



THE

Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREETHOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM,
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

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

No. 216.

MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY 1st, 1888.

PRICE 6d

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varied and many sided are the phenomena met with; so different are many of them when viewed from different aspects, that the philosophic explorer hesitates to speak with authority save in those instances where his own experiences are corroborated by parallels in the experience of other careful investigators. This is the case with the fundamentals of Spiritualism, and with a few of its leading phenomena, such as raps, movements of ponderable matter, and psychography, which have been demonstrated as produced by an intelligently guided force distinct from the witnesses. The testimony to this is so overwhelmingly strong that witnesses by the thousand could readily be found able and willing to give detailed accounts of experiences in entire harmony one with the other, and hundreds of thousands could testify that this unseen intelligence at the back of the phenomena alluded to invariably claims to be a disembodied human spirit; and though we are told by our orthodox friends that they are deceiving spirits or devils, and by our Occultist confreres that they are Pisachas or astral tramps, the evidence to the contrary is too strong to be shaken by these unproved assertions, which in any case are but theories put forward to account for the admitted facts. Nizida, the writer of the article we have referred to, appears to be a theosophic Spiritualist, rather prone to lose sight of the philosophic leaders of the Spiritualistic movement in the larger mass of more or less angular minds composing the body.

UNDER the heading "Where does the danger lie?" we republish from a recent number of *Light* one of the most rational articles on the dangers of Spiritualism that have emanated from an apparently theosophical standpoint. It is the custom of many nominal Spiritualists who happen to have met with a case of obsession, of moral decadence in a medium, or of misleading communications in a circle, to take up the cry of the Occultist, and by magnifying the dangers, real and presumed, frighten sincere investigators off the track and demoralise circles by introducing an element of suspicion and anticipation of deception altogether inimical to progress.

To point out known dangers on a road but little travelled by the multitude is a good and proper thing to do; to suggest to the weak-footed that the road is beset with difficulties probably beyond their strength, and that they would do wisely to let the stronger ones do the pioneer work, is wise when such advice comes from those who have travelled the road; but for people who have travelled only a short distance and turned back in alarm at the first obstruction they meet with, to endeavour to dissuade intending travellers better fitted than themselves for the journey from undertaking it, is foolish and presumptuous. We have frequently in the past pointed out the folly of persons plunging into the investigation of spiritual phenomena without first acquainting themselves with what has been done in this direction by others who have preceded them—many of whom have by a lengthened experience come to be considered as experts in the matter—though few of these will dogmatise as some scientists do with less basis for so doing.

So extensive is the field for exploration and investigation, that the most experienced have come to realise that their knowledge is but limited. So

That the scientists have appropriated Mesmerism, and under the guise of Hypnotism are running a phase of it into dangerous prominence, is no fault of the spiritual philosophers; they work on a higher plane, the developments in which would not impress the mind not in approximation to it, and the rush of the material scientist into Hypnotic phenomena is very much on a par with the rush of Phenomenalists into spiritual matters, which he deprecates. Most heartily, however, do we endorse his recommendation to investigators to preserve their integrity, and not surrender their wills to unknown controls; but we cannot go so far as to recommend them not to submit to the mesmeric influence of either man or spirit when they have satisfied themselves that the man or spirit is on a higher plane of development than themselves. This indeed is the criterion. Mesmerism

applied biologically or hypnotically is either elevating or the reverse, according to the moral or mental status of the operator in relation to the subject, or their relative conditions for the time being. We do not know what "Nizida's" experiences have been, but our own, so far, have satisfied us that absolutely diabolical spirits who persistently stimulate to evil, are very exceptional visitants to circles of even ordinary calibre, and that victims of obsession are almost invariably persons with badly balanced minds, or morbid tendencies. We have had some experiences with this class of spirit during the early years of our investigations, and found their influence over the mind of an individual with an average mental conformation and good moral tendencies was very small. When controlling a medium their character becomes immediately manifest to a person of any discrimination, and if with their eyes wide open they yield themselves again and again to their control and eventually become obsessed, it is more from weakness in their moral stamina than from the magnetic power of the obsessing spirit.

Magnetism is a spiritual force, or rather power, and a gross magnetism cannot penetrate into a finer grade, which if distinctly more refined is impervious to it. In mixed circles the disturbed condition of the magnetic aura often gives openings for the intrusion of a lower order of spirit by the displacement of the medium's magnetism; but the influence is only temporary, and the medium's tone can be restored by a few passes from the hand of a person with purer magnetism.

The dangers of Spiritualism only exist as "Nizida" indicates to those who allow prominence to the baser side of their nature; whose motives are selfish and consequently unspiritual. To succeed and progress in a circle the members must have spiritual aspirations, and no personal ambition for mediumistic development. The rules are simple, and if these are adhered to, the danger is reduced to a minimum. None, however, should enter a circle without some definite object in view, and when that object is attained, unless some higher one presents itself, it is time to withdraw. Directly a circle ceases to progress it should be either reorganised or dissolved, or it will undoubtedly recede and become more or less demoralised. To progress in spiritual knowledge through a circle or individual development is not, as the writer suggests, an easy thing: like other things of value it takes time and effort to attain, and neither circles nor conscious intercourse with spirits are absolutely essential to the attainment of high spiritual development: nevertheless, we contend that both of them are legitimate, and (rightly used) valuable aids to the spiritualisation and harmonisation of the individual. It is, however, much wiser to induce people to read up in the philosophy of the subject and get a comprehension of it before entering into a practical investigation of its facts than to frighten them by magnifying the dangers they are likely to encounter on the road, and thereby in some instances deterring them from gaining knowledge which may be of incalculable value to them.

THE *Carrier Dove*, for Dec. 3rd, contains a fine portrait of Alfred Russell Wallace, accompanied by a brief sketch of his career.

OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGES.

No matter of what advantage it may be to a limited number of individuals of peculiar sagacity to have found out, like Tom Carlyle in his day did, that the majority of his fellow-men are unmitigated fools, and that it is easy to make a very comfortable living out of their congenital folly, one thing, it appears to me, would be of immense advantage to mankind at large, and that one thing is diet in the widest acceptation of the term, and including in it not only what we eat, and how much, but also what we drink, and how much; what air we breathe, where we live, &c.; for surely all these matters affect the welfare of our bodies as much as whether we live on beef, pork, and mutton, or on cereals, vegetables, and fish. No one seems to doubt the fact that the closer we live to the bosom of nature the closer we fulfil the conditions requisite for our existence as living and reasoning beings. Now, it does not matter how much a scurrilous press in the metropolis of Victoria runs down the doings and proceedings of our vegetarians at the Antipodes, one thing is past all doubt and question, and that one thing is that vegetarianism strictly followed out would lead to more beneficial results from a sanitary point of view than any other medical or other fad or hobby now prevailing in our midst. This view of mine I find now backed up in the October number of *Sphinx*, where the subjoined statement of facts appears, which I translate for the especial benefit of our Vegetarian Society, and of all those to whom a majority of doctors keep constantly telling that they consume too much beef. The notes are copied by the *Sphinx*, from a paper called *Thalysia*, which is supported by a club of friends of a natural mode of living. Here are these notes: "A lecture was lately delivered by Dr. Voit before the Anthropological Society of Munich on the Diet of Vegetarians, in which he made the important communication that during last winter, under the instigation of Dr. Aderholdt, of Paris, a man presented himself, willing to submit to an exclusive diet of bread and fruit alone. A similar experiment was made in Munich on a paperhanger of Vienna, who was carefully watched for several weeks in the local physiological institute, where he refused, even in the midst of winter, to have a fire lit in his room, attending to his ordinary work as usual with the windows of his room open, and living on the ordinary vegetable food he had been using for the last five years, including a modicum of water. The weight of his body maintained its average all the time the experiment lasted. The result of the experiment, carried out on exact lines of science showed that the food taken consisted daily of one pound of brown bread, two pounds of fruit, and twenty-one grammes of oil, which amount in spite of its simplicity appeared to the man as luxurious fare, and turned out on a proper examination of the excreta to contain a surplus of starch. Better off are, according to Dr. Voit's account, those vegetarians who cook their food. These, he says, obtain a far more ample supply of nutriment out of white wheat bread, cooked rice and macaroni than they would from flesh and eggs; but the most important statement made by Prof. Voit is the following, viz., that the scientific doctrines of to-day are no more, as a good many people still believe, in disharmony with or opposition to the principal doctrines of vegetarianism, and that it is a "positive scientific fact that a strictly vegetarian diet supplies all the requisite conditions of physiological nutrition, although it may require some time yet before this truth will be generally accepted." We shall simply have to wait until the time of general recognition of the merits of vegetarianism arrives, but we can assure those superficial scribes and would-be witty hacks of the daily press that their sneers and ridicule of what they do not understand are already row worse than useless, and tend only to draw public attention to this truly important subject. It is certainly very possible that cattle dealers, sheep breeders, and butchers generally will not like to hear of such a revolution in human diet, but another thing is equally certain, viz., that the researches of scientific men cannot take into account profits or losses made by either butchers or bakers.

I can only briefly allude here to a very elaborate

rate discussion by Dr. du Prel in the *Sphinx* of October on the *demon of Socrates*, which, according to him consisted in transcendental influences, other invisible egos, as I take it, outside of himself, in short, spirits so-called, by whom all of us are more or less consciously influenced, and by whom Socrates was thus influenced from his earliest boyhood, and to whose admonitory voice he listened with the greatest attention, actually preferring their advice to the threats held out to him during his trial by his judges: so much so that he told them plainly that he would not alter his mode of thoughts or the line of his actions, even if he knew that his life were depending on it, for above all things he would obey his God, *id est*, the voice of his *daimonion*. As the article will be continued in a future number of *Sphinx*, I intend to return to this subject, and give the solution of this riddle of the ages if the author furnishes it.

The *Revue Spirite* of November is almost exclusively occupied with details of a commemorative *seance*, and speeches about Allan Kardec, which, although of great interest to French Spiritists, presents few features interesting to wider circles. One trait, however, that is especially praiseworthy is the spirit of unanimity against the introduction of the new and foreign element of esotericism.

Madame Blavatsky's work, '*The Secret Doctrine*,' has so long nettled and irritated the curiosity of the students of Spiritualism and Theosophy that most of them will be very thankful for getting at last a distant glimpse of the nature and spirit of the book in a short article in the November number of "*Le Lotus*," where, under the caption of "The Inter-etheric Force of Mr. Keeley," a fragment of that long-expected and long-subscribed-for work made its appearance, and where at the same time the pleasing information is conveyed to the expectant student of God's and nature's secrets that her own great book of secrets will shortly make its final, first, and positive appearance. What this Mr. Keeley's Force really is I am not able to say after the perusal of the six-page article any more than Madame was able to say what Mr. Keeley himself meant by his inter-etheric force, the translation being so difficult on account of the obscurity of Keeley's phraseology. Madame was in a similar difficulty in dealing with Zoellner's four-dimensional space, of which she could make little or nothing, even with the aid of the Mahatmas and Sinnett and Colonel Olcott. But no matter what it is, it has something to do with sound, it is something like the vril-power spoken of in Lytton's "Coming Race;" it is something with which anarchists and bloodthirsty revolutionists could burst up the Pyramid of Cheops, or even sink continents, after having blown them to atoms. It is consoling, however, to every peace and quietness loving reader to be informed by Madame that, although she does not know that she understands Keeley's secret exactly, the inventor of this earth-shaking force does not know the power of his invention, any more than an elephant knows his own strength, and that consequently we have no occasion of being in fear that he will misuse his gift, and send us back to Father Sol wrapped in a cloud of cosmic dust into which our planet could be converted, if the invention were handled by expert occultists, who alone know the proper and correct use of it, without, however, intending to really use it against us, for the very good reason that it always requires a little consideration to blow up a house in which the destroying angel himself is compelled to dwell, for people dwelling in glass houses generally know that it is not safe to throw stones. For further information on this highly interesting subject I must refer the curious reader to Madame's original article in *Le Lotus*, or the forthcoming mountain of a book, "*The Secret Doctrine*," which I trust will not after all turn out a ridiculous abortion of a mouse.

In *Les Sciences Mystérieuses* of November, "Omega" brings, in his "Review of the Month," some severe strictures on the conductors of *Le Lotus*, calling especially one of its articles in the October number of *Lotus* a perfidious attack on Spiritualism. As the October number of *Le Lotus* did not reach me, I am unable to judge

of its contents, but most Spiritualists are well acquainted with the Russian tactics of Madame in her wild-goose chase after the a little too positive shades or shadows, which no amount of theosophical exorcism or thundering abuse on her organ's part will be able to banish from the ranks of Spiritualism. But what is the use of talking, for Madame was a declared Spiritualist herself before she turned Theosophist, but was ashamed to admit the fact after she received a superior light from her source of inspiration Koot Hoomi, or Eliphas Levi, or Olcott or Sinnett, or perhaps from the spirits she saw for the first time so plainly and palpably at the *séances* of the Eddy brothers. Virgil says to Dante in the "*Inferno*," whilst looking at some shades of a nondescript kind: "*guarda e passa*," look at them, and pass on, and this advice of Virgil to Dante should be taken by the Spiritualists on whose work the fashionable temple of theosophy has been erected. To be killed by silence is also a *modus moriendi*, and why should the Spiritualists not allow this arrogant lady (?) to know everything better than other people, as it pleases the lady, and does no harm to the Spiritualists, no matter what she says or does, for she has been weighed in the balance long ago, and found considerably wanting in many respectable respects.

Of the rest of the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch papers I can bring no notices this month, but I must not omit to announce the birth of still another Spiritual organ of Spiritualism, under the beautiful name of '*La Alborada*,' which means the first dawn of day, Aurora; or, as Homer called it, "the rose-fingered Eos." This is a fortnightly review, and appears in a very decent garb in *Sagua la Grande* in Cuba. Amongst other articles I find a very interesting leader on Father Secchi, the celebrated astronomer and Jesuit of the College of Rome, who in his work on "The Sun and the Unity of the Physical Forces," showed himself an outspoken advocate of the plurality of inhabited worlds, although it would seem to be a heretical proposition to say so openly in the forum of Catholicism, as it would not only presuppose in a plurality of worlds, inhabited like ours by sinners, a plurality of saviours, redeemers, and only-begotten Sons of God, to die for them, but also a plurality of vicars of Christ and infallible popes, *quod est absurdum*. We wish the new Child of Light all manner of success in its enterprise.

C. W. ROHNER.

Phillip Island,

Jan. 17, 1888.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

That must be a very unintelligent and undiscerning mind which can look abroad to-day, and not see change written on everything. This is no place for the discussion of the political outlook, deeply interesting as it is to us all. Nor is this the place to dwell on the social changes that are being wrought out in our midst. Not (as we have been mistakenly thought to contend) that Spiritualism as a movement has no concern with the hopes and fears of human life. Far otherwise: it is the business of the Spiritualist to learn from the faith that he professes to sympathise with all that touches human interests, and while reaching forward to the life to come to see that the best is made of the life that now is. All that we have said is that the pages of this journal are devoted to a definite purpose for which they are all too cramped, and that they who fill them must of necessity keep that purpose in view. In this way alone can we avoid the shoals and rapids of controversy on moot questions respecting which men hold divergent views, and on which Spiritualists have opinions quite uninfluenced by their specific beliefs. There are channels of publicity existing in abundance where these subjects find fitting place, and there we all, whatever be our faith on other matters, may profitably ventilate our views. It is not too much to ask, we think, that in these pages the cobbler may stick to his last. And this, we are sure, may be done with the fullest interest in all that concerns the well-being of our fellow creatures.

To return. The change that is written on the face of all things is affecting Spiritualism. It is touching all the

varied schools of thought which concern themselves with that which specially belongs to what we call Spiritualism. Time was, and not so long ago, when the average Spiritualist might be taken to be one who had been startled out of previous habits of thought, or who had been set thinking by being fortuitously brought into relation with certain phenomena. In most cases he had not sought them: they had by apparent accident obtruded themselves on his attention. They occupied his mind as mere phenomena, with no special ethical or moral significance. It would depend on the cast of his mind, and on the particular circumstances of his life, what view he took of them. But at any rate he would regard them *ab extra* as curious objective facts. It might well be that he could cultivate a familiar acquaintance with these phenomena, and convince himself absolutely of their entire objective reality, and remain an unchanged materialist. There was nothing necessarily spiritual in such Spiritualism. Of all the misleading expressions there has probably been none more oddly inconsequent than that which called these raps and noises and the like "phenomena called spiritual."

For what seems to us a long time as we look back this exclusive view of the situation held sway. It is amongst us still, and we suppose that the time will never come, at least until human nature has greatly developed, when these appeals to the sense: will not be necessary to reach a certain type of mind. But this view is not exclusive as it once was. The time of mere wondering surprise at what was so strange to a generation that had almost lost faith in a future, is rapidly passing away. While there have risen some schools of thought which concern themselves with an attempt to demonstrate scientifically what we have long since proven to our own complete satisfaction, Spiritualists have with increasing frequency been devoting themselves to discover what these things mean, to evolve a philosophical explanation of them.

They have looked abroad, and have found that they are not by any means the only body that is engaged in a similar quest. They see other schools of thought which have started from a different point, and which are traversing very much the same ground. Some of these are purely philosophical: they have had no phenomenal interference with their lives to attract their attention. They seek to apply to modern occurrences the philosophical wisdom which the most metaphysical and subtle minds in the past have found serviceable. They have gone to the East for their enlightenment. The letter of Dr. Hübner Schleiden's which we publish to-day will show the line of thought that commends itself to such thinkers. We should not be prepared to admit that the view so presented is any more than partial and incomplete; but we are prepared to contend that it is one that deserves respectful attention.

It is, perhaps, not to be expected that any system of thought which has been evolved by a type of mind so different from our own as that of the subtle Eastern should commend itself wholly to us. It would be strange if it did. What we should rather hope to do is to take what we find nourishing in their system of thought, to assimilate it, and to transmute it into terms of our own thought, to restate it and to incorporate it with that which we independently have found to be true. There can be no danger in such a course. The only conceivable danger is that we should rashly conclude that we have a monopoly of truth, that we can learn nothing from other inquirers, and so that we encase ourselves in a panoply of self-sufficient, supercilious contempt which is fatal to all progress.

It would be unfair to omit mention of the light that has been thrown on some dark places of our search by the German school of philosophers. It is by no means necessary to acquiesce in all the conclusions, for example, of Hellenbach, Du Prel, or any of these profound thinkers to admit *ex animo* the debt we owe to their methods, and to be thankful for the side gleams of light which they have shed on what they have discussed.

We are not pretending to any exhaustiveness of treatment. We have probably said enough to show how from without their own little body the Spiritualists have had opportunity of receiving some assistance in their own

special field of inquiry. There are not wanting signs that we are availing ourselves of it. It has come at a time when the old attitude of open-mouthed wonder was giving place to a more philosophical frame of mind. Men were asking themselves what did all this mean? There were the phenomena: how were they to be read? And here we may be permitted to say that if Spiritualism had done nothing else but direct attention to these occurrences, this impact of the world of spirit on the world of matter, it would have deserved well of the age. For all this thought-provoking mass of fact the whole world of thought comes to Spiritualism. It comes to us for facts that are to be had nowhere else. It tears them to pieces, and makes what it can of them, sometimes nothing, sometimes little, sometimes much. But much or little, it takes *our* facts, and we shall be wise if we take heed to *its* philosophies. If we remain wrapt in a passive contemplation of our objective facts, wondering and content, we shall find ourselves waking up one day to learn that we have been left behind; or, worse still, that the fresh impressions made upon the mind have faded into dim obscurity, leaving us poor indeed.

When Spiritualists came to study the facts at their disposal, and to correlate the information given to them, those who approached the investigation with an open mind found that the discernable object in view was by no means simple. First of all the messages given professed with one accord to proceed from intelligences who had once been incarnated on this earth, and had survived physical death. The exceptions are so few that they do but emphasize the general agreement. Here then was the first great lesson to be got from these occurrences, no less a thing than actual demonstration of what in all ages had been an article of faith, now a matter of proof. For it was at once obvious that the simple fact that any intelligence, no matter of what order, should demonstrate its survival, no matter by what ineptitude of talk, was a most portentous occurrence. Recent criticism has shown its appreciation of this point by its strenuous efforts to minimize the evidence for the action of an external intelligence, and to lay stress on undiscovered sub-conscious tracts of our recognised consciousness.

This fact of survival once brought home, it resulted that Spiritualism found itself *en rapport* with forms and systems of religion. There was then, it would seem, a future life, really, and not merely as an article in a creed, glibly recited and never realised. This had been the consentient teaching of all forms of faith, but Science had gradually worn away Faith, and in these latter days had openly derided its claims as visionary. Of what character was that life? Inspired seers had told of a life eternal which, when seriously analyzed, was utterly unthinkable. The heaven of the Christian theology, as popularly understood, was not to be taken seriously. What had the people who had made acquaintance with the land beyond the tomb to say of it? Various things and very different, as one might expect; for the impression of what we experience is filtered through our consciousness and is translated in terms of our individual conceptions. But when collated and compared the various communications showed a remarkable agreement in some points—an agreement quite incompatible with any theory of a mundane source, or of mere brain phantasy. The accounts were very like those which would be brought back by travellers of various degrees of intelligence from an unknown country. One thing struck one, and another, another. But in this absolutely central truth they all agreed, so far as we can differentiate their teaching from the preconceived and dominant views of some person who had power to influence the medium and vitiate the purity of the message. They maintained that the next state is the outcome, the consequence of the present one; that a spirit incarnated here makes his own future, and goes to his own place at death. They taught, some that we had thought frivolous and (as we in our vanity put it) low, in terms that might bring tears to any eyes, that every moment of life, here or hereafter, is precious, and that a man may use it better than in the pursuit of pleasure or even wealth, or than in acquiring an external familiarity with facts that made

him no better than they found him. They bore in upon us that there is a Spiritualism which is a hardly elevated Materialism: and that we should energise to raise our own spirits to a higher plane instead of spending ourselves in vain and futile efforts to drag spirit down to the plane on which we chance to find ourselves.

Here, let it be noted, Spiritualism has passed into a distinctly new phase. It has become a means of ethical, educational influence. For the future, while the past has its lessons which we may not neglect, the point of view is enlarged. It is well that we should have our demonstration of continuity of existence. It is well that we should have our consolations of communion with those who are gone before. But it is better far that we should know that beyond the tomb is a land in which we are preparing our home, and that its character depends exclusively on ourselves."—*Light*.

EDISON'S PHONOGRAPH.

If the following, which appears in the *Golden Gate* for October 29th last, is authentic, the coming phonograph will be a very wonderful instrument indeed. It will be observed that the *Golden Gate* quotes Edison's words, but where or when they were spoken does not appear. However, the paper is a reliable one, and would not publish hearsay evidence as fact:—

"Edison gives additional particulars concerning his perfected phonograph. He finished his first phonograph about ten years ago. He says: 'That was more or less a toy. The germ of something wonderful was perfectly distinct, but I tried the impossible with it, and when the electric-light business assumed commercial importance I threw everything overboard for that. Nevertheless, the phonograph has been more or less constantly in mind ever since. When resting from prolonged work upon light, my brain was found to revert almost automatically to the old idea. Since the light has been finished, I have taken up the phonograph, and after eight months of steady work have made it a commercial invention. My phonograph I expect to see in every business office. The first five hundred will, I hope, be ready for distribution about the end of January. Their operation is simplicity itself, and can not fail. The merchant or clerk who wishes to send a letter has only to set the machine in motion, and to talk in his natural voice, and at the usual rate of speed, into a receiver. When he has finished the sheet, or 'Phonogram,' as I call it, it is ready for putting into a little box made on purpose for mails. We are making sheets in three sizes—one for letters of from 800 to 1,000 words, another size for 3,000 words, and another size for 4,000 words.

'I expect that an arrangement may be made with the post-office authorities enabling phonogram boxes to be sent at the same rate as a letter. The receiver of the phonogram will put it into his apparatus, and the message will be given out more clearly and distinctly than the best telephone message ever sent. The tones of the voice of the two phonographs which I have finished are so perfectly rendered that one may distinguish between twenty different persons, each one of whom has said a few words. One tremendous advantage is that the letter may be repeated a thousand times.

'The phonogram does not wear out by use. Moreover, it may be filed away for a hundred years and be ready for the instant it is needed. If a man dictates his will to a phonograph there will be no disputing the authenticity of the document with those who knew the tones of his voice in life. The cost of making the phonograph will be scarcely more than the cost of ordinary letter paper. The machine will read out a letter or a message at the same speed with which it was dictated.'

Edison has also experimented with a device to enable printers to set type directly from the dictation of the phonograph. He claims great precision in repeating orchestral performances, so that the characteristic tones of all the instruments may be distinguished."

THE *Gnostic* for January contains a fine photograph of Mr. George Chainey, some good original articles, and a number of high-class selections.

POSTHUMOUS HUMANITY.

A CRITIQUE.

It is truly astonishing to watch the desperate exertions men of mind have made in all ages to get rid of the man-haunting thought of immortality. Here, on this vain and vile clod of earth, these men who fight so shy of the immortality of their own souls, still fight like madmen to prolong their miserable lives by one single second. What! Do they prefer the immortality of their bodies to that of their spirits? Is this their appreciation of the value of their spirits as inferior to their spirit-housing bodies? Since when has the tenement become of more value than the tenant? How long is it since the garment has become more precious than the body it was destined to cover? Has the dross always been dearer than the gold? Truly it would seem that when God breathed the spirit of life into men, He was casting pearls before swine, so little do these little mannikins of men appear to appreciate the eternal gift of God to man—his immortality—the immortality of his most essential principle, his spirit, made in the very image of God.

If Socrates and Jesus, if Buddha and Plato had not long ago established the righteous claim of posthumous humanity to immortality, our deeply rooted instinct of self-preservation would have furnished ample proofs thereof.

Why this longing desire to prolong our life here on earth, and why this vain endeavour to prove our life hereafter a dream, a phantom of the living?

Adolphe d'Assier has truly styled his latest work, "Posthumous Humanity, a study of Phantoms" for if ever I have seen realities treated like phantoms, I have seen them thus treated here in his pretentious work of Posthumous Humanity, a work evidently not written to be studied much by a distant posterity.

For what purpose Henry S. Olcott has translated this book of French flirtations with mere phantoms of spirits, has not yet become clear to me. Did the theosophical Colonel think he was propping up some of his tottering positions of Olcottism, or Occultism, by submitting to the eyes of his English readers this *hachis* of posthumous phantasmagoria? If he did he made a most egregious mistake; for we know there are living in the ranks of English Spiritualists men, the lachets of whose boots neither Olcott nor his Madonna, nor an Assier even, are worthy to undo.

But the most amusing statement made by d'Assier is to be found in the author's preface, towards the end, where he most naively says that one of his principal objects in writing his book was 'to rescue the people of our epoch from the enervating hallucinations of Spiritism.'

Very kind of d'Assier; very kind indeed. Mr. Crookes and Mr. Wallace will be very much obliged to d'Assier for the trouble he has put himself to in earnestly trying to rescue them from mental enervation, and to cure them of their hallucinations in connection with the positive phenomena of Spiritualism, which they have so thoroughly investigated very likely for more years than d'Assier did for months.

How strange for a Comt'ist, a friend of positive philosophy, to lecture men in every respect his superiors—his superiors in scientific fame, his superiors in literary reputation, but above all his superiors in profundity of thought and moral courage to advocate and support with all the force of their characters problems which are unpalatable to the spirit of the age—to positively administer to them a tonic dose against their "enervating hallucinations."

After having picked up a smattering of the partly convertible phrases of "spiritual body," "perisprit," "astral body," "mesmeric body," "the double or doppel-gaenger;" after having seen some strange phenomena during a time of illness in an out-of-the-way place; after having read a few books on Spiritualism, Adolphe d'Assier has the assurance to stand up, or rather to sit down, and write a book on a subject over which he merely fluttered like a butterfly for a brief season, and to tell the thousands and thousands of better-informed men in Europe and America that we have to look upon the writer as a

saviour of the people of our epoch, from eventually getting into lunatic asylums in consequence of the "energating hallucinations" engendered in them through an earnest study of Spiritualism and its phenomena from a scientific and experimental point of view.

The work of "Posthumous Humanity" may possibly furnish pleasant food to self-sufficient theosophists, or amuse hallucinated students of phantoms both of the living and the dead; but I am of opinion no genuine Spiritualist will rise from the perusal of d'Assier's book either a better man or be ter informed searcher into the truths of spiritual science, which we may assure our self-confident author are as far removed from phantoms as his own perfunctory work, so full of errors in quotations and many other respects, is removed from the path which leads to truth. *Dixi.*

C. W. ROHNER.

Phillip Island, Jan. 14, 1888.

WHERE DOES THE DANGER LIE?

To be properly qualified to point out dangers resulting from intercourse with spirits one must either have gained experience through personal sufferings or have been elevated to some superior plane of knowledge, either through research and study in this life, or by a knowledge stored up in the soul's experiences in a former life, and spontaneously bearing fruition in the present.

We Spiritualists are apt to think we have solved all the problems of the next world, and stand upon the mountain heights of supernal knowledge. We settle, out of hand, every question that comes before us relating to spiritual matters, and our backs are very prone to rise in a cat-like arch of indignation if anyone appears upon the scene professing to know a little more than we do, and offering to throw a little more light upon our pet subject. We immediately put on smoked glasses; we decline to see their light; we show our teeth and our claws, and often turn and fly in a storm of snarling invectives and execrations.

But we have still a great deal to learn. Indeed, we have to go back to the very foundations, and learn the *causes* at work behind the phenomena which have primarily attracted our attention, and like the dazzling rays of a light to which the eye has long been unaccustomed, have blinded us as to the nature of the light itself. As our mental vision clears and steadies itself, we shall begin to appreciate things at their true value. Meantime, until that does take place, we mistake shadows for the real objects upon which our intellectual vision should be fixed.

If we have been the pioneers along a road suffered by the neglect of other mental leaders through the lapse of centuries to become overgrown to the extent of total obliteration, we are learning that the same road was open to the peoples of ancient times; and remains open to representatives of those ancient days still existent in the East. We perceive that one reason why the road was suffered to become overgrown and closed was because of certain superstitions and evil practices to which those nations became addicted, by which the nature of man became degraded, and by following which he found himself at length brought up by a dead wall of non-progression. Hence those nations have fallen into decay. They are either destined to drop off the tree of human life altogether as nations; or, being electrified and vitalised by some new mental impulse received from younger nations, to become completely transformed, and thus enabled to march on with the rest.

A huge responsibility rests upon Spiritualists, who have been made the consignees of a great truth, out of which a science can be evolved which, in its acceptance and study, must completely revolutionise the whole human race. And that race, spurred on by the necessities of a gigantic mental evolution, by no means waits for the slow progress of Spiritualists; but its scientists, always on the verge of new discoveries which may land them at any moment in another world, have seized upon, and appropriated as a legitimate field of inquiry, one of the radicals of spiritual science—namely, mesmerism, or hypnotism. Already do they discover the extraordinary powers of the human Will, and the dangers attending that *passivity* which has been inculcated as one of the leading and most essential qualifications to be possessed by those whom Spiritualists have selected as their public exponents

of truth and heavenly wisdom. It might be right enough to so accept them, were they always of a high and purified nature; but the very opposite is, as a general rule, too painfully apparent. The appalling catastrophes which may befall a hypnotised subject, passively, helplessly obedient to the will of another; the slow and gradual loss of all power of moral discrimination, under such deteriorating mental influences; and the fact that a *suggested* crime always leaves in the mind a germ of evil, which in moments of normal consciousness may eventually produce fruits of real and voluntary criminality, should open the eyes of Spiritualists to the dangers attending this much-lauded yielding up of our own wills, in a state of helpless trance, to entities we complacently take for granted are good, but have no means of proving, except by experience, that they are; and to gain such experience we frequently find ourselves irremediably plunged into sufferings and tortures which threaten to unseat the reason.

The human Will is the only safeguard a man possesses against *any danger*, whether moral or physical. A will trained up to such a point of potency may quell a raging lion of the jungle, and bring him to lie down harmless at the feet of the man he threatened to destroy. It is the Will which surrounds us with that invisible armour of defence through which the powers of evil cannot penetrate. And this only safeguard the ignorant Spiritualist lays down at the feet of the first comer, who would take upon himself the duties and responsibilities of guiding, for all intents and purposes, that most precious of all things—a *human soul*. Now this spirit-guide becomes the mesmeriser, the hypnotiser, to whom the ordinary medium yields himself as an instrument to do with absolutely as he pleases: to manipulate, as it were, mentally, psychically, physically,—for what purpose? That phenomena, transcending the ordinary powers of man, called *spiritual*, may be produced by means of his passive body and soul. He renounces himself—in short, he yields up his self-mastery; he becomes, to all intents and purposes, self-annihilated for a time, returning always into a body more or less weakened, a mind divested of a portion of its normal, healthful strength. For no one can *perpetually* and *habitually* yield to mesmeric control without the mind losing gradually its powers, and approaching to a more or less idiotic condition, the body becoming a home unfit for the soul. It is the case with those who are continually subjected to earthly mesmerisers for purposes of exhibition, who become gradually transformed, leading an incomplete earthly life and a psychic life that must necessarily become more or less a blank. They become the psychical puppets of the hypnotiser—mirrors to reflect his will only. The evolution of the soul into higher spiritual conditions must, for the time being, be arrested for them.

I am sure everyone can remember instances of persons who have seemed, from the effects of habitual trances, to have lost their mental power; to have also, sad to relate, apparently become reduced to a state of moral weakness which rendered them powerless to discriminate between good and evil. This condition ensues upon the *abuse* of mesmerism or hypnotism. It is the *perversion* of that state which, in its lawful form, is the normal exaltation of a purified soul, lifted above the earth, the body no longer a dead weight upon its soaring powers; when it enters *voluntarily*, and *consciously*, into a holy ante-chamber, wherein it communes with the blessed, and enjoys a foretaste of Heaven. From this state, attained by self-purification, the soul descends strengthened, still more purified, happy, with the intellect brightened by spiritual light, and better able than before to perform its earthly duties. Its spiritual armour becomes so invulnerable that evil is turned aside, and falls innocuous, powerless.

Mesmerism, or hypnotism, lawfully exercised, is the greatest of blessings to the human race; but every good may be perverted, and becomes transformed into a curse. In striving to learn the dangers of Spiritualism, we must endeavour to have our eyes spiritually opened to *perversions*. All that causes moral and mental deterioration, and physical incapacity, is a danger, an evil. The object unceasingly held before the eyes of a *true* Spiritualist should be self-elevation and purification; that inner growth which leads to complete self-mastery in the first place, and, in the second, to the mastery over every evil power in Nature.

To dabble in Spiritualism for the mere sake of phenomena, or the premature forcing of a few abnormal gifts, or the obtaining of powers which may enable one to make money by trading upon the weakness or susceptibilities of a *clientèle* intent only upon the most worldly objects is a perversion of that which, on its legitimate side destroys in us "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and lifts us to the spiritual condition of those holy ones whose light shines from afar upon our path—a Moses, a Gautama Buddha, a Jesus, or Appollonius of Tyana,

This subject is far too vast and deep for the small space allotted to each contributor in "LIGHT." One could easily fill a volume pointing out the blessings, and possible perversions, of the grandest knowledge and powers it is possible for a man to obtain.

The danger of thrusting oneself unprepared upon that world which, to our uncleared vision, seems a world of shadows; to invite, with an idiotic lightness, the influence, nay, the *control* absolutely, of its unsuspected hordes of preying, malignant entities, whose functions in the service of nature are ranged upon the side of destruction; have been, and are sufficiently proved by many catastrophes which, to our certain knowledge, have befallen those daring adventurers, lured by no higher motives than those of curiosity, or personal gain, however uncertain the latter might be; who have tried to seize by assault these powers and gifts which the spiritual man trains himself for, and with which nature crowns his successful work.

A man's only safeguard is in his virtue, *i.e.*, his strength of character on the side of good. But even the good, as we call them, have suffered immensely, and do suffer, from a rash attempt to open a communion that for them may be mercifully closed. A spiritual man grows into this state normally; if a man forces it prematurely, it is dangerous for him. If a man immersed in worldliness could have his eyes suddenly opened to his spiritual or astral surroundings, he would be appalled, possibly driven mad. Yet this is what he invites to declare itself to him, to unfold itself to his sensations, when it is no wonder those sensations become of a most distressing nature, and if he does not succeed in regaining his previous state of *protection*, he is driven to commit suicide, or becomes insane.

I have said, elsewhere, that we know very little about "elemental," or nature-spirits as they are sometimes called. It is impossible to enter upon that subject except in a very slight way in this paper, and I can only say this much, a man reckons without them. It is as impossible to avoid them as to avoid the air he breathes. They are Nature's most industrious, most useful, most indispensable workers on the side of *evil* as well as of *good*.

In considering, or treating of, the dangers attending spirit intercourse, we should not think solely of our own personal safety, which may be secured; but out of danger to others, to the ignorant, the unprepared, to say nothing of the vicious and impure. It is for them more especially the danger exists, and it is of a most appalling nature.

Penetration into that unknown world is not, for *all*, the easy sailing which some Spiritualists represent,—judging from the childish prettinesses we frequently meet with in print and social life,—upon a rippleless summer sea, our barque adorned with silken sails, flowers and ribbons, glittering in the sunshine; ourselves lolling at ease in ecstatic laziness, softly towed to Heaven by a smiling angel-guide, who kindly whispers gentle platitudes we rapturously welcome as the acme of Divine wisdom never dreamed of before on earth, surprisingly new, and exquisite; *revelations*, in short, just dropped from Heaven, fresh and hot, like breakfast rolls: said benignant angel-guide kindly saving us all trouble in the matter of being spiritualised, having smoothed for us a royal road of progression, our qualifications to pursue which are summed up in the one word—*passivity!*

I do not wish to be too hard upon the pretty, but injurious, sentimentalisms which have sprung up like a ready crop of mushrooms, under the *agis* of worldly or fashionable Spiritualism; but there are those amongst us who find that progression, or spiritual evolution, means hard work, and hard fighting; in which the soul must engage *alone*, if it would win its crown; and who cannot by any means feel that every frisky sprite who thrums a tambourine overhead at a dark seance, is necessarily an *angel*, and suited to guide a soul through vicissitudes of spiritual growth that have caused hours of poignant sufferings to some of the greatest saints on earth. All the other is child's play. *Voilà toute la différence!*
—Light, Dec. 10th. NIZIDA.

THE LYCEUM.

At the Lyceum Session, on the 22nd ult., Mr. Bamford, the Conductor, called attention to the approach of Nomination day, and recommended the members to look around for officers and leaders for the forthcoming Session, as the present one had suffered from a paucity of them.

Mr. Terry endorsed Mr. Bamford's remarks, and urged the youth of the Institution to come forward as candidates; with an infusion of new blood and help from some of the old workers who were at present "resting on their oars," an impetus would be given to the Lyceum. It only wanted a combination of a few energetic workers to restore the pristine prosperity of the Institution.

On the motion of Mr. Borrowman it was determined to ask all friends of the Lyceum who were prepared to lend a helping hand to attend the committee meeting at 84 Russell-street, on Wednesday next, Feb. 8th, to arrange for the nomination of officers and confer as to the best means of advancing the Lyceum. Those who have the interest of this excellent and very necessary Institution at heart, and who are willing to work for its advancement, are earnestly requested to attend.

EXPENSIVE CONVERSION.

THE *Argus* recently quoted from *The Times* some statistics, supplied by Canon Taylor, showing the result of missionary labour and the cost per capitum of converts:—"Some facts lately published in *The Times* by Canon Taylor with regard to the results of missionary enterprise in various parts of the world will, we imagine, come as a surprise to most people. According to Canon Taylor, the reports of the Church Missionary Society in India show that 841 missionaries, employed at a cost £48,296 19s. 1d., made last year only 297 converts. The record for the four countries of Persia, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt is still worse. Here the sole result of the labours of 109 missionaries and an expenditure of £11,804 9s. 6d. was the conversion of one Moslem girl in the orphanage at Jerusalem, of whom it was stated that 'she is easily influenced, and requires constant guidance.' In Ceylon, 347 agents made 207 converts at a cost of £10,138 17s. 6d. In Mid-China, 71 agents made 62 converts at a cost of £8,917 13s. 8d., and in South China, 148 agents made 297 converts at a cost of £8,448 4s. 11d. The price of a convert is thus seen to vary in different parts from a little over £25 to the virtually prohibitive figure £11,804 9s. 6d."

The Canon not unnaturally suggests the possibility that the money might be devoted more profitably to other objects. We rather think it might. If the 1516 missionaries referred to had expended all their energies and the £86,602 8s. 0d. in enlightening, educating, and improving the moral tone of the "heathen" in Great Britain, they might have shown a much better record. Apart from the enormous amount of money and energy expended in converting these 865 so-called "Heathen," it is a question whether they have been elevated above their normal plane by the change of religious belief, the Hindoo and Confucian religions in their purity having as high a standard as Christianity.

We think these statistics should be circulated as widely as possible; they will serve as an eye-opener to many poor people who are induced to contribute a portion of their hard-earned means to the conversion of the "poor heathen," who does not need conversion so much as many nearer home.

In the *Journal of Man* for December Dr. Buchanan gives a short sketch of the world's neglected or forgotten leaders and pioneers, few of whom lived to be appreciated, and many of whom were persecuted for their efforts to enlighten their fellows. The list includes Pythagorus, Copernicus, Galileo, Ericson, Bruno, Harvey, Kepler, Newton, Hunter, Gall, Froebel, Young, Gray, and Fitch.

A MATERIALISATION SEANCE AT 84
RUSSELL STREET.

"I have tested the fact of spiritual manifestations most minutely and carefully, and I grieve for those who have concluded against it from a touchy disposition not to accept a truth simply because it does not originate from self, or on account of any other weak and personal consideration."—*Harbinger of Light* for December, p. 3590, quoting the late Dr. Ashburner.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—My midnight meditation (or inspiration if you will) last night moved me to purpose addressing a letter to you on the subject of "Modern Spiritualism," never less interesting to me than at the present moment.

The subject I wished, and now wish to bring before your readers is the most wonderful of all its phenomena, viz., the Materialisation Phenomena.

As I have (though a very old and enthusiastic correspondent of yours) not had a letter in your journal for a very long time, I hope (since the spirit has moved me at last) that you will stretch a point, and make the four remaining full days suffice for the printing of all I send to you on the subject in question. If you don't, my former readers will suppose I am dead or done for.

It will be easy work for your compositors, and, Sir, for your own eyes to run over the matter, as all I ask for is a reprint from about the date of 29th June, 1882.

The *Harbinger* refused it at the time, but its second thoughts may be better after the lapse of about six years.

I will say much on the subject in your February issue if you will first give the facts of the case in your January number, as I prepared them with the deepest interest that long time ago.

I repeat my faith in the truth and importance of this subject has not diminished one jot, neither has my disposition diminished one jot to think all those fools, who (like the Editor of the South Melbourne *Record*) think me a fool for what I have written!!!

As I am late with my communication I say not another word, but gum to my 5th slip the printed letter I refer to, and ask for its reprint.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient,
ROBERT CALDECOTT.

The Fountain,
Raglan Street, Port Melbourne,
28th December, 1887.

[Our refusal to publish Mr. Caldecott's letter five years since was not from lack of interest in the subject treated upon, but from the fact that we had already given the substance of it editorially, and a reprint from a local contemporary would have been out of place. After the lapse of years Mr. C.'s letter is more appropriate, reviving an interesting episode in the evolution of Spiritualistic phenomena here.—Ed. *H. of L.*]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "RECORD."

"The possession of a secret that will benefit the world is the obligation to reveal it."—A. J. Davis.

"He who has a truth and keeps it,
Keeps that which not to him be'ongs,
But performs a selfish action,
And his fellow-mortal wrongs."

—H. J. Browne.

SIR,—On Tuesday evening last, 27th June, 1882, I joined a circle of nine at 84 Russell Street, where, for the year or two last past materialisation seances have been held twice a week. As little or no notice has been taken by the press generally of these deeply interesting manifestations, I venture to offer you a narrative of some of the manifestations. I say some only, for you warned me to make my letter very short, and as I saw walking, talking, materialised spirit forms pass out of and into a curtained-off corner of the room, fifty or one hundred times (counting egress and ingress) of course I can only record a fiftieth part of what I saw.

The vulgar solution of the very difficult problem presented to the minds of those who are ignorant of the subject, by these materialisations, is this, viz., "it is the medium who personates the different spirits, young and old, male and female." It is for this reason I men-

tion, to begin with, that the spirits passing so constantly backwards and forwards for an hour and a half, would very carelessly expose the medium to view, whom we could, therefore, observe, as he sat in deep trance. I was the only member of the circle who had not witnessed the phenomena before, and the manifestations therefore commenced by their asking what my name was, through their spokesman the spirit Peter. When informed by Mr. A. J. Smart that it was "Caldecott," and that I had not been there before, he disputed the fact by declaring that he had seen me often in that room. The evening circle room is the morning reading room of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, and as I often sit there to read in the daytime, I concluded it must have been on those occasions he had seen me. Upon inquiry we were informed that it was so, when he at once demonstrated the fact that he not only knew me by sight, but knew something about me. He said he was reminded that he had something to say to Mr. Caldecott, and then changing his mind, he said, "no, he would send the spirit 'Geordie' to write it to me." This spirit came, shook hands with me, giving me the closest view of his face and dress, then walked deliberately, and with the easy air of any other human being, to the writing desk, where he took up pencil and paper, and wrote a communication to me, and then, with the same easy step, walked up and presented it to me, and then taking my hand for a second time, he drew my face close to his own, and as if the same thought had occurred to each of us at the same instant, we ran our heads together in a playful butt, after the fashion of the sheep and goats. The light was quite sufficient for us all to see him writing at the far end of the room, so that of course when my eyes were close to his face, I never saw features more distinctly in my life. As I not only felt, but heard the crack with which my head came against his, I enquired from a beautiful lady who sat next to me on my left, if she heard it. She said, "Yes, distinctly." What was singular, I felt the hand cold, and the head warm, and while wondering at this, without having mentioned it, the young lady chanced to mention the same phenomena of cold hand and warm head or face, in her experience of materialised forms. This little incident goes to show how all the phenomena rest upon some deeply interesting groundwork of law, which fools may laugh at, but wise men will ponder over. I now come to the most interesting and the most significant part of my story, viz., the communication which I read out to the circle as soon as full light was restored at the rising of our session—a communication which you, Mr. Editor, ought to understand better than the circle to whom I read it. Indeed I think that the message was a complimentary notice of my letters in your journal on the "postage stamp episode." Be that as it may, I will give you the communication, and you may judge for yourself. It was as follows, and in as good a hand as I could write myself:—

"I can go out and get a postage stamp.

—GEORDIE.

Peter."

"Get a postage stamp" was underlined. For the information of those who do not know the contents of my letters in your journal on the "postage stamp episode" so well as you, I, and these spirits seem to do, I may mention that I persistently held, against a "Doubting Thomas No. 1," a "Doubting Thomas No. 2," whose letters were in in your paper, that the purchase of the postage stamp by the spirit "Geordie" at 84 Russell Street was a fact, and that the doubters should no longer doubt. Unless your readers know or remember this, I repeat, the full significance of the communication (which I hereby thank the spirits for, will not be understood.)

I have often wondered how the visitors during the last two years, could keep their tongues and pens so silent upon the wonderful mediumship of that sincere, estimable, and self-sacrificing medium, Mr. Spriggs, whom, together with the spirits, I again thank for the help they have given me against my enemies the "Doubting Thomases."—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT CALDECOTT

[We pity the credulity of our correspondent.—Ed. *Record.*]

PASTEURISM.

WE extract the following from the London correspondence of the *Age* of Dec. 31st. It is well that the evils of the pernicious practice of inoculation are in this instance so early manifest:—

“London, 18th November.

“The medical authorities of Austria are more wary, if not more wise, than those of England. They have recommended that the subvention granted a year ago to the Vienna General Hospital to defray the cost of inoculations on the Pasteur system should be discontinued. They declare that the failures have been so numerous as to discourage competent judges from further supporting the method. This is a very mild way of putting the case of a thorough breakdown. But it is to be feared that there has been something more than failure—there has been the possibility of the absolute doing of mischief. The latest victim to hydrophobia in England is Lord Doneraile, who, after having been bitten by a pet fox in March last, immediately proceeded to Paris with his coachman, who had also been bitten, to be placed under the care of M. Pasteur. They were looked upon as having been saved from death, but after an interval of five months Lord Doneraile exhibited dangerous symptoms, and in five days more he was dead. It will never be known whether he died from the bite or from the inoculation of the intensive virus to which he was subjected. It was only the day before his death that the nature of the malady was recognised. The previous fatal English case occurred a few weeks before, and although the coachman is still free from illness, he cannot be regarded as out of danger. The indiscreet report of the English commission has not been approved by medical public opinion in England. The best medical testimony of France is against the system. The deaths from hydrophobia has sensibly increased since it has been in operation, so that it is unlikely that it has saved a single life, whatever it may have done in the opposite direction. The Austrian experience is typical, and the system stands condemned before the world.”

BILLY BARLOW AT A SEANCE.

Mrs. Campbell has had a series of weekly sittings in London, Mr. Husk being the medium. On the evening of 28th Sept. last a spirit said suddenly to Mrs. Campbell, “I made a sea voyage with you once,” and gave a name which sounded like “Cole.” The lady replied, “I made a voyage once with a public singer, who called himself “Billy Barlow.” The spirit said he was the man. Without the slightest hint from Mrs. Campbell, the spirit began to comment on her having looked with intense disgust at him on one occasion when he was behaving in a very ill-tempered and bullying manner to his poor wife, who had left behind in Melbourne some favourite razors of his. He also recalled the fact that a gentleman present said to him, “How long have you had those razors?” “Twenty-five years,” said Mr. Barlow, in a very injured tone. “Then,” said the gentleman, “you had better shut up, as you have had them quite long enough.”

Mrs. Campbell has never forgotten the amusement she felt at this well-deserved reproof, but she certainly did not expect to hear Mr. Barlow himself comment upon it at a seance nearly thirty years afterwards. Mr. Husk had never heard Mrs. Campbell allude to the incident in any way, and it had been some years since she herself last thought about it.—*The Medium* of 7th October, 1887.

WE know that in an age of materialism it is difficult to develop the spiritual life. The earth attracts the soul as well as the body; but thank heaven there is a counter attraction which is ever drawing the soul upward. We are like the water lily whose roots are fixed in the mud and slime, but whose blossom lies pure and sweet upon the surface.

THE LONDON SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE.

ON the 24th of November last, the above Association held a conversazione in St. James's Banqueting Hall. It was as is usual with these meetings of the Alliance, largely attended. The actual conversazione is usually preceded by an address, and on this occasion it was announced that the president, Mr. W. Stainton Moses, M.A., would be the speaker. Though suffering from severe indisposition this indefatigable worker put in an appearance to fulfil his engagement, but his medical adviser who was present advised his immediate return home. Fortunately his address was in manuscript, and was read to the meeting by Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, the title of it being:—

“SOME THINGS THAT I DO KNOW OF SPIRITUALISM, AND SOME THINGS THAT I DO NOT KNOW; A CHAPTER OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.”

I have recently been endeavouring to persuade those whom I can influence to put on record their personal experiences in Spiritualism. Especially have I urged those who were privileged to observe rare phenomena in the early days of the movement to fix their impressions and to give them to us before it is too late. For there is some reason to fear that these experiences may not be repeated, at any rate in the profusion that then characterised their appearance; and the hand of the Destroyer is at work every year removing from amongst us those who can tell us most about these things.

EBB AND FLOW.

There is in these manifestations of spirit-power a certain ebb and flow, a flux and reflux, which renders it eminently desirable to put on record what we are able to observe. There is a cry amongst students of these mysteries for facts; and there is perhaps too much craving for records of mere objective facts and phenomena, and too little attention to the philosophical correlation and explanation of them. Perhaps that is not the case now in the same degree that it has been, but it still seems to me that we are content with too superficial views, and perhaps also that we are too much disposed to rest in our own beliefs and explanations to the exclusion of all other views and opinions which different types of mind have set forth. And this—may I at once say?—I state as a Spiritualist who finds in the explanations of the Spiritualists that which is intellectually satisfactory, and who does not get more than side-lights from any other source

MY RECORDS.

This, however, by the way. There is, as I have said a cry for facts, and I have tried to induce those who have them within their own experience to place them on record; I will emphasise my advice by personal example. It is a distasteful thing to me to talk about myself; nothing could be more distasteful. But it is necessary when one has passed through exceptional experiences to detail at first-hand what one has seen and known. I have not been unmindful of this duty in the past. The pages of the Spiritualist journals and periodicals since 1872 up to this day bear too abundant traces of my endeavour to record my knowledge and to give the world the benefit of my experience such as it is.

I may be permitted to refer to a series of articles which appeared in a magazine now defunct—*Human Nature*—to the records of personal experience in my books, *Psychology*, *Spirit Identity*, and *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*, and especially to the intimate and detailed record embodied in my *Spirit Teachings*. These, however, are scattered narratives, and it is not every one who has the will and the power, or even the time, to master them. What I propose to do now is to have a confidential and quiet chat with you, in the course of which I shall try to give you some gleanings from my own knowledge and experience, and to tell you some conclusions that have established themselves in my mind.

And at the outset I will say, categorically, that I shall draw my facts from the storehouse of my own observation, from records made with such care as I am capable of, immediately after the occurrences recorded, and that I shall refrain as far as may be from any repeated discussion of *pros* and *cons* in my cited cases, except where

such discussion is manifestly profitable and elucidatory of a theory. For I will say, once for all, that I have taken all the pains I can to be exact. I know what I am talking about, and I am accustomed to weigh and measure my words. I am not suffering under any delusion; I am not hallucinated; may I say humbly that I am not mad?

DELUSION.

Delusion! Hallucination! A man does not change the whole course and complexion of his life, altering or modifying cherished opinions, discarding what he inherited as a faith, and held assuredly as a personal belief: he does not give up what most men would regard as an honourable position, and devote himself without hope or expectation of fee or reward to the promulgation of an unpopular truth, with the certainty of being misrepresented, and the probability of giving pain to his best friends—a man does not do this unless there is deep down in his inner being a fixity of belief, a certainty of conviction, which goes to make up a very potent motive-power, a factor in a moral force which all history shows has availed to move the world. Therefore I shall not concern myself or trouble you with any remarks about delusions.

MY INITIATION INTO SPIRITUALISM.

My practical acquaintance with the phenomena of Spiritualism dates back to the early days of the month of April in the year 1872. In the Appendices to my Spirit Identity I have given some details of my introduction to Spiritualism. (See especially App. 5.) And throughout that book is evidence, which I will not now reproduce, of facts within my experience, bearing on the establishment of the faith that I have ever since professed with unvarying conviction.

In the month of December, 1872, I set myself to record the impressions created on my mind by the preceding nine months' experience; and the opening words of the record, which extends to more than seventy closely written pages, minutely describing what I had seen and the effect produced upon me at the time, are worth quoting. They are these:—

"From the time when I began the investigation of Spiritualism I have kept an accurate record of facts and impressions. It has seemed to me that the investigation of an occult subject must necessarily be aided by the minutest record of facts and circumstances from the peculiar nature of a rap to the state of barometrical pressure. Moreover, a register of the impressions made from day to day on the mind of a careful observer cannot but be valuable and interesting. Holding this view, I propose to write a retrospect of the past nine months, tabulating facts, recording existing opinions, and bringing up to the present moment arguments and impressions which commend themselves to my mind."

During these nine months I worked hard at my self-imposed task. I read all that I could get to read on the subject of Spiritualism; the periodicals, journals, and books that were available. I thought nothing too diffuse or strange in tone or matter for my consideration, and I availed myself of opportunities of investigation to the extent of attending 105 sances, of which I kept exact records, written in every case while the impressions made upon me were fresh and vivid.

STATE OF OPINION AFTER NINE MONTHS INVESTIGATION.

It is interesting to notice what I record of my opinions after nine months' experience:—"I am groping my way (I wrote) in the dark, collating facts and drawing inferences—inferences which very frequently ten days' further experience shows to be delusive. In such a position it becomes a man to speak with modesty and reservation; not knowing whether the opinions of to-day may not be upset by the facts of to-morrow. It seems clear that there is a force which, proceeding from certain persons, has the power of so charging, e.g. a table that it is moved, tilted, rapped upon, and even raised from the ground to the height in some cases of more than three feet. It is to me a question for investigation by scientific men whether the force that passes through the fingers of a medium and moves a table is or is not analogous

to the force which passing through a magnet moves iron. I am not competent to offer an opinion.

"Further, it seems clear that this force is under the guidance of intelligence. Whence is the intelligence? My conviction is that it is, in some cases, demonstrably external to the medium and circle, conveying information outside of the knowledge of any person present."

You will observe by the way that I had not, at this early period of my investigation, come across the problem of the unconscious self. I have since made some vicarious acquaintance with that psychical solution of our facts, but it is still one of the things that I do not know in Spiritualism. My record continues:—"The intelligence, then, being external, whence comes it? A difficult point to settle. On my own responsibility, I should feel unable to give a definite opinion. But in view of the communications I have received, and the solemn assurances that have been given me by an intelligence who impresses me and others as emphatically good and truthful; in view, moreover, of the extreme difficulty of substituting any other theory that will bear testing, I incline to accept the theory put forward by the intelligences themselves, viz., that the spirits of the departed are permitted for wise reasons to return to earth and to communicate with us."

After some words on the difficulty raised by frivolous and untruthful communications, I continued:—"I decline, in my present state of knowledge, to frame any theory to meet the difficulty. I will simply wait and watch. I am as sure as a man can be of the objective reality of the phenomena; and I have great reason to incline to accept the explanation of their source put forward by the spirits themselves. For the present I am in the position of a man exploring a strange country. I will not put forward any theory."

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH I SET ABOUT MY INVESTIGATION.

I have quoted this extract, written fifteen years ago, because it remains on record as a standing evidence that I was not unaware of the difficulties of the subject on the investigation of which I had embarked, and also that I was not a rash meddler or an excited enthusiast. I was as careful as a man could be to pin myself down to facts. At that time I did not know what they might mean. I was also as cautious as most men are in giving way to speculation; and I think I employed in my investigations what is known as "the scientific method," i. e., I endeavoured to be sure of my facts and to appreciate their significance. Perhaps I have appreciated their significance more fully since, but I did my best always. And if I need any excuse for dulness, you will remember what a tremendous thing it was for a man to be projected suddenly into such a mass of abnormal experience as I then had. My great desire, which I was fortunate enough to carry out, was to maintain a level head, and while living almost more in the world of spirit than in this world of ours, to do my duty here to the best of my power and ability without allowing the absorbing interest of my life to interfere with my work.

It would be very difficult, almost impossible, to convey in words any adequate idea of the absorbing interest of this period of my life. I could not convey to you any conception of the reality of these experiences, of their objective phenomenal reality on the one hand, and of their spiritual influence and significance on the other.

ANOTHER YEAR'S EXPERIENCE.

By the following Christmas (1873) my record of sances reaches nearly 250. My notes were invariably written whilst the impressions were fresh, and I was in the habit of recording from time to time the effect made on my mind by what I witnessed. I congratulate myself on this habit, for many facts that had quite passed from my memory are recorded there, and have so been recalled to me.

In addition to my own personal experience at this time, I find I made an exhaustive study of the records given in the files of the various Spiritualist papers and periodicals from the earliest time up to the close of the year 1873. I considered that I was not qualified to judge of the facts under my notice without making a careful study of the experiences of other people.

Now, of what character were the phenomena that I witnessed during this year and nine months? As regards what are known as the physical phenomena, I saw nearly everything that I have seen since, and under circumstances wholly favourable to exact observation, occurring too with a systematic regularity that I have not found during the last five or six years. It would be beyond my scope to give any prolonged details of these phenomena now, but I may roughly enumerate these:—

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

Raps of every degree of intensity, from a peculiar soft velvety thud, up to a crash on the table, which my friend, Dr. Speer, vainly attempted to rival by using a steel hammer. These raps were all distinctive, each indicative of the presence of a particular intelligence, of whom they were all as characteristic as the tone of voice is of the man. They were made in all parts of the room at request, in a closed cupboard, on walls and ceiling, on and in a box suspended in mid-air.

Perhaps the most remarkable sound was one that exactly counterfeited the dropping of a large marble on the table and its rolling down on to the floor. The imitation was exact, the interval between impact on the table and on the floor exactly preserved, yet no trace of any object could be discovered.

These raps occurred without the contact of our hands with the table; and it was very noticeable that all our attempts to imitate them were fruitless. I quote an instance:—

"We had ventured on one occasion, contrary to directions, to add to our circle a strange member. Some trivial phenomena occurred, but the usual controlling spirit did not appear. When next we sat he came; and probably none of us will easily forget the sledge-hammer blows with which he smote the table. The noise was distinctly audible in the room below, and gave me the idea that the table would be broken to pieces. In vain we withdrew from the table, hoping to diminish the power. The heavy blows increased in intensity, and the whole room shook with their force. The direst penalties were threatened if we again interfered with the development by bringing in new sitters. We have not ventured to do so again; and I do not think we shall easily be persuaded to risk another similar objurgation."

I have also observed over and over again the movements of the table without contact of our hands. At request the table—one large enough to seat four people, and weighing about forty pounds—has often tilted so as to answer questions by pressure of one of the corners of its upper surface on a hand placed upon the floor; that pressure was far less than would be caused by the normal weight of the table, and the ordinary position of the table would be resumed without contact of our hands.

The table would also be raised in the air as thus described:—

"The table, a small square one before described, was raised from the floor to the height of from one to four feet. At times it would rise steadily and slowly without contact of the hands, until it was three feet from the floor. I have preserved records of some eight or nine occasions on which we were compelled to stand up in order to touch its upper surface, and of three in which this occurred when the room was well lighted by a gas burner through a red globe. The table would remain suspended, oscillating, and entirely independent of our hands, and finally settle down quietly again to its original position on the floor of the room. At times the force would be less under control, and then the movements were rapid, jerky, and violent. But usually they were steady, slow, and gentle. The testimony of three independent observers affirms that the movements of the table were entirely uninfluenced by the sitters in these cases. Their chairs were withdrawn, and only a finger of one of the sitters was placed near the table, so as to judge accurately of its movement."

Serjeant Cox records a case that occurred in his house in the course of the year 1873. I was in his dining-room, seated near a heavy table, six feet wide by nine feet long, which stood on a Turkey carpet. "The united efforts of two strong men were required to move it an inch."

The light fell full under it, and no cloth was upon it. The Serjeant was opening letters. I was "turned sideways so that my legs and feet were not under the table." "Presently the solid table moved and quivered as if with an ague fit. Then it swayed to and fro so violently as almost to dislocate the big pillar-like legs, of which there are eight. Then it moved forward about three inches." The Serjeant suggested that we should try to get the table to move without contact. He writes:—

"We stood upright, one on each side of the table, two feet from it, and held our hands about eight inches above it. In one minute it rocked violently. Then it rose three inches from the floor on the side on which my friend was standing. Then it rose equally on my side. Finally my friend held his hands four inches above the end of the table, and asked that it would rise and touch his hand three times. It did so: and then rose to my hand, held at the other end, to the same height above it, and in the same manner."

I cite this as a specimen of what then was of regular and systematic occurrence within my experience. It is a sample, remarkable only for the size and weight of the table moved. This is one of the elementary facts that I do know: but how the tiniest tick is made, how those ponderous raps were caused, how that heavy table was moved, I cannot tell you. I only know that the table at which we usually sat would follow the passes of my hands, and rise clear from the carpet to touch them, just as iron rises up to a magnet.

LEVITATION OF MEDIUM.

An analogous but slightly different instance of this exercise of force I had opportunity of observing under excellent conditions in the house of a scientific friend.

We were sitting in the dark, round a table, above which was a gasolier, and our hands were linked together. The table was slightly moved from its original position, and then in an instant the medium sitting on his chair was placed upon the table, still grasped by the hands of the sitters on either side of him. A light was struck, and it was then seen that his head was placed between two branches of the gasolier; in the original position of the table his head would have struck the central spike of the gasolier, and he must have been seriously hurt. No conceivable human agency could have accomplished such a delicate feat as this in darkness."

OTHER PHENOMENA.

I must not stop to dwell on phenomena of which these are a type: on the abnormally produced Musical Sounds which were so remarkable, answering our questions with every variety of intonation that could be conveyed by the human voice: starting in their volume, wailing so as almost to sob and shriek as if in a burst of sadness when the conditions under which we were met were not favourable. Nor can I linger over the Perfumes and Luminous Appearances which I have already described in print, except to say once more that the method of production of these phenomena is one of the things that I do not know. It would seem that phosphorus enters largely into the composition of the lights seen at séances, but when they are seen by the side of a lamp of phosphorised oil the colour is perceptibly different. Moreover, I have seen a spirit light remain in view for a period lasting over an hour. No light made by a preparation of phosphorised oil will last more than a few minutes, I believe, without renewal by contact with the air.

It is not necessary for me to do more than refer to the subject of Form-manifestation, on which subject I have recently contributed to "LIGHT" a long series of papers. Nor can I go into the question of Transcendental Photography, to which I devoted much attention, and published a good deal on the subject.

AUTOMATIC WRITING.

I pass to that prolonged series of communications made by Automatic-writing, some of which are given in my *Spirit Teachings*. It was on March 30th, 1873, that I first got a message by this means. I had been told to get a book to allow my hand to remain passive, and to await the messages which would be given in that way without any active or conscious volition of my own. In this way and while my mind has been actively directed to and occupied with other work, I have had automatically written by my hand coherent messages of sustained eloquence and great

beauty. It is remarkable, too, that these writings have in form and substance no flaw: *i. e.*, what is intended to be said is clearly and cogently put, and in the writing there is no erasure or correction: all flows smoothly on, the current of the argument unimpeded, the composition of the sentences perfect in their way. Never once did I receive a message that was not elevated in tone, and characterised by perfect straightforwardness and truthfulness. Whenever statements were made that were capable of being verified, they were found to be true. That is a point on which I desire to fix attention. For, on the orthodox hypothesis that Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light for the purpose of luring me to ruin, I must say he has been a very long time in revealing the cloven hoof, and meantime he and his emissaries have been very consistently truthful, pure, and good in the only sense I can attach to those terms.

As to the matter of these messages it was in a very considerable number of cases demonstrably outside of my conscious memory. At the close of the year 1873, fixing my impressions at the time, I wrote in my yearly retrospect:—

"I could pick out a hundred facts of which I was entirely ignorant till they were communicated to me in séance, or written through my hand. I have a very bad memory for dates; yet scores of them are written in my books all accurate when capable of verification."

How should I, on any far-fetched hypothesis of unconscious cerebration or sub-conscious memory, write out fact after fact that I was not consciously acquainted with on subjects such as music, on which I am even more ignorant than the average person, and give date after date correctly, and always correctly, when I should lamentably fail to give with anything approaching to accuracy the dates of prominent events in my own life and in those of my friends? This is another of the things that I do *not* know.

These writings went on with much regularity to the end of the year 1876, filling twenty-one books of greater or less size. The next book, a volume of nearly 200 large 8vo. pages encloses the communications of three years, to the end of 1879. The succeeding volume contains seventeen communications given between December 26th, 1879, and September 8th, 1880. The following volume extends from that date to March 12th, 1883, and contains seven communications in 1880, five in 1881, none in 1882, and one in 1883, thirteen in all. The twenty-fifth volume contains less than thirty pages representing written messages from March 13th, 1883, to January 4th, 1884. Since then there has been no regular attempt at communication, by this method of automatic writing.

If I am asked why this is so, I must reply that it is another of the things that I do *not* know. But I may, perhaps, throw some light on the cause by stating that during the series of years represented to the public by my *Spirit Teachings* I was very desirous of having a permanent record of what was told me, and that when my mind was satisfied, I was no longer bent on this. Moreover, I became clairvoyant and clairaudient, and those were easier means of communication, and have ever since been adopted.

During the time of which I have spoken, the messages written through my hand would, if consecutively printed, fill several volumes: they purport to come from more than half a hundred sources, and in every case where a communication is given by a communicative spirit, and is not written by an amanuensis, if I may so say, the distinctive handwriting first selected is invariably employed.

A QUESTION.

And here I will interrupt myself in order to put to you, as thinking and thoughtful persons, a question on this matter. What do you think of it as a case for opinion from the non-Spiritualist standpoints? If I had done all this elaborate writing myself it would have been sufficient occupation for a rather busy life. If I could have composed some of the messages given to me I should have been proud of the fact. But they were written, many of them, while my mind was consciously occupied with other subjects, and in the midst of a very strenuous life. The most of you know me as a busy man, with a regular occupation in life that would suffice to occupy the energies of average men; with literary claims on

my time enough to occupy by itself most of one man's time; with a huge correspondence (reaching then 3,000 and more letters a year), and with various other demands upon me that my not very robust health makes it passing hard to satisfy. Looking at the production of these writings from this point of view; and, quite apart from their intrinsic value, apart from the subject matter they contain, and apart from the method of their production, they present a curious problem for consideration. Now it is not within the bounds of possibility that I should pursue this line of argument further. I have given you a chapter of autobiography, of which the compactest portion is comprised within a year and three-quarters. I do not seek, for I know I should fail, to convey to you any idea of the revulsion of opinion, the stimulus to thought, the educational influence of that experience. It must be gone through to be understood in even a small degree. But, leaving now the phenomenal evidence for the existence of a psychic force, such as is this piece of testimony—

"We had risen from the table and one of the party was near the door. A chair was close to his right hand; I was three yards from him, when suddenly, from the corner in which I had been sitting, a footstool darted across the room as though it had been violently kicked, struck the chair near the door, and knocked it down with a great clatter. I saw the occurrence, which was in fair light, and very convincing as a display of force. The footstool ran along the floor as though it had been forcibly kicked; and started from a corner near which no human being was standing."

WHAT I HAVE GOT FROM MY EXPERIENCE.

Leaving this, I pass to put as clearly as I can what I have gained from the experience that I have had: and what conclusions it has left on my mind. I need not say, for that is common experience, that the first few months found me with a ready answer to every question, a satisfactory solution of every problem. All was clear and simple. Perhaps I need not add to this confession this other—that as years went on my answers and solutions were less satisfactory, my problems and difficulties more urgent and imperative. Out of the chaos of thought came in the end order: and, as my mind, which had fastened on these new and perplexing problems and had torn them to pieces, came to its maturer conclusions, I was astonished to find what a development I had undergone, what an educational influence I had been subjected to.

THE CAPACITIES OF THE INCARNATED SPIRIT.

I cannot remember any period of my life when I did not think, or at least *think that I thought*: and I have had, perhaps, exceptional means and opportunities for acquiring knowledge, and I have not been slow to avail myself of them as best I could. But nothing ever really taught me so much, so tore up the waste ground of my mind and made it fertile; nothing ever was to me such an education as this thing that we call Spiritualism. And that not merely from what is revealed to me of man's destiny and of our future life, not from the moral instruction merely that I got from the Intelligences with whom I was brought in contact, not from their elevated and ennobling views of duty, not even from the light shed on the possibility of the development and progress of the race—though all these form objects for thankfulness—but quite as much, as I now see, from the revelation of the capacities of my own incarnated spirit. I am not likely to undervalue any of the advantages I have enumerated. I am very thankful for them. But I will recur to them presently. Just now I am anxious to press on the consideration of Spiritualists what their experiences, rightly viewed, teach them of their own selves and of the potencies locked within their own breasts. Too often these potencies lie dormant through life, and incarnation is a failure. The man is born with a future before him; he misses his opportunity, and passes from his school of training without adequate benefit. It is one and not the least of the blessings of a rational study of our subject, that it enables us in some degree to obey the ancient precept—

"KNOW THYSELF."

To Correspondents.

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

WHY HAS MAN LIVED IN THE MATERIAL FORM?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—Your correspondent, "Diamond" (see H. Lt. Jan. 1st), has stumbled on a problem which certainly no finite mind can at present answer. He requires to be furnished with a reason why the individual has lived in the material form. He might as well have asked why is the universe created, and why the earth and all upon it.

Swedenborg had only an *opinion* that the human individual originated on this earth; but he was in error. No form can come into objective existence, as Aristotle well puts it, before the *privative* of this form is called forth. Man has been passing through phases of being from all eternity; he, as well as all things conceivable, is part of the Supreme Power we call God, and has existed in the Divine mind as long as God himself; and only when the "abstract ideal of this form" became concrete in the objective form of man to be, did he commence to work out his destiny, which he does by the law of growth and advancement, ever onward throughout all eternity.

As to hell and heaven, eternal misery and eternal bliss, I will here quote the following messages from the spirit-land received by myself and another in the month of February, 1884.

The first is from an eminent French philosopher who flourished in the 17th century:—"I find my works are wrong. The system I enunciated is most erroneous. I did think all matter was lost with spirit, and that all life terminated at the passing away from life. Now I know that spirit never dies. I do know that God loves all his creatures, and that all must eventually enter within the heaven of God. I tell you that the memory of wrong will be the only punishment which men will undergo. Spirit-land is full of many different faiths; every faith is true which has for its object love for God and love for man. I tell you all men are brothers. Have more faith in God, and all will turn for good. I wish you knew all that I do."

The next is from one of my most beautiful controls, who has given me very many messages transcendently beautiful:—"An idea seems fixed in many minds that God is wrath with those who are wicked; but all who entertain such an untrue thought are deceived. God is love; he wishes all his creatures well; they share his large beneficence. The Supreme Father wisely orders men everywhere to become their own regenerators. Take the case of wicked men; they do work out their just punishment until a kind spirit takes pity on them and shows them the way of rising to spiritual heights, where they may become holy spirits"

Yours, etc ,

W. A.

CASTLEMAINE PROGRESSIVE LYCEUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—As many of the readers of the *Harbinger* feel a deep interest in the progress of Spiritual Lyceums, it is with regret I have to announce that with the close of the year 1887 we have found it necessary to discontinue the meetings of the Castlemaine Progressive Lyceum, which if not the first in the colony, was among the first; and this is the second time it has had to be given up since the advent of Spiritualism in our town. Want of interest and consequent falling off in the attendance being the chief cause of our inability to sustain the meetings; and not adding to our numbers, and circumstances causing many of our friends to leave for Melbourne, has reduced our membership so low as to compel us to abandon the project (at least for a time) of carrying out the wishes of our dear friend, James Shaw, whose bequest for the purpose of building a Lyceum and lec-

ture hall for the spread of spiritual truth, especially amongst the young, we desired to see fulfilled. With that object in view we reopened our Lyceum on February 4th, 1883; we closed it Dec. 25th, 1887, not for want of funds, but for the reasons stated above. We have £16 in the savings bank, and friend Shaw's bequest, also at interest, which at some future time we hope to see utilised for the purpose for which it was given; and we take this opportunity of thanking our friends in Melbourne, and Mr. Denovan, of Sandhurst, for their contributions in literature and their kind sympathy during our brief existence, during which, let us hope, some good has been done.

"One sows and another reaps:" this is our consolation. At our last meetings, as usual at Christmas time, our kind-hearted friend, Mrs. Gibson, presented each child in the Lyceum with a handsome book. It would be invidious not to mention the 21 volumes of his work on Spiritualism presented to the children, by Mr. Denovan when we started, also the constant attention of Mr. Green while he lived in Castlemaine, and his generous gifts to the children; neither should we forget the quiet, unassuming labour of our old friend Mr. A. Rust.

We naturally ask, why is it so difficult to propagate spiritual truth by organisations on the same lines as churches or purely material societies, as the world carries on its business? It seems that spirit being immortal and permanent cannot and will not be bound up in material clothing; there is no room for growth and expansion; earthly things ever changing, birth and death, constant change, are not consonant with the eternal.

However, we have at present no other known method of working to combat ignorance and superstition, and spread the knowledge of spiritual truth: perhaps our friends on the other side of Jordan will in due time solve the enigma for us. One hindrance no doubt to our not attaching others to our movement here is that we are a parson-ridden people, with the Salvation Army added. We hear several of the churches have to make great efforts to keep their doors open, and it is not improbable some of them will have to close if trade and commerce do not improve; and then it will not be with them as with us, having a good credit at the bank, which is a vital matter with them; you can easily perceive how diligently the members of each fold are rounded up by their poorly paid shepherd. The drum ecclesiastic is constantly beaten to drown the cries of the community for spiritual food, to keep their attention and to prevent them thinking for themselves, like the din of battle, or lest they should enter our meetings.

All our furniture, library, etc., are held in trust against the time of spiritual awakening that may come soon. May it be so is the wish of

Yours truly,

W. G.

Castlemaine, 8th Jan., 1888.

"OUTSIDE THE GATES."*

THE above is a collection of spirit communications illustrative of the phenomena of death or transition, and the experiences of spirits (in various degrees of development) on their entry into the spirit-world. It is edited by Miss Shelhamer, the celebrated medium of the *Banner of Light* circles, and dedicated by her to James Gordon, late of Cincinnati, but since 1886 a denizen of the spirit world. In earth-life he was a practical Spiritualist, and a friend and benefactor of the medium's. Death has not weakened this friendship, and he has since his transition frequently communicated with her. Some of his communications were published in the *Banner of Light*, and are reproduced in this volume, from the first "Thoughts from a Spirit's Standpoint." We extract the following rational remarks on the dangers of the Spiritualist's course, which are made so much of, not only by the opponents of Spiritualism, but unfortunately by many within its ranks. We never yet knew of any one with good

* "Outside the Gates," and other tales and sketches, by a band of spirit intelligences, through the mediumship of Mary Theresa Shelhamer. Boston: Colley & Rich. 1887.

aspirations and a *mind of their own* who have been lowered, demoralised, or injured by communion with the spirit-world :—

“You hear a great deal of evil spirits, and of impure and unholy influences. You are warned against dealing with them; and you have been told that such swarm back to earth in untold numbers to prey upon the innocent and unwary who may be drawn under their power. As if spirit-life was a moral pest-house of iniquity, the doors of which are for ever open, permitting blasts of its deadly poison to contaminate the lives of earth’s helpless children, you have been advised to keep clear of spiritual gatherings, and not to encourage the utterances of unseen intelligences, lest you be filled with evil from the deadly contact.

“Are you to suppose that the moral government of the ‘higher life’ is less than that of earth? That there is no restraining power in operation there that will deter the wrong doer from effecting evil continuously? That there is no system of management by which the innocent and helpless denizens of mortality may be protected from the baleful influences of the corrupt and vile of the lower spheres? Then were it indeed far from ‘higher life,’ and incapable of affording man that enlargement of power and enjoyment of a progressive existence that he has been taught to expect.

“But the pure and powerful intelligences of the spirit-world do exercise a ward and watch over those who are not so far advanced as themselves; they do provide teachers, helpers, and guides for the wretched and undeveloped souls who need attending to. They are constantly and indefatigably working for the regeneration of the depraved and the despairing. Their moral influence acts as a restraining power upon the vicious and mischievous, and prevents them from reflecting sorrow upon any but themselves.

I declare to you that although numbers of unholy or unhappy spirits are daily reaching the spirit-world from the confines of the flesh, and that although many such may through their restless, turbulent condition, be drawn back to earthly quarters, and that although they may be known to work mischief among those mortals who are themselves impure in thought and questionable in action, they can never unpleasantly affect either the happiness or the welfare of the pure or good.

‘Evil spirits’ may approach and make themselves known to you, but if your thoughts are free from guile, and if love for mankind and a benevolent desire to be of use inspire you, you need not fear; such will have no desire nor power to harm you; they will only receive a blessing by coming in contact with you, and they may have been brought to you by some beneficent guide for that very purpose.

Inharmony, discord, dishonest dealing, and impurity will open a door to malicious and depraved spirits. When once they enter they will not soon depart, but will make havoc with your happiness, but you yourself have invited them in. Cultivate a pure life, sympathy and love for mankind, become honourable in your thoughts and transactions, and you will either banish them or assist in converting them into angels of light.”

The narratives of the various spirits who speak in the pages of this book, even if read as fictions, are interesting, but still more so to those who from the personal receipt of similar communications can accept them as biographical. They give some insight into the occupation of spirits and the methods by which they work out their salvation from unhappy conditions which the sins or errors of their earth-life have placed them in, showing that *rightdoing* is the corrective of *wrongdoing*, whether in this life or the next.

WE have received the first number of a 32-page monthly journal, entitled *The Soul*, published at Boston and edited by Mr. L. L. Whittock, who has for the last three years so ably edited *Facts*, which journal is merged into the new and larger one before us. Among the contributors we notice the Rev. Minot J. Savage, Prof. H. Kiddle, Rev. O. P. Gifford, and several other professional men.

ON THE EFFICACY OF CHURCH TEACHING.

[The following letter was written some time since by a then member of the Presbyterian church, from which he has since seceded. It was offered at the time to one of the Melbourne dailies, but was refused on the ground of “the commotion it would cause” among the religious community. We know the writer well, and feel assured not only that his statements are reliable, but that he was actuated by the best of motives in penning it.—Ed. *H. of L.*]

Sir,—I was told by a worthy Melbourne clergyman that one Sunday evening, by way of testing the usefulness of his discourses, he had asked his nursemaid what she could tell him of the sermon she had just listened to. She blushed and stammered, and at last said that she could not recollect any of it.

Well, you can at least tell me the text? No, she had a very bad memory, and could not remember it.

Turning to his man, who also acted as church officer: Well, John, you can tell me something of the subject I was speaking about to-night. No, sir, I am something like Janet; I am not good at recollecting sermons.

But surely, said the minister, you can tell me the text. Indeed no sir, I cannot.

The clergyman added that he hoped this was not a fair average of the intelligence of his congregation, or of his usefulness amongst them.

Since this was told me, nearly twenty years ago, I have grown older and if not wiser at least more anxious to benefit for myself and a large family by the weekly teachings that in old Scotland I was so strictly trained never to forget. But being a plain man with an ordinary education, I have long been puzzled with the, to me, very conflicting teachings that our worthy ministers give us. And as this has lately been more prominently drawn out by a weekly change of preachers, I make bold to suggest to you an idea that has long had possession of my mind, viz., that it would be well if the leading points of some of the discourses were subjected to the ordeal of a reporter. This at least would let many who fail to remember either the text or the discourse, see afterwards what they had listened to, and what I think more important, have the effect of causing the preacher to be more careful in the preparation of what he wished to say; “the strings of texts having little connection or bearing on the subject in hand,” and by no means conveying to my mind, much less I am sure to my family, any clear or beneficial teaching or religious instruction.

Permit me, sir, to give you a brief statement of what we have been told in our church during the last four Sundays:—

1st. That as there “is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,” so it followed that all who had not heard of that name were amongst the unsaved.

2nd. That our Creator was all powerful, that he directed and governed all; that He made the very devils and bad men, against their will, do their work (their evil word, I understood it to be) as He had done in the case of Pharaoh; and yet that He would punish them with endless punishment of the most terrible kind.

3rd. That our Father was full of love, and that He tempted no man more than he could bear; that in fact it should be a comfort to all bereaved parents to think that those removed in early life were taken by a kind Father from the evil He saw they could not withstand.

4th. Speaking of John’s vision—“And lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne.” He strongly insisted on it as a fact that they had gone to that land from which no traveller returned; yet have I heard others insist on the return of Moses and Elias, and that the angel that John was about to worship was his fellow servant and of his brethren the prophets; and we were told that the command given to preach the Gospel to every creature had, and was being carried out, for there were in the great multitude “of all nations and kindreds and people;” while telling us that John taught by symbols, heaven and all that John referred to were spoken of as literal matters of fact.

Now, as this is a plain statement of what I have carried away for the last four Sunday mornings from one church, what am I to do if I begin to wander amongst several? It is likely to make confusion more confounded. So I send this letter in the hope that some more able than I am may work out my suggestion, or point out some course by which this unseemly and very serious contradiction in preaching from the same pulpit may be avoided.

I have often thought that my old pastor's experience with his man and maid is more common than we think, or the state of affairs I have referred to would not exist, nor would our churches be so much left to women and children, who are apt to take all the minister says for gospel, while earnest minds thinking for themselves are driven elsewhere.

Yours truly

A. Z.

THE CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

At a late meeting of the Central Board of Health one of its members is reported to have said: "The health system of the colony is a perfect farce." This highly ingenuous statement on the part of the highly incensed and indignant member of a farcical sanitary system will be hailed with delight, and endorsed as a positive fact, past all possibility of denial or contradiction, by all friends of truth and enlightenment.

But, may I ask, were the Central Board of Health at any time anything else but a farce? What else but a farce was it when the department was presided over by that highly incompetent and tyrannical martinet, Dr. McCrea, who allowed the state of vaccine lymph to deteriorate to such an extent that no medical man could tell what the stuff was made of, which was under his lengthy regime distributed as genuine cowpox lymph to the public vaccinators of Victoria, of whom I was one for seventeen long years, a tenure of office long enough to enable me to know what I am speaking about.

What again else but a farce was the newly created Central Board of Health, under the presidency of Dr. Youl? The silent and half-suppressed discontent of the medical men of Victoria with this worthy successor of Dr. McCrea was smothered by the Government under the appointment of a new Board, the removal of Dr. Youl, and the elevation of Mr. Akehurst to the presidential chair. Immediately after this new arrangement, Dr. Allan, one of its most valuable members, resigned in disgust, seeing that the thus constituted new Board of Health would shortly share the same fate as its predecessor did—eternal and well-merited oblivion.

Some of the principal complaints of the present members of the Board consist in the charge against our Parliament itself, accusing some of its members as obstructionists. Another charge is the neglect into which compulsory vaccination is allowed to drop in the colony. This at least is a healthy sign, and shews that the colonists are at last opening their eyes to the mischief worked by this long defunct Jennerian fad, which had at no time a scientific leg to stand on, and was only carried on in the interest of the governing classes in England, who had once made the egregious blunder to give the enormous sum of £30,000 to the inventor of the vaccination nostrum.

Of what use are the impotent complaints and wailings of the Central Board when the people of Victoria know to what lengths the spirit of fiendish persecution can go with some of its members. The criminal attempt of that Board to have a properly and successfully vaccinated child revaccinated, because, forsooth, Mr. Mitchell had been the vaccinator in the case on whom the Board had what is colonially called an inveterate down, is still fresh in the memories of the Victorians, and the devil's hoof was so plainly shown on that occasion that members of Parliament, prompted and supported by the local Boards of Health throughout the country, properly objected to grant the Central Board of Health any further extension of power for fear of converting it into an holy in-

quisitorial Board as pestilent and dangerous to the liberty of the subject as the *quondam* Holy Spanish Inquisition was.

What these obstructionist members of Parliament should do is to abolish the compulsory clauses of the Vaccination Act, and then it would shortly be found that not only would many decimating diseases disappear which have been introduced, and I might say, firmly established amongst us in consequence of the strict enforcement of public vaccination, but the labours of the Central Board of Health would become, comparatively speaking, light, if not altogether a sinecure.

C. W. ROHNER.

Phillip Island, Jan. 11th, 1888.

DEATH OF CARL H. HARTMANN.

WE regret to hear of the demise of the above-named gentleman, which took place early last month, as the result of fever contracted in New Guinea, where he has recently been occupied collecting botanic specimens for the Queensland government.

Mr. Hartmann was a Spiritualist and Theosophist; very earnest in propagating the truths he had acquired in connection with these philosophies. He was one of the oldest members of the Theosophical Society in Australia, and always believed that the divergences of opinion between the Occultists and Spiritualists would ultimately be brought into harmony. We have no official particulars with regard to Mr. Hartmann's death, but believe those given are substantially correct.

SINCE writing our brief obituary of the late C. H. Hartmann, we have received a copy of *The Darling Downs Gazette*, from which we find that Mr. H. passed on at an earlier date than we had inferred, viz., Dec. 14. The *Gazette* gives some interesting particulars about our arisen friend which we shall reproduce in our next issue.

NEW SOUTH WALES ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

A MEETING of the general committee of the New South Wales Association of Spiritualists was held at the residence of Mrs. Lawson, 136 Phillip-street, on Thursday evening, 19th instant. There were present—Messrs. F. E. S. Hewison (acting chairman), Barber, Fizell, Horspool, Downes, Munro, and Small (secretary).

Mr. Munro was nominated for the position of president of the association and duly elected, Mr. L. E. Harcus being appointed vice-president. A vacancy on the committee was filled by the appointment of Mr. Quick. Mr. Barber resigned his position on the committee owing to contemplated departure for Melbourne, whither he goes shortly in search of work. The resignation was accepted with extreme regret. The question of adjourning the Sunday meeting of the Association for a brief period during the hot weather was discussed at some length, and the matter stands postponed for further consideration at an early meeting of the committee.

We are in receipt of further reports of sittings with Mrs. Kellie, but as there are no new features, except in the last one, we append that, together with an address presented to Mr. Barber, the Chairman, who before this is published will probably be in Melbourne.

WEDNESDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 1888 (11TH REGULAR SITTING.)

This being the last sitting with our respected chairman, Mr. William Barber, Mr. Geo. Wright, at the request and on behalf of the circle, read and presented a farewell address to that gentleman. The text of the address I send herewith. Mr. Barber made a feeling reply, and regret was expressed on all hands at his departure. Mr. Geo. Wright was then unanimously elected as Chairman of future sittings, and here I am happy to inform you that Mr. Barber has been instrumental in inducing Mrs. Kellie to sit for another month at least. After the presentation of the address the circle commenced with harmony. The medium was soon

controlled, and entered the cabinet. Lights of great brilliancy then appeared over the Cabinet, inside, and also travelling along the floor thereof. Several present saw a form outside the Cabinet. Although we have not yet obtained materialisation, I believe we are upon the verge of it, and that opinion is endorsed by our spirit-friends, who again, as heretofore, assured us that things were tending in the right direction. We were instructed by our spirit-friends to elect two new members (a lady and gentleman) to take the place of Mr. and Mrs. Barber, a condition being imposed that they must be Spiritualists. Our esteemed friends Mr. and Mrs. B. carry with them fraternal greetings to Melbourne Spiritualists. They leave per S.S. "Burrumbeet" on Saturday at noon.

FAREWELL ADDRESS TO MR. WILLIAM BARBER.

At the usual weekly sitting of Mrs. Kellie's Experimental and Developing Circle held last Wednesday, the Chairman, Mr. William Barber was presented by Mr. Geo. Wright, on behalf of the circle, with a farewell address prior to his departure for Melbourne. The text of the address, drawn up and engrossed by Mr. F. E. S. Hewison, was as follows:—

TO WILLIAM BARBER, ESQ.,

Chairman Mrs. Kellie's Spiritual Progressive Circle.

Dear Sir and Friend,—Words cannot express our extreme regret for the loss we are about to sustain in your departure from amongst us. In leaving this city not only our circle, but Spiritualism in general, will lose an earnest and valued friend. We need hardly say that during your residence in our city you have won the respect and esteem of every Spiritualist who has had the honour of your acquaintance.

We wish you God-speed, and can only cherish the hope that at no very distant date we shall see you amongst us again.

With respect to the circle, we shall endeavour to continue its sittings, and work it on the lines laid down by you.

Wishing you and Mrs. Barber a hearty farewell, long life, and continued happiness in this sphere, and assuring you of our best wishes for your future welfare and prosperity,

We remain, dear sir, fraternally yours
(On behalf of the circle),

(Signed) GEO. WRIGHT,
S. FIZELL, Secretary.

J. W. SMALL,
Sec. N.S.W. Association of Spiritualists.
F. E. S. HEWISON, Recorder.

Sydney, N.S.W., 18th Jan., 1888.

Replying to the above, Mr. Barber said he could hardly find words with which to thank them for their esteem. It had been a pleasure to know and to propagate the grand truths of Spiritualism, than which no science stood higher. It had been a pleasure, indeed, also to meet from week to week those around him, forming a circle the most harmonious he had ever met. He trusted the meetings would continue, especially as they were on the verge of materialisation. It was with sincere regret that he was about to part from them, and he hoped the day not far distant when he would be enabled to see all present again. Mr. Geo. Wright was then unanimously elected as chairman.

SPIRITUALISM AT ORANGE, NEW SOUTH WALES.

SOME three or four months ago a Society was formed for the investigation and propagation of Spiritualism in the fine, active little town of Orange. The efforts of the few earnest men who started this Society have been well directed and most successful. The number of enquirers and believers in Spiritualism gradually increased until at present a really good association exists, composed principally of intelligent young men and women. Their Secretary, Mr. E. A. Higman, is the right man in the right place, and actively watches the interests of the Society, and the committee generally take a lively interest in its welfare.

This little up-country Society sets our metropolitan Associations of Spiritualists, in many respects, a good example. It is more united, more social, and more compact than it may be possible to have a Society of the kind in Sydney or Melbourne. Special conditions which do not exist in these cities make it so. All its members are well known to each other, all are animated by the same feelings, and there are hardly any counter attrac-

tions. As long as harmony exists and is cultivated by the committee and members generally, they will continue to be successful and useful in spreading spiritual light, truth, and freedom amongst the quiet people of Orange and district.

The committee sent me a pressing invitation to lecture for them on Sunday (New Year's Day) on "Spiritualism, the Necessity of the Age." Accordingly and cheerfully I accepted their invitation, and left Sydney by the morning train on the last day of the old year, for Orange. The ride was long but most pleasant, the distance being 192 miles. The morning was all that could be desired: a cool, reinvigorating breeze fanned our cheeks, small fleecing clouds passed along the sky; the flowers, ferns, and fields on each side of the line appeared as fresh and charming as on the "morning of creation," and all nature seemed determined to appear to the best advantage on the last day of the dying year of 1887.

The view, as we ascended the Blue Mountains, on the first zigzag, was particularly grand. Looking back in the direction of Sydney we beheld a scene which none but the most stolid could view with indifference. Emu Plains first caught our eyes; the rising crops, which extended to the north and south as far as our sight could reach, appeared beautifully green. Next came in view the quiet and ancient town of Penrith, with its galvanised iron roofs glittering in the sun. Beyond and on each side of it, farm houses with their carefully trimmed hay stacks dotted the scene, and far away in the dim distance the vineyards of Seven Hills and district could be faintly seen, the symmetrical rows of young green vines forming a suitable termination to this long-extended view. The Nepean River, on account of the recent rains, had a large body of water, which flowed gently and majestically along in almost a straight course through the fertile Emu Plains, towards Windsor and the Pacific Ocean. The vastness, variety, and beauty of this scene form a picture in the present condition of the country of unsurpassable loveliness. In the poetical, reverential mind it awakens a dim consciousness of the Infinite and the Eternal.

It was almost dark when the train steamed into Orange station. Mr. Higman and several Spiritualists and railway men were on the platform to meet and gave me a hearty welcome. I was taken to the private boarding establishment of Mrs. Pexon, where a most sociable and enjoyable evening was spent. We let in the New Year by pleasant conversation, good singing, and communing with friends in spirit life.

There was a larger audience to hear the lecture than was anticipated, the hall not being large enough to hold them, many standing outside the door and open windows to listen. They gave me a most attentive, sympathetic, and appreciative hearing. It was the first lecture on Spiritualism given in Orange. A brief but favourable notice of it appeared in both the local papers.

The following is from the *Orange Liberal*, of January 4th:—

"LECTURE.—An interesting lecture on Spiritualism was delivered in the Lesser Caledonian Hall, by Mr. R. White, on Sunday afternoon last. The little hall was packed, and many persons were unable to obtain admission. Mr. Barnes occupied the chair. The lecturer spoke for about an hour in a very forcible manner, sketching the progress of Spiritualism, and mentioning scientific men who had investigated and accepted the theory, such as Wallace and Professor Zollner, and in conclusion he made an urgent appeal to those present to attend to their physical, intellectual, and above all, spiritual happiness, which would lead us to high and noble attainments, and when we would be able to fully realise the beauty of the words:

'Behold a brighter morning than ever yet had birth
Awakes and gives glad warning of love and joy on earth.
Yet powers of every nation this glorious light receive:
One grand confederation of brotherhood achieve.
Sing, sing, and hail the blessing around, below, above,
Every heart expressing peace, unity, and love.'

If the Spiritualists of Australia were only united and organised as they should be, a deal could be done to assist the cause in country towns by the delivery of suitable lectures, distribution of appropriate pamphlets, and

regular weekly meetings for social harmony, intellectual improvement, and development of reliable mediums. A good work has certainly been done in this respect at Orange, where the young men and women take a real interest in the movement; and under similar conditions the same could be accomplished elsewhere.

ROBERT WHITE.

The Boulevard, Burwood,
Sydney, Jan. 24th.

RIDICULE NOT ARGUMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—The enclosed is a cutting from one of our Melbourne religious papers. The rhyme is clever, but the criticism is "paltry and poor." It is easy to be sarcastic, and a little shallow wit is all that is necessary to a superficial mind to turn the gravest subject into ridicule. Some minds—many unfortunately—move in a deep rut of rigid habit, out of which they are neither willing nor able to extricate themselves. Some of these people are good souls, no doubt, but they unconsciously to themselves (we are willing to believe) "sit in the seat of the scornful;" and to them every new idea is but a new object at which to jeer and vent their shallow wit. How true it is still: "the natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit: they are foolishness unto him."

Yours truly, C. C. B.

"The Spirits," what are they, and whose,
That are tipping and tapping, and writing and rapping,
As sighing for bare recognition?
If of heaven or of hell, then why don't they tell
Just how we may mend our condition?

One cannot believe that Old "Scratch"
Is now sending his imps, like the smallest of shrimps,
To go crawling around in the dark,
To grumble by gables and rattle in tables
Without ever firing a spark!

And can they, the souls of departed,
The great and the good from the days of the flood,
Have found second life no more serious
Than by inanition to seek recognition,
In ways that are only mysterious?

Or can anyone tell why they come?
Why they love not the light, even fear mortal sight,
Are afraid of a dog in the room?
Why they only scratch slates, and rap doubting pates
When wrapt in a favouring gloom?

Why like tricksters so paltry and poor,
Seen concealing their sleights by reducing the lights?
Why not in the eye of the day,
Write and speak without fear, and let all see and hear
Something worthy to know and obey?

If the souls of the mighty come back
From the land beyond death, void of wisdom and breath,
Under tables to rap and to scrawl,
Cannot mend a man's ways or lengthen his days,
What on earth makes them come here at all?

[The rhymester's questions might be fully answered if he would take the trouble to read a few standard books on the philosophy of spirit intercourse; but those who make light of a subject on *a priori* grounds, are usually too prejudiced to investigate, or (if prompted) fear to do so lest they might stultify themselves.—Ed. *H. of L.*]

MR. JOHN SLATER.

FROM the following which appears in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of December 10th, we infer that Mr. Slater is now *en route* for Australia, but we are uninformed what city or colony he will first favour with his presence. Mr. Slater is both a Psychometer and Clairvoyant, and all we have read about him has been censorious of his reliability.

"Last Wednesday, John Slater, the remarkable test-medium, left Chicago, intending to visit California and Australia. Last Sunday his meeting at the Princess Opera House was well attended by skeptics as well as Spiritualists, and a deep interest was manifested. His tests were of such a character that, at times, they caused a decided sensation. He talks rapidly—rarely hesitates in his description, and ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the one whom he addresses admits the truthfulness of his statements. He intends to return to Chicago, and locate here permanently.

FROM OVER THE TOMB.

UNDER the above title, Mr. James Burns has just published a neat little volume of spirit communications received automatically by a lady from the spirit of her husband in the spirit-world. The communications are brief and pithy, and treat on the necessities of salvation; of God's manifestation to man and man's nature; of the teaching and example of Christ; of duty on earth and spiritual existence, and the state after death.

They are coloured with the spirit of Christianity but free from dogmatism, inculcating a high morality and deeds before creeds.

From the section on "Spiritual Existence" we take the following:—"All spirits have a work to do, and are always employed; let no one suppose that heaven is a place of idleness, for it is not; no one would be happy there unless engaged in work. All ideas people get of heaven being a place of worship and praise only are quite wrong, as they will find. Worship in the spiritual world is much the same as in the natural world, a drawing together of the spiritually inclined for praise and prayer. On earth a great many appear at public worship for form's sake or because they are obliged to, which is useless and will avail them nothing. The worship which is alone acceptable, or of benefit to man's soul, is the devout and anxious desire to be made worthy of the Kingdom of God. The worldly and sensual pleasures that may stifle this is the danger to met and conquered by man's own energy and trust in God. "Every one that overcometh is temperate in all things."

And from the same section the following on "Communion of Spirits":—"Those who are desirous of communicating with the dear ones who have left them can do so; the interest in things on earth does not cease with the death of the body, and all can have communion of spirit with those they have lost. This is constantly taught and inferred in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, but little understood or regarded. All men believe in the love and sympathy of their fellow creatures, but do they consider whence that love proceeds? They are not loving each other's bodies, but the spirit that animates those bodies: that spirit is the real man. Can any one who thinks fail to see that the spirit is only for a time clothed in flesh, and that the true man will appear when it has put off the flesh? If this were fully realised, would not men be willing enough to quit their bodies and join those who have gone before them into the spirit-world? They do not realise this, and think that when death removes them they are parted from all they love on earth; this is very far from the truth, for those who are in love and sympathy with each other can still mingle in spirit, and find happiness in the same way that all can come to their Father, and feel that he is with them. Communion of spirit is a great truth, and understood would be a source of comfort and consolation in many a sad separation here. All must feel it to be a sustaining and inspiring belief, though they may be unable to realise or accept it now."

The communicating intelligence does not claim to be a progressed spirit, but one anxious to impart what truth he has learned since his entrance to the spirit-world to those still in the mortal state.

A NEW Italian Monthly Magazine of 32 pages, is announced to commence publication in January, and we expect to receive the first number shortly. It will be edited by Signor Giovanni Succi, and entitled "Il Corriere Spiritico." The office of publication being Piazza del Signoria, Firenze.

VEGETARIANS will be interested in the first part of Foreign Exchanges in this month's issue.

Dr. Richmond's letter to the Seybert Commission, which we republished in our last, has, we find, been very largely reproduced in other papers in both America and England. We learn from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* that Dr. Richmond has a book of about 300 pages nearly ready for the press, in which he elaborates the subjects treated on in his letter to the Commission.

NEW BOOKS.

- Sepher Yetzirah: the Book of Formation and the 32 Paths of Wisdom; translated from the Hebrew and collated with Latin Versions; by Dr. W. Wynn Westcott. 5/6
- New Illumination; by E. Maitland. 1/3
- Animal Magnetism: an exhaustive study, including Experiments in Hypnotism; by A. Binet and O. Féré. 5/6
- Outside the Gates, and other Tales and Sketches; by a Band of Spirits through the Mediumship of Mary Shelhamer. Highly recommended by American papers. 7/6
- Philosophy of Mesmerism: Six Lectures by Professor Dods. 2/6
- Unanswerable Logic: a Series of Spiritual Discourses through the Mediumship of Thomas Gales Forster—including What is Spiritualism? What Lies Beyond the Veil? Spiritualism Without an Adjective, &c., &c. Acknowledged by press and public to be one of the best works on the Philosophy of Spiritualism. 7/6.
- The Soul World—the Homes of the Dead; by P. B. Rendolph. 10/6
- Seership: a Practical Guide to those who aspire to Clairvoyance absolute; by P. B. Randolph. 10/6
- Astronomic Theological Lectures; by Rev. R. Taylor. 7/6
- After Death—Disembodiment of Man—the World of Spirits: its location, extent, route thither, inhabitants, &c. 10/6
- Hidden Way across the Threshold—or the Mystery which hath been Hidden for Ages: an explanation of the concealed forces in every man to open the temple of the Soul and to learn the guidance of the unseen hand. Illustrated and made plain with as few Occult phrases as possible; by J. C. Street (Theosophist). Illustrated, 587 pp., cloth extra. 21/
- Exeter Hall: a Theological Romance; Wm. McDonnell. 5/-
- Beginning and the End of Man; by Z. Richards. 9d.
- Humanism v. Theism, or Egoism v. Atheism; by R. Lewins, M.D. 8d.
- Review Report of Seybert Commission on Spiritualism, issued under the authority of American Spiritualist Alliance. 6d.
- Spirit Manifestations of Ancient and Modern Times compared. 8d.
- Thoughts from the Spirit-world: addressed to Working Classes, through mediumship of Mrs. Smith. 1/3
- Worlds within Worlds: the Sun and Stars proved to be Refiners of Light and Inhabited; by W. Fahnestock, M.D. 2/6
- Spirituelle, or Directions in Development; by Abby Ferree. 1/
- Magnetic and Botanic Family Physician and Domestic Practice of Natural Medicine, with Illustrations, showing various Phases of Mesmeric Treatment, Full Instructions in Mesmerism, Curative Magnetism, &c., and a Complete Diagnosis of all Ordinary Diseases, &c., by D. Younger, Professor Mesmerism, &c., with full page Engravings, 534 pp., cloth gilt extra. 11/
- Twixt Two Worlds: Life Narrative of Wm Eglinton. Reduced to 7s.
- Cyclopædic Science Simplified; by J. H. Pepper: embracing Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Acoustics, Chemistry, 7/6
- Elementary Microscopical Manipulation: a Manual for the Use of Amateurs. Illustrated. 2/6
- Other Suns than Ours: a Series of Essays on Suns—old, young, and dead—with other Science Gleanings. Two Essays on Whist, &c.; by R. A. Proctor. 8/
- Causes of Decay of Teeth; by C. Weeks (Dentist). 8d.
- How to Improve the Memory; by C. Hartley. 8d.
- Mushrooms for the Million (Illustrated): Practical Treatise on their Cultivation. 1/3
- How to Read Character by the Action, Manners, and Speech. 8d.
- Law of Population; by A. Besant. 1/
- House of Commons in the Past, Present, and Future; by H. Courtney. 6d.
- Royalism: a Note on the Queen's Jubilee; by J. Robertson. 6d.
- Infidel Death Beds; by G. W. Foote. 8d.
- Force and Matter, or Principles of the Natural Order of the Universe, with a System of Morality based thereon, by Prof. L. Büchner. Newly translated, enlarged, and revised by the Author. 10/6
- Is Socialism Sound? Debate between Besant and Foote. 1/3
- Unscientific Religion; by "S. S." 6d.
- Handbook of Anthropology: Outlines of Anatomy, Physiology, and Psychology; by Edward Thwing, M.A. 1/3
- The Air we Breathe: Health Tract. 1d.
- The Food we Eat; do. 2d.
- World and its Gods; by A. Besant. 4d.
- A Fish in Labour, or Jonah and the Whale. 4d.
- Civil List and Pensions, and Grants to Royal Family; by C. Bradlaugh. 2d.
- Why I am a Socialist; by A. Besant. 2d.
- Why should Atheists be Persecuted? by A. Besant. 3d.
- Socialism—For and Against: C. Bradlaugh and A. Besant. 6d.
- Moral Physiology; by R. D. Owen. 8d.
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