

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

MR. PAGE HOPPS ON OLD TESTAMENT SPIRITUALISM.

*Spiritualism in the Old Testament; illustrated by the Book of Ezekiel,** a small pamphlet which I could have wished longer, is a most noteworthy publication. The writer, the Rev. Page Hopps, tackles his question with a most refreshing directness. The key, he says, to the enigmatical utterances of the old Hebrew prophet has been lost. "The truth is that the only persons who are at all likely or able to understand this puzzling book are those who know something of what is called Spiritualism." "Ezekiel was what is now called a medium. He was clairvoyant and clairaudient. He was a seer, a trance-speaker, and a writing-medium. . . . He was probably (if there is truth in such things) influenced by spirits who took a passionate interest in the affairs of the Jews, both at home and in the captivity. He was open to all kinds of influences, good and bad, sane and deleterious, sublime and ridiculous. The amazing blunder was the putting everything down to Jehovah; a piece of folly that few practised Spiritualists would be guilty of, who, when communications come from Socrates, or Shakespeare, or Milton, always have their doubts." Mr. Page Hopps proceeds in his most interesting analysis:—"Ezekiel was a spirit-medium. He held regular séances . . . in fact, the whole book consists of a collection of spirit séances, and spirit-messages, and of visions and clairvoyant and other occult experiences." (See Ch. ii. 1, 2.) Nor does the case of Ezekiel stand alone. "The Bible is full of records of spirit-intercourse, even to the calling up of the so-called dead, as in the case of Samuel and the Witch of Endor. When the boy Samuel heard the Voice it was not regarded as anything very wonderful, but it was taken at once as the Voice of the Lord. Perhaps if the Voice had spoken elsewhere, it would have been denounced as demoniacal." Yes; the Spiritualism that is found within the sacred pale of the Catholic Church is a hallowed intercourse with angels; all else is demoniacal, or lies at least under suspicion. Yet those who know both can see no hard and fast line of demarcation between them. To whomsoever these communications come there is no absolute guarantee of purity. Evil and good, true and false, weighty utterances and frivolous, are usually commingled. So it was in Ezekiel's case: so it is still.

"This" (says Mr. Page Hopps) "suggests one of the gravest considerations. What we really find all along is a bare assumption that 'The Lord' is speaking. In reality

* London: E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane.

there is always a conflict between Voice and Voice." This the writer illustrates by citations from the Book of Ezekiel, and remarks that Ezekiel was not the only prophet to whom "the word of the Lord" came. He laments that we have no record of these other utterances, and draws the conclusion that there were then, as there are now, various claimants to true mediumship: spirit against spirit: to be judged by their words and not by their pretensions, which latter are always magnificent. No instructed observer of the communications which are given through various forms of mediumship now can fail to see the exact parallel between what Mr. Page Hopps discerns in the case of Ezekiel and what is given through modern mediums. The messages do not usually emanate from a single source; they are given by "a band of spirits" under a leader, no doubt, but still a company. So Mr. Page Hopps is inclined to gather from a study of the Old Testament that the "Jehovah of the Jews was no other than a finite spirit or band of spirits of very limited and variable power." This suggestion should not be deemed irreverent by any, nor will it cause any surprise to an intelligent Spiritualist who has read his Bible in the light of his present knowledge. Rather will it relieve his mind that he feels no longer compelled to attribute to Deity commands and instructions such as some contained in the writings of Ezekiel; "commands which, if they came to a medium now, would be laughed at or recoiled from."

The development of the God-idea from early days down to the epoch of the Christ, to say nothing of its subsequent growth, is sufficient to show us that its early presentation must of necessity seem crude and undignified compared with the views we now hold. Nothing but an extreme unwillingness to see things as they are can blind the eye to the patent fact that Scripture, read in the light of this conception, gains a new interest and instructiveness. Surely it is clear that our present-day experiences throw a blaze of light on the dark places of ancient Hebrew literature. People have had a blind reverence for the letter, while they have missed the spirit, of these old writings. They have resented any attempt to treat the Bible in the same way of comment and explanation as they would demand to have any other old and obscure book dealt with. And so they have missed their way, floundering in a morass from which they cannot extricate themselves.

I must allow Mr. Page Hopps to speak for himself in his final summing up. But before doing so there is another aspect of the question which, I suspect, finds many a modern parallel. It is not an uncommon thing to find in the earlier books of the Old Testament that the "false prophet" has been made so by Jehovah Himself. An instance will at once occur. (1 Kings ch. xxii.) Micaiah, "the prophet of the Lord," narrates a vision which has been shown to his opened eye. He has seen "the Lord" on His throne with the host of Heaven before Him. "Who," he asks, "will persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said on this manner and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord,

and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And He ('the Lord') said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so. Now, therefore, behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets." Nothing could be more explicit. Jehovah, whatever that name implies, sent forth a lying spirit to lure Ahab to destruction. Spirit against Spirit. Micaiah against the Lying Spirit. Truth against Fraud mixed with Fact: not fraud pure and simple—that would soon be discovered—but fraud cunningly mingled with truth. For the prophets—seers, mediums—were genuine, only they were possessed by "a lying spirit."

Apropos. How often is this the case in our very midst? Who will be so bold as to say in a given case, where spirit-action is in question, "This is wholly true; this is undeniably false"? It would be either a very rash or a very inexperienced mind that would venture on any such hard, and fast statement. The problems that Spiritualism offers for our solution may well give pause even to the boldest. The true and the false are so mingled that wisdom will say of them, as of the tares and wheat in the parable, "Let both grow together till the harvest." Let them alone, reserving judgment till we are more fitted to pronounce it. All Scripture, all deep experience, shows that there is always an opposing spiritual force arrayed against the dissemination of truth; "the adversaries" of whom we are warned. And the most successful device that these "adversaries" could conceivably adopt would be so to mix up fair-seeming truth with easily detected fraud that suspicion would be thrown on everything by reason of the doubts so engendered. In this way many a circle, in which once truth was taught, has been broken up by the introduction of misguiding spirits who have caused doubt in minds that could not brook a lie, and so have retired in dismay from dealing with what seemed to them of doubtful benefit. In this way such hesitation of mind, such lurking misgivings, such mistrust may be bred that true and good spirits cannot live in such an atmosphere, and the unfortunate is deserted by those who can no longer help him. "Esau is joined to idols: let him alone." There is no device more clever, more truly diabolic. And the converse picture is not less true to nature. I have more than once said that psychic powers may be a valuable adjunct to the conjurer's sleight of hand. They may, it is obvious, be so employed as to make it impossible for any observer to separate their action from the mere trick of the conjurer. They may be so used that no man can say where the trick ends, and the inexplicable and inimitable result of the psychic power manifests itself. And so it may well be that the conjurer's imitation of genuine psychical phenomena may not be distinguishable by the nicest and keenest observation from the real thing. It may be the old story of Micaiah, the prophet of truth, and the prophet possessed by the lying spirit, but a prophet still:—Medium pure and simple *versus* Conjurer and Medium combined.

Mr. Page Hopps' final summary of his most instructive study of old-world Spiritualism I give in his own words:—

"Apart from this subject of spirit-intercourse, not only the Book of Ezekiel, but the whole of the Old Testament is a sealed book; but, with the light that this subject can throw upon it, it is exceedingly instructive, and everywhere clear. Turn where we will, we find indications of this intercourse between the visible and invisible spheres; and only the enormous assumption that the whole of these multitudinous records are fraudulent, or fanciful, or merely symbolical, will dispose of the inference that in the days of the ancient Hebrews spirit-intercourse was regarded as an almost every-day event. 'The angel of the Lord' is never long absent from the record.

He appears, so that he can be seen or felt: he speaks: he comes in vision: he acts as leader, guardian, inspirer: he works what we should call *miracles*: he actually wrestles with one of the patriarchs, who fancies he has 'seen God face to face.' Sometimes, only a vivid light is seen: or a bush glows with a glory that does not consume; or a hand appears—part of which is seen writing a word of doom. But why multiply instances? The Bible is full of it, and this Book of Ezekiel is only a striking instance. The spirit-appearances; the spirit-lights; the sounds; the trance-speaking; the symbolism; the intense feeling, and the peremptory style of the messages; the dignity; the pathos; the authority; the vulgarity; the imbecility, are all perfectly familiar to the Spiritualist, or to those who are acquainted with modern Spiritualism.

"What has to be chiefly taken note of is, that whereas modern Spiritualists know that spirits are not necessarily either wise or good, Ezekiel seems to have committed the grave mistake of taking everything for granted, and everything as from God; and nineteenth century Christians back him up! What is our duty, then? Our duty is to follow the wise advice of the Apostle John, when he says 'believe *not* every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God.' If we do that, we shall find the true use of this very remarkable Book of Ezekiel, as a record of intensely interesting instances of spirit-intercourse in ancient times; but, if we do that, we shall also be saved from the preposterous superstition of imagining that the Book contains a series of veritable revelations from the all-wise God. Above all we shall find the key to the Bible itself, and discover the true significance of the puzzling but familiar phrase: '*Thus saith the Lord.*'"

REVIEW.

The "Logia of the Lord."

Paul, the Gnostic Opponent of Peter.

The Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ.

*The Devil of Darkness in the Light of Evolution.**

Mr. Gerald Massey has had four of the lectures, which he has delivered in many parts of the world, printed privately. Mr. Gerald Massey is a purveyor of strong meat, and by no means desires that he should be considered otherwise. We entered on the perusal of these tractates with the expectation that we should find in them much with which we should be able to agree. We anticipated also that we should find statements which some—not all—of our readers would regard as shocking. We have found both, and we are obliged to the writer for both. For, as respects points in which we agree with our author, he puts them and the argument for them so well and so incisively that we are glad to adopt him as advocate without further question. And, when we are disposed to shrink a little from his very vigorous harrowing of the barren soil, we remember that the methods by which such soil is brought under cultivation must needs be severe and thorough. There are so many advocates of things as they are, so many apostles of *laissez aller*, that we may welcome, or at least tolerate, one thorough-going breaker-up of the soil.

To drop the metaphor, Mr. Gerald Massey attacks what he regards as error—error with the prescription of centuries at its back—in order to clear the way for the truth, which, equally with ourselves, he regards as of primary importance. He believes, and we are far from saying wrongly, that the energies of Spiritualists, so long devoted to a defence of the reality of the phenomena, which are attacked because to the average man they represent the whole case of Spiritualism as against Materialism, may well be diverted into a more profitable channel. The publication of these pamphlets, each of manageable 24 pp. size, is his practical contribution to this end.

We have no space to follow the writer through his arguments: no special knowledge to enable us to say with any finality whether he is or is not correct in his somewhat sweeping assertions. Our readers must settle that for

* Four Lectures by Gerald Massey, Villa Bordighiera, New South-gate, N. Price One Shilling each. To be had at the above address.

themselves—if they can. But on the subject special to this journal some of Mr. Gerald Massey's utterances are worthy and noble.

The following passage will remind readers of more than one "teaching" conveyed by spirits. The author is saying that the Devil of old theology is a myth. But, he adds:—

"There is devil enough, however—only of another kind than the one we have played with. We have talked of the devil long enough; but to a Spiritualist, for instance, the devil exists for the first time in some of the facts made known by modern Spiritualism—facts which are as much matters of personal experience and constant verification to myself and myriads of others as are those of your ordinary life! Think for a moment tentatively of there being a personal motive on the other side—a vested interest in our wrong-doing—degraded spirits present with us in the enjoyment of our most secret sins—the ghosts of old dead drunkards haunting the drinker's live warm atmosphere, because in that there may pass off into spirit-world some ghostly gust of the old delirious delight, and you may get at a real, present, self-interested, manifold, tempting devil that altogether surpasses the mythological monster of theology!"

There are passages of great power in all these lectures, for Gerald Massey is both orator and poet, which we should like to quote, but our space is short, and we must content ourselves with referring our readers to such passages as pp. 17-19, in the lecture on Paul; citing one highly-coloured picture, in conclusion, from the same lecture, from which we have already extracted. The author is enforcing the grand truth which is almost peculiar to our faith, to which, indeed, the teaching of Spiritualism first gave prominence, viz., that man makes his own future, and goes to his own place hereafter, the being he has made himself here, with his passions, his greeds, his true self unchanged, only without means of directly gratifying them. And this is the fearful picture, graphic as it is true, fraught with a lesson more powerful than a lifetime of sermons.

"In the olden days when Immortals
To earth came visibly down,
There went a youth with an Angel
Through the gate of an Eastern town:
They passed a dog by the road-side,
Where dead and rotting it lay,
And the youth, at the ghastly odour,
Sickened and turned away.
He gathered his robes about him,
And hastily hurried thence:
But nought annoyed the Angel's
Clear, pure, immortal sense.

"By came a lady, lip-luscious,
On delicate, mincing feet:
All the place grew glad with her presence,
All the air about her sweet;
For she came in fragrance floating,
And her voice most silverly rang;
And the youth, to embrace her beauty,
With all his being sprang.
A sweet, delightful lady:
And yet, the Legend saith,
The Angel, while he passed her,
Shuddered and held his breath!

"Only think of a fine lady who, in this life, has been wooed and flattered, sumptuously clad, and delicately fed; for whom the pure, sweet air of Heaven had to be perfumed as incense! and the red rose of health had to fade from many young human faces to blossom in the robes she wore, and every sense had been most daintily feasted, and her whole life summed up in one long thought of self—think of her finding herself in the next life a spiritual leper, a walking pestilence, a personified disease—a sloughing sore of this life which the spirit has to get rid of—an excrement of this life's selfishness at which all good spirits stop their noses and shudder when she comes near! Don't you think if she realised that as a fact in time, it would work more effectually than much preaching? The hell of the drunkard, the libidinous, the blood-thirsty, or gold-greedy soul, they tell us, is the burning of the old devouring passion which was *not* quenched by the chills of death. The crossing of the cold, dark river even was only as the untasted water to the consuming thirst of Tantalus! In support of this, evolution shows the continuity of ourselves, our desires, passions, and characters. As the Egyptians said; Whoso is intelligent here will be intelligent there! And if we haven't mastered and disciplined our lower passions here, they will be masters of us for the time-being hereafter."

PSYCHOGRAPHY AND CONJURING.

We have received from a correspondent, who has had large and long experience in the observation of abnormal phenomena, the following important letter:—

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I venture to send you an account of a séance which I had with Mr. Eglinton on Monday, December 13th, 1886, as it seems to me to present some points of special interest which deserve to be placed on record. The séance was held at 6, Nottingham-place, and I was accompanied by my wife and her sister, Miss Phillipps. We met at 12.30 p.m. in a small room at the back of the house, which was well lighted by one large window. Mr. Eglinton sat on one side of a square table, which was not covered by any cloth and was carefully examined by all of us. At his right hand, close to the slate when it was held in position at the corner of the table, sat my wife, who has unusually good eyesight, and keenly watched all his movements. I was opposite to the medium, and next to me sat Miss Phillipps at the corner of the table opposite to my wife. Mr. Eglinton placed on the table his folding slate with a lock, so often described in your columns, and two school-slates, which were under our observation throughout the séance, and could not by any possibility have been changed. At the commencement of the proceedings the two ladies each wrote a question on Mr. Eglinton's school-slates, which we had carefully cleaned, holding them so that no one but themselves could see what was written. Mr. Eglinton first took the slate my wife had used, and placed it in position under the corner of the table. We then joined hands: Miss Phillipps laid both her hands on my right hand: my left was in my wife's right hand: and Mr. Eglinton's left hand was placed on her left: while his right hand supported the slate when it was placed in position between him and my wife. His thumb was continuously visible above the surface of the table whenever he held a slate under it. Nearly an hour passed without manifestations, and at length Mr. Eglinton suggested that the slates should be changed. He then placed in position the slate on which Miss Phillipps had written her question, and laid on the table near my wife the slate which he had first taken, keeping the writing downwards, so that it could not possibly be seen. Very soon after this change had been made, writing was heard by all of us; when it ceased, the slate was withdrawn, and an answer was found to my wife's question, consisting of two words, and the initials of the friend to whom the question had been addressed. On examining the piece of pencil placed on the slate, and previously marked for identification, we found that on this, as on several subsequent occasions, the facet had been worn by use. My wife then wrote another question underneath the same slate, and requested that the answer might be written with a piece of blue chalk which was laid upon the top of it. The slate was placed in position, and in less than three minutes an answer was written in six words with blue chalk. It was then suggested by Mr. Eglinton that each of us should name a number and the colour of the chalk in which we wished it written. Miss Phillipps asked for 8 in red, I chose 49 in blue, and my wife 72 in green. Taking one of the school-slates, Mr. Eglinton placed it in position with three pieces of coloured chalk upon it, and almost immediately the numbers were written in the colours asked for.

I had brought with me a small box carefully closed, the contents of which were unknown to all of us, and Miss Phillipps a sealed envelope, in which she had placed a bank-note. This note had been sent to her by post, and she had not looked at its number. The box and envelope were then laid on a slate which Mr. Eglinton held as usual, and we requested that the contents of the box and the number of the note might be given. Writing was heard at once, and the slate on being withdrawn was found to have the following sentence upon it: "A key is in the box: if you put the bank-note in the locked slate we will write the number." Miss Phillipps accordingly opened the envelope, and took out the bank-note, which was folded with the number inside, and, without unfolding it or allowing any one present to see it, she put it in Mr. Eglinton's folding-slate after marking it with red chalk. She then locked the slate, and keeping the key on the table near her, and in full view the whole time, she handed it to Mr. Eglinton. He and my wife then laid their left hands upon it, while with his right he placed a school-slate in position. Writing was heard at once, and on looking at it we found that the number given was 97656. Miss Phillipps then unlocked

the folding-slate, and looked at the bank-note: the number was given quite correctly, and the mark in red chalk was on the note.

At this point the gas was lighted, as the day was gloomy, and it was kept alight during the remainder of the séance. Besides the box above mentioned I had brought with me a folding-slate carefully fastened by gummed paper on the side opposite to the hinges: the frame of the slate fitted very closely, and the hinges were perfectly secure. I had placed in it a marked florin, and a small piece of slate pencil, and it had been lying on the table in full view during the whole of the séance. Placing his left hand on this slate Mr. Eglinton put a school-slate in position, and we asked that the number (*i.e.*, date) of the florin might be written in the folding slate. The following sentence was then written on the school-slate:—

“We regret that, though our power is strong to-day, we have not the ability to write in the closed slate. We do not see the number of the florin clearly because there are no numerals, but we *think* it is 1876.”

Now the florin bore the date *mdeccclxxiii.*, and was somewhat worn, so that the number “iii” might easily be confounded with that of “vi.” We then asked that the florin might be taken out of the folding-slate which Mr. Eglinton now placed in position under the table: he soon became very much convulsed, his wrist, which was in full view, showing the strain put upon him by the veins and sinews standing out in bold relief: his breath came spasmodically, and we all felt a strong influence, when suddenly the florin was thrown out with considerable force and struck the wall three yards distant, rebounding from it and falling on the ground about two yards from the medium's chair. My wife saw the florin as it passed under Mr. Eglinton's left arm, and she made an exclamation as it flashed under the gaslight: owing to the position in which she sat she was able to see it before myself and Miss Phillipps. The florin had been marked with a P in ink, and a P scratched on the metal, and these marks were distinctly visible. On examining the slate, we could not detect the smallest aperture, and the gummed paper was intact. Before this manifestation occurred, the table was violently agitated, and was entirely raised from the ground six or eight inches. I then requested that a number which I gave, namely, 5420, might be written in my folding-slate. Mr. Eglinton placed it on the table with his left hand upon it, and held a school-slate in position. We were not aware at the time whether my request had been complied with, but a long communication was received from the medium's guide, Ernest, which was written very rapidly, and quite filled one side of the school-slate. Whilst this was being written, my wife, at Mr. Eglinton's request, placed her hand under the slate, supporting it, as he generally does; and she informed us that she distinctly felt the vibration caused by the movement of the pencil. The last communication was, “We cannot do more. Good-bye.” On our return home, we opened my folding-slate, and found clearly written within it the four figures 5420 which I had asked for. There was no key in the box, but a small metal knife and two or three other things. The séance was in many respects of unusual interest, and there are several points on which comment might be made; but I must not trespass further on your space. I will only add that Mr. Eglinton never left the table, that he was perfectly willing to try any experiment which we suggested, and that, so far as the sitters were concerned, there was no lack of “continuous observation.”

36, Bryanston-street, W.

F. W. PERCIVAL.

P.S.—I have omitted to state that before placing the closed slate in position, Mr. Eglinton shook it, and *we all heard a solid object moving within it, which made a sound such as would have been made by my marked florin.*—F. W. P.

After reading the above account we are of opinion that the phenomena witnessed by us are accurately described in it, and that no important detail has been omitted.

L. M. PHILLIPPS.

ISABELLA PERCIVAL.

There are in this careful and precise record some points which receive an added interest and importance from recent discussions.

Mr. Percival carried with him a folding-slate secured by gummed paper. We have had opportunity of seeing how that slate was secured, and we have no hesitation in asserting that it was beyond the reach of human ingenuity

to get at its inner surfaces without disturbing the fastening in a way that must at once have been obvious. Yet from that folding-slate a marked florin was unquestionably removed, and the gummed paper, carefully inspected by three witnesses, was found to be intact.

Moreover, within this slate, so secured, a dictated number, 5420, was written; and this fact was not verified until the slate was opened in Mr. Percival's own house. We have then these clear facts in evidence:—

1. That a slate containing a marked florin and a fragment of slate-pencil was so securely fastened by Mr. Percival before leaving home that it was physically impossible for any one by ordinary means to get at its inner surfaces.
2. That Mr. Percival himself carried that slate to Mr. Eglinton's house, placed it on the table, and kept it under continuous observation throughout the whole time that he was there.
3. That during the séance his marked florin was violently thrown from under the table, was picked up from the floor, examined on the spot, and identified: the fastenings of the slate remaining quite intact.
4. That a particular number, consisting of four figures, was, in obedience to Mr. Percival's request, written within this folding-slate, as verified by himself on his return home.
5. That the fastenings of the slate were intact when it was taken by Mr. Percival from Mr. Eglinton's house, and that these fastenings were not broken in his presence.

There has been much demand of late for “continuous observation” to be exercised by observers of these psychical phenomena; and there has been also much talk of the power of conjurers to simulate these phenomena. We suggest that the narrative of Mr. Percival supplies material eminently deserving of the careful attention of those who think that professed mediumship is a variety of conjuring. Will the Society for Psychical Research offer a sufficient inducement to any conjurer who will undertake to duplicate some half-dozen of the phenomena that have been recorded in our columns; who will further demonstrate that he has no abnormal psychical gifts to aid him; and, lastly, who will clearly show in every case the methods employed by him?

There are many interesting and suggestive points in Mr. Percival's narrative. It would seem that the agent, in spite of the presence of abundant “power,” had difficulty in perceiving, with any exactitude, objects that were not enclosed in Mr. Eglinton's slate. This is in accordance with our own experience, and is reasonable and intelligible. The contents of the closed box, not known (be it observed) to any person present, were wrongly given, but in such a way as to suggest that the real object had been imperfectly seen. The date of the florin was written in a way that suggests the same conclusion. The number of the bank-note could not be seen at all until it was transferred to the closed slate always used by the medium, when its number was at once correctly given, though the note was folded with the number inside, and was placed in the slate without being unfolded, and was marked for purpose of identification.

We confess we see no room for the exercise of the conjurer's art under circumstances such as those detailed by Mr. Percival. It will be for those who rely on that explanation to show that these phenomena can be reproduced by conjurers who demonstrably have not abnormal psychic powers to aid them.

We shall be glad to receive from our readers well-authenticated records of phenomena occurring in private families. All wishes regarding the publication of names will be respected.

M. AKSAKOW'S REPLY TO DR. VON HARTMANN.

(TRANSLATION FROM *Psychische Studien*.)

(Continued from page 579.)

XII.

FURTHER LOGICAL INCONSEQUENCE OF DR. VON HARTMANN'S HALLUCINATION THEORY WITH HIS THEORY OF NERVE-FORCE.

Concerning the physical explanation Dr. von Hartmann gives of the imprints obtained mediumistically, it involves such contradictions to all known physical laws that Physics and Physiology will never adopt it; and still stranger is it, that the logical development of Herr von Hartmann's physical explanation leads necessarily to just the conclusion against which he contends with all his might. To prove this, I must enter on some details. Since the phenomenon of imprints of organic forms is of great importance, and since I regard it as the forerunner of the absolute proof of materialisation, we must give our whole attention to Herr von Hartmann's explanation of it, he also pronouncing this phenomenon to be "among the most striking phenomena of the whole province." His explanation is as follows:—

"Suppose another arrangement of the push and pull lines of mediumistic nerve-force, corresponding to those relations of pressure produced by the interior of a hand stretched out flat upon an impressionable substance, then must the displacement of parts, resulting from such a dynamical system, again agree with that produced by the pressure of the hand; that is, must show the impression of an organic form, without an organic form having been materially there producing this impression?" (Tr., p. 47.)

Now, from the standpoint of physics, this explanation is a succession of impossibilities. We are to remember that the "imprints" here in question are of two quite different kinds; they are either produced upon soft substances, such as flour or clay, representing in relief all anatomical details of an organ with complete exactitude; or upon the blackened surfaces of hard substances, giving the same details *only in part*, for, as will be understood, the whole surface of an organ cannot be in contact with the flat surface of a hard body without extraordinary pressure. Now let us consider the impossibilities of von Hartmann's hypothesis in regard to imprints on soft bodies:—

1. Every force of attraction or repulsion propagates itself in straight lines; that it may deviate from this direction it must receive the influence of another force, proceeding from another centre of action. Now, we have here a physical force called nerve-force, proceeding from an organ of the medium, and propagating itself, not in straight lines, but in irregular oblique directions, in order to reach the body on which it is to impress itself, and on which, that it may produce the effect, it must act *perpendicularly*, for otherwise the representation of the part of the body to be impressed would come out quite irregularly. (We may recall here the imprint of a foot produced in a folding-slate resting on Zöllner's knees.) What, now, are those other forces determining the changes of direction of the nerve-force? To those forces points of departure (*Centren*) are also necessary, and they must act in a given direction. And as these centres are not to be found in the body of the medium, where else are they to be found?

2. The direction of these push and pull lines of nerve-force must, in order to produce the desired effect of an imprint, be an absolutely parallel one, without the least falling together of the lines; but the inequalities of a human organ, the source of this force, are opposed to such a parallelism, since the nerve-force, in consequence of these inequalities, must deviate in different directions.

3. All these lines of force must, for the result, be not only of the *same length*, but also of a *desired length*, corresponding to the distance, that at a certain prescribed distance they may correspond to all the inequalities of the organ to be impressed. What, now, is a line of physical force of a definite length?

4. This system of lines of force must be formed of lines proceeding throughout *from every point* of the organ to be impressed, and consequently must form a whole bundle of lines corresponding in its diameter to the circuit of the imprint obtained (or even to the circuit of the organ in a given attitude). This bundle of lines of force would therefore have a definite thickness!

5. "Since" (according to Herr von Hartmann) "the dynamical operations of the mediumistic nerve-force, like those of magnetism, penetrate unhindered every sort of matter" (Tr., p. 47), it is clear that the nerve-force, proceeding from an organ of the medium, cannot act exclusively on the surface of the body on which it is to produce an impression, but must proceed through it to the middle—"penetrate it unhindered" (*ungestört*). Thus, for instance, the nerve-force from a medium's hand lying on a table goes through this table; but, according to Herr von Hartmann, it arrests itself at the surface of the flour in a dish held under the table; or at the surface of a smoked paper laid between two slates, having just penetrated the upper slate without hindrance. We must suppose, then, that at a point prescribed (by whom, and by what?) this force takes on such a *density* that it ceases to penetrate the mass of the body further. We should thus have to do here with a force possessing a certain length, breadth, and thickness. Never has a physical force had such predicates.

6. If the nerve-force is a physical force like magnetism, gravity, heat, &c., and nevertheless produces organic impressions, why do not also these other forces produce impressions of their own nature? A copy by a system of lines of gravitation—that is the analogue.

If now we pass on to the copies produced on hard and level surfaces (on paper sooted and glued on a slate), we here encounter new difficulties.

1. Since the lines of nerve-force proceed from all points of the organ impressing itself, it is evident that all points of this organ must be reproduced on the impression obtained. But the result is otherwise; we see on the photographs of two impressions of this kind—one of Professor Zöllner's (*Psychische Studien*, November, 1878) and another of Professor Wagner's (*Psychische Studien*, June, 1879), that the hollows of the soles of the feet and at the toes, as also the deepening within the hands, show no traces on the corresponding places of the paper, those parts remaining black. Why? At the moment of the impression upon the *soft* substance all the lines of force act and press downwards on the soft substance; so that here, when a simple contact would be enough, and also much easier to produce, is a part of these same lines of force no longer operative? Are we to suppose, therefore, that the lines of nerve-force impress themselves only in the case of the projecting points of the organ? On the other hand, according to the hypothesis of materialisation, it is perfectly natural that just only these projecting points have touched the flat blackened surface.

2. In order to make an imprint on the sooted paper this system of push and pull lines of nerve-force must loosen part of this sootblack, and cause it to disappear, as may be seen from the impression. How is it conceivable that a physical force, exercising pressure, thereby loosens and makes disappear any sort of substance?

If to 1-4 Herr von Hartmann should reply, "As for the particular arrangement of the lines of force, that is merely a function of the phantasy in the somnambulist consciousness of the medium," it is clear that in that case the question is no longer of a purely physical force, such as Herr von Hartmann expressly regards the nerve-force, since he compares it to gravity, magnetism, heat, and asserts its convertibility into light, heat, electricity, &c.

And when Herr von Hartmann says to us finally, that this same nerve-force is not confined to the production of corresponding imprints of the organs of the medium, as its source, but that it can in like manner form all sorts of human limbs, according to the pleasure of the medium's somnambulist consciousness, and merely and simply by force of his phantasy, one asks why this phantasy should be confined to human limbs? It could just as well effect imprints of plants, animals, and all sorts of objects. In brief, the medium would possess the precious faculty of producing representations of his thoughts! And if Herr von Hartmann is true to the logic of his hypothesis, he has no right to deny this.

It is to this, then, that his hypothesis leads us! And I venture to assert that from the point of view of physics the theory of nerve-force, applied as Dr. von Hartmann applies it, is a manifest heresy, and that by setting up such a hypothesis he has himself offended against the methodological principles he indicates, because he does not "abide by causes the existence of which is guaranteed by experience or indubitable inference." (Tr., p. 112.)

As we have seen, his hypothesis of the imprint-producing nerve-force has led us logically and necessarily to the assumption of the length, breadth, and thickness of this force, or, in other words, to predicates usually appropriated to the definition of body; that is, we have been driven to consequences leading naturally to the supposition that such "imprints" must be brought about by the action of an invisible organic body producing itself at the expense of the organism of the medium. And what to me is most surprising is that Herr von Hartmann finds such a hypothesis "of a formed, invisible, and intangible matter" "superfluous," and "without scientific justification" (Tr., p. 50), while according to his own philosophy, as we have already said, matter is nothing else than "a system of atomic forces," and "the striving of force is nothing else than will," which leads Dr. von Hartmann to the following conclusions:—

"The manifestations of the atomic forces are thus individual acts of will, whose content consists in the unconscious representation of what is to be performed. Thus matter is, in fact, resolved into Will and Idea. Herewith is the radical distinction between spirit and matter abolished . . . and that not by killing the spirit, but by vivifying matter." (*Phil. of the Unconscious*. Coupland's translation. Vol. II., p. 180.)

According to this philosophy, we should have in mediumistic phenomena of materialisation an ocular demonstration of the objectivation of will, and indeed (which is important), of a gradual and not sudden objectivation of the concepts (spirit and matter); to this gradation, or gradual exaltation, the conception of "a formed matter without visibility and tangibility" would exactly correspond, and in this way would the speculations of this philosophy obtain its "scientific justification" in just this very phenomenon. And we may confidently anticipate that as soon as Herr von Hartmann shall have recognised the objective reality of this phenomenon, he will not trouble himself to explain it otherwise.

(To be continued.)

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THE INVESTIGATION OF RARE PHENOMENA.

No. I.

The principles on which phenomena of rare occurrence must be investigated seem to have been but little known in former times, and even at present are deemed so simple that any class of mind is apparently capable of undertaking such investigation, and forming an accurate judgment, after having had a very limited number of experiences.

Without referring to the details, we will call attention to the absurdly erroneous conclusions to which incompetent investigators have arrived, when they have examined the numerous novelties, which from time to time have been brought forward in science. In almost every case the new truth has been examined in a manner not only unreasonable, but exhibiting such an incapacity for criticism, that the conclusions arrived at by the examiners have been little better than examples of mental imbecility.

"If the earth were spherical in form, there must be people on the opposite side of the earth walking with their heads downwards like flies on the ceiling, and, as such a condition is impossible, the earth cannot be round.

"If the earth rotated daily, all the water on the earth would be flung off, and as the ocean remains on earth, and is not flung off, therefore the earth cannot rotate.

"To assert that a steamship can cross the Atlantic is absurd. It is impossible that it can carry sufficient coals to perform this feat; therefore I will eat any steamship, coals and all, that crosses the Atlantic.

"Any man who states that an engine can travel twenty miles an hour on rails must be a lunatic.

"This so-called mesmerism is nothing but a trick and an imposition. The persons who practise it are impostors, and those who believe in it are fools.

"Spiritualism and slate-writing are merely the work of conjurers and tricksters, and those persons who think otherwise are feeble-minded men and women, who are incompetent as observers, easily deluded, and, in consequence of believing in such things, are at once to be ignored as competent or truthful witnesses."

Here are a few of the many examples of investigations into novelties. The results are not such as to bring conviction to the mind of a reasoner, that the critics who gave such verdicts were to be revered for their profound wisdom, or for their exhibition of reasoning powers. We are more likely to be impressed with the belief that there always have been, are, and will be, certain classes of minds so constituted that they have an exaggerated idea of their mental capacity, and consequently hastily form, and as hastily express, positive opinion on subjects, of which subjects they were from imperfect mental organisation, or from hasty generalisation, or from prejudice, as incompetent to form an opinion as is a monkey to judge of the accuracy of the works of a watch.

In the majority of the instances, the system of investi-

gation adopted has been one totally unfitted for the subject to be investigated. The inquirer has laid down certain conditions of his own, which he sometimes finds to be just and reasonable. He asserts that unless these conditions are carried out rigidly he will not investigate, and should these conditions not be agreed to, he asserts that he has proved that the novelty is a delusion, as his so-called scientific system of investigation was declined.

Such classes of mind will then usually circulate statements to the effect that they have fully and clearly proved that the so-called novelty was a mere trick or delusion, and that they have exposed a set of impostors. The positive statements of such persons too often succeed in deluding those who, not having the time, or not caring to take the trouble, to investigate for themselves, come to the conclusion that such positive assertions could not be made unless they were actual facts, and that, therefore, the novelty has been "exposed."

Suppose a person doubted that it was possible to take a picture by photography, and asserted that it was a mere conjuring trick, and that upon being asked to examine the evidence he laid it down as a condition of his investigation that the plate on which the photographic image was asserted to be in an undeveloped condition must be at once exposed to the light for his examination. If he claimed that the image must be on the plate, and that if he did not see it there it would be a proof of imposition, we should consider, knowing that photography is a fact, that such an investigator was little better than a conceited and ignorant idiot. But if we ourselves were doubtful whether photography was or was not an imposition, we should probably consider that the investigator's system of test was quite fair and legitimate.

If we considered it desirable to take some trouble to convince this inquirer that photography was a fact, we might suggest that he should allow the photographer to follow the laws which had been found necessary to gain success, that this photographer should take his plate into a dark room to develop it, and even to print his picture, and then that the investigator should examine the results; that he should repeat this trial in every way, have buildings, manuscripts, likenesses and other things photographed, and then examine *the results*, and see whether any trickery in the world could by any possibility accomplish such results as are attained by the art of photography.

To follow out such a system of inquiry would lead to a discovery of a fact. To adopt the other course would be to suppress truth, and to allow delusions to be accepted as sound and correct.

When we have to examine matters which may, and sometimes must, be governed by laws even more complicated than those appertaining to such a science as photography, we must be even more cautious that we allow the conditions supposed or asserted to be necessary to be exactly fulfilled. If it be asserted that certain results follow certain conditions, the inquirer who is desirous to arrive at truth will naturally do his best to fulfil the conditions. His investigations must be directed *to results*, not to laying down his own laws as to what the conditions are to be. If the man who was selected to examine whether photography were a fact or a cheat were to say that he kept his eyes on the photographer constantly, but that when the plate was in the camera he could not see it, and that therefore all the photographs exhibited might be the result of trick, we should pronounce such an investigator to be an impostor, as he claimed to be possessed of such high intelligence as to qualify him to examine and to come to accurate conclusions, whilst his every act and remark proved that he was incompetent to even adopt the most simple and accurate method of inquiry, viz., to look to the results obtained.

We propose to deal further with this question in a subsequent article.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY AT MUNICH.

We have received from Munich the prospectus and rules of the new Psychological Society, dated the first of this month. The list of the governing body has twenty names, including a number of men of rank and otherwise distinguished. But a note informs us that the publication of this list is not permitted without special authority.

The prospectus, referring to the science of psychology as in a special sense the study of man, and to the deficient development of this research as compared with other sciences, observes:—

“The psychology of the Middle Ages was an outgrowth of religion, and, as a dualistic system of direct opposition of body and soul, is now obsolete, for science rightly demands a monistic explanation of man. Modern psychology has arisen out of the tendency of natural science, and seeks to reduce everything psychical to a physical explanation. Psychology has become a mere dependency upon physiology, and the soul, as independent substance, has been given up.

“Now, if psychology is to be freed from the false materialistic position to which it has fallen, to the influence of the bodily on the psychical must be opposed that of the psychical on the bodily, and every psychical function must be emphasised, which carries in it the guarantee of independence of the bodily organism.

“The normal life, with its natural and intimate fusion of the spiritual with the bodily, does not offer such favourable occasions for this as abnormal conditions, wherein, just because of the suppression of the bodily, the spiritual unfolds itself more freely, and by reason of this greater purity and independence can be independently investigated.

“Modern science already contains in this direction rudiments very capable of development. Hypnotic experiments, for instance, the principal merit of which belongs at present to the medical schools of Nancy and Paris, not only contravene materialism, but reversely prove the dependence even of the unconscious and involuntary functions of our body on the thoughts of the operator controlling the hypnotised subject. For example, he can, as Professors Bernheim and Beaunis have shown, so influence the system of vaso-motor nerves of the patient, that a stigma of an appointed form shall be produced on an appointed part of the body at an appointed hour. The action of the hypnotiser's thought is not direct, but is adopted by the subject, who has become entirely passive, and who then, as self-hypnotiser, influences his own organism. This evidently points to the identity of the thinking and of the organising principle in us, and this one fact among many is of itself sufficient for the foundation of a monistic doctrine of the soul.

“In this indirect way the hypnotiser controls the patient's feelings, his intelligent life, his organic functions, his will, and thus his activity, and that not only during the hypnotic state, but even after waking. It is especially noticeable that when the implanted idea emerges at the pre-appointed hour from latency, the hypnotised person does not recognise it as an idea of foreign derivation, but believes himself to act from his own impulse. This, again, tends to show that the idea does not act as the imperative of another person (*nicht als fremde wirkt*), but only because the hypnotised person has passively adopted it, made it his own, and recognises it as such.

“Hypnotic experiments have opened a new productive field for the foundation of experimental psychology, and we may confidently expect that psychology also will partake more energetically than hitherto of that impulse which every branch of science has received as soon as it was pursued experimentally; for here the soul appears no longer as a mere effect of the body, but we are rather in danger of reversing the causal relation, dividing soul completely

from body, and while avoiding the Scylla of Materialism, of falling into the Charybdis of a dualistic Spiritualism.

“Scientific hypnotisers have naturally recognised and emphasised in the first instance the medical, not the philosophical, significance of hypnotism, and indeed the hope is quite justified that from it will be developed to an indefinite extent a physical method of cure, which might even, having regard to self-hypnotism, arrive at self-treatment. But already the men of science named no longer object to using the till recently banned word ‘Somnambulism,’ and to recognising this—*le somnambulisme provoqué*—as a phase interior to hypnotism. Now it is here that we shall encounter those functions which prove the independence of the soul upon the body. Known already in antiquity, but covered with the veil of mystery, these phenomena, since the re-discovery by Mesmer and Puységur 100 years ago of so-called animal magnetism, have become again known and studied, albeit in constant strife with official science. But that there was here no new discovery, but only a re-discovery, might be pre-supposed, for if there are in the human soul such faculties as thought-reading, sight and action at a distance, &c., these will surely have been observed in all times, and whoever examines antiquity and the Middle Ages without modern prejudice, especially if he is acquainted with the now centennial literature of somnambulism, will at least be assured that a field lies here before us which opens research upon the most important aspects of the human problem. It is true that neither in antiquity nor in the Middle Ages did any permanent gain for humanity result from knowledge of these things; but to both periods was wanting an experimental method of research; and while antiquity made of it the mystery of a priestly caste, the Middle Ages regarded it from the here unsuitable standpoint of religion, and saw in it partly miracle, as lawful magic—partly black magic, as unlawful miracle. Let these faculties of the human soul—which we may denominate transcendental-psychological faculties, because they are latent in normal conditions—be once investigated by experimental methods, and there will be a lasting gain in the knowledge that they are independent of the senses and of the organism. Psychology will then be freed from its physiological chains, and to the soul will be ascribed the dignity of an independent substance.”

The prospectus proceeds to point out the importance which experimental psychology, and the phenomena of hypnotism and somnambulism must possess for many different studies and professions. The philosopher, the historian of civilisation, the physician, the philologist, the schoolmaster, the alienist, the theologian, the jurist, and the artist, can each, in the way described,* turn this new science to account in his own peculiar province. The phenomena included in the term “Spiritism” are then referred to as naturally coming within the scope of the Society's researches, “for a right of *à priori* denial does not belong to science, and it is notorious that it is just such negation that has exercised the most detrimental influence on the development of the sciences. The single right, nay, the duty, of science is investigation; but this duty does not cease in the presence of unintelligible phenomena; rather is it then all the more imperative, for it has been just the most unintelligible facts which have always proved themselves, when investigated, the most nutritious to science. It has been clearly enough shown that Spiritism is not to be exorcised by strong language from the standpoint of preconceptions; and he who would lay it is thus called to the investigation of it, not less than he who would promote it.”

The prospectus repudiates for the Society any exclusive basis, inviting the co-operation of different views and tendencies, and concludes by quoting the saying of Heraklitus: “Strife is the father of all things.”

* Want of space obliges us to omit these applications.

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.]

Re-incarnation.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Almost a convert to belief in Re-incarnation, and a very reluctant one;—notwithstanding the powerful arguments that have been brought forward in its support, still almost and not quite convinced, I wish—since the subject has been reopened in "LIGHT"—to submit to its readers an objection which I find to be insuperable: the limitation of human souls on which this doctrine is based. Though Kardec admits that spirits as well as worlds are ever newly created, yet if we learn to understand by birth only a fresh rebirth of old spirits, we can hardly escape the sense of our race being a much smaller one than we had before thought it. All limits, even imagined, thus affecting the mind. Van Helmont, one of the strongest believers in what he calls the "revolution of souls," was driven to support his belief by this process of limitation. "They are mistaken," he says, "who think that every day there are new souls created. All spirits are already created, and the souls are continually more and more elaborated until they arrive to the immortality of their bodies."*

If we believe that, we must also believe that there is no propagation of souls! But this would contradict every analogy of Nature. It is now an accepted fact that soul life energises in the vegetable as well as in the animal kingdom; and the increase of that life by propagation cannot be doubted. This may be answered by saying that the number of animal souls in mankind is thus constantly enlarged, and that these form an ever new basis for receiving a certain number of pre-existent spirits for progressive transmutations. Van Helmont's illustrations of this theory are a little too preposterous for acceptance,† but the ideas we gather from Kardec, the Baroness von Vay, Oxley, F. Hartmann, and many others, as to the spirit‡ winding itself into the necessary conditions of rebirth most suitable to it for another period of earthly discipline, are so plausible and so consentient in tenor, that my strong dislike to such prospects might have been overpowered if I had not been rooted and grounded in Böhme's opposing doctrine. Briefly and roughly stated, this is his unvarying and most precise teaching as to the genesis of the human spirit: the soul of man is a fire awakened by the *occluse* desire of God, originating in a thought of the Divine mind, and taking effect in the will to manifest itself in a creaturely form: this fire, kindled by the interaction of the first three forces of eternal nature, necessarily generates the light which is its revelation, and the true spirit of man is that light—if light evolution is not obstructed (in which case that ray of Deific light remains "workless," but not extinguished, in its own hidden principle), and it necessarily forms its own body for self-manifestation and organised efficiency on the plane to which it is born.

Thus, according to Böhme, it would be as irrational to think of a soul *not* producing its own proper spirit as to speak of a fire that had not been kindled by light and would not bring forth light. As he abundantly shows, *soul is generated* as unquestionably as the fire of life is kindled in every child that is born.

How, then, are we to dispose of these conflicting ideas—that of the soul's innate spirit, and that of a spirit that supervenes and attaches itself, like a parasitical growth, to a germ adapted to its own purposes? Of course no Christian who prays for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can refuse belief in habitual association with other spirits than our own, but that is very different from two spirits being born simultaneously. The only possible way out of this dilemma that I can see—if the belief in rebirths is accepted—is one I greatly dislike even to name, the hypothesis that the *pre-existent* human spirit, by its thought,

* Notes on Genesis, chap. ii., verse 1.

† *Microcosm of Man*, chap. iv.

‡ Kardec is very precise in his account of the method by which spirits introduce themselves to ante-natal circumstances. (See his *Genèse Spirituelle*, chap. xi., par. 18.) The spirits who communicate by the mediumship of the Baroness von Vay, speak of their plans for reformatory re-embodiment on earth much as invalids do of the health establishments to which they mean to resort; and now and then specify the character and position of the parents they have chosen for their début in a new outfit of flesh and blood bodies. One of these spirits said that his wickedness had been so great that in 300 years he had been re-incarnated ten times. Is it not possible that such wickedness may still lead him to tell fibs? Swedenborg has assured us that it is a habit to which the *dis-embodied* are peculiarly prone.

desire, and will, secures fleshly embodiment by first setting in motion those forces of nature (derived from the seven spirits of eternal nature) which conditionate birth. Yet, if this were so, how impossible it would be to call that offspring the child of its parents in any sense not degrading to humanity! All the notorious facts of heredity, of spiritual and mental, as well as animal, characteristics passing down from father to son for many generations, seem to contradict such a notion.

Kardec's dogmas regarding Re-incarnation give poor half-taught human spirits a wider range than later writers allow, for he speaks of migration from one world to another, after long intervals of what he calls purely spiritual life; but we are asked to accept the very repulsive idea of a repeated coming back of time-worn spirits to the old arena of endurance and combat and death. No wonder it is refused; even though some of our wisest contemporaries insist that it is the *needs must* of our immediate post-mortem future. Is it not possible that they may be mistaking the remedial exception for the invariable rule? Or can it be that we have such a complex multiplicity of souls in our seeming unity, under the headship of what Van Helmont calls man's "central life spirit," that some of our tributary Egos have to return for further development, while the Head of the tribe enters into its rest?

We shall all solve the riddle for ourselves by and by, but, unfortunately, it will be impossible to supply the right answer to those we leave behind, conscious remembrance of *this* stage of existence being forfeited when the *revenant* insinuates itself once more into a body about to be born. I do not pretend to form any opinion upon this unravelled mystery, but I expect to find that *enfleshed* life is by no means the only existence suited for spiritual progression.

January 1st, 1887.

A. J. PENN

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In a recent issue of "LIGHT" Mr. Haughton cites Swedenborg *versus* Re-incarnation on the plea that no mention of it is found in his bulky and, alas! to many, unscientific works. In connection with Theosophy, however, it is as well to state that the Swedish mystic asserted that the LOST WORD was to be looked for among the hierophants of Tartary and Thibet. What is this LOST WORD but Theosophy—the hierophants, the Thibetan Adepts? In answer to "V.," and other correspondents who bring forward the evidence of astrals against re-birth, it is sufficient to say that "controls" contradict themselves, and that each astral makes its world for itself, and its evidence is consequently worthless.—Yours truly,

ALPHA.

The Bible and Re-incarnation.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—While fully accepting the doctrine of Re-incarnation—not of the astral, but of the essential, soul—and recognising it as an integral element in the system of thought represented by the Bible, I cannot but think "T. W." unfortunate in his selection of texts whereby to support the doctrine. The declaration that the Christ is "before Abraham" is no more an assertion of it than is the parallel statement concerning the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." And the application of the clause cited from the Creeds to the same end, as implying the re-embodiment of a particular historical individual who "shall come to judge the quick and the dead," denotes a conception so crude and materialistic as to be positively startling to serious students of Divine things.

E. M.

[The discussion on the subject of Re-incarnation is now closed for the present.—Eds. "LIGHT."]

The Dual Nature in Man.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I think the strange phenomena spoken of by some persons, regarding their earth experiences in many instances being familiar to them, as though they had seen or heard every detail before, can be explained without the necessity of Re-incarnation at all. In fact, I look upon the subject as spiritual rather than physical.

As man passes at least one-third of his lifetime in a state of sleep, in my opinion this is the period when those impressions are made known to him—not in the natural or lower part of his nature called the natural mind, but in the spiritual mind

—and are received there by influx from his spiritual and sometimes celestial surroundings, according to the capacity of his intellect and the ardour of his love of goodness.

None will aver that during sleep the spiritual nature of man sleeps also. But though the physical body and natural mind may be in coma, and feel no connection between these upper and lower parts of his nature, yet the higher part may be *en rapport* with influences and powers, of which the man on waking to his lower mind's consciousness may retain not the slightest recollection, until at some time or other something occurs, or something is said or read, which is immediately recognised as not being uncommon, in fact nothing new. It is then made the property of the lower and higher parts of man's nature by perception simultaneously.

We sometimes dream and we know we have dreamt, but can express nothing of the matter of the dream. In other cases our dreams are quite lucid, and the characters and doings stand out as boldly as though bodily enacted in every-day life. Something, in short, has occurred which has brought a closer connection between the parts of our dual nature.

Another strange phenomenon which I take to come under, or to be nearly allied with, this subject, is that of inventions. We have known or read of persons studying almost a lifetime to bring out certain improvements or inventions, and after spending time and money unsparingly, they have reluctantly given up trying to accomplish that for which they had so strenuously laboured. Without further thinking or experiment upon their life's desire, some morning, on rising from their night's rest, the idea how to do what they so much longed to get hold of has come into their mind and they have immediately executed it, without delay. This is evidence of influx from the higher spheres into men's minds and to the wakefulness of our higher natures even during sleep.

I believe that to be inspired by influx from the higher states of existence man must fit himself by study and enterprise, and so become a vessel capable of holding the good wine, truth, and hence become a benefactor to his fellow man by giving to him out of his bounty that which he has received, it may be, unknown to himself, from the higher sources of being. I believe that man is as incapable of creating a single idea as he is of creating life, because he is only the result of creation, yet possessing life.—Yours faithfully,

January 1st, 1887.

THOMAS H. LOWE.

Supernatural Voices.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In answer to "Adair's" question as to "What distinguished persons, besides Socrates and Joan of Arc, have declared that they had heard and been instructed by supernatural voices; and in what book can he find any reference to the subject?" let me remind him that the Bible is full of it.

But to pass over much historic lore and come to comparatively more modern times, we have the case of Dante. In the very first canto of the *Inferno*, otherwise called the *Divina Commedia*, he meets with a ghost, whom he thus addresses:—

"I pray thee pity me, whate'er thou art,
A shade or living man!" 'Twas thus I cried.
It answered: "No man am I; I was a man."

Dante's conversations with the shade of Beatrice, whom he had loved in life, are proverbial. This first spirit tells Dante that it was not the first time since his death that he had come to earth, for he says:—

"Tis true aforetime I returned to earth,
By fell Erictho* conjured down below,
Who to their bodies called the spirits back.
And, at that time, I had not long been dead."

Ben Jonson tells us that he heard from Shakespeare's fellow-players that "Shakespeare never blotted out a line." Imagine what that implies! Shakespeare, writing in his *Sonnets* about his rival (whom Mr. Gerald Massey, in his *Shakespeare's Sonnets and his Private Friends*, shows must have been Marlowe), alludes to him as having:—

"Compeers by night,
Giving him aid."

And especially with respect to:—

"That affable, familiar ghost,
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence."

* A Thessalian Sorceress.

Still Shakespeare allowed that Marlowe was

Above a mortal pitch." "By spirits taught to write

And, if this may be said of Marlowe, what must we surmise of Shakespeare's wonderful self, of that half-educated young poaching woolstapler, giving us 15,000 words in his works, when Milton gives but 8,000? Tasso had a warning spirit, like Socrates; and, like Socrates, underwent the severest persecution and imprisonment for conscience sake. In *Notes Historiques de la Vie de Tasso*, by his friend, Monso, the Marquis de Villa, we find the following account of a conversation between the poet and his unseen monitor:—

"Tasso sometimes questioned and sometimes answered, and by his answers I guessed the meaning of what he had heard. The subject of this conversation was so elevated that I myself fell into a sort of ecstasy. I was made aware that the spirit had departed by Tasso's turning towards me, and saying, 'For the future you will not doubt.' 'Say, rather,' I replied, 'that I shall be more incredulous than ever, for I saw nothing.'"

I will give just two extracts only from Milton, on the same subject. He had a spirit monitor whom he called *Urania*. In the beginning of Book VII. of *Paradise Lost* he thus apostrophises her:—

"Descend from Heaven, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian Hills I soar,
Above the flights of Pegasean wing."

Fancy the conceit of a man who would thus write of lines of his own composition! Again we find at the beginning of Book IX. :—

"I now must change
These notes to tragick . . .
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse."

Time would fail me were I to write of Byron, Beckford, Scott, T. Lake Harris, &c., but I will say a word about Charles Dickens. In a letter to Forster, the author of the *Life of Charles Dickens*, he says:—

"When, in the midst of this trouble and pain, I sit down to my book, some beneficent power shows it all to me, and tempts me to be interested; and I don't invent it—really I do not—but see it and write it down."

In Dr. Crowell's *Identity of Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism*, he gives the testimony of Mr. James T. Field, Dickens' American publisher, who says Dickens told him that, when writing *The Old Curiosity Shop* :*

"Little Nell was constantly at his elbow, no matter where he might happen to be, claiming his attention, and demanding his sympathy, as if jealous when he spoke to anybody else. When he was writing *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Mrs. Gamp kept him in such paroxysms of laughter, by whispering to him in the most inopportune places—sometimes even in church—that he was compelled to fight her off by main force, when he did not want her company; and threatened to have nothing more to do with her, unless she could behave better, and come only when she was called."

Dr. Crowell also tells us that Mrs. Beecher Stowe says, with regard to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, that "she did not write it; it was given to her; it passed before her. She had to tell it as it came to her, and suffered in so doing."

In the *Life of George Eliot*, written by her second husband, Vol. III., p. 424, we find: "She told me that in all she considered her best writing there was a *not herself*, which took possession of her; and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting."

Longfellow writes of a poet, himself in all probability, thus:—

"For voices pursue him by day,
And haunt him by night;
And he listens, and needs must obey,
When the angel says: 'Write.'"

T. W.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Your correspondent "Adair" wishes to know of other persons in history besides Socrates and Joan d'Arc who have been sent on missions by the clairaudience of supernatural

* [This surely is nothing more than *façon de parler*, and not to be taken too literally.—Eds. "LIGHT."]

voices. I send you a few cases that occur to my recollection on the spur of the moment.

George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, heard such voices during his solitary wanderings in town and country, which told him of the faults of society and the way to amend them. Mention of this will be found in any large biographical encyclopædia; the authority being, I fancy, taken from Fox's own published *Journal*.

Scipio Africanus, on the authority of Cicero, constantly affirmed that he was guided by supernatural beings and conversed with them.

Mohammed's case is well known. He heard an angel when living alone in a cave in the deserts of Arabia, who sent him on his mission. The records of the Early Christian Church and mediæval saints would supply many other instances. The stories of Numa Pompilius and Gautama Buddha, though cases in point, would hardly be reckoned as founded on a historical basis.

F. W. THURSTAN.

Pears' Puzzle.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The solution of this puzzle has been most ingeniously shown by "F." in the manner described in your last impression, and I regret that his incognito prevents me from thanking him personally for the good work he has done.

Your readers do not require to be assured of my devotion to the cause of Spiritualistic experimentation, and they also know how completely I have identified myself with the problem of the passage of "Matter through Matter"; but at the same time I must adhere to the opinion I expressed in my first letter, that this "Pears' Puzzle" is a useful warning to Spiritualists, as every candid experimenter will admit that had such a puzzle been presented at a séance, most of those present would have accepted it as a demonstration of "Matter through Matter."

The Society for Psychical Research has persistently shut its eyes to most of the evidence given by experienced Spiritualists; but had that society done nothing more than insist on the most exhaustive examination of phenomena it would deserve the thanks of careful and conscientious investigators.

G. W., M.D.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—More than fifty years since, a carpenter made and gave me what he termed "A Carpenter's Puzzle," being a square piece of deal having in the middle a small opening through which two pieces of deal were inserted, their ends being twice the thickness of their centres. The puzzle was to find out how they could be separated, which would, of course, denote how they could be put again in their places. He showed me the way, and I have in two or three instances done it myself. Now, seeing in "LIGHT" of January 1st and 8th an account of what is called "Pears' Puzzle," I called at their Great Russell-street factory and bought one, when I found that it was identical with mine, or nearly so, the difference being immaterial; but I do not see anything to connect it with Spiritualistic phenomena.—Yours obediently,

THOS. SHERRATT.

10, Basinghall-street, E.C.

January 10th, 1887.

Squinting Cured without Surgical Operations.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Kindly allow me to call public attention, through your esteemed periodical, to the experience I have had in cases of strabismus or squinting, an experience which justifies me in positively asserting that I am able to cure this affection without using drugs or the performance of any operation of tenotomy.

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3, Bulstrode-street, Welbeck-street,

F. OMBRIN.

Cavendish Square, W.

January 10th, 1887.

A CURIOUS "COINCIDENCE."—George Eliot, writing to Miss Lewis on October 27th, 1840, says: "I have adopted as my motto 'Certum pete finem.'" In a footnote we read: "By a curious coincidence, when she became Mrs. Cross, this actually was her motto."—*Life of George Eliot*, Vol. I., p. 79.

TO THE FEARFUL.

We must own it with shame, if need be, that the power
Of the sun which draws forth the perfume of the flower,
Gathers, too, from the dunghill its pestilent breath,
And extracts from the swamp its miasma of death;
But we cannot, at present, admit that the sun,
And the flower, and the swamp, and the dunghill, are one,
Or own to misgivings if 'twere not as well
To shun flowers, since dunghills are given to smell,
Or believe it were safest and best to oppose,
For fear of bad odours, the use of the nose.
Believing the nose an endowment of One
Who created the dunghill, the swamp, and the sun,
And Whose goodness has given us flowers for posies,
We decline to relinquish the use of our noses;
But rather, by using them, hope we may know
Airs from Heaven to distinguish from blasts from below;
And, employed for the uses for which they were meant,
Have no fear of confounding a stench with a scent.

MR. W. EGLINTON leaves London for Munich to-morrow.

JERSEY.—From communications received from Jersey respecting certain marvellous and obviously highly coloured accounts of séances recently held in that island, we are disposed to impress upon our readers the necessity of receiving these reports cautiously, and of exercising great care in investigating the alleged phenomena. We do not think it necessary to mention names, but we feel it a duty to warn our readers that the care, always essential in observing occult phenomena, should be redoubled in this case.

THE LONDON OCCULT LODGE AND ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL INQUIRY, Regent Hotel, 31, Marylebone-road.—Last Sunday evening we had a very admirable lecture by Mr. Sinnett on "Re-incarnation," in which he dealt with many misconceptions of opponents, and replied to most of the objections recently put forward in "LIGHT." Next Sunday morning, at eleven, Mr. Price will commence his demonstrations in mesmerism. Mr. Tindall has in preparation a series of papers on occult subjects, the first of which, "On Palmistry," will be read by me (in Mr. Tindall's absence) on Sunday evening next at seven.—F. W. READ, Secretary, 79, Upper Gloucester-place, N. W.

JOAN OF ARC.—It is announced that Monseigneur Langénieux, the Archbishop of Rheims, purposes holding on the 17th July next a great religious festival in the cathedral of that city, in memory of the coronation of Charles VII., which took place in the Cathedral of Rheims on July 17th, 1429, through the exploits of Joan of Arc. At the request of the Archbishop, M. Gounod has composed a Mass for the occasion, in which he has introduced a solo for violin, with *obligato* organ accompaniment, intended to represent those "interior voices" which Joan always professed to follow as guides. This solo has been written for Henri Marteau, a young French violinist.—*Times*.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS.—The movement everywhere discernible in favour of breadth and comprehension, as against rigid dogmatism, spreads. The other day Canon Wilberforce, who has given so many evidences of catholicity and openness of mind, was fraternising with a Dissenting minister and occupying his pulpit. And now M. de Pressensé, the eminent French Protestant Pastor, writes to the *Christian World* to state that "the Evangelical Protestants of Paris are combining to assist Father Hyacinthe in commencing a campaign of Apostolic Lectures in defence of Christian spiritualism [not used in our sense of the word] which is so violently, and often senselessly, attacked by demagogic Atheism." M. de Pressensé adds some reflections on the desirability of preparing the way for a more general and wider agreement in essentials, for the foundation of a more catholic Church, seeing that "no one of the existing Churches embodies the whole truth." We entirely assent.

"THE BIOGEN SERIES."—The *Truthseeker* has the following appreciative notice of the Biogen Series, with which our readers have already been made acquainted. Professor Coues is doing good service in bringing out these little books, which are as dainty in form as they are excellent in matter.—"The Biogen Series,' Nos. 1—5. Boston (U.S.): Estes and Lauriat.—A singular and thoroughly original series of handbooks on rather out-of-the-way subjects: 1. 'Biogen; a speculation on the origin of life,' by Professor Elliott Coues. 2. 'The Dæmon of Darwin,' by the author of 'Biogen.' 3. 'A Buddhist Catechism,' by Henry S. Olcott. 4. 'Can Matter Think? A problem in psychics,' by F. T. S. And 5. 'Kuthumi. The true and complete economy of human life: based on the system of theosophical ethics.' A new edition, rewritten and prepared by Elliott Coues. These keenly interesting little books belong to the age. 'The Dæmon of Darwin' has in it a curious conversation between Socrates and Darwin. 'Can Matter Think?' is as notable for a trenchant preface by Professor Coues as for the quaint and thoughtful essay by its anonymous author. 'Kuthumi' contains forty-nine little chapters on great subjects, full of calm wisdom, and nearly always on a high plane."

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