

THE

Harbinger of Light.

MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

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

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last. These lectures attracted considerable attention, drew good audiences, and paved the way for the advent of Mrs. Britten. Since that time, with one short intermission, Sunday evening services have been maintained at one of the principal theatres and, although a direct charge has been made for admission, have attracted audiences larger than the most popular Melbourne churches, reaching in some instances to upwards of 1700. At the conclusion of Mr. Walker's first course of lectures, it became known to the committee that the Rev. W. M. Green of Collingwood had expressed his willingness to debate Spiritualism and Christianity, and they, on behalf of the Association, selected Mr. Walker as their champion. The debate, which took place in March last, occupied nine evenings, and the harmony of Spiritualism with the scriptures was well sustained by Mr. Walker, who lost no opportunity of showing the superiority of Spiritualism over modern Christianity. From that time until the conclusion of Mrs. Britten's lectures the Association contented itself with the conduct of them and the maintenance of the reading-room, but in the hiatus between that event and Mr. Walker's second course, a few of the most energetic members of the committee conceived that the time had come for a wider range of action, and at the annual meeting for the election of officers brought their views prominently before the Association. The leader of the progressionists was unanimously elected president, the committee enlarged to fifteen, exclusive of officers, and a number of new members enrolled.

The first step taken by the new administration was to arrange with Mrs. Fielden for a series of semi public seances at the Masonic Hall, which have to the present time proved a great success, and through that medium's generosity in giving her services free, have materially added to the building fund of the Association, with which it is intended at some future time to erect a suitable lecture hall in the city. "Experience" meetings and a Seance Committee to aid investigators have been inaugurated. Several prominent lecturers in England and America have been communicated with, with the view of keeping our platform supplied with the highest talent. Arrangements for periodical conversaziones, a Grove meeting, and several minor matters are pending,

It is now some eighteen months since, and shortly before the departure of Dr. J. M. Peebles from amongst us, that the Spiritualists of Melbourne met with him to confer on the advisability of forming, for the second time, an organisation on a purely Spiritualistic basis, and a resolution affirming its desirability having been passed, the following simple formula of objects was considered sufficiently comprehensive, and adopted, viz.:—"The investigation of Spiritualistic truths and purposes." As many outside of its immediate influences are not cognisant of what it is doing and has done towards the fulfilment of its professed objects, it appears to us an appropriate time to review the work and ascertain how far it has accomplished its purpose. At the period of its formation one of its present officers was in correspondence with Mrs. Britten in reference to a visit here. The Association promptly took the matter in hand, raised a sum of money to subsidise her travelling expenses, and gave a guarantee for the first twelve lectures she should deliver here. The success of those lectures and the impetus given to Spiritualism by them are too apparent to need comment. The necessity for a central office for the transaction of business, and reading-room, where all the leading Spiritualistic papers might be seen, was early recognised, and suitable accommodation being available at the office of this paper, an office and reading-room, furnished with all the principal Spiritualistic papers and a number of standard books, was formally opened by the President on the 7th of August, 1877. The room is not only open to members and friends, but any *bona fide* enquirer can obtain ready access to it between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pending Mrs. Britten's arrival here, the Association arranged with Mr. Thomas Walker to deliver a series of lectures at the Opera House, in January and February

and an enthusiastic feeling prevails among the members, who now number 150. But this number very inadequately represents the Spiritualists of the metropolis, and it is to those who, while participating in the knowledge of our soul expanding religion, and the comfort it brings, fail to realise their duty to distribute and diffuse amongst those less fortunate the knowledge which they have profited by, that this information with regard to the extended objects and work of the Association is particularly given. Whilst in the churches they have contributed their quota, and often given their services; but when free from the responsibility imposed by the church, they too often fail to recognise the moral responsibility devolving upon them in connection with the improved spiritual sphere they have entered, but it exists, nevertheless, and we trust that in most instances it is nothing worse than thoughtlessness which has hitherto prevented their helping, either by their mind or means, the cause of Spiritualism and liberal religious thought. If our supposition is correct, the perusal of this article by our non-members will doubtless tend to transform them into members or subscribers, and give the Association greater power to fulfil its mission.

COMMUNICATIONS.

JUST as the blossom of the sunflower follows the course of the orb from which it gets its name, so we unerringly follow any attractive power that may tend to develop and ripen the seeds of that glorious flower known to you as Spiritualism, or spirit communion. The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are comparatively few. A man who enters the field for his own amusement can scarcely be considered a labourer, or worthy of the hire of one. If this be the case with your earthly harvest, surely the same reasoning holds good in respect to the spiritual harvest. That man must be without reason who could expect an earthly master to pay the idler for his own amusement with the same coin that he metes out to his own hard-working labourers whom neither rain nor sunshine can drive from the field. These bearing the brunt of the day are suitably rewarded, whilst the former are turned away empty. If man would use his reason with respect to the spiritual gifts as he does with respect to his earthly, he would escape making a great many blunders. But, alas! the ring of gold in his pocket is, to many an inquirer, of more value than all the prospective riches in a heavenly kingdom. "He that is not with me is against me" holds good in the present day as much as it did in the days of the Nazarene. "We cannot serve God and mammon," the two will not coalesce. I wonder how many, if told by a credible person that a priceless jewel lay embedded at their feet, would hesitate, in spite of being surrounded by their numerous so-called friends, to turn up the soil with whatever appliances were at hand and secure the prize. Now, in nine cases out of ten, though a man's best friend assure him, from his *own personal* knowledge, that a pearl beyond all price lay at his very door, he obstinately refuses to believe, or, at most, waits till all are out of sight before he deigns to look; and if he cannot grasp it at once, and without light, slams to the door of his ignorance and cries "Imposture!" We will even suppose that a man in business has been imposed upon, that he has had goods presented to him that did not turn out to be the genuine article. What then? Does he instantly give up his trade and refuse to have any more dealings with his fellow man? Not at all; he goes on as usual, but with a little more caution. Just so in spiritual matters. If there were no *genuine* mediums, we should not have the *false* media. And because a man, or his neighbour, has been once imposed upon, is that a reason for denying the gift *in toto*? As in your worldly matters, it should only tend to make you more careful, more watchful. Also, take care that

into the market you neither send nor take aught but the *good and pure*, lest you get paid in your own coin. "With whatsoever measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Proclaiming the fact is but publishing your *own* dishonesty.

Castlemaine, 1st December, 1878.

July 2nd, 1878.

No man has yet been able to manufacture life; he can copy most of the external appearances, but only then the mere appearance, for no man has yet been able to make artificially a single drop of blood, a single ounce of flesh, a superficial inch of skin. But still scientists are always ready to tell you that they can account for everything except the difference between the dead body and the living, except understand what the motive power is which sets the human machinery in motion. But can any physiologist tell you how the repair is effected of the constant waste which is going on in the human frame? He will no doubt say that the blood carries with it the necessary materials into the most remote regions of the body. Yes, but that does not tell you how it is done. You might as well describe building as the carting of bricks, mortar, and timber to a certain spot. That is not building, it is only after that has been done that the real act of building commences. The scientist therefore is utterly ignorant of the changes which are constantly going on in every part of his own body, so far as waste and repair are concerned. He believes this takes place, but none have found out yet how it is done, and all but a few emphatically deny the only discovery man has yet made which might lead him to the solution of this question. We refer to the actuality of an aura which surrounds each individuality, just as the atmosphere surrounds the earth. This aura consists of the thrown off particles of the human system, which retain, by virtue of the animal magnetism with which they are imbued, a kind of parasitic life for a short period, and they gravitate around the individual, gradually nearing the outside of his aura, which they eventually reach, and when the magnetism which they originally possessed has been dissipated, they fall out of the influence of that individual, and go to make up new forms of matter. You often hear this stated by spirits when endeavouring to make you understand how materializations are effected. They tell you that they can draw from certain organisms and their aura the necessary materials, yet imbued with animal magnetism, with which they form those tangible appearances, which have often every semblance of natural life. The greater part of these materials could not be taken permanently from the medium without serious injury to his health, but a small portion can generally be spared, together with its vitalising magnetism, and thus you may sometimes obtain permanent remembrances of these representations. Where these are pieces of dress, &c., the materials for their formation have been generally drawn from the atmosphere, and not from the medium, and it is only the magnetism necessary to make the particles cohere which is taken from him. You yourself have never witnessed, this form of manifestation, which, however, is sometimes exceedingly beautiful, but the conditions necessary to ensure such results are so complex and so little understood, that there is much uncertainty in the production of these "spirit creations," so to speak. We do not wish you at present to seek after these phenomena, as they are called, but at a later period you will have plenty of opportunities of observing them, and will no doubt be frequently called upon to account for that which seems so wonderful to the uninitiated mind. Humbly and reverently, by this means you may obtain a glimmering of an idea of what creation is as practised by the Great Architect himself. From all time, and before all time, existed the great eternal First Cause. He called into existence matter, as a means by which He could manifest Himself to those creatures, parts of Himself, with whom He intended to people the vast expanse of limitless worlds. Then from matter, by the action of His almighty will, all things were fashioned, each containing itself the germ of its highest development, and as each rose to the greatest perfection to which it was capable of attaining, it died and was resolved into new forms, higher up the scale of creation; and so all progress tends eternally from matter up to spirit.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

I.

"WHEN the spirit is ready to take its final plunge into the unconsciousness which stands connected with change of state, it has premonitions of what is about to follow, but these, in my case, were indistinct, and I left the earthly frame, and the earthly surroundings, with something like a vague and indefinite conception that from my sleep of death I would awake, but to what kind of experience I did not seem able to conceive. Indeed, elated overpowered with an irresistible feeling of unconsciousness which was gradually stealing over me, until it seemed as if I had sunk into a condition of non-being altogether, and the depth of which became more fully apparent, when I was again aroused from the repose into which my spirit had been thrown by the magnetic operations of the attendant spirit intelligences whose business it is to superintend such transfers from the earthly state of existence to that which succeeds. Could man but fully know how carefully he is attended to, and that there can be no suspension of the laws of existence, even in the dying hour, how he would cease to fret and tremble at the thought of dissolution. With the same calm indifference with which he lays down to sleep at night would he lay down to die, safe and happy within the circle of that universal government of the Divine Being which regulates the most minute of nature's operations, and which cannot overlook the least necessity of man. The fear of death which man suffers from consists not so much in the indefiniteness which pertains to the conceptions of the future, as from that want of calm trust and repose in God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and from the operations of whose laws we can never be separated. Even though it were utterly impossible to realise anything in relation to a future life, if man would but repose trust and confidence in the Power which has given him being, and apart from which he could not continue to exist a single moment, his apprehensions would vanish, and he would as readily accept the conditions which death imposes as any other change which arises in his daily existence. Death, and the change which it brings, is so inevitable, that it is of the greatest importance that man should arrive at a proper understanding with himself on this all-important feature of his existence. Death would not then be surrounded by gloomy apprehension, but the calm repose, and childlike confidence, would bring an assurance of the fullest satisfaction, and the pleasure of dying be increased by the belief that in passing away from the scenes and circumstances of earth life, we take the most direct road to something better beyond. When man is able to live this enlightened life, his whole course of conduct will be influenced thereby; and the knowledge that he is travelling on to something better, will stimulate him to aim in his earth life at a condition more in harmony with such expectations. This is a consideration which I would most earnestly press upon the attention of those to whom by the ordinations of nature, it is appointed once to die."

II.

"I have set before you the condition of mind which should be cultivated in relation to the prospect of the death of the body, and the departure of the soul into its next stage of being. I have also pointed out how, in my case, I seemed to sink into a state of deep unconsciousness, and thus closed up my earthly experience for ever. From that profound repose, however, I soon awoke, aroused by the kind ministrations of attendant spirits, whose duty it seemed to be to introduce the new born into the new relations which awaited it. Like a child, and yet with faculties which indicated the more matured man, I arose from the death slumber to commence a career of growth which stretches forth into those vast fields of progress in which are learned the lessons of a higher wisdom than earth life can afford. To describe my sensations at this point would be impossible. Not only did I experience the freshness of a new born nature, but the vigour and elasticity of early manhood; so that I could enter upon the circumstances of this new phase of life with that relish and profit which a matured man on the earth engages in some new, important, and interesting enterprise from which he expects to derive

solid advantage. With the benefit of studious habits acquired on earth, my mind was disposed to regard the circumstances of my surroundings in a methodical manner; and it instantly occurred to me, that the prevailing feature of this new state of existence was one of supreme harmony, impressing the soul with a sense of interior joy, and elevating it to the most sublime conceptions of His perfection who manifests His presence here, as He does in all other departments of the universe. The loveliness of nature here, as compared with the earth life state, is beyond description; forms of life, manifestations of spirit power, exhibitions of benevolence as witnessed in the adaptation of parts to the whole, indeed the whole of the accessories and complements of man's being are of such a character that one is tempted to believe that the true Paradise has been at length reached, and confusion, deformity, and conflict for ever banished. Such, I say, is the prevailing experience of the new born soul as borne out of my own realisations. Every other thought seems to be swallowed up by the one consideration arising from the extreme novelty of the situation, and it was not until some time afterwards that I experienced a desire to know in what relation my present condition stood to the one I had recently left, and in what degree, if any, I was still related to men on the earth. This desire is wisely kept in abeyance on the first entry into the new life, that the young and recently formed tenement of the spirit may not be injuriously affected. In due time, however, it becomes necessary that there should be a recurrence to the circumstances of earth life, inasmuch as there are many important and necessary lessons to be learned in relation to that period of our existence, which although past and gone, has left its impression and influence on the progressive development of our being. These lessons are learned mainly by introspection. In the mirror of our past are reflected the life deeds and results of the earth state. And in the light of our own surroundings, and by means also of the instructions which noble and loving companions impart, we are led to perceive the character of our past and in what way it has either assisted or retarded the growth of spirit progress. My new abode is full of illustrations, loving pictures or instances in question, to help me like the child at school, to review the past, and form a basis for the future. And, with this, comes in not so much a feeling of anguish, or a recognition of deformity, as a sense of regret such as the wise man would experience even on the earth, as he reviews his daily progress and marks the want of prudence, or the smallest indifference to detail, which is at all times so important. As I told you in a previous communication, the object of the progress of the spirit through matter in its different circles is, that it may acquire perfect conditions of being, and this I see more clearly every step I take in my review of the past. As I gaze down that endless vista of being over which I have travelled, I mark the stages of progress which have been attained, and realise more fully the necessity for the cultivation of certain conditions that I may rise, and grow onto higher planes, and so be qualified for more excellent uses in the future. I will now enter more into detail regarding what I realised personally, both as it relates to the new state, and what I learned of my present connection with the earth state which I had left. I must premise my detail with the remark that, man when he is born into his next state of existence, becomes possessed of a power to which he was a stranger on the earth. The power of extending his observations almost indefinitely along the planes of being that mark the progress of existence. Hence, I could, in addition to a comprehension of my immediate surroundings, go forth into the varied avenues of existence peopled by sentient beings, and full of the illustrations of the Infinite Wisdom. Here, I see around me beings like myself, reflecting the attributes of exalted manhood, possessing faculties of locomotion and intercourse, and able to apply these to the production of forms suited to their necessities. Man, is a being who requires social intercourse, and material surroundings. His nature is in harmony with the elements of the universe, and from these he can derive all he wants in the judicious application of means to an end."

III.

"The brightness of this summer land, if I may so call it, arises from the combination of elements proceeding from the united

aspirations of its inhabitants. Purified from that grossness which weighs down the spirit in earth life, the emanations are like by comparison to the clear rays of a lamp newly trimmed, as by the side of one which had around its wick the thick and exhausted refuse of oil and cotton which prevents the flame from gathering brightness. In this world sphere, where I abide, the conditions of being favour the fuller reception of elements of spiritual vitality, and the result of this is manifest in the activities which reveal the fact. Mingled with the lessons I have to learn, as I have said, are the contemplations of the life now closed, and conditions which continue to be visible in the lives of those whom I have left behind. If I might so express it, there are four books from which I have to learn the lessons of a progressive life: there is the closely written scroll of the past of my own being; the ever recurring circumstances of life as manifested among you of the earth; also the more immediate surroundings of my present; and the pictures, delineated on the horizon of the spirit as it looks forth to the still further beyond. In these volumes, all of which speak of a progressive life, we see delineated the many features of its necessary history. And gazing on the light-beam which strikes the eye of the beholder we are able from the presence of that beam, to trace its course to Him who sitteth on the circle of the universe, the universal Lord and Governor of all things. Thus you will perceive how wide spread is our look out, and how, instead of being cut off, and thrust into a corner of the universe, we, as compared with the earth life roam about and grasp a comparative immensity. I have already said that a prime element of man's nature consists in the social capacity which unites him with others of his kind. Intercourse with kindred spirits is at once a source of strength and of comfort. Want of tact, as well as limitation of knowledge, renders this almost impossible in the earth state; but here we realise not only the possibility, but the means by which the end is achieved; and in our associations, our intercourse, and employments, we seem to be gathering the beautiful flowers of a lovely Paradise, which, while they serve as elements of delight, instruct us in the Wisdom and Love of Him who decks nature with all its enchanting features. And it is thus all things are governed here, and on the broad highway of good will, imperfect conditions of being are changed into those which, as they grow, exhibit the greater perfection, because possessed of the more refined elements of government. Now, speaking of that principle of love, which blossoms here so fruitfully, you must be told that it finds its occupation not only in regarding that which is most perfect, or beautiful, but that it also descends into circles of a much lower formation, and penetrating the exterior form, searches for the germ of vitality which is the centre of all being, and upon this it seeks to exert an influence favourable to its growth. It is in this respect that we learn from the lesson book of the earth life, and also the lower circles, or world spheres of the existence beyond it. Into these we can enter, and from them we can derive instruction, while we impart a magnetic influence which benefits their conditions. Not with disgust, or pity, do we behold lower conditions or forms of life than those which we enjoy, but as the necessary progressive steps of an upward and onward progress; and realising this, we are wise in our loving ministrations."

IV.

"It is very difficult to descend into particulars relating to our every day life. And yet it must not be inferred that there are no distinctive and well defined circumstances characterising our conscious existence. All of the appointments of this world in which I dwell, are calculated to expand the faculties of the spirit as they now develop. Sight we have, the power of vision in a degree far in advance of that faculty as enjoyed on the earth; and to meet this, to satisfy the hunger which hence arises, there are the visible objects which make up our social surroundings, and the natural objects which although less animated with intelligence, speak to us here with a loud voice of the wisdom and love of the Great Father. The dear associates of our home, of our assemblies, of our travels, indeed of all our engagements, are of such a character as to increase the capacity for action; while the sense of enjoyment grows in proportion. I have spoken of the intensity of love; of such a character is the whole of our intercourse here, whether

with our fellow beings or nature around us. We dwell at peace, and we labour to achieve the mutual wellbeing of all. When you understand that the succession of natural phenomena which prevails here is in harmony with human wants, and that the ongoing of everything which affects our external sensibility, conveys an appropriate lesson, the learning of which adds fresh interest to our existence, then it will be seen that we are indeed highly favoured, and that growth under these circumstances is certain to develop the most glorious results. We, like the nature which surrounds us, are sustained and invigorated by the absorption of refined essences; but this is not a birth world in the sense in which your earth is, but rather a world in which by other processes than you are acquainted with, nature expands and develops, and carries the spirit to higher realisations. It is enough for you to know that a nature richly endowed grows harmoniously, and so wide spread in its grasp, that the Human here is as a God compared with what he was on the earth he has left for ever. With respect to mental culture and elevation, I might say much; as I have told you, we learn from all our circumstances and surroundings. There are, however, organisations which have this object in view, and these are regulated, and are made available to us as we require them. Special gifts find special organisations whereby they may be fostered and made fit for special use. Self-government, being at the very base of all intercourse with others, this object is achieved, when the peculiar characteristics of individual life are cared for; and however varied these may be, when properly educated, the most apparently diverse contributes its quota to the general good, and then tends to form a perfect whole. Our highest aspirations are excited from an interior view of the operation of cause and effect, and which naturally leads up to a Great First Cause. That mysterious connecting link which seems to be common to life, and the realisation of which in a greater or less degree causes existence to feel its dependence on a source and power outside itself, is with us more palpable; and hence the ascent of the higher to the lower, of the creature to the Creator, is realised more fully, and is deepened by the combined study of those who are all alike interested in the Paternal Government of God, but who is seen and understood more in the laws of the universe than in any personal form, however exalted and refined. Hence it is that, however near we might approach to Him who is the source of all things, there can be no absorption of our individuality, or loss of a personality which distinguishes us from Him. *We* are personal and individual. *He* is not, excepting you resolved all existence into one combined form, and then gave that the name of God; but this is a simple impossibility, because personality and individuality, being the attribute of the human, as represented in man, you can never get beyond that, and could never grasp the whole, or combine the elements of being into one, except at the expense of your own dissolution, and that would be at once fatal to any further consideration of the question."

MARNIAS METL.

H. J. B.

December, 1878.

MR. THOMAS WALKER.

MR. T. WALKER's lectures at the Academy of Music continue to draw good houses. On Sunday 22nd, the subject was a seasonable one—"Christmas: its origin, ceremonies, and significance." The principal portion of the lecture tended to show that Christmas, like many other so-called "Christian" celebrations, had its origin in the earlier religions of the East. The lecturer showed, on the authority of Christian commentators, that there was no certain record of the time of Christ's birth, whilst the fact that in the northern hemisphere the sun enters into the summer solstice on that day is well known, but at the antipodes, to be consistent, we should keep our Christmas six months later. He spoke earnestly and reverently of the beauty of Christ's life, and the moral influence which, as a man, he legitimately exercised, but deprecated the idea of his being God himself. The lecture concluded with considerable applause from the audience.

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

MR. HUGHES ON SPIRITUALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—I shall be obliged by your returning me the manuscript of my articles, if you can do so.

By closing your columns against the discussion of Spiritism as a debatable question, you ignore free thought. Free thought, with freedom in its utterance, I have regarded as a settled principle. But Spiritism is an open and disputable one, subordinate to free thought, and subject to a candid utterance of the decisions of its exercise, both *pro* and *con*.

I am sorry that by refusing to entertain the subject of Spiritism as viewed by me, the *Harbinger* should have placed Spiritism in antagonism to Free Thought. It is unfair, as between Spiritism and Free Thought, to sacrifice the latter to the former, to allow the utmost measure of Free Thought so long as Spiritism is accepted and maintained, but to ignore free thought if by its utterance Spiritism is challenged and endangered.

It is a help to me in forming a judgment of Spiritism that Spiritists—at any rate, the *Harbinger*—will not afford me the help I seek by means of fair and friendly discussion.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

EDW. F. HUGHES.

Portland, 7th December, 1878.

[Mr. Hughes is evidently hurt at our refusal to insert his last letter. We are not surprised thereat, it is the natural feeling of newspaper correspondents when their MS. is rejected. Be it good bad, or indifferent, the parent does not like to have its offspring put in the shade; it sees virtues in the child to which others are oblivious, and attributes their non-recognition to public obtuseness. But we had thought Mr. Hughes had some editorial experiences, and would know how often judgment necessitates the consignment to the waste paper basket of what good nature and a desire to please would otherwise induce us to publish. We have in former times discussed Spiritualism in our columns *ad nauseum*, and unless some fresh arguments can be adduced, we would not inflict upon our readers a repetition of the A.B.C. which they learned by heart many years ago. Besides, Mr. Hughes puts himself out of court by ignoring testimony and demanding personal demonstration, which it is impossible for a journal to give. As we have said before, Spiritualism proper includes Free Thought. For proof of this assertion we would refer to the Ten Spiritual Commandments, published in the *Harbinger* of September, 1876. In rejecting Mr. Hughes' letter, or even closing our columns to him, we do not ignore Free Thought, but we consider the time has gone by for a representative journal to recognise Spiritualism as a debatable question. Its separate phenomena and moral influence may be open to discussion, but the irrefragable truth of its basic principles and the evidences of its facts are to us and the majority of our readers past dispute. 'Spiritualism may be challenged by Free Thinkers and sceptics, but it is not endangered. Free Thinkers, sceptics, and orthodox combined have never been able to check its progress; it still moves on and on, in defiance of all opposition, and this by its inherent powers, for while it exhibits some of the spirit of propagandism, it does not seek to proselytize. Our columns are open to the discussion of evidences presented, or to give information to those who seek to obtain personal demonstration, but it is too late in the day for us to debate whether Spiritualism is a fact or not.—ED. H. of L.]

DR. SLADE'S SPIRIT MATERIALISATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—On Sunday evening, 1st December, Dr. Slade, attended a meeting of the Psychological Association by invitation of the members. The sitting was for the express purpose of producing materialisations. The members ranged themselves round a table in their usual seats, whilst Dr. Slade took his seat at a small chess table, in front of a green holland blind, through the centre of which a small opening was made of about twelve inches in breadth, by about eighteen inches in depth. After we had thus taken our seats, the sitting opened in the usual manner. Previous to sitting our spiritual friends answered to their names by giving the knocks on the table or floor peculiar to each of them. One of our friends gives a very heavy muffled knock on the floor, which causes it to vibrate a good deal. It seemed to startle Dr. Slade a good deal by what he termed "its solemn unearthly character." Immediately after this he asked Owassoo if the preparations were nearly completed, who replied by giving three knocks on the book he held in his hand. Our gifted medium then described the spirit of a female standing between the chairman and Mrs. L. We were asked to sing a little. Whilst doing so, a female spirit materialised and showed herself at the opening in the blind. She was, however, but dimly visible, a veil seemed as if drawn over her face. She was asked if she would come again a little plainer. She nodded an affirmative. The gas was now turned on again a little brighter. We sang again, and whilst doing so she appeared to those sitting close to her, bright and clear. Mrs. L., who had a materialisation sitting with the doctor on Friday, looked surprised, expecting to see the same face again. Gazing intently for a moment, she exclaimed, "Why, it is Maggie." She smiled and bowed, then turned to her sister, Mrs. L., and smiled to her. Mrs. L. said, "It is my own dear sister," and fell back in her chair fainting with the sudden surprise. She quickly recovered, but the angelic face with its smile of love was gone, Owassoo now informed us that the materialisation sitting was over. Dr. Slade, under control, gave an instructive address upon the best means of procuring this form of manifestation, after which, according to the request of his guides, he left us to ourselves.

The spirit who appeared was Mrs. B——, who passed away at Castlemaine about ten years ago. She was very like Mrs. L——. The similarity of features was marked by those who were sitting near to the materialised form.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours fraternally,

R. LORIMER,

Secretary, Psychological Association,

Ballarat.

December 17th, 1878.

DR. SLADE'S SLATE-WRITING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I see by some of the Melbourne daily newspapers that a considerable amount of talk has been going on relative to the manner Dr. Slade holds the slate during his *seances*. He has attended several meetings of the Psychological Association, and in every case where the writing took place under the table, the whole of his hand, and also part of the slate, have been visible to all. The slates used were in every case new ones, the property of the Association. The messages received on them were of considerable length. The longest message was written upon two new slates, held together by Dr. Slade, whilst they rested on the head of one of the members of the Association. I sent you a photograph of the writing, so that the curious in such matters can see what it is like. The slates were the property of the Association, and had not been in Dr. Slade's hands until they were handed to him at the meeting, and were never out of the view of any of the members for one single instant. The writing was produced in less time than it could be done by an expert penman. The whole of his hand was visible to all the sitters, while I closely and intently watched for any

movement of the muscles of the wrist, the faintest one of which I could have detected.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours ever sincerely,

R. LORIMER,

Secretary, Psychological Association.

MY ADVENT.

THE gathering twilight steal't across the scene,
The busy tumult of the day was lulled
Into a dull and listless monotone,
As I, with weary limb and aching heart,
Descended to the river's lonely marge,
And laid me down upon its brink to rest;
I watched the shadows deepen, and the night
Descend and melt into the quivering stream,
And pondered how the waters of my soul
Were pierced by a more desolating gloom;
When, lo! a film across my vision passed,
An unknown something, working like a spell,
Closing the avenues of outward sense,
And opening to the inward consciousness
A wider realm of finer entities.
The world receded from me, and I moved
Free from the limitations of the flesh;
My form grew buoyant as the mountain air,
Subtle as ether—pure as virgin snow—
And effluent as the tremulous morning dew;
I felt my soul within grow luminous,
Fair as the light within a crystal fine.
My vision gained a mystic potency,
To pierce the envelope of outward form,
And see the forces of the infinite
In endless undulations moving on;
I saw all things amenable to LAW—
That law—no cold and stern fatality,
Unbacked by any final consciousness,
But vital, instinct, from the Eternal Heart
Whose thought is justice, and whose Being love.
And in this new-found joy I rose and swept
By mere volition the empyrean air,
In consort with celestial companies
Resplendent as the sun-enamelled waves,
And countless as the stars; all thronging up
The effulgent empires of the doméd heavens,
Mid surging spheres and swelling harmonies,
Towards higher planes and nobler destinies.
And as I looked with spirit-vision back
Across the gleaming spaces towards the earth,
And saw my mortal form still lying there
Upon the bank, cold, desolate, and DEAD!
And thought upon the weariness and pain,
The doubt and anguish which had burdened me
While pinioned there; and of the glory now
Bosom'd with love in calm serenity,
I broke into a rhapsody and sang—

"How little do we deem in earthly life
Of all the glory that attends us here,
When tossed amid the elemental strife
Which surges round earth's incompleter sphere—
Scarcely emerging from the shades of night—
How little dream we of the splendours rife
Through all the spaces (gleaming far and near)
Of this supreme, supernal world of light;
Of all the revelations of delight
Still pulsing down the azure atmosphere,
Unfolding to the soul a sense of might—
An instinct of its heirship,—of its right
To all the immortal joys—serene and bright,
(As purling waters or pellucid tears),
And yet triumphant, rapturous and strong,
As the full diapason of the song
Of choiring angels in harmonic throng,
Striking their music down the ambient arc
Of heaven, among the stringed and streaming bars,
Of the sublime and immemorial stars,
In honour of the sempiternal years,
Crowned with the nimbus of immortal love.
Yes, on the earth sphere we but strain the dark,

Seeking with faltering hopes and failing sight
To pierce the veil which shrouds this life above—
This life of lives—this life of God-like vim
Of glorious consciousness that ne'er grows dim;
This life Elysian, without clouds or fears,
But ever new unfoldments, opening blooms,
And sweet avatars filled with finer dooms,
And swift ascensions, cycling up and up
Through endless ecstasies for evermore.
"For evermore"—oh light! oh life! oh love!
Oh heart of God! Is this the bitter cup
Thou giv'st to drink? Then rise, O soul, and sing;
Rise, all ye mortals, let your voices ring;
Rise, all ye tenants of the spheres, that swing
In vaulted space; and all your praises bring,
Ye sons of God, ye hierarchs of the wing,
And let the chorus in one peal unite,
Till like a thunder-peal it shall smite
The farthest reaches of infinity.
"OUR GOD IS JUST"—no death awaits the soul,
But life triumphal—life for evermore.
Renew thy strength—oh soul! thy bliss is sure.
Drink in the splendours round, about, above,
And as the throbbing ages round thee roll,
Rejoice! thy path is upward without goal,
Towards thy God—for evermore—through Love.

E. L.

JESSE SHEPARD.

A SELECT concert was given at the Masonic Hall on Wednesday Nov. 27th, by the above talented medium. Although the event was not advertised, and the price of tickets high, there were nearly 100 ladies and gentlemen present. The concert was divided into two parts, the first instrumental, consisting of the overture from "Ernani," Russian Gipsy airs, operas selected by the audience, and a grand fantasia on airs from "l'Africaine," during the performance of which all who were able gathered in proximity to the key-board to watch the marvellous dexterity of the player, whose brilliant execution evidently produced a most favourable impression, and prepared the audience for the still more marvellous effects of the second part, in which it was difficult to conceive that the clear soprano voice could possibly be emitted from the mouth of a man. The term "Grand" prefixed to the "March of the Egyptians," which was the last number but one on the programme, was in this instance no misnomer. It is intended to represent the approach and encounter of two opposing armies, and the effects produced must have fully carried out the conception of the composer. The final piece was the solo for basso and soprano, from the lowest to the highest notes, with piano accompaniment, as described in our last. This was beautifully sung, the extreme contrast between the two voices creating much surprise and comment, and was heartily applauded at its close.

We have since been present at a subscription concert held in a large drawing-room in the city, kindly lent to Mr. Shepard by one of his admirers. On this occasion the "Egyptian March" was repeated, and excelled all previous performances we have heard. The march of the armies, the clanging of arms, and the imitation of thunder, produced in the course of the piece, were distinctly recognisable, and it seemed incredible to those understanding the instrument that such effects could be produced from the key-board alone. The concluding duet for bass and soprano voices was very fine.

WE understand that at the next meeting of the Eclectic Association, Mr. Samuel Milligan is to read a paper on "The Evidences of Spirit Communication." We have no doubt that he will do ample justice to the important subject he has taken on himself to handle, but from what we know of the members of this Association generally, we do not anticipate that much good to the great cause of Spiritualism will be effected by Mr. Milligan's well-intentioned effort. Eclecticism, as interpreted at the discussions of this Association, would almost seem to amount to dogmatic Materialism.

THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT.

BY SELDEN J. FINNEY.

(From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*).

CONCERNING SPIRITUALISM: ITS EXTENT, ITS VALUE AND ITS WORK.

THE conviction of this truth is too extensive among all classes, professions, and pursuits to be regarded as in whole, or in great part, a delusion. True, there are persons who are more or less deluded by sham manifestations, crude notions, absurd conjectures mistaken for fact, semi-psychological performances mistaken for spiritual verities, and actual deception received as genuine realities, who are Spiritualists. But making all due discount for these things, by far the largest class of persons are free from these delusions. Add to this the consideration that those who are so deluded, are not wholly, or even largely deluded. This class, at the worst, believe more truth than error, and are more elevated than depressed by their sum-total convictions. And of what class of religionists can anything more favorable be truthfully said? The most thoroughly befooled Spiritualist is less deluded than the most respectable Calvinist or Methodist—has less darkness and terror in his convictions, more exalted and exalting ideas of God, of moral freedom, and of the great Hereafter, and is pushed by his ideas into more practical reformatory work than any creed-bound soul whatever. The theology of the most deluded Spiritualist, will come out of the ordeal of the most searching criticism with more substance of faith left untouched than that of any orthodox person in the land. For all that, his delusions need cutting away none the less. We do not ask any charity for our delusions. We are not cowards, and do not go crying mercy for our faith from the critics. A candid criticism (a very rare thing to obtain) we invite; an uncandid one we do not fear.

Making all due allowance then for errors of all kinds, Spiritualism is still too largely received by the thinking in all classes, to be considered a delusion in the main. Its vast extent and living influence, are not characteristics of semi-total deception. Nothing from nothing comes. It counts its open receivers by millions in America alone, while it is well known to well informed persons, that tens of thousands more secretly receive it as genuine. I know that U. S. Senators and Representatives, Governors of States, lawyers, physicians, and Christian ministers in the course of social converse have clearly asserted their full conviction of the truth, and use and beauty of this great fact. One minister not long since told me that he was trying to lead his entire church out into the light and liberty of the Spiritual movement. Said he to me, "Nothing but brick and mortar walls divide us." Nor are these persons of no mark in their own connections. Some of them hold the highest places, in the most genteel pulpits, and the most influential denominations in the land. Indeed I think there are few families who have not believers in some of their branches. No class, or profession, or association but has been invaded by its presence, its power. And it is still extending in all directions. At no moment of its progress has it done more permanent and effectual work than to-day it is doing. It makes less noise because its current is broader, deeper, and more powerful. At first curiosity moved the masses; now, an earnest, quiet desire to get at the truth and the fact inspires men. The latter spirit is infinitely more desirable and powerful than the former.

It is sometimes objected that there are so many fanaticisms and fanatics connected with it, that it may well be questioned if the thing itself be not a fanaticism. It is said that this disgusts the thoughtful and cultured. In reply, I remark that any movement, attended by so many fanaticisms and half-crazed people—reveals an immense power. Nothing from nothing comes. *There was never a great religious movement in this world, that has left any marks in history, that was not so attended.* Christianity itself, in its early days—the first five hundred years of its career—was almost overrun and nearly

submerged by the wildest fanaticisms, the most disgusting "freeloveism" even among the bishops, and the shallowest of miracle-mongers. Mosheim declares that "false miracles were artfully proportioned to the credulity of the vulgar;" "that to lie and deceive for the interests of religion was a well-nigh publicly adopted maxim; that all the writings of the early Fathers were infested with this leprosy." And Neander says pious frauds overflowed the church even down to the fifteenth century. And I might remark that "Orthodox Theology is to-day only a fossil fanaticism."

The very follies connected with Spiritualism attest its great central power, as earthquakes and volcanoes prove the existence of the central fires of the globe. It is not given to mere negation to so move and unsettle the chronic opinions and prejudices of whole millions of men and women. The profoundest and most critical scholarship never so deeply moves mankind, never sets the mass in such thorough agitation; never so unsettles the long established habits of St. Custom; never so rapidly emancipates the heads and hearts of mankind from the tyranny of old opinions. It is given not to those who write about history, but to that power which moves men to act the great drama of life, to create history. Each of the six great historic forms of religion was originally a spontaneous Spiritualism, surging up against the barriers of ordinary life and thought. Modern Spiritualism is the seventh great revival of man's religious consciousness; and like all its predecessors, is attended with the profoundest agitation; unsettles and submerges the old landmarks of thought; puts all things at risk; asks terrible questions of marriage, of parentage, of government, of society, of religions; asserts the highest virtue to be opposed both to theology and to law; compels us to re-examine the grounds of our faith in God—Man and Destiny, subsoils all our social life, and drags up into the light of day the smooth, elegant, but rotten hypocricies of the self-elected saints of the churches. It is a terrible rebuke to shams. It makes men in earnest, for it kindles their souls at the fires of the morning stars. No wonder that a kind of frenzy takes hold of those freshly-kindled spirits, for numberless are the mockeries which, under Christian guise, its light reveals. It finds baptised villainies in possession of church and state, and immediately sets off on a crusade against them.

Its follies and fanaticisms are only the unsteady moral posture of souls in rapid transition from the old to a new order of things. Grand agitations which go down into the depths of life and thought, are always attended by these moral obliquities of men. They are only the incidents of new Inspirations of Power from the realm of "the gods." Great revolutions of thought always unsettle old habits as well as opinions. And before the new Idea has fairly become reduced to logical action, of course we must expect eccentricities of conduct. And even the moral eccentricities of a newly emancipated soul, are more heroic than that poll-parrot kind of virtue which is so very smoothfaced and "respectable." The first is the free action of emancipated instincts, not fully aware of their true latitude and longitude; the latter is a mill horse trot in the old paths of prejudice, which may, perchance, have been the path of virtue to some ancestor long since dead on earth, but which is to our perception only moral mechanics, with no jot of moral freedom or heroism. The first is a moral agent, the second only a moral machine. He has some new aspirations, who dares break through the restraints of custom, and assert, against the growing despotism of old opinions, a large individualism. There is hope of such.

And here I remark that Spiritualism has ten thousand times more living testimony to the truth of its facts of intercourse with the "departed," of spiritual guardianship, of healing by the laying on of hands, etc., etc., than Christianity has of dead testimony for the existence of Jesus or any of the so-called miracles he is supposed to have wrought. And besides, the spiritual evidence is alive and present, to be cross-questioned, which is not the case with the witnesses to Christianity. The Spiritualist longs for the opportunity to balance evidence

with the Christian Theologian; but the latter avoids the direct issue. He refuses to put his creed into the crucible of a full and fair contest on a free platform—a plain confession of his own lack of faith in his own creed. Let it be kept constantly before the people, that Spiritualism invites the closest scrutiny and discussion—both as to its facts and its philosophy. It has never once shrunk from that ordeal. It inspires its disciples with the very spirit of courage. How do you account for this, Messrs. Critics? Not always will orthodoxy be able thus to escape this trial balance of evidence before the world. A candid public will ere long demand the joining of the great issue.

Spiritualism has two very distinctly marked modes of operation. The one is external, tangible, visible, addressing the senses by suitable phenomena. The other, though more hidden and occult, is more powerful directly on the souls and opinions of men. The one addresses the thoughts, opinions and feelings through the senses; the other touches the soul directly—and spirit to spirit. The one set of manifestations startles attention, arrests and, as it were, coerces the thought, and compels by sheer force, the convictions. The other comes as an all enveloping magnetism, moving the very atmosphere of the soul so gently, and yet so powerfully, that our views are changed unawares. It comes as new spiritual life, as a luminous ether, washing out the old darkness with molten glory. In this latter form it has already vitalised the best literature of America. In this shape it can get into the brains of an orthodox poet and make his otherwise stilted rhyme, sing of the "Loved ones—the true-hearted"—gone before us over the river. In this form it breaks out in the middle of H. W. Beecher's orthodoxy, in his unguarded moments, and shines in such splendour as to make the darkness of his creed all the more visible. And in this form it cannot be easily resisted, not at all, in fact, except by wilful shutting of the soul's windows, or wilful viciousness of life. The evidences of this manner of its operations are seen in the sermons of the most spiritual and genial of the ministerial profession, as well as, not unfrequently, in those of the most orthodox. In moments of spiritual abandon—and the most bigoted occasionally have them (and herein is cause of hope)—this all enveloping magnetism flows into the chambers and magazines of the soul, suddenly illuminating and uplifting all within, until Creeds, Bible, Church, all but God and humanity are forgotten in a new blaze of inner glory. Then the congregation is nearly lifted to its feet, and for weeks thereafter finds it difficult to think from the creed. This phase of Spiritualism has been but little attended to, and yet it is the most powerful mode of all its operations. In this respect it is a vast synthesis of unresolved power. It will take years for the contests of this ocean of descending spiritual energy to evolve themselves into body—into form and place. And yet it must do this, and do it by a process of incarnation. This Soul of the NEW AGE, must evolve its own body. As the sunbeam translates itself into grass, and flowers, and golden fruitage, so must this pure white light of the Spiritual life translate its contents into fitting images of its transcendent Ideal. No soul need longer sit down in the darkness of imported superstitions. A world of light and life is waiting to rush into us. O, ye bookworms, look up, put yourselves in the attitude of reception, and from this Divine Spiritual Ocean, great rivers of light shall pour into you. Then you stoop at the same fountain with Pythagoras and Socrates, with Plato and Jesus, and no longer quaff the waters of spiritual life at second hand from their dead lips. The utterances of those ancient worthies are immortal, only because they lay open, on their divine side, to these great deeps of spiritual nature.

THE LYCEUM MINIATURE.

THE "Miniature" completes its first year of issue with a very good number, and with it is presented an index and title page for those who have kept and desire to bind their volume. We shall be glad to receive subscriptions for the coming year.

CLAIRVOYANCE AND PSYCHOGRAPHY.

(From the *Psychological Review*.)

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN PHYSICUS AND PSYCHICUS. (Concluded.)

Psy.—But I have heard you say a hundred times that you would not believe your senses if they testified to anything so opposed to what you know of the laws of nature.

Phys.—Yes, I have made that remark repeatedly, and in sincerity. I now see that the senses are too much for the speculative understanding, even for what Carpenter calls our "common sense." It is just my common sense that forbids my entertaining a doubt that all the phenomena I witnessed yesterday were genuine; inexplicable by any theory of trick on the medium's part, or of illusion or hallucination on mine. I must give up everything if I give up the conviction that I was in my proper mind, and saw things precisely as I have related and as they truly occurred.

Psy.—How is the experience going to affect your theory that matter is the sufficient factor in all phenomena?

Phys.—Of course, if matter does all, then are these new facts irreconcilable with the conception of matter as purely material, and that conception I had always held.

Psy.—Do they force you to the conception of an immaterial substance?

Phys.—Either to that or to the endowment of matter with an intelligent force which leaves it no longer pure matter in my eyes. It makes no great difference which conception I adopt; one is essentially the equivalent of the other.

Psy.—Not quite. In the one case the intelligent or energising principle may be separable; in the other inseparable.

Phys.—That is true. But a force or intelligence without a substratum in which to inhere,—what is it but something unimaginable to us *constituted* as we are? Mind and matter, in some of their grades, though ideally distinct, may be practically inseparable.

Psy.—According to Mill we must not assume that our *constitution* is the universal measure of things. There may be other sorts of minds to whose conception there may be such things as round squares and square circles, and to which twice two does not make four, but five.

Phys.—I reject all that—though it cannot be disproved—as unmeaning speculation. What it is the nature of the mind to think—as, for instance, that twice two is four—it can only think as that which must universally be.

Psy.—Take care, Physicus, you are coming upon spiritual ground, and forsaking that of the crass materialism to which you have been so long devoted.

Phys.—How do you make that out?

Psy.—The adult consciousness, according to Mill and the materialists, is something "artificial;" the result of heredity, experience, merely physical antecedents—a mechanical, empirical product. The fact that two and two make four is not, therefore, implicit in the nature of the understanding itself. We do not know, says Mill, what is in the consciousness of an infant at birth; and he assumes that any idea which was not there at that date is foreign to the mind, and has arrived from without.

Phys.—My dear fellow, you make me giddy in leading me to these metaphysical abysses.

Psy.—Truly if any one is bound to be a metaphysician it is the extreme materialist. His whole system is based on purely metaphysical assumptions.

Phys.—How do you answer Mill's postulate?

Psy.—It is well answered, from the spiritual standpoint, by David A. Wasson, who says of it: "It is wholly unwarranted, and is in violation of all known analogy. For, as a male child is born without a beard, while yet it is in the nature of his body to produce one after a term of years, so the same child may be born without conscious ideas, which, nevertheless, it is the nature of his mind to bring forth at a later period."

Phys.—Well put, I have no wish to contend that the

nature of mind may be very different in the planet Jupiter from what it is on our earth. I regard all that kind of speculation as unprofitable hair-splitting. Mind is mind. What it is the nature of mind to think that it must think; I must think of two and two as four; my thought necessarily is that two and two are four, and cannot, in the nature of things, be more or less.

Psy.—You have been in a false position, my dear Physicus. It is plain that you were never born for a materialist.

Phys.—I am not so sure of that. My thoughts are like a swarm of bees that have not yet found a settling-place.

Psy.—Well, then, why not say with Huxley, "Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me?"

Phys.—That was merely an exaggeration. If I should tell a manufacturer of telescopes that I had a telescope by which I could see houses in the moon, and people moving, and he should reply, "Even if what you say is true, it does not interest me"—I should believe him just as I believe Huxley in his remark.

Psy.—You think then that the phenomena really have significance; and you are not disposed to say, with many inert intellects or artful dodgers, when cornered by the incontestable fact,—"Well, what of it? What does it prove?"

Phys.—To affect indifference would be dishonest; to feel it would be heartless apathy. Here, for more than thirty years, all our physicists, with some very rare exceptions, have been crying out, "These things cannot be"—things which I now know to be real phenomena! Do you think I am to be fooled a second time by then turning round and saying, "Well, admitting it is all true, what of it? What does it prove?"

Psy.—I have heard devout clergymen make the same remark when they have been pressed to the wall by overwhelming testimony; "Well, what of it?" My friend William Mountford, himself a clergyman, replied to them thus aptly; "And what of the theology that talks in that way—what of that? What else can it be but a mere semblance of something, the mere ghost of a faith, a shell empty alike of learning, sense, and earnestness? The phenomena of Spiritualism, acknowledged to be real, and yet scorned as being unimportant, unsuggestive, meaningless, and unworthy of theological notice! What flippancy! What mere blind leadership of the blind such theology must be; What a fantastic trick before high heaven! 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead!'"

Phys.—Is there no escape from the spiritual theory as a solution of these phenomena?

Psy.—If we suppose they are effected wholly by some occult powers, of which he is unconscious in the medium, what then? Are the powers, acting thus unconsciously, in any sense to be credited to the physical organism? Sight without eyes—can you explain to me how this is explicable by your empirical and physical theories, as now held by the extreme materialistic school? I undertake to draw no distinctions, mark, between spirit and matter; I do not insist upon the theory of two distinct substances—at least not in this discussion. But one thing is certain; if you conclude that matter does these things, you can no longer adhere to the notion that the constituent particles of matter are merely physical bodies, moved in obedience to merely physical principles, and which being in themselves without sensation, yet produce sensation and thought by particular forms of their combinations. Where are your physical principles to explain these things? And if you give up this tenet of materialism proper, you must either adopt the spiritual theory, or fall back on *hylozoism*, the doctrine that life and matter are inseparable.

Phys.—Well, Spinoza tells us that all things are alive in different degrees.

Psy.—But we must not confound life with force. Life requires organisation. All matter may be endowed with force; even the *vis inertiae* may be a force. But all matter is not endowed with life; that is obviously not co-extensive with matter.

Phys.—It must have been life, organised life, that wrote that message on my slate.

Psy.—What if we say it was the unconscious work of some faculty in the medium, independent of his physical organism? May there not be a psychic force?

Phys.—But I have always denied the existence of the *Psyche*. What I want is a solution that requires the aid of no unknown quantity—the x or y of spirit or soul.

Psy.—The writing was either done by an x force manifesting intelligence and hitherto unrecognised by science, or it was done by what the common consent of mankind calls a spirit, and that spirit external to the medium. Is there any getting away from one of these two suppositions?

Phys.—Truly I do not see that there is, and that is what confounds me.

Psy.—And if it is an x force or psychic force in the medium himself or anyone else, is it not a fair presumption that he has spiritual faculties, pointing to a spiritual organism, independent of the physical body?

Phys.—If by a spiritual organism you mean something real, and having extension or the power of extension, then I am not prepared at present to dispute your view.

Psy.—The super-sensual power of clairvoyance, since it is abnormally pressed into action, and surpasses all that we know of our ordinary and sense-derived powers, may be fairly supposed to be of psychical, spiritual, or super-physical origin. The fact, at any rate, puts an end to the theory of a purely empirical genesis for the explanation of all mental phenomena.

Phys.—And what, once more, of the act of intelligent writing, independent of any known human agency?

Psy.—In that act we have proof of the exercise of not only a mental and clairvoyant, but of a mechanical or manual faculty, with power to move and affect matter; and the question is, Where has that faculty its substratum? In what does it inhere? If we may believe our senses the writing is not the work of the medium. Whose, then, is it?

Phys.—Here, again, we are forced to one of two conclusions—either the medium did it through some unknown supersensual faculty or force, or it was the work of an independent invisible person, having a power over matter far beyond that ever exercised by ordinary mortals.

Psy.—I see no escape from one of these two conclusions.

Phys.—Frankly, neither do I—as at present advised.
EPES SARGENT.

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

A GENERAL meeting of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists was held at the Masonic Hall on Thursday, December 5th, to confirm rules framed by the committee, and to discuss the best method for attaining the objects of the Association, viz., the investigation and advancement of spiritualistic truths and purposes. Friends of the Cause who had not yet joined the Association were invited to attend. Several responded to this invitation, and when the meeting commenced there were about 150 present, which number was subsequently increased to 200. The president stated that beyond the confirmation of the rules, one of the principal objects of the meeting was to give the many new members who had joined since last meeting an opportunity of expressing their views and offering suggestions for the conduct and advancement of the Association. He summarised the means at present working to this end, viz., the library and reading-room, lectures, and weekly seances, and suggested that those desirous of forming private circles would, by giving their names to the secretary, receive every assistance in doing so, impressing upon them the fact that it was through the home circle without paid mediums that the most satisfactory evidences were obtained. Mr. Watt considered the morals and ethics of spiritualism its chief attraction, and advocated the formulation and publication of a system of ethics by the Association, also that spiritualists should show by their lives the superiority of their religion.

Mr. Terry endorsed the views of the last speaker, and intimated his impression that the great desideratum was to disabuse the public mind of the erroneous impressions prevalent that spiritualism was what the press had derisively called it, "a table-leg religion," or a religion founded and dependant on the lowest physical manifestations, instead of an eclectic system combining within itself the good of all religions extant. The press was closed to us as a means of formulating our belief, but if money were available, our principles or selections from our teachings might be published side by side with Spurgeon's and other sermons which are published in the *Australasian*, when any sensible reader would see the vast superiority of the one over the other. A series of excellent tracts had been published and largely circulated by a gentleman then present, which he believed had done much good. He would like to see this effort supplemented by the Association, and the principles of modern spiritualism largely circulated in printed form.

Mr. Oliver suggested that the Association should apply for a section of the new cemetery ground, to be set aside for the use of Spiritualists and Free Thinkers.

Messrs. Rice and Stevenson spoke of his identity and against the formulation of a system of ethics, the former thinking it of the utmost importance, the latter fearing it would be the first step towards the establishment of a creed.

Mr. Watt, referring to the uses of spiritualism, gave an interesting account of an interview with a deceased friend who had spoken to him through Mrs. Fielden, and given him most undoubted proofs of his identity. Mr. Drew supplemented this by relating his daughter's return, and repetition of her last dying words through the same medium, and suggested the holding of meetings where members could relate their experiences.

Mr. Alkemade spoke encouragingly of the increase of members, but was desirous of seeing a much larger increase, as he was convinced there was a very large number of spiritualists in Melbourne who held aloof from the Association. He would like to see tracts circulated largely.

Mr. Watt, after a few facetious remarks about tea meetings, expressed his intention of giving £5 towards the purposes of the Association. Miss Ricketts and Mrs. Cassell followed his example with similar amounts, and fifteen new members were enrolled.

The President congratulated the Association upon the progress of the cause and the success of the meeting. The press, the conjurer, and a lady lecturer had been advertising us; for which we should be thankful. It had been said by some that the Association had been managed or governed by a clique. In a sense this was correct. The clique were just the few who gave their time and energies to doing the necessary work and pushing forward the interests of the Association. But now they were all invited to come forward and join the clique, taking their full share of the responsibility. He alluded to the number of men of position, members of all political parties, and professional men, who, to his knowledge, were with us. We had only to deserve their support and assistance to receive it.

The Secretary intimated his intention to give practical effect to those suggestions which had been approved, and the meeting, which had been both an earnest and enthusiastic one, dispersed.

A CIRCULAR letter received from Henry S. Olcott, president of the Theosophical Society of New York, informs us that that body has affiliated with the Brotherhood of the "Arya Somaj," a society of Indian philosophers and occultists of older standing, whose headquarters are at Aryavart, and whose religion is founded on the Vedas. The rules of this society are very stringent, demanding that its members shall be of unblemished character, shall devote themselves to the interests of the society with even more zeal than to their domestic interests, and appropriate at least one per cent. of their monthly income to the support of its objects. The society inculcates the highest morality and the worship of one God only. Arrangements are being made for competent brothers to be sent from India and Ceylon to preach what they deem a higher and purer philosophy to the peoples of the western world.

JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

BY LAMBDA.

Ex Oriente lux! The *Argus* did the cause of Free Thought good service by its review, on the last day of November, of Mr. James Bonwick's late work, "Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought." The facts therein elicited were familiar to many readers before: Long ago Macaulay told us that though "Christianity conquered Paganism, Paganism infected Christianity; the rites of the Pantheon passed into her worship, the subtleties of the Academy into her creed." But in every community there is always a large number of people who are necessarily excluded, by their limited opportunities for study and inquiry, from becoming cognisant of these momentous discoveries in the arcana of religion; and there is an equally large proportion of people who resolutely shut their eyes to the light that is streaming from the burning sands and templed sepulchres of Egypt, and from India—mother-land of peoples and of faiths. To such persons the article in the *Argus* will come as a Thunder-clap. To the one class the statement of the historic analogies between Osirianism and Christianity will be as the magic touch of some great healer, "opening the eyes of the blind;" to the other class, it will be like the note of a bugle, calling "to arms" against the assault that threatens to hurl from his pedestal their Baal—popular theology. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of the facts made public by such works as Mr. Bonwick's. Once show that the traditional beliefs and religious ceremonies of Christendom are but imitations and derivatives from sources that are almost universally by Christians regarded as pagan or idolatrous, and the dogma that the "copies" have an origin that is either supernatural or divine must fade away and vanish like the baseless fabric of a dream.

Everybody seems to be talking about the Baldwins, so why shouldn't I have my little say? Well, I went, I saw, and I conquered—an inclination to feel disgusted. The poet sings, "That which the fountain sends forth returneth again to the fountain." So that feeling which the ridiculous evokes, after passing through various stages of, perhaps, disgust and annoyance, again impinges upon the humorous. After witnessing the performances of Professor S. S. and Clara Baldwin, I could not help indulging in prolonged and hearty "larfture" (the beneficial effects of which I feel to this day), at the audacious presumption, the cool cheek, of the worthy "professor" and his lady. *Exposers of Spiritualism!* Oh, yes! Just as the gymnast who drags his dreary length up a greased pole is an "exposer" of the albatross that wings its graceful flight through the sky. But, seriously, that Baldwin entertainment is a very absurd affair, and where the cleverness comes in I can't, for the life of me, imagine. The transmutation of water into wine, the blood-writing, the Katie King affair, how ridiculous! Why, where's the resemblance between these travesties and the originals? The clairvoyance is a little puzzling at first, but the mystery speedily vanishes when you get behind the scenes and see how the oracle is worked. As for the slate-writing, I never saw such a miserable burlesque in all my life. There has been a great deal of silly talk about Slade's declining to accept Mr. Baldwin's challenge. Well, what was Slade to gain by it, even if he could accept? Supposing the conjuror were obliged, by the inexorable logic of facts, to endorse Mr. Slade's phenomena, who would believe his report? Mr. B. must be possessed of either an inordinate supply of simplicity, or an overweening conceit, to imagine that any one could accept his testimony as authoritative, after the very mild statements he is in the habit of indulging in at his entertainments. But Slade does not need that worthy's attestation; he has testimonials and credentials upon which he may rest secure amid the tempests of bigotry and the storms of spite. When any conjurors can produce the evidence of scientists, *literati*, clergymen, and Court conjurors, as to the inexplicable character (inexplicable upon the supposition of trickery or fraud) of their performances, then Mr. Slade may look to his laurels, but certainly not till then.

To continue the subject. Riding the other day in a railway carriage, I heard a reverend divine remark that "if Dr. Slade were controlled by spirits, he would be able to produce his tricks under any circumstances, his (Slade's) statement as to the necessity for certain conditions being all bosh, for spirits could certainly act regardless of conditions." His reverence (and those like-minded with him) should read Matthew XIII, 58, or Mark VI, 5. It does not seem to have occurred to him that He whom Christendom regards as the deity incarnate—God walking the earth in human form—when he came to a certain country, "did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." If deity be controlled by conditions, shall mortal man be more powerful than God?

Mr. Baldwin, I see, has a successor in "Dr. Lynn." So I suppose we shall have, as the *Spectator* would say, "another killing." Really, it argues an immense deal of "brass" on the part of Dr. Lynn to try to gull the public by his *ad captandum* announcements, after the terrible overhauling he got from Dr. Sexton in London. But, after all, these characters are best left alone. The typical conjuror is an irrepressible animal. You may expose his falsehoods, thrash him, and "sit on" him, but you can't subdue him. Like Truth (oh, Truth! forgive the comparison), though crushed to earth, he'll rise again. As Pope says—

"Destroy his fib, or sophistry—in vain!
The creature 's at his dirty work again."

MR. FIELDEN'S SEANCES.

MRS. FIELDEN gave her tenth seance in aid of the Building Fund of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, at the Masonic Hall, on Friday evening, December 13th, 1878. Mr. H. J. Browne took the chair.

While in the clairvoyant state, Mrs. Fielden gave the names of no less than sixty-three spirits, of whom forty-seven were claimed by different persons present. The following are the names of those who were not recognised:—Mary Nicholson, Hall (female), Alexander Tweeddale or Tweedie, Jane Greerson (maiden name Miller), Mathew Goydor, John Wilson, James Wilson, Samuel Walker, Robert Murray, Murdoch Jeffries, —Rule, two brothers named Steve and Ewie, Patrick Burke, —Stevenson, James Power.

Mrs. Fielden was then entranced, and a beautiful invocatory address was given by the controlling spirit, asking for help for those present, that they might be enabled to understand the return of spirits, and might participate in spirit communion; pointing out to the sitters that as they lived here so would they commence their life in the beyond, and urging them to throw aside all contention, for all would enter by the same gate of life, and to unite themselves together as God's "happy family" here.

The spirit of Alexander Bruford next controlled the medium, and whilst addressing himself more particularly to some members of his family who were present, and whom he said he had no other way of reaching, he exhorted those present to a life of action and expressed himself very grateful indeed that the means of communication had been placed at his disposal.

The spirit of Mathew Goydor next controlled the medium, and in a very characteristic manner, sent a message to his parents at Coburg, which was principally to assure them that he was not in purgatory, and that he would be happy enough but for their thinking that he was.

Dr. Mesmer, the medium's principal control, next addressed the meeting, but, as the time appointed for the duration of the sitting had already all but elapsed, confined himself principally to a few observations with regard to these seances, impressing on his hearers that, if they would have them successful, they must keep their minds fixed on what they had in view; they must elevate their thoughts and extend their sympathy to the medium, for by that means they would impart strength to the returning spirits.

THOUGHTS ON PHENOMENAL SPIRITUALISM.

BY JOHN WETHERBEE.

THE Emersonian proverb says, "we must fetch the pump with dirty water if we can get no other;" the important point being to fetch the pump. Purification, which is in the highest degree essential, can be attended to in the subsequent flow and the stream made drinkable; without the first point gained, we perish with thirst.

Seems to me the world is in a thirsty condition in reference to the other world, if there be any other; that is the way it has to be stated, in the shadow and not in the light of modern Spiritualism; and the proverb above quoted is applicable to this subject and to phenomenal Spiritualism, for there is no other but phenomenal, for extinguish the phenomena, and the other goes out as matter of course. While so much is said about fraud and the testing of mediums, of having genuine manifestations or none, is it not better to fetch the pump first with what "water" we can get? Of course many are satisfied with what they have had, are not now thirsty, are sure of their future, and do not now want any more proofs unless they can have them under their own conditions; anything new that does not toe their line is worthless in the cause of Spiritualism, might just as well be treated as a fraud as if it was a fraud. I think all who reason in this way have got to step back a little and "see the salvation of God," so to speak, see how the thing works from the inside.

It seems to me the spirits, not mortals, have made this intelligent connection with human thoughts which we very properly call modern Spiritualism; mankind did not open the door, set the gates ajar; the business was done on the other side. I am willing to admit that this *ism* intrinsically is not modern, not born in 1848, but is as old as man on the planet; but in the olden times it came to semi-blind eyes, and was distorted into "thus saith the lord" and other unjustifiable incongruities, as did the comets of the olden times, were in their manifestations subjects of superstitious awe, while the same comets in their return in the 19th century are weighed, measured, and foretold, and what was once a presage of wonder and of woe is to-day a thing of nature and of beauty; so we may with propriety treat the subject now as a new and modern thing. The lesson learned or suggested by this retrospective connection with the modern idea should make us modest, for we may still be, if not to the same extent, in the bonds of ignorance in this matter, and not attempt to dictate conditions to the spirits. We certainly do not know the dynamical side of this subject, we are but feeling and sensing it at best. We sit on this side and in the dark or shadow; without the intelligent mystery through these manifestations we are without hope and without God in the world. There is nothing like a ray of light as to the future of man in the world except these modern manifestations. Of course this modern light adds a lustre of truth to the scripture records and makes them do duty in the domain of hope, which, in the dark, or without this latter added lustre, would be but fables, not effecting thoughtful or philosophic minds. Put out the modern light and the ancient goes out too, and all the hopes and intuitions of poetic, sensitive or sentimental souls, which, under our light, are now coming to the front as founded in fact, all these go out with the modern extinguishment; so I say, as I have said before and many times; the modern spiritual manifestations, that have called modern Spiritualism into existence, are the greatest events in the history of this world, and have come just when the earth was getting to be a spent ball as far as religious thought is concerned, and introduce us to a new heaven and a new earth.

I have great respect for the bright lights of the pen and the rostrum who feed us with their fine thoughts, made palatable and nutritious from their associations with phenomenal Spiritualism. But the important thing, and the only thing that gives these fine thoughts an auriferous setting, is the disembodied intelligence back of these spiritualistic manifestations.

We are not in the position to dictate terms and conditions to mediums or to spirits, but we should take what comes and any way it comes, if nauseating or unsatisfactory pass it by and wait for the good and true, bearing in mind that in ethics, as in dietics, what is one man's meat is another man's poison.

I have found, as Mrs. Conant says, that the spirits will give us tests at times better than we can suggest.

I am sure of two things from my own observation and experience. 1st. That every seeker after this truth will get in these various manifestations some things that will be satisfactory to him, perhaps he may have to encounter an ocean of sac for a bit of bread, that may be as much our fault as the fault of the spirit of medium, but the item of "bread" compensates when found, for it is the "bread of life" that is found in no other "diggings." 2nd. Some people are so organised that they get more and easier than the average seeker does, and this, I am sure, is not owing to credulity. I am not proposing to argue the point to get at the reason, I simply state what I know to be the fact.

Therefore, I say to all dogmatic people, all who want things their own way or not at all, all who say why the spirits don't do this, or to the medium, why don't she do it in the light, why is this necessary, and why that. I say to all these, "we are fetching the pump," it is the cleanest water we can get; when the matter of fact becomes settled by some Copernicus, giving us the laws of spiritual motion, or popularity adds its lustre, so that the fact of survival and communication is a generally admitted truth, then the "vestal virgins" of our order can be subjected to the "civil service" plan, and the "knights also of the phenomena" be disinfected for the public good. I think, however, as they stand to-day, I mean the mediums as a whole, they are as "sound on the goose," if I may use a slang phrase, and as reliable as humanity in general, and the spirits are as good as we ought to expect, from the exportation that this world sends over to the other, therefore, my advice is, "Prove all things and hold fast to all that is good," and in the end the truth will prevail, the fittest will survive.

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

EXPERIENCE MEETING.

THE first meeting for the exchange of Spiritualistic experiences ever held in Melbourne took place on Tuesday evening, December 17th, at the Masonic Hall. There was a large attendance, almost all the sitting accommodation being taken up. The president, Mr. Deakin, was in the chair. Explaining that the meeting was called for the mutual communication of Spiritualistic experiences, the chairman requested that each speaker should confine himself as closely as possible to facts, and give the conditions under which the phenomena occurred, with as much brevity as was compatible with accuracy. Ten minutes would be allowed to each speaker, and five minutes during which he might be questioned by others upon any business as to which the hearers might be in doubt.

Mr. Drew then gave some of his early experiences in Spiritualism. In a circle composed of his own family, he received evidence of the identity of a stepson of his, which was only known by himself and his wife, and afterwards obtained another test quite unexpectedly, and of the most convincing character, from the same spirit.

Mr. Watt related an incident which pointed to the presence of an intelligence other than that of the mortals present on its manifestation, and also recounted some public experiments made by himself, proving the reality of clairvoyance and the independence of the senses exhibited by the spirit under test conditions.

Mr. Samuels related an instance of the levitation of a large and heavy table in full daylight in a private house, and added verifications of two extraordinary predictions received by raps.

Mr. Browne sketched some of his experiences with Foster, showing the ability of the speaker to speak in the Caffre tongue, together with some striking proofs of the identity of spirits received through the same medium.

Mr. Strachan quoted from his experiences to show how impossible it was to explain the mental phenomena of Spiritualism by

the theory of brain reading, and gave various causes in support of his views.

Mr. Landy related his own mediumistic experiences, among which was that of being spoken through in a language quite unknown to him, but in which, while in the trance, he sustained a conversation with one familiar with it.

Some explanatory and cubical comments by the chairman were interspersed between these recitals, which were of a most interesting character, and were in every case excellently delivered. A large majority expressed themselves anxious to meet again at a similar meeting, and the chairman announced that the Association purposed holding fortnightly meetings for the discussion of Spiritualistic questions and the exchange of Spiritualistic experiences.

The collection made at the door was a very good one, and the meeting altogether of a most successful character.

"THE SPIRITUAL OFFERING."

WE are in receipt of a substantial monthly magazine published in Rochester, U.S.A., under the above title. The copy referred to is No. 6 of vol. 2 for October, 1878, and has amongst the contributors to its pages S. B. Brittan, John Wetherbee, W. E. Coleman, and other well known writers connected with the Spiritual movement. John Wetherbee's "Thoughts on Phenomenal Spiritualism" are appropriate just now, and we reproduce them. There are other articles on "Mediumship" and the "Rights of Mediums," which are particularly good. The matter is diversified, some light and other more substantial, but none weak or trashy. The magazine is well got up, printed in clear type on toned paper, and contains fifty-two pages. The Melbourne subscription would be 12s. 6d. per annum.

SPIRITUALISM IN TASMANIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I will not take up much of your space, but I should like to make a short reply to the letter, under the above heading, which appeared in your issue of December 1. I know not who your correspondent "Fair Play" may be, so I must take this medium of communicating to him how cheered and encouraged I was on reading his very eulogistic letter, as regards myself and the paper I had the pleasure of conducting, *The Christian Witness*. It appears to me that an organ which professes to be a mouth-piece of Christianity in this the nineteenth century should stand true to its colors, by being both liberal and unsectarian in reality, and not by profession only. It was this line I marked out for myself in conducting the *Witness*, and although, as "Fair Play" says, many left off supporting it, I had the warm sympathy and hearty assistance of those who, with myself, were endeavouring to give my readers a presentation of Christianity which seemed to us worthy of their acceptance. I can re-echo the hope expressed by your correspondent that a paper like the *Christian Witness* will again start and flourish here, and I can promise him that if I have anything to do with it, there shall be a "fair field and no favour" in its pages.

In conclusion, allow me to add, that such appreciation as that of "Fair Play" is like an oasis in the desert of an Editor's life, and I therefore thank him for his kindly words.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

EDITOR OF *CHRISTIAN WITNESS*.

Hobart Town, December 23, 1878.

Coo-e-e, No. 6, for December, has just reached us. This excellent little shorthand magazine maintains its quality, the present number being quite up to the mark, if not beyond it. The illustrations are portraits of Sir Redmond Barry and the late Mr. Edward Wilson, accompanied by short sketches of their careers. Students of phonography will find this magazine not only interesting, but useful in familiarising them with reporting style.

DR. SLADE.

SINCE his return from Ballarat and Stawell, Dr. Slade has been receiving visitors at 84 Russell-street. The séances have been excellent, and in several instances writing has been obtained without the slate leaving the hands of the sitters. The committee have held two meetings, at which the manifestations were of a satisfactory nature. We hope before the publication of our next issue to have their report. The Séance Committee of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists have had a sitting with Dr. Slade, of which the following is the secretary's abridged report:—

"Knocks, varied in character, were distinctly heard on the table by all.

"Writing obtained on a slate held close to the table Dr. Slade's hands and feet being visible all the time.

"Writing obtained on a closed slate held above the table, and resting on the arms of one of the committee.

"Writing obtained on a slate held by one of the committee, and not touched by the medium.

"Table and chairs rocked; accordion played when held by the block end in one of Dr. Slade's hands, the other being on the table, the instrument being in full view of the secretary all the time it was playing.

"Touches as with a hand on the limbs.

"Table levitated whilst Dr Slade's hands and feet were held."

The full report will be published in our next.

MRS. BRITTEN.

MRS. BRITTEN's success in Sydney is unabated. Sydney "Life" reports one of her lectures on "Who are the Infidels?" which is prefaced by some remarks of the chairman, Hon. J. B. Wilson, in reference to the unfair conduct of the "Herald" and "Echo" in their treatment of Spiritualism, by omitting to report anything in favour of it, and opening their columns to all that was adverse to it. The following is an abstract of the lecture:—

"The cry of 'Infidel!' she said, had in all ages been raised against every innovator upon established creeds. Going back to the earliest ages of which there was any record, we found that originally, pure Brahminism was the religion of ancient India. This became corrupted by a succession of sects, who each in turn raised the cry of 'Infidel!' against the latest comer, as soon as it had attained to strength and popularity itself. When Buddha came, two thousand years before the Christian era, he too was saluted with the same cry; which his followers in their turn passed on to the next dissentients. Precisely the same course had been followed in more modern times. Abraham was an infidel to his Chaldean brethren; Jesus of Nazareth was an infidel to the Jew; Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras, the Stoics, the Epicureans—all were Infidels in their time; and the followers of these, when they gained the ascendancy, cried 'Infidel!' to the next reformers. Mrs. Britten then commented upon the awful cruelties to which these 'infidels' had been subjected by the orthodox of their day. She referred to the crusades, by which two millions of the flower of Christian chivalry perished in the attempt to drive the infidels from a few feet of ground deemed to be holy. After that cruel persecutions arose, not because of any disbelief in the teachings of Jesus, but on such miserable questions as to the constitution of his body, what forms and vestments should be used in worship, &c., differences as to which had caused the sacrifice of millions. She cited the extermination of the Albigenses, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, Knox's Iconoclasm in England, and Oliver Cromwell's horrible treatment of the Irish—all of which enormities had been done in the name of the Prince of Peace. When it was found that those gifts which Jesus promised his disciples should be bestowed upon all believers, had departed from the church, Pope Innocent III. had declared that their exercise was forbidden, and then, during four centuries, two million human beings perished in torments because they had dared to do as Jesus told them. They were 'infidels' and, so in all times, attempt at reform was regarded as crime, and reformers persecuted as infidels. Even in these times there was just as

much intolerance, as witness the treatment accorded to the great and good Theodore Parker, who had dared to ask what were the dimensions of the ark, and how the whale that swallowed Jonah was constituted. Mrs. Britten concluded an eloquent discourse, of which we have but given the barest outline, by pointing out that Spiritualism was unlike all other faiths, in that it was based upon demonstrable facts, whilst the purity of its teachings commends it above all others to the human reason, the religion of Spiritualism being in effect but the religion of Love."

Just before going to press we have received Mrs. Britten's lecture on the "Chinese Labour Question, or the Problem of Capital and Labour." It is an impartial analysis of both sides of the question, and the remedy suggested to meet this or future difficulties, is by enacting laws which will prevent the rate of wages sinking below the standard of fair remuneration, and next by providing for the protection of employers by regulating the worth of labour rendered—a graduated scale of wages, and a graduated scale of labourers.

LYCEUM PICNIC.

THE Annual Picnic of the Melbourne Progressive Lyceum was held at the Survey Paddock on Christmas Day, and proved a great success. The Lyceum numbered about 150, and these were supplemented by a large number of friends. Dancing, swings, cricket, croquet, and other amusements were heartily enjoyed. An excellent band enlivened the proceedings, and led the march of the Lyceum to and from the ground. Ample provision was made for refreshment, the commissariat being largely supplemented by donations of cakes, pudding, fruit, &c., from friends of the Lyceum. A most enjoyable day was spent, the details and glories of which we will leave to the facile pen of the editor of the Lyceum *Miniature*.

MR. T. WALKER'S LECTURE.

The following is from the "Age" of December 30:—

Last night Mr. Walker, the spiritualist lecturer, delivered an address to a crowded audience, in the Academy of Music Theatre, on the Spiritual Telegraph and How it is Worked. Mr. Walker addressed himself principally to an explanation of the mode in which spirits are said to communicate with the material world. He asked his audience not to despise the apparently contemptible methods whereby the spirits communicated with mortal beings. The process might appear simple and even ridiculous, but the result was of the utmost importance. The most important messages were transmitted between persons in different parts of the world by means of common wire, and an electric current obtained from such common materials as zinc and copper, yet the messages were not despised on that account. The most exalted sentiments of humanity were transmitted from age to age by means of the simple pen and paper made of rags, yet those ideas and opinions became none the less valuable for that. It mattered not therefore that communication between the spirit and the material world was carried on by means of raps so long as the message was valuable. The means of communication might appear contemptible in itself, but what did it matter so long as it resulted in the establishment of intercourse with the immortal denizens of the invisible spheres? The lecturer recommended his audience to prepare themselves for mediumship, in order to do which he said they must lead virtuous lives, be abstemious, and not too much engrossed with the affairs of the world. The ordeal was often a difficult one to go through, requiring much patience and perseverance, and the objects of those who became candidates for mediumship were often of an unworthy description. At the conclusion of a lengthy address, which was listened to with attention, Mr. Walker answered a number of questions, after which the meeting terminated.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE *Spiritualist* of October 11th contains a lengthy article on spirit photography in France, by the Count de Bullet, who, it will be remembered, gave evidence of its genuineness at the "Buguet" trial some three years since. Ever since that period, M. de Bullet has steadily applied himself to the testing and development of spirit photography, retaining a medium specially for his experiments, and devoting both time and money to the subject. His persistent efforts are at last crowned with success, and a series of pictures of the invisibles are now visibly produced on the plates in a dark room. He describes at length the numerous safeguards taken by him to secure absolute verity, such as bringing the plates to be experimented on with him, conducting the whole process himself, and arranging all the conditions of pose, &c. Not only has he succeeded in obtaining photographs of spirits on his marked plates, but more recently he has found that more material objects, such as watches and chains, and even hats and cards, can by the assistance of the spirits be photographed without one ray of natural light being allowed to enter the room. Photographers to whom the results are shown appear astounded, as they exhibit peculiarities in style which are unaccountable to them. M. de Bullet has sent twenty-two specimens to the editor of the *Spiritualist*, and promises more as they come. The following addenda to the article giving the latest experiment we reprint:—

Since the foregoing has been written, Mr. Charles Hue, a well-known French gentleman, of Fecamp, who has had a considerable and varied experience in Spiritualism and kindred subjects, and who has written a work on magnetism, visited Paris, called on me, and requested permission to be present at one of my photographic seances.

Acceding to his request, he came on the next day, and was admitted to the free examination of the photographic apparatus and laboratory, and the interior of the little seance apartment. After critically examining all the details, he expressed a desire to have some identifiable article of his placed in the cabinet, and made to appear in the expected picture, as a test, suggesting his hat for the purpose. John King wrote that he would try to make it appear, so it was placed in the cabinet. The curtain was then drawn, darkness supervened, and the usual process was gone through for the photographic result, but nothing came; the plate when placed in the bath proved to be without any impression whatever. John King explained that the power was insufficient, but that he hoped to do better on the next day. The next day's seance proved more effectual. As on the previous occasion, Mr. Hue tendered his hat to be photographed, and as it was being placed in the cabinet, suddenly took from his pocket, as he supposed, one only of his visiting cards, sticking it in the top of the crape with which the hat was nearly covered. It should be remarked that this hat was somewhat peculiar in form and style—of a sedate and substantial character, and of easily recognised individuality. When the plate was developed on this occasion it showed an odd result; the hat was photographed amid drapery, but without any spirit form, and two cards appeared, one overlapping the other. In his hurry, Mr. Hue had taken two cards from his pocket instead of one. The outer card can be read without difficulty. John King afterwards wrote as follows: "I found that I was not strong enough to come out well, so I just floated the drapery around the hat, floated that also and put my light on it, as I thought it would be just as curious." Of course as a test the experiment was a complete success, and was highly satisfactory to Mr. Hue. I send you also a copy of this photograph.

Yesterday I asked John King if he could give me an impression of his photographic light, pure and simple, in a perpendicular position. He replied that he thought he could. To-day I have had a perfect representation of it. I will send you the picture. It was taken in about five seconds of time. It is somewhat pear-shaped, and I should estimate its size to be about two feet in length and one in width, having an apparently concentrated flame in the centre, with wide radiations. Friend John says that he can make it of any reasonable height, and that a trouble he encounters at times is that it may be too strong and burn the plate. I observed

an entirely novel effect on the plate when taken from the instrument and before any attempt at development, and that was a distinctly defined impression like a deep stain. This proved when the plate was developed to be the central part or body of the light. Of course it is understood that the light is not seen by any of us who are not mediums at any time. Mr. Firmin sees it when in a clairvoyant state, and described it as conical in form when used for photographing; and my wife, who is highly sensitive, also sees it when she occasionally attends my seances.

Paris, September, 1878.

Advertisements.

BOOKS JUST RECEIVED.

Ex *Acconagua*.

Works by John Page Hopps—

Summer Morning: Songs and Sermons, 1s 3d.

Spirit Life in God the Spirit, 1s 3d.

Light for Bible Readers, 4d.

Sermons for the Times, 3d.

What am I? Vol. I. (New and revised edition), by Sergeant Cox, 11s.

Where are the Dead? or Spiritualism Explained. Binney, 3s 6d.

Syntagma, by Rev. R. Taylor, paper, 1s 3d.

Priest in Absolution, 2s.

Concerning Spiritualism. Gerald Massey. 2s 6d.

Works by T. L. Strange—

Legends of the Old Testament, 6s.

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