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No. 265.—(VOL. XI.—No. 12.)

LONDON: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1877.

Published Weekly; Price Twopence.

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# The Spiritualist Newspaper,

A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism.

VOLUME ELEVEN. NUMBER TWELVE.

LONDON, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st, 1877.

## THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

THE attacks made by the ignorant at the beginning of this year, upon some of the persons in whose presence genuine and well-tested psychological phenomena are evolved, threw so much work, expense, and responsibility upon those who do most of the public business connected with Spiritualism in London, that during the past few months everybody has been glad of a rest. The National Association of Spiritualists has consequently been merely vegetating of late, and although there are some symptoms of returning animation, it is neither likely nor under the circumstances desirable that much will be attempted before the winter begins. But some of its members begin to see clearly that to retain its influence in the movement, it must before long lay down a programme of useful work to be executed during the winter season.

All along it has acted upon the healthy principle of making itself strong at home, rather than to fritter away its energy while it was weak at headquarters. The result is that it possesses a most valuable library, and handsome reading-rooms and premises, well furnished, with the whole establishment free from debt. It has established order in a movement in which all was previously anarchy and disorder; it has substituted elected for self-appointed public men, and has greatly increased the freedom of Spiritualists, because now we can vote for our own representatives, expend our own funds, lay down our own programme of public action, and have our own accounts properly audited and published. If anybody desires to present gifts or bequests, he can now give them to a public institution in which they become public property, and are preserved for national use. This is good work to have accomplished in three years. In America they have failed to establish a national organisation, because after an excellent managing body was elected, that body, instead of going to work, opening rooms, and presenting so many advantages to American Spiritualists that they could not help supporting it, appealed to the popular suffrage in small localities as to its future steps. Thus was the strength of the nucleus frittered away; months of time were lost, and those who can pull down, but are not endowed with the nobler power of building up, were allowed to deter from a useful course of action those who did not agree with them. In consequence of the American committee inaugurating small talks instead of at once beginning useful work, Spiritualism in America is a rope of sand, almost powerless for offence or defence, although there are far more Spiritualists in that country than in Great Britain.

What work should the British National Association of Spiritualists next undertake? One part of its forthcoming programme might be that, as it possesses a well founded central establishment, it will perform for Spiritualists all over the world the historical duty of collecting and storing upon its premises all the public records of the movement, all the new books, and all the periodicals, in whatever country they may be printed. A judiciously worded printed circular to private individuals, and letters sent to all the periodicals to make the public aware of this programme, would secure the presentation of a single copy of all new works to the library, since both authors and Spiritualists at large would be glad of such a public record office. When we suggested this plan some months ago, some of the continental Spiritualist periodicals displayed much interest in it, and a gentleman in Germany entered his name as an ordinary member of the Association, on the ground that such work ought to be encouraged by foreign Spiritualists; but nothing was done at headquarters.

On entering almost any good public library in the kingdom, the first thing to which the reader gives his attention is the catalogue. The National Association of Spiritualists

has no catalogue for public use, so the reader has to search among the books themselves—an imperfect and troublesome means of reference. Supposing the total number of the books to be five hundred, a catalogue could have been drawn up with ease in two or three weeks, had the Council given instructions to the staff to do the work. Another thing common in public libraries is a “recommendation book,” in which readers name works they think ought to be in the library, and reference to this book is a great guide to the managers in making them aware of the public wants. Such a book should have been on the table of the library of the National Association of Spiritualists years ago. There should also be a published list, of important books required for the library but which the managers have no funds to purchase, that those who possess copies might have an opportunity of presenting them; but there is no such list. The incidental mention a few weeks ago of a very few books wanted in the library has just resulted in the generous presentation to it by Madame Blavatsky of a complete set of the works of Andrew Jackson Davis; but as regards ninety-nine per cent. of the required books, nobody has had an opportunity of presenting them, because no information has been given to the public that they are not already in the library. A return of the number of books in the library, and their value, also a stock account showing the property possessed by the Association, ought to be passed by the finance committee every month, and these “assets” reported to the Council; the financial position of the Association would thus be shown every month to be very much better than it is now regularly represented to be, and this would have its influence upon intending new members, and upon non-Spiritualists who see chance numbers of our periodicals. Sometimes it is said that nothing can be done towards improving the library, because just now there are no funds available for the purpose, but the carrying out of nearly all the preceding suggestions to raise the library to the level of those common throughout the country, will cost nothing; besides, there never will be any funds for the purpose until it is seen that somebody has the work of perfecting the library heartily in hand. Probably the reason these simple and ordinary things have not been done long ago, is that the man has not yet appeared who has resolved that come what will, the library shall be perfected; once let a man appear who is determined to do the work, he will find many to support him whose minds and time are now too much engaged in other directions to allow them to do this work efficiently.

The daily papers should lie on the tables of the reading-room; chess-boards, and other attractions should be furnished. Such a line of action would be remunerative, because of the more numerous visitors it would draw. The British Museum reading-room is also in Great Russell-street, and several of its readers are likewise members of the National Association of Spiritualists; consequently, were there a good news-room on the premises of the latter body, Spiritualistic readers would bring non-Spiritualistic readers to the premises, the interest of the latter would be awakened, and the result a gradual influx of new members. Besides, a good news-room is a public want in the locality, so would prove an attraction to the whole neighbourhood. The annual financial loss to the National Association by the non-establishment of a good general reading-room and of a travelling library is something considerable. If the Association could say to Birmingham, or any other such town—“Directly you give us fifty members, we will send you one of our boxes of fifty books every three months, for you to pass on to the next town on our list at the end of that time, when we will send you a fresh one”—the required new members would soon be forthcoming. At

present this source of income is out off. Although funds are required to start a travelling library, the cost for beginning would be but small, but nobody is likely to furnish the sum required until some signs of life and activity become visible in connection with this department of the National Association. It is a department which, if well worked, can gain great reputation for itself, for upon its efficient action depends the filing of a perfect series of historical records of the progress of the Spiritualistic movement throughout the world. If it does not perform its historical functions with efficiency, the loss in future years will be irreparable. For instance, during the short existence of the National Association, a Spiritualistic weekly newspaper has lived and died in Australia, and an excellent Spiritualistic periodical for children has lived and died in Chicago. Sets have not been filed in the Library of the National Association, nor any endeavour made to obtain them by purchase or otherwise, and we doubt whether anybody on the Council has felt it to be a public duty to obtain and preserve public records such as these in a great national institution. History, however, will pronounce its verdict upon such neglect, and will say—"In those days some of our public men had great powers and possibilities in their hands, but they were not equal to the occasion, consequently such-and-such records connected with the early history of Spiritualism have been lost to the world for ever."

A programme for the year could be suggested for other departments of the National Association of Spiritualists, but for want of more space in this number of *The Spiritualist*, we defer the consideration of other points.

#### ANGELIC CURE OF SOULS.

THE following portion of an oration delivered in the trance state by Mrs. Cora L. V. Tappan-Richmond is quoted from the *Banner of Light* :—

The souls which go down in shame sometimes before the vision of man have still a redeeming trait, and some point of unselfishness, some wish to rise; and the spirits who minister in the sphere of healing—the first stage of the sphere of beneficence—receive them as you would receive soldiers from the battle-field, as you would receive a man in the street who has fallen from his horse, or who, wrecked upon the sea, is deprived for the time being of raiment and shelter. So upon life's sea, souls passing out into eternity, shipwrecked morally and spiritually, but having something to cling to in the Divine thought that aspires to something higher, they are received, and the process of spiritual healing begins. They are not received as into judgment; they are not taken before court and jury, that perhaps, have sent them there: they are not treated as criminals, for the very reason that the punishment of criminals in certain stages of criminal disease aggravates instead of cures. You do not treat a patient in fever, if you are wise, by augmenting the disease. You do not stab a man who is already mortally wounded. You do not, when a person is in delirium, add intensity to that state, and expect to cure him. The criminal has his crime upon him. He goes out with it stamped upon his outward life. If the first thing he saw were judge and jury confronting him in the world of souls, he would be driven back to that darker sphere that we have referred to. He is received first, and there is no sign or token given of his malady. The spirit having charge understands this. The soul appointed to receive the spirit is silent, and makes no sign. It receives him as though there were nothing in his nature to repel. He is placed in a position of ease and rest mentally. He is not confronted with his victim at first; he is not strong enough. He is not upbraided with his sin; he is not able to bear it without being rebellious. He is received, and when the kindness that is shown him shall have thawed away all the corroding lines of crime and care, and by its very persistence shall have shown the spirit that there is no judgment save that which comes from within, then the soul that is sick becomes its own more positive accuser. Even then that must be checked, or the violence of the repentance and the severity of self-judgment drives the spirit to despair.

The wisdom of ministering to souls that are thus afflicted

outweighs all that you bestow on physical maladies in earthly life. These spirits must be led to repentance; must not be stung to madness or despair; but by the falling of the waters of love, by the sunlight that is not too suddenly turned upon them, made to feel that there is still hope. The criminal entering spirit-life may behold, after a time, an angel mother bending above—not at first; the shock would be too sudden. For how can a soul accused of men, and sent into spiritual existence because of a malady of the moral nature, meet face to face the most loved object on earth? Not at first. But after some stranger friend has ministered unto and soothed the spirit—guided the way—then the voice and mind and spirit most healing, that will bring back the childhood memories, that will uplift the spirit gradually to repentance and hope, is summoned to appear beside the soul that enters that sphere of healing. Then gradually the spirit itself grows stronger, grows stronger also for self-accusation; and when the condemnation and research assume a point that only the soul itself can bear, every other spirit withdraws, leaving that soul alone with its own meditations. Then from mother, child, sister, friend, or wise and beneficent counsellor, comes the first voice of encouragement, when the spirit has purged itself of the crime, drowned its grief and crime in tears of repentance, washed away the stain of human blood or folly. Then there comes the gradual soothing of pain. It is not simply by ministering to this soul, but it comes in another form. The sin-sick soul that is repentant is shown another soul greater in suffering than itself—is introduced without being aware of it into the presence of some spirit in greater agony. The impulse to speak to that soul, to minister in some way to the suffering, to point out that he or she also has suffered, is the first impulse upon which the spirit rises one degree into healthfulness and strength. Then the first-mentioned spirit becomes a ministrant also in the sphere of beneficence. Have you ever seen a soldier on a battle-field, himself wounded, bearing off a comrade that was more nearly mortally wounded than he, because dear to him, or because engaged in the same conflict; or better still, bearing off a fallen foe? Have you ever seen in the conflict of life, when the great burden of grief and sorrow was upon one man, or more frequently (you will pardon us) one woman—have you ever seen that woman, rising up out of her own affliction and grief, to minister to some one in greater sorrow, and how the anguish has faded from her face because she could minister to another in greater suffering? Such is the sphere of healing in the sphere of beneficence. Such is the soul work that goes on vanquishing its own trouble by assisting others to rise.

No morbid corners, in which the criminal sits day after day, to pine and ponder over his darkened fate. No solitary dungeon cells, in which the soul is condemned to sit in punishment for a single offence, without opportunity to aid another. No healing of moral wounds by allowing the sores to fester and become corrupted with gangrene. No piercing of the wound that is well-nigh fatal, by any other lance than that of kindness and justice tempered by mercy. Has it not entered your hearts, when at some chosen and appointed hour of happiness in life, when perhaps the supreme moment of your joy of existence had risen—that selfish joy that comes from selfish love or fruition of love—there has risen up in the family or in the social circle some great crying agony, to cast aside your own joy to minister to another's woe? Then is when you enter the sphere of beneficence. Every soul, fortunately, that we are aware of in average life, experiences this. It is only the monster, the exception and that proves the rule—that enters the sphere of total selfishness and darkness for the time being. We do not wonder, parenthetically speaking, however, that in that first darkened sphere the shapes assume the shapes of monster wild beasts and dragons of terror, for you do know that these things that are called passions in the human heart, when they run riot become as beasts of prey, tearing away the very life of the spirit. But, as we say, that is the exception, fortunately. There are souls which pass from earthly life who are not corrupted with wickedness, but nevertheless have somewhat of it in their natures. Their first lesson in the sphere of beneficence is to minister to some other soul, and thereby rise from their otherwise darkened states.



Oh, the great moral healing that is to go on in the world! And who are these that cure the souls that are sick, and the hearts that are faint, and the eyes that are blind, and the spiritual bodies that will not perform their work aright? The church-going bell chimes every Sabbath day, and the worshippers in gay attire, or with pleasant worldly faces, pass to their appointed worship; and the man of God, or the teacher, speaks words that please the mind, and allure the heart, and uplift the intellectual sentiments of the assembly, and all places of modern worship become pleasant places of intellectual and æsthetic enjoyment during the hours allotted to praise. But who goes beneath, finds out the sin-sick soul, cares for and ministers to yonder darkened one in the corner, or to the very soul that has a smiling outward face, but within is full of sorrow and pain? Who does this, in all the great circles of self-appointed or man-appointed spiritual healers? We say that the man of God must be a healer as well as a teacher. Christ, who healed the bodies of men, and who taught their souls, also healed their spirits. The Master, whose example they are enjoined to follow, visited the sin-sick soul as well and more frequently than the bruised and wounded body.

Let us have spiritual healing. Teaching is well, but healing comes first. The sick man cannot be taught how to remain well until he first is restored from his malady. You do not reprimand him for the cholera or fever until he recovers from it. Let us have those who will heal the morally infirm before they upbraid them; who will bind up the malady and strive to cure it before they teach the prevention of it. The prevention may be taught to those who are still comparatively well, but for those who are sick let us have the merciful healing of kindly physicians, skilled in all the subtle lore of the human spirit and its manifold maladies. Let us have those who are clairvoyant of mind; let us have those who are penetrating of spirit; let us have those who are discerners of souls; let us have those who are gifted with inspiration and prophecy; let us have those who understand beforehand what is needed. The widow in her weeds, the maid clad in her mourning, the soul hedged around with despair, the quick and sympathetic physician readily understands. To the eye of the spiritual physician nothing shall be hidden or concealed. He should know at a glance the state of the spiritual pulse; he should understand by the look of the eye and by the countenance what morbid disease is lurking there. He should know if disappointment, envy, pride, malice, falsehood are stamped upon that visage and gnawing away at that heart. Oh, he should be wise; and the spirits who have charge in the great circle of beneficence that, as you must be aware, receives nearly all souls at first that pass from earthly life—the spirits who have charge in this great circle are those who possess these qualifications—who through sorrow have become sympathetic, who, through crime, perhaps, know what criminals suffer, and who have risen free and disenthralled above their crime and above its suffering, who, by study of human thoughts and human weakness, are prepared to administer to all those subtle maladies that afflict the mind, and who understand that no soul comes from earthly life (unless it be an angel or messiah sent as a messenger) that does not in some degree require the administration of spiritual healing.

#### THE INDIAN FAMINE AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES.

THE REV. THOMAS COLLEY, M.A., was the preacher at St. Luke's Church, Nutford-place, Edgware-road, W., last Sunday evening, and taking for his text the 14th chapter of Ezekiel, verses 13 and 14, Mr. Colley said:—

There is a preservative element of wondrous chemical power in the good and true, that keeps the world from moral putrefaction. Evil and error are solvents, and acrid agents of the kingdom of darkness, to bring into fearful dissolution the comity and amity of wedded virtues, and divorce the beautiful from the true, and the beneficent from the good, and excite war when gentle peace should have large sway, and make discord where harmony should rule, and confusion where order should obtain, and chaos where cosmos should dwell. For the province of the bad is ever to ruin, vastate, and destroy. But the effectual working of the good is ever to conserve, refrain, unite, support, build up. The one saps the vital force of earth, and the moral verities of mortal life, and depletes manhood of virility and virtue—drains out of Mundus the heavenly Ichor for the waste of Infernus, and leaves the world arid and dry of celestial graces, and the saturating showers of the

higher life. The wine of life, indeed, is drawn, and the dregs alone remain; sin is the waster, iniquity the spoiler, wickedness the destroyer. For though earth were crammed with heaven, as indeed it might be, yet unrighteousness would plunder it. Though it wore the riches of celestial wealth, which it might inherit, yet iniquity would rifle it. Though it had the beauty of the summer land above, as was intended, yet sin would mar it, plunder, rob, and spoil it; for it is a curse and a destroyer, and the countervailing good alone conserves the remnant of things unsullied, uncontaminate, and pure, and keeps alive the faithful, and the beautiful and true that make the world endurable.

"When the land sinneth against Me, by trespassing grievously (saith the Lord God), then will I stretch out Mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it." And this in mercy (from a God who in judgment will remember mercy) would be but righteous judgment, for "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Nay, but it would be no less merciful than righteous. Devotion to destruction, when hope of amendment is gone, is the highest act of mercy. Better, far better, that an abandoned sinner should be cut off even in the very blossom of his sin than live to ripen in iniquity, and go on still in his wickedness, and develop to a blacker devil here and a fouler fiend hereafter. And as with the individual so with the mass. Better, far better, that an entire race should perish from off the earth, when possibility of reform is past, than live to cumber the ground, to vegetate and rot, and perpetuate mischief, and spread moral pestilence around. Sentimental weaklings may perhaps object to this drastic and bitter philosophy; but it is of no use mincing matters. Robust Christianity, touched with pity, recognises the inevitable as the most merciful. The root and branch business of the Israelites with the Canaanites, directed by the word of the Lord to kill and spare not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass, attests the wisdom and beneficent goodness of amputating a limb to save a life, to excise the gangrene with stern severity, and cut away corruption without pity, to be most merciful and kind. So, in the judgment of our text, it were better that the staff of bread should be broken and famine should ensue, that man and beast should pass away, than that sinners should bring into the world others of like nature, unfitted to live, and unprepared to die.

In its naked boldness we state the case, and as it stands in the letter; and we strive to hide none of the repulsiveness felt at the wholesale holocausts alluded to, because we want strongly to enforce the truth that the Lord does none of these things he is alleged to do. God is love, and He never destroys, He never punishes, He never condemns, He never kills, or wounds, or hurts—is never angry, or vengeful, implacable, or stern, but is full of compassion, pity, and love, and "His tender mercies are over all His works."

It is true that after the letter these former dreadful things are attributed to him, and He is credited with much of the evil that befalls us, and there is that Scripture that says, "Is there wickedness in the city and I have not done it? saith the Lord God." But let us not forget that in this sense the letter killeth, and that the Spirit giveth life, and then these things will wear a different aspect. "Evil shall slay the wicked," and not God in anger. For, according to the first article of our Church the one everlasting and true God is without body, parts, and passions; and anger is certainly a passion, and not of the most elevated order, and an angry God is an absurd impossibility. For the high and holy One, who after the letter is said to be "angry with the wicked every day," after the truer Spirit says, "fury is not in me." For the truth of the appearance is one thing, the naked truth is another. True to appearances, the sun rises and sets; true to scientific fact, it does nothing of the sort; and just so is it with the Sun of Righteousness that ariseth with healing in His wings. Healing but never destruction. Pardon, never condemnation; love, never anger. "When the land sinneth against Me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out Mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it, saith the Lord God." But not so will I ever read the character of the All-Father whose name is Love. Let it be mine to dig through the appearance of truth in the letter, and get to the real truth of the spirit. Then I shall know that God is but a letter short of Good, and that evil wants but a letter more to make it Devil. Then I shall know that iniquity is its own inquisitor, that the woe is in the wickedness, the smart in the sin. Then I shall know that the bad is ever barren, that destruction is in depravity, that ruin is in riot, vengeance in vice. Then I shall know that a life of infamy brings famine, woe, wretchedness and want, and that sin is destructive, and that hell would depopulate earth and drag down the stars of heaven, and make the universe an utter wreck. For punishment for sin is Satan's wage for value received on part of the sinner, and not of God's infliction for man's transgression. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people," saith the Scriptures; and the latter affirmation is, to my mind, very mildly put, for, were I to presume to amend it, I should say that sin is not only a reproach to, but the inevitable destruction, sooner or later, of any people, as certain as that righteousness is infinitely more protective and conservative than guns and bastions, forts and ramparts.

And this leads me to the second head of my subject—the second part of our text—the large influence and beneficent power of good men. It is said that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." How much we cannot estimate; because the spiritual forces he sets in motion are imponderable, and our system of weights and measures cannot gauge their subtle influences. The meteorological barometer of prayer would give wondrous readings, could our gross vision ken the workings of Providence inspiring and suggesting it. But to ticket and analyse these finer essences is beyond our province. All we know is what we feel, and that is that good influences attend the righteous, and that there is safety to the individual and the state when men of integrity and uprightness are in our midst. History is pregnant with

instances where, in the rage of things loose strung and shifty, when the times were out of joint, and havoc and confusion ruled, and anarchy prevailed, one man, towering in moral rectitude above his fellows—self-sacrificing, righteous, stern, upright—has been the saviour of the commonwealth, defender of the faith, and father of the people. Such an one was Elijah, and Elijah reincarnated in John the Baptist—stern and uncompromising, a great church reformer and state purifier. Such an one was Moses, the emancipator of his people, and second father of the race of Abraham; and such were Noah, Daniel, and Job, with the especial emphasis of our text. For Noah's influence as a preacher of righteousness was doubtless no less strong against the deluge of iniquity around him than the allegoric waters of the flood. For "when the wicked come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him"; and his influence, in an evil and perverse time, must long have staved off the general ruin, and mitigated the horrors of the catastrophe when it came.

So with Daniel, as a contemner of a luxurious court, and advocate for abstinence and temperance, and self-control—as a manly witness for the truth (like his three companions in the fiery furnace) alone in the lion's den, his influence went far to change the religion, and hence recast the life of an entire people. And so with Job, who, "in all his affliction, yet still retained his iniquity, nor charged God foolishly." The influence, believe me, for good on part of such as these is simply incalculable. For if, as is said, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, what of the effect of many such whose life is a prayer, and whose prayer is act, and deed, and do, righteous, beneficent, loving! For he prayeth best who loveth best. What of the silent, secret, but largely felt influence for good on part of these? Bring an unrighteous man into their presence, and he is abashed, confounded, disarmed. Who has not seen the controlling power of a virtuous woman over rude men and sensual debauchees? So the multiplied forces of the righteous—virtue in the aggregate, love, mercy, goodness, truth, honesty, candour, and genuine humanity—do ever keep at bay the powers of darkness and the spheres of evil, and the fiends of hell—embodied or disembodied, it matters not, for there is an utter repulsion of things wicked and unmeet from the good and true, and hence the advantage of good companionship, and minds congenial and hearts reciprocal of the higher virtues. The amenities of social life should strengthen the souls protective of humanity against the infusion of foreign and adverse and mischievous influences. Unity, brotherhood, and oneness, and charity, and purity, and trust should be neighbours and near citizens in every circle; and the influence of such society and companionship would be felt in the peace and preservation of the state, and the republic of the soul that would legislate thus wisely should see abundance of peace and every good.

But power of deliverance from evil on part of the good, great as it is, has its limits. Ten righteous men in the city of Sodom would have saved it of old, "For," saith the Lord, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake." One righteous man in Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah would have worked a pardon and reprieve, for saith the Lord, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof if ye can find a man—if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." But when the virtue of the state, and moral health of the people, is centred in one man, or ten men, the times are perilous indeed. The merest accident decimates the one, or cuts off the other—the standard of right is lost—the sample gone, no supply follows—the pattern torn, no design appears—the die broken, no casts are taken—the throne vacant, and no heir apparent here; then (as in the evil days when there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes) wrong results, and confusion gathers head; order and degree upset, quiet rudely shaken, society rotten at the core, and civilisation but a gilded barbarism; the land is ripe for ruin and subversion, and "though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God."

And now, the practical lesson we have to learn from the consideration of these weighty facts and solemn truths, is that each in his office, and that state of life in which it has pleased God to place him, be thorough, conscientious, upright, and true. "No man liveth unto himself, and no man doeth unto himself." We are but parts of one stupendous whole, and must act in loving reciprocity with others for our own soul's good and the public weal. True, it would be egotism and self-righteousness to think that everything depends upon us and our poor weak advocacy and endeavour. "Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think," says the Apostle. The wheels of progress move with us, and let us be no obstacle in their way to hinder them; but let us not be like the fly that sat on the axle-tree and madly thought it drew the chariot along, and cried out in huge conceit and folly, "See what a dust I kick up!" Don't let us think the hub of the universe centres in us; but, on the other hand, at the same time, don't let us under-estimate our influence by precept and example, or forget that our small contribution to the general well-being has its value, and is duly noted to our credit by the omniscience of the Eternal, and that when we do wrong we subtract from the general good, and earn damnation to ourselves thereby. We may not have the faith of Noah, but what prevents us from praying, "Lord, increase our faith"? We may not have the moral courage of Daniel, but what hinders us from saying, "Strengthen these weak hands, and confirm these feeble knees?" We may not have the patience of Job; but what opposes the spirit's aspiration for the patience of hope, and the power of love, and the fulness of Christ, whereby we may do all things, and bear all things, and believe all things, and hope all things, and be made after the pattern of our great exemplar Jesus—the man Jehovah—meek and loving and lion-hearted, and innocently wise; and be, in our degree, as He was in His infinitude and divine amplitude, faithful and true, and gentle and long-suffering, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—

true, honest, upright men, after the fashion of the Divine Man, touched with the pitifulness of womanhood, and the compassionate nature and patient bearing of love? We may not, I say, have the faith of Noah, or the moral courage of Daniel, or the patience of Job in a remarkable degree, but a measure of grace is given unto every man—says the apostle—to profit withal; and if each will pray for and covet earnestly the best gifts, the condemnation of our text shall not visit us, as it has done that other land afar, but we shall be co-operative with angelic workers in bringing the world into a higher state of development, and more perfect accord with heaven.

This, indeed, is urgently needed by the world—a lever of individual goodness, comforted and built up of earnest, loving souls, and the fulcrum of some vital truth to lift the world into a higher condition and prise humanity some degrees in the scale of being towards angelhood. This is needed, needed in our midst; for in this vast wilderness of life around there is much moral desolation and physical want. But, specially concerning these things, to-night our thoughts are carried eastward, where we may contemplate want, spiritual and material, in an amazing degree and distressing proportions. That the Word of Life is needed there in India, from personal experience I can sadly attest, but preached in a very different way from which missionary societies insult—with mawkish and intellectual talk of the prayer-meeting sort—the acute and transcendental and meditative mind of the thoughtful Hindoo, high-caste Brahmin, or learned Pundit. But the urgent want now is bread—bread for the starving millions. "When the land sinneth against Me by transgressing grievously," saith the Lord, "then will I stretch out Mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it." And that land afar has sinned grievously—grievously; therefore, effete and broken, it is subject to the rule of a more vigorous race, and we of the far west from them, and mere handful of Englishmen, govern the destinies of the many millions of the mighty East, and India is our province. But it has also sinned against the laws of nature, as well as against the laws of God as rooted and set forth in man, by one a shade superior enfolding, contemning, despising and enslaving another, till the ancient and mysterious evil of caste has divided the nation and broken it up into warring sects, and shattered society into fragments innumerable—the bundle of sticks untied for our easy breaking. Not only has India sinned—in this misuse and degradation of man—against the laws of God, but against the laws of nature, which is God in ultimates. Trees have been cut down, and but few planted, and vast forests have disappeared. I have travelled in India north and south nearly three thousand miles, and have not passed so much wood as I did yesterday coming to London from Warwickshire. Across the plains (for India consists mainly of great mountain ranges and then vast plains of limitless extent), and across these wide stretching plains, from the horizon some hundreds of miles to the right, to the horizon some hundreds of miles to the left, I have gazed upon an utter flat, with not a tree to be seen; hot, dusty, arid, with not the shadow of a rock in all the weary land. Stunted bushes here and there, or jungle, in which the tiger prowls, with wild grasses rank in patches, or browned and stubbed, and indistinguishable from the dust in which it dies. Now, the source of the river is said to be in the leaf, and where there is woodland there is refreshing moisture, and there are gentle streams. But as here, with millions of square miles denuded of wood, there is a furnace heat and dryness inconceivable; river beds of great extent and breadth, but no water—stonier and dustier ruts merely than common, of the land they scar. So, when the rains do come, with no leaves to break the fall, or roots to retain the moisture, the deluge has irresistible force, and the swollen volume of the river, which is continually shifting its bed, rushes wildly on, carrying the loam of the rice plantation, and soil of the fields and surface earth completely away, leaving the rocks as clean washed as the pavement outside this church.

Now, in these evils that afflict so large a part of India, which from personal observation I briefly set forth, a remedy for these too frequent famines is suggested. Under native maladministration, before our beneficent sway in our eastern fatherland (for we as Indo-Europeans are only emigrant sons from the orient to the west ages ago, now returning to govern the estate we then left, and now again inherit), under native misrule, I say, before our sway of empire there, these famines were chronic, and looked for on part of the rajahs and princes and ameers to reduce the overteeming population, which our better humanity will not let perish.

Let us then, giving as largely as we can to alleviate the distress, at the same time try to understand its cause, and take measures to prevent its recurrence. For, as I have endeavoured to show, it is not God that doth break the staff of bread, or send famine, but man, who acts in opposition to the laws of life. Let us plant trees, and forest up the wastes, to attract the moisture, vital to the land as truth—is its spiritual correspondence—is to the soul. Let us irrigate the country, and dig canals, and lay down water highways over the plains of India, before we net the vast land with railways, for thus a double purpose would be served—transit of merchandise, and an unfailing water supply, where rivers are so very few, and where every few hundred yards wells have to be digged, and water all day long scantily drawn up by oxen grudgingly to moisten the dry and dusty land.

But, staying not further to theorise, let us to-night practically do all we can to mitigate the horrors of this famine. I could describe them, for I have seen somewhat of the matter for which I plead. Never overfed, the Hindu starving is a pitiable object, and I know what a few annas—that is, pence—will do; and our pence, and charity in pounds, going out to feed our dusky fellow citizens of the east, will do more to establish our rule there than many armies. Indeed, our power in India came to my mind more proudly, and advertised our prowess to the natives more lovingly, and infinitely better, than by force of

arms, in what I saw below Poonah—a famine relief train of over six hundred wagons filled with food, extending from one station to another, from Kurfut to Campoolce, nearly six miles long. Let us determine to-night to add to its length, and so, each being co-operative with the other, help to bring this dreadful misery in India to a speedy and final end.

And bringing, too, our own patch of earth into better cultivation, as we are all of the earth earthy, that the trees of the Lord's right hand planting, and trees of the Lord which are full of sap may never be wanting on our estate, and that spiritual drought and soul famine may never be ours, let us get *en rapport* with things spiritual and divine; bringing the little world within us into harmony with the higher world above us, until the threatened denunciation of the prophet Ezekiel in our text is transposed to the happier prophecy of Isaiah, which spiritually says of each regenerating heart, "Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Benlah, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." For, weaned from every evil way, and wed to goodness and to truth, virtue and fraternity and loving-kindness, the wilderness within, and the solitary place of the human heart shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

#### A DEVIL-DANCE IN INDIA.

It is an extremely difficult thing for a European to witness a devil-dance. As a rule, he must go disguised, and he must be able to speak the language like a native, before he is likely to be admitted without suspicion into the charmed circle of fascinated devotees, each eager to press near the possessed priest to ask him questions about the future while the divine afflatus is in its full force upon him. Let me try to bring the whole scene vividly before the reader. Night, starry and beautiful, with a broad, low moon seen through the palms. A still, solemn night, with few sounds to mar the silence, save the deep, muffled boom of breakers bursting on the coast full eight miles distant. A lonely hut, a huge banyan-tree, grim and gloomy. All round spread interminable sands, the only vegetation on which is composed of lofty palmyra, and a few stunted thorn trees and wild figs. In the midst of this wilderness rises, spectre-like, that aged, enormous tree, the banyan, haunted by a most ruthless she-devil. Cholera is abroad in the land, and the natives know that it is she who has sent them the dreaded pestilence. The whole neighbourhood wakes to the determination that the malignant power must be propitiated in the most effectual manner. The appointed night arrives. Out of village, and hamlet, and hut pours the wild crowd of men and women and children. In vain the Brahmins tinkle their bells at the neighbouring temple; the people know what they want, and the deity which they must reverence as supreme just now. On flows the crowd to that gloomy island in the star-lit waste—that weird, hoary banyan. The circle is formed, the fire is lit, the offerings are got ready—goats and fowls, and rice and pulse and sugar, and ghee and honey, and white chaplets of oleander blossoms and jasmine buds. The tom-toms are beaten more loudly and rapidly, the hum of rustic converse is stilled, and a deep hush of awe-struck expectancy holds the motley assemblage. The rickety door of the hut is quickly dashed open, and the devil-dancer staggers out. Between the hut and the ebon shadow of the sacred banyan lies a strip of moon-lit sand; and, as he passes this, the devotees can clearly see their priest. He is a tall, haggard, pensive man, with deep, sunken eyes and matted hair. His forehead is smeared with ashes, and there are streaks of vermilion and saffron over his face. He wears a high conical cap, white, with a red tassel. A long white robe, or *angi*, shrouds him from neck to ankle. On it are worked in red silk representations of the goddess of small-pox, murder, and cholera. Round his ankles are massive silver bangles. In his right hand he holds a staff or spear, and the same hand also holds a bow, which, when the strings are pulled or struck, emits a dull booming sound. In his left hand the devil-priest carries his sacrificial knife, shaped like a sickle, with quaint devices engraved on its blade. The dancer reels slowly into the centre of the crowd, and then seats himself. The assembled people show him the offerings they intend to present; but he appears wholly unconscious. He croops an Indian lay in a low, dreamy voice, with drooped eyelids and head sunken on his breast. He sways slowly to and fro, from side to side. Look! You see his fingers twitch nervously. His head begins to wag in a strange, uncanny fashion. His sides heave and quiver, and huge drops of perspiration exude from his skin. The tom-toms are beaten faster, the pipes and reeds wail out more loudly. There is a sudden yell, a stinging, stunning cry, an ear-piercing shriek, a hideous abominable gobble-gobble of hellish laughter, and the devil-dancer has sprung to his feet, with eyes protruding, mouth foaming, chest heaving, muscles quivering, and outstretched arms swollen and straining as if they were crucified. Now, ever and anon, quick, sharp words are jerked out of the saliva-choked month, "I am God! I am the true God!" Then all around him—since he, and no idol, is regarded as the present deity—recks the blood of sacrifice. The devotees crowd round to offer oblations and to solicit answers to their questions. Shrieks, vows, imprecations, prayers, and exclamations of thankful praise rise up, all blended together in one infernal hubbub. Above all rise the ghastly guttural laughter of the devil-dancer, and his stentorian howls—"I am God! I am the only true God!" He cuts and hacks and hews himself, and not very unfrequently kills himself there and then. His answers to the queries put to him are generally incoherent. Sometimes he is sullenly silent, and sometimes he is most benign, and showers his divine favours of health and prosperity all round him. Hours pass by. Suddenly the dancer gives a great bound in the air; when he descends he is motionless.

The fiendish look has vanished from his eyes. His demoniacal laughter is still. He speaks to this and to that neighbour quietly and reasonably. He lays aside his garb, washes his face at the nearest rivulet, and walks soberly home, a modest, well-conducted man.—*Pictorial World*.

#### THE DALSTON ASSOCIATION OF INQUIRERS INTO SPIRITUALISM.

A TRANCE ADDRESS BY MR. COLVILLE.

On Thursday, the 13th Sept., Mr. W. J. Colville delivered the first of two inspirational discourses to members and friends of the above Association. There was a small but appreciative audience. The subject chosen for the discourse was "What constitutes Mediumship?"

Mr. Colville said that it was erroneously supposed by many at the present day that mediumship and its phenomena were a result of what is called "Modern Spiritualism," and that the Fox family and others in America were the first mediums. That such was really not the fact was clear to every one who had taken the smallest trouble to study the subject, for mediumship was but a revival in present times of that "outpouring of the Spirit," which had taken place in ages long gone by, and the manifestation of which was as old as the history of the world. Mediumship was peculiar to no nation, race, or sect; it came impartially to all, and it was, therefore, a natural gift common to all men. It might be said that every living being was a medium; the only question was the degree of development in individuals. The vast spirit world surrounded the material world, like an enveloping cloud, and its myriads of inhabitants were ever influencing their brethren and sisters still in the body; the influence acted consciously or unconsciously, but none the less surely and effectively. Mediums, usually so known, were those persons who, possessing a predominance of what might be termed "nerve aura" in their constitutions, were thereby rendered sensitive to the approaches of the spirits. Of course it was in a great degree within the will of such persons whether they would welcome or resist the use that could be made of their power. All men possessed it, either in the germ or in fuller development; there were "born mediums" in the fullest sense of the term, and also those who might be said to be no mediums at all, their power being invariably in a normal condition. When medial parents were in harmony, their offspring would be far more susceptible to spirit influences than those who were born of parents with materialistic tendencies. Then there were the processes of development. The seers, the hermits of olden times, knew the necessity for this training; hence they were generally from childhood set apart from their fellows, and by eliminating the material tendencies of the body the spirit was brought into closer communication with the disembodied. The ancients were wiser than we, for the gift of mediumship was fully understood by them, and was cultivated as soon as it appeared. In modern times an outbreak of mediumship was regarded as insanity, and the unhappy medium was looked upon as a fit subject for a lunatic asylum; or worse, as a self-deluded impostor. The variety of forms of mediumship was such as to cause great discussion even among Spiritualists. It was in most cases a matter of aspiration on the part of the medium, influenced, no doubt, by his circumstances and surroundings. If the lower or physical form of mediumship were desired, the less developed spirits, who had greater power over material forces would control. If higher aspirations were followed, the purer and better orders of the spirit world were attracted to the medium. In the first instance no intelligence higher than that of the medium and his associates would communicate. In the latter higher intelligencies would come, and the sitters would learn more, although they might not receive manifestations of a startling and physical character.

At the close of the discourse many questions bearing upon the subject were asked by the listeners, and answers were given by the spirit controlling Mr. Colville.

An inspirational poem on the subject of "Guardian Spirits" was next delivered. An Indian spirit then controlled, and held a lively conversation for a time with those present.

The proceedings then terminated, after it had been announced by the secretary that Mr. Colville had that evening been elected an honorary member of the Association.

#### MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

The ordinary monthly meeting of the Council of this Association was held on Thursday evening last week, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston-lane, London, E. Present, Mr. John Rouse (in the chair), Mr. Jonathan Tozeland, and Mr. Thos. Blyton. Letters were read from the British National Association of Spiritualists, the Psychological Society of Great Britain, Mr. Benj. Coleman, Miss Corner, Mr. Christian Reimers, and Mr. J. J. Morse. Presentations were laid upon the table, and accepted with a cordial vote of thanks, from the Baroness von Vay, Mrs. E. Elgie Corner, Mr. Benj. Coleman, and Miss F. J. Theobald. Mrs. and Miss Arundale were elected ordinary members, and Messrs. J. William Fletcher and William James Colville were elected honorary members of the Association. A letter was read from Mr. R. A. March, offering to give a reading, with some critical observations, on Shakespeare's play of *Hamlet*, with special reference to the "Ghost," which was accepted with thanks for Thursday evening, the 29th November next. The seventh anniversary meeting was fixed for Monday evening, the 1st proximo. Arrangements were approved for fortnightly social discussion meetings on Monday evenings in months of Nov., Dec., Jan., Feb., March, and April. An arrangement was approved for the reading of a paper by Mr. Christian Reimers before the Association on Thursday evening, the 27th inst. The date of Mr. Morse's visit was postponed from 11th October to the 3rd January next. The Council then adjourned.

## MR. LESLIE STEPHEN ON SPIRITUALISM.

BY WILLIAM WHITE, AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF SWEDENBORG."

In the *Fortnightly Review* for September there is an article by Mr. Leslie Stephen on "The Scepticism of Believers," in the course of which occurs this pretty passage:—

"It is a commonplace to taunt sceptics with credulity, nor is the taunt without foundation. So long as men of science continue to dabble in the filth of 'Spiritualism' it will have a meaning. A confessor is, after all, better than a medium, and I would rather revere the miracles of Lourdes than grovel before the trickery of a Yankee conjurer."

As vituperation, this is distinctly inferior to Professor Clifford's manifestation; and "the filth of Spiritualism" is an appropriation from Mr. G. H. Lewes's repertory of abuse. I take it that such expressions of feeling are highly encouraging. Their ferocity is begotten of fear. It is the line of the agnostics (as they style themselves) to represent this world as the beginning and end of us—an opinion, an unhappy opinion, an untrue opinion, but no more than an opinion. This opinion is however converted into a dogma, over which their rhetoricians wax eloquent, as if they had discovered a new gospel, whilst its assailants are encountered with a degree of truculence which might surprise us if we did not know the vehemence with which men will fight for their favourite notions, even when they are the merest trumpery. Spiritualists, as men of science, whose belief in the continuance of life through the phenomenon of death is not only an opinion, but a matter of experience and demonstration, come in naturally for the especial savagery with which Professor Tyndall and others have made us familiar, which treatment we accept as evidence of the genuine alarm our facts and discoveries inspire.

## A REMARKABLE PRIVATE SEANCE.

BY EDWARD T. BENNETT.

THE following brief notes of the more interesting phenomena observed at a private *séance* may be worth recording:—

On Sunday evening, the 9th inst., a circle consisting of Dr. Monck, Mrs. F., Miss R., a medical man, Mr. Christian Reimers, and myself, met at Mr. Reimers's house, No. 6, Manor-villas, Richmond. We sat round an ordinary table on which were placed the works of a small musical box, two small slates, paper and black lead pencil. A shaded candle was placed in an adjoining room, the door being open, so that there was all through the *séance* sufficient light to see the various objects in the room, and the time by a watch.

After some ordinary preliminary manifestations, Dr. Monck's control addressed the medical man, whom I will call Dr. A., and asked him to tell him a word he would like written on the slate. The slates were examined and marked by myself, tied together securely by Dr. A. As no bit of slate pencil could be found, a minute fragment of black lead was placed between them, which we ascertained would make a mark. Dr. A. then chose the word "darling," and the slates were placed on the table, and Dr. M.'s and Dr. A.'s hands on them.

Mr. M.'s control: "Hav'n't you got any slate pencil?"

Dr. A.: "No. There is a bit of black lead in; can't you write with that?"

Dr. M.'s control: "Don't like it. Shall we get a bit of our own?"

Dr. A.: "Yes."

Dr. M.'s control: "My medium will carry the slates round and place them on the Dr.'s head. There; it is done!"

Candle brought. The slates (which had never been out of sight of the whole circle) untied. Inside, was the word "darling," written in a large, rather trembling hand, as if with slate pencil, but there was none visible.

Dr. M.'s control: "Tell me the Christian name of some friend you would like to be here."

Dr. A.: "Sophia."

Dr. M.'s control: "She is here; and there is an old man with her of dignified appearance. He is sorry for you about something; I think it is about money. He has such a curious thing on his head, a crown with points upwards, and little balls on them."

Dr. A.: "Will he give his name?"

Dr. M.'s control: "He says he will try and write it himself?"

The medium asks for a piece of note paper, holds it in his hand a minute, places it on the table, and a pocket pencil about three inches long by it. The pencil moves, no one touching it. It makes feeble attempts to rise. Finally it succeeds, and we see it stand up by itself, and write as with a firm hand for a few seconds, and then fall down again. Dr. A. takes up the paper, and finds written the name \* \* \* \* \*, that of a deceased nobleman with whom he had been professionally connected, and who was a relative of the lady whose name he had given, and whose rank was correctly indicated by the "curious crown."

A singular physical manifestation then took place. The works of the musical box began to move, but the movements seemed impeded by catching in the woollen table-cloth. I therefore handed a sheet of my note paper to stand them on. The whole works then moved about freely, and went on and stopped playing repeatedly as requested by the medium, and finally executed a sort of dance on the table, jumping up and down about half an inch.

This was followed by a still more singular, and so far as I know, a unique manifestation. Dr. M. was impressed to bring a lighted candle (in an ordinary chamber candlestick) into the room, and to place it on the floor just under the edge of the table. All six of us were sitting round the table, and all hands were seen to be on it. We hear the candlestick move, and see the shadows of ourselves and of the table-cloth move on the walls. For perhaps two minutes the candlestick with the lighted candle is carried about, round and round, backwards and forwards, underneath the table, apparently about six inches from the floor, as I feel the edge of the candlestick several times knock against my leg. It is finally thrown down with a jerk, at one end of the table, the candle being still alight, but nothing is burnt and no damage is done.

After a few minutes' break, we sat again for materialisations. Two sitting-rooms in the house are connected by folding doors. A curtain is stretched across the opening. We sit in one room, a lighted candle behind a screen being placed in one corner, so that the degree of light is about the same as before. Dr. Monck retires behind the curtain. In less than five minutes the medium appears "under control," with a white draped female figure standing by his side. The medium's control points out the "line of light" apparently of the same material as the drapery of the figure, drawn out into a band or cord, extending to the medium, and appearing to go into the breast of his coat. The medium draws three or four feet away from the figure, the cord stretches thinner. He strikes through it with his arm and it disappears, and he says, "Now all visible connection is dissolved. To show you that it is not a lay figure" (turning to the figure), "Clap your hands." This it does several times, the medium doing the same. The sounds are similar.

A second figure came out in the same way. The medium, suddenly addressing Dr. A., said: "You did not tell me—you are a widower—no—you have a wife—you have married again—she says she is your first wife—give me your handkerchief." Dr. A. hands a white handkerchief, which the medium takes and gives to the figure, who rapidly knots it up in a symmetrical, ingenious manner, and it is returned. Dr. A. is asked to step up nearer, but the figure is so closely veiled, and the features so obscure that he obtains no evidence of identity.

Four other figures appear, once two at a time, one on each side of the medium. One kneels down gracefully, says softly, "Bless you," and rises again. The most curious phenomenon is that two or three of the figures do not retire behind the screen, but are distinctly seen to disappear in front of it. They appear to go close to the body of the medium, and seem to be absorbed or sucked in.

Total darkness is then requested. A faint opal-like light appears, with an indistinct face above it, moves about, apparently high up, giving just enough light to show the features of a face. This brought the *séance* to a conclusion.

During about ten minutes' conversation afterwards Dr. Monck was several times "under control," and spoke to



Dr. A. of a young man he knew years ago, describing accurately himself, his conduct and course of life. Turning to me, he also spoke of seeing two of my friends, the description of whom, so far as it went, was perfectly accurate.

In reviewing the *séance*, it will be noticed that there was a remarkable variety of physical and psychical manifestations—ordinary trance speaking and clairvoyance, direct writing both between the slates and on paper with a pencil in the light, movements of objects in the light, carrying the lighted candle about under the table, the stopping and starting of the musical box at will, the various materialisations, and the spirit light. All occurred within the space of two hours.

As to test conditions. It will be observed that no special ones were imposed, no precautions were taken, except the use of all our senses at the time. As is often the case when this course is pursued, first-rate evidences of the genuineness and of what may be called the miraculous character of the phenomena presented themselves as the *séance* proceeded. For instance, the writing between the slates, of a word selected after they were tied together, and without a piece of slate pencil; the writing of a name by a pencil, in the light, without mortal contact, and which name corresponded with description and other circumstances. This amounts very nearly, if not quite, to a logical proof of identity. The carrying about of the lighted candle is a fine satire on those who persist in saying that everything is done in the dark. It will be observed that we had no darkness, except for the purpose of showing the "lamp."

I have endeavoured to be as concise as possible, and to give the facts in a way in which their value will be appreciated, and will only add that the gentleman I have spoken of as Dr. A. has seen and endorses this account of the *séance*.

The Mansion, Richmond Hill, near London, Sept 12th, 1877.

DR. ROBERT S. WYLD, F.R.S.E., has just issued a book entitled *The Physics and Philosophy of the Senses; or, the Mental and Physical in their Mutual Relation* (King and Co.).

ON Sunday next, September 23, Mr. J. J. Morse will deliver two trance addresses in the Temperance Hall, Keighley—afternoon at 2.30, evening at 6.30; admission free.

WE have received the second annual report of the Funeral Reform Association, but it contains little or no information as to the objects of the society beyond that given by the name of the organisation.

"STOICAL philosophy doubted whether the human mind can ascertain absolute truth. While Zeno was indulging in such doubts, Euclid was preparing his great work, destined to challenge contradiction from the whole human race. After more than twenty-two centuries it still survives, a model of accuracy, perspicuity, and a standard of exact demonstration. . . . The day will never come when any one of the propositions of Euclid will be denied; no one will henceforth call in question the globular shape of the earth as recognised by Eratosthenes."—*Draper's History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, pp. 27-8 and 33.

DEATH WARNINGS.—The *Liverpool Daily Post* of September 18th says:—"The loss of the *Avalanche* has been the occasion for the propagation of some of those mysterious stories which always seem to accrue to swell the marvel of great disasters. Perhaps the first is not very wonderful, except to the lad who was concerned in it. He was the great friend and mate of one of the apprentices who were lost, and had intended to accompany him down the channel, and to come on shore with the pilot. The arrangements had all been made, when he was suddenly seized with an indefinable repugnance to the proposed trip. At the same time an engagement in Edinburgh became suddenly pressing, and, making this the excuse, he escaped from almost certain death. This is strange, but the story regarding the drowned apprentice is even stranger. It reminds me rather of the scene in *Jane Eyre*, where the heroine of the novel hears the voice of Mr. Rochester actually uttered miles away. Lest I should be accused of garnishing, I give it precisely in the words which have been communicated to me:—'The apprentice whose friend escaped possessed a retriever dog which was very fond of him, and which answered to a shrill dog-whistle he carried. On the night of the shipwreck his mother and aunt were in the sitting-room, and the dog in the kitchen. Between nine and ten o'clock the ladies were startled by hearing a shrill whistle upstairs, in sound resembling that of the dog-whistle used by the young man. The dog heard it also, gave his usual recognising bark, and hurried upstairs, where he supposed his master was. It is difficult to explain such an occurrence as this by any reference to the laws of mental association. The two ladies in question are of such intelligence as not easily to have been deceived. In the house was the whistle heard just about the time that the *Avalanche* went down, and it was heard by two credible witnesses, whose testimony was confirmed by the response made to it by the dog of the lost sailor.' I give the story as it was given to me, but the marvel I do not attempt to explain."

## SPIRITUAL REASONS FOR EARTHLY SUFFERINGS.

A SPIRIT MESSAGE GIVEN THROUGH MRS. WOODFORD'S MEDIUMSHIP.

YOU ask me why some persons suffer so much, some snatched from a life of usefulness to a large circle, and compelled to pass their days in the dreariness of the sick chamber, useless to all, and vainly striving through the weary hours to recover that health and activity which had always been their delight. Truly, it is a pitiable sight, alike to mortals and spirits; and the trial is severe for those whose happiness is centred in the happiness they can make for others, and who do not care for life on earth except so far as they can pass it usefully, who also have lived for years with the hope to accomplish a certain work, continually spurring them on. The great trial of illness comes, and as the weeks and months pass on, and the coveted health does not return, one by one the beloved objects in life must be resigned. Instead of living for the good of others, with every breath laden with some scheme of work which may produce a certain amount of benefit, alas! every breath is a breath of pain, and for self alone is the poor weary being forced to live, to live for the body, the wearisome suffering body, which requires this little relief, that little necessity, this remedy, and that comfort, or solace. The spirit within, deprived of its usual enjoyments with friends and beloved ones, pines, becomes fretful, impatient, and feels the burthen of suffering too heavy. You cannot be too patient with one so afflicted, for you cannot measure the poignancy of the spirit's suffering within a deceased body. The spirit loses its happy equilibrium, and the lowest nature, held down in the strength of health, or unexcited because of ease, and comfort, rises uppermost. Weaknesses of temper are betrayed, which were never suspected, and the agonised spirit sees the hideousness of its lower nature, probably not yet completely eradicated. It needed some complete revolution in earthly circumstances to bring that hateful deformity to the surface. Doubt not the suffering spirit will *know itself*, although it may give no signs of consciousness of deformity. Pride may prevent any external sign being given, but that consciousness will be there, nevertheless, working reform. Have patience, then, as you would wish others to have patience with you, for the spirit is passing through the agonies of a great change.

Often in ignorance the question is asked—"Why is it so? Why am I thus afflicted? Why may I not be permitted to go on with my work? Unless I can be of use to others I do not care for life here. And I cannot see any spiritual good this long, tiresome, illness is doing me; on the contrary, it seems to me only harm. If I could see the good I might be more reconciled." True, it is difficult to see the good, but it exists nevertheless. The body exists for the good of the soul only, and the different conditions and circumstances of life arise out of the necessities of the soul's growth into the higher spiritual states of being. Ease of life on earth is not always conducive to that growth. If it be so the soul will have that ease, and the constant sunshine of all that conduces to happiness here below. A previous life might have been one of privation of all kinds; or a life of ease whose advantages were not sufficiently cultivated. But you cannot follow all lives through every change, and suffering, in some form or other, comes to all. Whatever may be the condition, be sure it is what the soul requires to mould it into heavenly beauty; to give opportunities for the uprooting of evil tendencies; for the acquisition of new virtues, the expansion of intellect, or the growth of the affections. Nature tries her plastic hand in human clay many times before she can produce the spiritual beauty required. The spirit within must become divine, and there are many steps, and many hundreds of years in which to take them, between the lower animal nature of the savage and the higher spiritual nature of the angelic man.

Look upon the life on earth as a school, a scene of suffering and trial. But remember there is no careless chance about anything. A law regulates the scenes which surround you, and in which you are an actor or a sufferer; it apportions to your lot only what your soul requires for its development. So if sickness, sorrow, or sudden calamity befall you, remember that spiritually you must have required it, or you would not have had it.

If from ignorance you commit an error, from the consequences of which you suffer nearly a lifetime, your soul will have profited by the knowledge gained so painfully, and will never suffer again from the consequences of the same error. Had man been so endowed with all wisdom that he could never have committed an error, life on any planet would have been impossible for him. If it be permitted us to imagine anything of the Divine Being from whom we proceed, I, from my spiritual standpoint, would say that it must be essential for the Divine Originator of all things to know every possibility of His Being, and therefore the material world exists. It is the lowest point that spirit can reach, and spirit can work upon that plane only in the material form; but a gradual growth from the lowest point is necessary, therefore the soul, or divine spark, proceeding from the Eternal Source of light and life, embodies itself in the lowest ere it can begin the return to the highest. Along that endless road it passes through all the unavoidable vicissitudes attendant upon life on the material plane. It learns the lowest possibilities in the human nature of evil, and the highest possibilities of good. If in its ignorance, in the exercise of freewill, it chooses all that degrades and transforms the divine possibilities into the demoniac actualities, it experiences all the horrors and painfulness of that state. The experiences of the soul are never lost, nor its individuality. The experiences gained in one life regulate the next; the soul springs from the attainments of the preceding life as from a spiritual ground or basis. But all through the attainment of a divine nature, it may wear hundreds of fleshly garments; it can never lose itself, its individuality. It is impossible for the human soul to spring at once from the lowest incarnation on earth into high spiritual possibilities in heaven. The lower animal nature must be gradually worn off through repeated incarnations before man can know himself an angel or divine. The souls of lower natures

cling about the earth waiting for reincarnation, whether they know it or not. A certain period of happiness in the spirit-world may be the lot of many, but sooner or later the knowledge comes that renewed life on some earth is essential for a larger growth, a greater acquisition of the divine. The trials, temptations, and sufferings of earth are a means by which the imperfect human nature may approach nearer to divine perfection; therefore, remember that on earth it will be impossible to avoid sufferings.

I will finish with the communication from your spirit-friend "A." :—  
 "When the seed is put into the ground it lies long in darkness, silently decaying, or passing from the old state into the new one of productiveness—a seeming decay. This is necessary before the new can be produced. So is it with human souls in the suffering, decaying body. The spirit in the dark dungeon ripens its germs of good, and by many deaths puts forth its blossoms of beauty in the spirit-world. So our darlings on earth frequently become imprisoned in the chamber of suffering that they may learn lessons of wisdom which they cannot learn in the gay, ever-changing scenes of life abroad. We must pass through the valley of the shadow of death to be able to appreciate the glories of heaven. For many that road lies through martyrdom, or the quick agony, the instantaneous passage athwart the dread gulf, by terrific, but short pain. For many more the prolonged suffering, comparatively mild it may be, but protracted, until life seems a weary burden, and the soul longs for release. But the quiet moulding of the spirit in preparation for that release goes on meantime, until the fields are ripe for harvesting, the grapes for gathering, and the Master will come for his own."

### Poetry.

#### THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

It lies around us like a cloud,  
 A world we cannot see;  
 Yet the sweet closing of an eye  
 May bring us thore to be.  
 Its gentle breezes fan our cheeks  
 Amid our worldly cares;  
 Its gentle voices whisper love  
 And mingle with our prayers.  
 And in the hush of rest they bring,  
 'Tis easy now to see  
 How lovely and how sweet a pass  
 The hour of death may be—  
 To close the eye and close the ear,  
 Wrapped in a trance of bliss,  
 And gently drawn in loving arms  
 To swoon to that—from this.  
 Scarcely knowing if we wake or sleep,  
 Scarcely asking where we are,  
 To feel all evil sink away,  
 All sorrow and all care.

(Mrs.) H. B. STOWE.

#### A PRAYER.

O my God! I turn to Thee  
 In my utter misery.  
 Wilt Thou not on me let fall  
 Thy smile? to compensate for all  
 The disappointment, sorrow, woe,  
 Which still attend the path I go.  
 Have I not drunk enough of tears  
 Through all these long and wasting years;  
 And trod my path with aimless feet,  
 Because I never yet could meet  
 One gleam of hope, whose kindling ray  
 Might brighten the oncoming day,  
 And shew the road Thy saints have trod,  
 Would bring me near to Thee, my God!  
 Son of the Father! who didst say,  
 When here Thou walkedst day by day,  
 That not a sparrow e'er did fall  
 Unmark'd by Him who made us all—  
 Thou, who didst comfort the distressed,  
 And promise to the weary rest,  
 Who bade us take Thy yoke and bind  
 It to us, if we hoped to find  
 The peace we vainly seek to know,  
 As wearily our way we go—  
 O Saviour, in my hour of grief,  
 I turn to Thee and ask relief.  
 O gracious Spirit! boundless Love!  
 In whom all living creatures move  
 And draw the breath by which they live,  
 Whose attribute it is to give,  
 Shed down Thy light upon my soul,  
 And make my wounded spirit whole.  
 Lay on my heart that holy calm  
 Which is the only blessed balm  
 For souls grown weary of the strife  
 Of this strange thing called human life!  
 Give me the rest for which I crave,  
 And lift me high above the grave,  
 Of buried hope and fruitless fear  
 And doubt, the foulest demon here  
 Of all the foes I have to fight,  
 In seeking for the true and right.  
 O grant the rest of Thee I crave  
 And lift my soul from out the grave!

B. M. P. G.

### Correspondence.

[Great freedom is given to correspondents, who sometimes express opinions diametrically opposed to those of this journal and its readers. Unsolicited communications cannot be returned; copies should be kept by the writers.]

#### MATERIALISM AND METAPHYSICS.

SIR,—Without going into the question how far the eight distinguished writers enumerated by Mr. Atkinson can all properly be described as both materialists and metaphysicians, I may excuse the expression "metaphysical ignorance" by urging that to ignore an argument—to betray not the least sense or perception of its bearing upon a question which cannot possibly be determined without reference to it—is really equivalent to, and may practically be treated as, ignorance of it.

I do not in the least plead guilty to the impertinent presumption imputed to me by Mr. Atkinson, for whose own acquirements, let me say at once, in case he should further notice me, I have so much respect that I esteem his notice an honour.

But I was wrong. It is not ignorance, but the attitude of mind, which made Hume say of Berkeley's idealism, "It admits of no reply, and produces no conviction." Had the demonstration of the earth's revolution been addressed solely to the intellect (and we know that Cremonini, a very learned man, refused to verify it by the senses), some astronomical Hume would have dismissed it with the same remark. Materialism comes naturally to every one. It belongs to the infancy, and not to the maturity of speculation.

The complacent assumptions of materialism, which, regarded from the metaphysical standpoint, provoke the doubt of metaphysical competence, are especially noticeable in Mr. Atkinson's letter—"Men who are content to take facts as they find them, and they find that there is a sensitive substance first, and as the essential basis of sensation." How often must we ask, "What is the substance, and where do you find it?" What we find first in speculation is, of course, the question to be determined. What we find first in experience is that which metaphysical analysis shows to exist only in and for experience—the phenomenon which is bound together, which has unity and consistency only by virtue of the laws and forms of consciousness, and which is dispersed—annihilated—as soon as those bonds are cut. Mr. Atkinson knows this, for he said in a former letter, "We have nothing to do with things in themselves." But if we have only to do with a phenomenal world, how does he distinguish this from a world in consciousness? Now, however, he seems disposed to hark back to the "primary qualities" (form, weight, &c.), and he makes the astonishing statement (for a well-informed metaphysician) that "idealists mostly refer to colour," rather than these. Why, that was the old standpoint of Locke's time; and the great landmarks of metaphysical speculation since then are the demonstration of Berkeley that the so-called primary qualities are equally subjective with the secondary; and the demonstration of Kant, that space—extension—is a mere form of sensuous intuition. So thoroughly have these old strongholds of realism been shattered, that Mr. Noel, in the article I quoted, could describe the opposite view as now universally acknowledged by the competent.

The position of materialism is just this—It is either ontological, and then its matter is a non-extended substance, which may just as appropriately, and more in conformity with popular ideas, be called spirit (with which it will ultimately be found to coincide, and thus will the controversy be resolved); or it deals only with the phenomenal order, and then it is self-contradictory, for *ex vi termini* phenomena exist only in consciousness, as a modification of consciousness, and thus cannot be the substrata of the latter.

When Mr. Atkinson says again that "metaphysical speculation never led to anything of value," I reply, it has at least this valuable result—that it shows that materialistic theory must ultimately be just as transcendental, just as speculative, just as much beyond possible experience, as the metaphysical theories which materialists reproach with these fundamental difficulties.

Physical science—the ordering of phenomena and their laws—is not materialism, and the man of physical science may, for his own purposes perhaps, quite reasonably decline to entertain questions of philosophy. But he has not chosen to do so, and in advancing higher pretensions, he steps "*jenseit Erfahrung*," and must become a metaphysician, or involve himself in confusions and contradictions which to metaphysicians will seem to result from ignorance of their science.

In your paper of July 20th, Mr. Atkinson finds fault with me for speaking of the matter of the materialists as a "hypothetical dead something," whereas he defines it as an "active cause, source or principle, of all phenomena or effects whatsoever, life and mind included." Surely Mr. Atkinson cannot have persuaded himself that there is anything distinctive of materialism in such a definition as this. Is it not very evidently an abstraction, barren of consequences, and resorted to under stress of the idealist argument? In Lange's *History of Materialism*,\* on the other hand, the distinctive character of the system is said to involve these propositions—"The purely material nature of matter, the origination of all phenomena, including those of adaptation and spirit, through movements of matter according to universal laws of motion."—Vol. I., p. 96.

Will Mr. Atkinson say that these requisites can be fulfilled without recourse to any phenomenal conceptions? Is unextended matter "purely material"? Does motion not imply space? Do "movements of matter" not imply a multiplicity of substances? Thus we come back to atomism as the fundamental and inevitable postulate of all materialistic systems.

My immature opinions, in their positive aspect, can have no interest for any one, so I shall not attempt to define my "shade of idealism"

\* A book strongly recommended by, and translated into English at the instance of, Professor Huxley.

for Mr. Atkinson. It is materialism that is aggressive, not idealism in any of its special forms, but only critically. To propose a right question, it has been said, is the half of philosophy; and the writings of materialists only serve to convince me that the study of Kant and his successors is essential to the clear appreciation of the problems that underlie all thought.

If Mr. Atkinson really considers the *Critique of the Pure Reason* has done nothing for human knowledge, I can only marvel at the singularity of his opinion.

C. C. MASSEY.

September 14th.

#### A SEANCE IN PARIS.

SIR,—I returned on Saturday from a week's visit to Paris, during which I saw the funeral of M. Thiers, and had the privilege of attending two *séances* with Count de Bullet, Mr. O'Sullivan, and their excellent medium, Mr. Firman. In some respects the manifestations are stronger than those we have had at Malvern, and I cannot speak too well of the busts, so accurately described by Mr. O'Sullivan. They are of very remarkable beauty, and must, I think, carry conviction to the mind of any intelligent person.

I do not need to say this, for the clearness, the accuracy, and the evident sincerity of Mr. O'Sullivan must be apparent to every one who reads his letters. I have known him for thirty years. He is in every way an unimpeachable witness, and the world owes a large debt of gratitude to the patient and careful investigations of Count de Bullet. I write this merely to give some tests to me, personally.

Before I left Malvern, a materialised form said to me, "You are going to Paris, and will probably be invited to see some manifestations there. I will try to be present, and will make myself known to you by giving you five distinct knocks on your head. Any one might give three knocks, but I will give you five."

Of course, I mentioned it to no one; but the first *séance* I attended in Paris, an invisible, first tapped my hands lightly, and then gave five strong distinct knocks, apparently with the ends of his fingers on my head.

Next day he came visibly, talked with me, as with all the others present, and, the electric light being turned off, brought in his hand a beautiful globe of light, about two-and-a-half inches in diameter, which he held so as to show his face very distinctly, even to the colour and expression of his eyes. Then he repeated the five knocks on my head with the globe of light, which he permitted me to handle freely. It was as hard as alabaster, smooth, solid, and full of white light. He allowed us all to smell it, holding it in turn to the nose of each person. It has a pleasant odour resembling that of the heliotrope, or vanilla. As one of us sniffed it, he put it to his own nose and sniffed it also several times. The light in the ball faded out before our eyes, and within twenty inches of them; then it became bright again, and about one-third smaller.

He took my hand as one would that of an old friend, shook it, grasped it firmly as I did his, and at one time squeezed my fingers about as much as I could bear. There was no room for doubt as to the reality of this person, and there was no possibility of imposture. After a brief, but very interesting, *séance*, he said, "Good-bye, God bless you," fervently to each person present, and sent messages by me to some in England.

I think we may get frequent tests between distant circles by bringing them into *rapport*. I do not in the least trouble myself with theories or hypotheses, or as to what may be the influence of these manifestations, but only with the question of fact. If they are diabolical, they settle the matter of materialism all the same. If the devil chooses to come and demonstrate his existence, those who believe in a devil ought to be much obliged to him. I do not see that he would be anxious to do so. In fact, the only authentic case of his making a personal communication occurred some years ago in this same wonderful city of Paris, where he wrote during a dark *séance*—

*Je n'existe pas.*

SATAN.

That was considered perfectly satisfactory.

Malvern.

T. L. NICHOLS, M.D.

#### FUNERAL REFORM.

SIR,—Will you allow me to bring before your numerous readers the claims of an association with which, I trust, a large proportion of them will entirely sympathise? I allude to the "Funeral and Mourning Reform Association," with which the name of Mr. Serjeant Cox has been so honourably associated. The second annual report of the society was published some months since, and is well worthy of perusal by all social reformers. The number of members has this year been increased by 72, and recently I have had the great pleasure and satisfaction of adding to our list the well-known name of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory. I trust sincerely that her good example will be followed by many other Spiritualists. The Earl of Essex is the patron of the association, whilst Mr. Serjeant Cox, Mr. P. A. Taylor, M.P. (well-known for his splendid speech advocating the opening of museums, &c., on Sundays), Alex. MacArthur, M.P., W. U. Heygate, M.P., are among the number of the presidents.

Not only is a large proportion of the English counties represented by this association, more or less numerously, but also Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the little island of Guernsey. This fact shows how widely the necessity for this reform is felt. To the report for this year is added a most useful form of directions as to funerals; and much difficulty and expense would be spared to survivors if all who are awake to the necessity for this reform, and wish to have their funerals conducted in a rational and unostentatious manner, would simply write out and sign this short formula, and so ensure that the principles they have professed during life might not be violated in death. The necessity for

this precaution has been illustrated in a case mentioned in the report as being of recent date, when the funeral of a member of the association was conducted in a manner entirely at variance with the views he had always entertained and expressed.

For the purpose of enabling all to assist in this much-needed reform, the terms of membership have been fixed at 2s. per annum only; I, therefore, earnestly ask all your readers who can afford this trifling outlay to give this truly good cause the benefit of their countenance and support; and by their protest against this national absurdity and extravagance—doubly absurd and inconsistent when viewed in the light of Spiritualism—assist in saving many a pound to the poor widows and helpless families of those who now (to use their own dismal phraseology) conscientiously believe that the only means of "showing respect for the dead" is to empty the already too slender purse of the living.

I shall be pleased to send rules, form of membership, and report, on application.

ELIZA BOUCHER.

Albion Villa, Henrietta-square, Bristol.

#### SPIRIT IDENTITY.

SIR,—In commenting on a paper of mine which appeared in your issue of August 31st ult., Mr. O'Sullivan suggests that the time is ripe for the publication of a collection of such cases of spirit identity as I there make mention of. I find myself of a totally different opinion. A mere collection of published cases would have little value. They are already on record. Most cases known to me could not be printed with that fulness of detail which should be given to render them of value as pieces of evidence. One must in decency show some respect to friends who are still with us, and whose feelings we have no right to outrage. And a mere crude collection of stories full of dashes, asterisks, and initials would be worthless.

Such facts as I can use will find their due place in my contemplated volume of researches. Most of the cases known to me must remain in my journal for future use, when the present obvious reasons for reticence are removed.

May I point out to Mr. O'Sullivan without discourtesy that my paper was signed M.A. (Oxon.), and that he violates literary etiquette in attributing it—whether rightly or wrongly I do not say—to any person by name? I use a *nom de plume* well and widely known, and I must be allowed to take my own time and place for altering or removing it.

M.A. (OXON.)

#### THE HEALING POWERS OF MESMERISM.

SIR,—I was afflicted with a white swelling in my knee about two months ago. The swelling came on very slowly, and I did not feel much pain at first, but the pain became unbearable at night, accompanied by great heats. I could not walk at last. In this condition most likely I should have had to have gone to the hospital, but, fortunately for me, a gentleman, a Mr. Regan, had his attention drawn to the case; but he did not look at or examine my knee. After hearing me describe my state, he mesmerised me some paper, also some strips of flannel, and ordered me to bind them round my knee, and not to take them off until he gave me some more. I did as I was told by Mr. Regan, and I passed a much easier night than I had done for some time. On examining my knee next morning, I found that the swelling had moved to the back of the leg; the pain was much less, and I could stand with less difficulty. I also found that the heat was not so great. During the subsequent three weeks I kept on having the mesmerised paper renewed each week, and at the expiration of that time I am happy to state that my knee was completely cured; the soreness was gradually drawn from it, and it lost all its pain; it was left rather tender after the swelling had gone. Now I am able to walk as well as ever.

SARAH BARSTED.

16, Bloomsbury-street, Vauxhall-bridge-road,

10th September, 1877.

#### MESMERISM AT LOURDES.

SIR,—I have read with much pleasure the very sensible and practical remarks of my old friend Captain James on the subject of mesmerism. Many persons like Mr. Serjeant Cox suppose that the influence of the mesmeriser arises simply from the effect produced upon the imagination of the patient, and no doubt some cases, such as those reported in the papers as having occurred at Lourdes, may be attributed to that cause. But this is a matter in respect to which similar effects are produced from different causes. In my early experience I put this matter to the test, and in a hundred instances caused the mesmeric sleep without the persons having any knowledge of what I was about, which of course completely refutes the theory of Mr. Braid, as explaining the whole matter, as well as that in respect to the imagination. Neither of these theories account for the undoubted fact of sympathy at a distance, or thought-reading or brain sympathy near at hand. We really must not generalise from particular instances, or from one class of facts, but seek an interpretation from all the correlated facts concerned.

I have just been astonished by the account of what is going on at Lourdes from a learned physician and friend of Dr. Slade just returned from the spot. He tells me that a certain priest actually now performs the mesmeric process on the patient before your eyes, and he says that many have been cured in this way, but chiefly those suffering from nervous complaints. The cures are regarded as miracles, and attributed to the influence and intervention of the Virgin. I will not say more upon this astonishing matter at present, since my friend will, I hope, give in his full report in writing. In this case I doubt not that the strong influence on the minds of the patients operates, together with the direct influence of the mesmeriser, selected no doubt for his remarkable gift of mesmeric power and healing sanatory influence. I think I have said enough in proof of the existence of such an influence, and whether it

be called "mesmeric" or "animal magnetic" matters little. It was named "animal magnetism" by Mesmer because many of the facts have a close resemblance to the phenomena of magnetism. But we will not quarrel about words, and I think Mr. Harrison did well to retain Dr. Gregory's expression in republishing his work, which is really much the best book on the subject on which it treats.

HENRY G. ATKINSON, F.G.S.

2, Quai de la Douane, Boulogne.

#### MR. MORSE'S ANNUAL SOIREE.

SIR,—At the request of the spirit friends of our well-known medium, Mr. J. J. Morse, I desire your permission to put forth the following appeal for assistance to that earnest worker in our cause. In consequence of the late disturbed condition of the Spiritual movement throughout the country, combined with the depressed condition of trade, our friend has not been so well sustained during the past year as is usual, and he now stands in need of pecuniary assistance. A special complimentary benefit *soirée* will therefore be held at the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer-street, Regent-street, London, on Wednesday evening, October the 17th, and in order that the proposed *soirée* may successfully accomplish the end in view, I shall be pleased to receive any assistance in the shape of donations from Spiritualists at large, to be applied towards defraying the necessary expenses.

It is intended to present the proceeds to Mr. Morse. As this *soirée* will be coincident with the eighth anniversary of his labours, it will form a pleasing tribute to him if the friends of the cause will do their best to make the meeting a success, and thus mark their appreciation of his services.

Donations will be thankfully received by me, at 16, Southampton-street, Fitzroy-square; tickets, 2s. 6d., with tea. One shilling after eight o'clock. The tickets can also be had at the doors on the night of the meeting.

AGNES MALTRY.

16, Southampton-street, Fitzroy-square, London.

#### THE ORIGIN OF MAN.

To the Editor of the "Western Morning News."

SIR,—The following on this subject of never-failing interest may be acceptable:—

At Brighton recently, a trance medium, under professed spiritual inspiration, defined man to be a trinity composed of the material body, the spiritual body (pervading the material body, and corresponding with it, atom to atom), and the soul. The second of these was said to be developed from the first, and to have ascended with it originally from elementary matter—"from mud to monad, from monad to man"; and that thus, after the lapse of ages, the casket was sufficiently perfected to receive the Divine spark, the immortal soul. This theory has the advantage of fitting in with the Mosaic account of the creation of man—understanding that account in its figurative and not in its literal sense—but some minds may still see difficulties in the way of its acceptance, and for my own part I do not regard the utterances of trance mediums as infallible.

HENRY WELLESLEY.

Marazion, September 13th, 1877.

#### THE SPIRIT'S MODE OF EXISTENCE.

THIS essential substance, this conscious being, has relation to time or duration, for this state or that may abide so long, an hour, a day, a month, a year, but it is not to be measured by the yard or pint, for it has no relation to space. That is, it endures, but it does not extend; it exists in time, it does not occupy space or fill so much room. And that the soul is not physical is also evident from the fact that it has a different order of being from outward objects. We cannot perceive mind or any of its faculties by the senses alone; there must be the mind behind them, using them as instruments, or, be they never so perfect, intelligence to them has no existence. That, therefore, which is not an object of the senses is of a different nature from that which is so. We know, then, that there is a spiritual substance, which also has its attributes, as well as that there is a physical substance, which also has its attributes. Or in the words of Paul, that there is a physical body, and that there is a spiritual body.

The unity and constancy of personal identity prove the clear distinction between the body and the soul. The unity of the sense of personality is an ineradicable conviction of the mind. The "I," which thinks, perceives, knows, is indivisible. I receive impressions through touch, taste, and hearing, through sight and smell, of infinite variety, but the self which receives them remains ever essentially the same. And as it is the self receives impressions, so is the self one and indivisible which sends forth streams of thought, wishes, hopes, and aspirations. It is a centre from which spiritual forces radiates. I know by consciousness that I am distinct from others, and that others are distinct from me. However numerous and diversified my thoughts, mental operations and emotions are the issue of this one person's vital force—that is of the essential self. Moreover the facts of my past history however remote, when recalled by memory are identified as belong-

ing to me, as their agent and owner, as much as the act of writing in which I am now engaged. There is no break in the continuity, and none in the personality. This consciousness of personal identity amidst diversity of personal experience; this evidently permanent something, which is specially myself, is incompatible with a merely physical being. What is it that maintains this unbroken identity, this absolute sense of personal unity amidst the constant and sweeping changes in the material body, which constantly dissolves and renews it? Physical it cannot be; for that, in every part, has passed away during bygone years; and, materially, we are not at all the same we were some years ago. If this be so, it follows that our inner and essential selfhood is not physical, but is an entity distinct from the body. The fact is, that on the principles of materialism the continuous identity of man's being is impossible. There is something which continues one and the same throughout all changes; but it is utterly impossible that we can tell how this can be if man is not essentially a spiritual nature.

Another thing which shows the difference between soul and body, and so helps to strengthen faith in the indestructible permanence of man's selfhood, is the difference between the objects and aims of the physical and spiritual natures, showing that however intimately connected they are not identical. For instance, sensation is common to men and animals by a common medium, the nervous system; but they never attain any ends but physical ones, unless they are used by some power other than themselves—that is the Mind. "The anatomist and physiologist tell us that every part of man's body derives its life, sensation, and motion, from two sets of nerves, issuing from the spinal cord—a prolongation of the brain. Now it is impossible for anything to proceed from itself, or to be the creator of its own properties; and as it is equally impossible that organisation can be a property, dependent for existence on the substance of which it is predicated, it becomes evident that the operations of the brain through the whole organisation, are none other than the expression of the properties of independent substance"—call that substance by what name we may. Sensation is produced by the vibration of a nerve having its root in the brain, constituting it its feeler to that part of the body through which it runs; the brain being the immediate but not the only organ of the mind. But what needs taking note of is, that communications may come from either within or from without. A blow tingles through the system and reaches the mind through the nerves, filling it with anger, shame, or fear, as the case may be. A painful thought depresses the body, making it heavy and dull; a pleasant one quickens the circulation of the blood. Emotion acts at once and immediately.—WILLIAM MITCHELL, in *The Truthseeker*.

MR. JAMES COATES will shortly be in the north of Ireland lecturing on mesmerism.

MR. ALGERNON JOY returned from the Continent last Wednesday, and is now attending to the work of the secretarial department of the National Association of Spiritualists.

MISS KISLINGBURY, secretary to the British National Association of Spiritualists, reached New York a fortnight ago, visited Dr. Crowell, Madame Blavatsky, and Colonel Olcott, and attended one of the Sunday meetings of Spiritualists. After a few days' stay in New York, she left, with a friend, for Niagara.

MR. COLVILLE, the trance medium, has taken the Langham Hall, Portland-street, London, for a few Monday evenings, and is there delivering inspirational addresses, to which the public are admitted free. On Saturday afternoons, at four o'clock, he delivers trance addresses to members and friends of the National Association of Spiritualists, at 38, Great Russell-street, at which those present have the opportunity of questioning at their leisure the intelligences controlling him.

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE.—Paul said, "Add to your faith knowledge"; modern Christians say, "All religious truth is known by faith." Spiritualists say the same as Paul, only in different words—"Found your faith upon knowledge." Faith is only an instrument, but an important instrument, by which we dimly perceive the truth. Knowledge with Spiritualists is derived from the use, not of the imagination alone, but of all the faculties and means God has given us, including the external senses. It is well known that dependence upon the impressions received exclusively through one sense is often unreliable. Those who rely upon faith alone cannot be assured of correct knowledge, like those who derive theirs from the exercise of various associated, but correcting faculties.—Crowell.



## MRS. WELDON'S ORPHANAGE.

THE *London Journal* of September 8th published a likeness of Mrs. Weldon, also the following particulars in relation to her endeavours to benefit helpless children:—

We may cite Mrs. Weldon as an example of what a woman with a purpose will undergo—what trials she will endure, what discouragements face, what aspersions she will encounter in order to successfully accomplish the object to which she has committed herself. At the outset of her life, young, beautiful, well-born, accomplished, a vocalist of unusual excellence, Mrs. Weldon was the object of admiration and adulation of the society in which she moved, “the observed of all observers.”

She was, as Miss Treherne, and subsequently as Mrs. Weldon, the idol of a circle including among its numbers members of the highest rank. Wealthy and without care, she pursued the career to which ladies of her class are accustomed, when, in the ninth year of her married life, she was unexpectedly consulted respecting the musical education of the daughter of a Welsh country parson.

About this time Mrs. Weldon had been framing a plan for the founding of a school for music, and although she had never given a singing lesson in her life, she commenced to teach Miss Gwendoline Jones vocalism. Out of that act sprang the school now established by her at Tavistock House, Russell-square, London, which for many years was the residence of the late Charles Dickens.

We have not space to record the trials, rebuffs, and we may say afflictions, Mrs. Weldon has passed through in her attempts to fulfil what she has conceived to be her mission. Those who may feel a desire to become acquainted with the details of a very romantic life can gratify their wish by attending any Monday evening at Langham Hall, Great Portland-street, and listening to Mrs. Weldon's history of her orphanage, which is also a history of her own life.

It appears that her husband did not enter into the scheme of his wife's ideal school with enthusiasm. Indeed, he viewed it while being founded with distaste, and declined to share in an undertaking which had resolved itself into withdrawing from the streets dirty, diseased orphans, and placing them beneath his roof, to be fed, clothed, and educated. Mrs. Weldon, refusing to surrender her task, therefore asked him to give her Tavistock House (the residue of the lease) and £1,000 a year, saying she would carry on the work alone. He consented, and to use Mrs. Weldon's own words, “While I give my labour he gives much more than the tithe of all he possesses in charity, for he gives half of what is his.”

The children reared by this lady at Tavistock House are children forsaken and without a friend in the world but her. She has caught up the undersized and the ragged, many afflicted with loathsome diseases, the utterly wretched and forlorn, and now she shows that they are healthy, well cared for, and brought up as she declares she would have brought up her own children. Unfortunately, the money she possesses is insufficient for the work she has undertaken, and she is compelled, therefore, to appeal to the benevolent to furnish her with some supplementary aid.

There are no patrons, or vice-patrons, no committee, no secretary, no preventible expenses, and, unfortunately, no subscribers to her orphanage. Mrs. Weldon devotes not only all the £1,000 received from her husband to the support of her little ones, but, as well, even the pin money received from her mother for her own use, but it is inadequate to the wants ever springing up.

That Mrs. Weldon has been successful with some of her pupils in her method of teaching is proved by the fact that her pupils, Miss Gertrude Bradwen and Miss Marion Westmacott, gained the first and fifth vocal scholarships at the South Kensington Training School for Music, and that the Rawlings family, who commenced under her tuition, can “compose, sing solos, part songs, play the piano, hand bells, &c.”

We do not take upon ourselves the responsibility of advocating either Mrs. Weldon's method of teaching music, or the principles on which she manages her school, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that, for the sake of saving some of the wretched little outcasts born, as it were, to misery and crime, she devotes her fortune and her life, that she submits to the difficulties attendant on such work, to the unworthy, detracting suspicions of ungenerous minds, that she unrepiningly sacrifices the pleasures of the world, and accepts a career of toil and anxiety for the sake of doing good to wretched and hapless orphans. We do not, therefore, hesitate to say that such self-abnegation should meet with some share of that pecuniary support which is too often freely accorded to institutions not half so deserving as Mrs. Weldon's Orphanage.

*Public Opinion* says—“Biography seems to be spoilt as an exact science, by the two axioms, that it's rude to speak ill of the living, and it's wrong to speak ill of the dead.”

A SPIRITUALISTIC BOOK.—Lot 1470.—Reginald Scot's “Discoverie of Witchcraft,” curious woodcuts, black letter, fine copy, morocco extra, gilt edges, bound by Riviere; published in London by W. Brome in 1584. Sold at Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s auction, August 27th, 1877, for £14 10s.

DISORDERLY SPIRITS.—No theory of a distinct order of spiritual ruffians and ragamuffins, with a Satan at their head, is needed to explain all these manifestations of spiritual malignity, ignorance, and disorder. We have but to consider the thousands of miscreated, rudimental beings that leave this planet every day, and every hour, and we shall lessen the difficulties of the great problem of spiritual evil without the intervention of any hypothesis so derogatory to divine benevolence and omnipotence as that of an antagonistic archon in the great world of causes, privileged to hound on the hosts of mischief and of wrong for the purpose of making this earth a sort of initiatory hell. Spiritualism dispels all such monstrous conceits, and offers a rational explanation of the perplexing facts.—*Epes Sargent.*

## SPIRITUALISM IN ULVERSTON.

LAST week a three nights' discussion on the question, “Is modern Spiritualism based on Scientifically Attested Facts?” took place in the Temperance Hall, Ulverston, between Mr. J. W. Mahony, of Birmingham, and Dr. John Anderson, of the former place. In February last Mr. Mahony lectured on Spiritualism at Ulverston, and, soon after, a lecture against it was delivered at the same place by the Rev. Walter Briscoe, Wesleyan minister, of Barrow. Mr. Mahony more recently challenged Dr. Anderson, who had opposed him on the occasion of his lecture, to discuss the subject in public, and the contest came off on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings, last week. Mr. Robert Casson presided on the first and third nights, and Mr. Thomas Edward Jones, the pioneer of Spiritualism in Ulverston, on the second evening. The proceedings commenced with the reading by the Chairman of the rules for the discussion, which provided that each disputant should open his case independently, in a speech of half an hour's duration, and that the remaining speeches should not exceed a quarter of an hour each, the third night to be devoted to the answering by each debater of questions from the audience.

Mr. Mahony, in opening the debate, said that the subject he had to defend was met at the very threshold with peculiar difficulties, principally due to the ignorance which prevailed concerning psychological science, men being so absorbed in thinking about their material welfare, but partly due to Spiritualism being mixed up with one of the most profound and comprehensive sciences that could engage the attention of man. Mr. Mahony then defined modern Spiritualism to be a system based upon evidence that the spirits of deceased human beings could and did communicate, through the instrumentality of mediums, with those still in the flesh; though he remarked that much besides was comprehended in Spiritualism. He then proceeded to say that the word “scientific” really meant “accurate;” scientific observation meant correct observation; and upon such observation Spiritualism was founded. It was not necessary for him to prove that certain learned organisations had come before the world with collective evidence in favour of Spiritualism, but all that was necessary was to prove that the facts had been accurately attested by men of culture, learning, and standing. Mr. Mahony then asserted that scientific bodies never came forward collectively to investigate new facts, but left them to be determined by individuals, and instanced as a case in point the discovery by Franklin that lightning could be conducted by a wire. Mr. Mahony then maintained that the facts of Spiritualism had been certified by men of high culture and scientific standing, and that the phenomena were proved to result from the agency of disembodied spirits, in the personal identity of departed human beings being established by some of the communications. He detailed the origin of modern Spiritualism with the Fox girls in America, and the obtaining through their mediumship of communications, by means of raps, from the spirit-world, including one setting forth that a pedlar had been murdered in the house and buried in the cellar, in which human remains were afterwards discovered. (Laughter.) The speaker also cited the elaborate experiments of the celebrated Professor Hare, a materialist, of America, who had messages spelt out on an alphabetical disc concealed from the medium, and whose investigations converted him to Spiritualism. He also adduced the report of the committee of the Dialectical Society, that the phenomena of Spiritualism were due to some external agency, and not to imposition or trickery.

Dr. Anderson, who was received with applause, then proceeded to read a paper in the negative, remarking before commencing it that it had been written during the past few weeks, during which time only had he given any attention to Spiritualism; his mind had been directed to it by the earlier lecture given by Mr. Mahony. The Doctor's paper was of the following substance:—“They were now assembled to discuss whether modern Spiritualism was a true and valuable revelation, or a discovery based on fully attested phenomena, or whether it was the outcome of deceit, conscious fraud, and misapprehension. His contention was that what Mr. Crookes and other honest Spiritualists had observed as or supposed to be spiritual manifestations were appearances in nature with no connection whatever with spirit-life, or were the creations of a peculiarly and exceptionally constituted cerebral organisation. Within historical periods ignorance, learned as well as unlettered, had been the concomitant of superstition. The superstitions of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, seemed to be a flickering revival of the same rash mysticism. (Applause.) He hoped the late Lord Brougham's *Schoolmaster Abroad* might be able to do something towards the education and enlightenment of ourselves and children, in anticipation and prevention of such enervating vagaries. (Applause.) His argument against Spiritualism was that scientific knowledge furnished no data by which we could recognise and differentiate a spiritual body. Psychologists were agreed that we never, as at present constituted, could know what mind or matter was in itself; therefore our only knowledge consisted in the phenomenal. It was only in sensation and consciousness that we could ever know anything of an external world. Physiologists, chemists, anatomists, would examine by every scientific method, but the Spiritualist was afraid of an atmosphere of incredulity vitiating the test conditions of a Spiritualistic séance. (Applause.) Dr. Anderson proceeded to criticise what he called the theory of the existence of spirits, which inserted themselves into human bodies and assumed the functions of the medium's intelligence, and produced table-moving, slate-writing, and so on, and he asked why could we not get the table itself to speak. (Laughter and applause.) He remarked that with regard to the notion that the human spirit is a thing separate from the human body, we might fairly ask the grounds upon which such an idea was founded. He argued that if immaterial, the spirit could not be endowed with the properties and functions of matter, namely, figure, colour, divisibility, and capability of contact, therefore it was beyond the reach of science; and it could not exist as a separate entity without

re-creation apart from the body and capability of being scientifically handled or tested. If material, though in the theory of the materiality of the human soul there was some plausibility and consistency, it possessed the qualities of matter and was not a spirit. Dr. Anderson had not finished his paper at the expiration of the prescribed time.

Mr. Mahony, in reply, charged Dr. Anderson with having advanced a string of ideas peculiar to himself that had scarcely any relevancy to the subject. (Hear, hear.) He called on him to attack and, if possible, confute the facts he had laid down. He pointed out that spirit was immaterial, something of totally dissimilar properties to matter, and said that we could not lay a spirit on a board and measure it—we could not lay hold of it and analyse it any more than we could electricity or light. Mr. Mahony, alluding to Dr. Anderson's remark as to why a table did not speak, said table-moving and rapping were only the alphabet of Spiritualism, and maintained that the communications given were proved to be spiritual by the intelligence manifested, and by the fact that correct minutiae of the past lives of the deceased were given, with which those present were sometimes not acquainted, but which were afterwards proved to be true.

Dr. Anderson having made some preliminary observations, resumed the reading of his paper, which continued in a highly metaphysical style, the chief points brought out being objections that *séances* were not held in open daylight, that the phenomena might be capable of examination by all sensible men, and also that certain conditions were required for their production. He also accused the investigators of Spiritualism of having been animated by prejudices in its favour.

Mr. Mahony, in reply, said that Dr. Anderson appeared to be utterly unaware that thousands of *séances* were held in broad daylight, and he asserted that Spiritualism only demanded certain conditions, as did all scientific experiments; and those who became convinced of Spiritualism, so far from being influenced by prejudice in its favour, entered on the investigation with the most intense prejudice against it, as, for instance, Professor Hare, who went into it with the determination to put it down. Mr. Mahony also cited the experience of Mr. T. P. Barlas, in the obtainment by him of correct answers, automatically written, from a lady medium, on the most abstruse subjects, with which she had no acquaintance.

The Chairman said that Dr. Anderson would reserve his reply for the following evening.

Dr. Anderson, the following evening, did not reply to Mr. Mahony's speech, but read a further manuscript, which had no relation to it. He also read an account from Mr. Home's new work of a *séance* at Florence, and ironically commented upon it throughout, throwing out various suggestions as to how the phenomena might have been produced.

Mr. Mahony denounced Dr. Anderson's insinuations that Mr. Home and his friends were impostors, and challenged proof. He then recounted the published experiences of Lord Brougham, Sir David Brewster, and Professors Crookes and Wallace in support of the genuineness of Home's mediumship, and remarked that he was one of the ablest and most reliable and recognised mediums in the movement. Mr. Mahony described Mr. Crookes' *séance* with Mr. Home, and the experiments with the accordion, and during his description was interrupted by the exclamation, "What about Dr. Monck's musical box?" Mr. Mahony called upon Dr. Anderson to adduce some facts in support of his assertions or confess his defeat. (Laughter, applause, and shouts from the audience.) He pointed out how every new truth was at first opposed, and said the truth of Spiritualism would one day be accepted like them, when it had triumphed over ignorance and prejudice.

Dr. Anderson continued his readings from Mr. Home's work, hazarding manifold suggestions as to the means by which the phenomena there recorded might be produced, and throwing in occasional sarcasms, which caused much laughter.

Mr. Mahony said it was a most fortunate thing for Dr. Anderson he had Mr. Home's book; he was sure he did not know what he would have done without it. (Laughter.) He (Dr. Anderson) did not advance a shadow of evidence in support of his theory of imposture, while he (Mr. Mahony) had given the clearest evidence that the facts and phenomena were scientifically attested. He charged Dr. Anderson with having played a very childish part as a debater, which remark gave rise to some clamour. He observed that if fifty cases of imposture were proved, and he proved one of genuine mediumship, the truth of Spiritualism was established. Mr. Mahony also charged Dr. Anderson with materialism. He described the test of the moulding of spirit hands and feet, and observed that an eminent sculptor had declared that the moulds must have been produced from living models.

Dr. Anderson, in the course of his next speech, maintained that exploits were performed by conjurors every day, far more wonderful than the supposed spiritualistic manifestations, and asserted that the communications described by Home as coming from a deceased woman were detailments of experience in her past life, which might have been ascertained within three hours before the *séance*.

Mr. Mahony, in his concluding speech for the evening, ridiculed the theory that conjurors surpassed mediums, and said that the fact that the manifestations occurred in so many families, and frequently with children as the mediums, proved that conjuring had nothing to do with them. He claimed that he had defeated Dr. Anderson, and closed his address with an eloquent peroration.

The third evening the attendance, which had been moderate the preceding nights, was much more numerous, and there was considerable excitement and tumult; at one period the chairman threatened to vacate his seat. By consent of the audience the two disputants were allowed to continue their discussion for about an hour previous to questions being put by the public. Dr. Anderson again produced his still unfinished paper, and had been reading for some time what he had read the preceding night, when he was reminded of that fact somewhat abruptly by some one in the gallery. He quoted Dr. Carpenter's arguments, and also read the sworn statement of Mrs. Culver, that the

rappings of the Fox girls had been produced by their toe and knee joints.

Mr. Mahony, in his reply, characterised Dr. Carpenter as the most unreliable scientific man in the country, he having been convicted over and over again of inaccuracies; and he further pointed out that Mrs. Culver's confession had since been proved to be utterly false.

The questioning by the public was then proceeded with, and a large number of well-selected interrogations were put by Mr. T. E. Jones and others. Dr. Anderson was asked what test he would consider a satisfactory proof of Spiritualism; and he replied, the firing of a bullet at the materialised form. In answer to another question, Mr. Mahony stated that this test had absolutely been adopted in America. Being asked as to the practical benefit of Spiritualism, Mr. Mahony replied that the advantage of Spiritualism was that it proved immortality, and brought home clearly our moral accountability, by proving that we moulded our future life exactly by this one, and could not be emancipated by prayer or any intervening grace from the consequences of our misdeeds, but must work out our own salvation. He also said that Spiritualism had converted thousands, including himself, from atheism.

Mr. Mahony admitted, in reply to other questions, that he believed much medial power had been crushed out by the destruction of supposed witches. He also asserted that spirit-forms could not be subjective delusions, since they had been photographed.

Dr. Anderson, when asked how he reconciled his theory of imposture in Dr. Slade's case with Slade's challenge to Lankester, and the assertion of the magistrate who convicted him that the evidence in favour of the genuineness of his manifestations was overwhelming, declined to reply, on the ground that "the case was pending." Confronted with the alleged exposure of Miss Wood at Blackburn, Mr. Mahony attributed it to the agency of bad spirits, and some excitement was caused by a Blackburn gentleman claiming to speak on the subject, who, however, was not allowed, because he would not put his remarks in the form of a question. At the conclusion of the discussion the Chairman, who is not a Spiritualist, delivered an address, in which he expressed his admiration of the spiritualistic doctrine of universal progression hereafter, and his opinion that there was not so much "tomfoolery" in Spiritualism as some persons imagined.

The *Mirror*, which, though hostile to Spiritualism, has always reported meetings on the subject with exemplary impartiality, has published a column and a half of the discussion.

CAVRE. SEBASTIANO FENZI writes from Florence to the secretary to the British National Association of Spiritualists:—"In Florence we possess two writing-mediums who obtain answers in Latin, a language they neither of them know. The questions are, as a general rule, asked mentally."

PRAYERS FOR RAIN.—A pathetic incident is described in a lately published letter from India as having taken place a few weeks ago at Indore. A day was set apart in that town for interceding with the gods for relief from the terrible prevailing drought. On the appointed day the Maharajah and the members of the Royal family, followed by almost the whole population of the town, to the number of about 15,000 persons, repaired to a village about two miles away, there to perform the ceremonies considered appropriate to the occasion. Among these ceremonies was that of the tilling of a part of the ground by the Maharajah, who took the plough in his hands for that purpose, and was waited upon by Her Highness the Maharani, who "played the part of the peasant wife," and brought her lord his daily meal, wrapped in the folds of her cloth. The most singular part of the story is that these appeals to the gods were followed by showers of rain, which of course the people gratefully recognised as an answer to their prayers. Such a fact is worth noting by those whose theory of the efficacy of prayer is unwisely based almost entirely upon very similar circumstances.—*Christian World*.

FRENCH AND BRITISH LAW ABOUT CLAIRVOYANCE.—The practice of clairvoyance, as a means of making money, is a legal offence in Jersey, where Madame Douglade, described as a French clairvoyante, and Mrs. Slader, a medium, have been charged with obtaining money under false pretences, and convicted. A Mrs. Petticart, who had lost some money, consulted the prisoners concerning it, paying them 5s. as a fee. The medium pretended to trace the money to the possession of Mrs. Gosling, but stated that, as the weather was dull, she could not positively declare she was the thief. Mrs. Petticart, however, told all her neighbours that Mrs. Gosling had her money, and, as she refused to retract her statement, the latter complained to the police, and the prisoners were arrested. Madame Douglade said she had long practised her profession in Paris, and some of the police in Jersey had engaged her services professionally, and had been satisfied with them. If so, the police in Jersey must be very peculiar people. They can hardly be a terror to evil-doers. The magistrate told prisoner that, however much such practices were allowed in Paris, they could not be allowed here, and he fined her £1 or five days' imprisonment. The medium, Mrs. Slader, was discharged.—*The Echo*, Sept. 18th.

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## HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES AT HOME.

Inquirers into the phenomena of Spiritualism should begin by forming circles in their own homes, with no Spiritualist or professional medium present. Should no results be obtained on the first occasion, try again with other sitters. One or more persons possessing medial powers without knowing it are to be found in nearly every household.

Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cool rather than warm—lot arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.

Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm, but when one of the sitters breaks the circle by leaving the table it sometimes, but not always, considerably delays the manifestations.

Before the sitting begins, place some pointed lead-pencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table to write down any communications that may be obtained.

People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well-developed physical mediums; it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is frequently found to be a weakening influence.

Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature.

The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.

When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion let one person only speak; he should talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is "understood." If three signals be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

Afterwards the question should be put, "Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?" Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will afterwards be strengthened. Next ask "Who is the medium?" When the intelligence asserts itself to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as the alleged spirits are found to exhibit all the virtues and all the failings of humanity.

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Printed for the Proprietor by BEVERIDGE & Co., at the Holborn Printing Works, Fulkwood's Buildings, 11th Holborn in the Parish of St. Andrew above-Bar and St. George the Martyr, London, and published by E. W. ALLEN, Ave Maria-lane, London, E.C.