

THE Harbinger of Light.

A
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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It is the boast of Spiritualists that they have no creed, and that beyond the acceptance of certain broad principles which common sense would declare as essential to the assumption of the title, the widest latitude is allowed for the expression of opinions on religious subjects, as diverse as the poles of a magnet. That this liberty of thought and speech is an advantage few thinking people will deny, but as with many other good things that are right in principle the advantage is not absolute and is neutralized to some extent by the disadvantages that pertain to it, one of which is the preponderating iconoclastic tendency of the discussions held under the auspices of spiritual associations in this city and elsewhere. It is rare indeed, that polemics can be introduced at these meetings without severe disparagement of individuals or writings esteemed and venerated by numbers of intelligent and religiously disposed persons emancipated from Church authority, but still cherishing kindly and reverential feelings for the religious heroes of past times, whom they have had presented to them as mediums of God's will to man. Such persons visiting the meetings we allude to, with the view of gaining an insight into the religion of Spiritualism would not unnaturally conclude that its preponderating tendency was iconoclastic, and the destruction of all religions founded upon the Bible, its primary work.

We are no "Hero worshippers" in religion, nor have we any greater veneration for the Bible than the Koran, Shaster or Zend-avesta, all of which contain beautiful allegories and excellent moral precepts, mixed with much that is irrational and in some instances debasing; but true spiritualism is eclectic and our idea of the duty of a Spiritualist is, that he should seek out and bring

to light the truths with which these books abound, abstract the spiritual portion, express his lack of appreciation of the remainder and leave to the materialist the rough and dirty but congenial work of its demolition. We do not, however, mean it to be inferred that Spiritualists should shirk this coarser work, but rather avoid entering unnecessarily into it, using their talents as a rule for higher purposes. When our principles and morality are attacked and compared unfavorably with orthodox Christianity, an exposure of the weakness and errors of that system is often justifiable and necessary, and again where a Spiritualist is impressed with the pernicious influence of some dogma which in his opinion obstructs the path of progress, if he feels himself competent to aid in its removal it would be cowardice on his part to stand idly by awaiting the arrival of the sappers and miners.

The cry of the people is for Light "more Light," and who can respond so fully to this call as those who are recipients of Light from above. In the arena of polemics, spiritual light only appears in scintillations and rarely effects permanent illumination, but in the calm dispassionate presentation of harmonious thoughts there is a power and potency more permanent in its effects and more soul satisfying than theological discussions can possibly be. We do not blame the associations referred to who in the absence of professional speakers often find great difficulty in obtaining competent volunteers to fill their platforms and cannot dictate the subjects they are to speak upon, but we would appeal to those speakers who have the cause of Spiritualism at heart, and whose feet are sound, to avoid treading on the corns of their more tender footed and often tender hearted brethren. There is no need to stir up the rubbish when ground is already prepared to build upon, or to use a sledge hammer and crowbar for work that can be more delicately and efficiently performed by the aid of a mallet and fine chisel. A little wise forethought on the moral influence of a contemplated subject would enable speakers to steer clear of polemics, and certainly produce a more favorable impression of the ethics of Spiritualism upon visitors, than theological controversies or iconoclastic disputations.

CONSTITUENTS OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

(A COMMUNICATION.)

"Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts in glad surprise
To higher levels rise.
The tidal waves of deeper souls
Into our inmost being roll,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares."

The fourth element of the universal religion consists of the persistent determination to preserve the harmony of operation which is required to give effect to the preceding considerations.

To secure this end, man must become the recipient of that spirit of wisdom which entering into his soul shall be to it as the rudder to the stately vessel, imparting a unity of purpose to all the other operations. This is the binding law, so to speak, whereby the several elements are consolidated and rendered effective to accomplish the work they have to do. Without it there would be confusion and constant deviation from the course marked out. The Father of Light hath imparted to man the various functions of mind, and the affectional emotions, that man may thus bring them into harmony for the great purposes of usefulness which will secure the well-being of the race at large—the very object which religion hath in view, and not the exaltation of one class over another. And, for this purpose, having recognised the means by which he is to accomplish this end, it then becomes man's duty to pursue it in a rational and harmonious manner, drawing the threads together that there may be no conflict in an operation upon which depends the happiness and well-being of mankind at large.

If you will look around you in the wide universe, and observe to how great an extent this harmony of forces and operations enters into the movements of nature at large, you will perceive its desirability in relation to the motives and operations of the life of man. This very fact is also admitted in the construction of machinery which man invents to accomplish the conceptions of his wonderful mind; the more harmonious the arrangement, and the more symmetrical the working, the greater is the perfection of results which issue. And thus it becomes man to apply to the movements of his own daily life the same principle which he found so desirable to apply to the mechanical constructions of his material life. This operation, however, is one which must have its mainspring in the secret recesses of the spiritual life. Man must come to a proper understanding with himself, and then exert his utmost determination to carry out the intentions formed. And in this respect it is a glorious truth that the Infinite Author of man's life has laid the foundation of his being in a department of his nature, which is ever enduring and above decay or limitation.

Man, alas! fails to recognise this fact; he seems to think that the external organisation is the medium through which all his movements are to be regulated; thus ignoring the higher and permanent department of his nature; and he thus becomes the creature of vicissitude, which drives him hither and thither as the wind does the mote which floats on its bosom; but let him operate from within, and lay down the principles of action which shall guide him at all times and under all circumstances, and then he will rise superior to those emotional changes which characterise the double-minded man, who is unstable in all his ways. Thus, when all things combine to produce harmony of operation in the daily life, that ideal religion will be the result at which it is man's truest interest to aim. Thus will the true brotherhood of humanity be achieved, and wars will cease to the end of the earth. It is the brightest picture which the soul can paint for itself, to thus realise the coming time when all the contentions and strifes of man shall cease, and when in the truest sense it shall be said: there is peace on earth and good-will among men. And with the true conservation of all the forces

and energies of being, and the purpose to use them in a spirit of purest benevolence, the general good shall be achieved, when men

"Rise up and look from where they are
And scatter with unselfish hands
Their freshness on the barren sands
And solitudes of death;"

then will the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose, and God be manifested everywhere. Then will those disorderly organs of the physical nature, which have been built up age after age by the selfish and often brutal passions of man, be subdued; and in their place there shall come those organs which wisdom and love delight to fill and to operate through; the demon giving place to the angel; earth a paradise; and man, the child of that kingdom of heaven which imparts a new and living radiance to the entire of his universe.

But even in view of this desirable state of things, I know that it will be said that already the foundation hath been laid whereby it is to be attained, and that Christ and Christianity you have all the elements that are needful for this end. But, if it be so, why is it that society seems rather to be receding from, than advancing to, this goal. What with the numberless sects of the so-called Church, and the assumption of each that it is right, and the others wrong, and the felt necessity for protesting against the errors of the ninety-nine by the one, and by each section in view of its fellows, how can you expect to realise unity, harmony, good-will, peace, and prosperity. The unity in diversity which is argued for, is a very different thing to this, and the cry that you cannot expect all men to think alike, a fallacy which has its basis in the selfishness and imperfections of human systems; while, on the other hand, we contend most emphatically that, as truly as God and Nature are one, and indivisible, so by the adoption of universal principles of truth and justice, will it be possible to unite mankind on a common platform, on which it shall cultivate a religion which shall breathe the intention—to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and strength, and soul, and mind, and thy neighbour as thyself!

"Sweet vision! do not fade away;
Linger until my heart shall take
Into itself the summer day."

"Therefore, accomplish thy labour of love, till
the heart is made God-like,
Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered
more worthy of heaven."

Marnias Meti.

Melbourne, January, 1881.

To Correspondents.

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

MR. TYERMAN'S TRADUCERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

DEAR SIR,—When one reads such slanders as those published by the *Methodist Advocate*, for falsehood—the *Protestant Standard* of falsehood—and other one-sided journals, *re* the late Mr. Tyerman, it makes one burn with honest indignation. To insert, as those papers have done, such slanders, is an action mean, cowardly, low, vulgar; in fact, to speak the truth, I cannot find terms strong enough to use in denunciation of such vile calumny and bitter spleen. It is a pity the reverend gentlemen who edit some of these washy papers are not possessed of a hundredth part of the education, honesty, straightforwardness, and plain outspokenness of our deceased friend.

Such is my admiration for the late Mr. Tyerman that I would suggest a monument be erected to his memory, and that his likeness find a place in the home of every Spiritualist. I am glad steps are being taken to place Mrs. Tyerman beyond immediate want. Why don't those who are laying false charges, to the name of our friend, whose reputation for honesty was far higher than that of his orthodox slanderers, come forward and let us

see for once that they practice as well as preach about benevolent action by assisting Mrs. Tyerman in the hour of need? I owe a debt of gratitude to our late friend, who very materially contributed to emancipate me from creedal bondage, from the cobwebs of superstition, by his very able lectures, and who has borne the brunt, brand, and stigma of *Infidel*, as every other pioneer has had to do.

We have in his death a blank which it will be very hard indeed to fill.

It speaks little for orthodox Christianity when its leaders traduce and malign the character of such a gentleman as Mr. Tyerman really was, when they will not practice what they preach, and show it in this instance by loving their enemy (?), if enemy he could be called. The only logic of these orthodox people is vulgar abuse, and the sooner their system is stamped out and obliterated from the face of the earth the better. How dare they insult the relatives of the gentleman whose character, I say, and say it without the slightest hesitation, was unimpeachable! Pity they cannot be compelled to make a public apology. Let every liberal rebut by all means in his power the vile slanders circulated by the contemptibly mean, religious journals of Sydney and elsewhere. Let every liberal demand that they *shall* and *must* speak the truth and nothing but the truth.—Thanking you for space, Mr. Editor, I am, &c.,

F. E. S. HEWISON.

Bathurst, N.S.W., Jan. 14th, 1881.

RECENT DISCUSSIONS ON PREDESTINATION.

SOME little interest has been excited by the correspondence with which, to adopt the language of a rival journal, the *Argus*, has of late been seeking to enliven its columns upon the theological doctrine of Election.

Several amusing features were exhibited during the course of the controversy. The remarkable spectacle, for instance, presented itself of men who had for years been members of the Presbyterian church, being entirely ignorant of one of its primary articles. One wiseacre assures us that there is nothing incomprehensible or unjust in God predestinating some to salvation, inasmuch as the means of that salvation, viz., the Atonement, also was predestined. This brilliant genius, who so chivalrously stepped forth to defend his creed, seems to have forgotten that little clause of it which says, "*Elect infants*, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved."

Another writer wildly affirmed, that of course no one could reasonably suppose that all men would, even eventually, be saved; such a fate, we presume, being in that intelligent gentleman's estimation "not good enough." Next, one shrewd clerical, with an eye to business, availed himself of the confusion into which the old system of faith was falling, and the haze that was beginning to surround the minds of both the scribes and their readers, to announce a new programme, and put in a good word for his own little sect. Of course the usual wrappings that attend religious discussions were noticeable; scripture texts were twisted by different hands to bear different and conflicting meanings; and expositors were not wanting to make things in general as clear as mud.

The opinion has been hazarded that the interest manifested in such controversies proves the vitality of the old dogmas, and the hold they have upon the popular heart, which, it is urged, beats true to its first faith. We admit the vitality of some dogmas; the lowest organisms in creation's scale are generally the most tenacious of life. But we see in such discussions, and the interest they absorb, the revolt of the unesophisticated conscience against ideas that are derogatory to God and degrading to man; that clothe the All-Good with the attributes of a demoniac tyrant, and which, if only intelligently apprehended and honestly abided by in all their length and breadth, would paralyse every effort towards self-elevation. We see the mind of man freeing itself from ecclesiastical despotism, and protest-

ing against that servile allegiance to "use and wont" which dominated it in ages past. And in every discussion such as this we discern the spirit of inquiry, like the angel of destruction in the Egyptian homes, going forth to slay the first-born of ignorance, fable, superstition, and bigotry.

Perhaps the most ridiculous part of the recent controversy—though it is almost too pitiable and disgraceful to be amusing—was the attempt made by some to show that the Confession does not teach the doctrine of unconditional Election and reprobation. How such a claim can be made in the face of the following emphatic declarations, is as inexplicable as how any person in the possession of ordinary faculties can acknowledge adherence to those declarations when once they are made known to him.

We now quote from the "Westminster Confession of Faith," and the authorised Catechisms:—

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished." "As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous Judge for former sins doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves even under those means which God useth for the softening of others." "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by his word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." "God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory; and, in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also according to his Sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favour as he pleaseth), hath passed by and fore-ordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin afflicted, to the praise and the glory of his justice." "The punishments of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever." "God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Works, but of his mere love and mercy delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace." "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free will and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereto." "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

DIVINE PARTHENOGENESIS.

How is it that the now existing Church of Christ, with all its various wrangling sects, sections, denominations, and other splits and schisms innumerable, should deem it of essential importance, even in these our latter days of enlightenment to insist upon the fact that the founder or original prophet of the Christian religion was born by a virgin under the paternal influence of the shadow of a Holy Ghost? Why should it be still thought necessary to uphold with such a waste of zeal of which obstinate orthodox theology alone seems to be possessed—the stupid, unnatural, nay revolting dogma, of the Immaculate Conception of the man Jesus? If it is a compliment or honour to any man to be thus conceived and born; if any sane human brain is at all capable to conceive this pagan conception, and to understand this birth from a virgin, then, I ask, why should not the Father of All have conferred the same benefit upon the rest of his creatures? Why should I, or any of my helpless fellow men, be born into this world with the stigma of a maculate conception and a soiled origin attached to us? If it was not a disgraceful act on the part of an Omnipotent Creator to have made the first man out of a lump of clay, why should it be deemed a dishonorable or disgraceful act on his part to allow one of his most advanced prophets to be born from a human mother impregnated by a human father, as all the rest of us are? Why should it be considered a divine compliment to have a mere ghostly shadow of a father and an impossible virgin for a mother? Who, now-a-days, considers it a compliment to Jupiter to have sprung out of the forehead of Minerva? We know now that the pagan mode of birth is just as absurd as the Christian one, and that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and virginal birth of Jesus is about one of the most maculate and mind-degrading conceptions of both pagan and Christian theogony. This conception is not only degrading to the mind of man, but also discreditable to God himself, who in this isolated instance allows his laws to be infringed in order to make the rest of his creatures feel the utter shame and humiliation involved in the every-day fact of being born in the ordinary way of all flesh, by the aid of human parents. If to be born thus is to owe our birth to disgraceful conditions, who is to be blamed for this disgraceful act? As we have not learnt yet the mysterious art of self-conception and self-creation; as it is not in our power to be our own fathers, then the Father of All would be the only responsible party in the disgraceful transaction. Of all the illusions of men, from Adam down to the last infallible Pope, Leo XIII, only one man was allowed the honour of being conceived and born like the leading deity of the Hellenic Olympus, and that august and divine person is the God of the Christians, the man Jesus, also called Christ, also called the son of a carpenter, also called simply the son of Mary, also called the Son of God, also called the second person in the Holy Trinity. And all these high-sounding, though utterly empty names and complimentary epithets are attached to as frail a mortal clay-figure, to as sensitive a man as ever was born from woman or human virgin, maculate or immaculate. This deified son of Mary on whom all these divine honours are conferred with so lavish a hand, has left it on record that he was no better than the rest of God's creatures; and he actually went in his innermost feeling of human nothingness so far as to repudiate the ordinary compliment passed upon him by one of his numerous admirers of being good. Very properly did he reply on that occasion that no one is good but God; evidently implying in this answer that he did not claim a superhuman or divine origin. But so far from our ordinary natural mode of birth by human parents being a disgrace to us, it is not even a disgrace to be the offspring, as Jesus was, of one who had "loved not wisely, but too well," as the bride of Joseph seems to have done. It is as cruel as it is untrue to call a child born out of wedlock an illegitimate child. What is the meaning of an illegitimate birth? What is an illegitimate child? A child not born according to law? What law? I should have thought that everything that is born according to the

ordinary laws of nature constitutes a legitimate birth, no matter whether the sanction of human hands, often soiled or maculated with the filthy offerings of mammon, consecrated the entrance into the grove of love of any given couple of human creatures. As the rain descends upon the head of the unjust as well as upon the head of the just, so also has it been ordered by God that his best gifts are often bestowed upon what we, in our ignorance and vileness, are pleased to term illegitimate children. How many instances of such children are known to us all in our daily walks of life; how many such children grown into men and women of great merit, distinction, and even genius, do we not know ourselves? But none of us would have the courage to tell any of these gifted bastards that they were not born according to the same laws of nature as any of us more cold-blooded mortals were, who flatter themselves, often without knowing it to be a fact, that they were born under the holy canopy of priest-sanctioned wedlock. Far rather, then, let us accept the fact to which both Matthew and Luke point with great delicacy, and not with a Christian finger of scorn and contempt, that Jesus was the natural son of Mary and of a royal Davidic priest, who did not know Joseph, and whom Joseph did not know either, than take refuge for an explanation of the origin of the man Jesus in the barren and unnatural dogma of a theology itself begotten of vice and ignorance and fostered in the impure lap of statecraft, always so apt to kill, Herod-like, infant divinity in adolescent humanity; I say, instead of accepting from the hands of a soiled theology this senseless doctrine of the only-begotten Son of God, the *unigenitus Dei Filium*, and of Mary as the mother of God, the *sancta Dei genitrix*, let us accept from the purer hands of Matthew and Luke the far more sublime, poetical version that Jesus was conceived by his mother during an extatic trance of sexual exaltation with the aid of a messenger from God (are not all fathers such messengers?) as if in a dream—a dream which resulted in one of the grandest and most memorable realities of human history that has occurred during the last eighteen hundred and eighty years. Without this offspring of a genuine dream of reality, we might never have learned that we are all equal in the sight of God, that God is our Common Father, and that consequently we are all brothers with, in, and through the loving spirit of Jesus, called the Christ, *id est*, the anointed, the divinely gifted medium of Nazara, upon whose head the hand of God was so unmistakably, let us also say, so fearfully heavily laid, that he went unto death of his own accord, though struggling and agonised, in order to teach us the eternally important lesson to die for truth and principle in spite of the greatest sacrifices, remembering that to win the world and to lose our souls is one of the worst bargains a man can make. Truth at all risks and hazards; Truth above all; Truth for ever. Let us all be ready at all times to die for the Truth, if necessary, as our protomartyr brother of Nazara has died: *magna enim est Veritas, et prevalebit in secula seculorum*. Amen.

C. W. ROHNER.

Chilthorn, January 16th, 1881.

THE CHINESE QUESTION.

We are in receipt of an article (from Sydney) on the above subject which we would willingly print were it confined to the moral and social aspects of the case, but the political element in it precludes its publication in these columns, which are essentially non-political. The following extracts which are exempt from the objection will suffice to illustrate the writer's object, viz. to expose the injustice of the popular clamour against the Chinese.

"Men of unbiassed minds look upon Chinese rights in these colonies from a higher sense than the clamour of party prejudice or veto of a trade union, because, morally speaking, there are certain equal rights of existence to all men alike, providing each individual fulfil his destined sphere with honesty of purpose, without encroaching upon the liberties of his fellow creatures. Apart from a metaphysical aspect of the case, let us take the

theological precept that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth." Does the Bible, a book supposed by all Christian nations to be the standard of truth and guidance, say that a Chinaman, a German, or an alien, shall not live in Australia? No. We are all God's children alike, drawing breath from the same source at the fountain head of all things, and so long as there are millions upon millions of acres of unexplored lands upon this great fifth continent, there is room for all to till the soil or work the mines, to make the earth yield forth her treasures, under the glorious rays of the beaming sun. From the geographical position of Australia in relation to China, surely the Chinese have as much right here, as Englishmen, whilst from a physical point of view, they are well adapted by constitution to the more tropical latitudes. The Chinese are unjustly slandered by would be statesmen, who glory in denouncing them to solicit favour from electors. The immense population of China would lead any person to suppose that although they live under an arbitrary despotic Government command, there must be some excellent traits underlying their fiscal administrative policy to result in the wise and successful government of so many cities and towns, without civil commotion of any kind, for history records that during a term of two thousand years, the Empire of China was at peace with the rest of the world and herself.

The historical written records of the Chinese Empire are full of the most intense interest, dating as far back as 2000 years before Christ. But one of the most unexpected features, upon the perusal of those ancient documents, is the general recognition of the highest moral influences and social principles in connection with State Government. For instance, the following are some of the maxims of the Chinese administrative policy:—1. "The universal acceptance of the principle that the nation must be governed by moral agency, in preference to physical force." 2. "The no less universal conviction that the services of the wisest and ablest men in the nation are essential to its good government;" and, 3. "The system of Civil Service examinations by which this result is arrived at."

"FREETHOUGHT."

WE read with considerable regret in the last number of the above excellent Sydney journal the announcement of its cessation. In a farewell article the editor and proprietor points with honest pride to the fulfilment of promises given in the initial number in the quality of its matter and the impartiality of its conduct. Although we had hoped for the continuance of this useful vehicle for the diffusion of Freethought and Spiritualism, we are not surprised at its stoppage, knowing by bitter experience the apathy and lack of consideration for workers in this direction exhibited by so-called Spiritualists and Freethinkers, numbers of whom only buy a copy when they want it, and prefer getting access to a free copy if they can; while others who do subscribe consider their obligation fulfilled in the payment of the annual 6/., extracting the value for their own edification, and making no attempts to increase the circulation. Of such we would say: May the Lord expand their small souls to a perception that they have duties beyond what they now perceive, and that one of them is the encouragement and assistance of the editors and publishers of papers, which are the potent instruments for the diffusion of the light which they selfishly enjoy.

We have a quantity of previous issues of "Freethought" by us belonging to the proprietor, who has been a considerable loser by his well meant and unselfish efforts in the cause of truth. Anyone whose conscience is touched by our remarks can send amounts according to the depth of their feelings (or their pockets), for which we will return them full value in the papers referred to for circulation among their acquaintances.

PART OF AN UNPUBLISHED PLAY.

- HE. 'Tis nought—nought but a shadow—and yet how real! So like that I could almost swear 'tis she. Say, what art thou? Mortal or spirit? Speak!
- SHE. I, like thyself, once was mortal.
- HE. Sayest thou "once" thou wert mortal? What art thou now?
- SHE. A shade, a phantom; not of the brain diseased.
- HE. What is't I hear?—"a shade!" can shades then speak?
- SHE. Aye, and listen too.
- HE. Whence camest thou? From out the grave?
- SHE. Nay, no cold tomb do I occupy; my home is like to thine.
- HE. Like unto mine; in what particular?
- SHE. To me mine is as real as thine is to thee, with all the appliances I need.
- HE. Perchance thou need'st but few, seeing thou art but a shade, a shadow of thy former self.
- SHE. Nay, my tastes are still the same.
- HE. Thou wert fond of society, of music, and of art; canst gratify these tastes?
- SHE. I can.
- HE. I ne'er knew thee yet to lie, blest shade; 'twere folly then to doubt thee now. Tell me what society with thee is like.
- SHE. Like unto that of earth; but with a difference.
- HE. I crave thee tell me in what this difference lies.
- SHE. Unlike earth in this: no deception is practised, as none is needed; we do not give the hand where the heart is not, for only kindred spirits meet; therefore all is harmony, and each refined taste is gratified in full.
- HE. I wonder then thou carest to approach the earth.
- SHE. True love is never selfish. I come to tell the glad tidings to those I left behind. I come that ye need not be afraid to follow.
- HE. Half my fears are gone already! I thought not when I sadly parted with thee last that e'er these eyes would look on thee again. Death is indeed robbed of its terrors, and the grave of its victory. Though I thought that I should go to you, I knew not that thou couldst come to me. And dost thou really see the home that thou hast left—the dear ones and the loved ones?
- SHE. The ties of home are not yet broken; the cord of love is not yet snapped. Whilst in that home I can do good, thither, at times, as God's messenger I come.
- HE. This news is joy supernatural! And when I grieve?—
- SHE. Yes, when you grieve I feel a touch of sorrow too, and often raise the load that seems to crush thee down.
- HE. Henceforth then, for thy sake, will I be brave, and prove that Love can conquer all things—e'en the *Grave*!
- Castlemaine. K.

DIRECT SPIRIT WRITING.

MR. G. S. CHAPPELL of Yackandandah who was spending a few days in Melbourne brought with him his daughter Fanny and Miss Crambrook, both of whom are mediums for direct spirit writing, and other physical phenomena. An impromptu sitting was held at our office on the evening of the 29th. December, ten persons being present, when in a well lighted room writing was obtained through both mediums; the slate in each instance being held under the table in one of their hands whilst the other was placed on the table, the girl sitting sideways to the table, so that her feet were visible, and the other medium sitting away on a couch. A piece of blank paper was placed in a metal match box with a small grain of lead pencil, and stood on the slate, this was held under the table a short time and on being withdrawn the box was found crushed in three pieces, and a message of several words written on the paper, some of the lines of the previous writing extended across the middle of the slate. The seance was considered highly satisfactory.

THE MORAL TRAINING OF YOUTH.

True is the old proverb, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Equally true is the more modernised one, "Train up a child in the way he should not go," and the context as applicable. Thus we see that the character of manhood is moulded in youth, and the tenacity of impressions received therein is surprising.

Many and varied are the schemes of reform propounded by philosophers to enhance the welfare and prosperity of the nation socially and morally; but the evanescent nature of most of them is owing in many instances to the wrong views many take of the character of youth. It is well known that in childhood imitativeness is a very largely developed quality, and the surprising rapidity with which a child will repeat the character of an adult is proverbial. Thus, impressions received in childhood are almost indelibly stamped, and to erase such impressions is an arduous task. The moral training to which youth have been subjected has done so little to mould aright the moral character of manhood that we are constrained to believe that there is defect in the system adopted. The ordinary curriculum of education is insufficient to meet the moral requirements of youth; and thus the moral nature is left to starve to the detriment not only of the youth himself, but of society at large. A great wrong is thus perpetrated, and disastrous results consequently ensue from the want of proper attention to the moral well-being of those who are to become the future rulers of the nation. By the very constitution of our nature it is an incontrovertible truism that the heart of man cannot be governed aright without due attention being paid to the requirements of the moral forces with which the varied developing stages of manhood are provided. Hence, to rightly train the whole nature of man to a harmonious working of all his forces, it is absolutely necessary that due attention be paid to the proper training of all those essentials which go to make up the elements of proper education. Of these essentials there are many, and what may answer the purpose of one individual may not answer the purpose of another; thus, upon a scientific basis must education be built—due precaution in the selection of materials—proper attention to the divergent constitutions of youth, as a primary and absolute qualification, without which all energy is misapplied and consequently wasted. To adopt a better system of training is no easy task, for there are numerous prejudices to overcome that arise from the time-honoured practices of the race, and our supposed inability to improve upon ancient customs. While we have been shocked and surprised at the depravity of those who have allowed their education to assist them in acts of crime, we see not the necessity of preventing such criminal prostitution by extending the basis of culture that the idiosyncracies of youth may be overcome by the superior tone applied to the improvement of their moral nature, by cultivating early signs of ability in any particular direction by nature, by curbing obnoxious forces which show themselves in early childhood, and in many other ways, attending to the moulding of impressions rightly received.

My object in writing this paper is to bring before the notice of the public the advisability of improving upon the present system of education, so that all will benefit by the training of the intellectual and moral side of man's nature, begun in childhood and ending only, and so far as mundane education goes, when dissolution takes place.

The education received in youth is of course elementary; but being so it must contain the germs of advancement, that after-impressions may be more easily received and more rightly moulded. That an elementary study of science would considerably benefit the training of the moral nature, I firmly believe: for I know of no study calculated to fill the mind of man with more advanced ideas than a study of scientific subjects, having their basis first in the constitution of man, and then as far as shown in the construction of the vast universe. The amazing power displayed in the open heavens around will fill the youthful mind with reverence for the unseen but nevertheless intelligent power manifested to

his mind. That many of our youth neglect a study of science is owing to the fact of there being no such study associated with their early instruction—left till after-life, an approach to scientific research is an absolute impossibility, and thus never having acquired a liking, because never having had the opportunity, the enlarged ideas engendered thereby have no plan in his nature, and consequently that amount of instruction which would have proved beneficial to the race, finds no place in the cramped up intellect which predominates over the space which might otherwise have been covered by a more advanced, enlarged, and reverent species.

That many of our youth are totally oblivious of anything beyond time and sense is easily seen, and can only be accounted for on the ground of neglect in cultivating the ideal. So profound is the intelligence of man, that to cramp up that intelligence by confining it to the limits of time and sense, is to injure its moral purpose. Give the intellect in youth its proper capacity by teaching it to idealise, and we see it advancing to that stage of being when surrounding circumstances are submissive to its all potent will. Owing to the suppression of moral forces, engendered by not cultivating the ideal, habits are formed in youth which tend to overthrow perfect manhood by debasing the perfect man, and we deplore the natural outcome of such moral depression. To moral training, virtue is so closely allied as to be inseparable; but in the majority of our youth we see virtue at a discount, and the result is disastrous to our national welfare. A race of individuals in whom no trace of moral development is found, is a piteous spectacle, and to such a state must we rapidly converge unless we bestow more care and attention on the training of those indispensable essentials that are in our midst.

But the greater duty in training youth lies in the home circle. Alas! in how few modern homes are our youth inducted into the inner life! The mother watches with pride the physical growth of her sons, oblivious of the fact that they are imbibing the cunning artifices of the world. Home training is the first essential; and in how many homes a wrong training is given to the nature of youth we need not stop to enquire, for the visible facts are patent to our view. Next to the home we may class the school; and here we find depraved habits engendered in our youth, which show themselves only too plainly in after-life. Too many are apt to think that provided a good mental training is given to youth it is not necessary to train the heart in juxtaposition. How grievous an error!

To point out all the defects in our systems of training youth would exceed legitimate space; I must, therefore, content myself by making one or two suggestions for the improving of our youth, and I suppose my remarks will be applicable to both sexes. In the first place, if the parents are of sufficient moral culture to impart the same to their offspring, the task of the schoolmaster would be considerably lightened. When Napoleon asked Madame De Stael what France stood most in need of, her answer was—"Good mothers." Not only does France stand in need of this essential adjunct to its social welfare, but every other nation where youth are to be taught to be free, enlightened, and law-abiding citizens. In the home the little traits of character, little buds of genius begin to develop themselves; how important that these should be attended to I need not stop to discuss. And again, could not our schools, secular and religious, be improved? Have we gone beyond improvement? I trow not. In how many modern schools are our youth taught virtue, uprightness, honesty, and truth, as part of the curriculum of their home and class studies? Our Sabbath schools supply a deficiency since secularism will not admit of religion. But with even these I find fault—sectarianism is not the science of religion; and to train up a child to believe in any particular set of doctrines is only a sheer waste of time which might otherwise be spent in teaching him of the finger of God in science, and which would prove of more inestimable benefit in after-life. The influence exerted in the workshop must not be lost sight of; but to discuss the merits and demerits of this branch of training, I find will occupy more space than I care to claim; suffice it to

say, that the workshop is not merely a machine of technical structure, but of mental and moral worth, as forming a most important branch in the training of youth. I think that a small select library attached to every place where a number of hands are employed would do more to advance the working classes, socially and morally, than many will admit; but in this country of enlightened privileges such desirable adjuncts are conspicuous by their absence.

And now I must bring my rambling remarks to a close by urging upon those who have the instruction of youth under their care, or who are interested in the moral welfare of our youth, the desirability of extending the basis of culture and inculcating principles and ethics, even though we have to delve in heathen mythology or script to supply the pabulum. The establishment of youths' clubs, where all may meet for the purpose of assisting each other, or interchanging ideas, and in many other ways improving themselves, will go a long way toward bringing about a better system of things.

I cannot conclude without paying a tribute of respect to that excellent Training Institution, the "Melbourne Progressive Lyceum." If more such institutions were established in our midst we would soon see a better moral status in our youth, and less of that rowdy element and coarse buffoonery which is alas! so rampant, and which we so justly deplore.

EMMA.

OPENING OF A NEW LYCEUM.

A New Lyceum was opened at the Temperance Hall, Church Street, Richmond, on Sunday, January 16th, under the conductorship of Mr. Devine. Mr. J. Veevers, of the Melbourne Lyceum, gave the opening address, and Mr. Cackett led the calisthenics. Upwards of fifty members were present, besides a number of spectators, and the proceedings passed off satisfactorily, the only difficulty being a lack of books. This will shortly be overcome, as a new edition of the "Lyceum Leader" is now in the press.

THE SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT.

As mid the heaven-kissing heights
Descend the clear empyrean dews
Through all the calms and cloudless hues
Of golden days and starry nights.

And as those dews suffuse and run
In streamlets down the mountain slope,
Singing a glad sweet song of hope
Of new-born joy beneath the sun.

And as those streamlets strike the plain
And surge triumphantly along,
Still singing—and a grander song
Of fuller life—towards the main;

Until there rolls a swelling tide,
Bearing on its expansive breast,
In graceful motion, or at rest,
A thousand ships, in stately pride.

So with this faith serene and pure;
This sweet evangel from the spheres;
This gospel of the heavenly seers,
Set with a hope sublime and sure,

It came amongst the haunts of men
Fresh from the realms of peace and light,
In lowliness and yet in might,
Unrecognised of worldly ken.

It came, it grew, and now it flows
A noble current strong and deep,
Majestic in its onward sweep,
And bearing blessing as it goes.

And who shall seek to stay its course?

"This consonant with natural law;

"This one with truth for evermore,

And mighty with inherent force.

It leads the way to life above;

It makes the road that man has trod,

And shows it reaching up to God,

Through all the wide degrees of love.

E. L.

"LIGHT."

In our advertising columns will be found the prospectus of a new Spiritualistic paper, issued by the Eclectic Publishing Company recently formed in London, for the publication and dissemination of progressive literature. Among the directors we observe the names of Alexander Calder, Rev. W. Stainton Moses, M.A. T. Templeman Speer M.D., and others of equal note and standing who have been prominent in the van of rational Spiritualism for many years. We will endeavour to publish the prospectus in our next issue, meantime it can be seen at our office.

SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE.

THE Spiritual Conference alluded to in a previous issue took place at Manchester on the 25th October last, thirty-three delegates being present.

After some discussion on the order of procedure, it was decided that papers bearing upon organisation should be read, Mr. Richmond, of Darlington, one of the pioneers of the movement in England, reading the opening paper, which was followed by a more comprehensive one from the pen of M.A. Oxon, read by Mr. Morse. Some discussion followed as to the constitution of an organisation, and whether it would be advisable to affiliate it to the British National Association, or take an independent course. A letter from the B. N. A. S., expressing sympathy with the movement, and a desire to co-operate, was read. Mr. Richmond proposed the formation of a National Committee, to co-operate with District Committees. Mr. Johnston proposed as an amendment that the matter be left open for one year, during which time plans for the organisation could be matured, and the co-operation of local Societies secured; and after some discussion the amendment was carried.

Mr. Lambelle then moved, and Mr. Blyton seconded, the following resolution, which was adopted:—

That this Conference recognising the desirability of organising the movement for the more thorough and complete diffusion of the principles of Spiritualism, do urge upon the various societies in the country to form into district organisations, the executive work of such organisations to be directed by a district committee, to be composed of representatives from the societies affiliated with the district organisations; and further, that the representatives from the several district committees meet together in General Council or Conference every six months for the discussion and adoption of such matters as may conduce to the advancement and practical welfare of the cause of modern Spiritualism.

Votes of thanks to the editors of three Spiritual papers for their presence and support, concluded the proceedings,

Advantage was taken of the presence of the various delegates to hold a Social Re-union and Convezione in the evening, which passed off agreeably.

A CHEERFUL WIFE.—What a blessing to a man is a merry, cheerful woman—one whose spirits are not affected by wet days or disappointments—one whose milk of human kindness does not grow sour in the sunshine of prosperity! Such a woman, in the darkest hours brightens the house like a piece of sunshine weather. The magnetism of her smiles, and the electrical brightness of her looks and movements infect every one. The children go to school with the sense of something great to be achieved; the husband goes into the world with a conqueror's spirit. No matter how people annoy and worry him through the day; far off her presence shines, and he whispers to himself: "At home I shall find rest." So day by day she literally renews his strength and energy; and if you know a man with a beaming face, kind heart, and prosperous business, in nine cases out of ten you will find he has a wife of this kind.—*Riv. Recorder.*

MATERIALISATION OF SPIRITS IN MELBOURNE.

It is an invidious task to chronicle events which the writer feels will be discredited by nineteen out of twenty of his readers. This feeling is made more palpable by the knowledge that long after we became convinced of the reality of Spiritual intercourse, some of the incidents which we are about to relate would have been beyond our capacity to receive as facts upon the testimony of others. They are now made palpable to us through three of our senses, viz., sight, hearing, and feeling; and the reliability of those senses is confirmed by the corresponding senses of nine intelligent persons who simultaneously witnessed the phenomena we are about to describe. True, the record of similar phenomena which appears in the Bible is unhesitatingly believed by the majority of Christians, yet this does not, as it should do, open the way for the reception of the testimony of intelligent living witnesses that parallel phenomena corroborative of that which they have accepted on the authority of the Jewish record is now occurring in our midst. We have, however, a duty to fulfil as historian of the development of the great Spiritual movement in Victoria, and all phenomena, whether of a mental or physical character, which demonstrates to us the working of Spiritual or occult forces, shall be recorded as justly and concisely as possible. If it is a fact (as we have every reason to believe) that spirits can resume for a time the human form, and deport themselves as human beings, the fact will ultimately demonstrate itself as such to the world, and be of general acceptance.

At a sitting held in the office of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, December 28th, the sitters were told to be in the best condition for the sitting appointed for New Year's eve, as, if conditions were favourable, the materialised forms would eat and drink with us. Accordingly, on the night referred to, a glass of water, containing about half a pint, together with a small plate of biscuits, were placed upon the window sill, a short distance from the curtain described in our last, and the séance began. "Zion" was the first to appear, with his white gown and red girdle; he was followed by two lady forms, unrecognised by the sitters, one of them being very graceful in appearance and having a beautiful hand with long taper fingers. Zion then re-appeared, and walking to the window took up the full glass of water, and placing it to his lips drank about half the quantity. He then took in his hand a biscuit and bit of it twice, the sound being distinctly audible to all present. A little while after he retired behind the curtain there appeared at the opening the form of a black girl, about 36 to 40 inches high, who answered to the name of "Baba." The blackness of her hands and face being intensified by contrast with the white drapery in which she was enveloped. She bowed, smiled, and reached out her hand for some flowers that were offered; and, having obtained possession of them, carried them to and fro with expressions of delight, holding them towards a gentleman and drawing them playfully back when he attempted to take them, but ultimately relinquishing them to him. Quickly following her disappearance came from behind the curtains a greeting, in a peculiar, squeaking voice, which on enquiry proved to emanate from the materialised form of a spirit well known in London circles as "Peter." He opened the curtains and conversed with the sitters for several minutes. The next form was entirely unknown to all present; it was a male, about 5 feet 9 inches high, somewhat bent, but active; he gave the name of John Wright, and said he was accustomed to materialise at a private circle in America. Approaching the window, he lifted the glass to his lips and drank the remainder of the water, ate part of a biscuit, and bit another one, leaving the marks of teeth distinctly visible on it.* The

spirit formerly introduced by the name of "Charity," next appeared, and motioning to a gentleman to sit on a chair, which was just outside the curtain; she took hold of it by the seat and lifted it and the sitter from the floor. This brought the remarkable sitting to a close.

On Tuesday, January 5th, two ticket holders were admitted in addition to the circle. Zion appeared and gave a military salute; then a female form, unknown by anyone present. The third to appear was "Pearl" (described last month); the star or light on her forehead was bright and beautiful. Zion again appeared, and was quickly followed by the little black girl, "Baba." A bunch of flowers were presented to her, which seemed to gratify her much, and after carrying them to and fro and smelling them (audibly) she threw them into the writer's lap, a distance of about 7 feet. The next and last to appear was "Charity," who motioned to one of the sitters to take a seat on the chair nearest the cabinet. He did so and was lifted from the floor. Having signified her willingness to lift another, Mr. J—, a gentleman weighing twelve stone, took the seat and was levitated in the same manner. A lady was then lifted, and the spirit bowed adieu. It was stated by the control that the force was now inadequate for further materialisations, and the séance concluded.

On Tuesday, 7th, in addition to seven members of the circle, three visitors were present—Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Stephen and Mrs. D—. Zion appeared for a short time, and was followed by the form of a veiled lady, who subsequently appeared with the veil raised, disclosing dark hair and eyes. She was, however, unknown to any one present. Within a minute of her retiring, Zion reappeared, and seemed stronger than before. Next came the form of John Wright, described previously; he extended his hand and touched the fingers of two of the sitters. A bunch of flowers being handed to him, he separated them and handed one or more to each person present; taking up pencil and paper, which were on the window sill, he walked to the desk and deliberately wrote. Before retiring he raised his hands and extended them as though bestowing a benediction upon those present. Then came "Charity," who danced gracefully to the music; then, walking to the corner of the room where John Wright had deposited the remainder of the flowers, she took them and carried them to a chair on the opposite side; turning her face to the east, she prostrated herself and kissed the ground reverentially, her movements being both graceful and impressive. After an interval the medium was controlled by John Wright, who gave some particulars about the circle he was connected with in America, and promised further information. This sitting was considered a most satisfactory one by all concerned.

Tuesday, January 11th. Atmospheric conditions were unfavourable, the weather being hot and close. After waiting a much longer period than usual, the form of Zion appeared, but came only a short distance outside the curtain; he was followed by the veiled lady, and she by John Wright, who after several attempts succeeded in coming near enough to the sitters for his hand to be reached and touched by them. Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Gellatley, of Mudgee, N.S.W., were present, and the materialised form extended his hand to Mr. G., who grasped it. The form again emerged from the curtain, and taking a pencil from a music stand wrote on the paper, "I am glad to make your acquaintance and will come again.—John Wright."

Extending his hand and bowing to the company, he then withdrew. A female form covered with a gauzy veil next appeared, and was not recognised by any present. Mr. Gellatley subsequently discovering it was his sister, who has been in spirit world many years, he also obtained a test of the presence of a deceased daughter. The power being found inadequate for further materialisation, the meeting closed.

We regret to inform our readers that a few days after the last mentioned séance, Mr. Spriggs was prostrated with rheumatic fever, from which he is now convalescing. As soon as his health is sufficiently restored the seances will be resumed.

*Similar phenomena to this is recorded in the "Medium" of June 15, 1877, through the same medium. (Mr. Spriggs) The account of it, attested by ten witnesses, is published in pamphlet form, and to be had at our office.

VITAL MAGNETISM.

(By ANDREW TIMBRELL.)

IN the Report on Spiritualism by a committee of the London Dialectical Society, and which was presented to the Council of that body, on July 20th., 1870, we have the evidence of thirty-five witnesses, of whom nine were ladies, and the remainder were gentlemen. The committee in question was appointed on January 26, 1869; the preliminary meeting occurred on February 2, 1869; the second meeting was held on 16th *idem*, and was devoted to the reading of correspondence, besides the appointment of sub-committees for the purpose of practical investigation: and the first witness was examined on March 16. The report of sub-committee, No 1, concludes with the opinion that "Motion may be produced in solid bodies without material contact, by some hitherto unrecognised force operating within an undefined distance from the human organism, and beyond the range of muscular action." The report of sub-committee, No 2, contains the following paragraph:—"Death, we were informed, was, so far as the body was concerned, of comparatively trivial import; but, as regarded the spirit, it was a birth into new experiences of existence; that spirit life was in every respect human; that friendly intercourse and companionship were as common and as pleasurable in spirit life as on earth; that although spirits took great interest in earthly affairs, they had no wish to return to their former state of existence; that communication with earthly friends was pleasurable, and desired by spirits, being intended as a proof to the former of the continuance of life, notwithstanding bodily dissolution; and that spirits claimed no prophetic power." In her evidence before the committee on March 16, 1869 Mrs. Hardinge stated that the principal difficulties, spirits have had to encounter, have arisen mainly from two causes: firstly, the subtle and ill-understood nature of the magnetic fluid used to produce the phenomena; secondly, the materialistic tendencies of the age, which operated to retard investigation and neutralise the demonstrations. So little analogy exists between material and spiritual laws, that it is extremely difficult to establish a scientific system of communion, hence it is almost impossible to explain the many and various conditions under which phenomena occurred. It appears, however, that the communication is established somewhat on the principle of a galvanic battery, requiring for its operation three elements, namely, (1.) A person called a medium: (2) a spirit in magnetic rapport with the medium: and (3) a certain condition of the atmosphere in which to produce the manifestations. It is believed that there are two kinds or qualities of vital magnetism which might be termed positive and negative. The medium must be possessed of an excess of the vital fluid of a negative quality; the medium spirits,—for there are medium and non-medium spirits as well as men,—must give off an excess of the vital magnetism of a positive quality; so that the medium and the spirit always stand related to each other as negative and positive; the spirit being always positive in order to be able to produce phenomena: thus the two stand in relation to each other as the copper and zinc in a galvanic battery, whilst the atmosphere represents the solution. The human magnetisms composing the spirit circle, above all other elements, exert the most considerable influence on the character of the manifestations; thus, a strongly antagonistic state of mind in any one of those forming the circle, would probably, by developing a positive influence towards the spirit, neutralise the manifestation. This portion of the evidence confirms the opinion expressed by sub-committee No. 2, that disputation amongst members at a seance is a disturbing element, and any strong emotion is detrimental to the exercise of spiritual power, because inordinate and extreme excitement has the effect of rendering magnetism positive, and neutralises the action of the spirits. It is mentioned, at page 113 of the report, that judge Parker of Massachusetts, though an enthusiastic believer in Spiritualism, brought to the circle, such a peculiar quality of magnetism as invariably to suspend the manifestations when he appeared. This idiosyncrasy con-

tinued until a short time before his death, when some change took place in his physical system, and then the phenomena were produced in his presence with perfect freedom. Again, associated bodies who have entered upon the investigation of this subject have almost invariably failed; firstly, from their sense of responsibility, which, by producing positive magnetism, neutralises spiritual influence: and secondly, from the materialistic training of scientists; the effect of a long continued course of scientific study being to impel the belief that nothing can be true which may not be subjected to material tests, and measured by material gauges. It was probably a recognition of this prejudicial law which induced Washington Irving to represent Mr. Doubtless as declining to believe in the existence of anything he saw unless he could actually touch it. Material tests are not always applicable to spiritual phenomena, especially in those of clairvoyance and clairaudience, in which the material notions of time and space appear to be entirely ignored. The laws of optics and acoustics offer no explanation for the phenomena of Spiritualism; for the formulae of science, valuable as they are in the investigation of the laws of matter, are generally unavailable for an enquiry into the *arcana* of Spiritualism. I am indebted, for the above information, to the interesting report now by side; for, being only a novice in this department of Philosophy, it would be presumptuous in me to assume the character of an oracle upon so important a subject. Although but a recent convert, I am only an investigator, and cannot either write or speak upon such a serious topic with personal authority. One thing I know and may avow it confidently; that within the last twelve months, I have learned enough to induce me to discard the doctrines inculcated by former education; and my reformed opinions while they estrange my confidence, and divorce my sentiments from the incomprehensible platitudes of denominational pulpits, forcibly teach me to be charitable, courteous, and lenient towards those who remain in bondage to the superficialities of orthodoxy. The poet Byron was accustomed to remark—"Orthodoxy is my doxy, and heterodoxy is another man's doxy"—but I confess I know nothing about the 'doxies'; notwithstanding that the doxology, as sung by most choirs resembles, to my judgment, the costume of a ballet girl, by commencing too low, and terminating too high. The present article would not have been written had it not been for an impression left upon my mind by what occurred at a circle held in Melbourne on the evening of Thursday, November 20, 1879, which I attended professionally as shorthand recorder, and not as member. From what transpired upon that occasion, it occurred to me that there existed at the time sundry disturbing influences which exercised an injurious effect upon the magnetic condition. A lady acted as medium and it was obvious from her manner and utterances that there was a disarrangement in the constitution of the circle. Her preliminary request,—“do not break to night,” coupled as it was with an enquiry for some person not present, impressed me with the suspicion that all the requisite conditions had not been complied with; and, I believe I am correct in noting that two gentlemen were absent from that sitting, who had been present at the previous meeting. Whether any stranger had been introduced into the circle I cannot say, but the absence of two former members was sufficient to affect the magnetic element. The medium occasionally uttered, in what appeared to me a nervous tone of voice,—“Oh, what a strange influence!” and her deliverances were, if I may use the expressions, spasmodical, disjointed, and incoherent. Surely, thought I, there must be something wrong, or unfavorable to free development; and although I am too inexperienced in such matters to advance a definite opinion, it certainly occurs to me that the agitation of the medium was occasioned by some disarrangement of the circle. It was this circumstance which prompted me to examine the report of committee of the London Dialectical Society, with the hope that I might acquire some information to guide me to a solution of what appeared to me to be a problem in Spiritualism. I read the evidence of the witnesses in one day, but deferred the minutes, correspondence, and appendices to

another time. I then discovered, commencing at page 400, rules and conditions for the spirit circle, compiled, apparently with great care, by Mr. James Burns, managing representative of the Spiritual Institution, 15 Southampton Row, London. And now I will give a few extracts from those rules, commenting *en passant* upon such passages as seem to me to apply to the event above mentioned. From them, I ascertain that a warm dry atmosphere is best, as it presents the mean between all extremes, and agrees with the harmonious state of man's organism, which is proper for the manifestation of phenomena, while a subdued light or darkness increases the power, and facilitates control. Now, at the circle on Nov. 20th., the medium occasionally complained of an excess of light, and yet the only light in the room was a candle, carefully screened off from the sitters, who were in comparative darkness. There may have been a ray of light cast upon the ceiling of the apartment, escaping through the top orifice of the shade, and perhaps it was that ray which disconcerted the medium, and caused a member of the circle to occasionally re-adjust the light upon the recorder's desk. One of the local conditions is that those persons composing the circle should assemble in the room about an hour beforehand, and the same sitters should attend each time, and occupy the same places. This rule was violated on the occasion referred to, for the medium complained of a 'break' in the circle, caused by the absence of two previous sitters; and another thing, an interchange of position occurred among the members after the medium had passed into trance. But, I observe that this is not an unusual event, for the law affecting physiological conditions asserts, if a circle does not succeed, changes should be made in the sitters till the proper conditions are supplied. The mental conditions, which proscribe those persons who are opinionated, dogmatic, and positive, or parties between whom feelings of envy, hate, contempt, or other inharmonious sentiment exist, were perfect. Again it is recommended that cane bottomed chairs, or those with wooden seats, are preferable to stuffed chairs; while mediums and sensitives should never sit on stuffed chairs, cushions, or sofas used by other persons, as the influences which accumulate in the cushions often affect the mediums unpleasantly; whereas, upon the occasion referred to, cushioned chairs only were occupied. With respect to arrangement of disposition and complexion, the rule is that the active and quiet, the fair and dark, the ruddy and pale, male and female, should be seated alternately, and no person should be placed behind the medium. I sincerely hope that I am not giving offence in selecting these extracts. The fact of my doing so will prove the interest I take in such occurrences, and I cannot resist a spirit of enquiry. I must confess that on the evening of November, 20th, 1879, the medium, who was a lady, betrayed, at intervals, during the sitting such violent emotion, that I interiorly and heartily sympathised with her; and I could not resist the intuitive opinion that there had been some departure from the prescribed conditions. As immediately concerns the revelations of modern Spiritualism, it is obviously best suited to the present constitution of society, for it demolishes the fortresses of error, and directs the aspirations of the mind towards the prospects of immortality. It teaches me that Alfred Tennyson was correct as well as poetical, when he wrote the lines,—

"There is no death,
What seems so is transition."

It disabuses an unprejudiced and receptive person of many preconceived falsities, and conclusively proves that we must all ascend the futtock shrouds, and not crawl through the lubbers' hole, to reach the main top. Our journey to the future terminus must be by gradual and progressive stages, and not along the narrow gauge of, what Mr. Davis designates, an atonement railway. Self reliance here, and soul reliance hereafter, constitute the cardinal points of faith. Spiritualism is adapted to improve the moral tone of society, whereas, experience indicates that the old formulae of sectarianism only serve to create an army of imposters, and a host of hypocrites. As to spirit communion, what is prayer? Is not prayer spirit communion?

"Father of Light! On Thee I call!
Thou see'st my soul is dark within;
Thou who can'st guide the sparrow's fall,
Avert from me the doom of sin.
Father! No prophet's laws I seek:
Thy laws in Nature's work appear:
I own myself, corrupt and weak:
Yet, will I pray, for Thou wilt hear.
Thou, who in wisdom, placed me here;
And, when Thou wilt, can'st call me hence;
Ah! Whilst I tread this earthly sphere,
Extend to me Thy broad defence
Shall man confine his Maker's sway?
To gothic domes of mould'ring stone?
God's Temple is the Face of Day!
Earth,—Ocean,—Heaven, His boundless throne!
Patience!"—cries Longfellow—"and shuffle the cards."

ANDREW TIMBRELL.

PHTHISIS AND TYPHOID FEVER.

WE are in receipt of two pamphlets on "Phthisis" and "Typhoid Fever," by William Thomson, F.R.C.S., F.L.S., asserting and giving statistical evidence that both these dread diseases are invariably the result of contagion, the former being attributed to a *zymotic microscopus*, or minute parasitical insect, and the latter from zymotic germs. We have long held the opinion of Acari, as an active cause of true phthisis, but not of all lung diseases, commonly classed under the head of consumption; but at the same time we have held, and do hold, to the belief that an unhealthy condition of the bronchia or mucous membrane of the lungs is essential to the effectual lodgment of the phthisical *microscopus*, and a morbid condition of the viscera, equally essential to the development of fungoid germs, which would be destroyed on absorption by the secretions of a healthy membrane.

Mr. Thomson's articles are worthy of serious attention, suggesting a means for the diminution of the prevalence of these two fatal scourges.

SPIRITUAL ASTRONOMY.

THE last portion of the article on the above subject was sent rather hurriedly to press, some part of the proof escaping correction. On a subsequent revision for the same, some obscurity was found in the copy, which it will be necessary to submit to the astronomical control for elucidation. An opportunity not having occurred for that, the "Errata" are deferred till next month.

MR. THOS. WALKER.

WE are in receipt of a letter and papers from Mr. Walker (dated Port Elizabeth, South Africa, December 1880), from which we are pleased to find him doing well for both himself and the cause he represents. He was lecturing at the local theatre to crowded houses, the newspapers reporting him fully and fairly. One of his lectures, delivered at the Theatre Royal, Port Elizabeth, on "Voltaire the Infidel" has been published in pamphlet form. It is a review of his work as a Free-thinker and Reformer, and a fine vindication of the charges that have been brought against him by the priests and their satellites. It is not improbable Mr. Walker may revisit the Australian colonies during the current year, but that at present is uncertain. In his letter he desires to be remembered to his many friends in Melbourne.

THE *St. James's Gazette* of November last contains a favourable critique of Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace's recent work on "Island Life," the following extract from which indicates that Mr. Wallace has not lost prestige by his connexion with Spiritualism:—"No other living naturalist has the same union of high literary excellence with profound scientific knowledge. His wonderful grasp of detail, depth of insight, and breadth of view, remind one at every turn of Darwin, with whom he shares the honours of discovery in the theory of Natural Selection; but beyond this he has a lightness of touch, a beauty of style, and an ingenuity in unravelling intricate difficulties, which are all his own."

AN EVENING WITH OUR SPIRIT FRIENDS.

In the following lines we present our readers with a detailed account of a sitting at a circle in this city composed of several members, who constitute one of the oldest circles in Melbourne. After the usual preliminary arrangements had been completed, and the medium had passed into the trance state, she remarked that the conditions of the circle were very favourable, and that there was a strange and peculiarly strong influence present, but she was not yet able to discover from whom it proceeded. In a few minutes the medium remarked: Now I see a form, and it has moved round and is looking at that picture on the wall, the portrait of Swedenborg. It is a male form, and I see him very distinctly. The medium then became very much excited, and partly rose out of her chair; she then complained that the vision had become indistinct, confused; but soon resumed her lucid condition, and said: Now he is going to speak. The control then, through the medium, said: Is there a friend at this circle who would be kind enough to explain the Swedenborgian doctrines to me? I find at this circle some whom I have known during my former life, whilst, my good friends, I was with you in the earth-life. The medium then said: Do you know who this is? It is old Mr. Justice P—, but he don't seem to know me; he is touching his forehead in a confused manner. He evidently possesses much penetration, but for the moment he seems lost in thought. Now he has in his hand a large thick volume, and he looks from it to the portrait on the wall. Now he is going to speak again: I am under the impression that the knowledge of Swedenborg's doctrines must constitute a preliminary step to the attainment of a higher Spiritual state; it was told me that a foundation would be laid in my mind by a knowledge of these doctrines. I received this information in the Spiritual world. The medium then remarked: Now he is walking up and down; he is not altered in appearance, excepting that he looks wan and ghastly, and has the appearance of a darkish veil thrown over him. Now he is looking very hard at Thinker (Mr. S.); he seems very soft and gentle; he says he will always take a great interest in the general welfare of the colony; the life of the community seems to be part of his life, but he is confused somewhat. He now asks that a remark addressed to him by Thinker may be repeated. He says: Yes, you are quite right, that institution was indeed the offspring of my most earnest desire to aid my fellow men. If you would permit me to suggest that one of my legal brethren should be requested to take my place. . . . I quite feel that the boundary which separates us is very narrow, much narrower than I could ever have expected. The veil is so thin that in a little moment and the inner life is opened to you; it is only a question of waves of attraction. Now, who of you can conceive of the millionth part of a second? but in this brief time you are transferred from one state to another, and find yourself in the spirit world. I have met many whom I have known in my recent life; some also whom I have wronged, and the sight of these was wormwood and gall to my soul. I have also met some whom I helped, helped in the best of senses; not so much by worldly means as by the advancement of the mind. Oh! I cannot tell you what a holy, what a true gratification the sight of these afforded me. I feel that I am near to you, so near that I could touch you did conditions permit. I have learned so much since I came here; many things which before were a confusion in my mind are now quite clear to me, and I only wonder that I did not see before what I now see so clearly. Spiritualism is too sublime a belief for the men of the nineteenth century to grasp. Nature is full of similitudes; under the waters, and under even the surface of the earth itself, you may find the ruins of prehistoric nations; and the time will come when the present generation shall disappear in like manner. Mighty changes will occur; and thus also will the mind of man change and develop; and as it does so it will realise more fully the great truths which now it rejects. I know that your little community will grow and expand also, until it becomes a mighty nation; and, therefore, from my heart I say,

"Advance Australia!" The control then continued: Before I take my departure, may I ask if the request I made will have the attention of the friends of the circle? A long conversation then ensued respecting the doctrines of Swedenborg. The control admitted that he was not prepared to accept all that had been advanced by the great theologian while on earth, yet that he quite thought there must have been features of his (Swedenborg's) teachings which were calculated to ennoble and raise the mind. The control said he had found that this Swedenborg was regarded in the Spiritual world as eminently pure, wise, and good; and he desired to discover the foundation on which so much goodness was built, that he might be assisted to raise himself, which he hoped to do. The control then said: I thank you for the kind words you have addressed to me; they have afforded me encouragement and gratification, and I am thankful for the opportunity of having thus communed with you, and hope to be allowed to come again. Farewell! The medium then remarked: Ah! old Mr. Justice P. has gone; I am so glad that I fell in with him. Now I will pass on. Tell sister that Alfred W— is here. He says: My mother would understand if she looked at these things in the proper light, and she would be thankful. It is one of the contradictions of earthly people that while they admit that their children who have departed to the inner life are better off, yet they repine at their going. The more I see of my new existence, the more I feel it to be higher and better in degree; and I am thankful for the change which has taken place. If they would understand this, they would not sorrow as those who have no hope. The past is as nothing to me; the present is everything; and what is the future but a continuous present? . . . The medium then remarked: There is an elderly lady present; she evidently comes to another earth-friend. Thin, sharp features; some of her lower teeth gone. She has ringlets hanging down the side of her face. Now she has something in her hand. She holds up a card, and round the edge of it is black. It is an embossed card, and I can see printing on it. Now she holds up a portrait; it is that of a young man, rather frail looking. Now I will try to read the writing on the card: "Sacred to the memory of Hannah B—." I can't make out any more, it is difficult; she has a very wavering mind, and don't understand conditions. I have got this to say, that another earth friend can help that lady, and I think there is some relationship between them. She seems to have had some great trouble, and that funny, old-fashioned portrait has had something to do with it. Now she is shedding tears; she is crying bitterly; poor old lady! she was once very pretty; there is nothing to annoy or vex me when I approach her. Oh! if you could see the look of softened sorrow on that poor lady's face, you would not say I had wasted my time in stopping to speak with her. That is a peculiar portrait she has; it is more like a painting. Good-bye, old lady. She seems so glad that another earth friend has recognised her. I am satisfied he can help her in some way. Will you tell the new comer (Mr. B.) that an elderly man, with short hair is here. He answers to the name of Thomas P—. He has a very great deal to say. He holds in his hand a strange model, and in the other a square paper drawing, with lines on it. It is a most complete affair. Now he is going to set the model in motion. What a lovely thing; I never saw anything like it before, why the whole thing is illuminated with something, and it works by means of that. No, it is not electricity, as you recognise it. It is a fluid which has the appearance of glass. And now I see all the rays of the sun are passed over it, and the fluid shoots along in force waves. There are also numbers of fine wires, and the light is attracted with great rapidity. I see the most exquisite force at work. As the rays fall on it there are three distinct effects produced. Now he holds up something, a peculiarly formed thing with a valve and a hollow cylinder, with some powerful influence at the end of it, like a stone, or some transparent substance. This valve draws off certain rays. The three rays have distinct forms: one illuminates; the other exercises a great force over the machine; the third is the one which the cylinder draws toward it and

throws off. Now he has shut up the valve and points to the machinery; it has lost its movement. Now he opens the valve and the movement is perfect again. These rays are metallic, not chemical. Now he holds up a quantity of material like skeins of silk, or something similar. Now he is arranging them in a curious manner; they are of different colours, and he fixes the material on little pegs. Now all is in rapid motion again, as he utilises the rays, and there are produced such beautiful colours, and a grand design is brought out, and he looks so pleased. In a little while he will explain it better. His great wish is to find a person competent to receive his ideas and communicate them to the world for the good of mankind. After some further converse this control withdrew.

The medium then remarked: Tell the impressionable (Mr. T.) that the frail young girl is present; she holds up that portrait and wreaths the immortelles around it. It is the portrait of a male form; not of anyone I know. She says you know who it is, and smiles. Now she holds up a lovely white rosebud, and she waves her hand over it, and as she does so a most remarkable change takes place—the rosebud opens, and it is forming itself into a fair young face, and the petals have become arms, baby arms. Now she is going away, and smiles her adieu.

The medium then said, evidently to some spirit-form, Ah, my good friend, you utterly failed to make yourself known the other night to another earth friend, and I don't see the use of spending time over you now. Well, she is very much disappointed at her non-recognition. Now there is that male form with little labels. He comes to the old man, it is Gilbert B. He says: Do you remember the frolic with the baillie? Now he pulls out a paper and reads it, and laughs, and puts it into his pocket again. The medium then said: Now I see the darkness, and as I enter it I am transfixed with fear. This darkness is greater than the darkness of the tomb. O, is it possible that I could be lost here? I know that there are forms here, although I cannot see them. I feel their influence, and they are struggling through this last stage into the light. How long they remain here I cannot tell, but that they will get out of it purified from the grossness which cleaves to them, sooner or later, I am satisfied. And now I hear a voice which says: Bear on, bear on; thy work will soon be done. Bear on, bear on; thy earthly race will soon be run. Bear on, bear on; no more the darkness of the night; soon there will be for thee nought save the everlasting light! I don't know who spoke these words. Now I see the light in the distance; it seems such a fine frail line which holds me to the earth. Now I am entering the light, and it is all around me. There are the great lights approaching, like two gigantic orbs of brilliancy, unequalled by anything I have ever seen on earth. And now they are descending, and I am quite safe. All is well with those protectors around me. The little Doctor is here, and he says the controls will soon come and speak with you.

The little Doctor looks more grand and beautiful every time I see him. He says that, any friend of the members of the Circle can come forward and speak this evening. The Medium then said that there was present an old gentleman, who answers to the name of Howitt, Dr. Howitt; he smiles at seaman (Mr. C.), and points to his legs. Now he looks all round the Circle and appears much pleased. He says: A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you all, and may you each be long spared to complete your work on earth. There is a great deal for each of you to do, if you will only do it. You see that the great depths of religious thought, called Christianity, are being broken up, and the traditions of the past are giving way before the advance of spiritual thought, which is gradually permeating all classes of minds. There are great moral and religious changes impending. The reason why leading spiritualists in England are in conflict is, because each one wants to have his own way; they are not sufficiently desirous to see the truth, rather than their own opinions, prevail. I much regret this, but it will work good to the cause in the end, and cannot, in the meantime, impede the progress of the great truth which

spiritualism involves. The Medium then said: Tell the new comer that the man with the skull cap is here. He has a black glass in his hand, a mirror. Yes, it is Dr. D., and he holds up the black glass that you may look into it. I see something in this glass like the impress of forms. He says that, if you had given as much attention to these things as he did, you would leave a reputation behind you as great as he did. Now he holds in his hand a human skull; it has a reference to death in some way, and now as he pats the skull he fades away. The Medium then said: Another earth friend: there are two forms near you. I know one of them well enough, it is he of the clerical garments, James M.; but he has a stranger to me with him. It is a female form, the form of a girl a little younger than the sleeping girl (the Medium). It is his niece. Now he requests her to do something; she is to write. Wait until I see what it is. Ah! now I can see, she is making letters. Sarah; well there is something else, there is a little comma over the top of the last letter, and then there is S after it. Now I make it all out; it is, Sarah's love to all at home, to aunt, and the rest. Oh! he is so pleased at what she has been enabled to do. Tell them her views have undergone some modification. She feels and knows now that the doctrine of the atonement has another interpretation, but I, Jas. M., will impress this matter more fully on another earth friend's mind than she could do, and make matters clearer to you. It has been productive of great pleasure to me to know that she, my niece, can thus impress your Medium. One word more; during the ensuing season of joy and festivity remember that there is a spiritual meaning underlying the material teaching, and that it is in that you are to find the true means of spirit growth in the knowledge of God. Farewell. The Medium then said: The little Doctor has now come forward, and says that there is one more dear friend who wishes to speak, and now he points me to the distant horizon. Ah! it is the spirit mother—my own dear mother. And now she approaches, and she has something strange in her hand. She has a sorrowful look to-night. She has laurel in her hand, and she is placing it on the head of the sleeping girl, and she winds it all around her. Now she has willow, and she puts that in the place of the laurel. Now she is speaking, and the little Doctor touches her, and points to the circle. Yes, she will speak by impression. Oh God of love, whose tender care for all created things doth beautify the universe, and gives the spirit wings to soar aloft to realms of light, and gaze upon Thee there; for God would not be what he is were He not everywhere. He is in the spirit which speaks to thee from out the inner life; He is in the kindling elements which deal out deadly strife; doth shake the worlds, those endless spheres that in their orbits roll. He is in the still small voice that whispers in your soul: I am a loving Father, obey my righteous laws; I am the all-existent power; I am the eternal Cause of all created things: then raise thy thoughts to Me by faith and love, pure rays of light from my Divinity! The Medium then remarked: Ah my mother, she is going. Oh! why does she not take me with her. Now she fades away, and as she does so she casts such a look of love at me. Now the little Doctor comes forward again, and he says: You can now return the Medium, and good night. The Medium then, in the usual manner, returned to her condition of external consciousness, and the sitting closed.

We have only to remark, in conclusion, that during these sittings the Medium appears to pass through a variety of states, from the earth plane, and all its subsequent stages, until she arrives at that region of extreme darkness, the boundary land of the bright and more advanced condition of being. And in all these states she meets with people once of the earth, who, according to their stage of spiritual growth, are progressing along these great highways of spiritual existence. We trust our readers will be interested in this narrative of spiritual experience, and that we may have another opportunity to present them at a future time with some other phases of spiritual life, all of which are so calculated to render the otherwise vague and shadowy things of the after-life more real, and to invest them

with a greater interest and importance in the estimation of the anxious enquirer. With this wish, we close our account of an evening with our spirit friends.

H. J. B.

MISCELLANEOUS SEANCES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—Trusting you will give me fair play in reply to above article in your January number, I desire to state that "A South Australian Subscriber" is labouring under a mistake, and also caused you to supplement an error in reference to the so-called seance above-named. The following is the clipping from the *Age* relative to the mis-called seance, and I will leave you and your readers to judge who is right in the matter:—

"INSPIRATIONAL ADDRESS, 'Gates Ajar,' lady medium. Masonic Hall, this (Wednesday) evening 8. Melbourne Spiritualistic Society. Admission, 6d."—*Age*, November 24.

You will observe there is no intention to mislead anyone in reference to our weekly gatherings on Wednesday evenings in the Masonic Hall. The endeavour of Melbourne Spiritualistic Society is to spread the truth abroad in the simplest and most practical manner, and strangers attending our meetings always meet with a cordial welcome. I am sorry our Adelaide friend did not find what he was evidently anxiously seeking, but is like many new beginners who are desirous of getting the kernel ere they have cracked the nut.

As chairman of the meeting on the occasion when the lady medium gave her inspirational address entitled "Gates Ajar," I deem it a duty to reply to the misinformation which caused your uncalculated for strictures.

JOHN VEEVERS.

7 Raleigh street, Windsor,
January 6, 1881.

[Mr. Veevers' letter shows our S. A. correspondent to have been in error in referring to the meeting as a "Spiritual seance," though to the uninitiated the terms "Inspirational address" and lady "medium" would suggest one. We adhere to our opinion as to the necessity for the Conductor of the meeting to explain to the audience that trance addresses as a rule offer no test of spiritual intervention.—Ed. H. of L.]

SUCCOUR TO THE DISTRESSED.

On Thursday evening last we were present at a circle (alluded to elsewhere,) when the medium passing into trance described a spirit seeking help and succour for one dear to her, but still in the body. Accompanying this spirit she described herself as passing over a city, which she recognised as Sydney; then away round the coast to the north, ultimately reaching a barren island with a projection or ledge of rock, under which she perceived the shattered remains of a boat; on the rock was erected a staff composed of three sticks tied together and bearing a coloured handkerchief as a signal of distress. Her attention was then directed to a man much emaciated and suffering intensely from the pangs of hunger. A youth was asleep under a sail, and the moral sensibilities deadened by the cravings of the physical appetite, the man was contemplating with murderous intent the sleeping boy. It was the child of the spirit mother who sought for aid, and her desire was to divert the mind of the elder man from the idea that possessed him. She was unable of herself to do this, and the medium was equally impotent. They sought for means of sustenance and discovered a stranded fish, but were unable to direct his attention to its whereabouts. In this dilemma the medium whose sympathies were strongly aroused became impressed with the idea to seek aid from more powerful and exalted intelligences, and summoning the aid of the circle she ascended to a higher altitude, where her earnest aspiration attracted towards her the spirit of one who having passed away under similar circumstances to the suffering castaways, could sympathise with them. At his earnest call came an angel of mercy, who descending to the earth, caused a sleep to fall on the tempted one, and while his physical nature was quiescent, a vision of the locality in which the fish lay was presented to him. Seeing this

accomplished the medium returned happy in the consciousness of having been the means of bringing succour to the distressed and averting the commission of a crime which would have brought misery and remorse on the soul of the shipwrecked man.

WARNING TO BIBLICAL SCHOLARS.

BIBLICAL scholars are sometimes sadly entrapped. In a little town of Bavaria, the other day, sat an aged frauin and her father confessor, who was, at least supposed to know the bible by heart. The frauin enjoyed a practical joke in spite of her age, and the reverend father, although a thoroughly pious man, was not a whit behind her. Our frauin said: "Father, you may have heard that some of the persistent explorers in the Holy Land have just discovered a huge heap of bones which are supposed, on pretty good authority, to be those of the children which Herod killed." "Ah, indeed!" replied the pater, thoroughly interested. "Yes, I had heard of it," continued the frauin, "and, strange to say, nearly half the bones were white as the snow of the Alps, while the rest were almost black as ebony." "Well, well," exclaimed the good priest, "that is certainly very remarkable." "And the problem to be solved is," continued the frauin, "whether the white belonged to the girls and the black ones to the boys, or vice versa. The explorers were greatly vexed by the matter, and could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion. Now, what do you think Father?" "Oh," wittily rejoined the priest, "of course the black ones belonged to the girl babies, and the white ones to the boy babies." We ask the same question of our readers, and they had better guess several times before they read the rest of this paragraph. When they have settled the matter they can refer to the answer of the frauin, who, with a merry twinkle in her eye, said: "Father, you must have read your Bible to very little purpose, for the account tells us that only boy babies were killed by Herod."—*The Shaker Manifesto*.

THE "TYERMAN" FAMILY FUND.

The following additional Subscriptions have reached us towards the above fund:—

	£.	s.	d.
Mrs. Henniker	...	...	0 2 6
M. Elliott	...	...	0 6 0
Mr. T. Lang	...	...	0 10 0
Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Cohen	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. G. Potter	...	...	0 5 0
Mr. E. Shaw (Queensland)	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. R. O. Mittell	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. J. E. Snell	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. R. Rollwagen	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. H. Petersen	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. G. Simpson	...	...	1 0 0
A Friend (Stawell)	...	...	1 0 0
Do. (Brighton)	...	...	0 5 0
H. J. Browne, Esq.	...	...	2 0 0
T. O. Button (Additional)	...	...	0 5 0
Mr. Nicholls	...	...	0 5 0
Amount previously acknowledged	24	10	0
	£36	18	6

£19 19s. 6d. just received from Mr. Eckersteen, of Invercargill, N.Z. Particulars next month.

ARRANGEMENTS are being made for an Entertainment on a large scale for the benefit of the "Tyerman family." The choir of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists have already commenced practice, and other kindred societies will be asked to co-operate.

As we are going to press we are pleased to observe in Saturday's *Age* a lecture, by Mrs. E. H. Britten, entitled "Is Spiritualism the work of the Devil?" which some appreciative friend has published as an advertisement. We understand it will be repeated in next week's "Leader."

MR. G. M. STEPHEN AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

At the recent annual meeting of the Medical Society of Victoria the retiring President (Mr. Gray) spoke of Mr. Stephen as a charlatan, and affected to treat both the diseases and cures referred to in connection with that gentleman as imaginary, hinting at the same time the necessity of legislation for the protection of the public from imposition.

In reply to Mr. Gray's remarks, a long letter from Mr. Stephen (dated Jan. 15th), appears in the *Age* of the 21st, wherein, after showing that his own social status is higher than that of the gentleman who speaks so contemptuously about him, he proceeds to prove by history the reality of cure by "laying on of hands," as exemplified in the cases of Greatrakes, Gassner, the Zouave "Jacob," Dr. Newton, and other comparatively modern healers, whose performances in this direction have astonished the world; and, lastly, by the many well authenticated cases of cures effected by himself, concluding with the following challenge:—

At the next gathering of the afflicted poor, for the benefit of my "imaginary" gift of healing, I will select three cases, and place them before the audience. Dr. Gray shall then select nine of his brethren, to separately write diagnoses of the cases, not three of which shall agree with his own. I will then blindfold a young girl, who shall forthwith diagnose each case so correctly, that I will instantly cure them, or send them away relieved from all pain—unless, indeed, they prefer submitting themselves to Dr. Gray's treatment for a season!—Yours, &c., G. MILNER STEPHEN. 172 Collins-street, East, 15th January.

The *Age* commented on the above in a leading article, urging Dr. Gray to accept the challenge. This, however, he declined to do, but proposed another test, viz., that Mr. Stephen should, in the presence of medical and clerical witnesses, cure two cases of cataract, deemed incurable by ordinary treatment.

Mr. Stephen having left for Sydney before the publication of his own letter, no reply from him to Dr. Gray's proposal has yet appeared; and so the matter rests. We do not think Mr. Stephen professes to perform miracles, which the instantaneous cure of cataract would in our opinion, be.

A RESPONSE TO THE GREETING OF ENGLISH SPIRITUALISTS.

The following is the reply of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists to the address published last month:—

84 Russell Street,

Melbourne, Jan. 27th. 1881.

To Messrs. Yeates, Towns, King, Burns, and other English Spiritualists.

Friends and Fellow Workers,

Your fraternal greeting in illuminated form sent to the Spiritualists of Melbourne at the hands of Messrs. Spriggs and Smart, and placed by them in custody of Mr. Terry, was handed by him to the Committee of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, as the oldest representative body connected with the movement here. The Committee accept the address in the spirit of fraternity which it breathes, and in response are pleased to say that their experience so far is corroborative of the eulogium given by you of the character of both Mr. Spriggs and Mr. Smart, whom they already find a great acquisition to the cause of Spiritualism in Melbourne.

The object and aim of our Association is the "Advancement of Spiritual Truths and purposes." With this end in view we are at one with you and all religious progressionists.

Wishing you all success in the good work,

We are Dear Sirs,

Yours fraternally,

S. G. WATSON, President.

W. H. TERRY, Treasurer.

A. VAN ALKEMADE, Hon. Sec.

The *Medium* newspaper is being published under difficulties; lacking means to pay the printer, Mr. Burns, aided by his family, has filled the breach made by the withdrawal of this very necessary individual, setting the type and printing the paper himself, the result being most creditable to the amateur staff. Some sympathising friends are sending encouraging letters and subscriptions. Among the subscribers we observe the name of "Oquina," Mrs. Richmond's poetical control. She sends a pound, which she says (in a characteristic letter which accompanies it) was given to her by some one in Scotland to do what she pleased with, and promises to influence the minds of others to help in sustaining the *Medium*. We trust her efforts will be successful.

LORD MOUNT TEMPLE has been taken ill at the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, while on a visit to Lord and Lady Cowper. He will be unable to be moved for some days. A clairvoyant lady doctor has been summoned specially from London to attend him, and is now staying at the Lodge.—*Times* (London.)

ERRATUM.—In article on page 1932, for *microscopus* read *micrococcus*.

Advertisements

SPIRITUALISTIC & FREETHOUGHT PAPERS.

The Medium, London (Weekly), 12/6, per annum.

The Spiritualist " " 15/ " "

The Banner of Light, the oldest American Spiritualistic and Freethought paper, published weekly. Subscription, 22/6 per ann.

The Religio-Philosophical Journal, a first-class American Weekly published at Chicago, U.S.A. Subscription, 17/6 per annum.

Shaker Manifesto, monthly, 6d., 5s. per annum.

The Voice of Angels, an interesting journal Edited by Spirits published fortnightly. 10s. per annum.

The "Theosophist," a monthly journal devoted to Oriental Philosophy, Occultism, Spiritualism, &c. Published at Bombay. 20/ per annum.

Light for All. A monthly journal, published at San Francisco 6/- per annum.

Copies of all the above available for subscription.

POSTAGE EXTRA.

W. H. TERRY, 84 Russell Street.

EYE OPENERS, for Orthodox Christians. A parcel of the above sent to any part of this, or the neighbouring colonies on receipt of 6d. for postage.—W. H. TERRY.

PSYCHO-MAGNETIC HEALING.

MRS. WEBER,

Having recovered from her long and serious illness, is now prepared to receive a limited number of patients. Immediate relief and speedy cure in all cases of Acute Inflammation, or local affections. Cure of Consumption, and all Spinal diseases, Internal Ulcers, etc.

83 GORE STREET, FITZROY.

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