

# Light:

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

"WHATEVER DOTH 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)."

Not for any intrinsic merit of its own, but for the purpose of getting on record what marks the progress made since last the *Times* meddled with Spiritualism, I note a leading article (October 30th) on the *Phantasms of the Living*, published on that day by the Council of the Society for Psychical Research. There is in the article a marked absence of that scornful and supercilious contempt which has hitherto characterised the pronouncements of the leading journal on this subject. The writer is amusingly impressed with the names of Professors Balfour Stewart and Henry Sidgwick, the Bishops of Carlisle and Ripon, Lord Rayleigh and the Secretary for Scotland, and naïvely shows that the names impress him more than the facts alleged. Another point that strikes the writer is that the volumes are printed by the National Press Agency—"the medium of publication recently patronised by Mr. Gladstone—a coincidence to which the title of the volumes, *Phantasms of the Living*, will be held in some quarters to give a peculiar significance." This occult remark I have pondered without any success in arriving at its "peculiar significance," if it possesses any beyond affording some indication of the mental fog which has settled down upon the critic as a consequence of dipping into these volumes. He does not pretend to have read the book, "to have examined it in detail," and he confesses that if he were to do so it would be in "a temper of sober and wary scepticism." "But though such a temper is indispensable, one of mere impatience or prejudice would be out of place." This is one of the utterances which I have adverted to as marking a change of tone in the *Times* with reference to psychical investigation. Perhaps it is the Bishop and the Professors who have awed the writer. Perhaps the Society for Psychical Research has in this case, as in others, contributed to make the subject less distinctly tabooed than it used to be.

"Science," the writer proceeds, "knows no *a priori* limits. Its province is the whole range of phenomena. It may affirm on sufficient grounds that the alleged phenomena do not exist, or that they have been wrongly interpreted and imperfectly co-ordinated. But it has no right to reject phenomena presented to it with adequate credentials merely on the ground that it has hitherto possessed no recognised organon for their investigation. '*Ars inveniendi*' (says Bacon) '*cum inventis adolescit*.' The methods of science grow with the growth of science itself." This is excellent

in its way, and raises hope of impartiality in the critic which are doomed to speedy extinction. He will not travel far on the path that he has marked out. "We are not, however, prepared to affirm that the phenomena adduced in *Phantasms of the Living* are yet entitled even to this amount of scientific recognition." This is chilling; but I observe that the critic adduces no reason whatever for the opinion that he has formed *before* (as he admits) reading the book. If it had been formed after perusal and study, and if it had been supported by argument, it is conceivable that it might have been worthy of reply. As it is, it remains as the mere expression of a preconceived opinion by an anonymous writer, on whose capacity for forming a sound judgment we have no means of deciding beyond the admission naïvely made that he "cannot pretend to have examined the book in detail" on which he is commenting.

The main theses advanced are stated by Mr. F. W. H. Myers, who edits the book in collaboration with Messrs. Gurney and Podmore.

1. Experiment proves that telepathy—the supersensory transference of thoughts and feelings from one mind to another—is a fact in Nature.
2. Testimony proves that phantasms (in a person, voices, or figures) of persons undergoing some crisis, especially death, are perceived by their friends and relatives with a frequency which mere chance cannot explain.
3. These phantasms, whatever else they may be, are instances of the supersensory action of one mind on another. The second thesis, therefore, confirms and is confirmed by the first.

This third thesis the *Times* writer considers to be "argumentative, theoretical, speculative," standing on a wholly different basis from the other two. Granting the first two, "it does not necessarily follow that these two classes of phenomena are related in any way whatever. . . . We may divide the phantasms into two classes—those where the associated crisis is mortal, and those where it is not. In the case of the mortal crisis we can ascertain nothing as to the mental state of the dying person at the moment of the apparition. In the non-mortal crisis, either the mental excitement is similar to that in ordinary cases of telepathy, in which case there would seem to be only a difference of degree between the two conditions, or it does not occur, in which case there is only a faint analogy between the two conditions. In other words, the phantasms appear to resolve themselves into cases of intensified telepathy wherever the accompanying conditions can be adequately observed and verified, but in the large majority of cases they so completely elude analysis and observation that no safe conclusions can be drawn from them."

It will be observed that the explanation of the Spiritualist is studiously ignored in all this, and the "natural" cause is the only one discussed. Telepathy, the writer takes to be "a generalised expression for the phenomena of mesmerism, of hypnotism, and of other abnormal or supernormal conditions of the human consciousness, apparently produced through the influence of an external consciousness and independently of the recognised channels

of sense." That is a large order, but I am not disposed now to take any particular exception to the terms of the definition. The writer makes the admission that such phenomena occur can hardly be disputed—a small mercy for which I do not feel very thankful. It is when the phenomena that unquestionably occur, and which are referred by Spiritualists to the action of unembodied spirits—it is, I say, when these come to be seriously examined in the future, as the Society for Psychical Research publishes more cases, that the telepathic explanation will be found wanting, unless it be stretched and strained enormously. It will be time enough, however, to press this when the Society comes to deal with "Phantasms of the Dead"—if I may perpetrate such a bull. Meantime it remains true that the only explanation of psychical phenomena which holds the field as covering the whole ground is the explanation of the Spiritualist. "To explain [these apparitions] by telepathy" (says the *Times* writer) "is surely, in the present condition of our knowledge, to beg the whole question." Yes.

It may be worth noticing how cautious and careful the *Times* writer is, having made certain admissions, to minimise their force by deviating into the opposite direction. "We have no right to assume that we know all that can be known of the phenomena of the human consciousness, or that the unknown will not reveal itself if interrogated in the proper way." Precisely so; "the proper way" being the establishment of a thesis which is sufficient to account for all facts. That is what the Spiritualist does; that is what others avoid doing. The investigation into apparitions the writer finds difficult. "The subject of an apparition," as he oddly calls the man who sees it, "is not generally in a condition of mind favourable to scientific inquiry." Why not? There are many persons whose inner vision has been opened who are wont to see these apparitions with regularity, and they are not by any means disturbed by them. Their state of mind is favourable to careful observation, at any rate, though (in a different sense) possibly not to what is a little arrogantly called "scientific inquiry." That method, useful as it is in its own sphere, is not infrequently quite inapplicable in psychical investigation.

I observe in a footnote to Mrs. Sidgwick's Address to the Society for Psychical Research, delivered on May 3rd of this year, and recently published in Part X. of the *Proceedings* of that Society (p. 66), that she cites me as having "asserted the entertainment of Maskelyne and Cooke to be mediumistic." What I have asserted is that, as Mr. C. C. Massey puts it in the same Part. X. (p. 97), "Mr. Maskelyne has publicly testified from his own experience to the existence of an unrecognised force productive of physical results." In other words, I have inferred that Mr. Maskelyne has gone so far as to lead us to believe that the "phenomena called Spiritual" are not, in his opinion, to be referred exclusively to conjuring. I believe I have also stated, on the authority of a gentleman once resident in the town in which Mr. Maskelyne was born and brought up, that he had, in days long antecedent to his conjuring career, made pretensions to the possession of powers commonly called mediumistic. Of this latter fact I have no personal knowledge; but the statement undenied, no doubt, led me to the conclusion adverted to by Mrs. Sidgwick.

"M.A. (Oxon.)."

MR. W. EGLINTON will read a paper at the conversazione of the London Spiritualist Alliance, to be held on Thursday evening next at the St. James's Hall, on "Some recent experiences in Psychography at home and abroad."

MAN'S work is not to force truth on unripe souls, but to show a divine pathway in which men must learn to walk by their own efforts.

## A REPORT ON SLATE-WRITING.

(FROM *Mind in Nature*.)

Early in August the secretary of the Western Society for Psychical Research received notice, from Mr. F. A. N., of Muskegon, Mich., that there was a boy in Vanburen Co., in that State, through whom slate-writing could be obtained under conditions that would be satisfactory to the committee of the Society. That the boy was but eleven years old, the phenomena quite recent, and the results might be crude and limited in extent, but the case gave evidence of honesty and genuineness. The secretary wrote Mr. N. to obtain such information in regard to the case as he could, and if possible arrange to have the boy brought to Chicago.

About the same time Mr. A. B. Wood, publisher of *Social Drift*, Muskegon, visited the boy and reported as follows:—

"Last Monday, in company with Mr. A. C. Smith, of this city, we went to Hartford, and were fortunate enough to obtain a sitting, though the boy is not a professional medium and no charges are made, it being left with the guest to act his own pleasure in this matter. Thus far his sittings have been mostly confined to the family circle and such neighbours and acquaintances as cared to investigate the phenomenon.

"Charlie Morse, the boy medium, was eleven years old last June. His father, George Morse, died some years ago, and his mother is now the wife of Mr. Sullivan Cook. Mr. and Mrs. Cook are intelligent, courteous, middle-aged people. When Charlie was called in from play to give the sitting and appeared in his shirt sleeves, short boy pants, and barefooted, his broad, honest face lit up with a smile, and deporting himself with an air of careless ease, instead of cautious expectancy, we mentally scored a point in favour of the boy, but lowered, somewhat, our expectations in regard to results. Charlie is large for his age, and displays a superabundance of adipose tissue, is, in fact, decidedly a fat boy. His head, like his body, is large and well shaped, and, if physiognomy is any criterion to go by, has more of the honest ox in his nature than of the crafty fox or grasping vulture. In his light summer dress his pants' pockets seemed to be the only place for the concealment of appliances, and these, by request, he proceeded to empty of buttons, strings, and all the various descriptions of things usually to be found in a boy's pockets, and then turned the pockets wrong-side-out. We then examined the table and satisfied ourselves that there were no clap-trap arrangements about it that could be used to aid in deception. We carried our own slates and know that they were not tampered with before sitting. We sat down with our left side to the table, and Charlie with his right, he holding one end of the slate with his right hand and we the other with our left; when in position the table spread was lowered in front of our hands and the slate, the spread falling down about a foot from the edge of the table. Mr. Smith sat a few feet from us on the side of the table we occupied, and Mrs. Cook sat six or eight feet from the table on the opposite side. No pencil was placed on the slate and none was seen during the sitting. At first several answers were given by taps on the slate, seeming to be made by the point of a pencil held perpendicularly to the surface of the slate. One rap indicated a negative answer, two 'don't know,' and three, 'yes.' A question was then asked that required a written answer, which was given. When the writing commenced, we held our end of the slate loosely so as not to hinder and yet so as to be able to detect any movement at the other end of the slate, but Charlie's right arm and the slate remained passive, except that a slight pressure could be felt on the slate which was more perceptible when a letter *t* was being crossed than during continuous writing. The control was asked to drop the pencil on the slate, which request was complied with several times, producing a distinct rattling sound, showing that a pencil attached to a rubber string had not been drawn from a place of concealment, for in that case it would have retreated to its place of concealment when let go of instead of rattling naturally on the surface of the slate; aside from its invisibility the pencil used seemed to be a good, substantial slate pencil in every respect. After a time Mr. Smith took our place at the table, and we occupied his post of observation, but in neither position could we detect anything to throw a doubt on the honesty of the medium or the genuineness of the phenomena.

"If the writing was fraudulent, we were unable to detect the fraud. We asked for several tests which we did not get. The control could not or would not put us in communication with

any other intelligence. He seemed to be ignorant of means beyond that of control. He gave us little beyond what we have stated that would be of interest to our readers; yet we have confidence in Charlie and believe that he will yet develop great mediumistic power under proper control."

On the 10th of August, Mr. N. wrote as follows:—

"I went to Hartford yesterday and saw the boy Morse. He is a genuine slate-writer, though as yet comparatively undeveloped. The fact of independent slate-writing can be satisfactorily established by him, but more than that at present cannot be said. I showed his mother your letter of 6th. They are entirely willing to go to Chicago, and say they are more than willing that the tests shall be thorough. No great variety of phenomena can be got from him at present, but if properly handled he ought to make wonderful progress. All his phenomena are obtained in full light, doors and windows open, arm bared to the shoulder. He does better early in the day, as he is very active, and by night is tired and goes to sleep early.

"It is because the boy is as yet undeveloped that I regard him as a most desirable subject for the Society. The main fact to be determined is that of *direct writing* without physical intervention. From what I have myself seen of the boy's operations I am entirely satisfied as to his honesty, and as to the verity of the writing. I watched him closely for upwards of an hour. It is a splendid opportunity, as I look at it, to ascertain the conditions of development."

During the following week the boy and his mother went to Muskegon, Mich.

Mrs. A. E., a member of the W.S.P.R., writes as follows:—

"The boy came to my house in Muskegon on Wednesday, August 18th, with his mother, Mrs. Cook, and remained three days.

"During the time, at different sittings, independent slate-writing without a pencil was produced. Many people witnessed the phenomena on various occasions. My own slate was used, and also a new one bought for the occasion. A light table was used, with a spread thrown over, the slate held under the table. Almost all the time the slate was held by two persons, but writing was produced by the boy alone holding the slate on the palm of his right hand, the left resting upon the top of the table. During the manifestations the boy was unconcerned and usually employed his disengaged hand in ways peculiar to boys. At the first sitting, the evening of his arrival, we sat down to a large square table. Raps came, but no writing, in answer to questions. We were made to understand that a table up-stairs would do. We asked, 'Have you seen it?' and the answer was 'Yes.' As soon as we brought down the table, the writing began. I took the slate with the boy, but we were unable to hold it, the shock was so great. But the next morning, in answer to our inquiries, we were told to sit together five minutes twice a day and we would be all right. We asked what the trouble was, and it was written, 'You are too strong.' Again we asked, 'In what way?' and it wrote, 'Your magnetism.' Following instructions, the next evening we got a little writing together, and afterward had no trouble. I think the best results were obtained when the boy, his mother, and I were alone, although the phenomena were produced at every sitting except one, while he was with me. On Friday evening and Saturday morning, when we three were sitting, the answers showed the most intelligence, and several sentences were volunteered, which had not been done before. We received directions about the best conditions for sitting, and were told in answer to questions about Charlie's contemplated visit to Chicago, that he would do well. During the sitting two young ladies and a young gentleman entered the room, coming close to the table, when the writing ceased and only raps came. When they were seated in an adjoining room writing began again, and we inquired what was the difficulty. The answer was written, 'There is too much moving about in the room.' At the close it was written, 'Un papoose is tired.' The next morning the writing was good, and at our request a rough sketch was made of the boy; a fat boy with boots on. It was done almost instantly. At times the writing was done with a paper box fitted closely inside the frame of the slate, the box open at the top.

"Besides the slate writing, raps were heard on the slate with a pencil, with the finger, and with the knuckles. On laying one hand on top of the slate a touch was plainly felt of a finger; and on Saturday morning our hands were touched by the sharp point of a pencil, and I felt it very distinctly drawn across my hand. Not the least interesting of the manifestations

to me was the dropping of the pencil upon the slate with a sound so exactly like a pencil dropping and rolling a little as to make it seem very real.

"I believe the boy to be honest, and as the experiments were conducted, I see no chance for fraud.

"A. E."

Suitable arrangements having been made to bring the boy to Chicago, he arrived with his parents on Monday, the 23rd. Tuesday morning six members of the Society met them at Colonel John C. Bundy's office, but were unable to obtain any manifestations. Thinking that this might be due to the fact that the boy was not accustomed to the noise and commotion of the city, it was arranged to meet him at Hyde Park on Tuesday evening, at which time there were present D. W. C., E. E. C., Mrs. H. E. S., the boy and his parents, and the secretary.

A small table was placed under the lighted gas-jet, over which was thrown a shawl. The boy was examined and found free from concealed slates or pencils, &c., &c. A slate belonging to a boy in the house was obtained. This was cleaned by the secretary, who then held it under the table. The boy sat down on the opposite side of the table, and took hold of the other end of the slate. The other persons present were seated in various parts of the room, none of them near the table.

In a moment there was heard a slight tapping on the slate; questions were then asked and replies given by taps on the slate. There was also the sound as of a pencil dropped on the slate, as reported by Mr. Wood. Words were also written, and one sentence, viz.: "8 or 9 years ago."

As the boy was tired, it was not thought best to protract the sitting that evening, and in a few moments he was sound asleep.

On Wednesday evening there were present six gentlemen, two ladies, the boy and his parents. At this sitting no manifestations were obtained, but on Thursday and Friday, five of the eight persons had separate sittings, and each obtained writing.

On Friday morning (August 27th), the boy and his parents came to the office of the secretary. A small reading table was placed in the centre of the room. Over this was thrown a shawl, reaching half-way to the floor. The boy was seated in a rocking-chair on one side. The secretary took a small single slate, sat in a rocking-chair on the other side, and held the slate under the table, which was so high that the boy rested his elbow on the arm of the chair, to steady his arm. Besides the parents there were three persons present; two of them sat where they could see and detect any movement of the arm or hand of the boy, had there been any. The rocking-chairs would also have responded to any muscular movements of arm or body. The slate was held loosely, and at no time during the sitting could any movement of the hand of the boy be detected. There was no pencil on the slate. Within half a minute there was a tapping on the slate, same in sound and character as above described. During this sitting three different slates were used, and writing was obtained on each of them. On one of them was drawn a caricature of the boy, made with one continuous mark of the pencil, which could be distinctly heard in all parts of the room, and when finished it was difficult to determine where the ends of the pencil line joined.

Mr. W. A. S. reports as follows:—

"Through certain friends of our family, Mr. and Mrs. Cook, of Michigan, with their son Charles (Charles Morse, son of Mrs. Cook by a former marriage), a boy of eleven years of age, were guests at our residence, during a visit of two or three days in Chicago—some two weeks ago.

"The morning before they left for their home, Mr. Cook invited me to go upstairs to the room which he and Mrs. Cook were occupying, to witness an exhibition of 'slate-writing' through Charles as a probable spiritual medium. Mr. and Mrs. Cook did not, so far as I understood them, claim to be Spiritualists. They simply knew that this boy could almost always command a certain wonderful slate-writing manifestation. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when I went up to their room. The room was full lighted. I never was at a Spiritual séance except once some seven years ago, at the house of Colonel Bundy, in Chicago, where a company, mostly distinguished scientists and thinkers, were invited to witness manifestations through the Spiritualist, Slade.

"What I saw manifested through this boy, Charles Morse, on the morning above stated, was as follows:—

"Charles took a clean slate, seated himself on one side of a table, while I seated myself on the opposite side, we

two being the only ones at or near the table. The table was about three feet wide. Charles passed the slate under the table towards me. *There was nothing on the slate that could be rubbed or shaken off.* I took hold of the other end of the slate. Almost instantly there was heard, *as plainly* as if it were done by myself with a slate pencil, tapping and writing on the slate. I withdrew the slate, and there was written the name Henry — (something which I cannot recall) in what one would call an awkward or illiterate handwriting. This was repeated perhaps three times, the last time, by my request, the name being written near the end of the slate next to me, with the lower side of the writing next to me.

"I then asked Charles to pass the slate under the table as before, and, after I had taken hold of the opposite end of the slate from him, to pass his hand over the slate as far as he could towards me. He did so, but could not reach to my end of the slate—his end of the slate indeed dropping off his knees when he would begin the attempt. It was physically impossible for him, as we sat, to let go his hold of the slate and reach near my end of it without causing his end of the slate to slide abruptly off his knees.

"The writing I heard plainly each time, and all the time it was being done. There was no pencil, and no particle of a pencil, nor anything of any kind which could be shaken, rubbed or washed off, on the slate.

"The boy is unquestionably, in my judgment, an honest, innocent, and unsophisticated child, incapable of attempting any trick or imposition, even if there had been opportunity for anything of the kind to be practised.

"The parents I believe to be good, honest people, as much bewildered by the manifestations through their son as any who witness them."

### CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

#### Spirit Photography.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I am glad "Mopsus" is going to "try a little spirit photography." I hope he will succeed, and let "LIGHT" know about it; for spirit photographs are arguments that can be put into albums, hung up on nails, or e'en put into a cupboard for especial use.

In answer to his questions, I may say that Mr. Hudson used a wet plate, but dry plates were not then so much in use as at present. I have a good photograph taken lately at Leeds which I do not doubt is a genuine spirit photograph, and that was taken, I believe, with a dry plate. I know that Mr. Hudson sometimes made his exposures long.

The medium should not be the person photographed, but the sitter who desires to obtain a spirit photograph. The medium should remain out of focus, but near the sitter. Mr. Hudson did not always require a medium; he sometimes thought the sitters would do as well without one. "Something told him," I believe. When I was present, Mr. Hudson always, after the first time of sitting, used to ask the sitter into the dark room to see the whole process.

T. W.

#### Duration of Process of Death.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In the significant remarks of "M.A. (Oxon.);" in your number of October 30th, with reference to cremation, he asks, "How long does the actual process of death last? When may the soul be deemed to be wholly separated from the earth body? Communications from the other side point to the conclusion that the process is, at least in some cases, prolonged." This is surely a weighty subject, and there are, doubtless, strong grounds for the assumption. And there are also strong grounds for believing that, in some cases, souls, either from sympathy or from some untold necessity, linger about their former bodies, though not within them, for periods long or short, according to circumstances. One has read of seers, at death-beds, perceiving the exit of the soul from the body, and yet they have also viewed the apparently emancipated soul still hanging over its ancient possession for some time afterwards. May not this state of things be in some cases prolonged? In this latter eventuality cremation might act as a deliverance.

Several years ago I used to be much more frequently awakened from my sleep than I am now by short messages, sometimes prolonged. Not so, however, on the occasion I am about to allude to. I was staying in the house of a near relation after the loss of his wife. Three days after the funeral I was awakened by the following words: "Sad it smells." I did not doubt from whence they came, and I put my own interpretation upon them, but I never imagined, nor do I now think, that that soul had still a dwelling-place within the dead body that I had gazed upon some five days before, though it certainly seems to have had a hankering for it; and perhaps for the happy life it had led within it.

On another occasion I was staying at the house of a lady who had just died after a long illness, and who, knowing little or nothing about Spiritualism as a Spiritualist, was, nevertheless, during her illness at any rate, constantly in the habit of seeing spirit forms; though no one doubted, I believe, but that she was as sane as she was good and charitable to the last. I slept in her house the night of the funeral, and for some nights afterwards. On the night of the funeral, but only on that night, there were rappings in the house all night long. I put my own interpretation on this case also. I fancied that the soul preferred its old quarters to the new, and did not want the company of its old body any longer, at any rate in the locality where it was lodged.

The following case, which was merely a dream, and which, therefore, may mean anything or nothing, I now insert because it impressed me a good deal at the time:—A few years ago I lost a young relation; he was in 1883. He was killed on the spot by a carriage accident. Just a fortnight after his death the dream occurred, which I copy from my note-book written at the time:—"Dreamed a voice said, 'Robert has come.' I went and found him lying on his back. He was sensible, I thought, and I laid hold of his hand, and then and thus I awoke." This looks rather in favour of the soul lingering within the body after death; and yet, by the paradox and perversity of dreamland, the soul was said to have come to me first. Such telepathy is, however, not uncommon before death, so it leaves the matter unexplained and my dream likewise.

T. W.

#### "Professor Hoffmann" and Mr. Eglinton.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I happened to be in Mr. Eglinton's "ground floor back-room" in Nottingham-place, on Friday last, the 29th inst., at 5.15, fourteen days later than the date upon which Mr. Lewis declares it to have been necessary to light the gas at 5.10 to read the writing obtained upon the slate, and I remained in this room until 5.35, when even then it was not at all necessary to have to resort to an artificial light, the second hands of my watch being plainly visible.

The back of Mr. Eglinton's residence is not "shut in by adjacent buildings" but, beyond a low brick wall, there is a large open space, which allows the light to enter the room without interference.—Yours truly,

L.

#### The Spiritualistic Panic.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mr. Theobald addresses you under this title; but he greatly deceives himself—there is no panic. He expresses his amazement at my proposing—though without naming me—to ascertain the numerical proportion of the believers and non-believers in the Eglinton marvels among the members of the Psychical Society. The result, when announced, be it what it might, would not weigh with me a feather, no—"nor the estimation of a single hair." My object was different; it was to ascertain on which side the main and preponderating force of the Society lies, in order to solve the question whether the Materialists or the Spiritualists ought to hold the reins and direct the operations of the Society. This was my object, and not the absurd idea of ascertaining the truth by the number of votes.

We are assured that the Society is committed to nothing—that it has no policy and that no one is authorised to speak or write on its behalf. This may be true theoretically, but it is false practically. The direction of the Society is wholly in the hands of the materialists. It is they who expend its funds, arrange its meetings, conduct its correspondence, appoint its inquiring agents, edit its *Journal*, give the lion's share of its space to their own set, excluding whom and what they please. If they constitute the great majority, they have a right to do so. No one could then complain. But at present under the pretence

of neutrality an active crusade is carried on against our dearest convictions.

If "M.A. (Oxon's)" doctrine that the Spiritualist is "born, not made," be true, that would be an additional reason for not remaining unequally yoked with those whose conversion is hopeless, and who yet are allowed to carry on a warfare by means moral and material now furnished by their opponents.

G. D. HAUGHTON.

"Psychical" Research.  
To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The Society for Psychical Research is apparently incorrigible. The recent article of Mr. R. Hodgson, in the October number of the *Journal*, almost eclipses, in its utter inability to weigh evidence, the incapacity of Mrs. Sidgwick. Never was there a more egregiously grotesque exhibition of hopeless obtuseness. "Men philosophise with wishes," said a great philosopher—he should have added, "they also weigh evidence according to preconceptions." Nor is orthodox science in any way free from this imputation. In Professor Bain's *Logic* the astounding statement is to be found, viz., that all evidence, *however well attested*, to the effect that a table rose to the ceiling of a room—about the commonest form of Spiritualistic phenomena—is to be *wholly disbelieved!!* Here is an index to the "credulity of incredulity" of pseudo-scientific investigators. Bain's position is, of course, ridiculous, but it is eminently characteristic of the attitude of certain "psychical" researchers. If human testimony can prove anything, Spiritualistic phenomena are facts of Nature. Reject the volumes of evidence now accumulated in their favour, and we must avow an absolute agnosticism with regard to the assertions of geologists, astronomers, and other scientists. We must, in short, say with the sceptics of old, "I know nothing for certain; no, not even that I know nothing."

The scathing allusions to Mr. Hodgson's last effort in "LIGHT," October 23rd, apply with the same force to the incompetence displayed by him in drawing up his report on Theosophical phenomena. Well might Theosophists re-echo the same impeachment of the results of that gentleman's Indian Mission. "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 not 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." How much value, then, are we to attach to this gentleman's recent report on Theosophic phenomena? To cite one case alone—his utterly baseless charge of forgery (of the K.H. letters) against Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Damodar is conclusively negatived by the fact that very recently, as shown in a letter to "LIGHT," signed "X.Y.Z.," the insertion of notes, *the MS. of which exactly corresponded with that of the original K. H. letters*, in the letters of Theosophists in India, when passing through the post, was again repeated. Must we assume a third (!) forger? For at the time of these occurrences Madame Blavatsky was in Germany, and Mr. Damodar with the Mahatmas in Tibet, where he still remains. Does Mr. Hodgson's ingenuity in theorising fail him here? Psychical Researcher though he is, he will find "arguing the hind leg off a cow" requires practice to ensure effective results. We have yet also to learn how he disposes of the indisputable "Elberfeld letter-phenomenon." And if *one* letter can be delivered by occult means *why not a thousand?* And so the whole fabric of his empty impeachment crumbles into dust.

A word now about Madame Blavatsky. Impostor! Charlatan! What! Do impostors labour twelve hours a day, tormented continually with a mortal disease, over a work involving enormous literary toil, in the interests of humanity at large? And yet in her Continental retreat, almost unable to walk across the room alone, afflicted with a cruel complaint, *with no books of reference at hand* to assist her, the devoted servant of the Mahatmas is writing her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, under the direct tutelage of her chosen Master. Surely, in view of such unselfish abnegation, those who have been misled by the hasty and unfair—as Spiritualists have now learnt in all cases where distasteful evidence is at stake—conclusions of the Society for Psychical Research would do well to await the coming "Memoirs" before passing judgment on her. The demolition by Mr. Sinnett of

Mr. Hodgson's baseless theorisings on one department of phenomenal Theosophy—*The Occult World* experiences—shows that the last word has yet to be said on her behalf.

In conclusion, let me advert to the "hard nut to crack" presented by the testimony of Colonel Olcott *alone*. If, as admitted, "his honour is unimpeachable," the Mahatmas exist, and K. H. is a real entity. There is no possible escape from this position if Colonel Olcott's written statements are assumed to be due to honest conviction.—Yours truly,

Landscape, Torquay.

E. D. F.

The Psychical Society and Spiritualism.

[Mr. J. Murray Templeton has forwarded, through us, the following letter to the editor of the Society for Psychical Research *Journal*, with a request that it should also be published in "LIGHT." Mr. Templeton, however, will see that Mr. Eglinton, we think very properly, refuses to sit with any one who has committed him or her self to the present attitude of the Society, as represented by its working members.]

To the Editor of the "S. P. R. Journal."

DEAR SIR,—I do not write to enter directly into a re-discussion of the questions which have happened in the last few *Journals* to concern my own belief in psychical matters generally, and Mr. Eglinton's genuine occult power in particular. I might more or less enlighten Mr. Hodgson upon one or two of the points he has touched upon in my own notes of séances. But I wish only to say in this matter that imperfections in my report do not necessarily invalidate the facts related. If two or three newspaper reporters write an account of a street accident their respective columns will probably show some discrepancies in observation, though the public will not gather therefrom that the street accident was probably a street play. Somewhat similarly, the amount of evidence from the personal observations of many respectable members of the civilised world, as regards certain psychical phenomena, is such as to impress most readers strongly. The existence of the Society itself testifies to this fact, not to refer to the probability of one-half its members inclining to believe or actually believing in their reality. There remains then the possibility that these observers of the phenomena speak the truth, and that equally the vague rumours of constant trickery concerning mediums may be often untrue. In commencing investigations, therefore, I should have supposed that the Society would have set itself to test these actual phenomena first, leaving doubtful rumours of personal character (denied by Spiritualists) to their later examination and judgment. I believe that almost all those who have at present accepted the facts of Spiritualism as genuine, in England, will unanimously hold that if the Society for Psychical Research is to examine any one public medium at all in particular, it should be Mr. Eglinton. Why has not the Society done this in a *more important way* already, or something else of a more serious and *direct* nature? With considerable hesitation, and the sense that it should be the duty of other and abler men to make such proposals, I now write to suggest that Mr. Eglinton be tentatively engaged for, say, three months, at a salary of £250, for examination by different, perhaps a dozen or more, small committees and other members of the Society only, permitting of a break in the engagement at the end of six weeks or otherwise as arranged. One of the committees might consist of Mrs. Sidgwick, Mr. Hodgson, and Mr. Podmore (could Mr. Eglinton be induced to submit), and if they obtained nothing, as would be certain, it does not follow that among the various other committees of different and as strong calibre, even unsympathetic, all good evidence would be wanting. I think that for some such purpose many members of the Society would gladly make an additional subscription, so that there might be no burden on the funds. I would for one gladly give £10, though, owing to my residence in Paris, I could only hear from the *Journal* of the succeeding results. From the following passage in Mr. Eglinton's recent publication in "LIGHT," it would seem that he himself has no objection to the carrying out of any such examination:—"Has the Society publicly appointed a commission of experienced and competent physicists to investigate the pretensions of the many professional mediums whose services have always been available?" In the above manner it might be done. I throw, therefore, this proposal out as one which may or may not be of service, but that possibly will induce some others to formulate their ideas. Certainly, if Mr. Eglinton is to be passed over I do not see whom else of such noted ability they can as easily and rationally work with.—Believe me to be, sir, yours obediently,

J. MURRAY TEMPLETON.

39, Rue Gabrielle, Montmartre, Paris,  
October 18th, 1886.



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

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## Light:

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 1886.

### REVIEW.

#### "THROUGH DARK TO LIGHT."

Mr. A. Eubule Evans has arranged under the foregoing title fourteen miscellaneous poems. He divides them into three categories, a prelude, interlude, and epilogue; the first composed of poems written under the influence of what he designates as "the darker problems of the human soul"; the interlude and epilogue representing his "musings on the sunnier side." This order of arrangement is intended, the writer says, "to suggest a certain sequence in meditation"—possibly also as a concession to the exigencies of the title! Whether the reader of poetry desires to have "the sequence of his meditation" thus penned out for him in advance, his goats on one side and his sheep on the other,—to have his light separated from his darkness by a hard and fast line which his experience of life will usually have taught him does not exist in nature—may well be doubted. This "arrangement in black-and-white" gives an air of artificiality to a book intrinsically simple and genuine. Another defect in the eyes of some readers may perhaps be found in the length of some of the poems. The journey from "Dark to Light" is no doubt to most of us—as Byron said of Wordsworth's celebrated poem—"rather a long Excursion," but it is not, therefore, needful that the stages should be long also; indeed, as the journey, at the best, is an austere one, it is comfortable that they should be short. A poem, for example, of sixteen pages, not one of the "musings on the sunnier side," but contrariwise, addressed to a parrot, would seem to have been constructed as respects length rather with reference to the reputed duration of life of these hardy fowl, than to the time capable by most readers of being pleasantly devoted to reading addresses to them.

Having liberated his soul from a certain sense of grievance suggested by the foregoing considerations, the judicious reader will find himself inclined readily to admit that he has derived from this volume a substantial measure of real enjoyment, and will have recognised in the writer a brother pilgrim on the progress from "Dark to Light," very capable of enlightening and enlivening the way by a considerable variety of humour, pathos, and thoughtful present-day philosophy. The aforesaid poem to the Parrot contains some quite admirable verses, of which the following, not consecutive, may serve as example:—

"O Parrot, if tales tell true,  
You number a hundred years;  
Life is a trifle to you  
Who never give way to tears.  
Your eye has a cold, calm glaze,  
Which mocks the antics of time,  
And your plume's grey pencilled maze  
Maintains unruffled its prime.  
You live for yourself, I ween,  
And through the bars of your cage,  
You eye with disdainful mien  
The wild world's riot and rage.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
No?—You are clever, no doubt.  
What comes of our human speech?  
We chatter till teeth fall out,  
And yet no certainty reach.  
Our life unriddled remains,  
However we wag our tongues;  
And the issue of all our pains  
Is to lift the latch of the lungs.

Yes; you are wiser by far  
Than we proud masters of earth;  
You bend the eye of a star  
Alike on sorrow and mirth.  
If the Grecian sage spake true  
When he placed the Highest Good  
In a life of calm clear view  
And a meditative mood,  
Then you, my parrot, may vie  
With those on the crest of bliss;  
A cage and a tearless eye—  
What a glorious life is this!  
\* \* \* \* \*  
O Parrot, who sit and swing  
In your palace of brass on high,  
You ruffle never a wing  
As you hear my sore heart sigh;  
Enthroned in the regal state  
Which century years have brought,  
You jar the rhythm of fate  
With no such discord as thought;  
Content to be and to bear,  
To travel through time alone,  
A patient passionless seer,  
Who mocked at mirth and moan.  
O bird of the changeless plume,  
O bird of the cloudless eye,  
You make of this world a tomb,  
And so have no need to die!"

Another poem, "The Dog," written in the same vein, contains some noble stanzas aimed at the vivisectionist, of which, without disparagement to the rest, the following may be quoted:—

"Do you think, my Carlo, the knife  
Can cut to the core of things,  
And track the retreating life  
Through a maze of torture-stings?  
  
Do you think the soul can be traced,  
If we call it "vital force,"  
Or the secret spring uncased  
That starts the heart on its course?  
Do you think that men have a right  
In the living flesh to grope,  
In search of possible light  
To illumine selfish hope?  
  
Were it not better for us  
That we writhed in pain's unrest,  
Than that we outraged thus  
The instincts that make life blest?  
It is not so hard to die,  
If only our past be pure;  
But the heart that gives love the lie  
Can have no strength to endure.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Oh, worse by far than the death  
Which hushes the wild world's strife,  
Is the selfish hoarding of breath,  
And the craven clinging to life.  
To crawl on the earth at cost  
Of all that is true and kind,  
This is indeed to have lost  
The life we fancy we find."

The poem addressed "To a Wife" may be taken as the measure of the author's faculty for apostrophising the higher orders of creation. It is a very tender and graceful composition.

The following pretty conceit will exhaust the space available for further quotation:—

"But e'en in the cerement  
The soul grows not cold;  
Remembered endearment  
Is quick as of old,  
And love is perfected by breaking its mould."

### THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

The attention of members and friends is again requested to the announcement in another column of the *Conversazione* of the Alliance to be held on Thursday evening next. In all probability there will be a large attendance in view of the important questions to be brought forward on the occasion.

#### TO INQUIRERS.

SIR,—As I am desirous of making earnest inquiries about Spiritualism and its phenomena, I should be glad to meet with ladies and gentlemen who would join with me in this important matter. Communications addressed "Stanley Hutton, North Kensington Constitutional Club, 37, Ladbroke Grove-road," will find me.—I am, sir, yours obediently,

November 4th, 1886.

S. HUTTON.

**THE LITERARY COMMITTEE**  
OF THE  
**SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH AND THE**  
**EVIDENCE FOR PSYCHOGRAPHY.**

By C. C. MASSEY.

I have resigned membership of the Literary Committee (and of the Council) of the Society for Psychical Research, and though my individual action can signify little to the Society or to anyone but myself, I venture to think that the reasons for it are of more general interest.

That they may be appreciated, it is necessary to call attention to the functions and record of the Literary Committee, in relation to the original programme of the Society.

In his first presidential address, more than four years ago, Professor Sidgwick expressed the prevalent feeling which led to the formation of the Society, when he referred\* in general terms to the current reports of alleged phenomena, to the long continuance and spread of those reports, and then to the uncertainty in the public mind concerning them, and when he declared that the condition in which the subject had been left was a "scandal." I need not particularise the passages in that address which must, I think, have left upon every hearer or reader the impression it left on myself, viz., that it contained a large and explicit recognition of the importance of those evidences which were most accessible to the public, and which were necessarily those obtained through mediums who have been before the public. I need not do this, because it is obvious that but for the easy and abundant opportunities afforded by the existence of such mediums, and the consequent publicity, the whole subject of Spiritualistic phenomena must have remained matter of vague, occasional, and unverified rumour, and could not then or now have been in a condition to challenge scientific or public inquiry. Very few people would now be troubling their heads about Spiritualism if the evidence for its facts depended on what Brown had heard from Jones of the odd things happening in Robinson's house. The public records of phenomena, the newspapers and magazines devoted to the subject, have all resulted from the public opportunities for investigation afforded by the class of professional mediums, and the vastly larger proportion of available evidence is thus derived. No doubt there is now a considerable, if still relatively small, amount of excellent evidence obtained through private mediums, but most of it would never have been recorded, much of it, probably, would never have been obtained, but for the already widespread interest in the subject.

Having adverted to the notorious frauds by which the subject has been so largely discredited, Professor Sidgwick, towards the close of his address, expressed a hope that facilities would be afforded by private mediums for original research on behalf of the Society, and recommended that such research should as much as possible take this direction. And for my present purpose I am quite willing to treat this intimation, taken with its context, in accordance with a recent explanation,† as amounting to a deprecation of original research by the Society with professional mediums, especially with such as have at any time come under suspicion by reason of positive allegations against them. It is, however, only for my present purpose that I can make this concession, as from another point of view I might have occasion to remark upon the zealous investigation by Professor Sidgwick himself, and other prominent members of the Society, with Mr. Eglinton in 1884, without such previous inquiry into the antecedents of the latter as must have led to knowledge

of the allegation which Professor Sidgwick *now* considers a fatal bar to investigation with that medium.\*

But whatever may have been intended by Professor Sidgwick, it is not, I think, reasonable to suppose that hundreds of the public joined this Society with no other hope or expectation than that a few academical and scientific gentlemen would be admitted to private families for exceptional opportunities of research. The mere expectation of such a thing suggests a complete ignorance or ignoring of conditions, of that psychical solidarity to which private circles owe their success, and which only professional mediums, partly by the excess of force which qualifies them for their calling, and partly by the training incident to it, are able in some degree to dispense with. What that part of the public which is interested and in doubt, really wants, is to know what to think of the existing and recurrent evidence, to have it so carefully sifted and examined by critical and unprejudiced minds that opinion may be built, if at all, on a solid substratum of proven facts. That in the first instance, and then that the higher functions of psychical research should be called into action for results of a truly scientific character.

Now one of the first consequences of the constitution of the Society was the formation, in accordance with the plan of action previously agreed upon, of a Literary Committee, whose object and chief function should be the collection, classification, and critical examination of the records of phenomena within the scope of the Society's inquiries. By this step, an important division was introduced into the work and character of our researches. There were other committees for *original* research of various kinds—thought-transference, mesmerism, haunted houses, &c. But upon the Literary Committee, which was, of course, not a committee for original research, devolved by far the largest single part of the Society's work. And its appointment was a recognition of the principle that the Society was not merely constituted for original research—which might imply that no sufficient basis of evidence as yet existed†—but had for one of its main objects the presentation to the public of the already accumulated and daily accruing case for these phenomena, after rejection of all that did not reach a high standard of evidence, and with such a judicial estimate of the residue as ought to satisfy the educated world that the evidence had at length undergone a rigorous but fair critique.

The methods adopted by the committee, and the thorough performance of its duties, seemed to justify this expectation in the fullest measure. It was wisely, I think, decided to postpone consideration of the case for physical phenomena, and to prepare the public mind by collection and elucidation of facts which could be included in the province of an extended and deepened psychology. The mode of dealing with the great quantity of evidence elicited in response to public appeals was as follows:—and I bespeak patience for these particulars, the application of which I hope to make apparent.—The committee held frequent and long meetings—often of many hours duration—going through the cases and discussing their evidential value, and assigning them to classes according to certain principles agreed upon. In the great majority of them it was found necessary to obtain additional or more explicit information, that no presumption of ours might either supplement or impair the evidence. This involved an enormous and troublesome correspondence, and many personal visits by members of the committee to the witnesses, often at great distances. The peculiar significance

\* It will, of course, be understood that I am not for one moment questioning the sincerity of Professor Sidgwick's present belief as to what he meant in 1882, or would not have done in 1884 had Mr. Colley's statement about Mr. Eglinton been then known to him. It does not require the peculiarly applied psychology of Mr. R. Hodgson to see that a mental impression or position may easily be antedated in good faith.

† Some expressions in the original draft of the prospectus which seemed to imply this were altered at the preliminary meeting, when the terms were finally settled.

\* Writing at a distance from my books I am unable to quote the exact terms used.

† See remarks of Professor Sidgwick following my paper in the *Proceedings* of the Society, Part X., and the ensuing discussion.

of this treatment of evidence, as I now wish to call attention to it, is in the fact that statements sent to the committee were not adjudicated upon as final and complete until all possible means had been taken to make them so. And I think I am not wrong in saying that the result of further inquiries was usually the *improvement* of the evidence, which in comparatively few cases came up to our highest standard as presented to us in the first instance. It is superfluous to point out that the method adopted was the only fair one. Of course, had our object been to throw discredit upon the evidence, while seeming to give it an impartial and judicial hearing, nothing would have been easier. Even when testimony of the highest probative force can be given, it rarely happens that a witness, however intelligent, knows how to give it its full value unassisted by questions. It would have been in most cases quite unnecessary for us (with the supposed unfair purpose) to have made such presumptions in the teeth of definite and exact statements as are now resorted to for the purpose of discrediting the evidence for psychography. We had only to make every presumption against the evidence which was not expressly excluded by the evidence, giving the witnesses no opportunity for explanation, and putting no questions the answers to which might elucidate the testimony on important, or possibly important, points: we had only further to magnify unessential disparities in different accounts into proofs of generally unreliable observation and memory, to point to an assumed or asserted tendency in the human mind to supplement these faculties by the inventions of a *bond fide* imagination, dressing up our review with a little spurious or inapplicable psychology, supported by illustrations of apparent but unreal analogy, in order to bring down the fabric of telepathic facts, and conclusively prove to the world that there was no occasion for a Society for Psychical Research. And though I am far from suggesting that but for the fortunate accident that several of our leading members had themselves obtained personally observed evidence of telepathy they would have dealt with the testimony of others just as M. Preyer, for instance, has recently dealt with their own—not one whit more unfairly than the evidence for psychography has been dealt with—I do now suspect that if they *had tried and failed* (as many try and fail) to get the evidence, the testimony of others to facts of telepathic experience might not have received at their hands the just and rational treatment I have described.\*

Well, time went on; the important work of the sub-committee (Messrs. Gurney, Myers, and Podmore) on *Phantasms of the Living* was got well in hand, and it seemed probable that the attention of the Literary Committee would soon be free for direction to alleged phenomena of a distinctly objective character. How far, if at all, the determinately *subjective* treatment of much evidence which stood at least in a debateable position between facts of subjective and objective origin (including telepathy, as in a sense it may be included, in the subjective category) may either have been due to antecedent presumption against the objective phenomena, or may have prejudiced the future consideration of them, thus compromising the impartiality of the committee, I am unable to say. But till recently I saw no sufficient reason to impute any attitude of finality to my colleagues. It was known to me, for instance, that one of the heretofore most valued and useful of those colleagues, Mrs. Sidgwick, who perhaps represented most distinctly the tendency to scepticism, had already recognised the high standard of

some of the evidence for the physical phenomena.\* That seemed to exclude the apprehension that a basis of satisfactory personal experience would be a *conditio sine qua non* of the fair treatment of the case for these phenomena generally. Not that I quite neglected to estimate the possibly fatal influence on the judgment of *trial and failure*, in relation to a particular class of phenomena. It was, indeed, the fear of this, rather than any exaggerated importance I may have attached to the additional testimony, that made me so deeply regret the failure of my colleagues with Mr. Eglinton. I knew tolerably well all that could be urged in such a case by minds of a certain ingenuity when driven to justify foregone conclusions. And I had been more and more distinctly realising the truth that *no* evidence, in relation to the mind, has a purely objective character or validity, that is to say, that the *evidential* character of any fact is a resultant of mental and external co-efficients. I fully expected that we might have to discuss in the committee, within certain limits, the psychology of observation and memory, and that the “conjurer” would be trotted out. But I saw no reason to doubt that at the right time the committee would take due cognizance of the evidence, would deal with it in detail according to established practice, and would come to its consideration at least without any disposition to rule it out of court upon the *à priori* ground of the infirmity of human observation and memory. Or had such a tendency betrayed itself at the sittings of the committee, it might, and I am disposed to think would, have been successfully encountered, while still unfixed by premature public declarations. Certainly I had no presentiment that evidence sent to the Society upon a new head of its investigations, which had not yet been before the committee, would be handed over to a single member known to have already formed an adverse opinion; that this member would compromise the committee by criticism—if such it can be called—in complete disregard of the methods and precautions we had established, approaching the evidence in a spirit indistinguishable from *à priori* negation, with avowed presumptions so arbitrary and violent that one had almost to look again to be sure that one had not been dreaming as one read.

I must not, of course, be understood as disputing the legitimacy of considerations adverted to by Mrs. Sidgwick and by Mr. R. Hodgson in disparagement of testimony to certain facts of observation and memory, so long as they are what I have called them, “considerations” only. I should be well content to meet them in argument in relation to actual evidence. Indeed, I have already done so, for in my paper on “The Possibilities of Mal-Observation” I pointed out that in the best evidence for these facts it is not the question—as is invariably assumed by opponents like Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. Hodgson—whether the mind is to be trusted to take in and retain an accurate record of minute occurrences *in ignorance of the exact thing to be observed*—which we do not require to be told that it is not—but whether, when this is definitely ascertained and distinctly apprehended, observation under the easiest physical conditions, and without excessive protraction or changes of conditions, is still liable to be deceived. It is in that case that the incisive retort of Mr. Roden Noel to Mr. Hodgson, in last week’s “LIGHT,” has its full application, and *all* testimony, *all* experience, receives its death-blow if this question is answered in the affirmative. The existence and quantity of evidence for

\* To avoid any possible misunderstanding, I wish to say that, though I was a member of the Literary Committee, attended many of its meetings, and, of course, knew generally what was done, I am not entitled myself to more than the smallest share of the credit due to its excellent methods. Nearly all the trouble devolved upon others—Messrs. Gurney, Myers, and Podmore especially—and I had a very easy time of it.

\* Mrs. Sidgwick has been especially impressed by the evidence of M. de Gasparin, some experimental evidence obtained by the Committee of the Dialectical Society, some of Mr. Crookes’s experiments with Mr. Home, and “M.A. (Oxon’s)” testimony to phenomena occurring through his own mediumship. (See her Paper, *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Part X., pp. 72, 73.) But she denies that there is any “crucial” evidence. The evidence is not enough, she says, “to establish so vast a conclusion.” This is a common fallacy, that the probative force of evidence can be affected by the magnitude of the consequence.



psychography in which the problem is thus reduced would, in my view, be the first thing to be ascertained by the Literary Committee on entertaining this phenomenon. But that the adverse considerations referred to are not really the grounds of disbelief, but are its excuses, that the evidence had been already rejected before these pretexts were excogitated, is betrayed by the fact that the conclusion is not the logical conclusion from them, is not the plea for doubt, suspended judgment, and more facts, to which they naturally point, but a negation as positive as it could be if it rested on the most positive evidence. Mr. Hodgson is at no more pains to conceal this than is Mrs. Sidgwick. The consideration has become in their minds a presumption, and they are both of them too logical, by nature and mental training, to mistake possibility for fact, were it not that in this case the conclusion was prior to the reasons alleged for rejecting evidence, the full amount and force of which can only be estimated by unprejudiced examination. The scientific attitude has been abandoned for that of the hostile partisan, and the intellectual forces are enlisted to cover precipitate judgment and self-committal with factitious reasons and illusory criticism.

The mere printing of this evidence of Mr. Eglinton's psychography in the *Journal* has been represented as a proof of fairness and impartiality, and even as an equivalent to the due performance of its duties by the Literary Committee. A short time ago a correspondent of "LIGHT," signing himself "A Student," and who, judging from his language, should be a member of that committee, wrote to defend the Society from a disadvantageous comparison of it with the Dialectical Society's Committee. I have never made that comparison myself; but it seems the writer who did so had made a verbal confusion between the Dialectical Society and its Committee (just as people often say Frankenstein when they mean Frankenstein's monster), a confusion of which "A Student" was rather too ready to avail himself, seeing that the meaning of the writer he was answering must have been in this respect perfectly apparent. Of course, the comparison, if apt at all, should be between the two committees, and does not relate to the mere printing of some spontaneously communicated evidence, but to the due examination and careful judgment of all the evidence available on the question referred. Comparatively few people take the trouble to read and estimate a mass of evidence for themselves, and for ten persons who have had their minds influenced by the conclusions of the Dialectical Society's Committee, I doubt if there is one who has carefully studied the evidence, or at all events one who would have done so if the committee had pronounced against it.\*

But the letter of "A Student" contained an incidental statement very significant to me, as I had little reason to doubt the correctness of his information. It spoke of the evidence for psychography printed in the *Journal* as having carried "no conviction" to a majority of the Literary Committee. Now this could only be (as to some at least of that evidence) upon the general *a priori* distrust of observation and memory of which Mrs. Sidgwick was at that time the only declared representative among us. If this was the case, there was, of course, an end of the question, an end of all serious design to entertain the testimony to one of the best attested classes of Spiritualistic phenomena, as far as the committee was concerned. Mrs. Sidgwick had distinctly admitted that some of the evidence in the *Journal* was unanswerable except by adverse presumptions opposed to the express statements of the witnesses. Up to the present moment there has

been no attempt to answer, except by such presumptions, the striking and numerous cases—I am not now referring only to the *Journal* cases—in which the necessity for anything which can be called "continuous" observation is obviated by *immediately* written responses to new and unsuggested questions put when the slate is already in position. The present members of the Literary Committee know perfectly well that the *Journal* evidence is not one hundredth part of the available evidence for psychography, yet not one of them has come forward with the mildest remonstrance against the violent prejudgment of the whole. I have done what I could, privately not less than publicly, to elicit such a remonstrance, to obtain even some intimation of dissent from a position obviously, nay, avowedly, inconsistent with any pretence of investigation by the committee. But, with one very doubtful exception, I have altogether failed. And I can see in my failure nothing but an indication that the committee has abnegated its functions, and that the Society has been stultified by the intrusion of the bad old *a priori* spirit of negation, under a flimsy but scarcely new disguise. Hume never said that "miracles" were impossible, but that no testimony would prove them.\* And that is exactly the position which our Literary Committee must now be taken to have adopted with regard to psychography, whenever the testimony is to facts of observation with a professional medium. Professor Sidgwick's recent remarks on my paper in the *Proceedings* of the Society, Part X., show him to be substantially of this opinion, while not quite formally committing himself to it in its full extent.

This being the apparent state of things, it seemed to me idle to challenge a formal decision of the committee on the question of entertaining the evidence for psychography. I could only refuse to be myself party to this new *non possumus*, and therefore I addressed a letter to the hon. secretary, Mr. Gurney, retiring from the committee, and alleging briefly as my reason that I could not remain a member unless the phenomena of Spiritualism were to be forthwith entertained, and that I saw no probability of this being done. It is evident that the objections to psychography would apply to all phenomena observed with professional mediums. The Society will judge whether its expectations in relation to these heads of inquiry are likely to be fulfilled. For my own part, I recognise a considerable and important field of associated research independently of them. I think that inchoate psychical science is much indebted to some of our most active members for what has been already done, and I am full of hope of yet more substantial results, especially in the departments of telepathic and mesmeric research. These sentiments would alone prevent my retirement from the Society. My retirement from the Council was only somewhat in anticipation of the date I had already fixed for it, irrespectively of my dissatisfaction with the recent course of things.

Minehead, October 31st.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Several communications still stand over. We hope, however, to bring up arrears next week.

A SOLEMN meeting in memory of the late Professor Boutlerof is to be held in December next, by representatives from all the Russian Universities. M. Aksakof is editing for that ceremony a celebrated work on chemistry by the distinguished professor.

LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, REGENT HOTEL, 31, MARYLEBONE-ROAD.—On Sunday next, November 7th, at 11.0, Mr. Hopcroft will give a séance. It has been decided to make a charge of 6d. Mr. Price will lecture at 7.0 on "Mesmerism: its Use and Abuse." The greater part of the evening will be taken up with experiments. It has been decided to allow persons living in the country to become associates by paying what they please. They will have the use of MSS., and questions and objections will be answered through a medium.—F. W. READ, Sec., 79, Upper Gloucester-place, N.W.

\* Our best answer to the comparison is not that of "A Student," but in the fact that the conclusions of the Dialectical Society's Committee had reference largely to the success of its sub-committees of original research, with which our Literary Committee, as such, has nothing to do. Our Society has readily availed itself of original results when they have been obtained in other branches of its research.

\* He floundered into a qualification, however, on this very point, which was fatal to the principle of his whole argument.

## NOTES ON ROYAL NATIVITIES.

It may be remembered that about six weeks ago I called attention to the horoscope of the little Prince Arthur of Connaught, observing that it seemed to me much "afflicted," the indications for the present year of life being especially threatening. Since then I have made more particular calculations without being able at all to alter my general judgment according to astrology.\* I have, however, been in doubt as to the nature of the evil astrologically to be apprehended, whether it is one to the child personally, or to a parent. I incline to the former opinion, though a distinguished astrologer whom I have consulted considers that the indications may have been satisfied by the very serious illness of the Duchess of Connaught a few months ago. I cannot agree with him, and should like to call the attention of those interested in the study to the remarkable relation to this horoscope of the full moon—governing the ensuing fortnight—of the 11th inst.

It falls in the very degree of Saturn—which was also that of the Ascendant—at the time of birth. Now it is, at least, a curious coincidence that at the secondary direction, called the Lunar Process, for that same date of the 11th inst.—for three years, nine months, twenty-nine days from birth, and falling on the 6th May, 1883—the moon comes to the very declination of Saturn at birth. And by the other secondary direction, computed by allowing a day after birth for a year, and so in proportion, while the moon is again near the place of Saturn at birth, the exact degree of Uranus at birth is found on the cusp of the eighth house of the direction. At the Revolution the moon had the exact parallel declination of Mars at birth, and the Ascendant of the Revolution—the eighth of birth—had also that declination. And seeing that the dangerous primary direction of Ascendant to conjunction Saturn, *in mundo*, falls due, according to the Ptolemaic equation of time, within ten days after the same date, and that there is an evil transit of Saturn, I cannot see how the astrologer can resist the evidence pointing to a fatality either to the Royal child himself, or to some one closely connected with him, now very near at hand. I was mistaken in my former communication in saying that no primary direction threatened the Duke himself at present in his own horoscope. That of Ascendant to the square of the sun in the zodiac is immediately due. But this, again, is a direction as appropriate to a family loss as to personal danger. His Lunar Process brings the moon to the place of Saturn at the Revolution within a day or two after the approaching full moon.

The secondary directions for the same date in the Princess Margaret's nativity seem also to have a sinister significance of family affliction, but a large error, probably from miscopying figures in my data, occurs in the positions I before assigned to this horoscope, as will have been discovered by any student of the subject who took the trouble to verify my calculations.

As already said, I make no confident predictions; not only because with my limited experience that would be rash, but also and especially because our knowledge of the real, as distinguished from the methodical, principles of astrology is altogether deficient. The "science" is one of tradition rather than of intelligent apprehension, and the ordinary modern astrologer can no more explain the connection between the external heavenly movements and the life of man—and indeed all other mundane things—than can the public which disbelieves just for want of such explanation. But the astrologer knows how to estimate the empirical proofs, and the public does not, except from the mere occasional accordance of event with *prediction*, which is not a thousandth part of the evidence with which the student is familiar. Nevertheless, I think the latter does well to try to offer the public the only evidence it can accept without study, whenever (as seldom happens) attention is called beforehand to indications easily recognised afterwards, but which can then impress no one unacquainted with the science. Nor will astrology be permanently discredited by the mistakes we inevitably make in this endeavour, whatever may be the case with ourselves. The true key to this mysterious and beautiful science is more probably discoverable, I think, in the writings of Jacob Böhme than in any others with which I am acquainted. But, alas! to understand Böhme in this relation one must be almost already an initiate.

November 1st.

C. C. M.

\* It is fortunate that the general disbelief in astrology leaves students in one respect more at liberty to publish their observations upon known nativities than otherwise they would be. Even were "LIGHT" to be seen in higher quarters than probably it penetrates to, it is not likely that any other feeling than amusement would be excited by the above speculation.

## TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP.

The editor of the *Medium and Daybreak* makes the following suggestions as to certain phenomena pertaining to trance mediumship, which deserve a thoughtful consideration:—

"It seems to us that the mental state produced in the sitter so far controls the spirit, that it is deemed wise to break the contact sometimes when the eagerness of the sitter is at its height. We have observed that continuous controls deteriorate, become more earthly in the style of thought, and opinionated and mixed in expression. The moral is, that those who quiz spirits too much get little satisfaction, and sometimes end their research by declaring that spirits trifle with truth. There is a certain stage in the communion when the balance between the earth sphere and the spiritual state becomes destroyed, and the earth influence preponderates. Is this not the true cause of all error and perversion?"

We should not be willing to say, "of all error and perversion"; but, doubtless, of very much, and the utterances of trance speakers should be carefully criticised in that regard. We are satisfied that there is no phase of spirit manifestation which, at the present time, needs so much scrutiny, to prevent deception and delusion, as the one to which reference is here made.

The glittering poison of seductive spirits, both in and out of the flesh, dispensed in what are, or what merely claim to be, trance utterances, is far more pernicious than the worst possible materialisation frauds, whether perpetrated by mediums or their deceptive controls. There was never a greater need to try all, both what is done and what is said, by the test of right reason, sound ethics, and high spirituality.

H. K. in *Spiritual Offering*.

## THE SOUL'S WINDOWS.

Thou spiritual light  
Which, like the stars at night,  
In human eyes dost burn and burn away;  
Fair light, bright light,  
By whose translucent, emblematic ray  
The solemn mystery of soul in sight  
Is shown in earthly day—  
Most beautiful, all hail!  
The vesture and the veil  
Of holy life, of life intense, immortal,  
Light hiding Light Divine, grace hiding grace,  
Veil of the Secret Shrine, the Holy Place!  
Hail, Veil of Isis! hail the Temple's starry portal!

The morning darkness whitens,  
The mist of twilight lightens,  
All the low sky brightens;  
When the great day-star soars upward, O the blaze and the gold  
On the streams and rolling seas!  
And, how fairer far than these!

On the gentle eyes, the human eyes whose lids unfold!  
Dark eyes and bright eyes passing all the day,  
How they shine round us, how their lightnings play,  
How the bright thoughts make them sparkle, how the deep  
thoughts make them burn,  
How the love, the love within them, makes the fond eyes yearn!

O mystery of shining eyes, each one a world around me,  
Whene'er our casual glances meet, I know the soul hath found  
me.  
The soul herself is shining forth, the spirit speaketh there,  
Mind unto mind gives answer and the Inmost Shrine is bare.  
For, lo, the eyes round all the face a burning nimbus make,  
The body from the light within doth grace and lustre take;  
The spirit strips its vestures off, it lifts the fleshly veil,  
And in the Secret Shrine, the Holy Place,  
Immortal Truth of Love, we see thy face—  
The presence which informs, the god within, we hail.—  
From *Israfil* by A. E. WAITE.

THERE is more merit in subduing a passion than in avenging an injury.

Who thinks deeply intensifies the meaning of words and gives to common speech a deeper significance. Though he use the same vocal utterances as the superficial and the unthinking, his speech is to them as an unknown tongue. He and they live not in the same world. Though their eyes fall on the same external forms, very different are the objects they see. Though the same sound-waves pulse on their ears, very different are the sounds they hear.

## 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 the 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 contemporaneous, 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,’ ‘somnambule,’ ‘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 anylegerdemain, 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 (Phrénologie, 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. Eglinton, 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 am 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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