

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATEVER DOTI MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

No. 208.—VOL. IV.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

CONTENTS.

Papers of the late Mrs. Howitt Watts.....	536	"Truth" and Spiritualism.....	538
The Spiritual Outlook—X.....	537	The London Spiritualist Alliance	539
Coincidental Dreaming.....	537	Spiritualism—Some Difficulties	
Verified Dreams.....	537	and Some Suggestions.....	540

[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]

PAPERS OF THE LATE MRS. HOWITT WATTS.

(Continued from p. 526.)

[Among the papers of the late Mrs. Howitt Watts was a little MS. volume, which she used to call "The Brown Manuscript." This she believed to have belonged to the late Robert Chambers. It contains stories of somnambulism, second-sight, clairvoyance, trance, vision, and ghostly visitation. They were probably collected by Mr. Robert Chambers, and, on Mrs. Watts' lamented departure, I received them for publication in "LIGHT." This was her intention had she been able to carry out her desires.—"M.A. (Oxon.)"]

VII.

TRANCE AND SOMNAMBULISM.

The following narrative I heard in 1820, when I lived with my father at Croonshill, near Blackheath. Our neighbours were Professor Landmann; his son, Colonel Landmann, of the Engineers; and his father-in-law, General Dickenson, of the Artillery.

At the Landmanns' I frequently sat late, and heard many a story of the Indian and Peninsular wars. General Dickenson related the following singular incidents regarding Lieutenant Ford, a young man of ability, and full of lively fun.

Some troops with their officers were on their passage to India in large transports. On board was an ensign of the name of Swift. His intellect was weak, he was afraid of the voyage, and got drunk every day to drive away thought. It was proposed by the officers to cure this young fellow of his tippling propensities by—fright.

It was therefore mentioned casually at table by the officers that when they entered the latitude of the trade winds, it would be needful for each one to be very careful of his diet, and also what he drank, owing to the existence of a dreadful disease called the "stomachopia." This disease, it was said, frequently attacked persons whose blood was fevered by improper eating or drinking. It was also asserted that in these attacks of "stomachopia" the trunk of the body would become black, and internal mortification and heavy sleep would go on in the patient until he died. The commanding officer added that, this being the case, it would be necessary for the officers to look well to the men, and see that no one got more than his own allowance of grog, and thus guard against mortality among the troops. The military surgeons also entered into the joke.

Ensign Swift was much concerned at hearing of this dreadful "stomachopia." He privately, with reference to it, consulted one of the surgeons. But still the drinking went on as usual until one morning, when all was sudden bustle on board. The ship was stripped of all her good sails, the old ones being brought out and rigged in their places. It was announced by the captain at dinner that the cause of all this bustle was that now they had entered the trade winds, where steady weather might be expected.

Hearing this, Swift looked rather glum. The officers, with long and serious faces, spoke to one another in subdued voices regarding the fearful "stomachopia."

It was then agreed, privately, that the next day, Lieutenant Ford, who was one of the number on board, should pretend to drink hard and to be drunk. He did do so. The following day every one was again cautioned against the "stomachopia." Next day, however, Ford kept his seat after dinner, beside Swift, and told the steward to bring their wine and brandy as before, which Swift joined in, his fears having been relieved by some of the hands on board, who told him that the "stomachopia" was "all humbug."

Ford's bottle had been prepared by the steward with strong toast-water, so that himself in safety he kept on plying Swift until he was in a fit state for the steward to remove him to his berth.

Early the next morning, Ford arose to find the sea smooth and the weather fine. He went below and blackened all his body up to the waist. Before Swift was up, a plank had been laid in Ford's state-room. His brother officers were busy in making his face pale with flour, and putting on his head a cotton night-cap. Ford was laid on his back on the plank in his state-room, and he said he could fix his eyes so steadily on vacancy that Swift would think him dead.

After everything had been arranged, Swift and other officers were invited to go down to Ford's state-room. When Swift beheld Ford's black body, he expressed the utmost horror, and inquired if he had been very drunk the night before. All lamented Ford's fate. The junior surgeon asserted that he feared nothing could be done for him; the disease must be left to its course; in short, the surgeon professed to regard him as already pretty nearly dead.

After this every one left the state-room, the surgeon giving strict orders, in the presence of Swift, that no one was to enter Ford's room to disturb him, as he was going to apply a remedy requiring the greatest quietness, as the last possible resource.

All were assembled in the main cabin still talking over Ford's condition (for the further bewilderment of Swift), when suddenly on deck there was heard a loud cry. The watch on the maintop had seen a strange sail bearing up towards the fleet. Every one rushed on deck, anxious to see this unexpected sight. In due course a large ship, crowded with canvas, came in view. The convoy had fired a gun and was signalling the fleet to shorten sail for the stragglers, and for every ship to keep close.

After the lapse of a number of hours the ship came up and communicated with the convoy. She proved to be one of his Majesty's frigates bearing despatches for the West Indies. This stirring and novel affair so occupied the attention of all on board that nothing else was thought of,

not even the "stomachoplia," until 5 p.m., when dinner was announced.

One of the officers then hastened to Ford's room, and to his surprise found him still lying on his back upon his plank, in the same position in which they had left him. It had been supposed that so soon as Swift and the others had disappeared he would have risen and gone away.

The officer, supposing that he was asleep, spoke to him ; but received no answer. He then, taking his hand, found it cold ; he also observed that his eyes were open and fixed. Off flew the officer in alarm for one of the surgeons. He came, and taking Ford's wrist could find no pulse. The commanding officer and assistant-surgeon were summoned. They cut open his coat and applied a lancet to his arm, but without any effect. Both surgeons said that he was either dead or in a fit. All assistance was given to him in the most quiet manner possible, and no communication of his state made to any one, out of consideration for a lady on board to whom he was related.

He was undressed and put into blankets, after having been bathed, body, hands, and feet, in hot water—his body then being well rubbed. Before midnight arrived animation had been restored ; but neither consciousness nor the power of speech had returned. All night the surgeons remained anxiously with him, endeavouring by the use of hartshorn, and by making him sit up in a chair, to prevent his falling back again into his trance.

The following day, through these unremitting attentions of the surgeons, his speech returned, and by degrees he recovered.

He then told them that he had heard all that had been said, but had felt a deadness over every part of him. He said also that whilst they were rubbing him he had experienced shooting and excruciating pains.

Swift was cured of his drinking, Ford's illness having been made use of to that end. Ford was, as the following narrative shows, predisposed to somnambulism :—

Some years later Ford was called into active field service in India. During the campaign he was ordered to endeavour to obtain information regarding a certain town ; also a plan of it, as there was the intention to invest and besiege it. He accordingly commenced his work and made drawings of all the outworks which he could see. Being of an adventurous and bold disposition, and anxious to effect a service of merit, he proposed to the General that he should be sent with a flag of truce on a mission to the governor of the town, in order that he might thus see the inner works. To this plan the General assented, and accordingly all was concocted and carried into execution.

Whilst Ford was within the walls, and whilst the message was borne to the governor, Ford made his observations on the works, and drew upon his thumb-nail—which he had previously prepared—parts of the fortification, which upon his return to the camp he transferred to paper.

The negotiation was purposely protracted until he had gone on this duty to the town several times, and thus obtained all the plans and information needful. Then the final defiance was given. He returned to the camp with a light heart to finish his plans, considering his promotion sure for the great service he would thus have rendered.

To his dreadful consternation, entering his tent in the evening, he found his papers disarranged, his nearly completed drawings, his measurements—the whole details, which he had laboured so hard to procure—gone ! All was a mystery. No trace of his lost work could be discovered. The displeasure of the General was great when he heard of this loss, just at the very moment when his plans were ripe for execution.

Suspicion rested on a brother officer jealous of Ford's coming promotion. Ford, through imagining that the General suspected him of treachery, and of having been bought over by the enemy, together with his terrible dis-

appointment, was in such distress of mind that he fell into a fever, and was for some days delirious. He was carefully attended by the surgeons, and his orderly sat up with him at night.

This man, fatigued with his duty, one night fell asleep, and never woke until near morning. Awakening, he was astonished, in the gloom of the tent, to see his master dressed, standing at a table and drawing something upon a board, such as is used by engineers.

The soldier, conscious that he had been slumbering at his post, was afraid to speak, and so kept very quiet. He wondered, however, that his master could see to draw whilst the only light came from the night-lamp which was placed upon a chair. Presently, however, Ford left the table, undressed himself, went to bed, and fell into a sound sleep.

The orderly having looked at the board, and seeing upon it a drawing, he carefully put it away. On the arrival of the surgeon, the man told him what had occurred, and exhibited the board. The General was at once sent for. On seeing the drawing he recognised it as the plan of the fortress, with the measurements all filled in : in every way a complete work !

Ford awoke late in the day, in his right mind, but weak and worn out by the severity of the crisis which he had passed through.

The imprudent impatience of the General made him shew the plan to Ford, who in wonder owned it to be a correct and true drawing of the fortification. He asked who had been employed to obtain it, and internally was beginning to fear that the laurels he had hoped to win were snatched away from him. The General undeceived him, telling him the whole truth—that he himself had made the drawing in his sleep. This threw Ford into ecstasies. He sprang from his bed, grasped the hands of the General, exclaiming, "You no longer think me a traitor—but true to my colours !"

This excitement was more than the poor fellow, in his exhausted condition, could bear. He fell back into his bed, in violent hysterics, which continued until he expired in the arms of the General. He was deeply regretted by all who knew him.

It was by means of the plan drawn by a man in his sleep, that the fortification was besieged and taken.

(To be continued.)

THE "CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE."—Spiritism is not the only subject which has to encounter the "conspiracy of silence" on the part of those who think their self-interest is concerned. It is known that our Legislative Chamber has appointed a commission to inquire into the condition of the working classes. This commission has addressed a series of questions to Chambers of Commerce and Trade Syndicates. One of the questions is : "Are there in your department Societies of Co-operative Industry ? If so, what results do they shew ?" To this the Chamber of Commerce of St. Quentin—five leagues from the Godin Works and Familistère*—replies :—"We know nothing of Societies of Co-operative Industry." "Who is there who can believe," asks *Le Devoir*, the organ of the Familistère, "that the men of business of St. Quentin know nothing of the largest establishment for the manufacture of metal goods in France ?" *Le Devoir* then details the co-operative organisation of the establishment and Familistère five years ago, and gives a summary of the results of its operations, among which are its having paid during that time 9,111,000frs. in salaries and wages, and its members having in the same period saved 1,747,000frs. ; living not parsimoniously ; of having furnished their children with a general education, better than that obtainable by the children of the working classes in ordinary. *Le Devoir* claims that the Familistère demonstrates the existence of a practical remedy in France against pauperism, with all its concomitant sufferings, shames and infamies ; and charges those who either condemn the Familistère as visionary, or who attempt the "conspiracy of silence" against it, with being *de mauvaise* for : the opposite of honest.—*Revue Spirite*.

* Founded by M. Godin, a member of the old Spiritual Society of Paris.

THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK.

X.

THE *St. Stephen's Review*, to its honour, pursues a different course to that adopted by *Truth*. The same may be said of *Society* and the *Whitchall Review*. Each of these journals treat the subject calmly and dispassionately, allowing the argument *pro* and *con* to be fairly stated.

* * *

THE *St. Stephen's Review* published, a week or two since, a leading article, in which, after alluding to the importance of the subject, it pleaded for free and scientific inquiry, at the same time throwing open its columns for discussion. The result was an avalanche of letters compelling a confession from the editor that he "had no idea he should have been so inundated," and adding "it would be necessary to double the size of *St. Stephen's* if we were to print even half of those forwarded to us by one day's post."

* * *

Now, that is a gauge of the state of public opinion, which corroborates the statement recently made in these pages as to the growing interest in Spiritualism. Other journals report to the same effect. Surely, in view of this, if an attempt is made to do Mr. Eglinton any wrong, we, as Spiritualists, may fairly hope to arouse public opinion as to the injustice of persecuting a man because he possesses and exercises certain gifts.

* * *

ONE of the letters is short enough for me to quote here. The writer dates from Onslow-gardens, W., but does not give any name for publication:—

Onslow-gardens, W.

DEAR SIR,—It was with the utmost pleasure I gathered from your article on Spiritualism that you were, like Agrippa, almost persuaded there was something in it. What you say about the commonplace characteristics of many of the manifestations is quite correct, yet I have been present when certain strange revelations have been made—revelations, which you, sir, as a practical man, would admit were not only singular in themselves, but of large utilitarian interest. For example, a husband, deceased only a few days, announced to us at a private *séance*, no paid medium being present, that he had been painfully affected at witnessing the anxiety of his wife, who could not discover a document of some importance, which document he had given into the safe keeping of a friend now absent from England. The friend, he stated, was moving about Europe, and at that moment was in the Tyrol, giving us the exact address. He finally asked us to interest ourselves in the matter, which we did, and telegraphed to a little Austrian town, receiving a wire in reply next day, announcing the immediate return of the person to England. Not a soul present at my house that evening was acquainted with the deceased, his wife, or friend, the latter of whom lived some 300 miles from London. As this only happened last Thursday, I am not in the position to give the sequel; but I am quite sure it will eventually result in the discovery that Spiritualism has been a great blessing and comfort to the woman, who will not be only relieved of anxiety, but will be satisfied that there is a hereafter where she may meet the dead partner of her joys and sorrows; and should she wish to commune with him down here, she must, after such an incident, have the firm assurance that such a thing is possible. I will write you on the subject again, but really the difficulty is to know where to begin; there is so much to say.—I enclose my card, but not for publication, and am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

* * *

"CHERUBINO" of the *Figaro* has, by the insertion of Mr. Shedlock's account of his visit to Mr. Eglinton, brought a host of correspondence on the matter:—

I have received a large number of communications in regard to Mr. J. S. Shedlock's visit to Mr. Eglinton, and the extraordinary answer given on the Duke of Albany's Brahma locked slate by the alleged disembodied spirit of Franz Schubert. The question asked by Mr. Shedlock was, it may be recollected, 'Schubert, can you tell me how many symphonies you wrote after the unfinished one in B minor?' and the reply came at once in the numeral '2.' This reply, if genuine, would tend to shew that the 'Gastein' symphony, which Sir George Grove declares is missing, really had some existence. I may add that Mr. J. S. Shedlock's honour and character are so well known to be above suspicion, that not one of my correspondents, many of whom treat the affair with derision, has ventured to suggest that the story told is, so far as Mr. Shedlock is concerned, not perfectly *bona fide*."

* * *

FURTHER ON "Cherubino" continues:—

Several correspondents express curiosity as to the conversation between the spirit medium and Miss Shedlock, and whether that lady gave any hint of the questions likely to be asked by her brother. Other correspondents narrate some surprising "manifestations" by Mr. Eglinton and other psychographers, but as none of these deal with matters musical they cannot be quoted.

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.]

"Coincidental Dreaming."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—With reference to Miss Busk's explanation, in reply to Mr. Wedgwood, one would like to understand from her more clearly what is the "superstition," the source of which she conceives would be removed by taking note of the fulfilment of purposeless dreams. Every one who investigates occult psychology in a scientific spirit will agree with her that the number of trivial dreams fulfilled impairs the presumption that others of more importance, and likewise fulfilled, were inspired with a purpose of warning. But Miss Busk's argument recognises no alternative than this presumption, or the reference of all such coincidences to the expectation arising from mathematical probabilities. It seems, therefore, that every disposition to question and look beyond the latter explanation is included by her in "superstition." If that is so, it is strange that she does not perceive the suicidal character of her own argument. "I have," she says in *Notes and Queries*, "with this view, noted a great number of striking coincidental dreams"—"this view," being, as now explained, to shew that "all such affairs" are "coincidences and nothing more." Now upon mathematical principles, it is plain that the more of such cases she has succeeded in collecting, the more difficult becomes the explanation upon the doctrine of chances. They are indeed numerous, more so, probably, than Miss Busk would suppose.

We are, of course, all familiar with the common argument, adopted by her, about the innumerable dreams each one of which gives a chance of fulfilment. There is in this a great deal of loose, and, as I believe, quite inaccurate assumption. What are the conditions of a dream, the fulfilment of which can be observed? First, it must be distinct; secondly, it must have some degree of internal coherence (and this is especially the case with trivial dreams, since a minute incident, or one of little interest, can only survive in subsequent memory as part of a context); thirdly, the waking recollection must be clear and persistent. Now I believe that with most persons dreams fulfilling these conditions are very far from habitual. In my own experience they are very rare. I do not of course dispute that the total number is very large; but that it is the sort of infinite quantity suggested and required by the "chance" argument, seems to me not in accordance with experience. In meeting that argument one is, of course, under what is a great disadvantage, supposing it to be in fact fallacious. For in that case, there will be an immense number of veridic dreams of which we have no information, yet the existence of these cannot be assumed against the chance argument, which, nevertheless, has the benefit of any enormous total which the upholder of it likes to imagine.

It is obviously impossible to compute the chances of fulfilment, but no one who accepts the evidence of even a small number of picture-dreams, *circumstantially* verified, will find the chance argument at all enduring. Like the great majority of intelligent and educated people, Miss Busk sees no other alternative to it than a belief which she regards as superstitious. But she may be assured that this is not the issue recognised by the new and rising school of psychological inquirers, who are engaged in the systematic investigation of these facts. If Miss Busk will communicate the cases she has collected to the secretary of the Society for Psychical Research, at 14, Dean's Yard, Westminster, they will be gratefully acknowledged, and she need not be afraid of furthering any "superstition."

C. C. M.

Verified Dream.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I am sorry I did Miss R. H. Busk (not Mr. Busk, as I erroneously designated the writer) the logical injustice of supposing that her opinion of the verified dream being due to something more than mere coincidence, would depend upon the question whether it served any useful purpose or not. I overlooked the direct assertion in her introductory observations, that she regarded the apparent fulfilment of the dream, in all cases, as an accidental coincidence.—I am, sir, &c.,

H. WEDGWOOD.

All communications to be addressed to —

THE EDITOR OF "LIGHT,"
4, AVE MARIA LANE,
LONDON, E.C.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

ADVERTISEMENT CHARGES.

Five lines and under, 3s. One inch, 4s. 6d. Column, £2 2s. Page £4. A reduction made for a series of insertions.

Orders for Papers and Advertisements may be addressed to the Editor of "LIGHT," 4, Ave Maria-lane, E.C.

Cheques and Post Office Orders may be made payable to HENRY BARNES, at the Chief Office, London. Halfpenny Postage Stamps received for amounts under 10s.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

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

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Subscriptions for 1885 are now due. Subscribers will oblige by forwarding these at once to "The Manager of 'LIGHT,'" 4, Ave Maria-lane, E.C. Post Office Orders may be made payable to Henry Barnes. All Editorial Correspondence to be addressed to "The Editor."

Light :

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27TH, 1884.

"TRUTH" AND SPIRITUALISM.

We frankly confess that were it not that "LIGHT" is regarded by many Spiritualists as one of the very few channels open for the public defence of the facts and truths committed to their charge we should have preferred to preserve silence. We have always cheerfully responded to the call of duty in replying to opponents, because the methods of warfare, especially of late, have in most cases been honourable and worthy of the steel of any man. We regret we cannot so characterise Mr. Labouchere's recent utterances in *Truth*. In most circumstances he who, on obviously insufficient grounds, so far forgets himself as to go out of his way to attack a large and increasingly influential body of people in terms the use of which are open to severe condemnation, is beneath notice of any kind; but there are obvious reasons why, in this instance, a different course should be pursued. Our chief cause for reluctance in dealing with this matter is a strong feeling of hesitance in believing that tactics of the kind indulged in by *Truth* can really find countenance at the hands of, or be approved by, any person possessed of even the smallest capacity for right thinking, or a desire for fair play. It would speak ill for the present condition of society if we are mistaken.

We are willing, for the time being, to concede that Mr. Labouchere probably believes he is acting in good faith, and really considers he is doing a public service in denouncing Spiritualists in general and Mr. Eglinton in particular; but while admitting so much, we are bound to protest, in the most emphatic manner, against the language used; and in the hope that Mr. Labouchere will make what reparation he can when he realises what he has, perhaps, unwittingly done, we make the following remarks.

We did not feel called upon to notice the first attack. It was apparently so far removed from the sphere of courteous and free inquiry that we felt unable to cope with such graceful expletives as "humbug," "credulous dolts," "knave," "cheat," and so on, as applied to Spiritualism, Spiritualists, and mediums. Mr. Labouchere has, however, since then, become more explicit. In the last number of his journal he returns to the subject, and in introducing an anonymous letter he speaks of Mr. Eglinton as a "rogue

and vagabond," furthermore expressing an opinion that "the police should take the man Eglinton in hand," and offering to supply evidence against him for "prosecution on the ground of pretended dealings with the unseen world."

Now we wish to inform the editor of *Truth* that he has attacked, in a most unjust and unjustifiable manner, a man whom hundreds of persons of good standing and education in all ranks of society, from the highest circles downwards, believe to be honest and true. There are numbers of these personages who can testify, that to whatever cause or causes these mysterious phenomena are to be traced, they are certainly not due to fraud or trick on the part of Mr. Eglinton. The evidence on this score would, if taken in the trial of a man for his life, be held to be sufficient and effective.

If, therefore, those who believe, through personal observation and the strictest scrutiny, that the phenomena of psychography are due to a cause or causes outside of, yet in some unexplained way intimately connected with, the medium, are "credulous dolts" and "fools," then we must class in such a category men who rank far above the average run of mankind. But Mr. Labouchere, if we are to give him credit for consistency and a desire to do justice as well as serve truth, does not make himself quite clear on these points. He says, in effect, people wonder how, in the present age of enlightenment, fools have been found to become the dupes of some old crone who pretends to have dealings with the unseen world, and (now we quote the exact words) "yet Eglinton is allowed to practise his trade with impunity, and (the italics are ours) *people of sense and education pay him.*"

Surely, that in itself is *prima facie* evidence that sensible and educated people believe him to be an honest man, and anything but a rogue and vagabond? If not, who would Mr. Labouchere have pronounced an opinion on the subject?

To take recent cases alone, the names of those who have satisfied themselves that there is something in the phenomena, and that they are beyond Mr. Eglinton's control would form a goodly list. We will mention two or three only. First and foremost comes Mr. Gladstone. ("LIGHT," November 8th, 1884.) If we read the record of that gentleman's experience aright, he, though expressing no conclusion as to the nature of the phenomena, was yet thoroughly assured of Mr. Eglinton's integrity. Similar, though incomparably stronger testimony because coming from those who have given deeper and more thorough attention to the subject, has been placed on record in these columns alone, by Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell ("LIGHT," May 31st, 1884), Mr. C. C. Massey, Barrister-at-Law ("LIGHT," April 19th, 1884), the Honourable Roden Noel ("LIGHT," April 19th, 1884), the Honourable Percy Wyndham, M.P. ("LIGHT," June 1st), and if we had space we could give, and hereby promise to supply, if necessary, dozens of names of persons of undoubted probity and eminence in the ranks of science, literature, and art, who know these phenomena to be genuine. If testimony of this nature as to Mr. Eglinton's good faith is not admissible, then we fear we must in all circumstances entirely reject human evidence.

Mr. Labouchere has done a grievous wrong to Mr. Eglinton, a man whom we all—that is those of us who know him—respect and trust. He has, however, done more than this. He has struck a deadly blow at the principle of free inquiry, and we are loth to believe this was deliberate or intentional. If, therefore, the editor of *Truth* is honest in his desire to state facts, and is actuated by the average Englishman's sense of fair play, he will at once retract what he has said, and make that reparation which all honourable men concede in such cases to be nothing more than an act of bare justice. We may well leave the matter here at present.

As regards the letter quoted by *Truth*, we simply remark that,

it is, in the first place, anonymous, and in the second, that it bears on the face of it evidence that it is based upon hearsay and gossip—with, we suspect, the common result of embodying so much of the truth, wrongly stated, as to make it worse than a downright lie. A charge of this kind should not be made under the cloak of secrecy, and when the name of the writer is revealed it will be quite time enough to take notice of it.

Mr. Labouchere, in speaking of prosecution, evidently has that Act of Parliament (9 George II., c. 5) in view which, twisted in the same way as it is distorted in order to make it apply to mediumship, would include every clergyman and minister of the Gospel professing to have communion with the Supreme Spirit. We mean no irreverence; we simply state a fact. By it also every medium, whether public or private, whether money is taken, or whether the services are given freely, can be proceeded against. In this respect the question concerns all Spiritualists and all lovers of free inquiry. If, therefore, Mr. Labouchere succeeds in arousing Spiritualists to bestir themselves to agitate for the repeal of a law never intended to apply to Spiritualism, and acknowledged by many eminent lawyers to be a blot on the Statute Book of a free and enlightened country, we may yet have to thank him, and he may find that in cursing Spiritualism he has only blessed it.

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A conversazione of the members and friends of this Society took place, as announced, on Friday evening, December 19th, in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall.

The regular business of the evening commenced at eight, the chair being taken by MR. STANTON MOSES, the President of the Alliance.

In opening the proceedings the CHAIRMAN made a brief reference to the accident which had recently befallen him, and he expressed his cordial thanks to all the kind friends who had shown him so much sympathy. He felt it a duty to occupy if possible his proper place at that meeting, and he had been much relieved when the state of his health allowed him to hope that he might be present. But the shock he had sustained compelled him to exercise great care, and he trusted they would on this account excuse more than a very brief speech. He would therefore no longer stand between the meeting and the speaker of the evening, Mr. Alaric A. Watts.

MR. WATTS then delivered an address on "Spiritualism; Some Difficulties with Some Suggestions," a full report of which appears in this week's issue.

After the usual vote of thanks to the lecturer had been proposed and seconded, and an interval for refreshments,

DR. G. WYLD took the chair in place of Mr. Stanton Moses, who had been obliged to leave early. He then called upon Mr. E. Dawson Rogers to address the meeting.

MR. E. DAWSON ROGERS said he had been requested by the Council of the Alliance to make some reference to the work of the Association in the past, and its hopes as to the future. With regard to the past, they had not very much to boast of, for the simple fact that the Spiritualist public had not furnished them very generously with the means to do much work. He found himself placed in a difficult position, for while he was requested by the Council to give them a broad hint, he was at the same time strictly enjoined by the President of the Alliance not to beg. He had been begging lately. It had fallen to his lot to write the paragraphs in "LIGHT" with reference to the Sustentation Fund of that journal, and their President had paid him the compliment of saying that he had exhibited the possession of all the wiles and arts of the professional beggar. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, so long as it answered its purpose he could put up with that. At the same time, while their President told him on no account to beg, he hardly knew what attitude to take, or what remarks to offer to them. One of the fundamental points in the constitution of the Alliance was not to get into debt, and he had pleasure in telling them that at the end of the first year they had not only not got into debt, but they had a little money in hand, and they did not intend to spend that until they had got some more. He thought they had done some good service. They had had a series of very happy meetings in that hall, and if they had done nothing more,

good work would have been accomplished in the direction of binding Spiritualists together and cheering on the workers in their work. He was puzzled sometimes to know why Spiritualists were not a little more generous—no, he did not mean that—but why they did not take more advantage of their opportunities. He really hardly knew how to put it, but everyone present would know what he meant. Perhaps he had better tell them a little of what they could do if they had the sinews of war. They had spent no inconsiderable portion of the sum which had been placed at their command in sending out literature of various kinds into good channels, taking care never to force Spiritualism down anybody's throat; and never to press it upon people who were not evidently anxious to know, but still never withholding their aid whenever an opportunity for judiciously distributing literature presented itself. But they might have done a great deal more in that direction had it not been for reasons which he must not mention but which, after what he had said, were sufficiently obvious. Then the members might not all be aware that they had a valuable library of books, which could be placed at their service if the Alliance had a home of its own. Till they were enabled to get a habitation those books would be useless. It occurred to him while he was on the topic of useful work, to mention that it had come to his knowledge through his slight association with "LIGHT," that there were men connected with the work of Spiritualism who were taking to themselves all the comfort and all the blessing which come from doing good. He knew, as a matter of fact, that the editor of "LIGHT" received an average of 200 letters a week. These letters had to be answered, and were, he knew, replied to after hard labour in editing, managing, and writing for the paper, though such work would properly come within the sphere of the Alliance, a large amount of that correspondence having reference to anxious inquiry as to how to learn something about Spiritualism, and the asking of advice and guidance in investigating the subject. He thought the Alliance ought to do that work, and he might mention that the Council contemplated, if possible, forming a sub-committee of correspondence for the purpose. But all plans of that kind meant money. At present they had no means for such work; but he held that the editor and manager of "LIGHT" ought not to be called upon to spend their money, as well as time, in a matter that was properly the work of their Society, nor that the blessing which comes from doing good should be unshared by others. That was the best way he could put it. He would also remind them that they had on the table forms of application for membership which could be very practically used by those present if they wished to help the Council.

MR. E. DAWSON ROGERS then referred to the attack upon Mr. Eglinton in one of the society papers, but as the matter is under discussion by the Council of the Alliance, we refrain from making any report at present. The meeting broke up at eleven o'clock.

MR. J. J. MORSE.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you kindly permit me to acknowledge the receipt of the following sums for the J. J. Morse Testimonial:—

	£	s.	d.
R. A.	3	0	0
A Friend	2	0	0
T. Everitt, Esq.	0	10	6

All further subscriptions will be gratefully acknowledged by yours very truly,

FRANK EVERITT.

26, Penton-street, N.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—In consequence of the Christmas holidays, we have had to go to press some days in advance of our usual time. This will explain the non-appearance of several important communications.

SLATE-WRITING.—At Moffitt's photographic gallery is a photo from a pair of slates. A well-known citizen here, visiting Boston, took with him a pair of new slates, tied and waxed together; went to a medium through whom such tests are said to be given. The slates did not leave the owner's hands. He was told to hold them upon his own head with one hand while he held one of the medium's with the other. He did so. He heard writing; it lasted about ten seconds. He did not unfasten his slates until he returned home. Then he found two messages written on them from his deceased sister and brother, and he has had them photographed. These are the facts of the case.—J. W. P. in *Hartford Times*.

SPIRITUALISM.—SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH
SOME SUGGESTIONS.

An Address delivered before the London Spiritualist Alliance at St. James's Hall, by MR. ALARIC A. WATTS, on the Evening of December 19th, 1884.

It was remarked by one of the most illustrious of English statesmen of perhaps her greatest military commander, long before the latter had fully disclosed himself, that when he discussed a matter of business with him he heard of all the difficulties first—and nothing of them afterwards. "I never met any military officer," said Mr. Pitt of Sir Arthur Wellesley, "with whom it is so satisfactory to converse. He states every difficulty before he undertakes any service—but none after he has undertaken it."

The service which I have undertaken to-night is, if I may pursue the analogy, a limited portion or aspect of a combined series of operations, the first movements of which have been developed in the admirable address delivered to this Alliance on Thursday, October 23rd, by my friend, General Drayson.

It is to the second stage—or some aspects of it—that I am now to address myself, and—following the illustrious example which I have adduced—primarily with its difficulties.

I shall venture to premise by assuming the acceptance by this company as a whole, of the fundamental belief upon which "the London Spiritualist Alliance" is founded, viz., that we possess adequate evidence that a means has developed itself—and I say "developed *itself*"—for it was none of our seeking—for establishing communication with the spiritual world or state of existence—as apart from the material—and with the denizens thereof. Those of the visitors honouring us with their company this evening who are at present only inquirers into this fundamental truth, I must resign the task of converting to other agencies, contenting myself with the conviction that, in the investigation of new truth, doubt is only belief in the embryo.

The first serious difficulty which the Spiritualist has to encounter, when he shall have overcome the initiatory difficulties of experimentalisation, will be likely to proceed—paradoxical as it may appear—from his belief.

In consequence of the mystery inseparable from absolute ignorance, in which, until the advent of Spiritualism, everything connected with the spiritual state of existence has been enshrouded, a veneration has attached to it in the mind of man similar in character to that which has, in all ages, given an aspect of sanctity to the ordinary operations of as yet uncomprehended natural laws.

This veneration, which has become from habit and association an integral portion of the being of most of us, ceases to be reasonable, when under the Divine guidance, the spiritual state immaterial has of its own accord—and I again insist upon this—of its own accord—under laws of its own, now become externally operative—invited the investigations of man. This veneration, now become superstitious, is a very serious stumbling-block in the earlier stages of spiritualistic investigation, when the new relationship established between the two states, spiritual and natural, has not been fully and adequately realised by the experimentalist.

In consequence of it, communications from spirits are, in this early stage of our progress, very apt to be received with confidence, because they are such; and a condition of mind—or rather of feeling—becomes formulated highly adverse to sensible and reasonable investigation.

Nor is this all. Intercourse between the two states or worlds, spiritual and natural, is regulated, we have reason to believe, by the law of affinity. Affinity may be said to be spiritual propinquity. Like is near to Like. This affinity is of three orders—natural, spiritual or intellectual, celestial or moral. The communications present themselves usually in this sequence, and the earliest communications received by us through these methods will therefore be likely to be in the names of those, venerated and beloved, who have passed into the spiritual world before us, with whom we are in natural affinity; and it is apt to be felt—though we may scarcely avow it even to ourselves—to be almost impious to doubt them. At all events there is a great unwillingness to do so.

I am almost ashamed to propound to such an audience the obvious truism that a communication of the source of which we possess no assured knowledge, can derive no confirmation whatever from the name in which it is given; but I am, nevertheless, pretty certain that there are few Spiritualists able to affirm that

they have never, in the condition of mind to which I refer, been tempted to overlook it.

In this frame of mind, or phase of feeling, the Spiritualist is laid open to the temptations of a particular class of spirit, the most really dangerous, perhaps, of any with which it is possible for us to be infested, because these spirits possess the power of neutralising the processes of the reason by operating, I may say, magically on the will, against whom we are warned by Swedenborg under the name of "confirming spirits;" spirits that possess a subtle power, by infusing themselves into the perceptions and will, of confirming the human being in any opinion which it is his desire to maintain, and to give to any estimate of things, however erroneous, the aspect of truth.

The operations of these injurious agencies are by no means confined to Spiritualists, as a very slight observation of the social, political, and theological conflicts going on around us will sufficiently testify. It is, however, the privilege of the Spiritualist and one of his first duties to recognise and watch the operations of these malefic influences and to guard against them. While I am upon the subject of spirits troublesome and injurious to the Spiritualist, I would desire to say a word of another class of spirit, very active and mischievous in this relation, whom I will describe as "inflating spirits;" spirits who employ themselves in stimulating the vanity and self-esteem of the experimentalist by false or misleading statements of the great importance of the work to be done by him or her individually, and of the exalted position which he already enjoys or to which he is directed to aspire. Experienced Spiritualists will be very familiar with the operations of these gentry and the evil effects produced by them upon simple and innocent natures; but as there may be present some who may not yet have learned by experience or observation to recognise them for what they are, I have ventured to place them for a moment under the microscope.

There is assuredly no Spiritualist of whom it may not be truly said that he has a great work to accomplish; but that work, probably, has more relation to himself than others, and will most likely consist—and enough too—in the utilisation of his knowledge and opportunities for the spiritualisation of his own individual being.

Am I then to be understood to affirm that all communications purporting to emanate from spirits are to be received with mistrust and suspicion? I do not desire so to insinuate; but I do earnestly urge, nevertheless, that they all require to be scrupulously verified, and much more scrupulously verified than they very commonly are; verified in the light of reasonable probability; in the light of collateral circumstances—in their bearing one upon another, but above all in a careful comparison, not only of the forms of expression but of the spirit of the communication—its essential character and quality—with the mind and character of the deceased person from whom it is claimed to emanate.

Much pain would be spared to the Spiritualist receiving the message—and sometimes to others—and much discredit be spared to the cause, if this only were more universally recognised and obeyed than it very commonly is.

My own observation and experience would lead me to say that, in the first instance, these communications are very usually genuine; and it is probable that, whatever serious examination they receive at the hands of a large number of experimentalists, will be applied in these early stages, and be omitted later when they are most needed. In Spiritualism, as in morals, it is when Reason has been lulled to rest and Feeling has assumed her throne, that temptation—which is only a word for trial—is likely to present itself. Having verified our earlier communications to the best of our ability, we are likely to receive those which follow with an unreasoning confidence. Discrepancies, when they present themselves—which they will—are disregarded or plausibly accounted for. We become accustomed to the communications—and use is very risky in the presence of danger; we recur to them from habit—which is only a word for form—we seek in them a perfunctory consolation and support, for which we should more wisely look for the more truly spiritual direction of our not unaided instincts and reflection, and in the result they are very apt to contract and enervate the mind which it is their real mission to invigorate and enlarge. But, whether we be wise or whether we be the reverse, the time will assuredly arrive at which, unless we are wilful to the confines of insanity, communications from spirits will present themselves, accredited often by the most dear and venerated names, which no sophistries of our own phantasy, however aided by confirming spirits, can enable us to accept as true,

I say, well is it that these falsities should present themselves to arouse our reason and awaken reflection.

We are now introduced to the second difficulty of spiritualistic investigation, and this arises, very naturally, from a reaction from the first. Our first difficulty, as I have said, will have been likely to proceed from inconsiderate belief; our second will arise from equally irrational and inconsiderate disbelief.

Unless we shall continue determined to wrap ourselves up in delusion, in which case we are likely to be awakened by some sudden and unlooked-for catastrophe, we are apt to be seized now with unreasonable dismay. We forget the experiences which we have verified, and the satisfactory evidence by which they have been established; we mistrust as unreasonably as we have confided; we turn and flee in a disgraceful panic.

Now is the time for us to emulate the example of a gallant *attaché* to a foreign embassy, of whom a friend was telling me the other day, who, when nearing his first fence on his first day's experiences of an English hunting field, was heard to address himself in the following words: "*Allons, Joubert, du courage, mon ami, du courage.*"

The communications which we are now unable to accept as true, in any sense in which we must suppose it to be intended that we should understand them, range themselves more or less under two classes.

The first and most obvious class of these perplexing communications is of objectless and deliberate falsehoods. So aimless and so deliberate are these, because at the same time persistent and capable of being readily identified for what they are, that we may be led to consider whether there may not be some specific object at the back of them—some underlying beneficent purpose in the permission that they should exist. What purpose? To display to us, perhaps, the important fundamental axiom that it is not the mission of Spiritualism to tell us Truths, but to teach us Truth.

If a man desires a new region wherein to prospect for gold, in which he is to find the precious metal already minted into sovereigns for his pocket, without the trouble of crushing the quartz, it is not in this direction that he must look to find it.

Let us consider for a moment what would be the effect upon us, as rational beings, if all communications made to us from the spiritual world or state could be accepted by us as invariably true. We should be led to seek in them a solution of all the problems of life—for direction in every action—for comfort in every need. The effect of this would be necessarily and unavoidably a gradual and finally entire suspension of the operations of Reason; to intromit us into a condition of worse than second childhood; and finally to leave us in a state of being in which, the processes of Intellect no longer needed, the powers of mind needful to them would wholly disappear from disuse, or leave behind them only rudimentary intellectual appendages from which the scientific investigator of the future would be able to detect and display the nobler origin from which we shall have degraded.

Lying spiritual messages are the natural corollary of indiscriminating and irrational belief, and very thankful, as I have said, may we be for them, for they are blessings in disguise.

I now come to the second class of which I have spoken, of communications from spirits which we are often unable at first to dissociate from the class of communications artfully and deliberately false and made with intention to deceive.

This class of communication is not made with an intention to deceive, but with quite a different object; but the messages are false or unintelligible from a literal standpoint.

Firstly, there are those in order to understand which we must place ourselves in the position of an inhabitant of the spiritual world—a person in the spiritual state addressing a denizen of this world. This method is adopted probably to spiritualise our ideas, and qualify us for *real* spiritual intercommunication. The language of this world represents now different ideas. The word "death," for example, lends itself to much misconception when employed in spiritual communications of this order; and generally words expressing, to our comprehension, ideas derived from time and space, which have no existence in the world or state spiritual. "Three things," says Swedenborg, "of the literal sense perish when the spiritual sense is evolved—Space—Time—and Person."

This difference of standpoint giving rise to a "confusion of tongues" between the spiritual and natural states, is very nobly

summarised in the following lines of a great metaphysician—now too little read—Cowley.

"Angels who live, and know what 'tis to be,
Who all the nonsense of our language see,
Who speak *things*, and our words their indrawn pictures see
When we, by a foolish figure, say—
Behold an old man dead; then they
Speak properly and cry, '*Behold a man child born.*'"

Passing from this earlier category of spiritual communications not capable of being regarded as true in the literal sense, but yet true, we come to a class of communication not intended to be received by us literally, not merely to be accounted for by differences of terminology, arising from the different standpoints of the two worlds, but intended to be understood spiritually or figuratively. When we receive them we are entering, or have entered, or it is sought to prepare us for entering, the state or world spiritual; and our progress in it is determined by our willingness and capacity to study and comprehend them. Great assistance in doing this, I may here observe, may be obtained by a study of the "Laws of Correspondence," as laid down by Swedenborg, whose experiences as a medium are to the intellectual Spiritualist simply invaluable.

We now enter upon a third difficulty to be encountered by the Spiritualist, the difficulty which must always arise where persons converse with those speaking a different language.

The inhabitants of a nation adjacent to our borders, who dwell on the border land, will understand our language and be able, more or less, to make themselves understood in it to us; but, as we make our way into the interior of the country, it is by its language and not ours that communication must be maintained. So is it with spiritual communications. On our first entry upon them the communicating spirit will be able to accommodate itself to our existing knowledge and methods; but as we progress into the interior—and if we do not so progress we need not trouble ourselves to set out on this journey at all—we must enlarge our knowledge and submit ourselves to their laws.

The language of the spiritual state, world, or order proper, is a language of symbols. It is not more so, in fact, than the language of the world material, for what are the letters of the alphabet but symbols, wholly without intelligible significance until the system of symbology represented by them is understood? If we will not learn our alphabet we must remain ignorant of language. But these are material symbols, if I may so express it. The alphabet of the spiritual state is immaterial. It is an alphabet of ideas, wherein the thing signified by the word is to be deduced by a process of analogy. I will give an illustration.

"What am I to do?" inquired a perplexed Spiritualist of a more experienced friend, "when the spirit enjoins me to swallow the church door key?" "Obey the spirit," was the answer. "Open out to yourself an entrance into the spiritual state by entering into some formal religious communion. It is probably this that your nature needs at the moment, and perhaps all need."

While given without any warning that they are to be understood otherwise than literally, communications given in this order are wholly and absolutely figurative, and are intended to be so received; therefore we may ask ourselves, why is no warning given of this change of standpoint, when the communication given is, for the first time, designed to be understood spiritually, so as to protect us from error? The reason for this, I think, is that it is a law as infrangible as natural laws, that when we enter this more spiritual state or order, we *must* derive our instruction from *experience* and not from oral teaching.

It is so, of course, largely in the natural world, when we pass from childhood to manhood and womanhood.

I have said that the law of affinity, natural, spiritual or intellectual, moral or celestial, seems to govern spiritual communications; and that they present themselves usually in this order. I say usually because I believe this to be the natural order and most frequently observed, but Spiritualism in its present state as a science has not reached the stage of dogmatic assertion, and lends itself little to being pigeon-holed in the narrow cell of any individual experience and observation.

However this may be, the class of communications from spirits of which I am now speaking, belong to the order or degree of spiritual affinity which I have termed spiritual or intellectual. They proceed, so to speak, from our intellectual relations in the world or state spiritual.

As our earlier intercourse with spirits will have been designed, we may believe, to afford us comfort by responding to our

natural emotions, so those which now present themselves are similarly designed, I think, to afford comfort by a different—I will not say higher, but different—process, viz., by stimulating, and then satisfying the intellectual appetites. In this connection I may be allowed to point out that that Holy Spirit which we are invited to seek as the realisation and consummation of spiritual progress, is described to us as The Comforter, and also The Leader into Truth. “It shall lead you into all truth,” shewing, I think, that it is from the intellectual examination of spiritual things that we are to look for real and abiding comfort in the difficulties and perplexities of existence.

While, therefore, I have been anxious to be allowed to caution my brother and sister Spiritualists against the temptations of indiscriminate and superstitious belief, I would with equal earnestness press upon them to examine thoroughly, in every aspect, and from every standpoint, intellectually and imaginatively, all such communications before dismissing them as false. I say emphatically, *imaginatively*; and this brings me to the last and most comprehensive difficulty in our intercourse with the spiritual state—most comprehensive because it is the *alpha* and *omega* of its difficulties, because it includes all the others; and this is want of imagination on the part of the Spiritualist, and an indisposition to employ it.

It would seem to be a very prevalent opinion that imagination is a faculty or gift intended to be employed solely by poets, writers of novels, and such fanciful persons, for the diversion of humanity; that it is the mortal adversary of reason and ever to be mistrusted and discountenanced by all sensible folk. Some there are, I believe, who regard it as one of the mediæval theologians regarded poetry—as the devil’s wine. That it should be of utility for any practical purpose of life seems never to have entered into the mind to conceive of many sensible and truth-prizing persons. It is supposed by some eminent men—who ought to know better—to be identical with fancy—Phantasia—Phantasy—to which it bears no nearer relationship whatsoever than that which the substance bears to the shadow, or the light to the darkness.

What, then, is this faculty, and what are its uses in investigating and forming a judgment upon the phenomena of Spiritualism?

It is the faculty or sense—for it is just as much a real sense as sight or touch—whereby “the invisible things from the beginning are clearly seen—being understood by the things that are made.” It is, therefore, “the evidence of things unseen,” and the only evidence possible of such things whereby, building upon reason and experience, we are enabled to realise a knowledge whereunto reason and experience are too limited to attain.

So far from furnishing only dreams to the poet and combinations to the novelist, it is the *fons et origo* of every original idea, moral, mental, or mechanical, that has ever furthered the progress of humanity, and the slowness of that progress is attributable solely to the lack of its exercise. So far from being the adversary of reason, it is the higher reason, its helpmeet, and should be united to it in an indissoluble marriage. So far from being identifiable with phantasy, it is the very substance of what is real; to epitomise it in a word, it is Insight.

In displaying what it is, I have, perhaps, sufficiently indicated its use and purpose in the investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism. But it is well to be fortified in such matters by a more authoritative experience than our own, and I will venture, therefore, to invoke in support of my arguments in favour of the uses of imagination in the investigation of spiritual phenomena, the testimony of a witness, not a poet or novelist, and, assuredly, not a Spiritualist, to its value in the cognate investigations of the phenomena of matter. I am quoting—it is lawful for us to be taught by our adversaries—an essay on “The Scientific Use of Imagination,” by Professor Tyndall. Its use is thus defined by this distinguished writer:—“To take you beyond the boundary of mere observation into regions where things are intellectually discerned. But how are those hidden things to be revealed? Philosophers *may* be right in affirming that we cannot transcend experience, but we can, at all events, carry it a long way from its origin. Urged to the attempt by sensible phenomena, we find ourselves gifted with the power of forming mental images of the ultra-sensible; and by this power, when duly chastened and controlled, we can lighten the darkness which surrounds the world of sense.”

To “lighten the darkness which surrounds the world of sense” is, of course, the first object of the investigation of the phenomena of the world of spirit; and I am happy to be con-

firmed in the methods I am earnestly commending to you for so doing, by so distinguished a scientific authority.

The difficulties of which I am discoursing are all of them merely difficulties of darkness. With light they will disappear.

Cultivating and employing this faculty of insight, we shall soon cease to be capable of being deceived by communications from spirits given in the names of the loved and venerated who have passed away—in the names of men and women “of light and learning” for all time; we shall distinguish readily from the true, sentimental, or flatulent verbiages, which if we are to believe, we must believe also that the spiritual state of existence is not a state of progress, but of degeneration.

With its light upon other phenomena taking their origin in Spiritualism and mainly echoes and reverberations of some aspects of truth revealed by it, less coarse than those of which I have just spoken, but more dangerous, they will yield up *their* secrets, if they have any, and be judged for what they are really worth.

With this light upon them, not for a moment will the Spiritualist be imposed upon by the “confirming” or “inflating” spirits of those who claim an exclusive knowledge of laws regulating the destinies of human beings through countless cycles of ages—claims supported by no more satisfactory evidence than thaumaturgical phenomena, valuable and interesting on their plane as subjects of thoughtful investigation, but far too weak to bear the universe on their shoulders.

Exercising a sober and rational imagination, the Spiritualist will no longer permit his reason and intellect to be predominated by pretentious individualism, claiming a monopoly of esoteric mysteries which he is not worthy to have revealed to him. He will perceive, at once, in this light, that of truths which it is not permitted to promulgate, it cannot be needful to speak; that Esotericism, in any real sense of the word, is violated where it is proclaimed to exist; and that it may fairly be doubted to exist at all wherever ostentatious proclamation is made of its existence.

Some of the “difficulties” of Spiritualism I have thus essayed broadly to delineate. I would willingly have indulged myself by dwelling rather on its comforts and its blessings; upon the knowledge which it has been the instrument of affording us of things which many prophets and wise men have desired to know and have not known; upon the light thrown by its revelations of the actions of unembodied spirits; on the causes underlying much of the action of man; upon its value in limiting the area of human error by its vindication of many aspects of long discredited truth; upon the confirmation afforded by it of much contained in all the sacred books of the world; and of the especial singleness, purity, unadulteratedness, if I may use such a word, of those held in especial veneration among us; and above all upon the assistance afforded by it to the study of Theosophy, or the intellectual apprehension of Divine things.

Upon these subjects I would willingly have expatiated, but they are not on the record.

It is of the difficulties and not of the beneficent aspects of Spiritualism that I have had to speak.

In things of the spirit it is the evening and the morning that make the day, not the morning and the evening. My duty has been with the darkness and not with the light, with the sowing, not with the reaping.

My “suggestions” I would finally epitomise in the advice given by the spirit to the friend whose case I have quoted:—

Swallow the church door key! The church door key of Spiritualism is a bold but sober and chastened imagination.

IN Germany the practice of cremation extends; in Coburg alone the number of cremations is reported to have already exceeded 200.

PRODIGES.—We have recently been telling our readers of Jacopo Inaudi, the Italian youth, so untaught as not to have learnt to read, being able to solve, almost instantaneously, intricate arithmetical and geometrical problems. We have now to report another prodigy in the person of Chandra Singh, a student in St. Stephen’s College, Delhi, India. He is blind, but he is said to have such a memory that he can recite word for word any book, not only in his own language, but in English, or in Persian, that is read to him. He solves complex arithmetical calculations with almost instantaneous rapidity. In a late examination he passed the twenty-seventh among some hundreds of competitors. He is now preparing for an examination in law.—*Revue Spirite*.—[The *Revue Spirite* cites such prodigies as illustrating some points of the doctrine of Re-incarnation.]