

# Light:

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATEVER LOATH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT.—Paul.

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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.]

## "SPIRITUALISM AT HOME."

BY FRANK PODMORE, M.A.

I must preface my letter by an apology to Mr. Theobald. I assumed—as I now find without any trustworthy evidence, and upon mere conjecture—that the mistake of ascribing a prose quotation to an epic poem had been committed by the spirit who is responsible for the quotation. Mr. Theobald has now informed us that the mistake was committed by a "Greek scholar." No doubt Mr. Theobald has some grounds for making a statement so extraordinary, and I must apologise to him for my unwarrantable supposition.

Mr. Theobald proceeds to state that he has submitted my letter and the original writing to a friend who is acquainted with the Greek language, and that this friend dissents from my reading of several of the words in the Greek; and "considers some of the letters of antique form, and Mr. Podmore's criticism thereon unimportant, and in one case wholly wrong." I think Mr. Theobald should state whether this critic is identical with the Greek scholar who made the mistake referred to above. For in that event I shall not be inclined to believe so fully as Mr. Theobald in his competency to discuss questions of Greek scholarship. But even should the umpire's qualification for his task be beyond dispute, Mr. Theobald's intimate acquaintance with investigations of the kind must surely convince him that the course which he has adopted is not calculated to elucidate the truth. I made my criticisms openly, and explained my reasons for making them. It is not enough for Mr. Theobald to meet my objections by a vague report of what an anonymous critic has asserted or assumed. The name of the critic should be given, the grounds of his criticism should be set forth, and his actual words should be quoted. If I have made a mistake, he should come forward and prove me in the wrong. If the form of the letters is archaic, he should adduce other examples of these archaic forms. If he disagrees with me in his reading of certain words, the writing should be submitted to other duly qualified judges. The matter cannot be settled by assertions and assumptions of his or of mine. But I may mention one circumstance which may, perhaps, prove relevant to the issue between us. Mr. Theobald, as mentioned above, stated that he submitted my criticism of the Greek to a friend whom Mr. Podmore knows, and would consider equally able to form an opinion of the writing as he is. This friend is not only

a Greek scholar, but a Spiritualist. ("LIGHT," p. 53.) Now, I have received a letter, dated February 2nd, from a valued friend, who is a Spiritualist, who possesses some knowledge of Greek, and who was consulted by Mr. Theobald on the Greek quotation, and on my comments thereon. The most pertinent sentence of my correspondent's letter I will venture to quote:—

"On these (i.e., the Greek and my comments) I could have no decided opinion, for my knowledge of Greek is scarcely beyond the alphabet. \* \* \* \* There is a letter in the last 'LIGHT' (i.e., of the 31st ult.) which puzzles me."

The meaning which the writer intended to convey by the words last quoted is hardly doubtful; but perhaps Mr. Theobald will solve the puzzle by telling us whether this correspondent of mine is identical with the "Greek scholar" referred to by him.

Before passing on to consider the question of the production of the writing, I will meet Mr. Theobald's challenge on the position of *men*. It seems to me probable that in the original sentence from which the writing is copied, the nominative, *Odusseus*, stood first, thus—*Odusseus men*; and that the copyist, with a fine sense of literary propriety, not wishing to introduce the quotation by a word that would be obviously irrelevant to his previous remarks, omitted the name *Odusseus*.

I have expressed my belief that the writing is the production of a person wholly ignorant of Greek. But there are remarkable indications of an *imperfect* knowledge of Greek somewhere. Though the termination of the word *Odusson* is incorrect, it is yet characteristically Greek in form. Again, though no accent, and only one "breathing" is inserted, that one is not only inserted correctly, but it is precisely the one mark which is essential to the correct pronunciation of the sentence—representing, as it does, the letter *h*. Lastly—a point which I overlooked in my previous letter—the word *epeidan* is incorrect; the proper conjunction in the sentence is *epeide*. But *epeidan* is an actual Greek word, with the same meaning as *epeide*, and it is at least as unlikely that a person *wholly* ignorant of Greek should have invented *epeidan*, as that a Greek scholar should have written it in this context.

These three circumstances appear to me to indicate that while the sentence was actually written by a person who knew no Greek at all, it was composed by a person who possessed a knowledge of Greek about equivalent to that of a schoolboy in the fourth form.

When a scientific student wishes to ascertain the cause of some rare phenomenon, he naturally compares it with any analogous phenomena which have come under his observation. Let us pursue this method in the present case. Most readers of "LIGHT" will have read with interest the communications published in the spring and early summer of last year, from Saadi, from Wamik, another Persian poet, and others. And possibly some may have been rather impressed by the abnormal introduction of out-of-the-way Oriental poetry into a quiet suburban household. I doubt, however, if any reader of "LIGHT" will have appreciated the full significance of that note which Mr. Theobald has appended to his account of these writings in "LIGHT" of June 14th, and which also appears at p. 29 of his tract, "Spiritualism at Home."

Obviously, the marvellous nature of the incidents, as

originally described by Mr. Theobald, in "LIGHT" of April 19th and May 3rd, was due, not to the actual method of production of the writing—for the conditions were not such as to exclude possible fraud—but to the antecedent improbability that any person capable of such fraud should have any knowledge of the works of old and little-known Persian poets, and should be able to give accurate translations from their works, and an accurate account of the life of one of them. The whole interest of the matter lies, and must have been understood by all readers of "LIGHT" to lie, in this admitted improbability. When, therefore, Mr. Theobald discovered—what he did discover in the interval between the original publication of these writings and their republication in "LIGHT" of June 14th—that the whole of the information given was derived from such a readily accessible source as "Chambers' Repository," it was clearly incumbent on him to explain this in the most unmistakable terms to his readers. What he does say in the note referred to I will here quote.

"Since writing the above, I have had my attention called to an old tract, called 'Persian Poetry,' published by Chambers many years ago, in which every particular relating to Wamik is confirmed. . . . Wamik here unfolds the mystic doctrines of Zerdusht, and has several stanzas on the world of fire, in the midst of which come the two which he wrote direct in our midst; but in the tract the last line but two differs, and reads thus: 'Thy living word through *Vesta's* fire domain,' and in a note we are told that the word in italics is introduced by the translator. The spirit of Wamik, in writing it now, uses *Zend Avesta*, and otherwise corrects the translator. The slight variations, as a test of spirit identity, are important and interesting. . . . In the same tract are also very interesting references to Saadi, and some of the poems written by the spirit of Saadi, as quoted above, are given with similar variations, which preclude the idea of their being copies, if such were admitted possible."

This parsimonious commentary can hardly be considered a satisfactory account of the matter. The "old tract" referred to is included in Part VI. of that at one time popular and widely circulated series known as "Chambers' Repository of Instructive and Amusing Tracts." It is, therefore, as stated above, a readily accessible source of information. From this source are derived *all* (not "some," as stated by Mr. Theobald) the translations of Persian poetry quoted in Mr. Theobald's articles; and *all* the biographical details given. The poetry is quoted *verbatim et literatim*, except for a few trifling alterations, which invariably violate the rhythm, and very generally the sense and the grammar. For instance, in the passage beginning "At home the point of junction is the hearth" ("LIGHT" of June 14th, pp. 248, 249), in the tract the last line but two reads "Thy living word through *Vesta's* fire-domain," but Mr. Theobald's version has it, "Thy *Zend Avesta*, thy living fire domain." This line which, of course, does not scan, and the sense of which is doubtful—is an incongruous mosaic of the original line and of *two* footnotes given in the tract. The first note is appended to "thy Living Word," explaining that it alludes to the "*Zend Avesta*"; the second note—referred to by Mr. Theobald—states that the word "*Vesta*" was introduced by the translator. The "spirit of Wamik," Mr. Theobald tells us, signs this production, and adds the interesting information, "Wamik was burnt to death at Abyssinia: he lived in this life before 636" ("LIGHT," p. 249). The spirit's zeal for biographical accuracy has here outstripped his discretion. If either the spirit or Mr. Theobald had read the tract in "Chambers' Repository" with sufficient care they would have discovered that "Wamik" never *lived* at all; he is an allegorical and wholly imaginary personage, the hero, *not* the author, of the poem quoted; and that the date 636, given in the tract, has no connection whatever either with "Wamik" or the unknown poet. In view of these facts Mr. Theobald must, I think, admit that the proof of "spirit identity" cannot as yet be

considered complete. It is hardly necessary to detail other variations in the poems as given by the spirits, and as printed in the "Repository"; they are all of the same clumsy type.

There is one interesting point, however, to be noted about the poem headed *Ghazi* ("LIGHT," p. 247), which appears in the "Repository" as *Ghazal* (apparently a name for a short lyrical poem). The spirit of Saadi, I regret to say, claims this poem as his own; it is in reality a combination of two poems by a later author—one of the Sufis.

Again, Mr. Theobald hardly does justice to his subject when, in the last lines of the note referred to, he says that the tract contains "very interesting references to Saadi." The reader would certainly not suppose from this casual remark that the whole account which the spirit of Saadi gives of his life on earth is borrowed almost word for word from the tract. Readers of "LIGHT" must, I imagine, have grown tolerably familiar in the last few months with the citation of parallel passages from English and Oriental literature, and I will spare them another infliction of the kind. But it should be observed that the sage whose writings formed the basis of a previous comparison had more excuse for his borrowing, and showed more discretion and accuracy in the manner of it. For our poet, in describing facts so familiar to him as the events of his own past life, is content to use the precise words of another, adding to them not at all, and omitting only certain facts somewhat discreditable to himself. I am afraid we must allow that here, too, we require some further proof before we can regard the identity of the communicating spirit as established. Mr. Theobald, however, is not, apparently, of this opinion. In "LIGHT" of April 19th, after giving Saadi's own account of himself, he writes:—

"On receiving this history I thought it possessed incidents sufficient, probably, for testing its accuracy, and sent notes of it on to my friend, 'M. A. (Oxon.)' from whom I received the following extract, which substantially confirms this spirit identity."

The extract referred to is an account of Saadi derived from another source, corresponding in detail with that given Mr. Theobald by that "spirit." It is difficult to understand upon what rules of evidence Mr. Theobald proceeds when he speaks of the correspondence as a substantial confirmation of spirit identity, even when the source of the spirit communication was still unknown. But a few weeks after publishing this, it was pointed out to him that Saadi's account of himself was undoubtedly derived from the tract above-mentioned, and that this correspondence of two independent accounts of his life was, therefore, destitute of what little evidential significance it might have been supposed to possess. What are we to think of his competency as a witness, and of the value of his recorded evidence, when we find that in republishing the account *twice* ("LIGHT," June 14th, and "Spiritualism at Home") he does not mention these circumstances at all, and alludes to the tract in question merely as containing "very interesting references to Saadi"!!!

In a subsequent letter I hope to return to the subject of these writings from another point of view.

London, February 2nd, 1885.

ORGANISATION.—Believers in Spiritualism are more numerous than any sect in Christendom, excepting the Roman Catholics; yet the most insignificant among them can bring a strong influence to bear upon society, because they, one and all, recognise the value of organisation. Misrepresentations of us, of our principles, and of our people are continually admonishing us to organise. Will any apostle of disorganisation enlighten us as to the superiority of leaving everything among us at loose-ends? If Spiritualism is not respected the fault lies at our own doors. It should appeal to all, for it has in it all the elements for engaging our best affections and for exercising our best intellects. Organise Spiritualism on a natural, broad, rational basis, and it will command the respect of the world.—*Dr S. B. Brittan* (1878).

"MATTER THROUGH MATTER."

My fourth séance with Husk was again, by the kindness of Mr. Stuart-Menteath, held at his house on the 5th inst.

We had ring No. 1, which we found too small to be forced over Husk's hand, again placed on his wrist; but as this operation was not under test conditions, I cannot assert that it was placed there *after* Captain James had hold of the medium's hand.

My object in now addressing you is to draw attention to the present condition of the case.

Husk has my ring, No. 2, still on his wrist, namely, nine days after it was first placed there; he telling us that "Irresistible" declares he will not remove it for some time, as he wishes his medium to exhibit it as an evidence of matter through matter; and to favour this object I now give Mr. Husk's address: 60, Maxted-road, Peckham Rye.

As to the possibility of this ring, which is manifestly much too small to be forced over Husk's hand, having been cut open and then welded on Husk's wrist, I to-day took the opinion of two friends who are civil engineers, one of whose specialities is connected with details in iron, in reference to the construction of locomotive engines. Their opinion was:—

1. In order to weld such a ring, a white heat, approaching the melting point, would be required, and this would almost exclude the attempt to weld it on a human wrist.

2. This necessary degree of heat could not be retained by so slender a ring for more than about one-third of a minute, a period much too brief in which to re-bend the ring into its circular shape round the wrist and to complete the welding.

3. Such an operation, if possible, could be effected by means of a pair of pincers made for the occasion, of a special curve, calibre, and shape, and would require a great leverage power; but such power could only be used through an instrument too large and clumsy to grasp a fine ring within a quarter inch of the wrist.

4. The operation, if effected, would leave the line of welding visible, and thus reveal the operation, although the ring need not be reduced in circumference by the welding, as I have formerly stated, as the ends could be drawn out.

I think we may, therefore, exclude the idea of Husk having had ring No. 2 welded on his wrist. At the same time, it is easier to believe in such a welding than in the passage of matter through matter.

I trust I do not weary your readers with these repeated tests and details, and they will at least show that I am determined not to accept so astounding a proposition as the passage of matter through matter on trust.

Criticisms on this matter are very important as they lead to renewed and more careful experiments. But those who criticise this subject should have certain mechanical aptitudes, and first of all should most carefully examine the experimenter and the materials operated on, before verbally and publicly criticising the operations themselves.

7th February.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

MR. PLUMB, a leading citizen of Sreator, Illinois, writes to us:—"Dr. Slade has been here for a week; about fifty inquirers had séances, and were much impressed by the facts witnessed through his mediumship. His visit has given the cause a great impetus here."—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

Let those who believe in a resurrection of the material body consider attentively this passage of St. Paul, "But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Is not this contrary to the interpretation that the material body will rise again? What we bury is not a human being; it is only its outer used-up framework, which becomes decomposed into its elements, to go to the building up of other material organisms. The doctrine of Jesus is that the soul is the man, that death is the parting of it from its temporary earthly apparatus. The resurrection is only of spiritual significance.—*Dr. Wilder*.

PROFESSOR ELLIOTT COUES' EXPLANATION  
OF TELEPATHY.

(From *The Nation*.)

I beg to offer some hypotheses in explanation of telepathy:

(a.) Suppose that the fact of telepathy has been established substantially according to the results reached by the London Society for Psychical Research, viz.: that one person can know what another person is thinking of without any known physical means of communication;

(b.) Suppose that consciousness and memory, will, understanding, &c., do not depend upon matter for their existence, but only for their manifestation; i.e., are spiritually self-existent, but require a physical basis whence to effect any knowable result, i.e., to become efficient causes or "forces";

(c.) Suppose there is an ubiquitous, imponderable, frictionless, tomic (i.e., not atomic) or any other state of matter, ordinarily inappreciable to the physical senses, having modes of motion peculiar to itself and appropriate to the support and primary manifestation of consciousness; and that we agree to call this kind of matter "akasa," or "od," or "biogen," or anything else;

(d.) Suppose akasa susceptible of being set in sundry modes of motion by the consciousness, will, &c., of some person, and that such modes of motion are respectively the expression of such and such thoughts, in the form of thought-waves;

(e.) Suppose biogen capable of continuing for some time a particular mode of motion impressed upon it by the will, and of propagating this motion to some distance from the point of its origination, just as light-waves, &c., are propagated—both the matter and its motion being ordinarily imperceptible to the physical senses;

(f.) Suppose a person at some distance to be affected by the impacts of these waves in a way that causes in him waves identical in all respects with those proceeding from the originator of the motion;

Obviously, then, the consciousness of the two individuals would coincide; i.e., one would have come to think the same thing the other thought; i.e., one would have "read the mind" of the other; and the operation of the one mind upon the other would not have been cognised by the physical senses of anybody; i.e., it would have been the action of one mind upon another at a distance, without any known physical means of communication; i.e., it would constitute telepathy—just what the London Society for Psychic Research would appear to have established.

Assuming the truth of this hypothesis, it accounts for the facts, is not incompatible with any of them, and is, therefore, an available working hypothesis to explain telepathy.

The biogen-theory derives some confirmation from the fact (not generally known or accepted, and contrary to some of what are called "laws of matter"), that some persons, in certain states of mind, can see the biogen-waves proceed in a ray or pencil from the agent and impinge upon the object.

It derives additional confirmation from the fact, that biogen, in some of its states and modes of motions, may be smelt, heard, seen, and handled by any one; i.e., comes under the ordinary observation of the physical senses.

It may relieve the minds of some to be assured that no *Deus ex machina* need be invoked to lay some of the "ghosts" that haunt the séances of the Spiritualists. I have nothing to say here of those alleged ghosts supposed to be apparitions of dead persons. But I will give a new name to what are called "veridical phantoms." I will call them *telepathic automata*. With this hint, and the reminder that the substance which composes the visible and tangible bodies of telepathic automata is that which I have elsewhere described and named biogen,—I remain very truly yours,

ELLIOTT COUES,

1726 N. St. Washington St., Dec. 28th, 1884.

## 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.]

The Society for Psychical Research and Mr. Eglinton.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—To make a reply which shall be no answer, and to divert attention from the main question by importing a slight flavour of personality into a discussion—these are controversial devices with which the world has long been familiar, and of which the letter of "C.C.M." affords yet another example. Any little amusement which may be derived from them has been, I am sure, abundantly earned by such of the readers of "LIGHT" as have ever made an honest attempt to study the metaphysics so often set before them by the same writer.

"What does Mr. Eubule-Evans want?" asks "C.C.M." Well, incredible as it may appear, Mr. Eubule-Evans actually wants a plain answer to a plain question. But he no longer expects to get it. For what would become of the occult under these circumstances? How could such a tender creeper flourish in the bracing atmosphere of categorical clearness?

My question was and is: "Why does not the Society for Psychical Research investigate the most prominent psychical phenomenon of the day? Has the Society a reason for not offering to do so, or does Mr. Eglinton decline to be investigated by the Society?" These are questions which obviously admit of categorical answers. If they do not receive them, even that congeries of noodles, "the general public," which, according to "C.C.M.," "will not study existing evidence," will yet be able, without over-pressure on its faculties, to draw a right conclusion here.

Of course no one with any knowledge of human nature expects strict logic from an avowed partisan; but it is, perhaps, a little less *ad rem* than usual for "C. C. M." to inform us that, in his opinion, the proper work of the Society for Psychical Research is "less the verification of bare facts than the interpretation and co-ordination of them." The question here is, not "C. C. M.'s" opinion as to what the Society ought to do, but what the Society itself professes as its aim and object, and as yet, it has happily shown no tendency to devote itself to the co-ordination of "facts" which it has taken no pains to verify. No doubt, were it to do so, some magnificent generalisations would be the result. Sitting in Lama-like seclusion in Dean's-yard, and abundantly fed in the darkness with occult phenomena by "C. C. M." and Mr. Morell Theobald (phenomenal Greek preferred), it would astound, if not convince, the world by the grandeur of its co-ordinating faculty. And in the end, like the Lama, it would assuredly receive the reward of a well deserved apotheosis a little hurriedly achieved.

Meanwhile, so long as my question remains unanswered, I am assured of the continued existence of at least one occult phenomenon.—Yours faithfully,

New Athenæum Club, S.W.

A. EUBULE-EVANS.

[The "plain answer" required by Mr. Evans can obviously only be given by either of the parties concerned. Speaking unofficially, we believe we are within the mark in saying that neither the Society nor the medium fight shy of the other. The former have hitherto confined their *official* investigation to another phase of occult phenomena. We believe, however, that individual members of the various committees have obtained very satisfactory results with Mr. Eglinton. We also believe the time is near at hand when the Society for Psychical Research, as a result of its investigations, will be compelled to make some distinct statement as regards "Spiritualism." We trust that the public will have been sufficiently educated by its researches and influence to receive their report in a different manner to that in which previous reports have been received.—ED. OF "LIGHT."]

## Money Challenges.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the letter you publish from Signor Damiani on the above subject, he says: "It is really to be regretted that Mr. C. C. Massey, before condemning betting as unbecoming, did not see," &c.

To which I reply, that it is really to be regretted that Signor Damiani, before attributing to me a moral objection which I never dreamed of raising, had not taken the trouble to read my

letter with a little more accuracy. Had I "condemned betting as unbecoming," I should have been self-convicted, not only of inconsistency, because in the same paper I said I would lay 100 to 1 that a certain phenomenon was genuine, but of most contemptible hypocrisy. For not a week passes in which I do not bet upon a rubber of whist—my favourite and now almost only pastime—besides my nearly daily habit of playing the game for the regular money "points." And in past years I have been, to my cost, something of a gambler in other ways. I can imagine the laughter of some of my old and present friends if they heard I was pursing up my mouth and pronouncing betting "unbecoming." No; it was rather as an old sportsman, made wary by experience, certainly not as a moralist, that I took exception to Signor Damiani's challenge. For what did I say? That such challenges were "futile, because in the end nobody knows exactly which side has backed out, by objecting to conditions or attempting to impose them" and "imprudent, because every experienced investigator knows that the phenomena are not to be commanded on any given occasions, and because none of us know at all fully or accurately the conditions of success." I can assure Signor Damiani that could he have won £1,000 from Mr. Labouchere I should have chuckled exceedingly, without the ghost, or even the "shell," of a moral scruple. But his challenge rather resembled a practice at certain games of cards, as to which some players do, I believe, entertain a quasi-moral scruple, not considering it exactly unfair, but as not belonging to the legitimate game. It is known as "bluffing." There being a heavy stake in the pool, and no player before you, you have to declare an option of contending for it or not, under penalty of replacing the whole amount if you play unsuccessfully. You hold a bad hand which no commonly prudent player would play. But without a moment's hesitation, after looking at these bad cards (which no one else sees), you say, "I play," with a confident and decided air. Those who have to declare their option after you, may think you hold great cards, are, perhaps, intimidated and will not risk the contest, and you clear the pool.

Now I think Signor Damiani was "bluffing" on this occasion; for as regards the materialisation challenge he held bad cards, and even as regards psychography very doubtful ones. It is a dangerous game, and I congratulate him on not having had to play it out. He says, indeed, that he did not propose "to prove the reality of form manifestations by actual experiments with Mr. Eglinton." But does he mean to imply that his challenge did not refer to proof by experiments—fresh experiments—at all?

Then he says that I make the mistake of believing him to have pledged Mr. Eglinton's ministry without consulting him first; whereas he did consult Mr. Eglinton and obtained his promise to sit for the experiment of *slate-writing*. So I understood, and never said or suggested the contrary. All I said was that Mr. Eglinton was not a party to the *materialisation* challenge—which was to my mind by far the most objectionable of the two—and Signor Damiani does not assert that Mr. Eglinton did as a matter of fact consent to that. Really, before talking about people's "mistakes," Signor Damiani should look again to see what it is they say.

C. C. M.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—"*Fidelex*" (whoever he may be), in your last issue, used the expression "immorality" as applied to the Labouchere challenge. Nothing more absurd. For if attributed to Labouchere's challenge, that gentleman might tell him that as betting in this country goes on continuously from the Stock Exchange to the turf, the whole English nation must be very immoral. If "*Fidelex*" attached immorality to my challenge to Labouchere, when I proposed the money to go to a charity, the application of that epithet becomes doubly absurd. I hope "*Fidelex*" will in future recollect that the ugly word by him employed should never be used amongst gentlemen, Spiritualists, and, above all, by an anonymous writer.—Very truly yours,  
29, Colville-road, Notting Hill, W.  
February 9th, 1885.

G. DAMIANI.

## Miracles.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "*Trident*," appears to me only to confuse the subject.

His definition of Law as "a certain result from a certain cause under certain conditions," is not enlightening, as it applies equally to a miracle or an accident.

According to his view, a miracle happens whenever I take up my pen from its position of rest on the table: its movement into my hand cannot "always be repeated with unflinching accuracy," as it "depends upon the volition and intention of a superior being," and upon the "arbitrary power and caprice" of my will.

Its position is one of rest, in obedience to the law of gravity, which law is superseded by the transcendent potentiality of my human volition or caprice, which is itself subservient to the "higher law" of life and being.

Your correspondent's confusion of thought is also shown in the final paragraph of his letter, in which he states that "man could walk on water if held up by angels, and would then enact a miracle;" but if supported either by men or angels he would not walk on the water at all, but simply be carried through the air, and the water might be dispensed with as an element in the performance.

Given the facts, the explanation is to seek. Mr. Roden Noel's few words on the subject put the matter in the right light. There is no room for miracle in a domain of law, and this domain is co-extensive with the universe.—Your obedient servant,

W. N.

The "Natural" and the "Supernatural."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Glancing lately over some old copies of the *Times*, I found one in which was an interesting review of the Life of Dr. Johnson. In dealing with his opinions, it finds itself impelled to treat in some way the question of the supernatural in relation to them. Its attitude is singular and noteworthy. What, I should like to ask the *Times* critic, is "the line which divides the natural from the supernatural"? Of what kind are "matters that can be decided exclusively by human reason"? What test is to "decide the general question with regard to the possible reappearance of departed spirits," in the opinion of the *Times*? And let it be noted with some moderate feeling of congratulation that "the man who calls his neighbour superstitious is often objecting only to a particular kind of superstition, and that his own belief is often the greater sham of the two." Let us be joyful in a chastened sort of way. Here is the criticism *in extenso* :—

"Johnson was incredulous in matters which depended upon human testimony, or could be decided exclusively by human reason. When he passed the line which divides the natural from the supernatural he was on ground where these tests lost half their value. They would enable him to determine the reality of particular occurrences alleged to be supernatural, and in some cases to detect imposture, but not to decide the general question with regard to the possible reappearance of departed spirits—whether it had ever been permitted, or whether it was permitted now. If uncertainty, and curiosity, the offspring of uncertainty, on this momentous question, may be termed credulity, Johnson was credulous. He was as bitter an enemy of all 'shams' as Carlyle himself—sham grief, sham joy, sham government, sham poetry, sham religion. But he knew very well that the man who calls his neighbour superstitious is often objecting only to a particular kind of superstition, and that his own belief is often the greater sham of the two."

Yours, &amp;c.,

A SPIRITUALIST.

I WOULD NOT SHRINK!

By REV. CHARLES BELL, D.D.—From "Songs in Many Keys."

I would not shrink if some dear ghost,  
One of the dead's unnumbered host,  
Should rise in silence of the night,  
Shrined in an aureole of light,  
And pale as snowdrop in the frost.  
No! If the brother loved and lost  
For me the silent river crossed,  
For me left worlds all fair and bright,  
I would not shrink!

Oh, if I gauge my heart aright,  
Dear would the dead be to my sight!  
A vision from the other coast  
Of one on earth I cherished most  
Would be a measureless delight.  
I would not shrink!

TRANSITION NOTES.

The *Harbinger of Light* for January is just to hand, and contains the following :—

Miss Wood.

Miss Wood, the well-known medium for materialisation, died at Adelaide on the 11th of last month. In a letter of Mr. Reimers, which appeared in the December issue, it was mentioned that she was suffering from neuralgia, indicating a debilitated state of the blood, but no idea was then entertained of anything serious, but in the early part of the month, typhoid fever set in, and the patient had to be removed to the special ward of a hospital, and isolated from her friends. The fever rapidly assumed a malignant form, and in a few days the physical body becoming untenable, was abandoned by the spirit, which we doubt not has found a more appropriate tenement on the "other side." Miss Wood attained considerable fame at Newcastle some ten years since, where, in conjunction with Miss Fairlamb, she gave materialising sésances, under strict test conditions, to the satisfaction of Mr. T. P. Barkas and other experienced investigators.

Mr. Defries, of Sydney, whilst on a visit to England some twelve months since, induced Miss Wood to accompany him to Sydney to give a series of sésances to a number of investigators there; these sésances were very carefully conducted under the supervision of Mr. H. Gale and Mr. Buckland, and gave satisfaction to quite a number of earnest inquirers.

Mr. Reimers, of Adelaide, has been most anxious for Miss Wood to visit that city, and at length succeeded in making an arrangement for her to do so. Only a few sittings had been held, giving promise of good results, when the illness which has removed her from this field of action overtook her. Our personal acquaintance with Miss Wood was of the briefest, but friends in Sydney who knew her intimately speak highly of her sincerity and other good qualities. One of the most striking events in connection with the Sydney sésances was the materialisation of the late Mr. C. Cavenagh (of the General Post Office, Sydney), who was distinctly recognised by several of his personal friends.

Mr. Charles Partridge.

(From the "Banner of Light.")

This patriarch in the field of spiritual publication—for the firm of Partridge and Brittan (S.B.) was one of the very earliest in the work of putting before the people the literature of Spiritualism in the opening days of the movement—passed to his reward on Friday, January 23rd, from his country-seat, Belleville, N. J., at the age of sixty-five years.

His transition has awakened a profound sensation among the New York Spiritualists, and we are informed that a memorial service will be held by the First Society of Spiritualists of that city, of which he was a trustee, as soon as the proper arrangements can be made.

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Spiritualist Alliance was to be held on Monday evening, January 26th, to take action for a like service in memory of one who was prominent among its founders, and was its Vice-President.

The New York *Tribune*, in speaking of his transition, remarks :—

"By the death of Charles Partridge . . . the Produce Exchange loses one of its oldest members. He was the senior member of the firm of Partridge and Smith, flour merchants, No. 17, Moore-street, and was a shrewd and successful business man. He took strong ground against dealing in 'futures.' In regard to the evils of speculation he testified before the investigating committee of the Legislature, which some time ago took evidence in this city on the subject. He was a subscriber to the gratuity fund of the Produce Exchange, and his was the ninety-seventh death that has occurred among those for whom it was instituted."

Rev. C. P. McCarthy, writing us from New York on the 25th, says of Mr. Partridge :—

"He was an old-time Spiritualist, a true humanitarian and an unwearied philanthropist. He was a director as well as the chief originator of the N. Y. Orphan Asylum, and to the last devoted to its interests. I have visited that institution with him and witnessed the love and regard of its hundreds of inmates for him, and his insight and keen business penetration and knowledge of its various departments, as well as his hearty reception as he earnestly addressed the children. Bro. Partridge, before he became a Spiritualist, was an active member of Dr. E. H. Chapin's church in this city. As a Spiritualist and an earnest lover of mankind, ever willing to help in every good work for the race, he was a remarkable man, and he will be long remembered and mourned by his numerous friends and a large circle of acquaintances who esteemed and valued his philanthropic character."

All Communications to be addressed to  
**THE EDITOR OF "LIGHT,"**  
**4, AVE MARIA LANE,**  
**LONDON, E.C.**

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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## Light :

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 1885.

### LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

#### FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ended 31st December, 1884.

On the 25th October, 1883, a Special Conference of the Members of the "Central Association of Spiritualists" was called "to consider the necessity of discontinuing" that Association, "and further to consider a scheme to be submitted by Mr. Stainton Moses for carrying on effectual work under other conditions."

The Liabilities of the Association at the end of 1883 involved a deficiency of £210, without realising assets, which chiefly consisted of Furniture and a valuable Library.

The Conference resolved to make over the Library to a new Society, appointing a Committee consisting of

REV. W. STAINTON MOSES, M.A.,	*E. DAWSON ROGERS,
JOHN S. FARMER,	*MORELL THEOBALD,
D. G. FITZGERALD,	*H. WITTHALL,
A. JOY (who has since retired),	DR. G. WYLD,

with power to add to their number—the instructions to this Committee being 1st, To liquidate the affairs of the original Society, and 2nd, To adopt the scheme proposed by Mr. Stainton Moses for the formation of a new Society.

The first of these objects was carried out by those Members of the Committee marked with an asterisk,\* and the second by all the above named gentlemen, who were joined at their invitation by

PROFESSOR CASSAL,	DR. STANHOPE SPEER,
MAJOR-GENERAL DRAYSON,	ALARIC A. WATTS.

The London Spiritualist Alliance was thus launched in December, 1883, with about 100 Members, and the number during the year 1884 was increased to 140.

The Alliance has not felt itself at present sufficiently strong to take the obviously desirable step of renting a home for itself, but has during its first year met periodically at the Banqueting Room, St. James' Hall, in Regent Street. Here the general body of Members assembled for the first time on the 5th May, and the address given by the President on that occasion has been since published under the title of "Voices in the Air." The next meeting was held on the 10th June, when a paper was read by Mr. Morell Theobald and has since been published as "Spiritualism at Home." A Conversazione on the 15th July closed the summer season.

On the 23rd October a Conversazione was held at which General Drayson read a paper since published in "LIGHT," on "Science and the Phenomena termed Spiritual ;"

and on the 19th December, Mr. Alaric A. Watts gave a paper on "Spiritualism: Some Difficulties and Some Suggestions," which was published in "LIGHT" of December 27th, 1884.

The Council have met many times during the year, and have directed their attention among other things to a dissemination of spiritual literature, not only at the Church Congress, which Mr. Farmer attended at Carlisle for this purpose, but also at the Congregational Union meeting in London, and in other channels where the truths of Spiritualism might be advantageously presented.

They have also given their attention to the promotion of *Confederation* amongst Spiritualist Societies throughout the world; and are in the receipt of cordial replies to their overtures.

The main work of the Alliance, which they earnestly contemplate, must rest with the Members, depending as it does on the provision of adequate means. Amongst the objects immediately in view, when the requisite funds are forthcoming, may be mentioned the opening of rooms where in the Library and various Spiritualist papers can be placed for the use of the Members, and where a social centre may be established for the convenience of Spiritualists. With this might be associated a depot for the sale of spiritual literature.

While large sums are yearly subscribed voluntarily to support societies which have no more worthy object to attain than that sought by this Alliance, it is a matter of regret to the Council that the work before them should be hindered by lack of funds. They would hope, therefore, to be enabled in their next report to announce a large accession of members.

The Accounts for the Year, duly audited, are appended.

Signed on behalf of the Council,

W. STAINTON MOSES, President.  
 MORELL THEOBALD, Hon. Sec.

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT, 1884.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Subscriptions ... ..	142	16	0	Expenses of Conversa-	49	14	8
Donations ... ..	10	0	0	zations ... ..			
Liquidators of the				Distribution of Litera-			
C.A.S. ... ..	0	5	4	ture ... ..	23	4	3
				Printing ... ..	12	9	9
				Petty Cash and Postage	16	4	0
				Balance ... ..	51	8	8
	£153	1	4		£153	1	4

Audited and found correct,

THEOBALD BROTHERS, AND MIALL, F.C.A.

AMERICA is often spoken of as having among its inhabitants the greatest number of Spiritualists, but it would be erroneous to suppose that they have all been convinced by professional mediums. There are very many mediums who receive no money remuneration. We learn that in Brooklyn, a suburb of New York, there are no less than seven societies, to whose séances there is gratuitous admission.—*Le Spiritisme.*

ROME.—Three centuries ago, by Papal authority, Jordano Bruno was burnt in Rome, and to-day a statue is raised to his memory. Free-thought begins to upset all tyrannies, and we may soon see Italy entering upon the same course of progress as Spain, which, after being the strongest bulwark of obscurantism, stands in the front among nations in which Spiritism has been established. In Rome, on the 30th of May, anniversary of the death of Voltaire, an anti-clerical congress is to be opened, to close on the 2nd of June, anniversary of the death of Garibaldi.—*Le Spiritisme.*

DURING Gerald Massey's stay in Sydney he lectured to crowded Sunday audiences in the Theatre Royal, Charles Bright, the usual lecturer, making way for him. At Ballarat, previously, he gave three lectures; the two first, on literary subjects, were received with unanimous approbation; the third was upon "The Devil of Darkness." When half through, the chairman felt his opinions so shocked that he rose, saying that he could no longer listen to such "twaddle"—colonial for "rubbish"—and, calling upon all good Christians to follow him, walked out; and there were seven of the audience who did so. Mr. Massey resumed, and at the conclusion received a cordial vote of thanks. Spiritualism is gaining ground here, and people are more and more openly expressing their views in defiance of the colonial Mrs. Grundy.—Sydney Correspondent of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal.*

THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK.

XVI.

The admirable discourse of Mr. Alaric A. Watts on "Some Difficulties of Spiritualism," delivered before the London Spiritualist Alliance at St. James's Hall, has been copied at full length from "LIGHT" into the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, of Chicago, U.S.A. This courteous reproduction very widely extends Mr. Watts' auditory, and can hardly fail to put many thousands of Spiritualists on their guard against seducing or ignorant spirits.

\* \* \*

The first fact of Spiritualism is that spirits exist; the second is that they are, under some conditions, able to talk with us. It does not follow that they will in all cases tell us the truth, or even that they know the truth. Taking immortality, or even a continued existence, as a demonstrated fact, we have forty millions added to the population of the spirit world every year.

\* \* \*

These forty millions are in every condition of development, from the rudest savageism to the highest civilisation, and varying infinitely in ideas of morals, religion, and character. This is the ever-growing spirit world of our one little planet. It is an obvious inference that every sun in the starry heavens has its world of spirits. We know that individual life survives physical death on our planet; why not on all? With an infinite number of suns and planets in space, there must be an infinite variety of spirits.

\* \* \*

The difficulties of Spiritualism, says Mr. Watts, are those of darkness. With light they disappear. So we cry for "Light—more light!" and gladly welcome all that comes to us. To have absolute proof that spirits exist is an immense enlightenment. The difference between a trembling hope that rests on some religious teaching, and the knowledge born of actual demonstration, is something that Spiritualists alone can fully appreciate.

\* \* \*

What can we do for our fellow men—for all we would so gladly benefit in any way—better than to give them light upon this most interesting, most important, of all things? What knowledge can be so interesting, so useful, so full of peace and joy as this assurance of a life to come? The utterly astonishing thing is that Spiritualists should not only *not* be eager to tell all they know to their friends, but that they should even conceal their knowledge.

\* \* \*

The fact is that what we most fear in this world is ridicule. Within the memory of living men a gentleman whose veracity was questioned invited the questioner to meet him with sword or pistol. We have happily dispensed with duelling as a corrector of manners, and we back our assertions with a wager of money instead of the wager of battle. All the same, one who has seen a ghost generally prefers not to talk about it in mixed society.

\* \* \*

For all that, the Spiritualist Alliance gives liberal invitations to its conferences at St. James's Hall, and in most of the large towns there are Spiritualist societies, with "Sunday Services." The good work goes on. The bulk and weight of testimony increases. Faith in the popular theologies declines. Our world brightens, our atmosphere grows clearer, and life is better worth living with every fact that proves that existence is continued with every growing glory in the world to come.

\* \* \*

There are *strong* reasons why a man may conceal his knowledge of the facts of Spiritualism. For example—Is a man with a fair prospect of a Government appointment to some post of dignity and honour, with an income of £10,000 a-year, such as has just fallen to the new Bishop of London, likely to proclaim upon the housetops his belief in Spiritualism? Is a Prime Minister, fighting with the Mahdi? The Czar of Russia and the late Emperor of the French, feeling secure in their positions, did not mind it. But the Nicodemus Club is considerably larger than all our Spiritualist societies. For these reasons it is a curious thing to go to a Spiritualist meeting in London or "the Provinces," and look round upon the audience. Intelligence, firmness, and independence mark every head and countenance. You see moral courage and cheerfulness based upon a solid assurance.

\* \* \*

"Outlook?" Yes: This is the outlook: that, as the knowledge of the facts which constitute Spiritualism increases, the characters of men and women will be changed by it so com-

pletely that a new moral world, and, to a great extent, a new physical world will be created—a new heavens and a new earth.

\* \* \*

The *Religio-Philosophical Journal* vouches for the truth of a statement that a lady has been in constant familiar intercourse with a deceased brother for more than forty years. "To this day that brother is with her as naturally and really as ever—seen and heard as are others of the household. 'Thousands of times,' she says, 'I have seen him and talked with him.'" In all such cases it should be distinctly stated whether the spirit was visible and audible to only one, or to all persons present. If not, the testimony has no value except for those who do not need it.

\* \* \*

Mr. Crookes has been a model investigator. His ghosts, or materialised spirits, were visible, audible, and tangible to all present. He, and four of his friends, each armed with a camera, in one evening, with the electric light, took forty-five photographs of a ghost, in several cases with the medium on the same plate. Now, what has Mr. Lankester to say to a series of scientific investigations, carried out with such thoroughness by a distinguished F. R. S.? The photographs exist, and there is Mr. Crookes ready to be cross-examined! If that is not reasonable proof, what is?

\* \* \*

Henry Slade, driven from England by the persecution of Lankester and Donkin, has gone to Philadelphia to meet the scientific committee appointed to carry out investigations into the reality of Spiritual phenomena, provided by a bequest of the late Mr. Seybert. Slade, I know, from personal observation, to be a genuine medium, as he was proven to be in the most thorough way by Professor Zöllner, and by many others; but he is personally so little of a hero that he allowed himself the other day to be bullied into a confession of fraud—showing for the hundredth time, perhaps, that mediumship does not necessarily give courage or morality. But as a coward or a rascal may possess any sort of physical quality or intellectual accomplishment—may be a clever artist or athlete—so may he have the qualities necessary to mediumship.

\* \* \*

From observation I should say that a very gifted medium—one who can be readily used by spirits for their manifestations, was more liable to yield to all sorts of influences, good or bad, than others. Sensitives are continually getting into trouble. It is the hard, firm, unimpressible natures that never go astray or get into difficulties. The condition which makes one a medium for good spirits may, without special protection, make one a victim of bad ones—in the body or out of it.

\* \* \*

Then it may be dangerous to be a medium? Not quite that. It may be dangerous to be susceptible to influences; but I have not observed that spirits out of the body are half as dangerous as men and women still in the flesh. The rule is that good spirits watch over and protect their mediums. And in any case they are, on an average, as good as the best. How often do we read in the newspapers of clergymen of various denominations who get into "trouble," while probably nineteen cases in twenty are hushed up. In itself, the belief in the presence of spirit friends must be one of the strongest restraints—one of the most powerful of protections against evil temptations that can be conceived. Crime wants secrecy.

\* \* \*

When a man in New York gets a telegram from a friend in Liverpool, dated five hours after he receives it, he does not go about talking of forces in nature—but he buys or sells corn or cotton. Our friends in the spirit world can telegraph to us, but they do not often concern themselves with speculation in stocks or merchandise. They very seldom give us the news that comes out in due course in the morning papers. *Why* our spirit friends do not give us the straight tip for the Derby is a mystery. The spirit "Joey," after making a quantity of diamonds, perfect to sight and touch, but which, after being well examined, visibly melted into air, said, "I could make my medium the richest man in the world: but it might not be the best thing for him, and it might be the worst."

\* \* \*

And here comes in Mr. Gladstone's remark about the slate-writing he had with Mr. Eglinton, that there are forces in nature we know very little about. The truth is that we know nothing at all of the real nature or mode of action of *any* force in nature. All are equally mysterious to us—and the wisest man in the world is just as ignorant as the most foolish. For

example, I have not the least idea of the nature of electricity or its mode of action ; but when I get a telegraphic message I have no doubt at all that some force was acting with intelligence at the other end of the wire, hundreds or thousands of miles away ; and such intelligences are generally able to give satisfactory evidences of their individuality.

\* \* \*

Dr. Nichols' chair story, which he told at Liverpool, is a similar fact, a little stronger, because seen by several persons, and it was, therefore, not a hallucination. In full light, a chair, standing at a distance from the spectators, first called attention by knocks on the floor, and then balanced itself on two legs, changing them from time to time, and then, at the request of the doctor, rose on two legs and deliberately walked two yards towards him, and pressed with considerable force against his knee. This curious manifestation was seen by five persons, and the chair, one with a common cane bottom, was carefully examined. It seems a silly sort of fact ; but consider what it demonstrates : force acting with intelligence on matter.

\* \* \*

"What good do spirits do us ?" is a question every avowed Spiritualist is called upon to answer at least once a day. Well, one good thing they do is to prove to us that there are spirits. Is there anything they could do that is more useful ? Sitting one morning in the full daylight, at a large table, with a girl—a little nursery-maid of fifteen—I heard some raps, which, if disposed and clever enough, she might have made. The thought was answered by a whizzing, jangling sound at my feet. I looked down, and saw that the table leg was clear of the floor and the brass castor set whirling. Here was a force, acting intelligently on matter without visible contact. So simple a fact carries conviction of spirit life and power.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Oliphant is writing a spiritualistic story in *Blackwood*—a story of the seen and the unseen, which is very favourably noticed in *The Literary World*. Indeed, the elements of the so-called supernatural enter more and more into our literature. Either the demand is increasing or the supply is pressing. The spirit world seems to be urgently demanding recognition.

## THE PHENOMENA OF STONE THROWING.

(From the *Revue Spirite*.)

Our friends at Valais write (November 11th) that a small farmhouse on the frontier, occupied by Isaac Perrin, his wife, and son, has been the scene of strange events for some time past. Household articles are thrown about or hidden, stones are cast through doors and windows, and down the chimney, dishes are taken from the table and thrown to the animals, lamps are lighted at untimely hours, firing is scattered about the hearth, and indescribable noises are heard. People come from the surrounding parts to hear and see for themselves. Curés and Capuchins have exorcised, but the invisibles mock them.

Similar facts, they say, occurred at Monthey, some miles off, eighteen months ago ; but they ceased at the intervention of an old man from the Canton of Vaud. The Perrins would send for him, but our curé forbids it, because the old man is a Protestant, and therefore, say they, has no power over demons !

Our correspondents say that they belong to a nucleus of sixty Spiritists, among whom are mediums who would willingly join a circle at the house in the hope of bringing the invading spirits to sentiments of order ; they think that the younger Perrin, aged seventeen, is a medium, and that his mediumship might help ; but the family is under the sway of the curé, and he is harder upon us than he is upon the old Protestant from Vaud, for he tells them that Spiritists are the same as Freemasons, who ought all to be put an end to.

P.S.—The latest report (November 27th) is that the Perrins were recommended to cut and stab the air about the objects that had been moved, but the result had been an aggravation of their trouble, for now stones are thrown at them, and their clothes are torn.

## FRAUDS AND EXPOSURES IN MEDIUMSHIP.

*Delivered in the Church of the New Spiritual Dispensation Conference, Brooklyn, N. Y., January 4th, 1885,*

BY HENRY KIDDLE.\*

Fraud, and the exposure of fraud—these are not pleasant things to contemplate in connection with a subject so sacred—for such it should be—as spirit communion. But it is never allowable to ignore facts for the indulgence of sentiment, however disagreeable it may be to confront them ; and it is usually an important preliminary to the attainment of truth to throw down the idols we may have enshrined in our minds and hearts, and to enthrone the actual—the matter-of-fact—in their place. The millennium has not yet arrived ; humanity is still characterised by the weakness and wickedness that stand out so conspicuously in the records of the past. There may have been progress and amelioration, but the elements of human nature are very far from being purity, unselfishness and truthfulness. The opposites of these are far more potential and conspicuous in human society, notwithstanding the establishment of Christianity for more than 1,500 years, strengthened and sustained, as it has been, during that long period, by all the power of the civil government and the institutions of social life. It is not necessary for me to ask how far that social system which calls itself Christian reflects the ethical and spiritual principles of the Great Teacher, or to what extent the lives of those who are nominally His followers are based on the Divine beatitudes that fell from His lips. When the angels of this New Dispensation—for such we seem to have at this time, at least in its dawn—talk to us, they whisper the same essential truths and blessings, and for a time, at least, startle us from our sleep of materiality ; but, alas ! there are other voices, beguiling and ensnaring, that drown the sacred accents of the Divine messengers, and lead us back to our more accustomed sphere. We do not sufficiently heed the tender injunction of the loving and beloved disciple : "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Thus we see that, in the early days of Christian Spiritualism, when the voices of spirits were listened to, when "spiritual gifts" abounded, as they do now, there were then, as now, mediums (prophets) of deceptive manifestations, as well as of the good and the true. The doors from the spirit world were open then, as they are at the present time, and the two classes of spirits came through—in the language of John, those who were "of God," and those who were not—spirits of light and spirits of darkness—the white-winged messengers of truth, and the "seducing spirits" from that sphere where every one "loveth and maketh a lie."

The material sphere in which we now dwell has one special characteristic—that of choice. Everywhere we, as the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, are made to partake of the "fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" ; and the experience by which we are taught to discriminate between them is often a very sad one. But the lesson must be learned, because in this way alone can our individuality as responsible, self-conscious beings be perfected.

Spirit communion presents no exception to that law ; it contains the elements of good and evil, and we are to be strengthened and elevated by choosing the one, and refusing the other. We cannot evade the responsibility of making that choice. We dare not dash the cup of blessing from our lips, because the poisoned bowl is by its side, and we are too indolent, too apathetic, too cowardly, to distinguish one from the other. It is the condition of life itself, for we should die of hunger or of disease, did we refuse to study the properties of the substances offered for food, and the sanitary influences that surround us, and thus learn to reject the unwholesome and the morbid.

So is it with the true and the false in Spiritualism. I ignore neither ; I never have, for I conceive that both come to us with the same mission, to instruct—the one with the voice of edification, the other with that of admonition. But it is incumbent upon us to make a wise discrimination, with neither ignorance nor rashness. The tares and the wheat must usually be left to grow together, lest while we gather up the one, we root up the

\* We give this Lecture (reported for the *Banner of Light*) almost in *extenso*, in order that the views of a large number of American Spiritualists may be clearly set before their English brethren. We hope to offer a few remarks of our own on the subject in an early issue. There is another aspect of the question, a consideration of which will, we believe, throw much light upon debated points.—ED. OF "LIGHT."



other. The harvest comes, when the separation can be safely and effectually accomplished.

The enemies of the great spiritual movement of this time find no theme so prolific as the "frauds," which they allege are perpetrated by those who are called mediums for spirit manifestation. In their public invectives against it, they usually resolve all the phenomena on which we base our knowledge of the spirit world into fraud, delusion, or misinterpretation; and fraud is said to explain the greater part. We must, of course, expect this from the enemies of our cause, the progress of which threatens their earthly interests, and the claims of which are offensive to their strongest prejudices; but, certainly, while we ought always to be faithful to the truth, as Spiritualists we should not be eager to fasten this odious charge upon mediumship, and thus to supply ammunition to its bigoted assailants, and aid them most effectually in their efforts to poison the public mind against it. When we attempt its defence, we often have to meet the statement hurled disdainfully at us: "Your best friends have to admit that the movement is permeated with fraud, and that the word *medium* has become almost a synonym with trickster or impostor." There may be, they sometimes admit, a small *residuum* of fact after excluding the result of wilful imposture; but this, they assert, is wholly due to certain unknown psychological forces, or to the psychic powers of the embodied spirit, the hypothesis of disembodied spirits being wholly unnecessary and therefore illogical. Thus Spiritualism is made to "give up the ghost," literally; and its foes exult over its lifeless remains, from which all the vivifying warmth of immortality has passed away, to give place to the death-like coldness of an extreme *scientific psychism*.

You all know the frantic efforts that were made to prove the Fox mediums to be tricksters—how committee after committee was appointed at the public meetings held to witness the phenomena; how disappointing the successive reports of those committees were to the people who were charging the mediums with fraud, their own committees being obliged to exculpate the accused, after a careful examination; and how those pious and respectable citizens bore their disappointment, being restrained from violently assaulting, and probably murdering, those innocent girls, only by the heroism of a small band of resolute men, who bravely confronted and held back the insensate mob, furious with scientific and religious bigotry, and maddened by their righteous zeal against *fraud*. This was the first ordeal passed by the New Dispensation, which then came nearer being strangled in its cradle than did the Babe of Bethlehem to falling a victim to Herod's "slaughter of the innocents."

Since that early period, the spirit manifestations have gone on with a vast increase in the number and variety of their phases, and with overwhelming demonstrations of spirit power; but there has been no intermission in the outcry of *fraud* against the public mediums. Indeed, there is scarcely one, however genuine or powerful, who has not thus been stigmatised.

In former years this outcry of fraud came only from the opponents of Spiritualism; but, in recent years, it is kept up quite as vigorously by many professing Spiritualists, especially in relation to manifestations which they are inclined to disbelieve and discredit. While, without doubt, this is done with good and pure motives, and the sincere desire to keep the spiritual movement free from all that tends to dishonour it in the minds of the public, I have been led to believe, from careful experience and study of the phenomena, that many serious mistakes have been made in carrying out this policy; as, I think, will be obvious from the facts I intend to present.

The Fox mediums, fortunately, after they had been scoffed at by the prejudiced, superficial witnesses in the public meetings at Rochester, were examined carefully by committees appointed for the purpose; and thus, in part (but only in part), escaped public condemnation.

In 1874, long after the "toe and knee joint theory" had been exploded, we find the English scientist, Alfred R. Wallace, bearing the following testimony in favour of one of those mediums (Mrs. Kate Fox Jencken):—

"We have here a career of twenty-six years of mediumship of the most varied and remarkable character; mediumship which has been scrutinised and tested from the first hour of its manifestation, down to this day, and with one invariable result—that no imposture or attempt at imposture has ever been discovered, and no cause ever been suggested that will account for the phenomena except that advanced by Spiritualists."

The phase of manifestation which has especially encountered the charge of fraud is that which is known as "full-form materialisation;" in connection with which the "exposures" of mediums, apparently guilty of imposture in personating spirit-forms, have not only brought public odium upon mediumship and Spiritualism, but have been made the means of discrediting many of the most earnest adherents of the cause, who are, even now, I am sorry to say, charged with "condoning fraud," because they present facts, as well as theories supported by facts, that go far toward the partial or entire exculpation of the accused mediums, and the vindication of mediumship in general.

It certainly cannot be right or expedient to make sweeping denunciations against the intellectual and moral integrity of a large class of intelligent and earnest Spiritualists. Surely this is not requisite to strengthen the defence of truth against falsehood, purity against immorality, or genuine mediumship against that which is spurious and fraudulent.

There is a very serious question concerned in this matter—a question the proper solution of which is rapidly being reached by the intelligent, fair-minded students of spiritual phenomena and laws; and if any one thinks he can affect the decision by attacking the motives or aspersing the character of those who have taken either side of it, he will find himself greatly mistaken. It would be no triumph, but a great misfortune, to divide the present spiritual army into two hostile camps. Differ we must in our interpretations of many of the phenomena, but difference of opinion is not inconsistent with fraternal feeling and mutual respect and good will, unless it incite to personal insult or detraction, to which no true disciple of spirit-communication will ever descend. If I commend a medium whom another has condemned as unreliable, it does not prove that I have "condoned a fraud." The inference is, indeed, quite the reverse; since my experience must have been totally different, and that experience should be respected.

In what I intend to say on this subject I shall present only well-attested facts, and the conclusions of investigators of mature experience and superior intelligence; and these should be attentively considered, without prejudice or partisanship. I make no plea for "charity" toward wrong-doers justly condemned. Let the guilty suffer; but let no penalty be inflicted before a fair trial, lest in the end it reflect lasting disgrace upon both judge and executioner. I do not know but that, with some persons, it may be "easier to be charitable than to be just"; but I do know that it is always vastly easier to be uncharitable than to be just. It is not, however, charity, but truth, as well as justice, that is concerned in a careful discussion of the principles by which mediumship should be tested, and the cause of deceptive manifestations demonstrated and exposed. The personal element is, in fact, a subordinate one; for the progress of spiritual science depends, in no small degree, upon a knowledge of those principles. I trust, therefore, I shall not be misunderstood; I offer no apology or excuse for those who have profaned the sacred gifts of Heaven by fraud, or counterfeited the evidences of immortality; let them suffer the just consequences of their guilt; but let not the innocent suffer in consequence of our rashness and ignorance.

The great question is: *On what principles and by what methods are we to determine the guilt or innocence of mediums charged with the perpetration of fraud while in the exercise of their mediumistic gifts?* This is the primary question; and next to it, but of the greatest importance to us as responsible representatives of this spiritual movement, is: *What is the proper course to pursue toward those who have been found guilty of fraudulent acts in connection with their mediumship?*

It will be observed that, in both these questions, I refer only to those who are really mediums—whose mediumistic gifts have been clearly proved to exist; and, also, that I refer only to acts committed in the exercise of their peculiar vocation. The simulation of mediumship by artful pretenders, that is, the perpetration of what have been aptly called "Truesdell's tricks," presents a different, and scarcely cognate, subject for consideration, as indeed, does also the moral character or conduct of mediums, apart from the exercise of their special vocation, or as ordinary members of the community. The common laws and usages of society provide for such cases, irrespective of any spiritualistic policy. I admit that offences committed in the name of mediumship, or by those endowed with that Divine gift, should be followed by a heavier rather than a lighter penalty; but experience has certainly taught us the truth of what I read recently in the English Spiritualist paper, "LIGHT," "the moral character of a medium has about as much to do

with the reality or excellence of his mediumship as the moral character of a singer or actor has to do with the quality of his art."

While I should object to the use of the word *excellence* in that connection, there is no denying the fact that the natural endowments of mediumship may, and often do, co-exist with great defects of character. Since we are now demonstrating to the world truths that can be made known only through mediumship, it is a precious gift, and should never be ruthlessly condemned and cast away, but judiciously encouraged and employed. I hold most strongly that no medium can be really excellent who is not moral and spiritual; and yet many of the mediums who have been most successful in proving to the world our grand truths of spirit existence and return, could claim but little of those qualities. We must separate the man from his gifts.

In my distribution of this subject I have been careful to make this distinction, from the disregard of which much injustice and incalculable injury to our cause have resulted. Indeed, the spiritual movement, on this account chiefly, now presents to many an appearance which, in Shakespeare's poetical parlance, may be likened to

"A tangled chain, nothing impaired, but all disordered."

One of the most significant facts to which I desire to call your attention, previous to a discussion of the main question, is, that all the most serious "exposures" that have had so disastrous an effect upon public opinion in regard to Spiritualism have happened in connection with mediums of established genuineness, usually after a protracted series of successful and startling manifestations that had greatly impressed the public mind.

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In regard to these several so-called "exposures" of the medium Slade, which I only refer to as being typical, in a certain measure, of many other such cases, let me say that I accept none of the statements that have appeared in the newspapers. The English case, as presented in court, shows the contemptible character of the effort at exposure made by the two learned scientists, the utter falsity of the exultant claims set up, and the impossibility of a medium's obtaining justice in what is called a "court of justice." The lessons it teaches should be applied to other cases; and we who profess to be Spiritualists should never condemn the humblest medium on *ex parte* statements or on the testimony of prejudiced, ignorant observers. The case should be carefully considered in all its parts, and both sides should be heard.

But some will, perhaps, reply: This is generally true; but what if the medium is caught in *flagrante delicto*, as when the spirit is seized and the "exposer" finds the medium in his arms? "Spirit-grabbing" is the method of testing the genuineness of materialisation most readily suggested to the inexperienced observer. Like blackening the trumpet, to which I have referred, it seems to be an *experimentum crucis*.

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The effect of experience has been to show to thinking, dispassionate students of spiritual phenomena, that the customary methods of fraud-exposure are really of no value—that "spirit-grabbing" proves nothing, either as to the genuineness or the honesty of the medium. This has now become the position of many of the most intelligent and experienced investigators. The letter written by Alfred R. Wallace in October, 1882, in reference to the "exposure" of Miss Wood, sets forth, in the most lucid manner, the philosophy of this subject. Let me cite a few short paragraphs:—

"It is my deliberate conviction—accepting the reality of these phenomena as witnessed personally, and as narrated by a crowd of competent observers, and deducing from them the obvious and close material and spiritual connection of the form and medium—that the fact of a person's seizing the form and finding the medium is not, and cannot be, a proof of fraud, but is, in all probability, the natural and inevitable effect of trying to keep apart two beings who are really one, and who cannot be rudely interfered with without danger to the human body whose abnormal organisation supplies the material for the temporary materialisation of these marvellous existences." . . . "I maintain that this is the only hypothesis which the facts directly support; and, therefore, the only 'exposure' made is of the incapacity of experimenters, who deal with the greatest mysteries of an unknown universe as if they were mere questions of terrestrial mechanics."

To this Mr. Wallace suggestively added:—

"So far as I remember, every medium for materialisation, nowever perfectly their powers may have been tested, however

good their character, has been subjected to accusations of fraud on somewhat similar grounds to those alleged against Miss Wood. The fact that whenever a form has been seized, it has been found, after a struggle of some moments' duration, to merge into the medium, lends additional support to the view here advanced. . . . I believe that even where the medium and form have been seen separate, a forcible seizure would result in their speedy amalgamation."

In regard to this view of the case, Mr. Stainton Moses—"M.A. (Oxon)"—said: "It is a hopeful sign that experienced Spiritualists are beginning to see what Mr. Wallace so well puts, that 'catching a spirit' proves nothing of logical necessity. It is probable, nay almost certain, that any such seizure would place the medium in the hands of the seizer of the form, if that form were as substantial and solid as they usually are." And very recently in one of the series of articles in "LIGHT," to which I have already referred, this cautious and intelligent writer remarks:—

"It will not be until our knowledge is very considerably advanced that we shall be able to see how dangerous, how ignorant, how foolish were the methods all but universally adopted up to that date (1882). We shall know then, as we do not now, how illusory are the appearances that lie on the surface; how fatuous the solution of a perplexity attempted by those who 'seized a spirit' in order to show that it was in fact the medium."

Thus, according to these and many other of the best experts in spiritualistic investigation, "spirit-grabbing" is not a proper and reliable method of testing the guilt or innocence of suspected or accused mediums; (1) because, even when a separate form is materialised, a forcible seizure of that form must place the medium in the hands of the seizer; and (2) because, when a separate form is not materialised, and the entranced medium has been brought from the cabinet, and made to personate the spirit, in a more or less changed or transfigured condition, it is the intelligence back of the medium who is responsible for the act; and if fraud is committed, the medium may be wholly guiltless. This may come within the category of deceptive manifestations, to fix the responsibility for which is always a problem of considerable perplexity. Obviously, the influences of the circle are not to be wholly disregarded in accounting for the presence of deceptive spirits. We are bound to consider (1) the general character of the sitters, (2) their condition of mind while holding the circle, and (3) their manner of holding it. There can be no doubt that a large circle of positive-minded sitters constitutes a battery, the power of which scarcely any medium or his guides could resist; and in that case the circle would be wholly responsible for the manner in which the medium might be used, and even articles of dress, drapery, &c., might be brought in to consummate a *fiasco*, and the disgrace or ruin of the medium; for the powers of the lower spirits acting through strong physical mediumship can scarcely be limited, though I believe they are always held in check, while they are at the same time permitted to have a temporary sway, so that mortals may learn the lessons they need.

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Of course, we cannot expect that the outside world will understand or accept this doctrine of spirit intervention, which is the outcome of much experience and study of the manifestations; and while promiscuous circles are held, we must anticipate that those who have little or no experience will derisively reject this explanation. As Mr. Sargent well says, "The frauds charged upon approved mediums raise questions the answer to which will be naturally scouted by those not intimately acquainted with the history of the phenomena." We must be prepared for the fate of all advocates of new and unpopular truths—namely, to be scoffed at and abused. This can be avoided only by a tergiversation which no person worthy to be called a Spiritualist would think of for a moment. We must follow Truth wherever it may lead us.

Those who have suggested the fact of the transfiguration of the medium as explanatory of much that has been perplexing in these experiences, have been subjected to a great deal of derision and aspersion, as desiring to palliate the guilt of the mediums; but this phenomenon is by no means unfamiliar to experienced investigators. Mr. Sargent, it has been seen, recognises it. The elongation of the medium Home—a kind of transfiguration—was certified to by the Committee of the London Dialectical Society many years ago; and Allan Kardec, in the "Book of Mediums," speaks of a young girl who took on at certain times, all the appearances, including voice and speech, of deceased persons, among them that of her deceased brother, presenting not only his face, but the height, size, and even weight

of his body. Mr. Sargent refers to this circumstance in the "Scientific Basis."

The facts which I have already cited show how difficult and puzzling a problem is presented by the scientific aspects of the phenomenon known as materialisation. Indeed, all mediumship, including even that of inspiration, presents questions of similar complexity; but in connection with that more sensuous form of spirit manifestation, these difficulties are apparently intensified because they are more conspicuous to ordinary observation. I am glad to see that trance-mediumship is now undergoing a very careful analysis, as to its processes and results, particularly with the view to discriminate between what comes from the spirit-intelligence, and what is the result of the medium's own mind or the minds of other persons present. When I look at these things in their suggestiveness, catching but a glimpse, as any of us can, of the subtle and profound principles underlying them, I feel that we are only at the threshold of spiritual science; and that to be rash, dogmatic and condemnatory in our conclusions in regard to these matters of which our knowledge is so superficial, is the part of extreme folly and presumption.

In investigating these phenomena, the very first thing that strikes us with startling force is the controlling intelligence which we see lies back of every manifestation. That intelligence is the essence of it all; to it all else is secondary. All sensuous phenomena, including these marvellous forms that pass before our eyes, are comparatively unimportant, because they can never be anything but an imperfect representation of the spirit. The term *materialisation* is, in this regard, a misnomer; for spirit can never be materialised, though it may, for the time being, clothe itself in these extemporized material forms. Not once, however, in a hundred times can a spirit completely express what it conceives, and wishes to present, in this way. But it can oftener give expression to the intelligence which is the very essence of its personality. When, therefore, we see these invisible intelligences—whom we so often recognise as the "loved and lost" of earth—striving to make themselves visible to us, by a process which they, in part at least, understand, but of which we absolutely know nothing, why should we intervene to dictate to them the methods and conditions of their work? Does not reason, or common-sense, require that we should leave it to them to select their own methods of presentation, we patiently, though critically, scanning the results, and learning the lessons which they convey? In connection with this, let me quote words, very recently penned, of Mr. Stainton Moses. Speaking of what have been strongly insisted upon as "test conditions," he says:—

"Some, in times past, have relied upon a more or less careful tying of the medium, so as to make the normal use of his body impossible. They considered that they had accounted for the medium when they had bound him hand and foot. I am glad to think that this fallacy is exploded. The assumption on which it was founded ignored altogether the power of spirit over matter. . . . To tie up a medium and put him into a dark cabinet is, first of all, a sheer waste of effort; and, next, introduces into the experiment a plain source of error."

That is to say, it emanates from a spirit of suspicion, if not something worse, and thus draws to the circle a crowd of mischievous spirits, who use the entranced medium as the instrument of their frolic or their malice. Mr. Stainton Moses then expresses his approval of the principle I have referred to as the proper one to guide in these investigations. He says:—

"I used to favour in my own researches, as the most useful and simple plan of dealing with these occult subjects, to let the invisible operator present what he wishes to show under conditions of his own selection. Let him tell me what he wishes me to do to aid him. Then when he has done, let me endeavour to have the phenomena reproduced under other conditions, if possible, in such a manner as will give the best evidence of their genuineness, and enable me to give them the most careful and intelligent study."

Experience has shown that by the application of this principle the integrity of the medium never enters as an element into the question; and thus the most convincing manifestations are obtained and the best evidences of genuineness presented. The demon of suspicion is exorcised by the overwhelming power of the spirit of truth reigning in the circle; and the minds of all present receive an unalterable conviction that they have indeed looked on the forms and faces and listened to the voices of visitants from the spirit-spheres, not because of their credulity, as sometimes charged, but because the proofs presented have been irresistible to the keenest intellect and the most critical observation. I have described, on other occasions, the varied tests that have

been given to me in this manner, by means of which a perfect conviction of the truth of materialisation has been definitely established in my mind. Many others of longer experience will confirm what I say in this regard; though some may be so constituted as to be satisfied only with bolts and bars. I do not reflect upon the sincerity or integrity of these persons. Let all use their best judgment.

While the phenomenal phase of Spiritualism continues to be as prominent as it is at the present time, and promiscuous circles are held under conditions so crude, so imperfect, and indeed so often utterly bad, we must expect that the results, however convincing, of spirit-power and spirit-return to those who witness them, will not always be congenial or satisfactory to the mind that has advanced beyond that low grade of spirituality. We must, however, bear in mind that Spiritualism comes to all classes and every grade of mankind, and that, in most cases, it must reach the senses ere it can touch the heart. Hence, even the lower phases of mediumship are greatly in demand, and, if we would help on the conversion of mankind to a knowledge of spirit-return, we must foster, not discourage it. We must recognise, and try to teach the outside world the peculiar dangers to which public mediums are exposed, and throw around them, as a protecting ægis, our own personal influence, instead of covering them with obloquy and treating them as criminals and outlaws. I have endeavoured to show how difficult it is, in the case of a perfectly genuine and honest medium, to prevent the occurrence of circumstances that may give rise to what is called an "exposure," and all the seeming evidence of guilty contrivance. Then how careful should all of us be not to settle the question of guilt too hastily, or before a careful sifting of all the evidence and the testimony of every person present, yea, as careful as if the charge were of the highest crime known to the law!

And now, to come to my second question; suppose the medium to be found guilty—I do not mean, please to remember, of simulating mediumship, but of presenting, or aiding to present, deceptive manifestations; for a genuine medium may be guilty in either of these ways, either as a kind of *particeps criminis* with his guides or familiars, who wish to make a startling manifestation beyond their assured ability; or to supplement the work of the spirits by his own contrivances of disguise and personation. Suppose, for example, the intention to commit fraud has been established by finding on the medium's person paraphernalia evidently prepared for the purpose; what course are we justified in taking in such cases? I answer we are not only justified, but obligated to inflict upon the offender, after a careful consideration of every mitigating circumstance, the penalty due to the offence. We are not, however, justified in going beyond the truth; we are not justified in a wholesale condemnation of his or her mediumship, and in discrediting its results, past, present, and future, as well as those persons who have witnessed them and certified to their genuineness. We may condemn the individual, if it becomes our special duty to condemn, but not the mediumship.

Is not this the course pursued in the case of other gifted people—actors, artists, musicians, poets, and sometimes even clergymen? Do we not discriminate between the genius of Byron, Burns, and Poe, for example, and their character as individuals? The world recognises this distinction and accepts the fruits of genius, basks in the radiance of its splendour and glory, while it is often saddened and disgusted with the earthliness and sensuality that are frequently its personal concomitants. We cannot control this, if we would, for true mediumship, like brilliant genius—which is, indeed, only another kind of mediumship—will always command attention, let us rail against its possessor as we will. The woman of Endor exercised her gifts even while Saul was rigidly enforcing the bloody Judaic laws by which it was sought to crush out all resort to those having familiar spirits. When the great psychographic medium, whose splendid gifts have emblazoned the Spiritualism of this time, fell (as fall he did), there was no attempt to hunt him down and make him an eternal outcast. His fault was "condoned" even by the Spiritualistic Draco of this time, under the plea that "each séance must stand on its own merits," he being a medium beyond all denial or equivocation. So when the great platform test-medium fell into discredit, the spoils of his so-called "exposure" having been captured, like those which, it is said, have been taken from materialising mediums, indicating an attempt at "personation," or the simulation of spirit-presence, this was "condoned," and due consideration was given to the medium's own statement of the case. If this is right, as it assuredly is, let the same principles be applied in all cases; but

let us not bring mediumship into general reproach and condemnation for the occasional faults of a few individuals.

Spiritualism, in its essential principles, is as pure, as good, as exalted, and holy as the angels from whom its teachings come to bless mankind and help them on their way through the mire and darkness of this world. Humanity, however, although comparatively progressed, is still held in the thralldom of earthly passions and vices; it still lingers on a low spiritual plane, and always contaminates, more or less, whatever comes in contact with it. Thus was it with the beautiful spiritual teachings of Him of Galilee; and so is it now with the angelic doctrines and precepts of the New Dispensation. In vain did the Divine Teacher say, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned"; for no sooner did those who claimed to be His followers form an organisation, through which they gained power, than they erected a despotic tribunal both to judge and to condemn, and thus to bind men's consciences in ecclesiastical chains. I hope the day is far distant when the representatives of Spiritualism will be able to establish any such tribunal; or when any man connected with the movement will be sustained in a dictatorial censorship to pardon or condemn whomsoever, in his judgment, he may deem culpable—to "condone" or anathematise the frailties of his co-workers, or doom to everlasting ignominy all who refuse to bow at his shrine or acknowledge his supremacy.

Only a few words more in conclusion. I am no mere phenomenalist, as those who know me are well aware. The principles which I advocate to-day are to myself, personally, rather speculative than practical. While I have never, I think, undervalued the phenomena, I have always viewed them as really subordinate to those higher and grander truths which can find no sensuous, external expression, and in which the true value and glory of Spiritualism consist. But I do not forget that, without the sensuous demonstrations, the light of that higher truth would never have dawned upon my soul. They it was that led me to the door of the spiritual temple, the pathway to which I should never otherwise have discovered. Now, though I may need them no longer, there are many, many others who are as much in want of their aid as I once was; and, hence, I endeavour to defend them, to protect the instruments through whom alone they can be presented, and to shield them from unmerited obloquy and condemnation. And there is another consideration: spiritual science, now in its infancy, can expand and develop only by a rational use of mediumship—a use regulated not by gross materialistic conditions, but by an application of those subtle principles which spiritual exploration can alone ascertain.

I do not believe that any of us have any favour to bestow on fraud or its perpetrators. We all alike detest it, and would zealously banish it from our sacred cause. Let us then all work together, cultivating respect for each other, and not permitting intellectual differences to disturb our spiritual harmony.

At Vienna, Baron Hellenbach, who introduced H. Bastian to the Court, has brought out a book in which he discusses and affirms the Spiritist doctrines.—*Le Spiritisme*.

Now that so much attention is attracted to the Arabs in the Soudan, the following proverb may be of interest:—"Allah has written a man's character in three places: in his head, face, and hand, one at least of which is generally uncovered for inspection."

GEORGE ELIOT.—I have just read the "Life of George Eliot," a deeply interesting book, but, like her novels, deeply steeped in sadness. Mrs. Stowe seems to have made repeated efforts to interest her in Spiritualism, but she seems to have felt a strong prejudice against professional mediumship and its phenomenal performances. Her mind was, however, so large, open, and truthful that one cannot but feel that, had the subject been presented to her in its philosophic aspects, she would have received it with the intensity of her nature. On p. 424, Vol. III., her biographer and second husband records these words: "She told me that in all she considered her best writing there was a *not herself which took possession of her*, and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting." This passage seems to confess mediumship in its highest sense, viz., that *inspiration* through which all the highest ideas in religion, poetry, art, and science have been given to mankind; the Divine Mind, directly or indirectly, expressing itself through the spiritual centre of the human soul.—G.W., M.D.

## ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first indications of success usually are a cold 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.