

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

The last number of "LIGHT" contains a body of testimony to the reality of the phenomenon of psychography which will unquestionably make a deep impression. It will be widely read and discussed, both by those who have shown interest in such matters by joining a society like that for Psychical Research, and by many who will criticise the testimony from without with no great knowledge of facts. I venture to think that very few of the former class will have had any clear conception hitherto of the wealth of evidence of the first importance that exists in favour of psychography as a proven fact. I think further that this collected testimony will make a great impression on any candid mind in the latter class that approaches the subject without *à priori* prejudice. And I think, once again, that very few in either class will rise from a study of the evidence without a feeling of wonder at the construction that was put upon it, or so much of it as she was acquainted with, by the lady whose name, of late, has so frequently been obtruded into a personal controversy, from which I hope it may now be allowed to drop.

Mr. C. C. Massey's essay on "The Relation of Faith to Evidence in Mystical Experience" is a most timely and valuable paper. It draws attention to what Spiritualists, and especially those who meddle with Spiritualism from an external point of view, are apt to forget, or, perhaps, do not know. At a time when methods of investigation are tending to become more rigidly critical, when criticism of the facts familiar to Spiritualists in their own experience and that of thousands of others is being applied from a point of view hardly distinguishable from that of *à priori* impossibility, it is well that we should realise what such investigation and criticism are likely to produce. This frame of mind can never apprehend spiritual truth, which must be gained in quite another way. It can at best discover flaws in the evidence for certain phenomena which are the external presentations to our consciousness of truths that underlie them. It cannot even get this particular class of evidence under its own observation, for, in many cases, it prescribes conditions which are prohibitory, and is so beset with conviction of the inherent probability of some form of fraud as to set up conditions favourable to the fulfilment of the wish that has been father to the thought. This frame of mind is compatible with perfect honesty, and a man may be no more responsible for it than he is for the

colour of his hair. But he is incapacitated for progress in the study of things psychical.

What are the conditions of successful psychical investigation? How shall a man not only see for himself these fugitive phenomena, but penetrate below the surface to the truths that they conceal? How shall he assimilate those truths that he needs for his soul's sustenance—"losing the world, gaining his own soul"? Mr. C. C. Massey tells us at the outset. "Faith is the condition of evidence; the key to the gate of the invisible world." This much abused word, "which modern Rationalism opposes to evidence," is the condition *sine quâ non* of success. Un-faith, (*infidelity*) is "a positive condition of mind, which is not only unfavourable to the production of evidence, but also fatal to its right estimation." What Mr. Massey calls "faith" is a predisposition and attention, a sympathetic state of mind which establishes between an observer and a medium a *rapport* without which no results are to be had that are worth the having. So when the dispassionate critic makes a merit of the absence of prejudice in his mind, he does well. It is conceivable that this negative state may render him harmless; it may even enable him to get personal experience under exceptionally favourable circumstances. But, it may be, as Mr. Massey well points out, "that this negative qualification is not enough, and . . . there is need of a positive sympathy" before any real progress can be made.

Even in the simpler forms of investigation into psychic phenomena the presence of a person who does not possess this quality will paralyse the psychic power of the ordinary medium. In every circle there is probably "a blending of the spheres," (as Mr. Massey points out without adopting the expression) before any results are obtained. How often have we noticed that in a circle, say of a dozen persons, where all is going well, no sound will be heard near a given sitter. The table is alive with raps all round him, but in front of him, and on either side of him, it is dead. The psychical current that proceeds from the medium is stopped by him and returns each way to its source. It cannot pass through him. He is a psychical non-conductor. If that man goes to a medium with the strongest desire to witness phenomena alone, bringing with him this deterrent attitude of mind which is the antipodes of Faith, he will most probably fail, unless he is fortunate enough to meet with a fully-developed psychic whom his coldness cannot wholly chill. "I should say," says Mr. Massey, "that the most unfavourable disposition to take to a medium is *suspicion*, and the most favourable is *confidence*." But this is to deliver oneself over a prey to the deceiver! Yes; such men do get taken in. I agree with Mr. Massey; they do. I also agree with him when he adds, "I believe that their success will be, on the whole, of such an amount and character as more than to compensate for these disadvantages. The best evidence is above the level at which extremely exact and cautious observation is important." I would go further and say that the success of the man of faith will be on a very different plane from any that may be achieved by the man of doubts, for he alone will be able to profit by what he sees, or to raise himself b it to any

higher plane of thought. He alone can penetrate through phenomena to the truths beyond, for he possesses "the key to the gate of the invisible world." It seems to be forgotten very often that a man is intrinsically no better for an intellectual belief in certain objective facts. In assuring himself of their existence he has given proof of the possession of certain powers of mind: that is all. Supposing him to be wholly right intellectually, he may have got out of Spiritualism all in it that is worthless except on the material plane. If he be a perfectly good Spiritualist, as the word is unfortunately used, he may be, as a man, morally worse than he was before he became acquainted with the phenomena called, and very wrongly called, spiritual. There is no necessary *spirituality* in the most pronounced *Spiritualist*.

Mr. Massey has some no less striking remarks upon the character of the present age as bearing on its meddling with psychical matters. It is a "transitional and critical epoch . . . engaged in reforming its conceptions: and in that process the element of negation is always more apparent than the element of construction." Precisely so. The present generation has largely lost its hold on Faith (in the broadest sense in which Mr. Massey uses the term) and it has not yet got hold of any substitute. In religious matters the old truths are being restated, but the world has not grasped them. The work is not complete yet, and meantime, as the temple is being built, there is much noise of axe and hammer, much din and dust, where all will eventually be beauty and peace. And so timid souls are holding on with pathetic persistence to the bodies of bygone truths from which the spirit has long since fled. They cannot be persuaded to bury their dead out of their sight: and they resent with angry vehemence any introduction of progressive thought into religious matters. They will have no "new-fangled notions." "What was good enough for my father is good enough for me." It is almost the same with psychical matters. In the witch-persecutions our forefathers killed off most of the psychics. The imagination of the witches no doubt distorted the truth: but most of them must have possessed this psychical power. With them disappeared the chief means of verifying to external consciousness the truth of the impact of the world of spirit on the world of matter. Very soon men forgot that there had been any such evidence: they lapsed deeper and deeper into a materialistic phase of thought. "The Rationalist," says Mr. Massey, "is right, but perversely right, when he points to the fact that with the decay of certain beliefs corresponding phenomena disappear also from what he considers the ordinary experience of mankind." That is true, as is the converse of the proposition. When men had no longer mediums at hand, their faith lapsed: and when mediums again started up and the old phenomena in a new guise were once more presented, they were received with surprise and indignation by a materialistic age that had thought them long since consigned to the limbo of extinct superstitions.

And not only were they unwelcome on these grounds; but they were likely to make most unpleasant rents in the garments with which the philosopher and the scientist had clothed themselves. If they were true, then many other beliefs must be abandoned. They were uncomfortable, these men of science, and they ignored the unwelcome truth that had been born into a world that did not want it. But it "had come to stay," and they found that it had to be reckoned with. So they applied to it the methods of the laboratory, the tests which had been found useful by men of science in the only investigations with which they were familiar, and they triumphantly exploded its pretensions to their own satisfaction. Naturally. This spirit is not amen-

able to the test-tube; and spiritual things are discerned by faculties with which these men of scepticism are not equipped. Both the man who investigates and the means which he uses must be right before any success is attained. And there is another point. The most outspoken testimony of the most eminent and trusted leaders of thought will make no impress on educated opinion till the world has been educated up to a plane of thought receptive of such testimony. The average mind, as Dr. W. B. Carpenter put it, "has no niche into which these things will fit." Mr. Massey shrewdly says, "If psychical evidence is ever to be estimated by the world at its right value, the presumption against it must be obviated otherwise than by its own unaided force. That which is now *à priori* incredible must become *à priori* credible, and that can happen only by a development of the spiritual comprehension of mankind; a subjective process by which the existing relation to evidence of this character will undergo a change."

The whole paper is full of wise and suggestive remarks. I commend it to the close study of all Spiritualists, for I have seen nothing for a long time that will so well repay attention, and which contains more solid truth.

"M. A. (OXON)."

THE KIND OF TESTIMONY NEEDED.

Spiritual phenomena, to be of any use to the world, must be so conclusive in their certainty as to place their genuineness beyond reasonable question. Nothing that comes of conditions favourable to deception—nothing that does not appeal to the unclouded senses, and to the better judgment of careful observers, because of its absolute fairness and freedom from all taint of suspicion—is really of any weight, in a scientific sense.

Hence, we believe it would be better for the cause of Spiritualism, pure and undefiled—better for all honest mediums—if our Spiritualist journals would cease to publish accounts of alleged phenomena not given under such conditions as to render the facts most palpable.

Especially should this be the case with all phases of manifestations that tax, and overtax the credulity of all reasonable sceptics. To assert as a fact such wonderful manifestations as those certified to by Baron Hellenbach, Professors Crookes, Wallace, Varley, and scores of other careful investigators, is worth nothing to the general reader unless the assertion is accompanied with such proofs of genuineness, deduced from such careful methods of investigation, as those prominent scientists were wont to require.

But instead of this, many of our Spiritualist journals contain a large amount of undemonstrated assertion concerning various mediums and various phases of phenomena—accounts of séances, often, where nothing is proven but the readiness of the writer thereof to accept what may or may not be a shameless deception.

Speaking for ourselves, we are in the receipt of much matter of this kind, which we deem it unwise to publish. It may be all genuine, but lacking in the all-important element of proof, we are constrained to consign it to the waste basket, or hold it in reserve for further evidence of genuineness.

If this course were generally pursued by all journals of this class, the effect, it seems to us, would prove most satisfactory. It would assist immensely in separating the true from the false in mediumship, by compelling all mediums to adopt such conditions as would render the manifestations of occult power occurring in their presence above suspicion. Only this class would then be entitled to public notice, and no others would be regarded as worthy of respectful consideration.

The demand of the times, in the matter of spiritual phenomena, is for facts based upon scientific research. We have no business with facts that will not stand the scrutiny of careful investigation. At least we have no right to give them to the world as facts unless we are prepared to furnish all reasonable corroboration thereof.—*Golden Gate.*

IMMORTALITY AND MODERN THOUGHT.

(FROM THE *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.)

Under the above head the Rev. Minot J. Savage, of Boston, delivered a notable address before a large and deeply interested audience, at the National Unitarian Conference at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., September 22nd. The entire paper is to be published in the *Christian Register*.

After a review of the beliefs of the primitive man in regard to continued personal existence, which he emphatically pronounced seemed to be "not so much an invention or discovery as an original endowment and integral part of man," the lecturer proceeded to consider both Agnosticism and science. While he had no hard words for the former, he could no more submit to the new tyrant than to the old. "But," he said, "when it attempts to set limits to investigation and warns us off even from a rational search for the 'undiscovered country,' then I rebel. Comptes, its first secular High Priest, attempted it even in regard to an investigation of the physical heavens, and hardly was he dead before the spectroscope turned his wisdom into folly. Who knows but some spiritual spectroscope may play the same havoc with the wise ignorance of Agnosticism concerning the spiritual stars of which the world has always been thinking it caught occasional glimpses?"

The growth of science Mr. Savage pronounced to be one-sided and incomplete. Though we have made extraordinary excursions into the heavens and mapped most of the earth, "man is yet very largely an undiscovered country." But we cannot give up the soul, because the dissecting knife does not find it. Passing by traditional orthodoxy as having "nothing to say to any one who needs to have anything said," the speaker went on to consider the belief in immortality in the present age, introducing the last and most important part of his discourse by stating that, "the springing up of Spiritualism and Theosophy on grounds burnt over by the fires of the orthodox hell, and right in the teeth of the east winds that blow from the cheerless seas of doubt, testify to the hunger of men for some assurance that the loved and departed are not also lost."

After an interesting preface, in which Mr. Savage enlarged upon the dignity and importance of the subject, and a protest, "with all the earnestness of which I am capable, against both the shallow and flippant scientific disdain of this question, and the airy, aristocratic, dilettanti indifference with which theologians treat it"—the speaker passed to his own experiences both as a member of the Society for Psychical Research and an original investigator during the last eight or ten years. He claimed to know more of the subject than those who had given it no attention, and pronounced those who knew only what, from time to time, they had seen in the newspapers, to have no right to hold an opinion, much less to express it. He had long felt it to be a part of his duty to investigate a belief which is "either a lamentable delusion or the grandest truth in the world." We will finish with his own words.

"Three things I now regard as settled. They do not at all prove the claims of Spiritualism, but they do go a wonderful way, in at least illustrating the power of the soul to transcend ordinary physical limits, and act through other than the recognised channels of communication.

... What are these facts? First, hypnotism or mesmerism. This, which a French scientific commission once scouted, after what it called an investigation, is now recognised by the medical fraternity,—in the words of one of them,—as having 'a distinct therapeutic value.' . . . All the ordinary phenomena I have witnessed in private over and over again."

"Secondly, the fact of clairvoyance is established beyond question. Under certain as yet little understood conditions,

both seeing and hearing are possible, apart from the ordinary use of eye or ear or ethereal vibrations. What is it, then, that sees and hears?"

"Thirdly, it is a fact that mind may impress mind, and in some exceptional cases, send messages to places far away, even half way round the world."

"Now, no one of these facts, nor all of them combined, goes far enough to prove the central claim of modern Spiritualism. But this apparent semi-independence of the body, does at least make the question a rational one as to whether the soul is not an entity, capable of getting along without the present physical body. And while we are on the borderland of facts like these, I confess I find it hard to be patient with the conceited and flippant ignorance which waves them aside with a supercilious air, while it gravely potters over a fish's fin, or the dug-up vertebra of the tail of some extinct mastodon, calling one science, and the other superstition."

Mr. Savage then spoke of the frauds connected with modern Spiritualism, as well as of honest self-delusion, and proceeded:—

"But, when all the fraud, all the delusion, all the misinterpretation have been brushed on one side, there remains a respectable, nay, even a striking and startling body of facts that yet has no place in our recognised theories of the world and of man."

"The so-called explanations that I have seen, such as those of Drs. Beard and Carpenter and the Harvard Committee of some years ago, are so ridiculously inadequate to account for facts of my own experience, that, by natural reaction, they almost incline one to grasp the opinions they combat, for the sake of having something a little more solid to hold by."

After noting the movement of physical objects without muscular pressure, and the imparting of information that was never in the possession of either of the sitters, as well as that which the medium only could not have known, he continues: "To call it mind reading is easy; but what is mind reading? One insoluble mystery is hardly a satisfactory explanation for another. Automatic writing, when the medium was unconscious of what she was writing, and this of a most remarkable character, is another common experience. These are little facts, you may say. . . . Science knows no little facts."

"I have never paid the slightest attention to anything that occurred in the dark, or under conditions where deception as to fact was possible. I have seen plenty of these; but have always ruled them out of court. And besides, most of the things that have impressed me have occurred when the medium was a personal friend and not a 'professional' at all."

"As the result of all this, am I a Spiritualist? No! Would I like to be one? I would like to be able to demonstrate the fact of continued existence and the possibility of opening communication between the two worlds. But I am a good deal more anxious for the truth than I am to believe one way or the other."

In concluding, he says:—

"If all men could know that death is only an incident, and that life is to continue for good or ill, right on; and if they could know that, under the workings of the law of cause and effect, they are making the future life day by day; that its condition is to be determined by this, not by creed or belief, or ritual or worship, as such, but by character, is it not plain that this would become the mightiest of all possible motives? If it can be attained, here is a power able to lift and transform the world."

"It is not a question, then, that is all in the air, and is of no practical importance. I know of none that I believe to be more practical."

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.]

Resignation of Membership of the S.P.R.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In view of the recent action of "The Society for Psychical Research" in respect of "Spiritualism," I find the standpoint of a "Spiritualist," in reference to that Society, untenable. I have, therefore, tendered my resignation, and I imagine that I shall not be alone in this action.—Yours truly,

STANHOPE SPEER, M.D.

13, Alexandra-road, South Hampstead, N.W.

October 18th, 1886.

The Crisis.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. Eglinton, in his preface to the "Special Appeal," says very naturally: "All interested in the question should therefore not fail to express in these columns their opinion on the situation."

We are arrived at a crisis which demands a sharp solution one way or the other. The Psychical Society, after nearly five years' existence, is surely bound to utter deliberately "Aye" or "No" to the question—"Is Mr. Eglinton an impostor?" The evidence is now complete. If the Society is divided on the question, and cannot give a collective verdict, we are surely entitled to know that fact. Let us know the exact numerical proportion of "the ayes, the noes, and the undecided." The votes could easily be taken, and great relief would be felt at the announcement of a definite verdict. Is the Society to drivel on for ever, pursuing interminable inquiries, but not able to arrive at any conclusion? The case of Eglinton is very tangible, very complete, and very compact. A clearer or a more positive case cannot be hoped for or even conceived.

If the evidence is deemed insufficient, it can only be on the ground that no evidence could establish the claim, for that all the forces in the universe are merely material, and that no evidence to the contrary, however apparently irresistible, ought to be received. In other words, the Society knows in advance what is possible in the universe and what is impossible, and, therefore, all the evidence you can bring of occult agencies, pile it up as high as you please, goes for nothing.

But if so, why does the Society exist at all? It pretends to inquire whether that is possible which it knows in advance to be absolutely impossible. Its very existence is a fraud. Professors Ray Lankester, Huxley, and Tyndall would not go through the foolery of a pretended inquiry. These men are consistent, and have the strength of a clear resolve, shallow as its foundation may be. But the Psychical Society remains in a state of pitiable imbecility and irresolution—with no mind, no purpose, and no opinion; continuing to inquire, but with no result, and yet ashamed to dissolve itself without having fulfilled its *raison d'être*.

I conceive that the limits of a reasonable patience have long been exceeded, and that all true and earnest Spiritualists are bound to withdraw *en masse* from the Society, and no longer suffer themselves to be the dupes of Sadducees and materialists who are animated by a spirit and intention exactly opposite to their own.

Barmouth, North Wales.

G. D. HAUGHTON.

Mr. R. Hodgson on the Test Envelope.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In view of the letters to "LIGHT" upon the subject, it seems advisable that I should state my share in the examination of the "test-envelope" of which Mr. Theobald has given some account in "LIGHT" of September 25th, 1886. Mr. Theobald, at Mr. Bennett's suggestion, asked me to attend the meeting "at the rooms of the L. S. A. 13, Craven-street, Charing Cross," mentioning the date, and explaining the object of the meeting, but, unfortunately, not mentioning the hour at which the meeting was to be held. I replied accepting the invitation, but, also unfortunately, thought that Mr. Theobald's omission to mention the time was probably due to the hour's not having been fixed, and I, therefore, expected another note from him stating the hour of meeting. Had I been aware of the hour of meeting of the Council of the

L. S. A., at 16, Craven-street, I should probably have gone to that number (16, not 13 as Mr. Theobald wrote in his letter to me) at that time. In a letter of the day following, Mr. Theobald stated, *inter alia*, that he proposed sending an account of the envelope to "LIGHT," with facsimiles, &c., and trusted to show it to me later on.

On the following Saturday I called at the National Press Agency on S.P.R. business, and meeting Mr. Dawson Rogers, I inquired if he had been present at the meeting. Mr. Rogers then gave me an account of the envelope, and submitted it for my inspection. Not observing at the first glance any signs of tampering with the seal, I inspected the edges, and observed a cleanly-cut gap on the top edge. A portion at least of this edge appeared to me to have been unquestionably cut with a sharp instrument, though I was unable to say certainly, even with the help of a pocket lens, that the cut had extended the whole way along the edge. I at once drew the attention of Mr. Rogers to the gap, and though, as Mr. Podmore says in his letter in "LIGHT" of October 9th, Mr. Rogers did not, at his first inspection, admit that the gap which I showed him was due to any other cause than the natural wear of the edges caused by the handling of the envelope, he was, I understood, quite convinced, after a longer inspection, that the envelope had apparently been fraudulently opened.

On the following Monday Mr. Bennett mentioned in a letter to me that Mr. Theobald asked him to go to 16, Craven-street, at six, on the Tuesday, and said that he had asked me. I received no communication from Mr. Theobald, but attended the meeting in accordance with what I supposed to be Mr. Bennett's wish.

In the meantime Mr. Rogers had experimented in the cutting of envelope edges, and showed me how difficult it was to detect the cutting, if it was made very fine, and so long as the two edges cohered closely; and I understood him to draw the inference, I venture to think rightly, that if, as may have been the case, the edges of the gap in the "test envelope" were close together at the time of the first meeting, the examination then made would not have resulted in the detection of the fraud, supposing it to have been previously perpetrated.

Indeed, when I consider that Mr. Rogers himself did not at first admit that the gap which I pointed out to him showed that the envelope had been previously opened; and when I further consider that Mr. Theobald, even at the second meeting and after a later inspection of the envelope, remained unconvinced that there was any sign of tampering until after the flap had been turned back and the gum exposed to view, it seems to me quite possible that even the gap which I observed might have been in existence at the first meeting, yet remained undetected. I learn from Mr. Bennett that in his opinion "no exact or sufficient examination of the edges was made at that meeting by any one"; and it appears to me not at all improbable that the gap might have escaped notice unless the edges were inspected for the express purpose of ascertaining whether they had been cut. My own discovery of the cutting was due not to any special keenness on my part, but to the fact that I expressly looked for it.

When the envelope was opened by Mr. Rogers and myself, there could no longer be the slightest doubt, even in the mind of Mr. Theobald, that the envelope had been previously opened by a cutting along the top edge, and that the two free edges thus formed had been stuck together by gum in the endeavour to conceal the traces of the opening.

The appearance of the envelope certainly suggested, "ordinary human trickery," and I am not quite sure that I understand the statements of Mr. Massey in his letter to "LIGHT" of October 2nd, 1886. Am I right in inferring his meaning to be that an ordinary human trickster would not have perpetrated the fraud, because he must have known that the fraud would be discovered?

RICHARD HODGSON.

1, Furnival's Inn, Holborn, E.C.

October 12th, 1886.

[Without in any way entering seriously upon a discussion of the question of the "Test Envelope," it may not be altogether without diversion for our readers if we proceed to hoist Mr. Hodgson on his own petard. In the *Journal* for October he uses arguments against the credibility of the witnesses for psychography, which apply with equal force against testimony of any kind, inasmuch as his qualifying clause that the observation is under circumstances of great difficulty is obviously the result of almost total ignorance of the subject. So on the principle of what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, we may be permitted to point out that Mr. Hodgson's recollection of the circumstance alluded to in the above letter is not

quite reliable. It cannot avail him to assure us that the events occurred actually as stated, because, in reply, we must remind him that in addition to a not improbable "desire" on his part "to strengthen the grounds of a conviction . . . already formed," there is inherent in man "a universal mental weakness, a perishability, an exceeding transience, a fading feebleness, an evanescence beyond recall of impressions"; that events may have occurred which Mr. Hodgson has forgotten; and his report is probably marred by the gravest omissions, and other misdescriptions a knowledge of which might fundamentally change our explanation of how the envelope was tampered with. Suppose that we are considering the testimony of Mr. Hodgson to his own separate and complete examination of the envelope. "Then . . . we have—with a perfectly *bond fide* witness—four possibilities to consider besides the one that his impression is correct. It may actually be that no examination at all was made by the witness; it may be that, although made, the examination was not made in the perfect manner now described; it may be that the examination, although faultless and made at the sitting, was not made on the occasion alleged; or it may be that although the examination was made as described, and on the occasion alleged, events, perhaps unnoticed or regarded by the witness as insignificant, intervened between the examination and the apparent production of the writing [discovery of the gap]." Moreover, the pocket lens was doubtless a "trick" lens. Therefore it can hardly be conceived improbable that Mr. Hodgson, by some of that "divine dexterity" which he attributes to Mr. Eglinton, managed somehow to elude Mr. Rogers' gaze, obtain possession of the envelope, tamper with it, himself seal it afresh, and then innocently pretend to "smell a rat." Our readers must pardon us for inflicting reasoning like this upon them. It is not ours, however, but Mr. Hodgson's, and we are pleased to make him a present of it re-dished up, turning against him, almost *literatum et verbatim*, the language and arguments he has used against others.—ED.]

Col. Olcott and Mr. R. Hodgson.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I was surprised to find in "LIGHT," of October 9th, 1886, a paragraph headed: "Mr. R. Hodgson charged with suppressing evidence." The charge consists of certain statements made in a letter written by Colonel Olcott to Mr. C. Reimers, and published by the latter "in *The South Australian Register*, of July 23rd last," and "in the interests of truth," as you allege, you place these statements before the readers of "LIGHT."

Now having in the account published in Part IX. of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, already dealt with all the main cases that had been previously published of phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society, having there expressly stated that it would be superfluous to print all the accounts of alleged "occult phenomena" which I received when in India, having further given illustrations of other cases which had not been previously published, including sundry "letter phenomena," and having, moreover, independently exhibited the unreliability of Colonel Olcott's statements, I do not feel called upon to enter into any discussion upon his innuendoes that I have suppressed valuable evidence. The manner, however, in which you lay his charge before the readers of "LIGHT" makes it, I think, desirable that in the present instance I should indicate the absurdity of the charge.

And I may first point out that there is another passage in the letter of Colonel Olcott from which you quote, and which, therefore, I presume you have read, which is enough to show any discerning reader familiar with the facts of the case involved, that Colonel Olcott's estimate of evidence is untrustworthy. The passage is as follows:

"You have also shown me that such incidents as the apparent plagiarism of Mr. Kiddle's language in a 'K. H.' letter have no evidential value in support of a theory of conscious fraud, by citing to me the startling fact that in the great Handel's oratorios 'there are whole choruses, note by note, by Stradella'—a composer who died a half-century before his time. Surely it would be an impertinent sceptic who should aver that he whom Beethoven styled the 'greatest composer that ever lived' had consciously plagiarised from Stradella, an inferior genius! How many examples are there not of this unintentional literary appropriation, not merely noted in mediumistic annals, but in those of general literature?"

To those who remember the details of the "Kiddle incident," as discussed in the columns of "LIGHT" in 1884—and especially Mr. C. C. Massey's able criticism of the incident in the number for July 26th, his letter in the number for October 18th, and the editorial remarks appended to Mr. Kiddle's letter in the number

for September 20th—to those, I say, who remember these details, Colonel Olcott's estimate of evidence, as exhibited even in the above quotation, will scarcely appear reliable enough to form the foundation of such a charge as you have thought proper to lay before the readers of "LIGHT."

I may now deal with the specific charge itself, which runs as follows:

"Mr. Hodgson suppressed an account—capable of verification by Postal Department and other proofs—of an 'Astral flight,' or psychic journey, of Mr. D.'s from Cawnpore to Madras on the night of November 4th, 1883, and of the transportation of a certain letter (to me from a gentleman in Italy) from Madame Blavatsky, which very letter was posted to me to Aligarh, N. W. P., on the morning of November 5th, at Adyar, by Madame Blavatsky, and duly reached Aligarh on the 10th, in regular course of post, where I found it on the 12th. This is so irrefutable a case, so outside of the possibility of any theory of collusion or deception, and it so upsets the plan to impeach Mr. Damodar's veracity and integrity, that it was quietly ignored."

I now proceed to explain this case.

EXTRACTS FROM COLONEL OLCOTT'S DIARY.

November 4th, 1883. "Received among other letters one for K. H., from Sam Ward, from Capri, and gave it to D. K. M. to forward."

November 12th, 1883. "Lectured on 'The Evils of the Times and their Remedy.' Letter writing all around. (See supplementary entry on 4th inst. about letter for K. H.) To-day this very letter, in one from H. P. B. posted at Madras on the 5th inst., and received at the Aligarh post office on the 10th in a registered cover, was delivered to me from the post office where it had been lying two days awaiting my arrival. Thus between the P. M. of the 4th and the morning of the 5th (for the northern mail closes at three p. m. at Adyar), the letter had been taken by D. K. M. to K. H. at M.—, and sent thence to Adyar—a most beautiful phenomenon, and of the very (same) physical character as the transportation of the London *Times* on the day of publication demanded of us by C. C. M. and A. P. S."

NOTE, BY DAMODAR, TO THE ABOVE EXTRACTS.

"I have read the above, and certify to its correctness. Colonel Olcott gave me a letter for the MAHATMA from Mr. Ward on the 4th of November, while I was travelling with him in the N. W. P. in 1883, which was enclosed in a letter sent by Madame Blavatsky from Adyar on the 5th idem, received at Aligarh on the 10th, and delivered to Colonel Olcott on the 12th idem, immediately on our arrival at that station."

REMARKS OF MY OWN WRITTEN BELOW THE ABOVE NOTE.

"When Colonel Olcott first showed me the entry in the diary, I inquired if he received the letter himself from the postman. He replied: 'Of course, it would be brought to me directly by the peon.'

"They arrived at Aligarh on the 11th, as is proved by Colonel Olcott's diary, and Colonel Olcott received the letter on the 12th. Damodar asserts in reply to my inquiries that sometimes the letters were delivered to himself, sometimes to Colonel Olcott, but on this occasion they were delivered to Colonel Olcott."

What then is the wonderful evidence for Damodar's "astral flight"? Colonel Olcott assumes that the letter which he found in an envelope at Aligarh on November 12th must have been in the envelope when this was at Adyar on November 5th; and as the letter which he had given to Damodar on November 4th could not have been conveyed to Adyar by November 5th in the ordinary course, Damodar must have taken an "astral flight" and the letter must have been "transported."

Plainly, all that was required for the production of the "phenomenon" described by Colonel Olcott in such glowing terms in his diary, was that Damodar should have kept the letter in question when it was given to him on November 4th, and fraudulently inserted it in the envelope which Colonel Olcott received on November 12th.

RICHARD HODGSON.

1, Furnival's Inn, Holborn, E. C.
October 12th, 1886.

A NEW Spiritualistic Society has been started in Merthyr Tydvil with fifty members.

ERRATA IN LAST "LIGHT."—P. 477, line 41, for *considerably* read *considerable*; do., line 51, for *this* read *the*.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
16, CRAVEN STREET,
CHARING CROSS, S.W.

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Light:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23RD, 1886.

THE MESSAGE OF SPIRITUALISM.

The message of modern Spiritualism to the world can have no other meaning than that of man's enlightenment and spiritual unfoldment. To imagine that unseen powers of evil are permitted to dominate the good in the world, and overwhelm the ignorant and the weak, as well as the wise and the strong, is to place a demon upon the throne of the universe.

The human race was rapidly sinking into the woful negation of materialism. Thoughtful men and women were fast coming to deny the myths and miracles of tradition, upon which they had been taught to believe in a continued existence beyond the grave. They buried their dead out of their sight, and they were lost to them for evermore. And in the gloom of this cold philosophy the world was becoming filled with breaking hearts—of mothers wailing for their lost ones—of earthly bonds stronger than death, sundered, and to be nevermore reunited.

The outcome of this belief was beginning to tell in a most pernicious way upon many lives,—of those who had thrown off the yoke of old beliefs and superstitions, and had come under far more cruel trammels, the yoke of cold, unfeeling Atheism—a belief that led down to the silent valley of annihilation. "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow ye die," shouted the unthinking sensualist; and amid the mad whirl of human passions, the fierce pursuits of unholy pleasures, and the wild struggle for possession of the perishable things of earth, men lived their little day and passed out into the unknown—into the starless night of oblivion.

The Church was powerless to stem the tide of this widely-sweeping thought. Science, with its new unfoldments in geology and anthropology, was slowly but surely undermining the very foundations upon which the Church had rested for so many centuries. Not that it was wanting in the "evidence of the spirit," for to a vast multitude it was still the living hope and stay of the soul, in its journey through the world—its solace in affliction, and its only comfort in the hour of death. But those who were no longer contented with tradition demanded the proofs whereof the Church taught of the existence of the spirit after death, and it was unable to give them. It even denied the possibility of the evidence to the modern world, of the existence of those who had passed on,—evidence which their Scriptures unmistakably chronicled as having been given to the world in the past.

Then came the new revelation so much needed—the positive proof that "if a man die he shall live again," but the Church rejected it, first as a delusion, and next as a demoniacal influx of spirit power to the world. But that makes no difference, the proof is there all the same, and millions of earth's children accept it.

The intelligences from the other side of life have taught man the fallacy of the old idea concerning Heaven and hell—a terrible abode of souls eternally lost, and a wonderfully appointed and equipped Heaven or the everlasting abiding place of the blessed. They have demonstrated to the satisfaction of millions that spirit-life is a counterpart of this life, and the spirit-world a place peopled with the ignorant, the wise, the good, the same as in this world, and that progress, growth, and spiritual unfoldment are a law of spirit-life just the same as in this.

All intelligent Spiritualists have learned that the messages from the unseen world are necessarily mixed with error, ignorance, and sometimes with mischief, just in proportion as the spirits communicating are good, wise, ignorant, or mischievous. This fact being well understood, they accept the messages for what they are worth, exercising their own reason concerning them, and never surrendering themselves to the dictation of any influence that has not the approval of their best judgment. And thus they have learned to obey the injunction of the Great Teacher to "try the spirits," holding fast only to that which is good.—*Golden Gate.*

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

The October number of the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research, is mainly occupied by an article by Mr. R. Hodgson, criticising the reports printed in that magazine for June of sittings with Mr. Eglinton. In our opinion, its publication gives the last and final indication, if such were needed, of the spirit in which the subject of Spiritualism is approached by the Society. Their minds are evidently made up in advance, and after weary years they have got no further than an equivalent of the old worn-out cry of "Oh, Maskelyne and Cook do all this"; or, seeing perhaps a glimpse of absurdity in such a position, they seek to destroy the evidence by impugning the credibility of the witnesses. Nothing apparently is now to be hoped for from the Society for Psychical Research, and unless under exceptional circumstances, which we do not now foresee, we shall, as far as we are concerned, pass by all that concerns them in silence. We believe this will be the universal verdict of every Spiritualist or candid investigator who reads Mr. Hodgson's article. We do not need to answer it; we only ask people to read it; that of itself will be a sufficient reply to much of what is downright nonsense, if nothing worse. A more flagrant and offensive case of special pleading, misleading insinuations, suppression of material evidence, and unwarranted assumption, helped out by what cannot be otherwise described than as a remarkably twisted vision, we have rarely met with. After all, however, there may exist in the world somewhere a commodity called common-sense. If so, we hope it will soon be revealed to the leaders of a certain organisation located not a hundred miles distant from Westminster Abbey.

MRS. MELLON, the Newcastle medium, is now in London.

We regret to have to announce the passing away of Mr. and Mrs. Butterworth, of Croydon, two old friends of the movement in that district.

We are continually hearing of the development of private mediums, through whom most excellent phenomena are occurring. There is no better method of studying Spiritualism than by holding home-séances; and if more attempts could be made to organise select circles for that purpose, not only would investigators help themselves, but the cause generally.

MR. W. EGLINTON has now resumed his psychographic séances, but to prevent useless correspondence, he wishes it to be understood that he can give no séances to anyone who is desirous of submitting the results to the Society for Psychical Research. He, like many others, considers that body, by its continued opposition to Spiritualism and its unfair methods of investigation, to have placed itself beyond the pale of recognition.

JUSTINUS KERNER AND THE SEERESS OF PREVORST.*

BY CARL DU PREL.

Translated by "V."

We shall celebrate on the 18th September, 1886, the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Justinus Kerner, poet, physician, and—ghost-seer. We understand that this anniversary will be celebrated in Weinsberg, the little Swabian town in which Kerner laboured for so long. The philanthropic physician Kerner still lives in the memory of his fellow citizens, the songs of the poet Kerner still are everywhere heard, and some of them have become "Volkslieder"; his contemporaries will therefore, doubtless, on this anniversary do him honour in these two characters. But with Kerner the ghost-seer it is quite another thing. An unprejudiced estimation of him in the latter character has not yet been arrived at: and it is more common for people to make excuses for, than to appreciate him; so let it be the task of the *Sphinx*, in a short notice of Kerner's life, to call attention to the mystic side of his character, which experiences of many kinds, but particularly the observations called forth by the malady of the "Seeress of Prevorst," tended to encourage.

Justinus Kerner was born at Ludwigsberg on the 18th of September, 1786, the youngest of five children of the High Steward and Counsellor Kerner, of that place. He has himself given an account of his early youth in his *Pictures from my Boyhood Days*; and besides this, we possess two biographies of him, one from the hand of a friend,† the other written by his own daughter‡. In the first we get more of a general picture of the man himself; the second, with its pious lingerings upon the more psychical imports of his actions and traits of character, reads like an idyl, in which we are only occasionally reminded that it really is a biography; for the experiences of a poet readily take a colouring which makes them appear like the creation of a poetical imagination.

Kerner was originally destined for the mercantile profession and had a hard fight before he obtained permission to devote himself instead to study. At eighteen years of age he left for the University; he took his tightly-packed knapsack upon his back and journeyed to Tübingen, where he intended to study natural science, without having yet decided upon

any special branch. To start at once economically, Kerner went on foot from Ludwigsberg to Tübingen, and only refreshed himself at springs on his way. He arrived at Tübingen by moonlight, sat down on a bench before the gates, tired out, and fell asleep. When he awoke, the poplars were blown about by a storm of wind, and a gust carried a written sheet of paper to him, a prescription blown from an open window of the hospital, bearing the signature of the head physician, Dr. Uhland. Kerner received this as a sign that he should adopt the profession of a physician, and forming the resolution that he would become one he entered Tübingen in 1804.

He was already acquainted with Uhland as a poet, and attached himself to him and to a small circle of companions of like poetic tastes while in Tübingen. Here, likewise, he became acquainted with his future wife, Frederica Ehmann, daughter of Pastor Ehmann, of Ruith, near Stuttgart. It was on the occasion of an excursion with a party of

acquaintances to the Achalm, near Reutlingen, on the 26th of April, 1807, that his kind fate led him to this being. All were merry, with the exception of a young girl in mourning raiment, belonging to the company, who gazed sorrowfully around her. Kerner accosted her with these words of Goethe:—

"How comes it that
thou art so sad
When all around is
gay?"

"Tis seen in looking
at thine eyes
That thou hast wept
to-day."

She answered him
by the second verse:

"If I, indeed, alone
have wept,
'Tis for my own sad
grief,
And tears which flow
so softly down
Afford my heart
relief."

The familiar
"thou" thus com-
menced, was never

abandoned, and Frederica, mourning the death of her father, found consolation in her love for Kerner. They could see one another but seldom, often only at a distance, but they corresponded by writing, and placed their letters beneath a stone in a deserted chapel, where they sometimes likewise met.

When in 1808 Kerner was promoted to the position of doctor, he left Tübingen, and joined his brother, who was likewise a physician, at Hamburg. There he attached himself to the society of Rosa Maria, sister of his friend Varnhagen von Ense, as he could talk with her more readily than with his male companions about his Riekele. In the following year, when his brother left the hospital in which they were both employed, Justinus went to Vienna, in which place likewise poetry pointed him to the path of friendship. He formed a friendship for the poet Ludwig Stoll, who was living in impoverished circumstances, and who was afterwards immortalised by Uhland in his sonnet, "To a Hungry Poet." Kerner assisted him to the best of



JUSTINUS KERNER. 1860.

* From the September number of the *Sphinx*. The illustrations have been kindly lent by the editor of that journal.

† Justinus Kerner: Aimé Reinhard.

‡ Justinus Kerners *Jugendsüelie und mein Vaterhau*: Mari Niethammer.

his powers, and often told afterwards how, when he went for a walk with Stoll, he would patch the shoes of the latter through which his toes were peeping, in some retired passage, with sticking-plaister from his surgical case.

When Kerner left Vienna in 1810, he settled in Wildbad as a doctor. The lively interchange of letters between him and his betrothed was never abandoned, and now that he was again in her neighbourhood, and in his own country, he was in the right mood to devote himself to poetical inspiration. Indeed, he often showed himself a poet, which with him was never separated from the man, in his actions. Thus, one day when he found a herd-boy sleeping by the wayside, he slid a thaler into his hand, and stealing softly away, pictured to himself how the boy on waking would imagine the piece of money a gift from a fairy, or perhaps from the devil.

His residence in Wildbad was not of long duration ; he found it impossible to establish a good practice there, and, therefore, took the post of under official physician in Welzheim. There he became well known, not only as a poet, but as a conscientious and clever doctor, who became much in request, and was only unfitted for his profession in that he looked upon each case of suffering not as an "interesting case," but with as deep sympathy as if it were his own. A death occurring in his practice would rob him of his night's rest, and once when he was asked if he had lost any children, he answered sighing : "Yes, more than a hundred !"

In 1813 Kerner was married to his Rickele in the church of Enzweihingen by his brother, and on the 1st of March the newly-married pair took up their abode in their modest dwelling at Welzheim. Only one was to be had, consisting of two rooms and a tiny kitchen in the Ox Inn. To the larger of the two rooms (the sleeping-room) the condition was attached that it should be vacated on every market day, on wedding festivities, and especially when a dance was to take place. But notwithstanding this Rickele managed to arrange everything with comfort and neatness. His practice abroad forcing Kerner to keep a horse, he purchased an easy-going nag, upon which Rickele often accompanied her husband, who then hired another for his own use ; but sometimes they would ride in the fashion of the neighbourhood on the same horse, the wife sitting behind her husband, clasping him round the waist.

Poetry afresh came into the house with a little maiden named Marie, in 1813, and as early as the following spring the child was taken on horseback sometimes by her father, sometimes by her mother.

When in 1816 Kerner received the appointment of head physician in Gailsdorf, the trouble of seeking a dwelling recommenced ; a hard winter went by and it was only in the spring that a comfortable house could be obtained. It was at this time that Kerner, taking a little journey with his family and passing through Weinsberg, cried out as though impressed with a presentiment : "What a lovely place, I should like to live here !" In 1817 a second child, Theobald, was born, afterwards Court Counsellor of Weinsberg, and from this time Marie could oftener accompany her father on his short journeys. As the child sat in the little carriage, Kerner gave the reins into her hands, leant back and pretended to sleep ; then how proud was the little one to drive the horse all by herself !

The position of head official physician at Weinsberg becoming vacant, Kerner applied for, and was appointed to it. In January, 1819, the journey was made to the pretty little town, which nestles up to the hill as though to a sheltering mother, overhung by the ruins of the "Weibertreu." It is a matter of course that Kerner as a physician soon became well acquainted with his neighbours ; as a poet he took care that his intercourse with them was of a pleasant ure. Greetings went forth from every house he passed,

and the children ran to meet him. But when one of his patients was dangerously ill, anxiety disturbed his rest, and often he preferred to stay up the whole night with such a patient, rather than return home to spend a sleepless night.

As the residence he had in Weinsberg became less endurable to him, Kerner resolved to build himself a house. The municipality presented him with a plot of ground, and the rights of citizen appertaining to it. Around and behind the house was room for a garden, which was laid out in the following spring, and so the property acquired the charming appearance which it now has. The neighbourhood of the "Weibertreu,"* however, was an opportunity for Kerner not to be neglected. At his instigation an association of ladies was formed in Weinsberg to preserve and repair the world-renowned ruin, which threatened to fall down. Narrow paths were laid out, and vineyards planted, and all the German ladies were invited to assist in the preservation of this token of woman's fidelity. All those who sent a contribution of five gulden received a simple gold ring, in which a stone from the ruins of the fortress was set, together with an appropriate poem by Pastor Gerber, called "The Rings of the Weibertreu." Contributions flowed in rapidly, and through Kerner's activity the hill on which the ruins stood was transformed from a desolate wilderness into a delightful pleasure-ground. In every German town these rings of Weinsberg might now be seen, and they reminded the German ladies who wore them of the day when the siege was raised, and the female inhabitants being allowed to depart, bearing with them their most valued possessions, carried their husbands down on their backs, and in recognition of their devotion were allowed to retain them. Now, however, upon the "Burgruine" may be read the inscription dedicated by Kerner to his Rickele :—

"Getragen hat mein Weib mich nicht,
Aber ertragen ;
Das war ein schwereres Gewicht,
Als ich mag sagen."

(Translated.)

My wife has never carried me,
But had with me to bear
A heavier weight that must have been,
Than I to tell should care.

To the end of his life Kerner remained a faithful guardian of the ruins of the "Weibertreu," and in his will he left a sum for the conservation of the Æolian harps which he had caused to be set up in the tower. At the foot of the hill, near Kerner's house, stood an old tower, formerly part of the town wall, which it was intended to convert into a prison. To avoid having such a sad neighbour, Kerner bought it of the town. A staircase was erected, the pavement levelled, and the vaulted space under it—in which once Count Helfenstein was kept imprisoned till the time of his execution—was turned into a habitable apartment, with Gothic stained glass windows. At a later period, Lenau inhabited this tower, and wrote there a portion of his *Faust*. And finally, on the other side of the house, separated from it by the road, a large garden was laid out. Formerly this piece of ground had been used as a churchyard, and uncanny sayings were connected with it. The little garden-house—formerly the dead-house—was now turned into a place of lodging for the guests who flocked to Kerner's house in great numbers, attracted by the widespread reputation of the Swabian poet. Freiligrath, Geibel, Count Alexander of Wurtemberg, and others stayed there, and when Lenau was residing there the wild, melancholy strains of his violin often penetrated to Kerner's house.

Sometimes in his quality as physician he paid visits to friends at a distance accompanied by his family. On the occasion of one of these, while on the road to Eberstadt, about

* Literally, "Woman's fidelity."—Tr.

halfway a messenger overtook him with a letter from a patient, begging for some medicine. It was a matter of importance, but it was impossible for Kerner to go back to write the prescription, and no one present had a pencil or paper. While debating what was to be done, a Weinsberg gardener passed by, returning home. Neither had he any writing materials, but he took from his pocket a piece of chalk and this had to do duty. Kerner made the man bend his broad back, wrote the prescription on his dark blouse, and straightway sent him to the apothecary at Weinsberg, who said afterwards he had never had so distinctly written a prescription of Kerner's to make up.

Great hospitality reigned in the Kerners' house, in which Rickele emulated her Justinus. One day a travelling journeyman was passing by, and seeing carriages standing in front of the door, and people passing in and out, he entered and asked Rickele, whom he took for the hostess, for a measure of wine, while he threw his heavy bundle upon the table. Wine and bread were set before him, and only when he demanded the reckoning did he discover that he had not entered an inn, as he supposed, but a hospitable dwelling, and went thankfully on his way. Bavarian soldiers who passed by on their road to or from the Rheinpfalz were often invited in and regaled, and banished Poles, with whom Europe then swarmed, were frequently entertained for days, weeks, or even months. A Tyrolean, a journeyman glove-maker, whom Kerner had taken a great liking to, arrived one day at the same time as Prince Adalbert of Bavaria, who was a great admirer of the poet. Kerner, who had always invited the



FREDERICA WANNER (AFTERWARDS FRAU HAUFFE) AGED 17.

Tyrolean to dine with him, presented him to the Prince as an old friend, and begged that he might this time also share their common meal.

So things went on in the house presided over by Kerner and Rickele. I think it necessary to give some of these details from the above mentioned biographies, though they only bring to view the amiable and humorous side of the character of the poet and physician, as they will prevent the reader from forming a false picture in his mind of Kerner, the ghost-seer. For if it is usual to think of a ghost-seer as a person abstracted from the present, melancholy, and troubled in

mind, Kerner was the very reverse of all this. The present, so embellished by his poetical imagination, was dear to his heart, and as a physician he must have been little inclined to the contemplation of ghostly mysteries. In respect to this, Frau Marie Niethammer says: * "Those persons are much mistaken who think that my father evolved his researches on this subject from his imagination and deceived himself as well as others. The facts which he described were real, and were clearly observed, not only by himself but by persons of every condition and age. How many men, disbelieving not only in ghosts but in everything spiritual, came with the firm determination to believe nothing and to probe the matter to the bottom, who often left the presence of this simple woman † shaken in their scepticism by the indisputable facts occurring in her presence, and which, in spite of all their cold and critical examination, she was found



THE SEERESS OF PREVORST



W. Hauff
L. v. Stein
 21. Juli 1829.

* P. 187 of her before-mentioned work.
 † The "Seeress of Prevorst" lived in Weinsberg from November 25th, 1826, till the 5th of May, 1829, and from the 6th of April, 1827, in Kerner's own house.

to be utterly capable of herself in producing." And yet most of Kerner's contemporaries have looked upon the mystic side of his character as somewhat of a disease, and this no doubt will long continue to be the opinion of most people, fulfilling his own prognostic :

"Fleeting is my fame as poet,
Fleeting by my doctor's skill,
Only when of ghosts the talk is
I'm remembered—laughed at still."

With such a disposition as Kerner possessed, therefore, it could be only experiences carrying great weight which would force him to opinions so contrary to those of the age, and turn his mind in a mystical direction. He has written a whole series of works about his numerous mystical experiences, the most remarkable of which is the book relating to the "Seeress of Prevorst," but which, the most read of any—it has already reached five editions—has met with the most opposition. This may long continue to be the case, but none the less certain it is the book of the future. A time may come, as Kerner foretold, when the poet and the physician will be forgotten, but then only will the name of Kerner and that of the Seeress of Prevorst always be thought of and named together; for those who take interest in the mystical side of the life of the soul must number this seeress among the most remarkable of beings and her biography can never fall into oblivion. Even if the prevailing materialistic mode of thinking at the present time be altogether opposed to a scientific examination of mystic subjects, it is but a passing phase. A belief, which recurs in different forms in every religious system, and which has been respected by all the great philosophers from Plato to Kant—the belief, namely, that human individuality is not limited to the earthly existence, may, it is true, at different times be thrust on one side by human consciousness, but it can never entirely vanish. We can clearly foresee that belief in mysticism will be more widely spread in the next century than it has ever been, and so it is certain that Kerner's name will be well-known to our grandchildren and *The Seeress of Prevorst* recognised as one of the most remarkable books ever written. If I only refer here to this one book, I shall recommend Kerner's other mystic works to the reader on any other opportunity.

(*) Frederica Wanner was born in 1801, at the Wurtemberg village of Prevorst, situated in a mountainous district; she was the daughter of a forester, and in her nineteenth year married to a certain Hauffe. Even in her childhood the seeds were sown of the bodily sufferings from which, during the last seven years of her life, she was a constant sufferer. A similar depression of the vital powers has often served in other cases to develop that inner spiritual life which—as Kant says—remains concealed "so long as all is well," and which, without being itself of a sickly nature, is often associated with sickness, because the latter seems to give it an opportunity of showing itself. Thus the Seeress developed a natural somnambulism, of which it was the task of her physician, Justinus Kerner, to recognise the high importance. The last three years of her life she spent as an inmate of his house in Weinsberg. Here she was entirely confided to Kerner's care, who stood by her sick bed more than 3,000 times, and therefore, was fully competent to give the exhaustive account of her extraordinary condition described in his work entitled, *The Seeress of Prevorst*.

At that time animal magnetism as discovered by Mesmer began to be generally known in Germany, but, as is the case with all great discoveries, encountered the most violent opposition from the supporters of the old systems. Kerner, however, unfettered by the prejudices of his age, recognised the great value of induced somnambulism in the

case of those sick persons in whom nature herself exhibits natural somnambulism, thereby giving a hint to the reflecting physician that he should support this effort of natural healing power. While the orthodox treatment had hitherto only increased the sufferings of the invalid, Kerner profited by nature's hints, and at least was able to procure great alleviations in the condition of the Seeress.

Kerner's book is, however, not only interesting to the physician; it is highly important to philosophers, for there is no doubt that Frau Hauffe was the most remarkable somnambulist about whom monographs have ever been written. In the case of most of these only one or another trait of the so-called night life of the soul is to be observed; they were all found united in the Seeress of Prevorst, and her mystic faculties were not limited to the subjective sphere, but spread forth their tendrils into the other world concealed to normal consciousness. Even in her childhood's days numberless instances of forebodings, visions, second sight, thought-reading, and the "double" are vouched for. Kerner says that with her, somnambulism was an almost permanent state, and that even when waking she was never quite awake in the ordinary sense of the term.

(To be continued.)

[An advertisement of "Pioneers of the Spiritual Reformation," a biography of Kerner and Mesmer, will be found in another column.]

MR. GERALD MASSEY is now giving his lectures in Edinburgh.

LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, REGENT HOTEL, 31, MARYLEBONE-ROAD.—Next Sunday evening, at seven, Mr. F. W. Read will deliver an address on "Evidence for Psychography."

NOTICE TO READERS.—Attention is requested to the announcement with reference to last week's issue of "LIGHT," on Advertisement page ii.

CAMBRIDGE.—The Editor of one of the local papers writes to us:—Readers of "LIGHT" learn from that source little of what is passing in Cambridge directly or indirectly concerning Spiritualism, not because of the paucity of adherents nor the limitedness of the circulation of your journal there, but because of prejudices fruitful of intolerance. Letting lodgings to college students is the staple, and those outside the University not engaged in this business find it their interest not to go counter to the "dons," and these authorities, as a body, having long regarded Spiritualism as a heresy or a demoralising humbug, will not suffer open cognisance of it, and their power to punish where disregard for their opinions or injunctions is shown is unquestioned and not reluctantly exercised. Nevertheless, the desire and the determination to learn the truth are permeating, if slowly, all classes of the community here; and we have "Spiritualism at home" in a variety of quarters. "LIGHT" is furtively read by many who do not purchase copies (I hope they forward you subscriptions, even if anonymously), and I very frequently see evidences among both orthodox and unorthodox of anxiety to find opportunity of private investigation. Happily, the tendency is now encouraged, whether wittingly or not, by some advanced thinkers and courageous teachers; and, perhaps, you would like to hear of the latest instance. In the course of a sermon preached at St. Edward's, on Sunday fortnight, by the Vicar (the Rev. J. J. Lias, M.A.), whose discourses attract vast congregations, the following words were made use of:—"The festival we kept last week may remind us that hidden influences are at work around us on every side; that spiritual essences are mixed up with us and our concerns, and that the sudden impulses and unaccountable impressions that seize on us from time to time are no abnormal workings of our own being, but are the work of invisible beings around us, for good or for evil. It is a humbling thought, it is a solemnising thought. If we had the least idea of the mighty powers above and around us, of which few of us have the capacity to form even the slightest conception, of the vast army of influences at work on the world in general, and ourselves in particular, which are quite outside our knowledge, we should have far clearer notions than we have of the infinite seriousness of life, of the vast importance which may attach to the deed or word of beings even so insignificant as ourselves." The full import of the words has been made the subject of speculation, in which I have participated, and thereby I have found that much bigotry has lately disappeared and been supplanted by zeal for inquiry. From this seat of learning, this may be pleasing intelligence. Our private séances continue and are fortifying. I hope you are well. Let me congratulate you upon the last issue of "LIGHT"—it is a powerful testimony. I mean to let a few detractors here have the benefit of its perusal.

(*) In the following account I make use of my essay on the "Seeress," which appeared in the *Münchener Bunter Mappe*, in 1885, by permission of the editor.

WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

PROFESSORS TORNEBOM AND EDLAND, THE SWEDISH PHYSICISTS.—“Only those deny the reality of spirit phenomena who have never examined them, but profound study alone can explain them. We do not know where we may be led by the discovery of the cause of these, as it seems, trivial occurrences, or to what new spheres of Nature's kingdom they may open the way; but that they will bring forward important results is already made clear to us by the revelations of natural history in all ages.”—*Aftonblad* (Stockholm), October 30th, 1879.

BARON CARL DU PREL (Munich) in *Nord und Sud*.—“One thing is clear; that is, that psychography must be ascribed to a transcendental origin. We shall find: (1) That the hypothesis of prepared slates is inadmissible. (2) The place on which the writing is found is quite inaccessible to the hands of the medium. In some cases the double slate is securely locked, leaving only room inside for the tiny morsel of slate-pencil. (3) That the writing is actually done at the time. (4) That the medium is not writing. (5) The writing must be actually done with the morsel of slate or lead-pencil. (6) The writing is done by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (7) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the medium. (8) It strongly resembles a human being, as well in the degree of its intelligence as in the mistakes sometimes made. These beings are therefore, although invisible, of human nature or species. It is no use whatever to fight against this proposition. (9) If these beings speak, they do so in human language. (10) If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (11) When these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen are of human form. (12) When these things become entirely visible, they show the human form and countenance. . . . Spiritualism must be investigated by science. I should look upon myself as a coward if I did not openly express my convictions.”

J. H. FICHTE, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR.—“Notwithstanding my age (83) and my exemption from the controversies of the day, I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism. No one should keep silent.”

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—“I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me.”

DR. ROBERT CHAMBERS.—“I have for many years known that these phenomena are real, as distinguished from impostures; and it is not of yesterday that I concluded they were calculated to explain much that has been doubtful in the past; and, when fully accepted, revolutionise the whole frame of human opinion on many important matters.”—*Extract from a Letter to A. Russel Wallace*.

PROFESSOR HARE, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.—“Far from abating my confidence in the inferences respecting the agencies of the spirits of deceased mortals, in the manifestations of which I have given an account in my work, I have, within the last nine months” (this was written in 1858), “had more striking evidences of that agency than those given in the work in question.”

PROFESSOR CHALLIS, THE LATE PLUMERIAN PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY AT CAMBRIDGE.—“I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts, which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses. . . . In short, the testimony has been so abundant and consistent, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.”—*Clerical Journal*, June, 1862.

PROFESSOR GREGORY, F.R.S.E.—“The essential question is this. What are the proofs of the agency of departed spirits? Although I cannot say that I yet feel the sure and firm conviction on this point which I feel on some others, I am bound to say that the higher phenomena, recorded by so many truthful and honourable men, appear to me to render the spiritual hypothesis almost certain. . . . I believe that if I could myself see the higher phenomena alluded to I should be satisfied, as are all those who have had the best means of judging of the truth of the spiritual theory.”

LORD BROUGHAM.—“There is but one question I would ask the author. Is the Spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic, manufacturing age? No; for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties; to these the author addresses himself. But even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand; it is modern Spiritualism.”—*Preface by Lord Brougham to 'The Book of Nature.'* By C. O. Groom Napier, F.C.S.

THE LONDON DIALECTICAL COMMITTEE reported: “1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. 2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person. 3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time and in the manner asked for by persons present, and, by means of a simple code of signals answer questions and spell out coherent communications.”

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, THE FRENCH ASTRONOMER, AND MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.—“I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction, based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated ‘magnetic,’ ‘sommnambule,’ ‘mediumic,’ and others not yet explained by science to be ‘impossible,’ is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind be not biased by pre-conceived opinions, nor his mental vision blinded by that opposite kind of illusion, unhappily too common in the learned world, which consists in imagining that the laws of Nature are already known to us, and that everything which appears to overstep the limit of our present formulas is impossible—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.”

CROMWELL F. VARLEY, F.R.S.—“Twenty-five years ago I was a hard-headed unbeliever. . . . Spiritual phenomena, however, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, were soon after developed in my own family. . . . This led me to inquire and to try numerous experiments in such a way as to preclude, as much as circumstances would permit, the possibility of trickery and self-deception.” He then details various phases of the phenomena which had come within the range of his personal experience, and continues: “Other and numerous phenomena have occurred, proving the existence (a) of forces unknown to science; (b) the power of instantly reading my thoughts; (c) the presence of some intelligence or intelligences controlling those powers. That the phenomena occur there is overwhelming evidence, and it is too late now to deny their existence.”

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, F.G.S.—“My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved, quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences, and it is not denial or quibbling that can disprove any of them, but only fresh facts and accurate deductions from those facts. When the opponents of Spiritualism can give a record of their researches approaching in duration and completeness to those of its advocates; and when they can discover and show in detail, either how the phenomena are produced or how the many sane and able men here referred to have been deluded into a coincident belief that they have witnessed them; and when they can prove the correctness of their theory by producing a like belief in a body of equally sane and able unbelievers—then, and not till then, will it be necessary for Spiritualists to produce fresh confirmation of facts which are, and always have been, sufficiently real and indisputable to satisfy any honest and persevering inquirer.”—*Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.—“The writer” (i.e., Dr. L. Robertson) “can now no more doubt the physical manifestations of so-called Spiritualism than he would any other fact, as for example, the fall of the apple to the ground, of which his senses informed him. As stated above, there was no place or chance of any legerdemain, or fraud, in these physical manifestations. He is aware, even from recent experience of the impossibility of convincing anyone, by a

mere narrative of events apparently so out of harmony with all our knowledge of the laws which govern the physical world, and he places these facts on record rather as an act of justice due to those whose similar statements he had elsewhere doubted and denied, than with either the desire or hope of convincing others. Yet he cannot doubt the ultimate recognition of facts of the truth of which he is so thoroughly convinced. Admit these physical manifestations, and a strange and wide world of research is opened to our inquiry. This field is new to the materialist mind of the last two centuries, which, even in the writings of divines of the English Church, doubts and denies all spiritual manifestations and agencies, be they good or evil.”—From a letter by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, published in the *Dialectical Society's Report on Spiritualism*, p. 24.

NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR.—“No one can doubt that phenomena like these (Phrenology, Homeopathy, and Mesmerism) deserve to be observed, recorded, and arranged; and whether we call by the name of mesmerism, or by any other name, the science which proposes to do this, is a mere question of nomenclature. Among those who profess this science there may be careless observers, prejudiced recorders, and rash systematisers; their errors and defects may impede the progress of knowledge, but they will not stop it. And we have no doubt that, before the end of this century, the wonders which perplex almost equally those who accept and those who reject modern mesmerism will be distributed into defined classes, and found subject to ascertained laws—in other words, will become the subjects of a science.” These views will prepare us for the following statement, made in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1864, p. 336: “We have only to add, as a further tribute to the attainments and honours of Mr. Senior, that he was by long inquiry and experience a firm believer in spiritual power and manifestations. Mr. Home was his frequent guest, and Mr. Senior made no secret of his belief among his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr. Home's recent work by Messrs. Longmans, and he authorised the publication, under initials, of one of the striking incidents there given, which happened to a dear and near member of his family.”

CONJURERS AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

Mediums who are the instruments of an external agency, have more than once been confronted with conjurers who deceive by sleight of hand; and in the same manner that no man of science who has thoroughly and fairly investigated the phenomena has failed to become convinced of their reality, so no conjurer who has been confronted with the same facts has been able to explain their occurrence by prestidigitation. Houdin, Jacobs, Bellachini, Hermann, Kellar, and others have already confessed their powerlessness to produce under the same conditions what occurs without human intervention in the presence of a medium. We give the testimony of one of them:—

HARRY KELLAR, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eginton, at Calcutta, regarding which he said:—

“In conclusion, let me state that after a most stringent trial and strict scrutiny of these wonderful experiences I can arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form; nor was there in the room any mechanism or machinery by which could be produced the phenomena which had taken place. The ordinary mode by which Maskelyne and other conjurers imitate levitation or the floating test could not possibly be done in the room in which we were assembled.”

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 sances, 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 a 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 sance.

The first indications of success usually are a cold breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitchings 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.

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