him about the old magical and occult lore, seemed to know little, and to care less, about it. That which it concerned was not within his sphere of action: he had not meddled with it, and was plainly too much absorbed in his own work to trouble himself about it. He entrusted to others the task of informing me, so far as was necessary, about such matters. At the same time he always impressed on me the necessity of avoiding one-sidedness: of studying the inherent powers of my own spirit, and of learning whatever old students had to teach. He drew what struck me as a careful distinction between the experience of those who violently assaulted the closed gates—who would take the kingdom of Heaven by storm—and who, if successful, wrested from the Dweller on the Threshold so much as they were fit to obtain, which, at best, was little, and that little of questionable value:—and those who, now that the gates are ajar, approach under quite other conditions to be received and welcomed, guided and instructed by those who, under other circumstances, could not be reached at all. Something of the kind is put in this communication, given nearly seven years ago.]

This is a warning that you may well ponder. It is necessary for you to know and act on it; but for the majority they have not yet reached the plane of knowledge when they can take in this truth. Hence it will come to pass that Spiritualism will be known exoterically as communing with devils, or as a curious form of mental or bodily disease, or as hallucination or fraud. From such a source it can never be known as you know it, can never be lovely or desirable among men, but must ever be a strange and tangled story, which will baffle the acutest among you to unravel by his own unaided powers.

There is another side, the esoteric, where far other evidence is had of the beauty of spirit communion where two or three meet in faith and sincerity to receive the word that comes to them. Where such circles meet, where the mind is pure and sincere, where the aspirations are exalted and the plane of thought spiritual, where due preparations are made to purify the atmosphere and provide conditions into which the higher spirits can come, then results are commensurate. Where the tone is one of pure affection, the friends who have gone before can oft return and identify themselves, or like-minded souls can come and speak words of consolation and good cheer. Or they who, like ourselves, are charged to enlighten and elevate the seekers after truth, can come and instruct you in the science which crowns all other knowledge. This is an atmosphere far other than that of which we have spoken. Into it the undeveloped cannot enter, or cannot come without permission; even as we cannot long breathe the emanations that befoul the circles where the unprogressed gather together. With due care, such circles might be made the vehicles for much enlightenment. But, alas! for the frailty of man's purpose. The concentrated aspiration which is needed becomes irksome. The world engrosses, business presses; cares and troubles enter in, and the medium becomes worthless for our purpose; or friends soon learn all they can assimilate, and so our work flags. Hence it is that no circle can long endure unless under circumstances rare to find. Development is slow, and many causes hinder.

But so long as these sacred meetings are perpetuated among you, so long will there be an esoteric band, who know that the

common notion gained in ordinary circles is not the truth, or at least not all the truth. And so long will the aspect of spirit communion which is most associated with the affections, continue to produce the purest and best proof of the holy nature of its faith. You can see now, we hope, why we have always urged on you the esoteric nature of true Spiritualism; why we have warned you to regard the truth as something too holy to be noised abroad and profaned; why we have withholden you from publicity, while we have encouraged you to defend the outworks of the truth. And you can see too, why, now that the truth is in danger, it becomes your duty to do still more for its defence. You can see, too, why we urged you and our friends to withdraw from open communion until the troublous time was past.

This is the risk, and this the blessing of Spiritualism. You knew them before, but it is well they be stated afresh. Observe that we have as yet said nothing of that which you call Occultism. We have spoken of the better side of Spiritualism as founded on the affections. In proportion as the affections are brought into play in pure and sincere aspiration, the best results are obtained. But there are other qualities of your mind which find no place in what you may describe as the sentimental side of the question. We have said that the intellect will find little satisfaction in the study, under such conditions as Exoteric Spiritualism provides, of the occult phenomena he finds there. In the family circle he will have rare opportunity; and there is, consequently, much that should engage his intellect which escapes him. Accordingly, he finds himself either perplexed by contradictions, or puzzled by erasions. He asks in vain for light which he is not fitted to receive, and bewilders himself with questions which he is unable to solve. He has entered on another plane of thought than that of simple faith or affectionate love, in which alone he found satisfaction from the pure atmosphere of the home circle.

The mental attitude has changed, and questions press for solution to which he can find no key there. When he attempts to probe phenomena and grasp the reason and method of them, he finds himself astray. There are questions into which he cannot penetrate without taking up what is practically a new study, the complement of that which he has passed through. This is Occultism, since it pleases you so to call it. It is the intellectual side of Spiritualism, and teaches the student the latent powers of his own spirit, and its place in the great world of spirit which surrounds it on every side. In saturating his mind with the lore stored up for him by many a student who has preceded him, he finds that he has entered on a new domain. For the stored up wisdom of the ancients deals entirely with the investigations and researches of those who would penetrate unbidden into the domain of spirit, and would even bind some of its lower powers to their own service and gain. This is not the side that you and those associated with you have approached the subject from. In your day the gate is opened, and entrance on certain conditions is invited. In the days of old the gate was stormed, and the methods are more or less obscurely written for the guidance of the initiated.

In this, occult lore has passed out of sight and has given place to wisdom. There is no room for affection in its simpler developments, but wisdom governs all. The stores laid up are not simple stories of family love which all may read, but records of mysteries of nature, of latent faculties of spirit to be entrusted only to the pure and good in heart and life. Hence to the esoteric world these books are as idle tales. They gain from them no knowledge because they do not possess the key. To the neophyte as he grows in wisdom, they unfold a view of the hidden mysteries of nature, which makes him marvel at his former ignorance. Step by step he advances on his path, and finds at every turn some one to direct and guide him. By degrees he learns to read the history of the world of spirit in which he is a unit. He gains the knowledge which is power, and he progresses by thorny and difficult paths, in which he is sifted through and through, up to the height where the whole panorama breaks upon his gaze. He has not got these without trial, temptation, risk. None gain anything without risk as you ought to know; and to be always counting the cost is no way to soar. The risks that beset occult studies are proportioned to the value of the truths conveyed.

The neophyte must win them, as you know, by conflict and trial. If he be boastfully over-confident, he will find that his pride will have a fall. If he be timid, he will learn that he who would wrest truth from those who guard it must prove his courage. If he be sluggish, he will learn that the seekers after

truth must be ever on the alert against danger on the right hand and on the left. If he be impure in thought and life—nay, if he be dominated by the flesh, he will learn to subdue it to the spirit. If he be vacillating and infirm of purpose, he will learn that he who climbs a giddy height must have a clear head. If he be worldly and governed by the world's estimates, he will learn to cast them behind his back. And if he fail to learn these lessons, if he temporise and hesitate, if he linger in temptation and look back in longing to the City of the Plain, then not for him the heights where knowledge dwells. Round his neck is a millstone that will prevent his progress. He has intruded where he had no right to go. He has failed where failure means disgrace, and it were better for him that he had not run the risk. A greater risk still hangs over those who would use their knowledge for base and unworthy purposes. On that we do not dwell. It is not one that concerns you; nor need you seek to know the curse that such accumulate for themselves. It were better for them, assuredly, that they had not been born.

As the neophyte progresses he finds that his troubles decrease; the probation time is over, and the lessons learned in it have become habitual. He finds others who are walking with him, and his courage, purity, sincerity, and perseverance have been proven and approved.

It is not permitted us to tell you much that it will be in your mind to ask. Do not be too literal. There are helps and aids that you know not of; and if there be risks too, those are the conditions of knowledge. Never can aught be had without facing danger and risk. It is impossible, even as it is impossible for you to gain knowledge and progress without conflict. We have answered your request: we shall reply as we are permitted to your questions. Remember only that it is the broad lessons that you should learn, and leave the details for the hereafter. We have ourselves written this, lest you should refuse to accept the statement of Magus. But we should not permit any who is unworthy to have influence over you.

+ IMPERATOR.

WHAT OUR CONTEMPORARIES SAY.

Spiritualism and Suicide.

The *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, commenting upon the suicide of a woman, who having suddenly been bereft of husband and children, had, in despair, taken her own life, says:—"Reader, if you are a Spiritualist, as we hope you are, you know this poor woman cannot escape from herself neither can she at once be happy by a reunion with her loved ones; but you know that the darkness now enveloping her is not eternal; you know that loving messengers from the realms of light are striving to aid her weary steps towards a higher and a happier condition; you know that some time she will join her husband and child. Let us all unite in heart-felt desires for her progress toward light and happiness. The true Spiritualist learns to act unselfishly for the good of others, whether it bring happiness or unhappiness to himself; to act rightly because it is right so to act, and not because of any anticipated reward here or hereafter. Resting securely in his knowledge of a continuous existence beyond the limits of earth-life, and that he will meet his loved ones there, he is prepared to do his best for his brother man. He bears the hardships and sorrows of this life with philosophical calmness and a resignation not born of despair. He knows that all his trials will in some strange way work for his good. A mediumistic soul with a sweet, all-sustaining faith closes a beautiful allegory thus: 'Our Heavenly Father wakes us from the slumber of infancy and helplessness and sends us forth alone into the world to learn life's great lessons. When we have learned them well, He sends the pale messenger Death, to take us home. How blessed will be that reunion.' The same writer ends her allegory of 'The Two Ways' with this paragraph: 'There are two ways of journeying through life: One, like the first pilgrim, who thought only of self and of speedily reaching the vale and the journey's end; the other better and wiser one, productive of greater good to all, of making a path, that all who come after us may be blessed by our labours.' Our unseen friend, Epes Sargent, on his dying bed with the

hand of Death already upon him wrote us: ". . . I look upon it all with the utmost reverence, death being to my eyes a gracious, loving angel, ready to let down the bars at the fitting time, and to welcome me to the great realities of the spirit-world. It is no spectral, ghastly thing to me, but a process full of tenderness and love, carrying some wise purpose which, if veiled to me now, will all be very clear soon.' Instead of uselessly throwing away this life, let each nobly struggle on to the end. He who does this, need have no fears that his influence on earth will cease with his departure; his body will return to the dust from which it came, but the spirit of his work, the essence of his life, will remain to strengthen those who fill his place. This should be an ever-present incentive to the highest endeavour."

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.]

"Spirit Teachings."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me space in your next issue for a very few words on the subject of "(M.A. Oxon's.)" "Spirit Teachings"?

Following them, as I and all your readers must do with deep interest, I have always felt, and increasingly feel, how greatly their interest would be heightened, were the *dates* of the communications given. For being, as they are, a sort of revision of the spiritual movement and its progress, one longs for the *data* to accompany such revision, as a *standpoint*, of which at present one greatly feels the need in perusing the "Teachings."

I venture to think that this need being expressed to "(M.A. Oxon.)" he will kindly and considerately add to the "Teachings" that which will so greatly enhance their value.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"LILY."

(Author of "Golden Thoughts in Quiet Moments," and a regular subscriber to "LIGHT.")

November 21st, 1883.

Miss Corner's Mission Work.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly permit me to say that I am sending a list of subscribers to "Rhineland" (2s. 6d.) to the *Medium* every week? Moreover, that my little work of charity promises to be a success. I should be glad, though, of more help. The more I get the more half-starved little guests can I warm, and feed, and clothe, and give comfort to at the forthcoming Merrie Christmas-tide.

CAROLINE CORNER.

3, St. Thomas's-square, Hackney, N.E.

Spiritualism in the Unseen World.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have a book filled with automatic writing, from which I never thought to publish one single extract, but I so completely sympathise with your correspondent, "G. D. Haughton," in refusing to look upon it as a blissful idea that throughout eternity we shall never sleep, that I will gladly copy out for him the exact words that answered automatically more than a year ago my question upon the subject. The last two sentences of one of our many conversations I will copy, since both sound to me very pleasant. I had been speaking of the limitations of this, in many respects, most wonderful writing—of the impossibility there seemed to be of writing by my hand things of which I could form no idea, when I added, "But surely you will be able to tell me whether or not in Heaven I shall find again both love and friendship?" and the answer was:—

"Ah! without both, could I have spoken to one who loves so well, of happiness that is 'perfect.' And love and friendship here are without the drawbacks both must ever know on earth. The constant dread of change, of illness, of alienation, and, worst of all, of death! None of the broken-hearted partings are here that make happiness—perfect happiness—impossible on earth! So try never again, dear S., to 'wonder' whether earth or Heaven is the happier place!"

"You have read my answer more quickly than I can write it, that any world will be Heaven to me where there is no more death. But, good-night now, for I am tired. Tell me if in Heaven we sleep?"

"Oh, yes; like you, we rest often, and like you, we sleep. And we not only sleep, but we dream! Dream of the friends

we have left on earth, and wake surprised to find we are not really with them! But now good-night, and may refreshing sleep and pleasant dreams be yours."

Nothing, of course, would have been easier (except for the folly of it) than to have made those simple answers to my own questions myself! But nothing would have been more impossible than for me to have written them in the handwriting I have just copied—a handwriting as exactly like that of the friend from whom they profess to come (when his own hand could hold the pen) as is this writing I am doing now like all my own, in our wonderful book; a book in which there are four or five different handwritings, all simply perfect in their resemblance to the "hands" of those who say they are writing for me; while no amount of practice would enable me to write any hand but my own; and most assuredly I have never copied a single stroke of any writing I ever saw; and so perhaps your correspondent will look upon what I have written as some slight confirmation of his pleasant hope that in Heaven we shall sleep.—I am, sir,

S. W.

SPIRITUALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

PLYMOUTH.

Mrs. C. Groom, of Birmingham, paid a second visit to the West of England on Sunday, November 18th, and lectured both morning and evening in the meeting-room of the local Spiritualists, Richmond Hall, Richmond-street. There were very large audiences on both occasions, it being exceedingly difficult to procure seats in the morning, while in the evening many persons had to go away for lack of room, as the place was crowded. Additional *éclat* was added to the former gathering by the fact that three children were then publicly named. This ceremony, which was of a simple but impressive character, was somewhat similar to that performed in ordinary Dissenting chapels, with the exception that water was not used. The president of the society, after the opening hymn had been sung, read a selection from the Scriptures bearing upon the event about to take place, and the audience then joined in a hymn appropriate to the occasion. This was followed by an invocation from Mrs. Groom (in the trance state), who then took the children in turn (the two eldest each by the hand, and the third, an infant, in her arms), and named them "in the name of the Cross," at the same time giving to each a spiritual name, accompanied by a white flower as typical of the purity they were intended to attain to. A short address to the audience and the parents, and an earnest aspiration that the newly-named children might be "ever attended by the holy ministers of the Almighty," concluded this part of the proceedings, and the usual service was then proceeded with, the subject for the discourse—"The Two Worlds: Their Influence on Each Other"—being chosen by vote of those assembled out of several subjects handed in. Following the lecture, Mrs. Groom gave a number of clairvoyant descriptions of spirits, seen, as it is alleged, near the persons addressed by her, all of which were recognised. The evening's discourse was on "Spiritualism: The Voice Crying in the Wilderness," and a graphic picture of the woes of human life, concluding with eloquent appeals for purity, justice, and right politically and socially. The attempts to crystallise truth into rigid creeds were condemned, and liberty to think was demanded in order that the world might become wiser and better. As in the morning, poems and more clairvoyant descriptions followed, all of a satisfactory nature, and the service ended with the singing of the hymn "Nearer, my God, to Thee." In the afternoon of the same day Mr. R. S. Clarke lectured at Wood's Coffee Tavern, Stonehouse, to a large audience, the address being a review of recent objections to Spiritualism, and a statement of its probable effects as a movement. Last evening Mrs. Groom delivered her concluding lecture in the Richmond Hall. The subject was "Moses and Carlyle: Were they inspired men?" and the speaker was said to be under the inspiration of "George Dawson." The address was a masterly one, and a large assembly listened with rapt attention. It is quite evident that Spiritualism is making rapid strides in the locality, and sooner or later will have to be dealt with as a power, entirely outside the range of conjurers' *exposés* and theological animosities.—*The Western Daily Mercury*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. F., Boston.—Declined. Too personal, and unsuited to our columns. We have no intention of inserting any such letters.

LILY.—We have made an exception to our hitherto invariable rule in your favour. Names, however, are received in the strictest confidence.

"S."—Thanks for the information you give. We will note any *fact* about the "Adepts," or the Theosophical Society, but do not see our way to re-opening our columns for the discussion of the subject from a purely speculative point of view.

F. M.—A. G., AND OTHERS.—NEW BOOKS ON SPIRITUALISM, &c. An announcement of several new books will be found on advertisement page II., and a complete list of Theosophical publications on our front page. This notice will be sufficient answer to numerous recent inquiries.

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

I do not feel it necessary to add anything material to the circular of the London Spiritualist Alliance which the committee have put forward. But I may be permitted to say, as a matter of personal conviction, that I am strongly impressed with the desirability of providing a meeting-place for Spiritualists, and of keeping together a nucleus of those who have so long acted together. I venture to express great confidence, from letters that I have received, that this will be done. Already the response has been large and very cordial.

It is, I may say, very essential that there should be no delay beyond what is absolutely necessary. The preservation of the library of the C.A.S. depends on prompt action. It is imperative that premises be secured for the publishing-office of "LIGHT," and it is very desirable that the Spiritualist Alliance should be so far assured as to be in a position to take rooms of its own in conjunction with "LIGHT" and the PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESS ASSOCIATION, at once. We act rigidly within our means, and I therefore hope that those who wish to co-operate will signify their intention at once.

I am quite unable, amid the pressure of much business, to reply personally to all the letters I receive on this subject. All of them are couched in terms of cordial sympathy, for which my best thanks are due. Many of them contain valuable suggestions which will receive the most careful attention of the committee over which I have the honour to preside. We invite suggestions. We desire, if possible, so to act as to offend none, and to meet the wishes of all. If we fail, it will be, I beg to assure my many correspondents, from no want of attention to the suggestion offered. Our first need, we feel, is a bond of union, and a regular place of meeting, where we can take courses together, and break down the barrier of isolation which is so destructive to united and successful effort. We shall keep this in view as a first requisite. Frequent social meetings and personal intercourse will make those who charge themselves with the conduct of the Society acquainted with the desires of the members. Real effort to help by judicious means the cause that we all have at heart will lead, we hope, to most beneficial results.

Apologising, therefore, for inability to reply personally to the many letters that reach me, I will undertake to report progress through the columns of "LIGHT" when some definite point has been reached. The sooner I receive responses from those who are disposed to act, the sooner I shall be in a position to say something definite. At least 100 members are needed before the committee will feel justified in taking action. And that action can not be long delayed without the loss of a great opportunity.

"M. A. (Oxon.)"

"The Council of the C.A.S. has addressed to the Members of that Society a circular intimating that it proposes to dissolve.

"At a Conference lately held at the instance of the Council of the C.A.S., I had the honour to propose a plan for the constitution of a Spiritualist Society, which should represent the views of old Spiritualists who do not now find themselves exactly represented by any existing Society. A Committee was formed for the purpose of giving effect to that suggestion; and it is proposed to call the new Society THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

"It is, in the opinion of a large number of Spiritualists, very desirable that there should exist in the Metropolis a society of the kind proposed. There are, I am aware, various kindred societies already in existence. With these we shall be careful in no way to interfere; and with them we shall hope to work in harmony by friendly counsel and co-operation.

"But there are a number of Spiritualists who have been associated together at various kindred times during the past ten years, who, we believe, would desire to perpetuate or to resume that Association under changed conditions adapted to changed times. Their faith has undergone no modification; and they

consider this a fitting time to express t once more in union with those who are like-minded with themselves.

"For many divergent opinions on spiritual matters are now before the world. Never before was greater attention paid to the claims of Spiritualism. The Theosophical Society, at one extreme, expresses opinions and holds views in which Spiritualists, as a body, are not able fully to acquiesce. The Society for Psychical Research, while doing excellent work in its own way, is concerned solely, at present, with the external aspects of what is an infinitely vast subject. Under these circumstances it will always find a sphere of action distinct from that which we now contemplate.

"Between these poles, Spiritualists pure and simple, of a type that may now almost be called old-fashioned, find their place, and should take up their position, if they desire to be true to their convictions, and to do their duty in influencing public thought.

"Such a position will be in no sense aggressive. It will involve no large outlay, nor necessitate any pecuniary responsibility beyond the small subscription incident to membership.

"The plan, subject to such modifications as experience may dictate, is simple and unpretending, and may be put thus.

"The C.A.S. possesses a unique library, and various objects of interest to Spiritualists; some of them, indeed, historically valuable, and such as should be preserved as heir-looms for the benefit of Spiritualists in the future. It was proposed at the Conference that, if possible, these should be kept intact; that they should become the property of the new Society; and that they should be acquired by it without cost.

"A room large enough to contain this library, to serve as a reading-room, and as a place for occasional meetings, is easily procurable at a small outlay. The necessary expense of rental need not exceed £50 per annum. Under the same roof it is proposed, as a matter of convenience, by the Editor of 'LIGHT' and manager of the Psychological Press Association, to place the publishing office of that journal and Association.

"It will be seen that an efficient system of organisation will thus be secured. Not only this, but Spiritualists as such will have taken a fitting stand in vindication of their faith at a time when such a step is incumbent upon them. It is, in the opinion of those who are acting in this matter, an imperative duty to keep together a nucleus of those Spiritualists who have so long been associated, and to do by united effort what individual energy is powerless to accomplish for the support of the literature of Spiritualism, as well as for the introduction of it in likely quarters.

"Most incipient organisations have been crushed by the necessity for making appeals for money to those who are disposed to interest themselves in their work, but who resent this continual begging, as they consider it. We do not propose to countenance any system of appeals for money. Money will, of course, be needed; and it will be forthcoming. The small subscriptions of our members will furnish us with an income within which our operation will be rigidly confined. As our work is tested, and found to be good, we have no doubt that our income will grow, and with it our opportunity for usefulness. But in no case shall we transgress the bounds of our income.

"The really important thing is that Spiritualists, many veterans among whom have one by one withdrawn into isolated seclusion, to the great detriment of the cause which they all still uphold by their belief, should make some sacrifice, if need be, in order to unite and take counsel together in times of no little difficulty, and to maintain, among other organisations of those who concern themselves with spiritual things, one which distinctively represents, as none now does, their own special beliefs and convictions.

"It may be well to state explicitly that no profession of faith in any set terms is sought from those who may desire to co-operate with us. We have room for all who realise the importance, in a materialistic age, of expressing a belief that there is something behind matter, and that death does not end all.

"I earnestly trust that old and tried friends of Spiritualism, whose faith is no less assured than my own, and who have done such good service in the past, will feel that there is still work for them which they cannot neglect without injuring what they would desire by every means in their power to support and sustain.

"The Society will be in working order by the opening of the New Year. It is proposed to engage rooms at a rental of not more than £50, in the immediate neighbourhood of Charing Cross; to open a reading-room, where the various Spiritualist papers can be read; to make the library generally available to members; to hold periodical social meetings; and to organise a Sunday service if found desirable. The subscription of Members is fixed at a minimum rate of a guinea.

"I trust you will give us the countenance of your support, and that you will enrol yourself and members of your family as subscribers. Kindly address your reply as soon as convenient to 'M.A. (Oxon.)' care of John S. Farmer, Esq., 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

"Signed on behalf of the Committee,

"M. A. (Oxon.)"

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Is it Conjuring?

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

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

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

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

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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