Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—*Paul.* "LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe.*

No. 430.—VOL. IX. [Registered as a Newspaper.] SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1889. [Registered as a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.

CONTENTS.

Spiritualism—What is it?	149	True Christian Spiritualism	158
The Spirit World of the Orient	150	Laurence Oliphant and Spiritualism	158
Magic in Egypt	151	Astrology and Public Events	158
Jottings	152	The "Evans" Exposure	159
Rappings by Abnormal Agency	153	A Perplexing Question	159
Advice to an Inquiring Mind	154	Society Work	160
Raison d'être of Spiritualism	155		

[The Editor will be absent from England and beyond the reach of the Post during the month of April. He expects to be back by the 1st of May, and till that time begs the consideration of his correspondents.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

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

SPIRITUALISM: WHAT IS IT?

The reading of Laurence Oliphant's letter, published in another column, of Mr. Kiddle's paper in the *Banner of Light* on "The Philosophy of Spirit Identification," and of Mr. A. E. Newton's article in the *North American Review*, "Why I am a Spiritualist," has drawn my mind to some questions that seem urgent in reference to Spiritualism.

It is well known (says Mr. Newton) that there are Spiritualists and Spiritualists:—

"In some quarters the term Spiritualist is regarded as almost synonymous with opened-mouthed credulity, wild fanaticism, general looseness of morals, scoffing irreligion, and measureless folly. Without attempting to deny that some occasion has been given by persons called or calling themselves Spiritualists for such an estimate, I shall endeavour to show that the term more properly applies to persons who hold convictions and cherish aspirations of which no rational, pure-minded, or devout man need be ashamed, but which are worthy the serious regard of all thoughtful people."

It is so, and Oliphant evidently got his conception of Spiritualism from a very superficial acquaintance with the average Spiritualist with whom Mr. A. E. Newton does not "want to be classed." This idea he lived to revise, as will a good many other people who hold erroneous ideas as to what Spiritualism really implies, that is, if their minds are honestly open to the truth and fairly free from conventional and inherited prejudices. It is the misfortune of Spiritualism that it has been forced on public notice in some of its most unlovely aspects. It is unfortunate, too, from one point of view, that what my American friends call "cranks" are freely attracted to it; though, from an opposite point of view, as Mr. Page Hopps reminded us recently, these are the men who break up the fallow ground, the men who naturally gravitate to new modes of thought, and, in their way, render them useful service.

No doubt this is true: but Spiritualism must not be judged by the eccentricities of some of its professors, any more than by the revelations of the police-court, or in the fierce light of the most recent "exposure." These are the accidents—in its present phase the *inseparable accidents*—of its existence. To regard them as in any way of the *essence* of the subject is the common blunder of the ignorant. Spiritualists who have penetrated below the repulsive exterior are not in danger of falling into such an error as to regard even the phenomena of Spiritualism as any essential part of the system. They are the porch, the ante-chamber through which most of us pass to the room in which we live in that great mansion which we inhabit. If we have been content to remain in the porch, we have not penetrated the mansion; if the phenomena that have attracted our attention still engage it exclusively, we cannot boast much of our knowledge. In my judgment the most encouraging sign of the times, amid much that must be admitted to be discouraging, is that Spiritualists are beginning to recognise this.

In being subject to misrepresentation and misconception Spiritualism is in no way peculiar. I presume that the conception of the early followers of the Christ formed by the Scribes and Pharisees and Rulers would not have been flattering:—

"There is no form of belief, no system of religious faith, or of rationalistic philosophy even, extant among men (says Mr. Newton), but has its lower as well as its higher interpretations—its unworthy as well as its worthy representatives. Christianity is surely no exception to this rule. The crude notions and practices prevalent among the more uncultivated of its professors differ widely from the convictions and observances approved in the most intelligent and refined churches in Christendom. And often members of the same sect or church are found greatly at variance in their conceptions and expositions of Christianity, as well as in their practical exemplifications of the same. Fair-minded inquirers will judge any system by its best, rather than its worst, expositions."

True as that is, we must admit that a tree is usually and rightly judged by its fruits, and that the sample we present is not always enticing. All the little apples are at the top of the basket—that is the worst of it. One must dive down to the bottom to find the really fine and sweet fruits.

When we come to consider what definition we find adequate to the term Spiritualism, I am not sure that I quite agree with Mr. Newton. Though I have little objection to what he says, it seems to me not to go far enough. We may dismiss the definitions of the dictionaries. Usually inexact when the writer deals with familiar ideas and words, they are wholly worthless when he plunges into a land unknown to him. Mr. Newton's postulates "(1) That man is in reality a spirit, or a spiritual being; (2) that he is capable, as a spirit, of surviving the death of his physical body, and (3) of living on as a conscious entity; (4) in a world or state which, though invisible, is not far removed from our mundane existence," do not land us very far. The *proof* that man has a future existence, leaving *faith* aside, depends on the evidence we can get of the existence in another state of those who have passed through the change that we call death. The pious belief, the universal tradition, are not proof. But even one "dead man" who "being dead, yet speaketh" is a very crucial fact. A Spiritualist, first of all, is one who has proven for himself, or has accepted as proven on adequate evidence, the fact that death does not kill the spirit. But this conviction has far-reaching results, as Mr. Newton points out. It is impossible to dissociate Spiritualism, of any sort worth the

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name, from religion and morals. For when a man becomes assured that he will live after his probation here he naturally seeks to know where and how: and equally naturally he seeks his information from those who, having passed to that state, are qualified to give it. He finds that there is a broad agreement as to the essential points which most concern him, and he arrives at the conclusion that *belief* is little and *life* and *conduct* much. He learns that his character is his own production as it is his own property, and that each act of his daily life is a factor in its evolution. When the probation of earth-life is over he goes to the place that he has prepared for himself. His Spiritualism, when he realises that, has already entered into the sphere of religion.

But this is not all. Not only is he correlated with the world of spirit; not only has he duties and obligations here by virtue of the future that awaits him; but he is himself a spirit, living as really in a spirit world as he ever will. His body is an accident that death disposes of. His spirit is himself that no accidental change can affect. It is now "in the prison-house of the body," bound by the limitations of the flesh, more or less imperfectly adapted to its environment, possessed of inherent powers which it very imperfectly realises. The Spiritualist, who is worthy of the name, will concern himself as much with the study of himself as a spirit as with intercourse with those who, "after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh," are able to return to this earth and commune with him. Spiritualism is therefore as much concerned with introspection as it is with that prying into futurity which most people consider to be its exclusive concern. The true Spiritualist must be an all-round man; not merely an Occultist, for Occultism is but the fringe of the vast subject that engages him: not merely an inquirer into psychical problems, for that narrows him down to self and limits his view: not a fanatic in matters religious: not an enthusiast. None of these things merely, but a man so convinced of his future life, of his own part in moulding it, of his spirit's infinite potencies, that he lives here, a student of spirit in his own self, in all that surrounds him, and in all that he can press forward to attain. And this if he be, he is, in the relations of this life, in the certainty of that which is to come, in the best sense of the word a Spiritualist.

THE LATE SAMUEL CARTER HALL.

In 1883 Mr. S. C. Hall sent us the following verses. It is not inappropriate now to quote them in reference to himself, the "good and faithful servant" who has entered behind the vail:—

IN MEMORIAM.

When a good man is called from earth,
To have, in Heaven, a second birth,
And hear the loving Master's voice:
Millions of brother-saints rejoice!

The "Welcome" words we also hear:
(Earth-friends who pay the tribute tear)
"Good, faithful servant, enter thou"!

He is not gone who leaves us now:
The good man chants a joyful hymn,
In train-bands of the Seraphim!

July, 1883. S. C. Hall.

"He is curious to wash, dress and perfume his body, but careless of his soul! The one shall have many hours, the other not so many minutes. This shall have three or four suits in a year, but that must wear its old clothes still."—William Penn.

"During many a long, dry, sound, sober exhortation which has been inflicted upon long-suffering meetings, we have seen men exhorted into sleep, and exhorted into helpless stupidity, into yawning and weariness; and there would be but a single truth that seemed to touch a genuine chord of feeling during the whole meeting, and that was the truth that it was time to close the meeting."—H. Ward Beecher.

THE SPIRIT WORLD OF THE ORIENT.

GHOST STORIES, &c., FROM OLD JAPAN.

Done into English by C. Pfoundes.
(*Omoie Tetszunotszuke.*)

Prologue.—All the world over, in every land, from all time, amongst civilised and savage peoples, there has been an intuitive *knowledge* of the unseen world of spirits; or else why does the traveller, the man of research, find traces in legend and literature of folk-lore, ancient and modern, old people's reminiscences, young folks' tales of ghosts, apparitions, ghouls, gnomes, fairies, hobgoblins, &c.? The Australian Aborigines, lowest amongst humanity, the Pacific Islanders, from New Zealand to everywhere, from Africa, America, it comes to us, this deeply-rooted belief in the spirit, without which there could not be superstition or religion, and the lands and peoples have to be discovered yet where such has not yet existed.

For many reasons stories from old Japan, through authentic channels, will be welcome to others besides the mere folk-lore student.

Unique amongst nations in the stability of many of its institutions, it has received literature, art, religion, and much besides from the main land; and preserved and developed all received—whilst much has been lost in its native place; Buddhism, for instance, no longer the religion of Benares and the neighbourhood, once the centre of Buddhism, now flourishing in Japan, far beyond Ceylon even, in its elevated forms. The popular literature of old Japan teems with spiritualistic ideas; that mystic and occult forces are recognised need not, therefore, surprise us; and the universal belief in the immortality of the soul and of a spirit world is illustrated by the innumerable ghost stories, a few specimens of which will be given in these pages from time to time.

Spirit Rapping in Old Japan was practised mostly by women, professionals, who wandered from place to place, homeless and nameless, like mendicant nuns, and who wore a peculiar garb and head-dress, by which they were to be recognised. Their stock-in-trade appeared to consist of a small box, the contents of which were a mystery to the uninitiated, about the size and shape of an ordinary 1lb. biscuit tin. It is believed, however, generally that in the southern provinces, somewhere, these are prepared in strict seclusion, a dog being buried alive, the head alone being left just above ground, food and drink placed almost within reach, but the animal permitted to die in the agonies of starvation tempted by such tantalising proximity of what was craved for; just at death the head being dexterously cut off with a very sharp instrument; this was prepared then by smoking and drying in the smoke of certain plants, and finally boxed up. Only the craft, a close corporation, really knew the process.

The "medium" carried a small bow, made of some special material, the string of which was constantly "twanged" on the aforesaid box. A small cup of water was placed in front of the medium, who "splashed" the water towards the inquirer. If a living person's spirit was to be summoned, this was done with a piece of some wood having mystic properties; but if the spirit of the departed, a leaf from an offering at a grave of a plant used for such purposes, is used. Then after some form of ritual, an incantation, the spirit *speaks* through the medium.

Ghost Raising in Old Japan was supposed to be possible, and many methods were employed to essay direct communication with the spirits of the dead. By placing in an ordinary domestic oil lamp one hundred rush lights (pith of common rush), then reciting an incantation of one hundred sentences, removing one wick for each, then finally blow out the last, and the spirit would appear *in the dark*.

Clairvoyance by glass, crystals, polished metal (mirrors, &c.), pure water, and prepared liquids is too complicated

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a subject to be dealt with in a "Jotting," but more anon.

PHYSIOGNOMY, PALMISTRY, and other branches of the Occult (now becoming familiar nearer home), were known and generally practised; but of late, the bureaucracy of younger natives discourage, and endeavour to suppress by edict, all these things, influenced by their missionary friends at home and abroad, and their acquired foreign ideas, many having travelled, and been *partially* educated in Europe, America, &c.

Haunted spots are numerous in every locality; fabulous creatures, from dragons to sprites, gnomes, demons, elementals, are believed to fill the air, but the educated natives affect to despise all this.

The common people, however, believe sincerely in many things, such as mothers returning to nurse their babes, left behind in this cruel, callous world. The nurses of orphans, therefore, take precautions to guard against this uncanny visitation; for it is said that the spirit-mother will take away the child's soul if she nurses it.

Parted lovers who remain true and pure and faithful and interchange vows to do so, may, and do, it is believed, visit each other on the death of either, but the survivor pines away rapidly, sickens, and dies.

A lover visiting the grave of the departed one, can by concentrated sincere thought, summon the spirit of the dead, even though in life the affection had not been consummated or even reciprocated. These visits usually end in the death of the survivor, who can only see a beautiful creature of the other sex, but a third party would only recognise a ghastly corpse or skeleton in burial clothes; and all gifts, ornaments, and tokens of affection would be found on the grave, at day-break, but unhallowed and unlucky to any one who should think of touching them.

THAT "MURDER WILL OUT" is exemplified in Japan by some proverbs and many ghost stories (some of which we hope to furnish later on).

The religious rites and social customs observed at death are numerous, and vary; the ideas and beliefs in some cases conflict, as there are several forms of faith, and many sects of each, especially amongst the followers of Buddhism.

The belief is universal that "something" leaves the body at death; some accounts relate that sounds like the fluttering of a bird, as escaping, are heard; and it is the invariable practice to open the windows to allow of the escape of the spirit of the dying. Again, it is maintained that sometimes the soul goes out as a lambent sphere; and there are stories of reckless and irreverent persons having attempted to stay its flight; one such tried to do so with a silk garment, with the result that the garment was "burned," and ever after had a powerful odour of smouldering fire, and the person and place became haunted to a very unpleasant extent with noises and mischievous, horrid-looking sprites. Where the spirits are supposed to dwell, &c., must be left for future narration.

(To be continued.)

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.

[Any acknowledgment of books received in this column neither precludes nor promises further notice.]

Fraternity. By CHARLES OLGILVIE. Lambert's London Library.

The Illustrated Practical Mesmerist. By W. DAVEY. (London: J. Burns.) Sixth Edition. Price 2s.

"I MUST call your attention to the mournful effects of dogma as a limitation upon piety itself. It is so much easier to think than to slay our sins, to be orthodox than to be holy, that we are very prone to set one activity in place of the other, and please ourselves in the pious and respectable look of it. If, too, we once pass into dogma and become active in it, we begin at once to overvalue it, mixing our pride with it, adding to our pride our will, to this our passions, and to these our prayers, till, finally, we become at once thoroughly religious in our way, and at the same time thoroughly abominable and wicked in our spirit. This class of characters are about the worst and most mischievous that are ever to be found in the Church."—H. BUSHNELL.

MAGIC IN EGYPT.

The Khedive sent to me one evening and said: "I have something curious to tell you. There is a Turk here in Cairo who wears a ring which he pretends is gifted with magic virtues. I have seen him and the ring—it is a plain hoop of gold set with a red stone, which is said to have come from Mecca. The Turk also showed me a plate of silver engraved with verses from the *Koran*. He explained that he could not work the charm himself, but required a child under ten years of age. The child takes the ring, the silver plate is put on his head, and in a little while the colour of the stone changes to white. Thereupon the child looks into the stone and sees in it visions, and can answer any questions." The Khedive went on to say, that being quite incredulous, he asked for permission to take the ring home and try it in private. The owner consented. So the Khedive took the ring to Ismailia Palace, where there happened to be a little girl eight years old belonging to an old nurse—an ignorant child unable to read or write.

When the plate of silver was laid on her head and the ring given into her hand, almost immediately she cried out, "The stone has turned to white!" The Khedive then asked questions about persons whom the child had not seen, and received correct descriptions. Another person present asked, "How many children have I?"

"Two sons and a daughter."

"That is right. What is the elder son like?"

"He wears a coat with a row of buttons down the front, and striped trousers, and has a sabre."

"What is the second son like?"

"He has a coat with two rows of buttons in front, little gold cushions on his shoulders, and an anchor embroidered on his cuffs."

The one was in the English army, the other in the Turkish navy, and both were absolutely unknown to the child. Collusion was impossible; for even a wizard would find it hard to penetrate into the ladies' apartments of the Khedive's palace. Moreover, the questions were too rapid and too varied to admit of shuffling or guessing answers. The Khedive's conclusion was—"I cannot believe it, and yet I cannot understand it."

After some talk about English mesmerists and clairvoyants, the Khedive related that once, before he came to the throne (Tewfik was the speaker), he consulted a soothsayer in company with the Minister of War. "What is the news for Egypt?' he asked.

The soothsayer demanded two minutes' delay, and then replied, "War with Abyssinia."

"Will the Egyptian army conquer?"

"Give me six minutes," replied the sorcerer.

At the end of that time his face became very troubled, his voice faltered, and his whole body shook as he answered, "The Egyptians will be defeated, and their army destroyed; only a small remnant shall be left." The Prince laughed at the prophecy and forgot it; but two months later the same Minister of War showed him a despatch from Upper Egypt, stating that the army had been utterly routed, and four battalions, out of six, annihilated. After showing the despatch, the Minister remarked, "Do you remember our friend the sorcerer?" And the Prince recollected. Now, as Khedive, he regards the thing as a curious coincidence.

Here Tonino Bey entered. The Khedive invited him to remain and retold to him in French the story of the ring. I thus heard it twice over, and the two versions tallied exactly. Before I left, the Khedive promised that he would try to get the ring again, and that I should witness some experiments. A few days later His Highness told me that he had seen the man with the ring, and asked to borrow it again, but the man became suspicious and alarmed. One of the Pashas at the Court had offered him £100 for the ring, which was 100 times its intrinsic value, but the offer was rejected. At the Khedive's second demand the magician was thoroughly frightened, thinking he should never see his treasure again, and bursting into tears he implored the Khedive not to take it away. Thereupon the Khedive said, "You are mistaken in thinking that I believe in the powers of your ring, or in things of the kind. I wish you good morning." The man's name was Ahmed Agha, but though I hunted Cairo over, I could find no trace of him; he was probably scared away from the city. But I heard another curious thing about him. The people said that he cured many sufferers of rheumatism by thrusting needles into their legs, and neck, or shoulders. No blood was let by the process, and no pain inflicted.—ALFRED J. BUTLER'S *Court Life in Egypt*, pp. 238-242.

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JOTTINGS.

Will anyone who feels charitably disposed explain to a bewildered editor what these advertisements, clipped from the *Times*, may conceivably mean? What is the "Hofwyl Society"? What is a "Baloon (1855)"? And who or what is the "Obrenovics Ghost"?:—

DR. SWANN'S NEW WORKS. Post 8vo. Series (Published for the Hofwyl Society).

An episode in the life of the Great Mexican Dictator. Post 8vo., 5s.

GENERAL SANTA ANNA'S GHOST. By EDWARD GIBBON SWANN, C.M.E., Ph.D., original Inventor of Military Baloons (1855), Inventor of the Apparatus and Application of Moderated Magnetism (1850). Author of "Laurie's Homœopathic Domestic Medicine" (the great edition of 1851) and other standard works of different reputed authors.

Shortly to be ready, large post 8vo., 4s.

THE OBRENOVICS GHOST and the "VAMPIRE" of PRINCE MICHAEL'S BIER. Sixth of the Ghost Series, but put forward to third, to illustrate the alarms and abdication of ex-King Milan. Domestic Scenes.

From the *Echo*. A fitting compliment to a very remarkable poem from a man little disposed to flattery:—

"This year—the jubilee of *Festus*—is to be commemorated by the issue of a special *édition de luxe* of the wonderful work of Mr. Philip James Bailey. Mr. Bailey wrote this book in three months, and before he was twenty-one years of age. So highly did Tennyson think of it that he wrote, 'I dare not say all I think of this book lest I should seem to exaggerate.' Thackeray, Macaulay, Arnold were all of the same opinion."

The March *Theosophist* has a notice (signed "R.H.") of Mr. C. C. Massey's translation of Du Prel's *Philosophy of Mysticism*, which is in marked and favourable contrast to notices that have appeared generally in the Press on that remarkable book. It has apparently fallen on the average critic with disastrous results to his reason and coherence.

Lucifer notices very favourably *Light through the Crannies*:—

"One of the most charming little books we have ever read . . . The parables are told with a grace and simplicity that will appeal to many far more than would any merely intellectual presentation of the ideas."

Professor Max Müller has been lecturing at Sheffield on "The Sacred Books of the East," viz., those of the only five countries which had produced them—India, Persia, China, Palestine, and Arabia. India he put in the foremost place as the mother of four great religions, each with its own sacred book. Palestine had produced three religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism.

Professor Max Müller laid down an important truth when he insisted on the evolution of religious faiths. Here are his weighty words:—

"The more we studied the history of the religions of the world the clearer it became that there was really no religion which could be called an individual religion in the sense of a religion created, as it were, *de novo*, or rather *ab ovo*, by one single person. This might seem strange, and yet it was really most natural. Religion, like language, was everywhere an historical growth, and to invent a completely new religion would be as hopeless a task as to invent a completely new language. Nor did the founders of the great historical religions of the world ever claim this exclusive authorship. On the contrary, most of them disclaimed in the strongest terms the idea that they had come either to destroy or to build a completely new temple."

Elucidating this point the Professor drew attention to the fact that the *Koran* contained very little that Mohammed could claim as his own; that the Founder of Christianity expressly and repeatedly disclaimed any attempt to set up a new faith. He came "not to destroy but to fulfil." So with Confucius, Laotze, and Zoroaster:—

"Moreover the sacred books of the East were all collections of religious thoughts that had been growing up for centuries among the people. They were not the creations of those whom we called the founders of the great religions of the world, but rather their inheritance, which, in most cases, they gathered up and sifted and purified, and thus rendered acceptable to a new generation. Now, the most powerful instrument for thus consolidating the ancient national religions was certainly the art of writing. The discovery of writing and its employment for literary purposes marked the most critical period in the history of religious thought, for without it it would almost have been impossible to impart to the floating elements of religion a permanent form. And here it was very important to observe that in no case had the actual writing down of any of the great sacred books of the East been ascribed to the founders of religion. Even their authorship was but seldom claimed for them, but was originally represented as the work of their immediate disciples or their more remote followers."

On the verbal inspiration idea—that fetish which has been so baleful—Professor Max Müller was explicit:—

"Sacred books often became a kind of fetish, requiring an implicit and unquestioning faith; their historical or natural origin was often completely forgotten, and the old ideas of what was true and divine were almost absorbed in the one idea of what was written and orthodox. Nor could it be denied that the responsibility of every believer for the religion under which he lived was in danger of becoming deadened when religion became a profession, and was administered with ceremonial exactness rather than with a strong human perception of what was true and what was false."

A final protest against a widespread prejudice is worth preserving. It has the ring of truth, sincerity, and knowledge in every sentence:—

"His object, however, was not so much to show the dangers which arose from sacred books as to protest against the prejudice which prevailed so widely against religions which had no sacred books. These bookless religions were not mere outcasts. At their best they seemed to be a natural belief in some higher power, and a life in the sight of God. We must all have our own bookless religion if the sacred books, whatever they be, were to find a safe and solid foundation within ourselves. It was easy to say it before his present audience, but he should not be afraid to say it before an audience of Brahmans, Buddhists, Parsees, and Jews, that there was no religion in the whole world which in simplicity, in purity of purpose, in charity, and true humanity came near to that religion which Christ taught to His disciples. And yet that very religion, we were told, was being attacked on all sides. Unbelief was declared to be omnipresent, the principal reason being, he believed, the disregard of our own bookless religions, the almost disdain of natural religion. What our age wanted more than anything else was natural religion. Whatever meaning different theologians might attach to supernatural religion, depend upon it the supernatural must always be super-imposed on the natural. Supernatural religion without natural religion was a house built on sand, and when, as in our days, the rain of doubt descended, and the floods of criticism came, and the winds of unbelief and despair blew and beat upon that house, that house would fall, because it was not founded on the rock of bookless religion, of natural religion, of eternal religion."

Mr. A. E. Newton's reason for the faith that is in him:—

"I avow myself a Spiritualist, and am prepared to state intelligibly and explicitly why I am one:—

"1. It is because for more than thirty-five years I have enjoyed the privilege of conversing, more or less freely and frequently, and in the privacy of my own family, with beings (invisible to myself) claiming to be excarnated human spirits—many of them relatives and personal friends well known in their earthly lives—and who have given conclusive evidence of being what they claim to be."

"2. Because, through this intercourse and the demonstrations and experiences that have accompanied it, I have been led to entertain conceptions of the universe—material and spiritual—of Deity and the Divine Providence—of the spirit-world and its relations to this—of man, his duty and destiny—in fact, of all which is embraced in the domains of religion, philosophy, and ethics—which are to my view not only eminently rational, but expanding, uplifting, spiritualising and soul-satisfying beyond anything and everything I have been able to gain from any and all other sources."

A definition and a limitation that is worth pondering. It is once more Mr. A. E. Newton's:—

"The term 'Spiritualist' properly pertains to such persons as, in addition to a recognition of spirit existence, presence, and communion, hold to doctrines of an elevating, refining, spiritualising tendency, and aspire to exemplify these in thought and life, seeking to make spirit-communion contribute to that high end. Such aspiration establishes a tendency to look beneath the surfaces of things—to inquire into causes, hidden meanings, and realities—to interpret all systems of religion, philosophy, and morals according to the spirit rather than the letter, and to view the universe from the standpoint of the spirit instead of that of matter."

In another place will be found some reasons why it is very necessary to let people know what we Spiritualists are in belief, and to limit the use of the term, as a matter of pressing urgency, so as to exclude the mere séance-room wonder-hunter, the mere phenomenalist, and all who do not in some way fit in with Mr. Newton's definition. The Spiritualist may be a Psychical Researcher, but he must be more.

Moreover, a Spiritualist must be more than a Spiritist. That term has a special meaning of its own in foreign countries. But it may very fairly be confined to those who limit themselves to a "mere belief in spirits and their doings; who are chiefly engrossed with marvels, or who mainly occupy themselves with the phenomenal and scientific aspects of the question, irrespective of and indifferent to any refining and uplifting tendency," such as true Spiritualism furnishes. It is well that we should insist on this. A man may be as sure as his senses

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can make him of the "phenomena (wrongly) called spritual" and be as pure a Materialist as exists.

Mr. Newton concludes with a profession and expression of opinion which we adopt and endorse *ex animo* :—

"I am a Spiritualist perforce of proofs personal to myself, so strong that were there no other of like belief in the world I should still be compelled to be one. But the fact that millions of other persons, in all parts of the civilised world, including in their number some of the brightest intellects and acutest men of science the age has produced, have within a few years been brought to substantially the same conviction by similar proofs, independently witnessed, does not weaken my assurance.

"Nor does the fact that a body of professional scientific men and experts acting under the auspices of a respectable University in our country—some of them eminent in special departments of investigation—have after a few ill-conducted attempts at experiment with certain professional mediums—attempt notable chiefly for what did not occur—gravely announced that they have discovered nothing but evidence of trickery and fraud, have any appreciable weight in the case. Even were all the professional mediums in the world proven to be unconscionable tricksters—which seems hardly more provable than that all other professionals are equally untrustworthy—such a fact would have no bearing upon the convictions herein set forth."

The Rev. Minot J. Savage has been dealing at his church with "The Problem of Evil."

"It is not strange (he said) that this question constantly recurs. To see a man like Keats dying at the very beginning of his life; to think of a man like Theodore Parker stricken down when his usefulness might have been expected to continue for long years; to hear of a cyclone destroying property and life; to read of an earthquake shaking the foundations of a city, or of a pestilence infecting a whole district; to know of a ship foundering in the midst of the prayers of those who drown; to see a mother losing her child, a young husband bereft of his wife, or little children orphaned and left in poverty and wretchedness; to hear the crack of the slave whip, and watch a man in affluence whose every dollar of wealth means a separate dishonesty, as well as pain and deprivation for someone else—to see all these things, and a hundred others which they suggest, is to see that they raise the question of the problem of evil and of the government of the world."

His concluding words are full of noble truth: –

"I do not see how it is possible for God to create the kind of a world of which some of us so foolishly dream, and I think a strong argument could be made in support of the view that this is the best possible world, provided, always, that the outcome of life here is to be the culture and development of souls. If there is no good in life unless everybody can get rich, unless everybody can experience the pleasure of foreign travel, unless everbody can be free from heartache, unless everybody can have everything he desires, then this is a poor kind of a world indeed, for there is not one in a million of us who has not failed in a thousand ways. But if the outcome of life is the culture and development of the soul, fitting it for a grand career beyond what we call the present, then I can see how this might be the best possible kind of a world for such a process of culture, such a development.

"And just this I do believe with all the power of my brain and all the reverence of my soul. I believe that the one thing that shall justify this life is the culture, the development of the soul, and that not he who has failed to get rich, not he who has never had a disappointment, not he who has never been ill, never lost a friend, not he whose eyes have never been wet with tears—but that he alone is a success who, when he stands on the borderland, stands there a self-controlled, developed, noble, aspiring soul—a spirit, the child of a spirit eternal, and fitted to go on step by step up those stairways of infinity that mean eternal ascent, with never an end."

Though not strictly in our way, the appended titles of books inquired for at a library, and the real descriptions, are very funny: —

Titles Given.	Books Required.
Shakespeare's Judith. Edited by Black.	Judith Shakespeare. By W. Black.
The Curtain will not Rise To-night. By Thorpe.	Thorpe's Curfew must not Ring To-night.
His Equal, and other Poems.	Ezekiel, and other Poems. Nelson.
Paradise of Burglars. By Helps.	Burglars in Paradise. By Phelps.
Four Wings and an Arm. By Molesworth.	Four Winds Farm. By Mrs. Molesworth.
Lamb's Essays. By Eliza.	Elia's Essays. By C. Lamb.
Darwin's Indecent Man.	Descent of Man. By Darwin.
Moolar's Four Boys Escaping.	Molière's Fourberies de Scapin.
Miss Understood. By a Lady.	Misunderstood. By F. Montgomery.
Poor Miss Elliot. By Earl Derby.	Homer's Iliad. By Earl Derby.
Molar's Burglarous Gentleman.	Molière's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

We learn from the *Baltimore Sunday Herald* that Spiritualism is making great progress in that district. As far back as 1843 there were Spiritualists there, but it is, as elsewhere, in recent years that the great stride in advance has been taken. In Baltimore also, as in all other places where these matters engage attention,

"There are two kinds of Spiritualists. The rational, or those who investigate the matter scientifically and accept the advice of St. Paul to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. These form the bulk of the Spiritualists. The others are mere wonder-seekers. They are frivolous, and may be depended upon to believe everything that purports to come from the spirit world, without waiting for positive proof."

The Great Man derives his inspiration, or some of it, from occult sources, according to the *Banner of Light* :—

"In its recent sharp attack on Bismarck the *Contemporary Review* spoke of his belief in astrology, and of his feeling assured of the proximate time of his death, being convinced that he will not die before the year 1890, and that he will not be alive after 1894. In certain circles in Germany his belief is the subject of free comment, it being told that on one of his birthday anniversaries a lady who had been invited made her appearance in black, and thereby enraged the Chancellor to such a degree that he ordered her away. In connection with his belief in astrology it is related popularly that a dark, mysterious stranger, at stated intervals, appears at his house in the country, and is closeted with him for long times together."

RAPPINGS BY ABNORMAL AGENCY.

We extract the subjoined letter from the *Tocsin*, a new medical journal to which reference was made in our issue of the 16th ult. :—

To the Editor of the *Tocsin*.

"Dear Sir,—Though I have always been an utter sceptic as regards the supposed causes of all Spiritualistic phenomena, and still attribute anything of the kind to some unknown force in animal magnetism, I forward an account of my first experience in table-turning. Sitting down at opposite sides of a table with a wooden top and three spiral legs, we (two of us) placed our fingers lightly on the top. The table at once began to vibrate and creak as if the wood were straining, and to rap on the floor with one leg. . . . Finally the table began to move in a circle with almost incredible velocity, such as could not be attained without the aid of machinery by any human efforts; and still twirling round and round, it whirled from under our fingers and across the room, at last falling with such violence that a piece of the strong wooden top was smashed nearly off.

"[This, we understand, is a simple instance of a matter of common experience, but we have no explanation to offer with reference to the same. We also give examples of phenomena following an exhibition of table-turning, which have been apparent to more than one person at the same time, as well as to dogs. We select these as tending to refute any notion that what was heard could be due to the overwrought imagination of any one individual. The first instance is contained in a continuation of the same letter given above.]

"Some hours later, while sitting at the dinner table, I felt a sudden faintness, and at the same moment my dog, who was sitting on the floor close to my chair, became very much disturbed, looking upwards at something behind my chair, which no one could see. That night I awoke suddenly, about an hour after midnight, and heard distinctly a loud ticking, as if from a muffled clock, proceeding from a door near the head of the bed. I lit a candle, and my dog, who was sleeping in the room, sprang growling to the door, and scratched to get out. I got up at once, and opened it to let the animal out. However, the moment the door was opened he sprang back, apparently terrified, and jumped on the foot of my bed, trembling violently, and with the hair on his back standing on end. The following Sunday morning (two days afterwards), at exactly twelve o'clock, I happened to be standing close to the table which had been used, when I heard a man's footfall in another room at the end of the hall. A maid who was standing near also heard the steps, and expressed her surprise, as we were the only persons in the house at the time, and both entrance-doors were locked from the inside. Presently we both distinctly heard the steps pass the hall towards the door of the room we were in. I ran to the door, convinced that some stranger had entered the house, and called 'Who *is* there?' But there was no answer, and no one to be seen.—I am, faithfully yours, "Sceptic."

"'It takes live fish to swim up stream'; and yet how many there are who seem to forget it."

"The best of a book is not the thought which it contains, but the thought which it suggests; just as the charm of music dwells not in the tones but in the echoes of our hearts."—Holmes.

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2, DUKE STREET,
ADELPHI, W.C.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"LIGHT" may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria Lane, London, and all Booksellers.

Light:

EDITED BY "M.A. (OXON.)"

SATURDAY, MARCH 30th, 1889.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi. It will much facilitate the insertion of suitable articles if they are under two columns in length. Long communications are always in danger of being delayed, and are frequently declined on account of want of space, though in other respects, good and desirable. Letters should be confined to the space of half a column to ensure insertion.

Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and *not* to the Editor.

ADVICE TO AN INQUIRING MIND.

Professor Elliott Coues never writes otherwise than lucidly and instructively. He has been advising an inquiring mind, and his advice is well worth attention.

FROM THE *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

A Letter of Inquiry, and the Response.

DR. ELLIOTT COUES—*Dear Sir:* I have been impelled to write to you for advice on a new and indisputable experience I have been undergoing for some seven or eight months past, and have as often refrained from asking of a stranger that "light on the past" which my experience and increasing conviction have not made plain.

Some months since I suddenly became conscious of audible communications, which I have since learned to attribute to purely elemental influences, using the Buddhist expression.

These audible communications soon ceased and were replaced by others which, I suppose, would be called purely clairaudient, and were of a very different character, being elevating and inspiring, and opening up to my heart an infinity of evolution of the soul and the universe, which I had not got from my past studies, although I have long had a conviction that there was some such plan to be shown to humanity some time, and in some way.

Before I go any further, let me say that I had been up to this time a thorough disbeliever in spiritual communication, and had given it little or no attention. Moreover, my experience related above all came to me before I read any writings on Buddhism, Karma, or Spiritism, and my experience at that time was the subject of debate between a medical friend and myself, who knew me to be a tolerably clear-headed man, and one not liable to be led away by superstition or evidence that was not conclusive. The only conviction that impinged on me was the consciousness of a new sense, the name of which I did not even know at that time. A month or two later I received from a friend in Washington, a book by A. P. Sinnett, called *Karma*. I found some startling suggestions in that work which interested me enough to induce me to read the work on *Esoteric Buddhism* communicated through him. I use the above expression intentionally, as it is evident to the most careless reader that the two works are not by the same intellect.

I was surprised to find myself so receptive to the doctrine set forth there, as it was a welcome light to one who had not been able to find peace and trust in creeds, although surrounded by devoted Christian influence from childhood. I have since then read very little of the scientific doctrines of Theosophy, but have found a trust in the teachings of Buddha that has thrown a new light on the words of the Bible, and has brought a growing peace and belief that I have long yearned for, although I have not yet found "the jewel in the lotus."

Strange to say, I have not cared so much for an understanding of the scientific aspect of Theosophy, as for the religious teaching. It seems to me that the latter is the one the world is waiting for, and that, like the treasure which Buddha said was laid up in our fellow man, the stranger, the mother and father and child, the scientific light would come "of itself."

That statement of my convictions being made, let me return to my own experience, on which I now ask your counsel and explanation. I don't go into society at all, nor have I made any Theosophical or Spiritualist acquaintances. I have not attended any séances or occult meetings, and have read but little of the current literature on Theosophy. I have read much of primitive Buddhism, both *pro* and *con*, and have tried to understand, first of all, the Buddhist doctrine of the greatest blessing, as taught in the Buddhist scriptures.

During all these months I have had constant communication through clairaudience with one who calls himself my Mahatma's helper; and who has given me succinct counsel in words which I know could not be the lucubration of my own brain, and which I, at the time, seldom understood, but which have been explained or discovered either in the Buddhist scriptures or the Bible, in subsequent study.

Lately, however, another voice has come to me clearly, telling me to look unto God and not unto Buddha. This either is or claims to be the voice of my mother, now dead some thirty odd years. This has all tended to *indirection* or *misdirection*, and I now ask you for direction and explanation.

I presume this discursive letter is unnecessary, as by your mystic powers you can probably learn all that I have told you and much that I have left unsaid, but I feel that I need some human guidance just at this time. Before writing this letter, and even *now*, I have been and am told *to* write you, and *not* to write you, so you see the quandary I am in.

One of the first communications I had was, "You are elected to learn that your heart was not given you for your understanding, but for your knowledge." It was a long time before I knew what those words meant.

There *is* a beautiful and trustful path that leads to peace, wisdom and helpful love; there *is* a religion that shall be for the "healing of all nations"; there *is* a knowledge of Divine help and love yet to come to humanity; there *is* a truth whose light shall disperse the shadows of dogma, ignorance and selfishness, and shall fill the universe with its brightness. Can you help me to that confidence and knowledge that shall make me willingly one of the light-bearers?

Fraternally yours. * * *

Boston, Massachusetts, February 2nd, 1889.

The Response.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

The foregoing letter is a type of many that I receive. It is absolutely sincere; the writer is in earnest, and such sentiments command respect. I undertake, with reluctance, to say a few words in public by way of reply, believing that if I am anywhere near the truth my words may be of use to others than my correspondent.

The process which he describes as an actual and veritable one which has gone on in himself, is, I think, not at all a singular experience. Many persons could tell a similar story, should they bare their hearts with equal unreserve. It is the growth of the "sixth sense"; it is the awakening to consciousness of the sixth principle, which exists only as a rudiment or embryo in most persons, incapable of making its existence known to its possessor till it has grown like a plant from its seed. In those whose "intuitions" are large this germ of wisdom often makes itself felt, and as it gains in strength it gradually dominates the Fifth Principle, or ordinary intellect, making reason quite subservient to the higher faculty, and tending to merge the merely human into the more nearly divine being. The process of growth of the embryo "Buddhi" is not unattended with dangers of its own, threatening both mental and physical integrity unless the tender sprout be firmly rooted in reason, and carefully guarded from passion.

The use of the sixth sense, especially for one who comes into its possession rapidly rather than by a process of very gradual unfoldment or evolution, is against all the world, the flesh, and the devil, and its vigorous self-assertion is likely to react unfavourably upon bodily health and mental peace. There

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is always some disturbance of the nervous system when voices can be heard and forms can be seen, that have no objective or material counterpart. The nervous shock of the awakening is apt to extend to other bodily functions, and often becomes a case for medical treatment. Therefore, I should say, the first and most imperative need is special attention to the ordinary laws of hygiene, in eating, sleeping, working, or recreation.

If a man is to live some years after his psychic faculties have come into operation, it is essential for their proper and useful manifestation on the physical plane to have a good sound body through which they may operate. Not necessarily the most robust, muscular, bone and sinew mechanism, but a thoroughly well organised, pliable and "vivid" apparatus of relation between the soul or astral body and the world or material things. Otherwise a person becomes like a super-heated boiler, or one in which steam is too suddenly generated, and the danger of an explosion is imminent. It is often a question, whether a person in the state in which I judge my unknown correspondent to be, shall go on to safely grow a splendidly effectual astral organism whose faculties shall be adequate to the discernment of the substance of things unseen, or whether he shall become the prey of the elementals which will infallibly seek to fasten themselves like vampires upon his astral organism. If the former, he becomes a Theosophic adept, a seer of eternal truths, a doer of Divine deeds; if the latter, either a practitioner of black magic, should his courage be equal to that, or else a mere wreck on the fatal rocks of so-called "mediumship."

The most important practical point, next to the care of the bodily health, is concentration of the will. By that I mean a firm, fixed determination, never vacillating, never wavering, never doubting, to know the truth, and to use this knowledge for the good of others, irrespective of consequences to self-hood. This is a positive moral power, without the operation of which on the astral body the latter never acquires real true effectual organisation, capable of withstanding in the end the shock of physical dissolution. For the souls of bad persons, however strong they seem to be here and now, find their strength fictitious and evanescent as soon as they are deprived of physical support, and black magicians are no exception to this rule. They may flicker about in Kama-Loka for a while, especially if they can feed upon the vitality of persons in the flesh whom they succeed in obsessing for the gratification of their unhallowed, unsatisfied desires; but their end is the murky smoke of a snuffed-out candle.

Since the concentration of the will, of which I have spoken, has for its purpose and motive the attainment of true knowledge, or wisdom as distinguished from worldly erudition; and since the soul that is troubled with desire (using that word in its broadest sense) can reflect but distorted images, it follows as a matter of course that the fourth principle or middle nature of man, must be held thoroughly in hand, under the rigid mastery of the reason, or fifth principle, itself a willing instrument in the hands of the still higher principle, the sixth, the "Christ." And if haply this victory shall be won in the battle-ground of life, the Divine spouse shall seek and find the soul.

Let none hastily suppose I have used figurative language. I have been speaking of actual processes which may go on in the substance of the soul, of the real nature of which it is not permitted me to more than hint. These things may be known; but they are unspeakable. Many know them; but, strangest of all, they are never told. They only need explanation to those for whom they are inexplicable.

First find thyself; then know thyself; then, be thyself. Strange words—meaningless jargon. Nevertheless, "as above, so below"; and the two are not two, but one.

Wishing my unknown correspondent a prosperous voyage of discovery among the finer particles of his being, I beg to subscribe myself with respect,—A PSYCHIC RESEARCHER.

MR. ALARIC ALFRED WATTS has been elected a Vice-President of the London Spiritualist Alliance in the place of the late Dr. Speer.

To an unknown friend:—Your generous contribution (£100) has been received, and, since you do not permit us to thank you personally—though we hope you will—we use this means of expressing our gratitude.

MAY we remind our readers that Mr. Edward Maitland is to address the next Assembly of the London Spiritualist Alliance, on Tuesday next? We trust there will be a large attendance to listen to what will assuredly be well worth hearing.

ASSEMBLY OF THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

The following address was delivered by "1st M.B. (Lond.)" to the Assembly of the London Spiritualist Alliance, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, on Tuesday evening, the 19th inst.

THE *RAISON D'ÊTRE* OF SPIRITUALISM.

The title I have chosen for this paper, "The *Raison d'être* of Spiritualism," demands, in the first place, a definition of that word. So for the purposes of this discussion I beg to define it as the great movement now manifesting itself under the phases known as Spiritualism in the narrower sense of the term, Spiritism, Theosophy, Occultism, and Psychical Research, as well as in many other unnamed forms, its authors pushing their influence wherever they find an opening.

My endeavour will be to show that Spiritualism, thus defined, is a necessary step in the psychical evolution of the masses of this world; and that it has come about at the earliest moment at which such a step could be made, if its introduction were not to be futile, and its existence nipped in the bud.

Many persons who are convinced of the truth of the gradual development of the soul, believe that that evolution is effected by the working of blind law alone. Such, however, is not my opinion; I believe that to assert any such doctrine is pure assumption, and that it rests on far less sound opinions than the opposite. For my own part I fail to see the working of blind law anywhere in nature except under the guidance of intellectual forces that modify and control its action, to answer the purposes they have in view. All spirits re-act mutually one upon another; when two spirits are on or about the same level of development this mutual interaction is about equal on each; but when the difference between them is great, the influence of the lower on the higher is very slight, whereas that of the superior on the inferior may be very great. Thus man is acted upon by beings of great power and advancement, to whom, following the nomenclature of the instructors of the medium Rose, I will attribute the name Mighty Spirits. And these again are influenced by still higher beings, called High Spirits, and who have reached an altitude of purification and power far beyond the powers of the human imagination to conceive.

But in the opposite direction, man in his turn makes use of his inferiors, and bends the souls of animals to his purposes; and these again are utilised to produce effects on soul in its still lower forms of manifestation. And yet the actions of every grade or rank, extending from the mineral to the highest creature in existence, are all directed towards, and utilised for, the one grand scheme of the universe, namely, the evolution of soul.

The first intelligent, intentional, and conscious employment of inferiors on any large scale, however, is seen in human action. The lower forms act their part without consciousness of it; and, for that part, by far the great majority of educated Europeans little dream that while training a horse, or a dog, a seal, or an elephant, they are helping forward the evolution of the spiritual monad, that forms that animal's soul. But it is so; that is a portion of the work of the first great Cause, that is entrusted to man by his superiors, those Mighty and High Spirits just now spoken of.

The hierarchy of the universe is organised on principles bearing a close resemblance to our earthly organisations, in which each and every individual has his proper work to do. Thus, take any department of nature, that department will be presided over by a High Spirit, whose development will be suited thereto; that department will contain many sub-departments, or sections, each of which will be controlled by a Mighty Spirit who is responsible for his charge to the High Spirit in charge of the whole. And each of these Mighty Spirits will have under him his allotted portion of workers, man's place being among the latter, and every man having just that work to do which is suited to his state of advancement. It is not blind law, but intelligent and benevolent wisdom, that determines the position and calling of every individual; and allots to each that sphere of action most suited to his further progress.*

The human world is composed of souls passing through a certain period of development. Some have only just entered on that period; while others are on the point of quitting it, and are about to pass away to higher and better worlds where they will assume more perfect forms, and where their

* This paragraph must not be accepted in the least as dogmatic, but as illustrative.

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lives will be spent in developing greater goodness and higher powers. This host of human spirits is marshalled by High and Mighty Spirits whose duties are all in harmony with the one scheme; and whose work is to forward the evolutionary processes by every means in their power, according to the eternal truths. Eternal progress of every living entity is one of those truths, and these elevated spirits are responsible each for his own share in that progress. Each has to see that those of whom he has charge are properly helped and assisted, guided, and counselled, but always nevertheless working by the unchangeable laws that guide them.

As every individual develops in goodness, so does the planet. As every single man increases in perfections, so does the mass. But the mass moves very much more slowly than do individuals. Individuals pass ahead much more rapidly, and outstrip the general pace of the whole. So that the population of the world gradually, but slowly, increases its proportion of good spirits, and decreases its percentage of bad ones. In its present condition this world is capable of providing all the conditions necessary for the development of intellect and morality up to a certain point at which they become wisdom and virtue respectively and of a sufficient altitude to permit of the action of a power that has lately made itself noticeably prominent. That power is the now strongly prevailing desire, and conscious struggle, for improvement and perfection in everything. This power is called by the teachers before mentioned the Spirit of Progress. Hence the highest human spirits on this earth having reached this point, and being unable to advance further here because they have caught up and passed through the wave of macrocosmic evolution going on on our planet, pass away to better worlds in which the conditions requisite for their further progress are provided.

Macrocosmic evolution is therefore continually pushing its most advanced point further and further forward, on every planet or world; or as some say that point is in some cases receding. On ours, however, it is evidently advancing, and this advance has until recent times shown itself by alternate periods of intellectual progress and moral progress. It is as if these two attributes of the soul were urged on one at a time by great waves. These waves, however, are not simple in their nature, and one can only trace their course along those lines of history with which we are acquainted. With regard to our own race, we are able to trace spiritual progress only as far back as our history extends, and that may be considered as about the year 400 A.D. For at that time our barbarous ancestors merging from out the depths of pre-historic times, replaced races who had a history, and who were more highly spiritually developed than they. So that perhaps the first wave we are able to observe was a moral one, following the introduction of Christianity on any considerable scale into the country (A.D. 600 to 1000), softening and restraining the wild and turbulent dispositions of the semi-savage North-men, Danes, and Saxons.

The end of this wave was probably about the time of the Norman Conquest, from which point no moral advance was made until the commencement of the Reformation, which marked the rise of the second great wave of moral improvement. This wave like the previous one came to an end, after a course of two or three hundred years, to be succeeded by a long spell of intellectual development, and the appearance of the action of the spirit of progress in a large part of the community.

I am told by one of my own teachers that at the end of every intellectual wave the spirit of progress manifests itself more intensely, and that we cannot always trace it on account of our want of historical knowledge, but that at the end of the intellectual wave that preceded the Reformation, this power of the soul manifested itself in the so-called introduction and general improvement of printing, the extension of gunpowder, and revival of learning. The present manifestation, however, is of greater power than any previous one, in obedience to the law, or eternal truth, that follows, which is: "Progress is eternal, and its speed increases in proportion to the progress made." This law refers to both the mass and the individual, and to every attribute of the human, angelic, animal, or vegetable soul. The more we advance in goodness, the more powerful our intelligence and the greater our powers of conception become, the more rapidly do these characteristics increase still further.

The point I wish now to bring out, however, is "that the period of intellectual development that the world has just passed through. had produced a state of affairs which necessitated a fresh period of spirit activity, partaking more or less of a religious character." That is to say, that intellect has now advanced to a point at which it must stand still (and standing still is equal to retrogression), unless the other factor of the soul receive an impulse from outside; that impulse having become necessary, the High Spirits having supreme authority here have afforded that impulse; and that impulse is Spiritualism in the most extended sense of the term.

The last 100 years, that is to say the latter portion of the last periodical wave of intellectual progress, has one special peculiarity that distinguishes it from the earlier part of the period. That peculiarity is the conscious and energetic endeavours of a large portion of mankind to improve and perfect everything about them. The disappearance from our midst, or, to be more exact, the constantly diminishing numbers of those animated with, or perhaps vegetating in, the old stand-still spirit, is a prominent sign of the times. The man who does anything in a wrong or foolish way, for no better reason than that his father did so before him and got on very well, is now a great curiosity among us; and is only to be found in remote districts, and out of the way places, in this country. Fear of novelties is rapidly dying out, education is pushed to its extreme limits, and perhaps a great deal beyond them, and on lines that are not the wisest. Discovery and invention have followed each other with a rapidity never before known. Hardly a year passes without our astonishment being aroused by some new fact in science, or some new process in arts.

Further, inquiry into everything has been the order of the day for many years now. Some anciently believed ideas were soon found to be incorrect. This being so, every ancient idea had to be re-examined by the light of reason, and with the aid of that which followed from the newly found out facts. The result of all this was to find that very few of the old teachings could hold water; and as they were, on the face of it, quite incompatible with the new truths, they had to fall, and fall they did. The new truths showed the absurdity of what the modern investigators *imagine* the old truths to be. Having completed the renovation and reformation of the philosophical, secular, and scientific views of Christendom, it could not otherwise befall but that the new spirit of progress and investigation should turn its attention to the religions of the world. And what absurdities did it not find in the popular representations of religious truths? What monstrous doctrines did it not discover? The religion of his forefathers became a laughing stock to every student of the renovated science; and the inevitable end was rejection of religious truth, with ridicule and contempt. Hence came Atheism and Materialism. Spirit was unknown because they who posed as its teachers tried to nourish the souls of their congregations on absurdities; they knew but the letter themselves, the spirit was a stranger to them; and by the letter their hearers were slain.

This was the state of Western civilisation but a very short time since. Atheism and Materialism were rampant and progressive. Where is thy God? and, Where is my soul? was the cry of the student of the new science. And there was no one to answer. There was none who could give a reasonable argument, that could move the searcher for facts with anything but pity and contempt. Science itself could not find nor trace the slightest sign of spirit; and it fancied it could explain those phenomena observable in the human body by reflex action, by the laws of cause and effect, much more reasonably from materialistic facts than from religious dreams. Yet among these very men there were many who felt within themselves aspirations and feelings which they could not satisfy themselves were of bodily origin. These men were agnostic, and, consequently, unhappy; desiring to know, but restrained by their knowledge of the laws of matter, to which they clung on account of the certainty they appeared to possess, from following the course by which they might find out.

This stage being reached, and no light being attainable, on account of the clouded lenses of the telescopes with which they searched for it, progress would have ceased. But such would be contrary to the law. And the time had come for a fresh revelation to man from the realms of Heaven.

The form in which that revelation has now come differs in some respects from those which preceded it. It came now in a manner to meet the requirements of the times. The prime requirement of earth was evidence, practical and tangible, of life after death. The survival of the soul was the first point to establish, and I think that you, ladies and gentlemen, will admit that that has been proved, for all who will search, with a vast

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deal more certainty than by far the large majority of the theories so widely spread, and positively asserted by men of science. As a scientist myself, I assert that the existence of the soul after death has been as thoroughly proved (if not more so) as the circulation of the blood, and the functions of the organs of the human body.

This having been done, the next step was to give to each and every such further information as he or she was capable of assimilating. We, none of us, are exactly on the same level of development. We differ from one another in the height to which our intellects or thinking and arguing powers have reached. We differ still more in the power of the sense of morality, or the power of divine love, of the universal love that makes us all brothers. Further still do we differ in the spirit of progress, that urges us on to perfect ourselves and others. And lastly, we differ more than all in the religious sense, that loves God before all, as the origin and source of every happiness we possess; and whose acts are prompted by that love. Every one of these powers or attributes of the human soul is unequally developed in every individual. And hence, what is food for the soul of one is unfit for that of another; that which comforts a lower one is of little use to him that has passed the stage at which that is the soul's proper nourishment. And that which will rejoice the heart and make glad the superior, will be incomprehensible and unacceptable to the inferior. This being so, teachings the most varied are given, and each one scrapes up and appropriates that which will give him pleasure, and on which his soul can feed and live. The wise, therefore, will remember that neither he nor his neighbour is perfect; that his own views do not contain absolute truth any more than do those of his friend. Such an one will be tolerant, striving for ever to get nearer and nearer towards his own ideal perfection; and the further he advances the further will that ideal recede into the deepest depths of abstract thought and imagination.

I have so far endeavoured to show that on account of the altitude of spiritual development attained by the most cultured races of earth, a new revelation had become necessary; that the senior races of humanity had reached a point at which new and more detailed information had become a necessity; and, that being so, our superiors and guides have furnished that knowledge.

The next point to consider is this: that such a revelation, or spirit action, could not have occurred at any previous period in our race, and that it would have been inexpedient to have introduced it among the civilised nations of antiquity, otherwise than esoterically and secretly. Spirit action on humanity has always existed; men have always been subject to the influence of spirit, whether they were conscious of it or not; men have always been subject to the instillation of ideas from without, while they imagined themselves to be the authors instead of the transmitters of them. Spiritualism is only an extension, a revealing, and a manifesting of that process; and by it the communion becomes mutual, and is elevated to co-operation.

I shall now read an abridgement of spirit communications on this subject with which I am very much inclined to agree:—

"One may say that an earlier introduction of Spiritualism would have been premature, and would have had prejudicial rather than beneficial results. A glance at history will show this clearly.

"Unbelief, born of the pride of the intellect, rejects everything that it cannot explain. But this error is not so hurtful as religious fanaticism, whence spring hatred, intolerance, and persecution, ever ready and willing to oppress, ill-treat, and destroy those who differ therefrom in opinion. So long as these traits prevailed, Spiritualism could not appear, it would have been smothered at once.

"It was necessary, too, that the world should advance far enough to recognise the worth of progress, and also to acquire a becoming idea of the worth of a human being, before the movement could have a chance of succeeding. Freedom of research, freedom of opinion, and religious tolerance were absolutely necessary preliminaries. The great prejudice of the majority against the movement at the present day, in our period of freedom of thought, shows plainly what would have been its fate in earlier times, when the stake and the rack were implements with which the State upheld the Church.

"The reformers of the sixteenth century indeed established as their principle: 'Faith according to the dictates of each man's conscience.' But they could not maintain it. The Protestants at that time were far too much leavened with the leaven of Rome. For they began to persecute the Papists, as soon as they had the power to do so. But still further did they go; not only were Roman Catholics the object of their intolerance, but also Protestants who differed from orthodox opinion in minor matters of faith.

"The witch persecutions, and the iniquitous proceedings of Hopkins the witch finder, and his brutal *confrères*, would soon have condemned all our mediums, and many others as well, to the flames, had any attempt to develop the movement occurred then."

The nations of antiquity, too, were far too immoral for the public practice of spiritual communion. We are apt to judge of Greece and Rome too much by the light of certain bright intellects that shone from time to time. But those nations were not all Platos, nor are Socrates and others typical examples. Cruelties, debaucheries, contempt for inferiors, and slavery sufficiently illustrate the lack of morality even among the legislators and rulers, and leaders of Latin and Greek thought.

I have tried now to show that Spiritualism was needed; and that it would have been unwise to have attempted its institution in earlier times. But so far I have only treated of the need for it on earth; there is yet to be stated that it was likewise a necessity for the spirit world. By that I do not mean to say that no other means might have been found to produce the results that have been and are being produced in the world of spirits by this new form of intercourse, but only that it is having the effect that was expected of it, and that that effect is very useful in promoting the development of a class of spirits that it was difficult to induce to exert itself. In this work, as in everything else, nature, or rather the guides and controllers of existence, kill more than one bird with one stone. In all natural phenomena, when looked at from the side of spirit, this great law of economy is observable. And in the complexity of its working the human mind is confused in following the consequences of every action, and one contemplates with admiration and amazement the wisdom of those who have the management and arrangement of all the mazes and intricacies of her operations.

We all know that spirits form coteries and cliques, which consist of individuals whose views are in agreement with one another. These coteries are very exclusive, on account of which they cannot advance rapidly, because new views and ideas are with great difficulty introduced into them. I am told that intercourse with men is gradually beginning to lessen that great exclusiveness, and diffuse views and knowledge more easily in quarters where it is desirable. I understand, too, from sources in which I have confidence that there are also two other ways in which spirits are being benefited from intercourse with men. There may be many others, and probably are, but I can recall no information of a reliable nature on the point. These two ways are as follows:—

It appears to be beneficial for vain spirits to know that men are now able to appreciate their true position more correctly than previously. We know now quite well that at death the soul of a believer in any religion is not at once transformed into an angel of light, nor does it go to any fabled home of the saved, such as that religion had pictured it. We know now that a soul a week after dissolution is just about the same as it was a week before it. And it is found to be a good thing that a certain class of spirits should know that we know this. I, however, do not give so much heed to this as to that which follows.

There is a very large class of spirits characterised by an aimless and dilatory existence. It is as if they had now found something that interests them, and I am told that many such become sufficiently aroused to perceive that they are not uselessly employed while communicating with man, and then do their best to become teachers and helpers in the cause; of course of a more or less low order; and from such no elevating, philosophical, or deep information can be gained. But yet there are many persons who know of and practise spirit intercourse, who could be assisted in early stages by such beings; because in our ranks we have all classes, and every class is afforded that nourishment which it is capable of assimilating.

"No man who hath tasted learning but will confess the many ways of profiting by those, who not contented with stale receipts are able to manage and set forth new propositions to the world. And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armoury of truth, even for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the special use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those, perhaps, neither among the priests nor among the Pharisees, and we in the haste of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them; no less than woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors."—MILTON'S *Arcopagitica*, *Section* 80.

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TRUE CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM.

From *The Communion of Saints.*

By the Bishop of Truro.

If we think much of those whom we loved on earth, and who have passed out of sight, we try to follow them, to be "imitators"—for that is the literal translation—of those who now "inherit the promises." They are above us, but not too much above us. They are still branches of the same vine; members of the same body. The branches of the tree are equally near to each other, whether the moonlight shine on all, or only on one branch. The hand in the shadow and the hand in the light are not more near to each other, than we are to them. If one hand is in the light, and one in the shadow, they are not really more separated than when both were in the light, or both in the shadow. The union remains: the union with Christ and with each other.

And so, if we live in fellowship with the saints in light—if we are followers of them, as they are of Christ, by the power of God the Holy Ghost—our natures become developed and strengthened for that more rarified atmosphere. The habits of the invisible kingdom are gradually formed within us; in spite of all our unworthiness we are beings made like unto those who have already inherited the promises.

We are "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." A great multitude whom no man can number—nearer to us than human language can describe, hidden from us only by a thin veil which at any moment may be rent asunder—are silently imploring us, as it were, to rise on the wings of a Heaven-inspired faith and hope, to be followers of them, even as they also are of Christ. And these, like elder brothers and sisters, are one with us. They are under the roof of the same Father's home; members of the same mystical body of Christ; indwelt by the same Spirit. They are a step in advance of us, because they have been set free from certain restrictions by which our spirits are still clogged, in their upward flight: yet only one step in advance, for they, like us, are not yet "made perfect."

As we read the glowing language of one of the greatest of modern writers, picturing to us the scenery of the material sky, we seem dimly to perceive how "the heavens declare the glory of God" in the spiritual "cloud" by which we are surrounded. The lower region, we are told, is emphatically the "rain-cloud"; whereas symmetry, purity, multitude, and variety are the characteristics of the clouds of the higher atmosphere; and the central clouds partake of the characteristics of both, and so, as we gaze together on the eternal sky, we seem to mark, between the mists and vapours of earth and the purity, the symmetry, the grandeur of that upper region, a border realm, as it were, "the central cloud-region," linked with both, partaking of the characteristics of both: that great "cloud of witnesses," "the spirits and souls of the righteous."

They are above us; delivered from the burden of the flesh, from the snares of the world, and from the crafts and assaults of the devil. And yet, they are not "made perfect," they are waiting, as we also are waiting, for the birth of that mysterious morning when we, together with them, shall have "our perfect consummation and this, both in body and soul"; when we, together with them, shall enter into the clearer light of the Resurrection Kingdom, where every capacity of body, soul, and spirit, shall be developed according to God's own eternal ideal. Then shall be realised the full meaning of those wonderful words: "He shall come to be glorified IN His saints, and to be admired IN all them that believe." All created beings shall bow down before Him, acknowledging Him as the source of all the light and glory and beauty manifested in His saints.

But even now, as all those material clouds derive their light and glory and beauty from the sun, so Christ is "glorified in His saints." The clouds above, and the central clouds of Paradise, and the lower cloud region—the holy ones by whom we are now visibly surrounded still in the body—all draw their light from the same Christ. It is the same sunlight in the clouds, everywhere. We must stay awhile in this "lower region" of earth, with all its storms of trial and temptation; but we wish, even here, to rise to the higher life by copying the characteristics of the blessed ones in Paradise. . . . Remember what has been already said. We are part of a great "Family." Our elder brothers and sisters are out of sight; a thin veil separates them from us. But they are close to us; they are round about us as "a cloud of witnesses." They see us and know us and love us. Probably they mingle their intercessions with ours. They are allowed to minister to us, it may be, under the angels. But certainly, on the word of God Himself, they are one with us and near to us. They are even as we are, "in Christ," branches in the One Vine, members of the One Body; only they have been set free from certain difficulties by which we are hindered. . . . Observe in passing, that in the Greek, the word which is translated "coming" simply means the lifting up of a veil—*αποκαλύψις*, or the manifestation of His Presence—*παρουσια*. It is the uplifting of a curtain, as it were, which now conceals His Presence; not the "coming" as from a distance.

Our elder brothers and sisters in Paradise are waiting for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . We know by an instinct that all who have passed out of sight since Christ ascended to Heaven—the saints, and martyrs, and confessors, and those whom we have ourselves known and loved, must be longing for—desiring with calm, steadfast expectation—the manifestation of Jesus Christ.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Laurence Oliphant and Spiritualism.

To the Editor of "Light."

Sir,—The letter from which I send some extracts is interesting, not only on account of the writer, but also as illustrating a disposition towards "Spiritualism," prevalent, I believe, among many who are thorough believers in its facts. It was written by Laurence Oliphant from Haifa in August, 1887. Later, I should mention, Oliphant reformed his ideas of English Spiritualists, mainly in consequence of reading "Light," of the high opinion he formed of the distinguished Spiritualist who edits it, and of making personal acquaintance with some representative individuals, who were well adapted to efface the sort of prejudice he had very naturally conceived. In 1886 I failed to induce him to join a small private club of Spiritualists, to which afterwards, in 1888, he was elected, though, alas, he did not live to meet us. I mention these facts that it may not be supposed he retained to the end the unfavourable view on which he founded some of his advice to his correspondent. The letter was addressed to a friend in England, who had an impression that he should die in 1889, and who had, half jocularly, urged this as an objection to going to settle with Oliphant at Haifa.

"Your letter gave me real distress. It is another evidence to me of the evil effects of Spiritualism. All your symptoms are exactly those of broken-down mediums, and of others who were not consciously mediumistic, but were very open to invasion through them. Numbers of such persons used to come to Mr. Harris to be cured, and with some he was successful, but not with all. So much depends on the strength of the person's will. Your idea that you will die in 1889 is simply a spiritual hypnotic suggestion. They want you to die. . . and the only way to prevent it is to make up your mind most positively *not* to die, and to do that with a grim determination of defiance, and to do exactly the opposite of whatever seems suggested to you as the easy thing to do—but if you begin to prepare for death as you seem to be doing, you will almost certainly die; it will be a species of quiet unconscious suicide. However, I hope to be home before many months are over . . . I shall return here round the world by way of America and Japan, and the best thing for your health would be for you to come with me. Depend upon it you will not die, much as you want to, and though from my point of view dying is a very happy thing when it comes after one's work is done, it is different when it comes to prevent one's doing it. Meantime have nothing more to do with Spiritualism, give up reading their papers, engaging in their controversies, or coming into personal contact with any of them more than you can help. You remember when I was in England how I was obliged to avoid them. I am writing in great haste, but shall hope to see you again before you die, and try to keep you alive till your proper time comes."

I am induced to send you the above, though rather personal and private, because it displays the thoroughly healthy character of a man, whom some people suppose to have been given over, at least on one side of his nature, to influences more or less morbid or delusive. C. C. M.

Astrology and Public Events.

To the Editor of "Light."

Sir,—I wish to put on timely record an opinion I have formed, solely upon astrological grounds, that we are nearly on the verge of some critical *and quite unexpected* public event or events affecting the political future in this country.

The following coincidence, if it has no significance, is certainly curious. At the opening of the present Parliament, on August 5th, 1886, Uranus was in the 10th, or Meridian house,

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in Libra 4°.53′. At the opening of the present Session of Parliament, on February 21st last, Aries 4.30, (the exact opposition to the 5th degree of Libra) was on the Zenith. And at the New Moon of the 31st inst., that same degree will be again on the Zenith. At the opening of the Session, also, Mars was in transit over the same point, and Saturn was nearly in conjunction with the Zodiacal place of the Sun on August 5th, 1886. This was also the case at the Solar Revolution of August 5th of last year, and moreover, the place of Saturn at the birth of the Parliament was then rising, Uranus being in square to the Ascendant. Nor is this all; for at noon on the day of birth of the Prime Minister, the Sun was in Aquarius 14°.14′, Saturn being in opposition in Leo 14°.49′. And now Saturn has returned to that position, within a degree or so, and will be almost stationery therein for the next month. At the Full Moon on April 15th, the Sun and Moon will be in mundane parallel with Saturn. Lord Salisbury has recently given the world to understand that there will be no early dissolution of Parliament except in the impossible event of a vote of censure in the present House of Commons. But events are more powerful than the will of statesmen, and if I have not over-rated the significance of the positions I have pointed out, a few weeks may produce a surprising change in political probabilities. But what I wish to remark is that this forecast, to be worth anything, must not be fulfilled by any development of circumstances already apparent, or calculable by politicians. It is the unexpected that is to happen, if Uranus is the governing influence. And I confess that the absence of any indication in what ought to be—if I am right—the important figure for the entrance of the Sun into Aries on the 20th inst., occasions in me some misgiving that I may have laid too much stress on the above coincidences. Nor am I quite sure that my conclusion may not be invalidated by the circumstance that Jupiter was in conjunction with Uranus at the birth of the Parliament. It must be remembered that these forecasts are experimental; just as the weather forecasts of the Meteorological Department are still in the experimental stage. The public does not think meteorology discredited whenever the forecast is wrong. It is aware that the science is difficult and imperfect. I claim the like indulgence for astrology, or for my applications of it.

As regards the important Enfield election on the 30th, the directions I find seem to point to the apparently very improbable event of the defeat of the Ministerial candidate, but they are not quite near enough to the time to satisfy me, with the exception of one, which measures exactly to the probable hour of the declaration of the poll, but which depends on an equation of time the propriety of which I have not yet satisfactorily verified.

March 24th. C. C. M.

The "Evans" Exposure.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

MY DEAR "M.A. (OXON.),"—(for I prefer addressing you by the *nom de plume* beloved by all readers of "LIGHT") I am sending you this mail under a separate cover a copy of yesterday's *Week*, which I register to ensure safe delivery, containing a reprint of the "Evans Exposure," which has been agitating the minds of Spiritualists in this far off corner of the world. Now a word in regard to myself before proceeding further. I am an old University of London Collegiate School boy, who came out here in '66. I have been for the last ten years a Spiritualist. I never saw a professional medium in my life since being taken once by my father in London to see the Brothers Davenport in '65. You can therefore imagine that my convictions in regard to Spiritualism have been gained at my "ain fireside," and are not to be shaken by all the exposures of professional mediums which from time to time occur.

My library contains all Spiritualistic works of note (some 150 vols.), amongst which copies of all your writings hold an honoured place, including the last five years vols. of "LIGHT."

I hold a fair position in the Queensland Government service as a staff or inspecting land surveyor, and have now been thirteen years in constant Government employ. So much to introduce myself; now about Evans.

Having been considerably victimised some twelve months ago (pecuniarily) in assisting to bring a professional medium named Erown up from Melbourne to Brisbane, whom it was my unpleasant duty to help subsequently to expose as an arrant fraud, I declined to join in the scheme to bring Evans here from America, and during the time he was here I was unable from pressure of my official duties to go and see him; therefore I never saw Evans or his wife and never attended one of his séances, but numbers of my personal friends have done so and have received innumerable tests which cannot be accounted for by any of the tricks exposed in the *Week*. I know Mr. Thos. T. Patterson, the exposer, well and intimately, as well as Mr. Fairman; both gentlemen belonging to the Survey Department. I know Mr. Patterson and Mr. Fairman to be thoroughly upright and honest men—the former an investigator, the latter a Spiritualist, and I know that Patterson learnt the slate-writing trick from watching Evans. Moreover, Patterson gave a séance to my wife, some lady friends, and myself a week prior to the exposure in the paper and completely mystified us as to the *modus operandi*, although we all knew beforehand that we were going to be tricked. Mr. Patterson spoke to me then concerning the advisability of a public exposure, and I quite agreed with him that it was right and honest to expose fraud wherever found, all exposures tending to clear the moral atmosphere, although regrettable in other respects. I am glad, therefore, that the exposure has come from the Spiritualistic camp, and not from the scoffers, as it shows we are prepared to denounce trickery where found. I do not like the tone of the exposure—but that is to be expected; anything does to raise a sneer or jeer at Spiritualism, and the above was too good an opportunity to lose. My object in sending you this note and the paper is that you may thoroughly understand the case before commenting on it in "LIGHT." That Patterson undoubtedly caught Evans producing slate-writing by trickery, and by that means discovered the present *modus operandi* as published, I firmly believe, and it only supplies a further proof in my mind of the fact that so many professional mediums are prepared to supplement by trickery their genuine mediumistic powers when the latter, through a diversity of causes, suddenly fail them.

Contemplation on these frequent failures and exposures makes earnest Spiritualists long for some combination of their fellow thinkers to provide for the well-being and support of well-proved mediums, so as to place them beyond the reach of temptation to trickery, which eventually is exposed and thereby brings the belief into contempt.

I do not write to you with any expectation of a personal reply; I know your time is too fully occupied for that. A simple announcement to my initials C. T. B. in "LIGHT" will let me know that you have received this note and the paper which accompanies it.

With hearty good wishes for your continued welfare and wishing you God speed with your labours in the Spiritualistic field.

C. TWISDEN-BEDFORD.

Toowong, near Brisbane, Queensland.
February 3rd, 1889.

[Though this letter is in some sort private, we print it because its contents are important; and we thank our friendly correspondent for his very kind allusions to our work.—ED. "LIGHT."]

A Perplexing Question.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—There is a young couple here, who having lost a child that had lived but ten months, are receiving through the hand of a medium long communications purporting to be from this infant, who is declared by the writer's guides to have resumed its pre-natal position of advanced spirit, its babyhood being buried with its baby body. Now this case raises a perplexing dilemma, for in England and America Spiritualists are taught that when children die they are children still, and have to be treated and trained as they would have been had they remained on earth, while on the Continent the idea of childhood existing in the spirit-world is scouted as an impossible absurdity, both by spirits and mortals. Can you, or any of your correspondents, suggest a solution of this discrepancy? Here is one of these communications. If it is not from the spirit it declares itself to be, that was born only to live for so short a time, we have the anomaly of finding a spirit inculcating pure and elevated sentiments while it is grossly imposing upon confiding mortals:—

"MY VERY DEAR PARENTS,—In my last communication I showed that the practice of charity was the indispensible requisite to bring back your humanity to the path from which it has so far strayed. To-day, beloved father and mother, I wish to say a few words concerning pride and selfishness, those two terrible enemies of charity. Humility is unhappily, if not ignored, but little practised among you; remember, however, that the Christ promised the kingdom of Heaven to the

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most humble, and that it was His own humility which made Him great and placed Him above all the prophets.

"What must we think of the great ones of the earth who imagine that their titles and their riches are the rewards due to their merits, and that they are of purer essence than the poor? Does God, I ask you, make a difference in your bodies? Is not the fleshly covering of the rich and poor the same? Is not the hungry sufferer organised the same as the rich man who, secure from human misery, revolts in his pride at the idea of equality? He will not perhaps refuse alms to his ragged brother, but never would he shake him by the hand. If we are equal in the sight of God, he reasons, why am I placed so far above him? But, proud one, I ask you what difference will there be between you when stripped of your earthly covering? How do you know that you have not been wretched like him you so despise, that you have not even begged alms of him, or that you will not do so some day? Are riches eternal? Do you not lose them at the dissolution of the body? Look at these things as they are, and at what makes your grandeur in this world and your humiliation in the next, and remember that death spares no one, neither titles nor riches exempting you from it. Oh ye rich, bow down those heads that God can lower when you hold them highest, for all men are equal in His sight to whom charity and humility are the only titles of nobility. To all of you who suffer, to you, poor mother, who are obliged to beg for a piece of bread to save your children from dying of starvation, we come and say, hope and pray, for to those who are oppressed and have faith in Him God will give the kingdom of Heaven. And you, young girl, condemned to work and privations, why always such sad thoughts, why these tears? Raise your eyes to God, have confidence in Him and He will not forsake you. If you knew what tears and grief were concealed under rich garments, what sobs are muffled by the noise of earthly pleasures, you would prefer your poverty. Remember the words so often repeated by Him who has given you the most striking example of humility and charity. He is the greatest who has been the most humble, and he who has most loved shall himself be most loved hereafter.

"Give God thanks, my dearly beloved parents, for allowing you to enjoy the light of Spiritism, because that will help you to better understand and better practise the teachings of Christ, and will make you better Christians. Act, I pray you, so that those who know you will be able to say the true Spiritist and the true Christian are one and the same thing; for all who practise charity are Christ's disciples, without regard to their sect or creed.

"I will only now say how happy I am and how thankful to the great, good, and merciful God for permitting me, your daughter, to show you the way to happiness and how to avoid the fate reserved for the unrighteous. So, beloved parents, never cease to practise these sublime virtues, Love, Charity, and Humility."

Bordeaux. J. H. G.

[Yes. The discrepancy is attributable to faulty methods of research in subjects full of difficulty. We, in this country, would never accept the utterances of this platitudinous and portentously didactic infant as of any value. We print its lucubrations as a curiosity.—Ed. "Light."]

Precocity.

To the Editor of "Light."

Sir,—The *Daily Telegraph* of March 16th in its "London Day by Day" says:—

"Precocity *in* extreme youth has been from time to time observable in all ages. In the reign of Charles II. there was at Manchester a small boy, aged three, whose parents were exceedingly anxious that he should be presented to his Majesty, on the ground that the bantling could speak Latin, Greek, and Hebrew without even having been instructed in those tongues."

Precocity, indeed! What a perversion of terms by a probably intelligent man! I send this paragraph to you as a riddle, though we must not tell, even if we should know, or think we know. It must be one of two things, but "precocity" is a misnomer. T. W.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

It seems desirable to make clear that any facts communicated to a Society or journal cannot be printed in "Light," and should not be sent to us. All records sent, moreover, must be accredited by the name and address of the sender, and will gain in value by the attestation of witnesses.

The Editor begs respectfully to intimate that he cannot undertake to return rejected MSS. If accompanied by stamps to pay postage in case of its being deemed unsuitable for publication, he will use reasonable care in re-posting any MS.

It will ensure despatch if all matter offered for publication is addressed to the Editor of "Light," 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., and not to any other name or address. Communications for the Manager should be sent separately.

He also begs respectfully to intimate that he cannot undertake to prepare for the press communications that are not suitably written. He begs his correspondents to see that all articles and letters forwarded are written on one side of the paper, are ready for the printer, and are of moderate length. Those over a column in length are in danger of being crowded out.

E. M. (Plymouth).—Many thanks. The notice is new to us.

E. M. (London).—Certainly; we approve, and will act on the suggestion.

Dr. Elliott Coues.—Your wishes have been attended to. Excuse this mode of reply as I am just going abroad. Your very kind words of commendation of "Light" are highly appreciated. The paper *is* warmly spoken of, and your verdict is that of an expert. Thanks.—"M.A. (Oxon.)"

SOCIETY WORK.

[*Correspondents who send us notices of the work of the Societies with which they are associated, will oblige by writing as distinctly as possible and by appending their signatures to their communications. Inattention to these requirements often compels us to reject their contributions.*]

Marylebone Association of Spiritualists.—A concert in aid of this Association will be given on April 10th, at Zephyr Hall, 9, Bedford-gardens, Notting Hill Gate.—H. Goddard, jun.

5, Devonshire-road, Forest Hill, S.E.—Last Sunday a very interesting meeting was held in the above room, when Mr. Long addressed a large audience. Questions were asked and answered. On Sunday next at 7 p.m. Mr. Harper will deliver a lecture.—A. Gifford.

Workman's Hall, West Ham-lane, Stratford.—The address on Sunday next will be given by Miss Keeves. Tickets for the tea meeting may be had from Mr. Burns, 15, Southampton-row; Mr. Raper, 102, Camberwell-road; and Mr. Drake, 34, Cornwall-road, Bayswater, and at the hall after service on Sunday.—M. A. Bewley, Sec.

London Occult Society, 18, Baker-street.—There will be no lecture next Sunday evening. On the following Sunday, April 7th, at seven, Mr. Herbert Coryn will lecture on "The Common Ground of Science and Occultism," and on Sunday, April 14th, "1st M.B.(Lond.)" on "The Higher Self from a Spiritualist Standpoint."—A. F. Tindall, A. Mus. T.C.L., President, 30, Wyndham-street, W.

South London Spiritualist Society, Winchester Hall (33, High-street, Peckham).—On Sunday last, Mr. Lees occupied the platform, the morning subject being "How does Christianity regard Physical Death?" and in the evening "What must I do to be saved?" On Sunday next, Mr. A. D. Wilson, of Halifax, at 11 a.m. In the evening Mr. T. Everitt will relate some of his remarkable experiences in Spiritual Phenomena.—W. E. Long, Hon. Sec.

London Spiritualist Federation.—In connection with the above Mr. A. D. Wilson, of Halifax (winner of *The Two Worlds* last prize essay) will speak in London as follows: Sunday, March 31st, at 11 a.m., Winchester Hall, 33, High-street, Peckham; evening at 7 p.m., 24, Harcourt-street, Marylebone; Monday, April 1st, at 8 p.m., Zephyr Hall, 9, Bedford-gardens, Silver-street, Notting Hill, W.—J. Veitch, Sec., 44, Coleman-road, Peckham.

295, Wandsworth-road, Clapham Junction.—On Wednesday, March 20th, we had an interesting evening as Mrs. Hawkins' control gave a number of convincing proofs of spirit friends being present. On Saturday, March 23rd, Mr. Vango gave to a large circle many clairvoyant descriptions, the majority of which were easily recognised. On Sunday, to our great disappointment, the lady announced was unable to attend, and Mr. Goddard and Dever Summers therefore addressed the meeting. We shall have the usual meeting on Saturday next, Mr. Vango medium, at 7.30, and on Sunday at 6.30, and Thursday at eight.—R. Hill, Hon. Sec., 18, Ilminster-gardens.

Cavendish Rooms.—A concert was given by Mr. Tindall, A. Mus. T.C.L., at the Cavendish Rooms, on Wednesday evening, March 20th, when an operetta was produced entitled *The Village Festival*, written and composed under spirit influence by Mr. Tindall. The room was crowded, and the work was much applauded, the general opinion being that it was highly melodious. The duet, "Through the misty halls of Dream," sung by Miss Johnstone, R.A.M., and Mr. Tandy, was an especial feature. Both these artistes by their rendering of the soprano and tenor airs respectively greatly contributed to the success of the operetta, which was ably conducted by Mr. J. W. Bond. The composer may be congratulated on having produced a work likely to be popular.

Zephyr Hall, 9, Bedford-gardens, Silver-street, Notting Hill Gate.—On Sunday morning last Mr. W. O. Drake opened a discussion upon "Physical Manifestations" (Ancient and Modern), and a very interesting exchange of ideas followed. In the afternoon a committee meeting was held, when arrangements were made for the summer out-door work, to commence the third Sunday in April, weather permitting, in Kensal Green on Sunday mornings, and in Hyde Park in the evenings, during the week. In the evening, Mr. J. Hopcroft gave a practical address upon "Spiritualism and Its Religious Influences and Effects upon Man." Mr. J. Veitch also spoke upon Spiritualism and the consolation it affords in death. Next Sunday at 11 a.m. there will be an adjourned discussion; at 3 p.m. a singing practice, and at 6.30 a Service of Song, when several speakers will attend. On Monday, April 1st, at 7.30, a special service, with an address by Mr. A. D. Wilson, of Halifax. Tuesday, at eight, séance at 10, Mall, Notting Hill Gate. Friday at eight, séance at 16, Dartmoor-street, Notting Hill Gate.—W. O. Drake.

Copies of "Light" for November 4th and December 16th, 1882, and March 1st, 1884, are wanted to complete a set. Will some friend who has spare copies of these dates kindly send them to care of Mr. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C.?

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