SOCIETY FOR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS, AUCKLAND.

THE

Harbinger of Light.

A

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DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREETHOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

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ONE need not be a pessimist to realise an abnormal growth of selfishness, at least in the Victorian community, if not in others, during the past decade; nor is it difficult to suggest some causes of this undesirable backward wave in the moral progress of the people. Two of the most prominent of these are legislation which treats all men outside of our boundary lines as aliens, and class antagonisms in which each class strives to advantage itself at the expense of the other. These wholesale examples of selfishness naturally foster the individual tendency to manifest it in man's dealings with his neighbour. The doctrine of "each for himself" where not openly preached, is unfortunately very generally practiced; and being the rule rather than the exception, is accepted as the normal condition of things. The betting man, who forms no inconsiderable fraction of our community, does not consider when he is made happy to the extent of five or fifty pounds, that some one else is made miserable to the same extent by the transfer of the money. The tradesman, who by unwholesome competition succeeds in shutting up his struggling neighbour and securing the remnants of his business, has no thought of the distress that may ensue to him and to his family; and all through society we find the masses struggling to get the most they can of what are esteemed the "good things" of this life, without consideration for any but those immediately connected with them in the family circle, not recognising the brotherhood of man outside the blood relationship.

In this condition of society it is very gratifying to witness the initiation of a movement which strikes at the root of the evil by cultivating charity and generosity in the young. We allude to the introduction of "The Ministering Children's League," which, after having made considerable headway in England, is now being successfully established in Australia and New Zealand by the Countess of Meath. We have on more than one occasion referred to the lack of moral education in our public schools; and as there is very little prospect of any reform being initiated in this direction, the formation of associations where disinterested action is inculcated as an essential duty, is a solid step on the road to moral progress in the community. Not only is disinterested action inculcated by the leaders of the League, but the children are encouraged to give practical effect to the teaching by doing at least one unselfish action daily; not for the merit of it, but as a duty, the omission of which is a fault. Many perhaps of the neophytes will fail at first to recognise fully the significance of their act, but the happiness which naturally flows from right-doing will soon manifest itself to their senses, and compensate them for all sacrifices made in the performance of their good work. The impress of the idea of man's duty to his neighbour lies at the very root of moral education, and is one of the bases of every religious system; and he who loves his fellow man, naturally loves God, for God and good are synonymous, and good works are the best tribute we can offer to the Source of all good.

Some little leaflets were issued in Melbourne by Lady Meath, one of which,* briefly states the objects of the League, which are embodied in the following lines—"To promote kindness, unselfishness, and the habit of usefulness amongst children, and to create in their minds an earnest desire to help the needy and suffering; to aid the necessities of the poor by supplying them with warm clothing, comforts, etc."

There is wide scope in the above brief programme, and much truth and wisdom in the following paragraph on the need for the work projected, with which the pamphlet concludes:—

"It is sad to note how many deeds of kindness remain undone, how many days and hours are wasted, and how much misery remains unalleviated, because men, women, and children have never acquired the habit of making

* Bearing the motto, "No day without a deed to crown it."

themselves of use to their fellow creatures, and have never learned to appreciate the luxury of doing good. Children have warm, generous hearts, but these hearts often become hardened, for many little ones are from their very cradle trained in habits of luxury and thoughtlessness of the needs of others. Even self-denying parents have self-indulgent children, and to the former it is a sore trial to see their offspring growing into selfish men and women. The habit of usefulness in the world requires cultivation as well as any other; it is grossly neglected, and yet surely it is calculated to be a greater blessing to those who acquire it than to those who are benefited by it. This League has been formed in the hope that, under the Providence of God, it may prove an humble instrument for the diffusion of happiness and the alleviation of misery, and that it may lead in some small degree to the moral improvement of the rising generation."

OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGES.

We have received from Madrid the first number of *La Irradiacion*, a review, to be devoted to psychological studies, edited by Don Braulio Alvarez Mendoza. It is a four-page folio paper, which will be published fortnightly—to which we wish the utmost success. Señor Mendoza proposes to give, among other features of this periodical, a *résumé* of the contents of kindred publications in the United States, England, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, and the Spanish Republics of America, translated by competent writers, so as to make his readers perfectly *au courant* with the progress of Spiritualism in foreign countries.

In the present number he gives as a *feuilleton*, part of the first chapter of a popular exposition of the philosophy of Spiritualism, in the shape of a dialogue between a mother and her daughter; so simple and lucid as to be comprehensible by the most ordinary understanding.

La Revue Spirite (Paris) reports some highly interesting séances which have been held with the famous Italian medium, Eusapia, at Nice; and with a Russian medium at Odessa; the accuracy of the particulars of the phenomena at the latter, being vouched for by the signatures of nine thoroughly trustworthy persons who were eye-witnesses of them.

At the former, Count Emilio, the Count and Countess d'Aramengo, Signor and Signora Palazzi, and M. Henri Brault, were present. We have only space to mention some of the manifestations which took place at Odessa: At one of the séances, what purported to be the spirit of Wagner, was present, and played a morceau of an incomplete opera entitled Isabella, on the piano, which was closed at the time; and he pinched the strings of the instrument so as to resemble an accompaniment by a harp; the effect produced being described as admirable.

On another occasion, a spirit who wrote his name "Offenbach," on a sheet of paper, in which he had wrapped some flowers he presented to two of the ladies present, played some airs from "La Fille du Tambour Major." A spirit named Pierro materialised, walked round the chamber, spoke to those present for something like eight minutes, requested them to light a wax candle in order that they might see him better, and then faded away. He told one of the sitters, Marie Miaskowska, that he would be mindful of her fête day, on the 1st of May (last year). He kept his word, for he brought to her a palette, to which were attached some living flowers, and below them was written "I felicitate you. Pierro."

In the *Moniteur Spirite et Magnetique* (Brussels), M. Bouvery advocates that at the next International Congress, to be held in 1894, every school of Spiritualists should be represented. "We are but a new branch," he observes, "of the powerful tree of Revelation, and in order to know the truth, and the whole truth, it is not only a duty but a necessity that we should not isolate ourselves, for isolation is as fatal to societies and to doctrines as to individuals."

Constancia (Buenos Ayres), of the 30th January, animadverts upon the inconsistency of some Spiritualists who, while firm believers in its cardinal doctrines, and thoroughly convinced of the truth and reality of the phenomena revealed, maintain nevertheless an outward conformity with the religion in which they have been brought up, and have not the moral courage to brave the ridicule of the scoffer, or the sneers of the atheist and the materialist.

Signor Ermacora continues in *Il Vessillo Spiritista* (Vercelli), his thoughtful essay on the Study of Spiritualism. He examines certain passages in the Old Testament which are supposed to prohibit spiritual intercourse, and shows that they cannot be held as applying to, or having any force with, either Jews or Gentiles in our own times. To which we may add that if any one will seriously reflect upon the low moral and intellectual development, at that epoch, of the race to which they were addressed, he will at once perceive that such prohibitions were wise and necessary. The Hebrews were, according to the descriptions of them placed on record by their own seers and prophets, idolatrous, ignorant, sordid, lascivious, vindictive, and merciless in warfare. As such they would, if permitted to hold communion with the unseen world, have attracted to their side, and would have been subjected to the influences of, spirits of their own mental and moral calibre; and thus all that the higher intelligences were endeavouring to do for them in the way of lifting them out of a condition of semi-barbarism, would have been frustrated and neutralised. Hence the most stringent interdicts might well have been laid upon the great mass of the people, to restrain them from commerce with the spiritual world. But, on the other hand, the few who were worthy of and susceptible to higher influences, were taught and instructed by exalted intelligences; and 'the voice of the Lord came unto' this, that, or the other prophet, was simply a more impressive way of saying "Thus spake my control unto me;" and a form of speech employed for the purpose of giving additional weight and solemnity to the admonitions, warnings, threats, and predictions, addressed to the people of Israel.

The latest issues of *Verdad e Luz* (S. Paulo, Brazil), contain two able articles on Reincarnation and Metempsychosis, and Spiritualism and Science respectively. The first is intended to show that the two things are essentially different, and must never be confounded; for while the elder doctrine of metempsychosis, as taught by Pythagoros, admitted the possibilities of retrogression, that of reincarnation is based on evolutionary development and continual progress. In the second article it is shown that Spiritualism perfects what science leaves fragmentary and incomplete; because it deals with that side of life which science ignores and too often denies. It supplies "the evidence of things unseen," and demonstrates the reality of "the substance of things hoped for."

La Lumière (Paris Auteuil), reviews the first volume of what appears to be a really great work, by M. Arthur d' Anglemont, entitled "Omnitheism; or God in Science and in Love." It will be composed of six volumes, and the first bears the title of "The Fractioning of the Infinite;" the meaning of which cannot be better explained, perhaps, than by quoting the well known couplet of Pope:—

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

The following passage will serve to illustrate the spiritual character of the work: "That which the divine law demands of us is the great collective love which is the passion of great souls, ever ready to expend themselves for the common weal without any recompense; for social happiness is the only guarantee of individual happiness, which can never be enjoyed in all its plenitude until that still remote epoch when unhappiness or misery and suffering shall have disappeared from the earth. It is progress in every form—progress in the arts, in morality, and in science—resolving itself into social

progress, which must be sought for in order to emancipate humanity from its sorrows, and to dry up its tears. But for that purpose humanity must become worthy of that enfranchisement, which can only be reached by the conquest of self by means of moral strength, this alone giving true liberty; for he only is free who is not under the yoke of insatiable desires, and whose soul, mistress of itself, knows how to command his body."

We note with pleasure, in the numbers of the *Journal du Magnetisme* (Paris), just received, two excellent articles, the one entitled "Man in the Cosmos," and the other "Magnetism in the Middle Ages," for a translation of which we wish we could make room. There is also a highly interesting paper showing how cases of ataxis have been cured magnetically.

La Revista de Estudios Psicologicos (Barcelona), publishes in its February number the first part of a translation into Spanish of M. Bonnemère's erudite and admirable work, "The Soul and its Manifestations throughout History." Not only is the compliment well deserved; but the wider diffusion which the book will thus obtain, cannot fail to open the eyes of hundreds of our brethren in Spain to the great antiquity as well as to the universality of Spiritualism. It may be characterised, indeed, as one of the innate and ineradicable instincts of the human race.

Our contemporary also contains an article from the pen of its editor on the subject of unauthenticated communications; or in other words, of such of these as emanate from spirits impersonating others. Great caution is of course to be observed where no means of identifying the invisible speaker are available; but test questions can generally be put; while much may be learned from the language, the modes of expression, the tone of thought, the subjects touched upon, and the very opinions and feelings of the author of the communication, as to his or her genuine identity.

M. Tournier, of Tours, has been contributing to *Le Messager* (Liege), a number of communications he has received from departed friends and relations, and from some who were personally strangers to him. A young lady over whose grave he had pronounced a discourse but a short time before, came to thank him for that act of fraternal piety, and to assure him that her faith in immortality had not been a vain one. She also dwelt upon the advantages of pain and suffering as a discipline for the spirit; and went on to say: "My last existence was that of a poor illiterate female. It was necessary for me to acquire certain virtues of humility and patience, which I had neglected to obtain in my previous life. In that one, in fact, I had greatly shone by the brilliancy of my mind, and by an intellectual culture of which I had been a little too proud."

The Abbé de Meissas, discusses the question of table-turning and table-rapping from the point of view of tbe Roman Catholic Church, in *Figaro* (Paris), of the 5th of March. He acknowledges the reality of the phenomena, and invents some fantastic theories to account for them; and states that they have never been forbidden either by the Pope, or by an Œcumenical Council; although particular prelates have done so; these evidently holding that while it is lawful and right for spirits to communicate with "saints" and hermits, with monks and nuns, and with a Joan of Arc, or a Catherine of Sienna, common lay folk, uninvested with the odour of sanctity, are not entitled to be spoken to by those who have departed this life.

But the Abbé makes one liberal concession. Table-rapping and table-turning may be pursued for scientific purposes, especially by persons gifted with mediumship; for, in that case, he goes on to say, "far from blaming you, I should wish to know you, so as to applaud your efforts, and to be able to second them." Have a care, Monsieur de Meissas. Other Abbés have carefully and critically investigated these phenomena, and have become confirmed Spiritualists. And the probability is that having got so far as to admit the genuineness of the results arrived at by typtology, to discard the theory of their physical origin and to acknowledge the existence in certain persons of the mediumistic faculty, you will advance still further along the road to Truth, and will ultimately arrive at the assured conviction of human intercourse, close and constant, with the spirit-world. Deny that intercourse, and what are all the narratives of spiritual communion, of levitation, and of the transport of persons from place to place, by unseen agency, which occupy so important a place in your Hagiology, but lying inventions or lamentable delusions?

The March number of *Op de Grenzen Van Twee Werelden* (the Hague), contains four articles, written with the sincerity, seriousness and ability which characterise this earnest publication. The first is entitled "What is the Light?" and is a spiritual exposition of the meaning of the words, "the Life is the light of men." In the second, Mr. W. T. Stead's "Experience of Doubles" is subjected to a critical examination; and this is followed by a translation of the "Vision of Life after Death," which appears at page 19 of the extra new year's number of the *Review of Reviews*. The fourth article is headed "The Power of Prayer," the efficacy of which is illustrated by incidents in the lives of Jung Stilling and George Muller of Bristol.

M. Huet contributes to *Le Spiritisme* an historical narrative of the apparition of spirits to Charles the Eleventh of Sweden, in the presence of three members of his suite, in the great council chamber of his palace, which was filled with a crowd of phantoms, who went through the form of a trial and execution; the throne upon the dais being occupied by a bleeding corpse, bearing the insignia of royalty, while on its right stood a child wearing a crown and holding a sceptre; and on its left an aged man wearing a robe of ceremony, such as were assumed by the ancient ministers of Sweden. The lofty chamber was illuminated by torches, and in the midst of a profound silence, a young man, nobly appareled, with his hands bound together behind him, entered the hall from an opposite door, followed by the headsman, knelt and laid his head upon the block. It was decapitated, and a stream of blood flowed towards the spot where Charles the Eleventh stood, and stained his shoes. As soon as he could regain sufficient presence of mind to speak, the king said to the aged functionary on the left of the corpse, "If thou art from God, speak; if thou art from the devil, depart in peace." The phantom replied in slow and solemn tones, "Charles, King of Sweden, this blood will not flow in thy reign, but five reigns after thine. Woe, woe, woe to the blood of Vasa!" And presently all the spectres began to fade away. The lights were extinguished one by one; there was a sound of low, sweet music; and Charles and his three attendants were the only occupants of the chamber.

He was succeeded by Charles XII., Queen Ulrica, the Prince of Hesse, Adolphus Frederick, and Gustavus the Third; and this last was assassinated in 1792, by Count Ankarstrœm, who was beheaded for the crime. The phantom corpse represented his victim; the crowned child was his successor, Gustavus Adolphus the Fourth; and the aged dignitary was the Duke of Sudermand, the young king's uncle, who was regent of the king, and eventually its sovereign, after the deposition of his nephew.

We should be glad if any of our readers having access to a copious history of Sweden would verify the statements relating to Charles the Eleventh.

We have received the March number of the *Psychische Studien*, of Leipzig, too late to enable us to offer a synopsis of its contents in our present issue.

As a discussion on Reincarnation in our columns seems inevitable, we must impress upon contributors the necessity of continuing it on philosophical lines. Letters simply expressing belief or disbelief, satire, or personalities will be rigidly excluded. A polemical discussion of a question of this kind would be worse than useless.

We have received some circulars from *The Spiritual Correspondence Society* (England), who invite co-operation in propaganda and the interchange of knowledge. Anyone desiring to join can get circular and member's list at our office.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

How's this? The Master of Queen's College, Melbourne University, the Rev. E. H. Sugden, B.A., B.Sc., who is a Wesleyan divine, says he has been asked to "explain the nature of the Trinity," and here is his answer:—"This is more than I or anyone else can do. The doctrine taught in the Scripture is that God is One; but that in the Unity of the Godhead there are three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These three are the same in substance, in rank, and in duration—consubstantial, coequal, coeternal. They are not so distinct as to interfere with the Unity of the Godhead, but they are distinct enough to be referred to by separate pronouns; *e.g.*, the Son can say to the Father, 'Not *My* will, but *Thine* be done;' and of the Holy Ghost, '*He* shall glorify *Me*.' The Trinity is revealed to us chiefly in connection with salvation as the Father reconciled, the Son reconciling, the Spirit attesting reconciliation."

Apparently neither the rev. Master of Queen's, nor his enquiring correspondent, has seen the "occasional note" in last month's *Harbinger*, which throws considerable light on the nature of the three "single gentlemen rolled into one." A last word: whether they like it or not, Mr. Sugden and his pupils are respectfully tendered the confident assurance that not only the "nature," but the doctrine which is alleged, though by no means *proved*, to be taught in the Bible, is fast becoming "dissipated."

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, of Manchester, having resigned the editorship of *The Two Worlds*, is about to issue a new 50-page sixpenny monthly magazine devoted to "Occult Science and Spiritism." Its title will be *The Unseen Universe*. Best wishes for its success!

Mr. Robert White, formerly a Secularist lecturer of the Bradlaugh school, in England, but who came to Sydney some years ago and was converted to Spiritualism, has now taken up his abode in Stockport (Lancashire), and is often engaged on the Spiritualist platform, proving himself a thoughtful, competent, and interesting speaker.

Bigotry rampant! The *Tasmanian Protestant Standard* has been giving the Rev. E. W. Nye "beans" because, in his Ex-Presidential address to the last Methodist Conference, he referred to Cardinal Manning, lately deceased, as "a devout Christian." The relationship of a Wesleyan President and a Roman Catholic Cardinal, as to their beliefs, must be antipodal, says the sapient *T. P. Standard;* therefore both men cannot be "devout Christians." Rough on the Rev. Nye!

Apropos of a "note" last month on the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A., the following from a London "Agnostic" contemporary may be worth re-producing:—Brewin Grant—or, as the older Secularists were wont to name him, Brewing Rant—has gone to heckle his ancient foe, "Iconoclast" (Charles Bradlaugh), on the other side of Jordan. Mr. Grant was clever, witty, malicious, and not over scrupulous; and truth, as well as individuals, suffered by his method and vituperation. His "Autobiography," published in 1869, is an interesting, sinister, and even libellous, work. The book is mainly an impeachment of the Nonconformists, beside whom the Secularists and Freethinkers appear as saints, in a mild way, although uncanonised. Mr. Gladstone is vilified to a greater extent than Messrs. Holyoake and Bradlaugh; and some of the most revered luminaries of the Dissenting world are criticised with so much Christian charity that one is not inclined to wonder at Mr. Grant in his youth being expelled from colleges, and further advised by the Chairman of the Committee that he had "incurred the disapprobation of all good men." Mr. Grant more than once justified his malignant egotism in debate by the example of Christ. He was the Piggot of theology. Mr. Holyoake was the only disputant who ever, for the discriminative, showed to real advantage in discussion with this redoubtable antagonist.

Is our malign foe, the Influenza fiend, coming to visit us this year? Not much doubt of it. Then it is desirable to be furnished with a preservative. Who knows of a really good, reliable article? Don't all speak at once. Eucalyptus Oil seems to have acquitted itself well, alike for prevention and cure. The latest treatment, one commended by the great *Lancet* itself, is that introduced by Dr. J. Crerar of Maryport, Cumberland England, and now adopted by Dr. Spurway, resident physician to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Here is the prescription:—As soon as the disease is diagnosed, take to your bed and keep warm; in a teacupful of milk, mix thirty (30) grains of Bicarbonate of Potash, drink, and repeat the dose every three hours.

What can Stead be about? It is stated that he has selected for the editorial chair of the Australian edition of his *Review of Reviews*, the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, B.A., president of the Methodist Ladies College, Hawthorn, and editor of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Southern Cross!* Now, *Review* readers, bid a long farewell to envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness; and welcome the new reign of sweetness and light!!

Many people are enquiring what the British Royal Commission on Vaccination is doing. Well, it seems to be still sitting. Three voluminous "reports" have already been hatched; a fourth is in process of incubation, and the bantling may be expected to see the light of day about the middle of this year; and "still there's more to follow!" During the whole of the March sittings, Mr. Alexander Wheeler, the veteran Anti-Vaccinist, was submitting evidence in confutation of the "Official Report" on the Sheffield Small-pox epidemic in 1887.

Students of Theosophy and Re-incarnationism will be interested to learn that there is a new phase of Astrology—"Esoteric Astrology," perhaps it should be designated—which claims to shed light upon the *future* earth-experiences of the *departed!* Thus in the *Astrologer's Magazine* of March last it is stated in reference to Cardinal Manning, that, "A figure for the moment of his death shows that he has taken away with him to his next earth-life—centuries hence—the warrior spirit and indomitable energy of Mars on the cusp of the mid-heaven in Scorpio; the mystical religion coming from Uranus in the ninth house is there also; and there is the Sun rising in Capricorn—a position which seems to suit his thin and ascetic but noble face. . . . Religious and literary eminence will again be his, dignity and public fame." Touching the late Duke of Clarence, the same "seer" remarks, "His death was the result of an evil Karma inherited from a past life, which can be seen from an inspection of his epoch and its directions. . . . He takes over with him to the next incarnation several striking tendencies, some of which certainly sympathise with what has happened to him in the life just ended. For instance, there is Uranus in the eighth house (sudden death); Saturn in the seventh house (afflicting the house of marriage); Venus very close to the cusp of the ascendant (an affectionate and sociable disposition); Jupiter rising in his own house, Pisces, and lord of the mid-heaven (prosperity and worldly success)"!! Now, "the Science of the Stars" is an absorbing study, and "the Wisdom of the Gods" hath great attractions, but isn't this hybrid philosophy (!) just a *leetle* "too steep"? "Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, answer—Yes."

X.

MR. GEORGE SPRIGGS.

This gentleman left for England by the P. & O. s. s. Arcadia, which sailed from Port Melbourne on Saturday, April 9th. Though the weather was inclement, quite a number of friends found their way on board to bid him good-bye.

We received a short letter from him, dated Albany, April 15th. He was then in good health and spirits, having so far escaped sea-sickness; and sent kind regards to all enquiring friends.

To Correspondents.

Communications intended for this Journal should be written legibly, and on one side of the paper only.

MRS. HUBBARD.—The incidents you relate are interesting, but need the corroboration of the persons who participated in them. No matter how good a reputation a medium may have, their unsupported testimony has little weight outside their own circle of acquaintance.

H. BANNISTER. — Your letter noted and filed. We believe in prevision; there is good evidence of its having been exercised by spirits, embodied and disembodied; but lucidity in this direction is rare, and for one prophecy that is *clearly* fulfilled, there are ninety-nine failures. It has been stated before, that J. B. was a medium through whom a certain exalted person communicated with her late consort.

"J. W."—Letter crowded out.

REINCARNATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—The letter on the above puzzling subject by your able correspondent, Senex, in last month's issue of your paper, has set me "a-thinking," and I quite agree with Senex that on account of the great number of its adherents, the theory of reincarnation is not to be disposed of flippantly as a mere intellectual fad.

But alas for the obtuseness of my mental vision, the longer I ponder over it, the greater and more aggavating are getting my perplexities.

I have considered the theory or hypothesis—whatever it may be called—from a physical, intellectual and moral point of view, and encounter everywhere ponderous difficulties and irreconcilable contradictions.

Taking, first, the physical aspect of the question, I find reincarnation at variance with the ordinary process of procuration. Science teaches me that procuration is effected and a human soul incarnated whenever a male and female germ, a spermatozoon and an ovum meet and unite together in the proper place. They are both animated by the parent soul, and a new anima or soul is the result of their union. This soul incarnates itself within the organism of the mother by building up around itself an organism or body of its own. Both physiology and psychology teach this to be the method and process of propagation alike of man and animal, the creating force acting from within only and not from without.

Now, I should be extremely obliged to Senex if he would explain how reincarnation is effected under these circumstances, and at what time the spirit seeking reincarnation takes possession of the tenement it intends to inhabit? To my mind three different methods are possible. The intruder must either take possession of the parents and become the animating principle of the germs intended to create the offspring, or he must at a certain time, to be majordomas from the first, slip in surreptitiously from without; or, lastly, if he comes in after the body of the fœtus is already formed, he must strangle and eject the poor little soul fledgling that built it up —a proceeding that does not commend itself to me as a very just and proper one.

One of these alternations appears unavoidable, unless we regard every act of procreation throughout the animated domain of nature as one of reincarnation; or the supposition that there is only a limited quantity of soul-substance at the disposal of the great Creative Power permeating the universe, and that therefore this substance has to be used over and over again.

These are some of the dilemmas I encounter on the physical plane, but even more formidable ones present themselves on the intellectual one. Our first principle as Spiritualists, and one of which we may justly be proud, is to accept nothing as true on the authority of either man or spirit, if it does not commend itself to our God-given reason. Never to abandon this our only safe guide, even in judging of spirit communications, is the constant admonition of our spirit friends.

The authorities, therefore, which Senex cites in favour of the theory of reincarnation, at best call only for a careful and impartial consideration of the subject on our part. They may create in us a predisposition for acceptance of the theory, but cannot enforce that acceptance if our reason puts in its veto. Now such veto it does put in, on the ground that the theory is perfectly incomprehensible, a mystery that must be accepted on authority, if accepted at all; and further, on the ground that the facts on which the theory is founded, and which it is supposed to explain, find a ready explanation outside of the theory and render it quite unnecessary. Thus heredity and inspiration account for the existence of genius, heredity and evolution for the vast diversity of character and bodily conformation presented by the human race.

We are every one of us what the germs that called us into existence, and the influences that have acted upon us from our first inception up to the present day, have made us. As Spiritualists we know that among these influences the most important factors in moulding and shaping our character are impressions we receive constantly from the spirit-world, and that the nature of these impressions, whether high or low, for good or for evil, depends entirely on our own condition and degree of development, on the choice we made between high and noble aspirations and low and selfish animalism. There appears, therefore, no need here and no room for reincarnation.

A very strong motive for caution in accepting the theory is finally furnished by the fact that it comes to us from the East—from a civilisation long past and far less advanced than our own—in which all sorts of fantastic notions and vagaries of imagination were advanced to explain phenomena that are now well explored subjects of exact science. We owe to the East, no doubt, some precious philosophical and religious truths, but also some mischievous errors that have been engrafted on our religious systems, and from the baneful influence of which we are but slowly freeing ourselves.

To my humble understanding, it appears much to be regretted that our grand but simple faith should be mystified by a theory the moral aspect of which seems absolutely repulsive to me and totally opposed to the leading tenets of Spiritualism. We know as a positive and a blessed fact, that at the death of the body our spirit enters at once on a new phase of existence, with memory and all our leading faculties and traits of character unbroken and unchanged.

We know that if we have made good use of our opportunities here and passed through the earth-school with honours, with a view of graduating for the higher life that awaits us after our career on earth is closed, we glide at once and without any effort on our part into a position adjusted to our moral and intellectual developments, and partake of happiness vainly sought on earth. We know that the continuity of existence is never broken, and that the great law of evolution from lower to higher types reigns throughout the spirit-world as it reigns on earth, a law of which even those get the benefit who enter the world of spirit in a low, undeveloped state, and through suffering and repentance are finally raised by ministering angels into higher and happier states of existence.

But reincarnation, it appears to me, sets both continuity and evolution aside, and substitutes for them what is represented to us as the inexorable law of Karma —another eastern notion to be accepted on authority. With no recollection of previous earth-lives, or the intermediate sojourns in the spirit-world, we are to be hurled back time after time into a human womb to face once more all the dangers and vicissitudes of pre-natal and post-natal influences, that may retard or even arrest our intended development. If perchance the tenement we have taken possession of is destroyed by disease or accident, we are not what we were before the law of Karma forced us to commit the nefarious act of ejection; our sin is visited upon us, and we have to roam the universe once more as half-conscious, homeless and houseless little soul sparks, looking eagerly for another incarnation.

But supposing we escape with our wrongfully acquired baby all the dangers besetting babyhood and childhood,

and pass scatheless through another earth-life, what guarantee is there for us that adverse conditions may not render our last incarnation a failure, as far as its object of a higher development is concerned. If Napoleon the First was a reincarnation of Alexander the Great, then I pity Alexander for having to reappear after more than 2000 years in the form of the heartless Corsican. Both were butchers of their race, but of the two Alexander was by far the nobler; and it would be interesting to learn from Senex how the grand old hero spent the twenty-two centuries between the first and last incarnation to degenerate into the little corporal.

However, my remarks are getting controversial, and I do not wish to enter into a controversary with Senex, having merely noted down a few of the thoughts which his letter evoked in me. Reincarnation puzzles me not a little, and almost more puzzling to me is the fact that so many able men like Senex believe in it as an actuality.

May I venture to hope that he will bestow a little more of his superior knowledge of the subject on your readers, including

Yours faithfully,

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

Mount Murramurambong,
11th April, 1892.

REINCARNATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—After analysing the lengthy effusion which appeared in this month's issue of your valued and instructive Journal, over the *nom de plume* Senex, I find it contains an abnormally large proportion of unreasonable assumptive sack, to a homœopathic crumb of plausible but doubtful testimony. Your correspondent states that spiritual intelligences of a high grade, and long residence in the spirit world, have declared to him that Reincarnation is a divine law, etc. Which is in direct conflict with the information received by the writer, from intelligences of a high order, who have for long ages been denizens of the world of spirits, and who not only ridicule but repudiate *in toto* the by no means "new," but antiquated theory of reincarnation, which had its origin in the dark ages of superstition, ignorance, and error. If the Angel Gabriel himself—who perhaps was never incarnated—condescended to assure me that reincarnation was a reality, I should require proof that such an act like the said to be immaculate conception of the Madonna, is not contrary to the operation of natural law, and therefore opposed to common sense and reason, before I could accept such an assurance. I fail to discover that any of the historical celebrities quoted by Senex, have given us positive proof of their reincarnation. What are we to infer from his vague assertion that "The human mind is so accustomed to the conditions of time, space, locality, dimensions, measurements, and so forth, that as a general rule, it is incapable of comprehending a state of existence from which these conditions are absent?" Are not the above conditions present in every state of the successive reincarnations which Senex contends spirits undergo, or are they confined to special stages? If the disembodied spirit is, as has frequently been ocularly demonstrated to be, the undiminished counterpart of its physical body—what becomes of your correspondent's contention, about compressing the form of an adult spirit and its matured intelligence into the body of a newly born infant? We have in record that spirits have passed through what we call solid matter, but no authentic assurance that the spirit condensation or compression that would have been necessary in most cases of supposed reincarnation has ever been effected or even attempted. In quoting from Milton's Paradise Lost, Senex does not appear to have made an appropriate or happy choice of an authority in support of his pet doxy. Milton's utterances therein should be accepted in a Miltonian or poetical sense, for we all should know that a large amount of license is allowed to, and indulged in by, the poet in his lofty flights of imagination. The spirits of Milton's creation have wings, but from what is actually known of spirits and their belongings, they have no such, to them, unnecessary appendages. In his view of reincarnation from a Scriptural standpoint Senex has conspicuously failed to strengthen his assumed position. Christ's declaration—Except a man be born again, etc., has no reasonable reference to, or logical bearing on, reincarnation; but is figurative, and embodies one of the leading doctrines taught by Christ, viz.:—That before a man living in a state of moral or spiritual degeneracy can truly understand or enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom of Grace and Glory he must pass under divine change, which may be called a new birth, or being born from above, in which change *the man indeed is the same*, but his spirit is regenerated and he begins a new spiritual life.

As more than one death of the physical body of the same spirit must eventuate if reincarnation be an actuality the cardinal tenets of that doctrine are obviously antagonistic to the scriptural declaration—"It is appointed unto man *once* to die." Senex avers that "Christ pronounced John the Baptist to be a reincarnation of Elijah," but I am not aware that he did. When John the Baptist was asked by the messengers who were sent by the Jewish rulers, Art thou Elias? (Elijah the Tishbite) he said, I am not, and to their subsequent interrogatory, Who art thou? he replied by referring his questioners to the prophecy in Isa. xl., 3-8. That John the Baptist was powerfully influenced by the spirit of the prophet Elijah it is not unreasonable to believe, but we have not a scintalla of reliable historical evidence that the former was a veritable reincarnation of the latter. Concerning the man which was blind from his birth; in Christ's answer to his disciples, who asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? "Neither has this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him," I submit there is nothing to indicate that Christ, by either word or implication, "acquiesed in the assumption (?) of his disciples, that the man's own sinfulness in a previous incarnation might have entailed on him his present privation of sight." Job held the erroneous belief that his mortal body would be resurrected at, what is scripturally designated, the Judgment day; hence his expression, "In my flesh shall I see God." A sufficient answer to which is its scriptural negative, "Flesh and blood cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." There is as much reason in believing now, the defective teachings of Astronomy and other branches of science that were promulgated centuries ago, as there is in believing because the Vedas, the code of Manou, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Zends inform us how firmly their ancient creed of reincarnation was held, that reincarnation is a fact of actual experience. Are the enlightened teachings, the advanced thought, and comprehensive experience of the 19th century, to be subordinated to the teachings and experience of those who lived in the dark ages of spiritual ignorance and superstition? The doctrine inculcated by Transmigrationists is but little more revolting, although in my opinion, not less worthy of credence than that which teaches that a Just, Merciful, and Loving Creator punishes his erring creatures for sins committed in previous incarnations, by compelling them to clothe their naked spirits with sightless bodies, and to enter another stage of purgatorial purification (?)

Theosophy teaches that only what is cast off by the spiritual body, after the death of its physical body, its shell, returns to earth, but that the liberated spirit begins and continues a course of progression until it reaches its final destination, spiritual perfection. This is certainly a much more rational doctrine than that which is the chief subject of this discussion. It is reasonable to suppose that any spirit, no matter how degraded it may have become during its earth-life, has ever been condemned by the exonerable, sternly exacting Arbiter of fate—its own Creator—to a series of retributive reincarnatory probations as a punishment and an atonement for its past sins, and for the purpose of raising it from its fallen position, when its reclamation would undoubtedly be rendered less difficult, and its progress expedited, by an existence minus retarding mundane, soul-depressing environments?

Senex makes a bold and hazardous assertion when he says "The single existence theory held by nine-tenths of civilised humanity is a hideous mystery, a revolting problem." Such a statement is susceptible of, and calls for, considerable qualification, and that it should have emanated from the pen of one who lays claim to a liberal share of historical knowledge—ancient and modern—and takes credit for having had communion with spirits of a high grade is astonishing if not deplorable.

Your correspondent's assertion does not apply to the large number of enlightened Spiritualists, who hold the single existence theory, nor indeed to a vast number of non-Spiritualists who hold the same theory. Happily there are not a few single existence theorists, who have had conclusive evidence that the after-life is one of glorious possibilities, and that there spirit retrogression is impossible; but the reverse would be the case in a life of reincarnation, were such an existence within the range of possibility.

After carefully considering the responses I have received to repeated enquiries, from the source most likely to supply the most reliable information obtainable on the subject, I am constrained to conclude that all cases of supposed reincarnation are simply cases in which mortals are controlled, influenced, and inspired by disembodied spirits, and that the alliance for long periods of such spirits with those in the flesh is the most reasonable explanation of the permanent manifestation in mortals of the striking and most unmistakable traits of character and the actions peculiar to those who have passed through the change called death. Some years ago, the 1st Napoleon frequently controlled a friend of mine; during those periods of control my friend was in action, appearance, and language the almost exact personification of that one time, Emperor. Had a reincarnationist seen my friend when he was under the controlling influence of the spirit of Napoleon he probably would have jumped to the conclusion that my friend was a reincarnation of Napoleon. Reincarnation is not essential to the production or reflection through a mortal medium of the peculiar gifts and talents of famous men and women of the past. The medium, Jessie Sheppard, when under spiritual control, spoke and sang in correct imitation of celebrated actors and vocalists, male and female, who had for many years been out of the body; and notwithstanding that he had no knowledge of the dead languages or instrumental music, he could, when inspired and controlled by spirit linguists and musicians, speak Greek and Latin correctly and fluently, and play the most difficult classical musical compositions on the pianoforte, and he has of recent years developed as a poet and a painter of great merit, under the guidance and control of spirit poets and artists. "All things are possible with God." It is therefore more than probable that He has created beings whose gifts, attributes and lives are so much alike as to be almost if not exactly identical, "Gautama and Jesus" to wit.

I have it on spiritual authority and assurance that the identity of individualised spirit is never lost or effaced, and also what are erroneously termed reincarnations of spirits are nothing more than the effects of the operations of spirits out of the body, who have an earthly mission to perform, on human organisms the best adapted to their purpose.

Socrates paid the death penalty for an unflinching persistence in his religious belief; but it is doubtful if he would have taken the cup of hemlock so readily, and bore up so cheerfully and stoically as he did under the distressing circumstances had he believed that his re-embodiment was inevitable, or even that there was a probability of such a post-mortem experience which, for all he knew, might eventuate in a less felicitous condition of existence than that then so near its termination.

Sweedenborg declares in his communication published in this month's *Harbinger* that the change spirits undergo after the death of their mortal bodies is progression and progressive, and *they never die but once*, though the last change from the spheres to the bright abodes is more of a change than the passage from sphere to sphere, but the change is as they go along. If they have not changed, how could they enter Heaven, or the bright above?

If I have not herein convinced Senex that reincarnation is purely a creature of the imagination, I think I have made it abundantly clear that the preponderance of the most reliable evidence available, is in favour of "the single existence theory."

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

THOS. PETERS.

110 William Street, Sydney,
14th April, 1892.

SPIRITUALISM AMONG THE AZTECS.

Some time before the seventh century of our era, the Aztecs inhabited a beautiful region far to the north-east of Lake Chapala, in North America, then known as Aztlan. Guided by their priests, who seem to have been mediums and claimed to speak under inspiration, they migrated to the south-west, pausing for many years at various places on their route, and building towns and temples where they halted; of which the remains still reward the researches of explorers.

Twelve hundred years ago, the Aztecs had attained to a remarkable degree of civilization. They were well acquainted with architecture, sculpture, painting and astronomy. They erected pyramids like those of Egypt, and their alphabet was composed of hieroglyphics. They were a theatrical and a musical people, and their songs and hymns, enshrining the traditions of their race, were carefully taught in their schools. They were firm believers in the immortality of the soul, and the future life they regarded as containing graduated stages of happiness; while they held that the enfranchised spirit passed from planet to planet. They constructed an immense zodiac or calendar out of a block of basalt, twelve feet in diameter, showing the division of time into cycles, years, and days. A cycle was composed of fifty-two years, and each year was divided into 365 days. Five days constituted a week; twenty days a month, and eighteen months a year; the odd five days being regarded as unlucky ones. This zodiac is still extant.

The Aztecs were great agriculturists, and were passionately fond of flowers. They carefully preserved their forests, and constructed canals for artificial irrigation. The Aztec women "ruled their homes peaceably, assisting in the lighter work of the field, taking care of the children, preparing food and all household requirements."

There was an order of priestesses, or mediums, closely corresponding in character with those who had charge of the old Greek oracles. They were vestal virgins, and lived sequestered inside the walls of temples, under the guardianship of a lady-superior.

It was not until 1243 that the Aztecs reached Mexico, and there founded an empire which endured for 300 years, until it was subjugated by the infamous and sanguinary Cortes, whose conquest of Montezuma, the last monarch of his race, was attended by the butchery in cold blood of 6000 of his peaceful subjects, in order, says the Spanish historian, with unconscious irony, "to give them some idea of the Christian religion."

The history of these events was written by Clavigero, a Jesuit, who spent thirty-six years in Mexico, collecting the information for his work, and in learning the dialects of the country. He composed his history in Italian, and it is admitted to be one of the highest authority. From it we translate what follows, and it is interesting to mention that he regards the manifestations described as divine, and not demoniacal; the latter being the doctrine usually held by the Roman Catholic Church with respect to spiritual revelations made to people who are outside the pale of that Church.

"Papantzin, a Mexican princess, sister of the king Montezuma, was married to the Governor of Tlaltelolca (a neighbouring and friendly State), and after his death she lived retired in her palace until the end of 1509, when she, too, died. Her funeral was celebrated with a magnificence resembling the splendour of her birth, in the presence of the king, her brother, and of all the Mexican and Tlaltelolcan nobility. Her corpse was buried in a subterranean crypt in the garden of her palace, near

a basin of water, in which she had been accustomed to bathe, and the entrance was closed by a light door of marble.

"On the following day, a little girl, between five and six years old, in order to reach the house of her mother, near that of the majordomo of the palace, situated on the other side of the garden, passed by the basin, where she saw the princess seated on the steps, by which she used to descend into the water of the reservoir, and heard herself called by the endearing epithet of *cocoton*, which is used in that country when addressing a child affectionately.

"The little one, who on account of her tender years was not in a position to reflect upon the death of the princess, and believing that this was really her who had come to take her wonted bath, accosted her fearlessly, and undertook at her request to go and fetch the wife of the majordomo. She went, in fact, to call her. But that lady, smiling and caressing her, said: 'My child, Papantzin is dead, and was buried yesterday.' But as the little girl insisted, plucking at her huepilli (feminine tunic), she, rather to please her than from any belief in what she said, followed her; but when she actually saw the princess, she fell on the ground in a swoon.

"The child then ran to call her mother, who with other companions hastened to the relief of the lady who had swooned; but they also, on beholding the princess, would have fainted away if she had not given them courage by assuring them that she was still alive.

"The Papantzin induced them to fetch the majordomo, whom she enjoined to go and tell her brother of what had taken place; but the official answered that he dared not do so, because the king would look upon the whole story as a fable, and would visit him with the severe punishment he was accustomed to inflict upon all liars.

"Then go to Texcoco (a neighbouring kingdom)," said the princess, 'and beg of the king Nezahualpilli to come to see me.'

(This Nezahualpilli, who had reigned in Texcoco for upwards of thirty years, was a most sagacious monarch, and had always been a safe and strong adviser of the Aztec king. Hence there was something very natural and appropriate in the wish of the princess to speak to him).

"The majordomo obeyed, and Nezahualpilli returned with him forthwith to Tlaltelolca; and when he arrived there he found the princess in the palace before him; and bowed himself in great wonder. Then she implored him to go to Mexico, and to tell her brother that she still lived, and that it was imperative she should see him for the purpose of communicating to him a matter of the greatest importance. Nezahualpilli repaired to Mexico and executed his commission. Montezuma hesitated to believe what he had heard; nevertheless, not to be wanting in the respect due to so well accredited an ambassador, he went with him to Tlaltelolca, accompanied by a numerous retinue of noble Mexicans, and entering the presence chamber, found the princess, and asked her if she was indeed his own sister. 'Sire,' replied the arisen one, 'I am your sister Papan, whom you buried yesterday. I am really living, and I seek to manifest to you how much I have seen, because it touches you nearly.' This said, the two kings seated themselves, and the others remained standing stupefied with astonishment at the scene.

"Then the princess spoke to them thus: 'When I was dead, or if it better pleases you, when I lost sense and motion, I suddenly found myself in the midst of a great plain, in which was a road branching off into many by-ways; and on one side was an impetuous river. Whilst I wished to plunge into and to swim across it, I saw before me a most beautiful youth of lofty stature, clothed in a robe white as snow, and resplendent as the sun, with this sign upon his forehead (making a cross with her two forefingers). He took me by the hand, saying, 'Stop; it is not yet time to pass over there. God, whom thou dost not know, loveth thee well.' Then he led me to the banks of the river, in which I saw many bones and human skulls, and where I heard such lamentable cries as moved me to pity. Turning my eyes over the water, I saw afar off many great ships, upon which were many men clothed differently to ourselves. They were white and bearded, wearing helmets on their heads and carrying standards in their hands. Then the young man said: 'God willeth that thou shouldest live and be a witness of the revolutions which are to occur in these countries. The lamentations thou hast heard among those bones are the wailings of the souls of thine ancestors. The men whom thou seest approaching in those vessels are those who, by force of arms, shall make themselves masters of these kingdoms.' Thereupon the young man disappeared, and I felt myself restored to life. I arose from the bier on which I lay, opened the stone door of my sepulchre, and issued out into the garden, where I was found by my domestics."

"This is one of many similar facts," observes the writer who has transcribed the passage from Clavigero, "demonstrating the intervention of spirits to forewarn Montezuma of the end of the Aztec Empire; it being evident that the invisibles threw the princess into a cataleptic condition and one of profound somnambulism, which made them believe her to be really dead; and that the young man in the resplendent tunic who manifested himself to Papantzin was her guardian spirit, or some other elevated intelligence."

It is far from improbable, moreover, that this spiritual intervention was also intended to put Montezuma on his guard against the invaders. For if he had been less trustful and generous, the cupidity of the Spaniards might not have been aroused. As it was, however, the magnificent presents of gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones, delicate textile fabrics, and exquisite plumes of feathers, which he sent to Cortes in order to propitiate that sanguinary scoundrel, only inflamed the avarice of himself and his followers, and the result was such a succession of appalling crimes that the mind sickens in reading of them. Indeed, as one writer has said: "murders and desolations of the most pitiless tyrants that ever diverted themselves with the pangs and convulsions of their fellow creatures, fall infinitely short of the bloody enormities committed by the Spanish nation in the conquest of the new world—a conquest on a low estimate effected by the murder of ten millions of the human species." And this was called "planting the cross among the heathen!"

THE SPIRITUAL SONGSTER.

We have received from Mr. H. A. Kersey, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, a copy of "The Spiritual Songster," a very excellent collection of Spiritualistic songs, adapted for Lyceum spiritual services and home use. The collection contains most of the hymns which appeared in the Lyceum Guide (now out of print) and numerous others of the same class and quality, in all nearly two hundred with music for both ordinary staff and Sol Fa systems, and is accompanied with some useful hints for musical conductors. The compilation, which contains most of the gems of spiritual song, with appropriate music, was made by H. A. and S. M. Kersey, and the dedication is as follows:—"To those dear spirit-friends who in the hour of physical suffering and dissolution, when all earthly aid was past, did, unasked, change the current of a mortal career and restore it to life, health and vigour; and to those wise and beneficent spirits who, through a long series of years, have guided and made happier our lives, and imparted to us more noble and glorious views of life and duty—this volume is reverently and gratefully dedicated by the compilers."

The publication of this book supplies a long-felt want; for lack of such a volume, choirs of spiritual meetings have languished and died out, whilst congregational singing became an impossibility. Its introduction should give an impetus to the musical part of the services, which is an important factor in their success.

We have received too late for insertion in present issue, some strong testimony to the permanence of Mr. G. M. Stephen's cures

INDEPENDENT SLATE-WRITING A FACT IN NATURE.

By Professor Elliott Coues.

During the past six months in which, like an alchemist of old, I have sought the elixir of life in the crucible of a vital experiment, I have probably paid off the mortgage which my Nemesis held upon a jaded organism, and cheated the grave of one tenant for the present. It is perhaps only when the foundation of youth has ceased to ripple and sparkle that one may discern the philosopher's stone at the bottom; and he is fortunate indeed who also sees on the placid surface of the waters of life a reflection of the smiles of the Goddess Hygeia. That is a magic mirror which reveals a vista of future usefulness.

In the course of my sojourn in California I had many interesting experiences in psychical research, some of which I wish to make public in the columns of The Journal. I make my first narrative a circumstantial account of certain phenomena which may be justly characterized as astounding, since they appear to be contrary to the laws of nature as formulated by the science of our day. Nevertheless, I have repeatedly seen that which justifies the caption of this article. If I am to accept the evidence of my senses, independent slate-writing is a fact in nature, the verity of which I am prepared to affirm without qualification or reservation. If I am to accept the logical consequences of that fact, I must revise my ideas of the motions of which inanimate matter is capable under some circumstances. These are sufficiently momentous alternatives to confront any scientist, and my dilemma is preplexing enough, without any attempt to explain the occurrences of which I am a valid witness. I therefore for the present waive all explanation, and content myself with a statement of fact, as simple and straightforward as I can make it. I write not as a Spiritualist, not as a theosophist, not as a theorist of any sort; but simply as a man of science, of good ordinary powers of observation, who has made some experiments in psychical research which he desires to give an account of, but which he does not expect to account for.

That there is such a thing as genuine independent slate-writing I have long been willing to believe, on the testimony of others in whose good judgment and good faith I had confidence. But until lately I had seen nothing myself of the sort that was not either, first, a mere trick, or, second, something so obscure and baffling that it amounted to nothing satisfactory, and could not be put in evidence at all. I am also aware that the vast amount of fraud perpetrated in this particular matter, and the large number of intelligent persons who have been deceived, have together put the whole thing into bad shape and brought it into worse odor. The affirmation of independent slate-writing as a fact in nature therefore requires to be doubly guarded and fortified. Yet in face of all this, I am ready to declare that I have seen, in broad daylight, a few inches from my face, a piece of pencil rise and move, no one touching it, and write of its own motion legible and intelligible sentences which conveyed intelligent thought; and that this same phenomenon was witnessed at the same time, in the same manner, and to the same effect, by other persons besides myself, of equal if not superior eyesight.

What do we mean by "independent slate-writing?" I understand that term to signify the formation of legible letters and words on a slate by a pencil which no one touches while the writing is being done. If that definition be correct, then I know that independent slate-writing is a fact in nature. By the phrase "automatic writing" I understand to be meant the formation of legible writing when one holds the pen or pencil but is not consciously aware at the time of what is being written. That is another phase of the problem, to be kept clearly apart from the former phase, and concerning which I have now nothing to say. I believe that the word "pneumatography" has been coined and used, somewhat loosely, to cover both of the above specified phenomena. It is also objectionable on the score of its etymological implication, namely, that "spirits" (whatever these may be) do the writings. So to call the phenomenon that I shall describe "spirit-writing" is to prejudge the case and and assume a certain explanation. That is precisely what I do not wish to do at present, when my business is simply to state facts and narrate occurrences. So I call the thing independent slate-writing, and proceed with my story.

While in San Fraucisco in October, 1891, I had the pleasure of making the personal acquaintance of Mr. W. E. Coleman, wellknown to readers of The Journal, whom I had also long known by correspondence, but had never met. At his suggestion arrangements were made for an experiment in independent slate writing at the house of Mrs. Mena Francis, of 811 Geary Street, whither I went by appointment, accompanied by my wife, on Friday, October 16, about noon. Mrs. Francis I understand to be a public or professional medium, who gives sittings for a fee; and a conscientious Spiritualist who fully believes that the writings obtained in the manner as I shall describe are done by disembodied spirits as messages from the other world. On entering her parlor we were met by a pleasant-faced elderly lady, in a simple unaffected manner, which rather prejudiced both my wife and myself in her favor. As soon as she had finished with a sitter who had preceded us, she invited us into a back room, facing south—or at any rate, the sun was shining brightly in at the only window, near which we took our seats. Mrs. Francis occupied a low easy rocker, my wife sat opposite, and I close between the two ladies, on Mrs. Francis's right, while before us was a small deal table with an ordinary cloth cover. On the table were a couple of thin "silicate" slates, frameless, perhaps four by six inches in size, a glass of water, and a wash-rag. Mrs. Francis invited us to examine the table and accessories at our pleasure. We did so, and found them as just said. She took one of the slates, dropped on its open upper surface a bit of pencil perhaps a third of an inch long, and passed it quietly under the table, out of sight, holding it by one corner, with one hand, in the manner in which any one would naturally hold out a slate or similar object—her other hand being in view on the table. She rocked back and forth a few times, while two pair of eyes were upon the proceeding, and said, in a quiet voice:

"Will the dear spirits please write?" or words to that effect.

This gave my scientific conscience a twinge, for if there is anything I do not like, it is something just like that. However, I sat, and in a few moments, tick, tick, tick, went something under the table, as if the pencil were writing. So it was in fact; and my astonishment may be judged when, whilst this ticking was going on, Mrs. Francis slowly withdrew the slate from under the table, and then and there, in full view, a few inches from my face, I distinctly saw the pencil write "of itself," and finish the last word or two of a sentence which straggled over most of the slate! This my wife did not see, simply because the table intercepted her line of vision; but that I saw it, just as described, is simply true. To make a long story short, this sort of thing went on for an hour or more. Sentences were repeatedly written as said, a part of the actual writing of several of them being done under my wife's eyes as well as under my own, with no one touching the pencil. Several times Mrs. Francis varied the experiment by holding the slate high up in the air over the table, and placing upon it a handkerchief, or a book half opened, to make a sort of shield from the sun's rays. One variation was especially interesting. She desired Mrs. Coues to grasp her hand while she held the slate in the usual manner under the table. Mrs. Coues did so; and while the medium's hand was thus firmly grasped by my wife, the writing went on, we heard the sounds as before, and Mrs. Coues tells me she felt a singular sensation, a sort of throbbing, as if a pulsation, or a regularly continuous set of impacts, were passing at once through her own hand, the medium's hand, and the slate.

I imagine that the last-mentioned circumstance may have an important if not conclusive bearing on the explanation of the phenomenon, or at least afford a clue to the rationale of the physical means by which independent slate-writing can be accomplished. But I am not now

offering any theory or attempt at explanation. That I leave to those who think they know all about it, in the hope that what they think may be satisfactory, to themselves at least. Neither am I now concerned with the substance or intelligible contents of the writing. The physical fact of the production of readable words that made sense is my whole present attestation. But I may state, without prejudice to the case in any particular, that the writing was certainly not at random, for it included intelligible and intelligent answers to various questions, and thus kept up, to some extent a continuous and rational conversation. The writing also referred in part to persons, places and things, respecting which Mrs. Francis must, humanly speaking, have been ignorant absolutely. The writing furthermore purported to be, ostensibly was, and was evidently believed by Mrs. Francis to be, a series of communications from the living spirits or souls of several different deceased persons, some of whom Mrs. Coues and I recognized as deceased persons whom we had known in this life, some of whom we know nothing about, two of whom bore suspiciously historical names, namely, Emanuel Swedenborg, the seer, and Sir Astley Cooper, the famous surgeon, each of which names was signed to certain of the writings.

I suppose that in all, during this sitting, some forty or fifty sentences were written more or less exactly in the manner described. The letters as a rule were very badly formed, and many of the words were illegible. In some such instances the illegible words were rubbed out by the medium, and the—shall I say spirit, or communicating intelligence, or stub of a pencil?—the whatever it was that was doing it, was politely requested to write more plainly, and as politely complied, sometimes underscoring the newly formed word. I should add that between each message the slate was cleansed of the former writing, with the wet rag, just as any one would rub out what had been written, to write something else on the same surface; and that I gave both slates a thorough cleansing myself at the beginning of the experiment. I kept one of the slates with the message from "Sir Astley Cooper," and have it yet.

At the end of this interview I took one of the slates, laid the pencil upon it, and occupied myself for several minutes in trying to make the pencil leave some mark. It was easy enough, holding the slate as Mrs. Francis did—or any other way, in fact—and joggling it about, to make the pencil jump and wriggle all over the surface; but the weight of the bit of pencil was not enough to leave any perceptible trace of its movement,—to say nothing of forming a letter or a word in this way. Some force, unknown to me, had during the writing pressed the pencil hard enough against the slate to rub off some of its substance and thus leave the visible and legible trace of its movements. This "force" was also the means of transmitting an intelligent volition; and it was not the muscular force of Mrs. Francis or of any other living person known to me.

It is morally certain that Mrs. Francis did not know who her sitters were until we made ourselves known at or near the end of the experiment; but as I am not now analyzing the content of the writing, nor indeed raising any question of "spirit communication," it is immaterial to the point at issue whether she knew who we were or not. She accepted a very modest fee, and we parted.

Mrs. Coues and I went carefully over the whole interview, to find ourselves in substantial agreement in every material particular; so that if either of us were hallucinated, the other was also, and thus it becomes a case of "collective hallucination." Nevertheless. I must confess that for my part I was inclined to discredit the evidence of my senses. My only other alternative was to discredit my life-long experiences of gravitation, inertia, momentum, and like attributes of the material of this physical world. In this embarrassing predicament I did probably a sensible thing in filing the apparently inexplicable occurences for future reference. I left San Francisco, rusticated at Santa Cruz for several weeks, and returned to the city late in December. At my invitation Mrs. Francis came to my parlor at the Occidental Hotel, and at this second séance I arranged for Mr. Coleman to be present, with my wife and myself.

With much variation in detail, and especially in the content of the alleged messages, the result was the same as before. Mr. Coleman and I washed the slates, which were clean already, just to be able to say we had done so, for the benefit of a certain class of Thomases. We four sat about one of the ordinary center-tables that are found in hotel parlors. It was about noon of a bright day. We all simultaneously, at times, and each one of us successively, at other times, saw the bit of pencil move of itself, no one touching it, and write legible, intelligible sentences. It wrote rational and sensible replies to various questions, answered some mental interrogations with a pertinence at times startling, professed to be writing on the part of various deceased persons whose names were signed (none of whom I, for one, recognized), and otherwise conducted itself like a volitional intelligence, and not at all like a small lump of inanimate mineral. All this, too, under our very eyes and ears for much of the time, during which we distinctly traced by sight and sound the movements of the pencil as it straggled over the slate and left the scrawly letters in its wake; and for the rest of the time while Mrs. Francis held the slate by one corner, with one hand, just under the table, her other hand being in sight meanwhile. Some persons may not unnaturally cry out: "What did she put it under the table for? What is the use of hiding it at all?" To which I reply: "I do not know, and I wish I did; for if I knew that, it would help me perhaps to explain the thing." But this is absolutely certain as anything in the range of human experiences can be, namely, that Mrs. Francis's hand never touched the pencil during the writing. This I can assert most positively: and I am sure that both Mrs. Coues and Mr. Coleman stand ready to corroborate the assertion.

One more point, and I am done with a narrative already longer than I intended it to be, but which I have found myself unable to shorten without weakening. Once during this second sitting Mrs. Francis desired me to hold her hand, as she had desired Mrs. Coues to do on the first occasion, I did so, and with the same result as Mrs. Coues had first experienced. Mrs. Francis held out the slate before me, in full view; she had it by one corner, her fingers bent under it, and thumb over it, as one usually holds such an object; I grasped her hand firmly, partly in fact holding the slate myself; I felt a strong, peculiar, almost convulsive twitching of her flesh, and she seemed, both to my touch and to my eye, to be as it were clutching the slate, with a force in her clenched fingers that made the silicate bend a little; there was the pencil upon the surface, and then and there the pencil wrote, right under my eyes of its own motion.

Mrs. Francis declined to take any fee on this occasion, and seemed only anxious that I should be satisfied, by any means in her power, of the genuineness and verity of a phenomenon which to her at least is fraught with the deep significance of a message from the dead to the living. She was not very well in health, having a bad cold, was worried over a slight misunderstanding about the hour of our engagement, and besides all that had gotten out of breath by climbing several flights of stairs that did not lead to my room on the parlor floor. So altogether she was in bad order, either for a successful experiment in psychical science, or for a clever trick in sleight of hand. Knowing what I do about such things I think it remarkable that we got any result, in view of the medium's nervousness and fear of failure.

I hardly know what will be thought of this narrative; probably different persons who read it will form different opinions of it and its writer. But a little while ago, I could hardly have imagined myself as the author of such a recital. Yet I cannot be untrue to my convictions without violence to my mental integrity; and I cannot be silent in the face of such facts as I have narrated without conviction of moral cowardice. Let the facts speak for themselves; I am only responsible for the veracity and substantial accuracy of this article which though penned at one sitting, from memoranda taken at the dates of the experiments respectively, has been on my mind for several months, and is now worded with some care, after mature deliberation.

PRESCOTT, ARIZONA.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal.*

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY.

We briefly alluded in our last to some illustrations of Psychic (or Spiritual) Photography, which appeared in the Christmas number of *The Practical Photographer*, and now append the salient portions of the editorial which accompanied them, which show the writer to be what our American friends would call "a level-headed man," and one not afraid of expressing his opinions.

The article commences as follows :—

"We fully expect that we shall be scoffed at for our 'credulity' when we reproduce four photographs of 'spirits,' and confidently state that there is no reason why they should not be genuine. We do not say that the present examples are genuine. We say that we believe them to be perfectly so, but for the present purpose it is quite sufficient if our readers (or some of them) will admit that it is just possible that there may be incorporeal entities, invisible to man, but yet capable of impressing their forms upon the sensitive silver plate.

"Perhaps out of the number who believe that this may be possible there will be some who believe that it *is* possible, and that in fact such entities do exist. If so, will they be on the watch for such appearances, and communicate any facts they may gather to ourselves?

"We do not want instruction for producing bogus spirit photographs; nor do we want examples of cunningly devised frauds. Everybody knows that such counterfeits can easily be made, but the production of millions of them does not prove that there may not be appearances which are not frauds."

The writer then goes on to explain his reason for entering into the investigation, which was, primarily, the knowledge that some of his readers were interested in the operation of Psychic forces, and having observed from some correspondence in the *British Journal of Photography* that a Miss Power, of Birmingham professed to get Psychic Photographs, he placed himself in communication with her, and found that her experiments had come to a standstill for want of the co-operation of an expert who would allow his name to be used afterwards in connection with the matter. The editor of the *P. P.* at once offered to act as such independent party. He visited Miss Power's studio, the door of which (he remarks by the way) was fearfully battered with stones thrown by a mob that besieged the house for two or three nights last September, and learned her ideas about Spirit Photography, as follows :—

"1. That the spiritual part of man is immortal; lives and progresses after death; and influences, more or less, those who remain in life upon the earth.

"2. That some, at any rate, of such spirit-forms have the power of impressing their images upon the photographic plate.

"3. That in the future the photographing of those who have left the earth-life, will be as common as the photographing of persons in the flesh is to-day.

"4. That such work is most important, because it tends to prove to those who recognise the spirit form that such spirit is still alive; and by thus giving an assurance of the life after death, tends to lead to higher aspirations in the earth-life."

Returning to his relation the editor says :—

"Now, with regard to the collection of negatives in Miss Power's possession, as they are decidedly what are commonly known as 'spirit' photographs, showing clearly recognisable 'spirit' forms, we are forced to one of three conclusions :—

"1. That they are accidental (caused by 'latent image" on the glass of the plate, or otherwise); or,

"2, That they are frauds; or,

"3, That they are genuine.

"As there are some dozens of them, and as some of them run in series of five or six views of the same face, the first explanation is out of the question.

"If the second conclusion is to be held, it must be taken that Miss Power is either duped herself, or trying to dupe others. There seems no good reason why anyone should month after month, for some years, persistently practice a fraud, and any one who knows Miss Power, knows that she is not a likely person to allow such a deception to continue. As to the supposition that Miss Power, herself, is a charlatan, we can only point out that she has had nothing to gain, but all to lose, by following her psychic investigations. As a matter of fact, from this cause alone she has lost all her scholars —her school was her main means of livelihood—and as we stated before, has even had her house besieged and assaulted by a mob of such dimensions that sixteen policemen were told off to protect the place.

"Among Miss Power's negatives are several which were not taken knowingly as spirit photos. They were portraits and groups, in the open air and daylight, but the 'spirits' are there, nevertheless, and in some cases recognisable. On the other hand, even when sitting specially for spirit photography, as many as four dozen plates have sometimes been exposed in succession, without a trace of the desired result. Neither Miss Power nor the operator can see the 'spirits,' though they have no doubt that a clairvoyant could do so."

The editor asked Miss Power to describe the series of photographs he was reproducing, but she asked Mr. Thos. S. Wilmot, who was present at their production, to do so, which he does as follows :—

"Astral Bodies Photographed. by Thos. Slaney Wilmot."

"*Add to your faith knowledge.*"

"This spray from the divine wave of intelligence gave us directions as to how we could photograph the spiritual bodies of our departed relatives and friends, and so prove to materialists how they can satisfy their doubts of a future.

"They are, briefly: to darken a room, drape with red or blue curtains; keep the air in the room still by darkness and quiet, focus a sitter whose natural aura, or atmosphere, is white and also luminous.* The operator to sit by the camera, or so that he can light a magnesium light eight inches long at both ends, then with a cap off, to sit in aspirational silence for twenty minutes, light the tape, take the plate out and develop, then to put in another plate, sit again and again, as long as time permitted. Follow the same directions the next week, and the next, until we began to see clouds and other peculiarities on the developed plate, which there was nothing in the room to account for.

* * * * * * *

"The first plate we exposed was in the camera, the light out, and the dark exposure commenced before the second sitter, Mrs —, came. She groped her way to her usual place; her chin, hand, and dark dress are seen in the background. The lady who was focussed had on a tight-fitting blue dress, her hair coiled on the top of her head; the loose hair is not hers, but belongs to the spirit or astral body which transfigured her; the halo or luminous atmosphere which surrounds these ethereal bodies passes through the sitter's forehead, covers one eye, and part of cheek. It caused no inconvenience to sight, nor was she aware of any body or object ethereal or otherwise being between her and the camera. There is also a white outline of a smaller figure to the right, but probably not shown on this copied print.

"II. The first sitter pushed her chair backwards to the late arrival, and sat herself on a lower one, Mrs. — leaning forward on the back of the front chair, the development revealed that the disturbances had quite upset the conditions for showing the central spirit, though the spirit to the right seems little altered; the halo instead of being through the front sitter's forehead, is over Mrs. —'s head; there is hardly a trace of the long hair, and the front lady is completely overshadowed.

"III. The ladies sat as in II., with the exception that Mrs.— is not leaning forward. The etherealised matter of which the astral body is composed, does not appear to have lost shape, the long hair can be traced, and the faces of the two focussed sitters are partially covered with it, and this time the right arm of the front sitter is seen. There was nothing visible to the normal eye, yet

* See "Psychic Photography in Relation to the Physical Sciences," in "Photographic Annual," 'Xmas, 1891.

a clairvoyant who was present saw the front sitter transfigured into an old lady, with hair hanging about her shoulders; several forms, from about 15 to 60 feet from the camera, and a host in the far distance. The apparition itself was about 16 x 12 feet; the influence of the room was calm, peaceful, and spiritual, such as one vaguely describes as 'The gate of Heaven.' These three plates had each twenty minutes dark exposure, and then eight-inch magnesium tape lit at both ends.

"IV. During the next exposure, the sitters remained as in III. After the dark exposure, the unseen intelligences told us to light an artificial light; the plate was developed, therefore, as it was.

"In answer to criticisms in "British Journal of Photography, Sept. 7th, 14th, 21st, 1888, Jan. 4th, 1889, proving that though the plates revealed traces of double exposure, the first was during the twenty minutes' dark exposure. 1st. The central figure, which can be traced in all the four plates, was recognised by the stranger who came from Ireland. 2nd. An old lady smiling down upon the central figure (the plate unfortunately got damaged here in developing.) 3rd. and 4th. Two tiny heads together, mother and son. 5th. An Irish peasant on left side of the plate. 6th. An unrecognised form looks as though it moved, and a host of hovering forms undefinable.

"The query to opticians and scientists is, from whence came the light to impress these forms on the sensitive plate?

"Intelligence is sometimes called the "light" of the mind; it is possessed by individuals in varying degrees. In some minds this light burns very dimly, others have so much of it that they, like the ancient philosopher who said to men 'Ye are gods,' see no limit to the creative power of man's intelligence, when unfettered by material hindrances and worldly surroundings; but the knowledge that it is electric or actinic is a new revelation to science."

In reference to the foregoing, the following trenchant article appears in the January number of the same journal:—

"Psychic Photography."

"We have received many enquiries and some 'letters to the Editor,' on this subject. We cannot insert all, and at present we do not feel inclined to insert any. Most of the letters are dissertations on Spiritualism, and have nothing to do with Psychic Photography. About equal numbers support and condemn the idea of 'spiritual' appearances. If anything bearing upon the truth of Miss Power's productions comes to hand, we will insert it with pleasure, whether it is *pro or con.*

"One correspondent says: 'Spirits cannot be photographed, and it is wicked to photograph them.' This is the gist of a whole long letter, and it is not logical. Two or three correspondents devote considerable space to stating that they 'do not believe in spirits,' and 'to showing up' a number of spiritualists. Such arguments are pointless. If a correspondent who has given some attention to the subject will state that Miss Power's photos are frauds, and show a plausible reason for his belief, we will gladly insert his letter, though we have no space for a long and desultory correspondence on such a subject.

"Some correspondents have asked us whether we, personally, believe in the genuineness of Miss Power's, or any other, Psychic photographs. We think our statements on this head in the article last month were perfectly clear. Beyond this we would say that to any person who is honestly investigating a phenomenon, the belief or disbelief of another person, or of thousands of other persons, is valueles as evidence. If anyone *knows* anything we shall be glad to hear of it. If anyone is investigating, and meets with difficulties, we will help him with hints and suggestions if we can. But the testimony of people who simply argue that 'such things cannot be,' that 'the whole affair is bosh,' and so forth, is useless to us; and any statement of our belief is useless to them.

"One correspondent says: 'I am sorry that Miss Power and the Spiritualistic party have got a photographic journal to lend a favourable ear to their ideas.'

"We want no misunderstandings in this matter; so we may as well state at once, that neither Miss Power nor 'the Spiritualistic party' has approached us in any way. We spontaneously asked Miss Power for information, which she gave. We asked her to allow us to reproduce four of her photographs, and she consented. Moreover, we have reason to believe that Miss Power is not connected with 'the Spiritualistic party.'"

SPIRITUALISM AMONG THE ANCIENT JEWS.

In the Hebrew Scriptures written before the Babylonish captivity, angels or spirits are often mentioned as beings or messengers charged with the fulfilment of a Divine mission on earth, and possessing a nature superior to that of human beings; but it was not until about two centuries before the Christian era that we find a well developed angelogy among the Jews. Then arose the conception of a spiritual hierarchy, composed of seven exalted intelligences, to each of whom was assigned the guardianship of a particular nation; and beneath these were gradations of ministering spirits. The just among men were watched over, guided and instruced by these tutelary protectors. "The angel of the Lord," writes David, "encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

And there is a remarkable evidence of the increasing strength of this belief among the more enlightened of the Jewish people, after their restoration to Jerusalem, in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Tobit, where Raphael is described as speaking to the old man and his son, and directing them "to write all things which are done in a book;" and where he also speaks of having shown them a vision. Daniel characterises as "watchers," or guardians, "the holy ones who come down from heaven;" or, in other words, descend from the spheres.

Gradually, it would appear, a belief in reincarnation began to germinate in the minds of the more advanced of the Jewish people, and it is curious to find the historian Josephus reproaching the Pharisees of his time for limiting the advantages of the transmigration of souls to good people only. and insisting upon it that the wicked were doomed to eternal torments in Scheol. Philo, the philosopher, also taught the Jews of Alexandria the doctrines of eternal life and of the metempsychosis of the human soul. But this was at the very same period that Jesus of Nazareth was preaching similar doctrines in Judæa.

INAUGURAL SEANCE.

Mrs. Harris, who has taken the premises formerly occupied by the late Mrs. Reynolds, gave an Inaugural Séance there on Monday, April 4th, for the benefit of the widow of the late Mr. Williams. At the appointed hour the séance room was packed with an earnest and attentive company, many of whom were formerly attendants at Mrs. Reynolds's meetings. Some preliminary singing brought the company into accord, and Mrs. Harris was controlled by Mrs. Reynolds, who expressed the great gratification she felt at being able to meet and converse with her old friends in the room where she had been accustomed to address them when in the body; also her pleasure that a medium with whom she was in sympathy had taken up her work. She promised her aid, and concluded by exhorting all to co-operate in furthering a knowledge of Spiritualism.

The voice and manner were very characteristic of Mrs. Reynolds, and the identity of the control seemed to be fully realised by those who were familiar with her. Miss Dwight, Mr. and Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Clay, John Tyerman, Wm. Denton, Dr. Motherwell, and other well known Spiritualists who have passed on during the last few years, addressed the meeting in a characteristic manner, whilst the childish prattle of little "Denty Harris," and the strange idiom of an American indian, were not uninteresting features of the séance, which was a most harmonious and successful one.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THREE LECTURES.

Given by the controls of Mrs. Harris in the Horticultural Hall, Melbourne, on "SPIRITUALISM OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE."

Opening Poem, "The Questioner."

Spiritualism of the Past.—"Looking Backward" has become familiar to us of late, we delight to turn back the leaves of the book of life, and see how it fared with those pioneers of human progress, whose thoughts remain immortalised upon those glowing pages, for our inheritance.

In relation to Spiritualism, which is perhaps too often looked upon as a new way to heaven or happiness, these researches are particularly instructive and interesting, revealing as they do, the thought of man, in its many changing developments, regarding the God we worship, and the future toward which we are all looking.

Since the primeval ages when man laid his dead in a rudely constructed grave, with the calabash of water at their feet, and the weapons of war by their side, so that they might be prepared for the jonrney from one sphere to another, and armed against the foes who might beset them, the idea of immortality has expanded; sometimes wrapping itself in strange weird customs of Egyptian or Indian worship, sometimes expressing itself in allegory or fable of Eastern lore, but always apparent, always forming the basis of spiritual or religious belief, always leading upwards to a representation of a happier, more perfect life.

We find in the ancient forms of religious worship, that although the votaries of the gods bowed the knee to sculptured images, of either beautiful or hideous personation, they invariably held in their remembrance some god among men whose memory they honored, whose glorious deeds they immortalised in song, in honor of whom floral and sacrificial festivals were held, and in whose name the victors were crowned.

'Twas the god idea, the impersonation of power and wisdom that filled their souls with enthusiasm, either of fear or admiration. The ancient oracles, whose words were accepted as the decree of fate, whose advice was sought on all occasions of emergency, and devoutly followed, were none other than the instruments of the angel-world; breathing the inspirations of those invoked by them. We have the authority of all sacred writings, not excepting the Scriptures, shewing the dependence placed on Spiritual communications given through mediums, the communion of spirit return, the special setting aside of certain persons for this special purpose, the assembling in circles, or seeking individually to receive the heaven-sent messages of departed loved ones.

The so-called miracles of healing, wakening from trance, casting out evil spirits etc., were manifestations of mediumship, corresponding to those with which we are every day familiar. The pagan (so-called) worship of Greece or Rome abounds with spiritual symbolisms, expressive of spirit return and communion; Socrates acknowledging the ministry of his daimon or controlling spirit, and the ancient poets breathing forth the inspirations of the angel world.

And when we turn to the record given us of the ministry of the prophets and seers of old, the mission of the beloved Nazarene and the disciples that followed him, we read the teachings of the philosophy of Spiritualism in every line, and the descriptions of its actual phenomena on every page. Even until the completion of his ministry of mediumship upon the earth-plane, when in order to convince his followers of the truth of spirit-return, he appeared through closed doors in materialised form before them, assuring them of the reality of his existence by walking and talking, ah! even eating with them.

So that the Spiritualism of to-day does not date back only as far as the Rochester knockings, and the mediumship of the Fox sisters; but is written in the Zend Avesta of the Persians, the Koran of the Mahometans, the sacred writings of Egypt, India, and China, as well our own Scriptures. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" was not spoken alone to the eunuch in his chariot, but to all souls who desire to look into the records of the past, and see how God hath dealt with his children during successive ages, and how the thought of man has progressed toward the attainment of a more perfect knowledge of the immortality of his own soul.

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Opening Poem, "An Angel's Tear, or Jesus Wept."

Spiritualism of the Present.—Last Sunday night we spoke of the "Divine voices heard and obeyed by Joan of Arc, of the revelations received by the Waldenses, the Hugenots, and the Chevannes; of the illumination of Luther, Huss, and hundreds of others by the divine 'Arabula,' or spiritual inspiration received from heavenly ministers. Of the 'miracles' of olden times, the visions of the seers, the prophecies of the prophets, and the glorious utterances of ancient inspired poets."

To-night we have to look into the mirror of the present, the spiritual manifestations we receive to-day, the spiritual gift possessed by the mediums and sensitives of our own time. We stand in the light of the ages, we inherit the fruits of their labors who have passed on before us through great tribulation; even those who have borne the cross, the flames, the rack, the torture of soul and body for the sake of the divine principle within them, and been made more than conquerers. We have read the sacred words, the golden promises of old, wherein it was said "greater things than these shall ye also do, *if* ye have faith."

We have seen the outpouring of the spirit, the illumination of thought by the inspiration of the angel world; we too have our poets, our musicians, our sculptors, our artists, divinely inspired by their attendant angels; we have our healing mediums, our clairvoyants to diagnose diseases, and describe our loved ones around us; we have "handwriting" on slates never touched by human hand, we have our trance speakers in many tongues, our electric healers, by the touch of whose hand men are healed, and to whom power is given by controlling angels to cast out obsessing spirits; we have our psychic travellers who can leave the body, and travelling through space, visit the "third heaven" spoken of by Paul. We have witnessed the materialisation of spirit forms, heard them speak, seen them walk about, touched their garments, and seen them gradually disappear in misty vapour. We have received messages through trance mediums from our dear ones, whom the world calls dead, called by their own names, mentioning familiar incidents, caressing us, and communing with us in very truth. All this have we, the children of to-day, to rejoice our hearts, to enable us to live holy lives of self devoted service, to raise our spirits ever heavenward. To establish complete communication between us and the departed, who are not so far above us, but round about us, cognisant of our thoughts, words, and deeds; to hold ourselves as worthy to be indeed their companions and friends; how pure should become our lives, how spiritual the influence surrounding us, how clean from sin, fraud and ignorance, the "temples, bodies, and souls" used by angels as vehicles of communications.

Why have we not more mighty results in our day, living as we do in these times of enlightenment, spiritual communion, and freedom of thought? Why do we win so comparatively few to a knowledge of these wondrous truths? Why are the spiritualists and mediums of to-day "feeble folk" compared with those faithful, much persecuted followers of the light of the world? Why do earth's risen saviours have cause to weep over our cities, as Jesus wept over Jerusaleum, and the beautiful angels fail to manifest greater things through their sensitives? "He did not many wonderful works in that city, *because of their unbelief.*" Even so it is with us to-day. Have we the simple yet mighty faith that inspired the poor maid of Orleans to go forth to her mighty task? Have we the prayerful, earnest enthusiasm of the Waldenses or early fathers? Have we the purity of life, the complete consecration of body and soul, yielded by the mediums of past times?

"Let us pray" that the spirit may descend on us more powerfully, let us believe the promise, and then labour to fulfil it all around us by the unselfish beauty of our own ministry, the faithful dependence on our angel guides, the more perfect following in the footsteps of him who is the light of the world.

Then will God bless us, and increase our power, filling pure vessels with the water of life, which thirsty multitudes may drink of, and receive added vitality, and sweeter sympathy, that at length the word may be verified in us, they shall be all taught of God.

'SPIRITUALISM OF THE FUTURE."—*Unavoidably held over.*

THE STORY OF "SEVEN LIVES."

"THROUGH the mediumship of Mrs. Harris," writes one of our contributors, "I recently had the great privilege and still greater advantage of listening to the personal history, in each of his seven incarnations, of one who in his last lifetime lived in that "fierce light which beats upon a throne" in the mother country. Nor was it until the spirit in possession had reached the final stage of his deeply interesting narrative, that I had any conception of who was the speaker. It occupied nearly half an hour in the delivery, and was one unbroken flow of lucid statement, always coherent and consecutive, and clothed in beautiful and picturesque, yet simple and impressive language.

I regret that I can only offer a vague outline of the most profoundly interesting autobiography I have ever met with.

"The speaker's earliest incarnation was as a cave-dweller, at an epoch which he described as enormously remote. Eons upon eons have passed away since that period. Our globe which undergoes an evolutionary development *pari passu* with the development of the human race upon its surface, was then in a very backward condition as regards both its vegetation and its animal life. It was subject to wild commotions of the elements. Man was scarcely a thinking being, and only one remove from the brute. Love was unknown to him. He felt a kind of ferocious delight in the possession of the woman who was the partner of his savage existence; but no softer feeling qualified it. Men lived in a state of chronic warfare among themselves and against the monstrous quadrupeds and birds by which they were surrounded. Only the faintest spark of intelligence glimmered in his own mind, coupled with a dim sense of some after-life; and this it was which prompted him when he had scooped a hole with his claw-like fingers in which to lay the body of one of his children who had died in infancy, to place by the side of the corpse a calabash of water, and some implements, so that he might not be unfurnished when he woke up elsewhere. When he himself floated out into the great unknown, he entered the first sphere, and fell into a deep and profound sleep.

"Thousands of years elapsed before—accompanied by the being whom he loves above all others, the angel of his life—he was again reincarnated. This time he found himself upon an arid plain near the ruins of a great city. He was born into the family of a ruler of a nomadic people, and his rank was therefore princely. His subjects were brave, hospitable, and warlike. Their chief aim was to increase their flocks and herds, to add to the number of their slaves taken captive in war and to extend the conquests of their race. Born with a strong desire to rule and a great love of power, he himself was often tyrannical, cruel and unjust, and exercising his love of dominion and authority without any consideration for the miseries and sufferings of those whom he conquered and enslaved. But the Princess, who was far superior to himself in spiritual development, tempered the harshness of his rule by the sweetness of her character and influence; and many a time pleaded successfully for the manumission of a slave, restrained his proud spirit and his thirst for distinction and territorial aggrandisement, and interceded for the lives of prisoners taken in war.

"That life, the second of the seven, terminated on the field of battle, where he fell mortally wounded; and entered on his departure into the second sphere. When he was again incarnated, after another lapse of many centuries, he passed into the planet Mars, which he described as far superior to the earth, geologically, scenically, and climatically; and peopled by human beings of a much higher type than terrestrials; so much so, indeed, that angels can mingle with and instruct them. Many of the speaker's statements with respect to the conditions of existence there tally very closely with those communicated to the famous French astronomer, Camille Flammarion, by a spirit who had visited Mars; and he added that those conditions are even nobler now than when he was an inhabitant of it. His brief life upon the planet was devoted to the acquisition of love and knowledge; not obtained for his own sake, but to be afterwards employed for the benefit and happiness of others.

"Thence he passed into the third sphere, and after the lapse of further centuries, the call was made for some spirit to perform a specific work on earth—some one who would be courageous, unwavering, and true; and who would become a saviour and a martyr. He did not feel worthy to undertake such a mission; but he was deeply anxious to make atonement for the errors and sins of his second existence, and he was reincarnated accordingly.

"In this, his fourth life, he was born into a state of pain, peril, persecution, and suffering. It was an age of bloodshed, bigotry, religious intolerance, and merciless oppression. It was the period of the Inquisition. He was mocked at, reviled, assailed with every evil epithet that malignity and opprobrium could devise; stoned, imprisoned, sentenced to death at the stake, and finally burnt alive. But when the flames enveloped him, amidst the hooting and yelling of an angry and excited crowd, ministering spirits threw around his body a magnetic atmosphere that rendered him impervious to physical anguish; and he passed into a still higher sphere—the fourth—on escaping from the trammels of the flesh.

"Then followed some years of rest, and when he was born again, he opened his eyes in the abode of a poor family, and the obligation of labouring for his daily bread was laid upon him. He was uneducated, but a flash of inspiration fell upon him, from those higher intelligences in the unseen world, who are the channels through which all original ideas, all inventions, and all pure and noble thoughts are transmitted to mankind. Through their instrumentality he was enabled to make a great scientific discovery, which was received with mockery and derision. But while man scoffed at and reviled him, God blessed him; and when he once more passed into the unseen world, it was to attain a still higher region—the fifth sphere—and deeper spiritual insight.

"In his next and penultimate incarnation, he was born a poet, and had for his companion, comforter, consoler, life long friend and loving wife, the being who had been appointed to sustain that tender and exquisite relationship towards him through the measureless ages of eternity. When released, he entered the sixth sphere.

"After this existence had terminated, and another interval had been spent in the spirit-world, the speaker was clothed upon with the garments of mortality for the last time. Born into a princely house, he became the consort of a sovereign, and as such laboured, under divine guidance, to promote the welfare of her people; to alleviate poverty, to diminish vice, to remove the causes of disease, to aid in the spread of knowledge, to combat ignorance and prejudice; to foster science, art, and letters; to share and by sharing, lighten the heavy burdens laid upon his wife, to devote as much of his time as he could possibly spare to the moral and intellectual nurture of his children; to visit the fatherless and the widowless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world; always feeling with all humility, and acknowledging with all reverence, that whatsoever might be the ability with which he had been gifted, whatsoever opportunities of beneficence were bestowed upon him, whatsoever good he might accomplish, were the work of a Higher Power than himself, and to whom, through His ministering spirits, all praise, glory, and gratitude must be ascribed.

"Lately he (the speaker) had received one of his grandsons into the spirit-world, and had carried comfort and consolation to his sorrowing father and mother; impressing both, as much and as often as it was in his power, in order that they may worthily discharge what-

ever exalted functions may hereafter devolve upon them. 'Do not address me as your Royal Highness,' said he, in tones of gentle remonstrance. 'All such earthly distinctions have no place here, where the greatest is the servant of the least."

MATERIALIZATION IN SYDNEY.

A Seance with Mrs. Mellon.

The Editor of this Journal, during a recent visit to Sydney, was favored with an invitation to attend a seance with the above celebrated medium for materialization, held in the room of the Society for Psychic Culture, Bathurst Street, on the evening of Easter Monday. The room (which is on the first floor) is about 22 feet by 18, with brick walls plastered on the inside, with only one door, which is in one corner, the window being in the middle of the further end of the room. To the right of this is a space of about 6 feet to the right hand corner of the room, the blank wall extending thence to the door. The corner, for about 5 feet each way, is covered with a thin dark material to give a better background, and those present were invited to sound the wall and floor, which were palpably solid. Across the corner, at the height of about 8 feet, was stretched a rod on which were hung dark colored curtains. The sitters, numbering about twenty, were arranged in two rows forming the arc of a circle extending from the outer side of the window to the wall near the back of the door. Within this enclosed space, and immediately facing the improvised cabinet sat Mrs. Mellon, in black attire, except for a white handkerchief over her shoulders for a time, to distinguish her position more clearly to the sitters. On a table under the window, a foot or two from the adjoining angle of the cabinet, were placed a small bell, a box of chocolates, a pencil and sheet of paper. There was also a musical box at the other end of the table.

Mr. D. J. Davis, who has the sole conduct of the business arrangements, gave a short preliminary address on the importance of the conditions, impressing on the ticket-holders the necessity of compliance with certain rules.

Mr. Mellon was seated outside the circle in the corner farthest from the cabinet, the gas shaded with a pink globe was now turned down so as to be equal to about one candle light, and as the musical box did not act satisfactorily, the company sang a hymn. Shortly after its conclusion a slender female form, clad in white drapery and about 5 feet high, appeared first in the centre, next at the right end, then at the left end of the curtains, Mrs. Mellon remaining seated outside the curtains the whole time. She then divested herself of the white kerchief previously mentioned and entered the cabinet. After some more singing by the company, a child's voice (said to be Cissy's, through Mrs. Mellon) was heard behind the curtains speaking familiarly to the members of the circle whom she knew and requesting an introduction to those she was unacquainted with. Presently a little black face was seen peeping through the curtains, first at one part, then at another, until finally the whole form (which appeared less than four feet in height) emerged, and ultimately reached the table, took the bell in its hand and rang it loudly, dropping it on the floor as it retreated to the cabinet. The next to appear was a tall female form, at first unknown to the sitters, but subsequently claimed by a lady as her guardian. Next came "Geordie," a form well known to the writer as frequently appearing at Mrs. Spriggs' seances some ten years since. In height and general appearance the figure was the same, including the black beard which was a striking feature in Geordie's appearance, but from our position the other features were not clear enough for identification. In addition to several attentions to the company, Geordie wished the writer good evening, and in reply to a question from one of the sitters whether he knew us before, replied, "I should think I did." Next a little form appeared that was at first supposed to be Cissy, but Cissy corrected the error by speaking through her medium from behind the curtains, and telling us it was "Pocha," a control of the late Miss Wood, several friends of both of whom were known to the sitters. Cissy appeared at the centre opening of the curtains with only the head and upper part of the bust materialised, first sinking half way to the floor as if to dematerialize and gradually rising again to her full height. She also at one time came just outside the end curtain and shook a chair, then with increasing force lifted it and dropped it on the floor twice. Geordie's somewhat husky voice was again heard from within. Unseen, he gave some last words and messages, and thus closed the sitting. It should be added that there was no tedious waiting for the phenomena, and that Mrs. Mellon shortly regained consciousness, which it is understood is lost during the greater part of the time she occupies the cabinet.

Considering that this was only the third meeting of the circle, and as the elements of it have been different to a slight extent on each occasion, the seance was a most satisfactory one, giving ocular demonstration that the forms were distinct from the medium, whose isolation from any of the company by a space of some 7 or 8 feet prevented any possibility of confederacy.

SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS.

From "Spiritualism,"
By J. W. Edmonds and G. T. Dexter, M.D.

(Section Thirty-four.)

Tuesday, June 7th, 1853.

When the Doctor first came in, you read him some extracts from a work purporting to be a life of Lord Chancellor Bacon. There were some traits true and others not so, evidencing a want of just appreciation of the true character of the man as he was, in the full exercise of his mind, and in the pride of that mind and strength.

I believe I had ever, from my earliest youth, a strong desire to understand not only the laws of nature, but the application of those laws to every condition of life, matter, and man.

This feeling was a leading feature of my mind; and I think you will find, on examination of my decisions, or charge, or essays, or my writings of any kind, that the conclusions or processes of reasoning, or the points of argument, were all predicted on the idea, that man possessing a mind capable of comparing and investigating, should be permitted the full and free exercise of the tendencies (proper and just) of his intellect, without any impediment by enactment, or prejudice, or zeal.

That I erred as a man, I cannot deny; that I was tainted with the habits and customs of time and society, I honestly admit; but that I had not at heart the advancement of my race, that I did not labour for its good, and that I did not forestall both age, education, and public opinion, I proclaim to be a libel on my true character and motives, as also a base attempt to shield the wrong others conceived and executed, by ascribing to me that of which I was not and could not have been guilty. That I was ardent, enthusiastic, and persistent, is true; that I contributed much to the enlightenment of my country, and advanced her in the estimation of the learned and good of all nations, is likewise true.

That I had a proper idea of what belonged to my position, and out of that position, as well as in it, gathered round me the highest intellects of the age, and reduced the unsettled vagaries of speculation and false practice to a system of pertinent sense, I think no one will deny. But I was beset by trials, and temptations, and seducements, to which I may at times have listened and yielded. But, too, the tendencies of my soul, even when plunged into all the intricacies of legal perplexity and all the false mysteries and pseudo-profundity of diplomacy, were upward, forward, and for good. The good I have done speaks for itself—it will live for ever; the evil to which I was accessory is perhaps repented of, and may ere this have been swallowed up in my advance and progression. At least this hope has comforted me, and I may not be permitted to doubt.

Bacon.

I then remarked: How closely it must be that I had been watched by them; for it seemed as if every thought, however secret I might have deemed it to be, was known to them, and I desired to know if others had been watched as close?

It was answered:—

Perhaps few need watching as much; for errant tendencies require reasonable stringencies to keep them within limits. Oh, Judge, if you are watched, it is the vigils of love that are seeking your welfare, and striving to guide you straight to the high goal to which life, truth, and love impel you! Yes, here is the Doctor, he is kept and guided by a curbed bit.

Yes, it has been a special, direct, and constant watching of your mind, in its thought, and in the thought's action.

I assure you that the object before you is a high and glorious, and a purely good and holy one. If the redemption of man from error, if the teaching of truth and knowledge is not a purpose worthy to live for, yes, and to die for, then you can well understand that watching would be of no account; but if it be so, then to watch you both is to make you like ourselves and of ourselves. When I say that you feel our care and influence, I do no more than justice to your intellect; and when you can stand on the very verge of time and look back on your path through the world, you will then see how your footsteps have been led, how your way has been directed, and more fully appreciate what we have done for you together.

THE STRYCHNINE CURE FOR SNAKE-BITE AND THE *ARGUS*.

The discovery made some years ago by Dr. A. Mueller, of Yackandandah, that in strychnine injected under the skin in large doses we have at last obtained the long sought antidote to snake poison, is of special interest to Spiritualists, since Dr. Mueller has been for many years an earnest and consistent advocate of our cause, and until lately contributed frequently to these columns.

We notice with pleasure that his discovery is now being recognised in the scientific world, and that he will not share the fate of other benefactors of our race, who were not awarded the merit due to them until long after they had quitted the earth sphere.

The peculiar and somewhat hostile attitude which the *Argus* took up from the very first towards Dr. Mueller's discovery, has always appeared to us most absurd and inappropriate. If the use of strychnine in the manner prescribed by the doctor is of no avail and even dangerous in snake-bite, it is surely not the task of a daily newspaper, but of the medical experts to point this out and give judgment on a purely medical subject.

But though this judgment has been given in favour of the antidote, which we notice is now used in every case of snake-bite, and used with success, still the *Argus* continues nagging away at the subject, and whole columns are written on the strychnine delusion and its dangers, as if the hundred-eyed thunderer of Collins street were general medical adviser to the public, authorised to warn against the use of any drug prescribed by the doctors.

The reason for its anomalous and ridiculous utterances on this pet subject has come out at last. It appears that Mr. H. Willoughby, the sub-editor of the paper took some part in investigating the merits of Professor Halford's ammonia treatment of snake-bite, and had some correspondence at the time with an Indian snake-expert, the late Mr. Vincent Richards. On the strength of this correspondence, and a small modicum of superficial knowledge gained thereby, Mr. Willoughby now thinks himself justified to oppose a scientific discovery that has conferred an inestimable boon on the people of Australia and of all other countries infested with venemous snakes. Because the ammonia treatment was found unreliable, Mr. Willoughby jumps to the hasty conclusion that the strychnine treatment is equally so, and issues his solemn caveat against it. A more ill-chosen rôle he could not possibly have essayed to play.

THE PERISPIRIT.

When the medical scientists of England, France and Germany, who had been scoffing at Mesmerism for years, as either a delusion or a fraud, discovered that its phenomena were indisputable, they coolly appropriated it and rebaptized it by the name of Hypnotism.

Something of the same kind is about to take place, it seems, with regard to the aura, perispirit, or astral body, the existence of which has been so long known to Spiritualists. But of course it would never do to speak of it as either one or the other, for this would be tantamount to crying *Peccavi* for all the ridicule so perseveringly heaped upon us by those who have derided the possibility of any such thing as this aura or perispirit. So it is to be spoken of as "Exteriorised Sensibility"—a new name for an old reality. Thus much, at least, we learn from an article in the Paris *Siècle* of the 1st of March, headed "*L' Exteriorisation de la Sensibilité.*"

We translate the more important portions of it:—

"The science of hypnotism, to which of late years so many inquirers whose good faith is indisputable, and whose experiments are so disconcerting, have devoted themselves, has just made a new step in the way of strange discoveries.

"Lieut. Col. de Rochas d' Aiglun, administrator of the Ecole Polytechnique, one of those passionate lovers who are endeavouring to elucidate the mysterious note of interrogation, which is now so sharply propounded by previous labours, has just published a more extraordinary book than any of those which we have previously read on the subject. It is entitled *Les Etats Profonds de l' Hypnose;* and unveils a new psychic condition of the human being—a very singular state, which he calls "the exteriorisation of sensibility."

"Around the subject exists a zone of sensible fluid. . . . . He is enveloped by that atmosphere, which constitutes, in some sort, a prolongation of his sensible being. . . . . Moreover, the sensible zone can traverse substances, may pass in spite of intervening walls from one room to another, and the subject may feel some kind of contact in a chamber in which he himself is not present at the time. One substance alone can interrupt the transmission of the sensibility in that zone—water. . . . .

"M. de Rochas has physically and scientifically studied that zone of sensibility with the attention and authority which no one is better capable than himself of bringing to bear upon such researches. He has investigated them just as he has heretofore investigated the undulations of sound and light. He has even succeeded in calculating the angle of refraction, which is eighteen degrees; as the angle of refraction of water has been also determined.

"These are fantastical discoveries, it is true, and they seem to belong to the domain of the improbable and the mysterious. As such they disconcert the notions hitherto reputed to be unquestionable; and they are so contradictory of 'truths' which appeared to be self-evident, that we may well ask with a feeling of anguish, where will the revelations of hypnotism stop in the time to come?"

Liet. Col. de Rochas d' Aiglun, we may add, is the author of several military and scientific works in the French language; and among the latter we may mention the following:—"La Science dans l' Antiquité," and "Les Origines de la Science, et ses premières Applications." He is also the editor of the "Revue du Cercle Militaire, des Armèes de Terre et de Mer;" while as the head of the greatest military school in France, the Colonel is not likely to announce a discovery of this kind, without being perfectly sure of the ground he is standing on.

We have received No. 2 of *Discovery*, a journal devoted to Invention, Scientific Discovery, and the Application of Science to Industrial Purposes. It contains a number of interesting records of modern inventions, articles on ærial navigation, underground locomotion, and tropical ants, some scientific notes, and numerous illustrations of the subjects treated upon. It is a twenty-page quarto, with cover, is published fortnightly, at Sun Buildings, Bourke-street W., and sold at 3d. per copy.

ADELAIDE SPIRITUALISTIC ASSOCIATION.

THE Adelaide Spiritualistic Association held their usual monthly social at their rooms, King William Street, on April 7th. The President, Mr. Charles Perrit, occupied the chair, and there was a good attendance. Mr. Boyd gave an interesting lecture on the subject of "Conscience."

The lecturer, in the course of his remarks, said:—"Everyone who believes in the teaching of Christianity reverently regards conscience as a divinely-appointed moral indicator of right and wrong. But what we call conscience, when closely examined, is found to be simply a moral abstraction, the result of our early training. Personally, I am of the opinion that we are born without conscience, which is acquired later from our surroundings—in fact, manufactured according to instructions. If conscience is the dread of punishment for wrong-doing, it may be cultivated as readily in animals as in man, and the 'still, small voice' of our religions literature may be as characteristic of our dog as of ourselves. This peculiar feeling of having done wrong is as much a reality as the air we breathe; but the power of distinguishing right from wrong must depend entirely upon early training. Take, for instance, the case of a young savage, who is taught at his mother's knee that, in order to please the Great Spirit, and win distinction in his tribe, he must take a certain number of human lives. If he is a *good* boy he will kill: if a *bad* boy, he will *not* kill. Again, the Hindoo mother who throws her offspring into the Ganges, consoles herself with the thought that she has done a most praiseworthy and religious act, for which she will be most amply rewarded in this life and the next. Viewed in the light, I fail to see how conscience can possibly be a divine attribute. We hear a good deal of 'the noble army of martyrs,' who have suffered, rightly or wrongly for conscience' sake, and who have marched to the stake or the torture, ready and willing to 'die for the faith that is in them.' But admiring Christians lose sight of the fact that thousands of human beings of other creeds, to whom the saving principle of Christianity is unknown, have done and are doing the same thing. The Hindoo who throws himself under the ponderous wheels of Juggernaut's car, to be mangled for the glory of *his* god, dies for the faith that is in *him* just as much as the most ardent Christian among the army of martyrs. Even in death the inherent selfishness of humanity shows itself in the craven fear of eternal punishment, side by side with the hope of reward.

As we examine the nature of the judge and of the punishment out of which the Christian conscience is manufactured, we find that 'sound' Christian teaching brings the conscience at an early age in close contact with a real, substantial, fiery hell. For instance, in our courts of justice, the judge asks a child-witness: 'Do you know where you will go to if you tell a lie?' and the credibility of the witness depends upon the answer being sufficiently fiery.

Shakespeare was fully alive to the priest-instilled fear of the supernatural, and we have it exemplified in the characters of Richard III. and Macbeth. Both were men whom nothing human could daunt; and yet anything, however harmless, coming from the confines of another world, was sufficient to paralyze them with fear. This fact of the irrestible influence of the supernatural upon human nature, should open a wide vista of thought to rational minds. Especially should it prove to Spiritualists that they hold in their hands the highest power of educating human conscience, knowing, as they do, that they are surrounded by the spirits of their beloved dead; and believing, as they must, in the possibility of establishing a daily and hourly communication with the departed. This belief should have a greater influence in ordering our actions, and shaping and moulding our morality, than the selfish hope of reward in a future life, or the craven fear of eternal punishment, so lovingly inculcated by the catechism of the churches. Reason, and and not religion, can alone successfully call forth the highest attributes of manhood and womanhood, and teach us to unerringly to discern, and fearlessly to do the right in the face of every obstacle."

A vote of thanks to the lecturer was carried amidst great applause. Songs and recitations were rendered by ladies and gentlemen present, and Mr. Glassboron, from Sydney, gave a most interesting account of materialising séances in that in that city.

Arrangements were made for holding public circles in the rooms; and a pleasant and successful evening terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman.

A NEW SPIRITUALISTIC MAGAZINE.

WE have received a prospectus of a new monthly magazine, the first number of which was to be published April 2nd, to be edited and managed by Mrs. E. H. Britten, and entitled "The Unseen Universe." Mrs. Britten states that it will not trench upon the ground occupied by the London Spiritual papers, but supplement them with matter that cannot be included in their columns.

Its contents will comprehend Spiritualism, Occultism, Ancient Magic, Modern Mediumship, and all subjects that pertain to the Whence, What and Whitherward of Humanity.

It is also announced that the second volume of that deeply interesting work, "Ghostland," will be published as a serial in this journal. The English subscription prices are advertised in another column.

WE have received a copy of "The Evolutionist," the official organ of the Brooklyn Ethical Association, of which Herbert Spencer is an honorary member, Its object or effort is said to be the utilisation of the enthusiasm for humanity which is already organised in Church and State, to educate it and direct it along scientific and evolutionary lines, and thus to bring all workers for human welfare upon a common platform, and concentrate and direct their efforts towards common beneficent ends. Amongst other good things which the journal contains is an article by Ellen E. Kenyon, P.D.M., on Evolution and Education, the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the basic feature of the Spiritualists' Progressive Lyceum; that is, that instead of aiming to form the child, the teacher should aim to direct its growth. A study of *how* to do this, inevitably leads towards the Evolutionists' camp. The paper is edited by Dr. Lewis G. Janes and Jas. A. Skilton, and published in Summer-street Boston.

THE "Coming Day," a new monthly journal, edited by that liberal and eminently spiritual thinker, Rev. John Page Hopps, is to hand. It contains a discourse on "Our Fathers' Church," embodying the editor's ideal—a church without either walls or creed, intended to take in all unsectarian religionists. A sketch and analysis of the late Mr. Spurgeon, by the editor; and an article on co-operation; both are excellent. The journal is very neatly got up by Williams and Norgate, of Covent Garden. The publishing price is threepence.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHIC CULTURE, SYDNEY.

THE third half-yearly meeting of the above was held in our room, 121 Bathurst Street, on April 1st, the attendance was large and enthusiastic; the Secretary's Report and Balance Sheet were very satisfactory, showing the number of members to be 86, including 4 honorary ones, and the balance in hand over £2 after paying all expenses and adding to our stock of furniture. Mrs. Havee was re-elected President unopposed, Messrs. Campbell and Garton Vice-Presidents for ensuing half-year. Our most energetic Secretary, Mr. A. Clarke, retired on account of leaving town, regretted by all. Our old friend, Mr. Avis was elected Secretary, and the following ladies and gentleman to act as the Committee, Mesdames James, Havee, Cross and Taylor, Messrs. Davies, Moses, Taylor and Morton. Some discussion then took place with regard to admitting the public to our Sunday nights' services; it was decided to continue as hitherto, viz.: to welcome anybody who is earnestly in search of the truth of our philosophy; our room has been inconveniently

crowded at times, but we are considering to take a larger room in the near future.

Circles are now held in the room nearly every night. Mrs. Mellon has a materializing séance for subscribers every Monday night. Mrs. Gelately conducts a developing circle on Tuesday. Mrs. Keelie on Wednesday, Mr. Avis on Thursday, and Mrs. Havee, a circle for healing and developement on Friday nights; the attendance varies from ten to twenty sitters, all doing good work. Votes of thanks to the officers, mediums, and our organist, Miss Gelately, were passed, and some excellent vocal and instrumental music given by the Misses Gelately and Sharp and Mrs. Cross, and a masterly recitation by Mr. Waldron.

Yours, &c.,
J. O. AVIS,
Sydney, April 15th, 92. *Hon. Sec.*

SPIRITUALISM IN SOUTHERN RUSSIA.

THE Odessa correspondent of the *Revue Spirite* communicates to that magazine some highly interesting details of phenomena which have occurred in that city. On the 3rd of April, last year, some members of a circle which meets in that city, had quitted it for Kieff, nearly 300 miles distant, as the crow flies.

"As the train was proceeding at full speed, an invisible being played airs to them, and invisible hands presented them with bouquets of flowers through the open window of the coupé."

On the 4th of April, the spirits Pierro and De Saget announced (to their friends in Odessa), the safe arrival of the travellers at Kieff. On a sheet of paper they wrote what the absentees had been doing at such and such an hour, which proved to be true. The heads of the convent wished to be present at a séance at the Belle Vue Hotel, where the mediums were staying. The members of the circle at Odessa wrote a letter to Kieff, and as soon as it was finished, Samuel Bourkser (one of the sitters) begged of Pierro to carry it, which he did, saying "*Au revoir.*" This was at ten o'clock at night; and the spirit Glinka said, "We have communicated everything," and disappeared.

On the 5th of April, the guides announced, at nine o'clock in the evening, that the travellers had inspected Kieff, and that at that moment they were giving a séance to the monks. "The manifestations are astonishing them. Your letter was received at Kieff one minute after it was written. The monks have become believers. They will come to Odessa."

On the 7th of April, they learned from their guides that the travellers had quitted Kieff for Odessa. Immediately afterwards, Samuel received a telegram confirming the statement.

On the 10th of April, the circle heard the most beautiful and extraordinary melodies. It was Liszt who was playing. The guides announced the hypnotism of Constantine (Novoselski, a member of the circle), and this having been done he was seated at the piano, which he began to play with amazing swiftness and with an exquisite sentiment. Chopin, they said, was controlling his hands. He was succeeded by Offenbach, and then by Strauss. All this took place in a strong light; and in every case Constantine seemed to have developed all of a sudden into a great artist."

A COLOURED WRAPPER.

SUBSCRIBERS receiving their copies in a GREEN wrapper will please understand that their Subscription is over Six Months in arrear, and kindly forward 6/ promptly. Those receiving a YELLOW wrapper are over Twelve Months in arrear; and unless subscription is paid, we shall reluctantly be compelled to stop the paper.

THE "HERALD," of April 6th, gives an account of a Séance held in the house where Mrs. Williams was murdered, *by some members of the Society of Spiritualists.* The officers of the local Society are unaware of the fact, and if any member was present at the séance, they were not there officially. Criminal investigation is outside the declared objects of the body, which are "The investigation and advancement of Spiritual truths and purposes."

MRS. HARRIS,

Having Returned to Melbourne, has Resumed Practice, and will hold Public Circles at her Residence, No. 324 Gore St., Fitzroy (formerly Mrs. Reynold's), on Wednesday Evenings, at 8 o'clock. Admission 1/.
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