

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

In last week's issue we gave a portrait and some account of Mr. Crookes, not "Professor" Crookes, as it is the fashion to call him. It was very gratifying to "LIGHT" to give this account, and the pleasure was greatly enhanced by the fact that we were able to do it without fear of that adverse comment which would have been but too readily supplied only a few years ago. Things have changed. But the change means more than change generally does; it means that the philosophy of the Unseen has entered on a new phase of life, and that we are bound to make the best of this new departure. We must, if we wish for progress, watch what is going on, for almost every step taken by modern science is a step towards a newer and different view of Nature from what has hitherto obtained. Electricity is Electricity still to many, only that and nothing more; but during the last few years, nay, during the last two years, the whole meaning of the term has changed, and its significance has increased a thousand-fold. What it may do next we cannot tell, but these strange movements in the ether, which are electrical, luminiferous, or magnetic, according to their modifications, are movements in a substance of which, perhaps, the souls of those passed on may know more than we do. All the séances recorded by Mrs. Speer and most others point to a power of manipulation of this ether which science has now begun seriously to investigate.

But what vistas are opened up by this realisation of the ether. If the ether is almost a spiritual thing to us, something more refined, delicate, and peaceful than the matter which we know of, why may there not be ethers still more refined to which our own ether is as coarse as the common so-called matter around us is coarse to that? And how it all helps us to realise the spiritual nature of everything. What we call matter is after all, probably, only a form of the ether. That it affects the undulations in the ether we know, else why blue glass and red glass? Therefore it must in some way be connected with the ether—so, possibly, only a form of it. And so the ether itself may be only a manifestation of the spirit, and the ether of ethers a still more pure and refined manifestation, till all ethers become One, even the breath of the Spirit of God.

Amongst the fifteen annually elected into the Royal Society there is this year to be found the name of Alfred Russel Wallace. Most of us (the writer of this paragraph among the number), even indeed many scientific people, thought that he had been already long years ago enrolled among the glories of Burlington House. But now when he brings as much honour to the Royal

Society as the Royal Society can confer upon him, we find him modestly letting his name be placed among the somewhat undistinguished band whom the Council has chosen for this year's election. We believe that his Spiritualistic investigations have had nothing to do with the delay, but that he is selected, and will be elected, is another important sign that a belief in the Unseen is no longer the badge of scientific scorn and social contempt.

Mr. A. F. Tindall, writing in the "Agnostic Journal," makes this pleasant remark: "For years I have been friendly to Theosophists, and have thus earned the dislike of our other narrow sect, the Spiritualists." Mr. Tindall is surely overstating the case. We have no dislike to Mr. Tindall, but we do object to Tindallism. There are enough "sects" in the world already without adding another. Nor are we a "narrow sect." We are not a sect at all, and, therefore, cannot be narrow. "I see plainly," says Mr. Tindall, "that the whole forces of the clerical Spiritualists, led by such men as Mr. Stead, and the Theosophists, led by agents of the Jesuit or fakir type, will be arrayed against us." This is pretty writing, but it is the "us" that is the troubling part of it all. We do not wish to be hard on Mr. Tindall, but sometimes egotism finds a place in the most exalted quarters.

Referring to the "Note by the Way" on a recent case of suicide, our correspondent, Charles Strange, writes with some apparent warmth. The letter should be printed in full but that it is, perhaps, just a little too near the borderland of theological controversy. What was said in the "Note" was: "Where have been the teachers, orthodox and agnostic, who could let this soul drift away into the Unseen?" And we say so still. There is no branding of people as "intellectual tyrants," as Charles Strange says, but if the teachers, orthodox or agnostic, had been able to show this unhappy person that he would not necessarily be happier "there" than "here," that he must "dree his own weird," and that his schooling was important for him, it would have been well; that was all that was meant. The problem of Atheism always seems to be a problem of low spiritual meaning—a sort of quarrel over idols. We must get beyond the images. The following from our correspondent's letter seems hardly warranted by the words of the "Note":—

Thus, taking all these things into consideration, one becomes an Atheist, and such are branded by you as "intellectual tyrants," for what real reason I cannot see. Is it because we deny the existence of an ideal God, when every fact in connection with existence goes to prove the absence of such a being? Is it because we prefer to accept the fact of a creative energy—a mere mechanical force—in preference to a supposititious loving, omniscient, and omnipotent God, as being more in accordance with the realities of life? Or is it because we say that worship and adoration of an unknown force or being is degrading and demoralising to man?

Why all this? How men love their idols! Little children, keep yourselves from them.

## SUICIDES AND MODERN CIVILISATION.

The "Arena" for May contains a thoughtful but disquieting article on the above subject from the pen of Frederick L. Hoffman. Tables are given showing that suicide is on the increase in the United States, and a serious indictment is thereupon made against our commercial civilisation. Quotations are given showing that this indictment has not been made carelessly, and very weighty it is. To those who believe that suicide does not bring the relief it is supposed to bring, but that the unhappy spirit will still have to work out its salvation under perhaps more difficult conditions, this subject is of immense interest. Referring to certain tables the writer says:—

While these tables are far from being complete presentations of statistics of suicide of the country, they are sufficient to show that the general law of suicide as laid down by Quetelet, Buckle, Morselli, and others, "that in a given state of society a given number of persons *must* put an end to their lives," applies to this country as well as to the state of Europe; and the question is natural as to what are the causes that bring about the voluntary destruction of thousands and tens of thousands of men and women who seek the ignoble grave of a *felo de se*.

In the plain but impressive language of statistics we have here before us a picture of the darkest side of modern life. Whatever the causes are that produce such frightful conditions, this much is certain, that something must be radically wrong in a society when thousands are *compelled* to put an end to their own existence. Is it the individual member or the social organism that is to blame?

Writers on the subject, from Quetelet to Morselli, show little agreement as to the probable causes of what Morselli calls a "social disease." Quetelet gave it as his opinion that "the offences of men are the result, not so much of their own vices, as of the state of society into which the individual is thrown." Esquirol, Falret, Bourdin, Dr. Winslow, and others hold that suicide is always evidence of insanity. Lecky, in his "European Morals," speaks of the idea of suicide in modern times as "being almost always found to have sprung, either from absolute insanity, from diseases which, though not amounting to insanity, are yet sufficient to discolour our judgment, or from that last excess of sorrow when resignation and hope are both extinct." The majority of more recent writers on the subject, especially Dr. Morselli, hold "that just as madness may go on without any attempt at suicide, so the suicidal determination may be formed in the healthiest mind, which then carries it out with the coolness inspired by the most perfect logic."

Dr. Matthews expresses the opinion "that the most powerful influence leading to suicide is civilisation," and "that self-killing is emphatically the crime of intellectual peoples." He adds further "that no act of a man's life can be shown to be more coolly and rationally planned than is generally the act of leaving it."

As to the theory of madness in connection with suicide Mr. Hoffman says:—

In support of the theory of madness and its relation to self-murder, there is an imposing array of statistical evidence relating to the general increase in insanity all over the civilised world. While it is true that, on this point as well, opinions differ, the majority of well-informed and competent statisticians affirm that the increase in insanity is absolute as well as relative.

In proportion to the total population the number of suicides is exceedingly small, and would not deserve the import attached to its occurrence were it not that a study of related phenomena made clear and indisputable the connection between suicide, madness, and crime. As it has been well said by the great Italian authority, "In proportion to the number of individuals who take part in the struggle for life, that of the suicides and mad is comparatively small; but it must not be forgotten that the greater part of the conquered pays a corresponding tribute to early death, indigence, emigration, to crime, prostitution, and to physical infirmities." A total of nine hundred and seven suicides for five years may seem a matter of small importance for a State like Massachusetts; but when we add

the twenty-one thousand deaths due to brain disease, the matter changes into one of the most serious nature a society can have to concern itself about. There are no means by which we can state in figures the total amount of misery and vice prevailing in a given community at any given period of time; but a careful study of statistics of marriage and divorce, illegitimacy and infantile mortality, pauperism and crime, foreclosure and evictions, drunkenness and arrest for vagrancy, will convince even the most pronounced optimist that the world of to-day is far from being what it ought to be, and, what is more, far from being what it *could* be. The forces that bring about conditions that, in the language of Carlyle, "neither heaven nor earth can justify," are the same and sole causes of suicide and madness.

And here comes the charge against modern civilisation:—

We must be far from being truly civilised as long as we permit to exist, or accept as inevitable, conditions which year after year drive an increasing army of unfortunates to madness, crime, or suicide. It is *not* civilisation, but the want of it, that is the cause of such conditions. It is the diseased notion of modern life—almost equal to being a religious conviction—that material advancement and prosperity are the end, the aim, and general purpose of human life; that religion and morality, art and science, education and recreation, are all subordinate to one all-absorbing aim, the struggle for wealth. To this unhealthy condition of modern society is due the majority of cases of suicide, madness, and premature death. It is the struggle of the masses against the classes. The former fall victims in the struggle for life and for the absolute necessities; the latter fall victims to their own iniquity, responsible for their own as well as the miserable fate of their victims. It has been well said by Guizot "that society and civilisation are still in their childhood: that what we have before us is incomparably, infinitely greater." At least, let us hope so; but, in words equally true and prophetic, an American writer warns us "that false is the not otherwise conclusion that uninterrupted progress of the race for all future time is a certainty." "It is not easy," adds Dr. Ely, "always to read aright the lessons of human history: but plain and clear and unquestioned do the annals of the past reveal a power which makes for righteousness, call it what we will, passes judgment on the nations of the earth, and deems those to decay and destruction which have ceased to help onward the growth of mankind."\*

Yes, it is Materialism which has been sapping the vitality of our general life, but that such an article as this should be able to appear in a magazine of the first rank is itself a sign that change is coming about. And there is another consideration—what is the meaning of "madness"? It has itself so far only been treated from the point of view of a material—that is, physiological—psychology. May it not itself yield to a treatment of a more spiritual kind? When the will is enfeebled and the soul is helpless through the long endeavour to cope with the demon of worldly struggle, then the adversary steps in and claims the defenceless victim. What if means were taken to fight these adversaries? Spiritual forces, and not material, will have to be used in the long run; but then spirituality must first overcome materiality, and it will.

I LOOKED over this wondrous scene towards Mont Blanc, the Grand Combin, the Dent Blanche, the Weisshorn, the Dom, and the thousand lesser peaks which seemed to join in the celebration of the risen day. I asked myself, as on previous occasions. How was this colossal work performed? Who chiselled these mighty and picturesque masses out of a mere protuberance of the earth? And the answer was at hand. Ever young, ever mighty—with the vigour of a thousand worlds still within him—the real sculptor was even then climbing up the eastern sky. It was he who raised aloft the waters which cut out these ravines; it was he who planted the glaciers on the mountain-slopes, thus giving gravity a plough to open out the valleys; and it is he who, acting through the ages, will finally lay low these mighty monuments, rolling them gradually seaward, sowing the seeds of continents to be; so that the people of an older earth may see mould spread, and corn wave, over the hidden rocks which, at this moment, bear the weight of the Jungfrau.—PROFESSOR TYNDALL.

\* "Labour Movement in America," pp. 292, 293.

## G E M S.

The following extracts are from a paper read by Mr. F. L. Gardner at a meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society, on June 16th, 1892, and recently published in "Theosophical Siftings." As there is nothing "sectarian" about this part of the paper, we are glad to make use of it, premising only that Mr. Gardner must be held responsible for his assertions:—

The gem varieties of the corundum have always been considered by Oriental nations as the most valuable after the diamond, and of all the ornamental stones the sapphire is *par excellence* the gem of gems and the sacred stone of the ancients, being the one most frequently consecrated to their deities. In "Isis" (Vol I., p. 264) we find H. P. B. stating that this stone, which is sacred to Luna, has its veneration based upon something more scientifically exact than a mere groundless superstition—a sacred magical power is ascribed to it which every student of psychological mesmerism can readily understand, since its polished and deep blue surface produces extraordinary somnambulant phenomena. The varied influence of the prismatic colours on the growth of vegetation has been recognised but recently—and investigations of the electrical polarity show that the diamond, garnet, and amethyst are negative, whilst the sapphire is positive (+ E). Thus the latest experiments of science only corroborate what was known to the Hindu sages before any of the modern academies were founded. "The sapphire," say the Buddhists, "will open barred doors and dwellings (for the spirit of man), it produces a desire for prayer, and brings with it more peace than any other gem, but he who would wear it must lead a pure and holy life."

In the cure of diseases we possess some remarkable facts in the history of precious stones; foremost on our list comes the history of what is known as the Lee Penny. This famous Penny is a precious jewel, although to what class it belongs is not known, and the reason it is so called is on account of its being set in the centre of an old English silver coin. It was obtained by an ancestor of the Lockhart family, of Lee Castle, in the Vale of Clyde, whilst serving in the Crusades, and this jewel was obtained as part payment of a ransom of one of the infidels whom Lee had taken prisoner. Amongst the authentic narratives concerning it on record may be enumerated the following: It is especially efficacious in diseases of horned cattle, and the mode of administering it is this: holding it by the chain to which it is attached, it is three times plumped down into a quantity of water, and once drawn round, three dips and a swirl, as the country people express it, and the cattle or others affected, drinking this water, the cure is speedy and effectual. Even at this day, rife as the Gospel is now said or supposed to be, people sometimes come from great distances with vessels which they fill with water treated in the manner described, and which they take home in order to administer to their cattle. In the reign of Charles I., the people of Newcastle being afflicted with the plague, sent for and obtained the loan of the Lee Penny, leaving the sum of £6,000 sterling in its place as a pledge. They found it so effectual or were so impressed with so high an opinion of its virtues, that they proposed to keep it and forfeit the money; but the Laird of Lee would not consent to part with so venerable and so gifted an heirloom. The laird of that time was a high Cavalier, and one of the charges brought against him by the party whom he had to oppose was that he effected cures by means of necromancy. Another remarkable instance is on record of the case of Lady Baird of Laughton Hall, at the end of the last century, having been bitten by a mad dog and exhibiting all the symptoms of hydrophobia, her husband obtained a loan of the talisman, and she having drunk and bathed in water which it had sanctified got completely better.

That this transaction really took place seems indubitable, for an ancient female member of the Lee family who died lately, remembered hearing the laird who lent the Penny to Lady Baird describe how he and his dame had been invited to Laughton Hall and splendidly entertained in gratitude for the use of the talisman. A few years after the stone was returned from Newcastle a complaint was lodged against Sir James Lockhart on account of "the superstitious using of a stone set in silver for the curing of diseased cattle." This came before the Synod of Glasgow, and resulted in the fact that they recognised its peculiar virtues and that the laird be permitted to continue using it. A document was drawn up embodying the above facts, and is placed amongst the other documentary evidence of the said

court. It appears to my mind a very probable thing that Sir Walter Scott founded his novel, "The Talisman," upon the above fact, as it antedates his work by many centuries.

There is a famous stone called the bezoar or beza, said to be procured from the inside of the cervicalra, a wild animal of Arabia. This stone was supposed to have been formed of the poison of serpents which had bitten her produce, combined with the counteracting matter with which nature had furnished it. It was firmly believed in the Middle Ages that this was a potent charm against the plague and poison, hence the origin of the name from the Persian *Pad-Zahr*, expelling poison, or *Bad-Zohr*, the same meaning. Its value increases with its size, the larger ones having realised very high prices, especially in India. Four of these stones are enumerated among the treasures of the Emperor Charles V. after his death, and one great beza stone set in gold, which had belonged to Queen Elizabeth, was counted among the jewels of James I. At the execution of Louis de Luxembourg, Constable of France, in the reign of Louis XI. (*vide* Monstrelet), he removed from his neck a beza which he had long worn, and handed it to the friar in attendance, with directions for it to be given to his son as a legacy, which instructions were not carried out, as by order of the Chancellor it was delivered to the King. Tavernier, the traveller, in his works also mentions this beza stone, and, amongst other of its properties, indicates how to tell the true beza stone from the counterfeit; he says: "There are two infallible tests; one is to place it in the mouth, and if it is genuine it will give a leap and fix itself on the palate; the other consists in placing the stone in a glass of water, and if true beza the water will boil."

In the case of the Bloodstone I find that in the West Indies it is used for the cure of wounds, being wetted in cold water, and also in magical works it is used in incantations, when the person using it was rendered invisible; anyhow, it served well with the Gnostics, who employed it largely in their gems and talismans; the Egyptians also worked with it, and later on it was in great demand in the Byzantine and Renaissance periods.

The idea that the brilliancy of gems varies in sympathy with the health of the wearer is very well known, and seems to belong to all of the precious gems, but more pronounced in the more valuable; in the case of the ruby it is stated that it gives warning by a change in its colour when misfortune presages its wearer. Says an old writer, Wolfgangus Gabelschwerus: "I have often heard of this quality of the ruby from men of high estate, and I also now know of my own experience; alas, for on 5th day of December, 1600, as I was going with my beloved wife Catherina from Stuttgart to Caluna, I noticed that a very fine ruby which I wore in a ring (which she had given me) lost repeatedly, and each time most completely, its splendid colour, assuming a sombre blackish hue, which lasted not one day but several, so much so that being greatly astonished I drew the ring from my finger and placed it in a casket. I also warned my wife that some evil followed her or me, the which I augured from the change in the ruby. And truly I was not deceived, for within a few days she was taken mortally sick. After her death the ruby resumed its pristine colour and brilliancy."

In the case of the diamond also, this stone loses its brilliancy with the health of the wearer and only regains it again when its owner recovers; this I have ascertained from personal knowledge. It also in common with other gems is capable of detecting poisons by exhibiting a moisture or perspiration on its surface. Holinshed, in speaking of the death of King John, says: "And when the King suspected them (the peers) to be poisoned, indeed by reason that such precious stones as he had about him cast forth a certain sweat as it were betraying the poison," &c.

WHAT we call eternity is perhaps a minute between two world-miracles. "We know nothing," in respect of any conception of eternity. Let us deny nothing, affirm nothing, but wait in hope. It is a beautiful custom that when we pass away from earth we introduce music and incense as an expression of our yearning for a higher sphere. The day in which belief in an after life shall vanish from earth will witness a frightful moral, perhaps an utter spiritual, decadence. Some of us might perhaps do without religion, provided only that others hold fast to it. There is no known lever capable of raising a people which has lost faith in the immortality of the soul. The inner worth of a man is measurable by a certain religious tendency which exhibits itself in spite of his training, and which influences his actions throughout life. Pious people follow a shadow, but we follow the shadow of a shadow, and who can say how coming generations shall satisfy their aspirations after a higher life?—ERNEST RENAN, quoted in "Literary Digest."

## "LA TERRE."

Not "La Terre" of Emile Zola but "La Terre" of Emanuel Vauchez, two handsome octavo volumes treating of the earth, its history and its future. To review such a work thoroughly would require much time, so we refer only to certain parts of it which interest ourselves, and after several hundred pages of history, geography, and so forth, we get what? only an "assertion" of the truth of Spiritism:—

After death, a phase of universal life which is brought about either by illness or by the natural decomposition of matter, man, stripped of his terrestrial organism, sees more clearly what he is. He very probably receives in his new situation explanations relative to this perpetual change of forms which are produced one after the other; and on the thoroughly understood nature of his actions, good or bad, is based the manner of his return to a new earthly life.

So after a more or less lengthy period he asks for, or chooses, for his new incarnation a body suitable for the evolutions which his spirit will have to undergo; by his own will, he calls for the special elements necessary for his new body, and weaves, as it were, the garment under which he will shelter himself during his new terrestrial sojourn.

Rank materialism is this Spiritism, it knows no getting away from this "Terre"; this coming back, this re-incarnation, is its only hope.

It is probable that latent and protective forces help in the formation of material bodies in suppressing or increasing the action of certain fluids of which the presence is hurtful or indispensable, according to the nature of the new incarnation. The formation of material bodies is without doubt nothing but a materialisation of the universal fluid.

We might hope that by this "universal fluid" spirit was in some way meant, but no!—

In presence of the important discoveries of science, one asks if a day may not come when, having succeeded in decomposing and recomposing matter, man will be able to attain the so much desired object of forming a material body.

This Spiritism is absolute materialism, hopeless in its methods, as it is hopeless in its results. Spirit seems unknown, unless these fluids—what do they mean by fluids?—of which so much is said, mean spirit, which does not seem to be the case. And after two "scientific" volumes, what are we to say to this?—

The "perispiritual" fluids have the power of attraction towards each other, which allows them to establish *rapports* between the dead and the living. In order to bring about this method of communication, an intermediary agent is necessary; this agent is, without doubt, terrestrial magnetism.

Why without doubt? Does M. Vauchez know what terrestrial magnetism is that he uses this expression "without doubt"? And how convenient it is to fall back on such a phrase when no proof whatever is forthcoming.

But after all, one hardly understands what these people mean. The clear scientific methods which have made French philosophy a glory for all time seem to vanish when Spiritism is in evidence. The author of "La Terre" is speaking of atmospheres; he says:—

The stratum of the fluids touching the earth is heavy, dense, and unwholesome; it does not get any purer until we reach the higher regions of the atmosphere. Here below, everything is miasmatic, either material or moral; we might call the state of things an unwholesome and pestilential marsh, of which the drainage was scarcely even designed. Spirits, both incarnated and disincarnated, get from this source only material fluids, of which, however, the purification would be easy, did they but know it.

Now does this mean the material or the moral atmosphere?—apparently the former, for we get immediately:—

The moral world has its emanations just as the material world has.

If this be so, what a curious and ill-organised jumble it all is.

The last paragraph of the book, however, leaves us in little doubt. On the last page but one we get this:—

Man, the highest animal on the earth, is material. When he is dead does he cease to be material? No; for he preserves a form which brings back for him all the advancement he has acquired in different ways, and this form, although invisible, is material in its various degrees.

That Spiritism is no power in the world, who can wonder?

## THE MILAN EXPERIMENTS.

### IV.

We now come to the phenomena obtained in perfect darkness. The experimenters made the circle round the medium, whose hands and feet were held by her neighbours. The report classifies the phenomena as follows:—

1. Knocks on the table sensibly louder than those heard in full light either under or on the table. A great noise, as of a heavy blow with the fist, or a hard slap on the table.
2. Pushes and blows upon the chairs of those near the medium, sometimes strong enough to knock the chair and its occupant over. Sometimes, when the sitter got up, his chair had been taken away.
3. Transport of various objects on to the table—objects such as chairs, clothing, and other things, sometimes from some metres' distance, and weighing many kilogrammes.
4. Transport through the air of different objects, musical instruments, for example; percussions and sounds produced by these instruments.
5. Lifting the person of the medium on to the table together with the chair on which she was seated.
6. Appearance of phosphorescent points, some millimetres in diameter, of very short duration (a fraction of a second); notably small luminous discs, which sometimes divided into two, but of equally short duration.
7. Sound of two hands clapping in the air.
8. Sensible puffs of air, as of a light wind in a small space.
9. Touchings by mysterious hands, either on our clothes or on our faces and hands; in this latter case the feeling of contact and warmth was just the same as that of a human hand. Sometimes these touchings were actual blows, producing a corresponding noise.
10. Appearance of two hands on a sheet of phosphorescent paper, or on a feebly illumined window.
11. Various operations performed by these hands, knots tied and untied, crayon marks made (according to all appearance by these hands) left on a sheet of paper or elsewhere.
12. Contact of our hands with a mysterious figure (certainly not that of the medium).

All who deny the possibility of mediumistic phenomena attempt to explain the facts by supposing that the medium has the faculty (declared impossible by Professor Richet) of seeing in the complete darkness in which the experiments are made, and that the medium, by skilful artifice, by agitating the hands in a thousand different ways in the darkness, finishes by getting the same hand held by both neighbours, so rendering the other hand free for producing the touches, &c. Those of us who had to mount guard over Eusapia's hand are forced to confess that she certainly did not lend herself to help our surveillance, and make sure of what was going on at every moment.

Whenever any important phenomenon was about to be produced, she began to agitate the whole of her body, twisting herself and attempting to free her hands, mostly all the right one, as from an unpleasant contact. In order that there should be no break in their watch, her neighbours were obliged to follow all the movements of the fugitive hand, and through this it was not unusual to lose contact during some instants, just at the time when it was of the greatest importance that the contact should not be broken. It was not always easy to determine whether the left or right hand of the medium was the one grasped.

For this reason, many of the very numerous manifestations which were observed in the dark, have been considered, although probable in themselves, to have been of insufficient evidential value; so we pass over them in silence, giving those cases only where there could be no doubt, either because of the perfect control exercised over the medium, or because of the manifest impossibility that they could have been performed by her.

(a) The "apport" of different objects, whilst the hands of the medium were fastened to those of her neighbours.

In order to make sure that we were not victims of an illusion we fastened the hands of the medium to those of her two neighbours, by means of a piece of ordinary string, 3 millimètres in diameter, so that not one of the four hands could move without the other. The length of the cord between the hands of the medium was from 20 to 30 centimètres, and of that between each of the hands of the medium and the hands of her neighbours, about 10 centimètres, a distance arranged so that the two hands of her neighbours could easily hold those of the medium, during the convulsive movements which agitated her. The tying was arranged as follows: round each of the medium's thumbs we twisted the cord three times, without leaving any room for the thumb to move, in fact so tightly as to be almost painful; then we twice tied a simple knot. This was done so that, if by any trick the hand could have disengaged itself from the string, the triple twist would immediately have become loosened, and the hand could not get back to the original form of tying.

A hand-bell was placed on a chair behind the medium. The circle was made, and the hands of the medium were moreover held as usual, so also were her feet. We darkened the room, expressing a wish that the hand-bell should ring immediately, after which we should have undone the medium. *Immediately* we heard the chair move, describe a curve on the floor, approach the table, and soon place itself upon it. The hand-bell rang, and then was thrown upon the table. Turning on the light at once, we saw that the knots were in perfect order. It is clear that the movement of the chair could not have been produced by the hands of the medium, during this experiment, which in all only lasted for ten minutes.

[In a footnote, M. Aksakof says:—

As an example of the "apport" of distant objects, under absolute test conditions, I may mention the following fact. At the séance of September 26th, the first at which M. Richet was present, the medium had evidently a great desire to convince him of her honesty, and for an experiment in the darkness she took off her shoes and placed her two feet on M. Richet's knees, and her two hands in his hands. Under these conditions, among other things, a tambourine, which had been placed on a chair behind the medium at a distance of 75 centimètres, was raised in the air, carried over the heads of those present, was struck as if by a hand, rested gently on the head of M. Richet, and was then thrown on to the table.]

(b.) Finger impressions on smoked paper.

To make sure that we had to do with a human hand, we fixed on the table, on the side of it opposite to the medium, a sheet of smoked paper, formulating the wish that the hand should leave an impression upon it, that the hand of the medium should remain clean, and that the "black" from the smoked paper should be carried on to one of our hands. The hands of the medium were held by those of MM. Schiaparelli and Du Prel. We turned out the lights and made the circle. We then heard a hand lightly strike the table, and M. Du Prel soon called out that he had felt his left hand, which was laid upon the right hand of M. Finzi, rubbed by someone's fingers. Having turned up the light we found several finger marks on the paper, and the back of M. Du Prel's hand was blackened with the soot, of which the hands of the medium, examined at once, bore no trace. This experiment was repeated three times, as we determined on having a perfect imprint. On a second sheet of paper, we got five fingers, and on a third the mark of an almost complete left hand. After this the back of M. Du Prel's hand was completely blackened, while the hands of the medium were quite clean.

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Under this heading, at the request of several subscribers, we give from time to time such questions as may reach us—provided we deem them of a profitable character—with a view to their being answered, not necessarily by the Editor, but preferably by our readers. Both questions and answers should be stated clearly and succinctly, and in the replies the questions should be indicated by the number.

#### QUESTION.

11.—May I ask what evidence would be held to be absolutely *proof* positive that a communication emanates from a spirit dis-incarnate?—J. HAWKINS SIMPSON.

#### HASHISH.

The following curious account of the effect of hemp-smoking is from a paper by Jules Hinde, of Leipsic, translated and condensed for the "Literary Digest":—

In moderate amounts the Indian hemp and its preparations have a mild effect on the nervous system and produce a pleasant state of feeling, at any rate among the Orientals. Larger quantities produce intoxication. In the East, the number of those who use the hashish is computed at between two and three hundred millions. Physicians are not all agreed as to the effect of the drug, some claiming that it produces nausea, heart-beating, dryness in the throat. When fully efficient it produces the feeling of pleased intoxication and the most agreeable and pleasurable thoughts. Thereupon follows sleep, deep and dreamless, and on the following morning the pleasant visions are still real and present.

That opium or alcohol eventually destroys those who use it to excess goes without saying. On the other hand, the effect of the hemp-chewing on the negro is wonderfully quieting. Wissmann mentions several African peoples among whom hemp-smoking has been firmly introduced as a habit, especially the Waniamesi. He says that he is convinced that the effect of this hemp on the negro is to make him milder and more gentle and make him more accessible to the influences of civilisation, although it does have to a certain extent an evil influence on the body, which influence, however, is generally exaggerated.

Most remarkable is the manner in which a "judgment of God" is secured by the hemp-smokers. Those that are accused continue the smoking of hemp until the guilty one is compelled to make a confession. On the other hand, the thieves of India use this hemp for the purpose of pursuing their work. They secretly make a hole in the house and fill it with fumes of hemp smoke. This has its effect on the people of the house, and when the thieves enter they find them in the most agreeable humour, incapable of understanding what is going on, and even welcoming the marauders with the most pleasant words and gestures. These statements are from the travels of Von Bibra.

Then the hashish-smokers frequently get into a state much resembling hypnotism, in which it is possible to place the members of the body in any position, and to treat the body as though it were all made of joints. The similarity between hypnotism and the effects of hashish-smoking is so great that Dr. von Schrenk-Notzing, of Munich, made special investigation of this subject. It is well known that when a person is hypnotised, a single word or threatening action suffices to throw the subject into spasms of rage. The authority just mentioned has discovered that in a similar way a person under the influence of hashish can be affected. He even discovered that persons who do not submit to ordinary hypnotism can be put into this state through the chewing or smoking of hashish.

The faculty most influenced by this narcotic is the imagination. The immediate present is idealised into the most beautiful and fantastic forms; hearing is made finer, and the finest strains of music affect as they never did before. The body also feels the corresponding effect; the pulse increases its beats, the muscular system is agitated, and the nerves are actively aroused.

The old Egyptians knew of a drink which they called nepenthe, or forgetfulness. This was probably not hemp, this herb having never been found in graves, nor is it mentioned on old monuments. The famous Papyrus Ebers speaks of a *seter-serref* drink, or the warm, sleep-giving drink, probably opium, or an opium mixture.

It is difficult or impossible to discover how long the Indians have used this hemp. It is probably the old "sona" drink of the gods, mentioned in the oldest Sanskrit literature.

For I say this is death and the sole death,  
When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,  
Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,  
And lack of love from love made manifest.

BROWNING.

In place of the dreary hopelessness of the nineteenth century, its profound pessimism as to the future of humanity, the animating idea of the present age is an enthusiastic conception of the opportunities of our earthly existence and the unbounded possibilities of human nature. The betterment of mankind from generation to generation, physically, mentally, morally, is recognised as the one great object supremely worthy of effort and of sacrifice.—EDWARD BELLAMY, in "Looking Backward."

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"  
2, DUKE STREET,  
ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C.

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## Light:

EDITED BY "M. A., LOND."

SATURDAY, MAY 20th, 1893.

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

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

### SPIRITUAL GRAVITATION.

The Semitic problem is forcing itself on the mind of Europe. To the general unthinking world this question of Judaic preponderance is largely one of generosity or of its opposite. But that is far from being the meaning of the matter. We are in the presence of something of far deeper significance; in fact we have to do with one of the great latter-day manifestations of materialism, that is, of earthly developments carried on by earthly agencies, unseen indeed, but systematically and cleverly, to a material and earthly end. The anti-Semitic agitation is spreading rapidly in Russia, Germany, and even in France, and whatever may be the overt excuses made for this apparent and, as far as many of the facts are concerned, very real persecution, there seems but little doubt that underneath there is an upheaval of a spiritual nature which has determined that the work of consolidated materialism must in some way be broken up.

A striking article on the subject by Sidney Whitman appears in the current number of the "Contemporary Review." The writer says: "That which lends its higher character to anti-Semitism—not to be culled from the daily Press—is that it has come to be partly identified with a powerful intellectual and moral upheaval. There is a spirit of restlessness abroad—a feeling that something is wrong and must be put right, a sentiment of dissatisfaction by no means confined to Germany alone." And as always happens, some of the most far-seeing on the subject are themselves Jews. One of these, Dr. Leopold Caro, is quoted by Mr. Sidney Whitman:—

Like Ibsen's "Enemy of the People," I, too, have spoken of our bourgeois society as living on the mephitic soil of falsehood; I, too, have pointed out that a source of spiritual life is being systematically poisoned.

"This feeling," continues Mr. Whitman, "is only anti-Semitic because it is directed against the Jews as the most successful representatives of that which many are inclined to believe foreshadows the decadence of character in the nation."

But this story of anti-Semitism is after all, as far as we are concerned, at present at any rate, only an illustrative commentary on certain phases and facts of life with which we are all more or less conversant. That so-called adversity and so-called prosperity follow not only certain individuals, but certain families and communities, can hardly be

doubted. The "luck" of some people is proverbial, the ill-luck of others is equally a by-word. And how far this "luck" has to do with the gospel of getting on, that gospel which belongs in its perfectness to the tents of Shem, is illustrated by the advice said to have been given by the head of a great financial house to another financier, "Have nothing to do with unsuccessful men." And he was right from his point of view. But why was he right?

If it be true that there is intelligence separate from the body as we know that body; if it be true that the ordinary human being when he dies does not at once get away from his surroundings, but clings to and delights in the freer exercise of his mundane faculties, gravitating to those places where it can best carry on his old practices,—if all this be so, and we believe it is so, then those who are themselves almost absolutely material and earthly will always be surrounded by agencies which are essentially material and earthly, and the material development and the material "success" will follow as a matter of course. "Ill-luck" is not likely to occur where the cold earthly calculations of several generations, all alive though not all seen, are being worked out in their most perfect material developments. Such a revolt as this against the Jews, then, is to be explained on principles quite apart from that of cruelty or oppression, however that cruelty and oppression may appear to be in evidence. It is only necessary to read the "Children of the Ghetto," by one of themselves, to understand this.

This presentment of modern Judasim is only one presentment among many of that spiritual gravitation which is a phase of our conditions of existence, of which we make perhaps too little. The ordinary philosopher calls it environment, but there it is whatever it may be called. What is the meaning of the City? and what of Lincoln's Inn? Are Oxford or Cambridge mere expressions? And what do people understand by the traditions, say, of Winchester or of Eton? These meanings and these traditions are all of them only expressions of the same thing, the assertion in terms of ordinary life of the lingering spiritual forces that hang about communities and help for good—as far as such lingering can possibly help for good—or for evil as the case may be. Those who go to Monte Carlo and are at all sensitive know how unpleasant are the influences which hang about that place; it is full of gamblers, all living, most of them unseen. But the whole question of temptation and crime comes in here.

### LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

A Conversazione of the Members and friends of the London Spiritualist Alliance will be held on Thursday evening, June 1st, in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, Regent-street, when Mr. J. J. Morse will give an address on "Spiritualists; their Privileges and their Responsibilities." No ticket will admit more than one person, whether Member or Visitor; and in the case of Visitors the ticket must bear the name of the person using it, and also the name of the Member by whom he is introduced.

### CONVERSION.

The denial of the possibility of a moral new birth, which is sometimes supposed to follow logically from the admission of a necessary connection between present and past in human conduct, is in truth no consequence of this admission, but of the view which ignores the action of the self-presenting Ego in present and past alike. Once recognise this action, and it is seen that the necessary relation in which a man stands to his own past may be one of such conscious revulsion from it, on account of its failure to yield the self-satisfaction which he seeks, as amounts to what is called a conversion. It is probably never fair to lay the blame of a moral deterioration or enfeeblement primarily on intellectual misapprehension; but in a speculative age even misapprehension may tend to promote vicious tendencies, by interfering with the conviction which would otherwise be the beginning of their cure.—T. H. GREEN.

## DEATH A DELUSION;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

## SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

ON THE

## BORDERLAND BETWEEN SENSE AND SOUL.

BY JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

*(Concluded from p. 220.)*

## XV.

I do not claim to have demonstrated my main proposition—that “the dead are not dead, but alive”—but I do hope I have said enough to stop contemptuous denial, especially when it is remembered that my testimony is, in effect, only the testimony of millions. The facts that have come home to me are facts so singular and yet, apparently, so simple, and certainly so far removed from all contact with impostors or fools, that I have no choice but to yield. If evidence can prove anything, this is proved—that, in certain circumstances, unseen somethings, exhibiting intelligence and a command of forces, are able to indicate their presence and prove their independence of material conditions. What or who these unseen forces or persons are we know not. That many things which are done as by, or given as from, them are absurd, childish, and altogether repugnant to even an ordinarily refined mind I know, and I do not wonder that many who have got a glimpse of these things turn away bewildered, sick at heart, and pitying. Nor do I wonder that others believe the prosecution of the inquiry will only lead to disorder and disappointment. But is it not possible that they who are inquiring in this direction are only groping in the dark amongst preliminary dust and ashes; and that, presently, they will clear away these and come to the palace door? I know not. I only say—Do not let us be in a hurry to condemn those who may be only repeating the process which precedes all discovery, in the passing out of darkness into light.

But it is not all disappointing, puerile, and unworthy, as some of the brightest and purest souls can testify, who, nevertheless, do not desire to unveil to the world the most sacred experiences of their lives.

For myself, I have, for many years, regretted that I could not take part in the investigations which I know are being pursued by some of the most devoted lovers of the truth. I bid them God-speed, and, so far from blaming them for bearing with trivialities and confusion, I thank them, as I think every lover of truth ought to do. If nothing comes of their investigations, they will fare no worse than men of science have fared who experiment with dust and ashes for years without result. But if they can only succeed in firmly establishing the fact of the possibility of any kind of communion with the unseen world, I do not think they will less deserve our blessings than they who established the fact of the possibility of flashing a communication beneath the Atlantic.

I am well aware of the feeling that exists against the whole subject, but I know nothing of closed or of improper questions; I do not believe we know everything yet; I call no fact “common or unclean”; I deem nothing “childish” or “unworthy” which may lead to truth; and I take it to be the sign of truest wisdom when one is free from rash assumptions, hasty condemnations, and that worst of all bigotries, the bigotry of an uninformed prejudice. We are here in this world to seek for the truth, and no one can be a thorough seeker after the truth who is unprepared to go all the way with the thing that is, whatever it may be.

## XVI.

The present explanation of those who admit the facts but hesitate as to their “spirit”-origin, is that our own personality and powers are more complex and extended (if

I may so put it) than we think, judging only from the limitations of the physical body and what may be called the physical consciousness; and it is held to be proven that we have a sub- or sub-liminal consciousness whose range of action is not only different but deeper and wider than we (what we call “we”) are aware of; and that it is this larger personality which is, for the most part if not altogether, at work in the mysterious sphere of trance, hypnotic consciousness, apparitions, and the like. It may be so; but I find it difficult to understand this extreme hesitation as to “spirits” when so much is admitted as to ourselves; because, what is admitted sharply marks off the superb spirit-personality from the poor physical apparatus we call the body; and it is perfectly easy to imagine this fine spirit-personality persisting when the physical apparatus has served its limited purpose and had its little day; and if the spirit-personality does persist in some more subtle sphere of being, more suited to its own subtle selfhood, why should it not, under conditions, do what it is admitted it now does even when garbed in this “muddy vesture of decay”?

Mrs. Besant takes us into deeper waters. She insists upon it that phenomena, such as I have described, are produced by the “denizens of Kāma Loka,” or, in plain English, by lingering spirits in a low earthly plane. I neither deny nor affirm. I have no theory. I only know that if what I have seen and heard came from “the denizens of Kāma Loka” some of them must be very interesting and clever people. I think none of us know. Mrs. Besant says, “the denizens of Kāma Loka” are at the bottom of it all. The Pope says “the devil.” Out-right Spiritualists sing and pray as in the presence of “angels.” I suspend my judgment, with a bias in favour of being civil to people who give their names.

## XVII.

I close with a glance at two questions which never cease to astonish me—“Is it right to attempt to unveil what God has hidden?” and “Cui bono?”

As to the first, is not everything hidden until mankind presses on to the discovery? “Beyond the veil” does not apply to the future life alone; and we never know what God intends us to find until we seek. The finding will demonstrate that God willed us to find. “Seek and ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you,” is written everywhere by the merciful Father’s hands, and His method of revelation is hidden in man’s longing to know; and we may be sure that if there is a path of communication between the unseen and the seen it must be so only as a part of the perfect order of the Universe.

The second question, “Cui bono?”—what is the good of it?—is a depressing one. We might as well have asked that concerning the trembling of the needle when the first ocean cable was laid; nay, but in this case the wonder is indescribably more, for, in relation to the unseen, it is not a new world we are speaking to, but a new world we are discovering. Hitherto, even the Christian has not got much beyond “I believe.” Will it not be the greatest of all victories if he can pass on to “I know”? Paul promised that the last enemy to be destroyed would be death, and we are now verifying his promise. Steadily and assuredly we are passing on to the discovery that death is not destruction but promotion, not defeat but advance, and that it is an advantage to everyone to die. Death is a Delusion, because there is no such thing. God has no dead; even as our brother Jesus said:

GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD BUT OF THE LIVING, FOR ALL LIVE UNTO HIM.

TRANSITION.—Passed to the higher life, after much suffering, borne with great patience, Ellen Harrison, youngest daughter of the late Captain Williamson, R.N.

## "CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITUALISM."

We do not like using this somewhat worn out heading, but the "Wesleyan Methodist and Church Record" has been sent to us, with the report, or abstract of the report, of a sermon preached in Chester on the trite old subject. The Rev. Samuel E. Keeble was the preacher. It goes without saying that the preacher does not like Spiritualism, and so we get the usual wearying materialism which talks about the "probable inversion of the moral order of the world." This sort of phrasing doubtless sounds very well in a pulpit, where the orator cannot be answered; anywhere else he might be asked to describe accurately what the moral order of the world really is. We leave all that kind of talk, which is harmless enough, as it proves nothing and disproves nothing. The sermon, however, contains certain remarks about the evidence, which are a little remarkable:—

"But," we shall be asked, "has not this evidence satisfied eminent scientists like Mr. A. R. Wallace and Professors William Crookes and Oliver Lodge?" It has—and these are undoubtedly weighty names. But against these may be arrayed other and equally weighty names of scientists, who have examined the evidence and rejected it—such names as Dr. Maudsley, Dr. Hack-Tuke, Dr. Symonds, Professor Carpenter, and Dr. Ernest Hart. When doctors differ, all that the ordinary layman can do—other things being equal—is to go with the majority, and in this case the majority is against Spiritualism. Mr. Wallace's name is undoubtedly one of very great weight; he is a most eminent naturalist, co-originator with Darwin of the Evolution theory; but he is undeniably "a crank." He is "a crank" in science; even in his special theory of Evolution he differs eccentrically from most of his scientific brethren. He is "a crank" in economics; he is a Henry-Georgite, founder and president of the Land Nationalisation Society. He is "a crank" in religion, he is a Spiritualist. Such a man's evidence must therefore be accepted with caution. The extent of his Spiritualistic bias may be gathered from the fact that in a brief history of Spiritualism written by him he entirely ignores the famous exposures of well-known mediums. Then Professors Crookes and Lodge are experts in electrical and chemical science, and are therefore—being imaginative men—very likely to be led astray by the phenomena of animal magnetism and the wonders of modern psychics and psychology, as witness the recent hypnotic frauds upon experts in Paris.

Was there ever such an exhibition of weak-headedness as the assertion that "the ordinary layman," when doctors differ, should go with the majority, "and in this case the majority is against Spiritualism"? The argument that Mr. Wallace is a "crank" is absurd on the face of it. Was not Faraday a Sandemanian in religion, and does not Faraday's name stand out as one of the brightest and greatest on the roll of scientific fame since the days of Newton? That Mr. Wallace differs from his scientific brethren "eccentrically," whatever that may mean, in the matter of Evolution is rather evidence of his strength than of his weakness; and, indeed, does this preacher dare assert that any two biologists worthy of the name agree exactly as to what evolution, survival of the fittest, and so on, mean? But the most astounding paragraph is that referring to Messrs. Crookes and Lodge as being "experts in electrical and chemical science, and, therefore, being imaginative men, very likely to be led astray by the phenomena of animal magnetism and the wonders of modern psychics and psychology." Fancy Mr. Crookes being led away by "animal magnetism"! Or Professor Lodge gaping delightedly at the wonders of "psychics and psychology"! Both are imaginative men, by that meaning that they possess the divine gift of imagination, without which they could not do their work, and that is for their credit, not for their disparagement; but imagination is not understood by the Rev. Samuel E. Keeble.

There is "something in it," though, after all, the Chester preacher allows:—

There is, no doubt, not infrequently something startling and mysterious in Spiritualistic phenomena, clearly not due to

trickery or fraud, but due to some obscure cause. What is to be said of this?

So we get first the Satanic theory, and next the "true" explanation in the mysteries of psychological science, though how an explanation can be formulated in terms of a mystery is a little puzzling. As to the first theory, which seems to be put forward as true, and yet not true, in a curious way, we get this:—

In a semi-blasphemous way, Mr. Stead has said that Christ's miracles also were ascribed to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and that this is the sin against the Holy Ghost. But it is Spiritualistic miracles which are by this theory ascribed to the devil, not Christ's—a very different thing and the sin is not against the Holy Ghost, but against some very unholy ghost. This is the theory of Mr. Pember, whose books are to be read before they are condemned, of Father Clarke the Jesuit, and tell it not in Gath—of Mrs. Besant herself! Mrs. Besant has frequently warned Spiritualists to beware, inasmuch as, according to Theosophy, the desires and lusts of men assume after death an astral body—Kama Rupa, and these Kama Rupas have about, seeking whom they may devour or inhabit. Spiritualists therefore, know not what they do. They may at their séances be brought into contact with the astral bodies of the lewd, dissolute, profligate, sensual, vicious and criminal. They may come with their hearts "empty, swept and garnished," but they may find on their return that they are inhabited by seven devils worse than the first, and that their last estate is their worst.

For which information Mr. Keeble ought to be thankful, as it points out to him the dangers to which his own converts are exposed at the séances which he calls prayer-meetings, and so forth. But we come at last to the "true explanation," and here we find the Society for Psychical Research is gradually explaining everything. It is not so very long ago that our good friends of that Society were classed with those very "cranks" whom it now appears they are explaining off the face of the earth. We know they have done much, and are thankful for the "subliminal consciousness," but has the Rev. Samuel Keeble ever met the "subliminal consciousness" face to face? And as to "multiple" personality, surely a triple personality is, to say the least of it, almost as fearful a thing as the same number of ghosts. That amateurs had better let Spiritualism alone, we quite agree; but that is no proof that Spiritualism is not true. But what a curious method of argument, first to assert that there is no evidence for the phenomena, and then to say that the Society for Psychical Research has explained them!

### A BOLD ASTROLOGER.

The following is extracted from a letter addressed to the "Review of Reviews." The bold astrologer is Mr. Richard Bland, of 41, Francis-street, Hull:—

Here is a distinct statement, that I am prepared to abide by, without any desire to shirk, either by explanation or alteration.

All persons born on October 4th, in any year, would be subject to trouble about Christmas, 1892. These troubles would be varied according to their individual nativities and the "directions" or progress of the planets therein. A good direction would largely overcome the evil I name, and make them partial exceptions; but I question if any born on this date would be totally exempt. If their nativities gave a tendency to sickness, then the trouble would be sickness; if financial loss, then financial loss it would be; if death of relatives, then death would cast his pall over them.

It would be necessary to have each individual nativity to specify the nature of the trouble in each case, but trouble of some kind all those persons born on October 4th, in any year, would have about Christmas last.

I also assert that, for the early part of 1892, those born in any year on October 5th would have trouble end of January; on October 4th, trouble end of February; on October 3rd, trouble middle of March; on October 2nd, trouble end of March.

Now I challenge those whose birthdays fall on these dates to say whether or not this astrological prediction has been fulfilled in their case.

MODERN WITCHCRAFT.

The Rev. Edward White, according to the "Christian World," continues his attack on Spiritualism at the Merchants' Lectures. The following is the account of Mr. White's latest utterances as condensed in the journal referred to:—

Witchcraft, in its present-day form, was to be forbidden in the strongest way by believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, said Rev. Edward White at Tuesday's Merchants' Lecture. Millions of people practised this seeking of the dead to-day, although the whole effect of the communications they received was distinctly antagonistic to Christ and His teaching, and caused many to lapse from the higher faith. Spiritualism wore a coat of many colours. Sometimes it was infidel, sometimes papal, sometimes Protestant, but in whatever form it appealed to its believers with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness. It was never heartily and thoroughly Christian and apostolic. It did not teach men of sin or of judgment. In the theology of the new Gospel the cross of Christ was nowhere. Spiritualism changed Sadducees to Pharisees, but brought none to repentance. It made manifest a real and invisible world of some sort, but boldly denied the claims of the Son of God. Myriads who rejected the Word of God had resorted to necromancers, who brought them some relief from materialism, and constructed for them a new idea of the religious state. These people, however, had not found God; that eternal Being remained a greater mystery than ever, and was indeed seldom referred to. Spiritualism was really a weaker Buddhism that left men without any decisive hope of God or the future world. The invisible world it revealed was without soul, yet for such a pale dream millions had forsaken the fountain of living waters. The world needed to-day another Samuel to warn Christians of the dangers by which they were surrounded. It was getting fashionable not to believe in the existence of the devil at all. People admitted the gross sensuality, the worse than brutal level of popular civilisation, but attributed it to the single action of one nature—the human—instead of seeing in it the awful result of two combined natures, the human and the satanic. To Mr. White the compensation for this prevalence of the anti-Christian spirit was that he believed it to be the sign that the time was coming when the actual and visible reign of Christ would begin.

The following letter appears in the "Christian World" immediately after the above:—

Sir,—Will you kindly allow me space just to say for myself and many others that Rev. Edward White's bull against Spiritualism weighs not the estimation of a hair with us. How idle, how paltry, in these days to seek to deter truth-seeking souls from any path of inquiry by such slight and trivial considerations, and to write up across the road "Trespassers will be annihilated!" Last year I was showing a very pious lady over an electrical workshop, and invited her to come and see the dynamo, but she refused, saying that it seemed to her too presumptuous for man to venture to meddle with the forces God had created. Where is this sort of thing to stop? Mr. White does not probably object to electrical research, but forbids Spiritualistic. To me it seems, as I said to the lady in question, "If God is my Father, I am free in His house." I don't want to judge Mr. White. Let him by all means obey his own conscience, but not make his conscience the absolute standard of judgment for all others. Wherever a road opens, and I am moved to examine and experiment, there I shall most surely go, in spite of the anathemas of such as do not like any to go where they themselves either dare not, or do not feel moved to go. For love casts out fear.—Yours very sincerely,

GEORGE W. ALLEN.

Curate of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, E.C., President of the Christo-Theosophical Society.

LITTLE minds are tamed and subdued by misfortunes; but great minds rise above them.—WASHINGTON IRVING.

If the vision of God constitutes the blessedness of man, then they whose spiritual eye is most enlightened will drink in most of His glory; and, since only like can know like, all advances which are made in Humility, in Holiness, in Love, are a polishing of the mirror that it may reflect more clearly the Divine glory—an enlarging of the vessel, that it may receive more amply of the Divine fullness.—ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

RECORDS OF PRIVATE SEANCES.

FROM NOTES TAKEN AT THE TIME OF EACH SITTING.

No. XLVI.

FROM THE RECORDS OF MRS. S.

February 21st, 1875.—We met this evening, although Mr. S. M. was feeling ill. We soon noticed masses of floating light, and spirit scent like sandalwood. G. and Kabbila made their usual musical sounds, and the spirit who made the wailing sound gave his name as Roomphat. H. and K. showed their respective lights, the one bright and flashing, the other large and shaded. The same weird sound was heard in the corner of the room coming from the undeveloped spirits. In trance the medium described them, and a spirit who was sending them away. Catharine rapped very clearly. The medium then rose from his seat, walked to Dr. S., touched him several times and breathed over him. Dr. S. said he felt fresh verberna falling all around him. Mr. S. M. then came to me, and I underwent the same treatment. I had been feeling unwell for some time, and felt much better at the conclusion of the séance. The fresh verberna scent rained over me in the same manner as Dr. S. had felt it. Mr. S. M. then returned to his seat, and Mentor spoke through him, saying he would bring musk for the medium—"medium bad." Mr. S. M. then called out that his hand was fast closed. Loud knocks asking for "light" were heard. Dr. S. opened the medium's hand with great difficulty. A quantity of dry musk was found enclosed within it.

February 24th.—This evening Mr. Percival sat with us. The room soon filled with spirit-light, and very delicious spirit-scent was wafted over us. The musical manifestations came as usual. Imperator controlled with great difficulty, as the medium was suffering from influenza. H.'s light darted many times round Mr. S. M., and was seen over his head, combined with other spirit-lights. We were informed that they were dispelling the bad magnetism. Mentor rapped, and controlled Mr. S. M. to move from his chair and go to each member of the circle to draw power from them. He poured liquid scent over each of our heads. When the séance was concluded, we found Imperator's signature on a piece of paper and the words, "God guard you."

March 4th.—This evening Miss B. and Mr. P. joined our circle. After the usual physical manifestations, Imperator controlled. He commenced by saying, "We repressed the wish of Vates to control this evening, fearing it might end in failure, and we ourselves were anxious to speak to you, if possible. When Vates lived on your earth, he was a very powerful medium, and an incarnation of a very high spirit. What you call prophecy exists chiefly in the imagination. Vates did foretell spiritual truths, but no spirit, even of the highest order, can predict exact dates. They foretell general principles, and their predictions are the result of their reasoning powers. We know of no dates distinctly prophesied in Scripture, and human interpretation of general statements in the Bible, as a rule, is of little value. Prophecy does not exist as understood by the ordinary exponents. We would now speak on some points which perplex the medium, and we wish to guard ourselves by saying that we operate with difficulty upon him, unless he is in a condition of complete passivity. We therefore endeavour to remove from his mind all the exciting ideas which interfere with our work by destroying his passivity." I may here mention that Mr. S. M. had lately met with an acquaintance who was getting communications of an orthodox character, and was testing the spirits by asking whether they worshipped the Lord Jesus. Questions respecting this were then asked. Imperator replied as follows:—

"The first point seems to be, how far theological creeds and doctrines can be a test of the trustworthiness of spirits. Secondly, whether spirits can be tested by texts of Scripture. Thirdly, how far we can communicate truths hitherto unknown to mankind. We would submit all to the Great Father, knowing that if we speak the truth His blessing will rest upon us. We are in a clearer and purer atmosphere than that of earth, and we care not to meddle with its theological controversies, except, as now, when called upon to do so. We say, then, that no profession of belief can guarantee the truth of any statement. Creeds are dissipated to the winds when the spirit soars above the earth, and no spirit can return and definitely prescribe for you forms of belief which are ill adapted to your present state of mind. As to the question of Christ's divinity, we need not repeat what

we have said on many previous occasions, and as to reincarnation, as generally understood it is not true. Great spirits are sometimes incarnated, and reincarnated, but this is the exception, not the rule. We have further to state, that many spirits, with the best intentions, communicate the most erroneous doctrine, as they have not lost the theological fog which they gathered round them during their earth-lives. These spirits are invariably nameless; they deal out pious platitudes, but they come with no authority, not even a name which may guarantee them to you as worthy of credit. Those of which you speak are probably spirits playing on a weak mind, and they may be unknowingly the agents of the adversaries who seek to perpetuate doctrines which we fight against with determined energy, as we cannot allow the idea to remain in your minds that these pious platitudes are anything but a bar to the progress of truth. You must know whence the information comes before you place reliance on it. You must use your reason in testing spirits, that reason which is born of God, and is the lamp of divine truth within you. You ask how far spirits can reveal truth to men: if they cannot do so, Revelation is a fallacy, and we ourselves are wasting time in coming here to-night. We have descended to your world for nothing else than to reveal truth to men. Divine truth has always been given to man as he has been able to receive it. He does not evolve truth for himself, but his receptive faculties are fed with the truths they desire. So far we have replied to your questions as fully as the time will permit, and now we will conclude with a word for ourselves. The difficulty of reconciling the statements of spirits must not be a stumbling-block to you. When, hereafter, the spiritual faculty of discerning spirits is given to men, they will have no cause to use tests. Until that time comes, and it is far distant, man must use his reason. Rational probing, sifting, and argument are the means whereby he must find out truth. If any spirit or angel from Heaven tell you otherwise, 'let him be accursed.' If any spirit would quench the divine light which the Father has given you for your guidance, 'let him be accursed.' Reason, and reason alone, can be your guide, and as you use it rightly so far have you acted well in life. The chaff will hereafter be winnowed from the wheat, and what now seems dark will be purged away by the light of divine truth, for the 'mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding sure,' and at length ye shall come into the truth, and 'the truth shall make you free.' Farewell."

### MRS. BESANT.

The story of Mrs. Besant's life goes on in the "Weekly Sun." One feels a somewhat jarring note in the eloquent words where the privacy of life is so mercilessly unveiled, but Mrs. Besant has taken up the position of a leader in a certain school of thought, and has never lacked the courage of her opinions. We have referred to the causes of suicide in another column of "LIGHT," and here is a curious illustration of the matter:—

One night in that summer of 1871 stands out clearly before me. Mr. Besant was away, and there had been a fierce quarrel before he left. I was outraged, desperate, with no door of escape from a life that, losing its hope in God, had not yet learned to live for hope for man. No door of escape? The thought came like a flash: "There is one!" And before me there swung open, with lure of peace and of safety, the gateway into silence and security, the gateway of the tomb. I was standing by the drawing-room window, staring hopelessly at the evening sky; with the thought came the remembrance that the means were at hand—the chloroform that had soothed my baby's pain, and that I had locked away upstairs. I ran up to my room, took out the bottle, and carried it downstairs, standing again at the window in the summer twilight, glad that the struggle was over and peace at hand. I uncorked the bottle, and was raising it to my lips, when, as though the words were spoken softly and clearly, I heard: "Oh, coward, coward, who used to dream of martyrdom, and cannot bear a few short years of pain." A rush of shame swept over me, and I flung the bottle far away among the shrubs in the garden at my feet, and for a moment I felt strong as for a struggle, and then fell fainting on the floor. Only once again in all the strifes of my career did the thought of suicide recur, and then it was but for a moment, to be put aside as unworthy a strong soul.

The account of Mrs. Besant's struggle for intellectual, and it would seem, also personal freedom, is given in vigorous language—and her "apologia" contains some words of warning:—

So it will easily be understood that my religious wretchedness only increased the unhappiness of home-life, for how absurd it was that any reasonable human being should be so tossed with anguish over intellectual and moral difficulties on religious matters, and should make herself ill over these unsubstantial troubles. Surely it was a woman's business to attend to her husband's comforts and to see after her children, and not to break her heart over misery here and hell hereafter, and distract her brain with questions that had puzzled the greatest thinkers and still remained unsolved. And, truly, women or men who get themselves concerned about the universe at large, would do well not to plunge hastily into marriage, for they do not run smoothly in the double-harness of that honourable estate. *Sturm und Drang* should be faced alone, and the soul should go out alone into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and not bring his majesty and all his imps into the placid circle of the home.

But then, unfortunately, one does not know always so early in life that one is going to set the universe straight. And perhaps, also, some kind of unhappiness is necessary for reformers, and it would also seem for those about them as well.

### A SHAMAN STORY.

The following appears in the "Revue Spirite" for May. It is copied from the Russian journal "Rébus," which in its turn got it from a Russian provincial paper. There are, therefore, many chances of error having crept in; still, as evidence in some way that occult powers are possessed largely by semi-barbarous peoples, the story is interesting.

M. Infantieff, being on official business in Siberia, came across a certain tribe of Vogols. He states that he is an utter materialist, but yet wished to learn something of the sorcerers known as shamans, and an opportunity was offered him of doing so while he was with this tribe. He says:—

I stopped one day at the tent of an Ostiak headman, and learnt that he had lost his keys some days before, and was expecting a visit that evening from a shaman, who was to help to find them by occult means. I resolved to pass the night here, so as with my own eyes to test the skill of the shaman.

M. Infantieff stayed in the tent, or rather hut, which he describes as being scantily furnished with camp bedsteads, two benches, a table, two or three boxes, and so on. The shaman did not arrive till nearly midnight, and is described as a vigorous old man, with bright intelligent eyes, and in no way repugnant as M. Infantieff expected him to be. He was clothed as other Ostiaks, except for a long strap of leather with which was fastened the usual camel skin robe of that people.

He brought with him a musical instrument of seven strings called a "swan," which he carried carefully by the side of his *asizm* or camel-skin robe. After saluting us he took off his upper reindeer-skin garment, undid the leather girdle, sat down by the side of the "swan," and begged that his arms and legs should be as firmly tied up as possible. He particularly insisted on this, saying that if it were not done he himself, as well as the rest of us, would come to harm. Helped by my host and the man who was to drive me on the morrow, I carried out the order with the greatest possible care; we bound him so tightly that the veins began to swell. The shaman then begged us to put out the fire which was burning in the *techoral* (a primitive sort of fireplace), and warned us to be careful not to re-light it until he told us to do so, as it would be dangerous. When all was ready we sat down on the beds and waited. The tent was in perfect darkness; I had placed myself quite close to the shaman, so as the more easily to observe him. Absolute silence reigned for about ten minutes.

I have already said that I am free from prejudices, and that I only expected a display of trickery on the part of the shaman; nevertheless all these preparations, added to the fatigue caused by my journey, began to excite a naturally susceptible nervous

system. I waited then for what was coming with some emotion.

Suddenly, in the midst of this sepulchral calm, I heard a feeble sound issuing from the musical instrument and coming from the exact spot where the shaman was seated. I thought I must be the victim of illusion, but the sound was repeated, then a chord was struck, feeble at first, indeed scarcely perceptible, then another, then a third, more and more sonorous, and this was followed by a chant, very low in the beginning, but the energy of which gradually increased. The shaman was singing. His voice accompanied by the "swan" became continually louder, until at last it became a terrific and frenzied howl. The sounds of the instrument and the wild cries of the shaman filled the hut, and must have re-echoed far away into the neighbourhood. I followed these incidents with an astonishment not altogether free from terror. The shaman was only three steps from me, and I was absolutely certain that no one could have got to him. Who, then, was playing on the "swan"? Evidently himself, but how?

Whilst I was puzzling over this riddle there suddenly happened a thing which set my hair on end. It seemed to me that the shaman was being lifted up in the air, and being carried to the wide chimney of the fireplace. I heard a murmuring and a confused rustling come out of this chimney. The sounds of the "swan" and the chant of the shaman came from the roof of the hut and gradually faded away into the distance. I wanted to light a match, but to my great astonishment I could not find any in my pocket, although I remembered distinctly having felt them there a moment before. I had intended to expose the fraud of the shaman. I got up and went to the place where the shaman had been seated. He was not there! I tried to call for a light at once, but I know not what power had paralysed my tongue, I could not call out.

Quite staggered I went back to my place.

The hut was still plunged in the same silence, as though all the world was dead. This continued for half an hour; at last I heard in the distance, in the direction that I was to take on the morrow, a chant, at first confused, but gradually getting stronger as it came nearer. I began to distinguish the peculiar tones of the "swan." I listened to the sounds above the chimney; then I noticed in the fireplace the noise made by some falling metallic object, like a bunch of keys. The savage chant, with the "swan" accompaniment, resounded anew quite close to me at the very same spot, and everything was again still.

Some moments elapsed, when the shaman said in a feeble voice, "Light up, the matches are on the table."

I quickly felt for my matches, and found them on the table in my own box. I lighted a splint of wood, my hands trembling, and looked at the shaman. He was in the same position as we had left him. The musical instrument was also in the same place.

"Unbind me," said the shaman, in a low voice. He was paler than before; on his face one could see the marks of profound prostration, and his eyes wandered like those of a madman. When we had undone the cords, he stretched himself slowly and fell down on to one of the beds. Addressing the host he said, "You were wrong, chief, to believe that your keys were stolen—you lost them yourself. But I have found them in the snow near the hut of your fellow chief (he here mentioned an encampment which was about fifty kilometres from where we were). Is it long since you have seen your friend?"

"About a week."

"And you have missed your keys since then?"

"Yes."

"Then there they are, in the fireplace; take them."

The headman went to the fireplace, and drew out a bunch of keys from the ashes, on which they had fallen. The next day my road lay along by the encampment, and out of curiosity I searched for the spot that had been indicated, and there, near one of the tents, I saw in the snow the fresh footmarks of two feet, and, close by, the snow had been dug up as if someone had been searching there.

This is the story as it is given. Some natural questions arise out of it, as, where was the "headman" during all this? was M. Infantieff certain of his whereabouts? Of course the whole thing might have been a trick, but where was the motive? The writer confesses to have lost his head somewhat, so that, unfortunately, the displacement of the matchbox, which would have been most important, is

diminished in value. Yet from what one knows of Oriental and semi-barbarous magic, the story is not impossible. But there seems to have been a good deal of fuss about a rather small matter.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents, and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.]

### Inspiration?

SIR,—The following brief essay was written under circumstances of so peculiar a character to all save an initiate that the writer thereof thinks it worth bringing before the readers of "LIGHT" as one of the many proofs from time to time afforded that truth is often stranger than fiction, and he pledges the word of an old man, and he trusts an honest and truthful one, that the following statement is correct in every particular.

It is now some five-and-twenty years ago that he first became acquainted with Spiritualism as it was known in the city of Baltimore, U.S.A., where he was then staying. Walking down one of the streets with a friend, he saw written over a door, "First Spiritualist Congregation." He asked what it meant, and was told that a parcel of fools met there from time to time, and professed to hold communication with Spirits. "What, the Spirits of the dead!" he asked. "Yes," was the reply; to which he answered—"Well, you Americans are a go-ahead lot certainly, but that 'licks creation,' as Sam Slick puts it." Day after day he passed that sign, and always regarded it with interest, and on one occasion seeing a notice that a public meeting would be held there the same evening he determined to attend it, and before leaving he had seen quite enough to convince him that the thing was no fraud; but what he saw and heard on that occasion would occupy too much space to allow of its description at the present moment; later on, he may return to the subject, and relate what took place there.

There is one phase of Spiritualism known as Spirit-inspiration, and a few days after the meeting the present writer determined, quite on the spur of the moment, to test its possibility, and this is how it occurred.

He went to a lecture, where he met a gentleman whose acquaintance he had recently made, and who was accompanied by his daughter, a school-girl of about fifteen, neither of whom were Spiritualists. After the usual remarks had been made, the daughter said to him, "I am going to ask a favour of you." "What is it?" he said. "I want you to write an essay for me," she replied, on 'Life, Real and Ideal.' (It is a common thing over there to set young people such tasks for school exercises.) The writer protested he had never done anything of the kind in all his life, which was strictly true, but the young lady was so persistent that at last he said he would try, and on his way home he thought to himself, "I wonder if there is any truth in what those Spiritualists say about inspiration?" and it ended in his sitting down as soon as he got home, with pencil and paper before him, but without the slightest idea of getting any assistance in the way suggested. All of a sudden his brain began to stir, and seizing the pencil he dashed off page after page of manuscript, without at all comprehending what he was writing, and eventually he threw down the pencil, and retired to rest.

The next morning he picked up the sheets and commenced reading what he had written, but even then he did not seem to take it in, and wondered at first what all this rubbish, as he thought it, had to do with the subject chosen. As he proceeded, however, the aptness of the language struck him most forcibly, and he now submits it for consideration, believing it to be a really good piece of composition, but taking no more credit to himself for the performance than the school-girl was justified in doing for whom it was written.

T. L. HENLY.

### LIFE—REAL AND IDEAL.

Mankind has ever felt the want of some great Power to lead it on its heavenward path, and give it light and life. The dreary teachings of Theology can no longer hold men's minds in bondage, nor does the flaming sword still guard the mystic tree of Eden, and bar man from his great inheritance. Christ, when He came, declared that He was sent to bring life and immortality to light; and although we do not endorse all the Church's views upon this subject, we freely admit that darkness fled before the face of Him who spake with a purity, and strength, and wisdom the world had never heard before.

To those who ask us what is life, the real and the ideal? we say, who shall define the difference between the two? The ideal of to-day is the reality of the morrow. The man who sows his fields with grain in Spring-time, and looks forward to the Autumn to furnish him with a bounteous supply of the golden store, lives in both the real and the ideal, and the one follows the other, and partakes of its nature, until both become alike. The poet who pictures a heaven here on earth, filling the world with visions of life and beauty; who paints his fellow-man as dealing justly and kindly to all around, thereby *making* a heaven here below; *he* lives in the ideal to-day; but as years roll on, and generation after generation of men are born into the world, to move through it for a while, and leave their impress upon all around, society shall be changed by slow, yet sure degrees; and when the blest reality of what he pictured has come to pass—as it most surely shall do—*he* then “shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied,” and the ideal shall have become real.

For what is life? Is it the simple moving up and down upon the earth, varied a little by Spring and Summer-time, by eating and by sleeping? Is gathering gold, or spending it, is this life? And yet to many this appears to be the “be-all,” and the “end-all” of existence. But surely it was not for this alone God placed us here. Who, who can measure the precious boon of existence; this glorious gift of life? To be or *not* to be! What a destiny is embraced in the very thought—To be. To wander forth through all eternity the child of God and of His care. To hear the song of full choired cherubim and seraphim, blending its harmony with the roll of the thunder, the rush of the avalanche, the deepening roar of the cataract, the twitter of the bird upon the bough, the hum of bee and insect, and the song of praise welling from holy hearts, all forming one grand anthem ever floating around the throne of God! To search into the depths of creation, and view the wonders of His hand. Or, *not to be!* Oh, horrible idea! Well may we thank Him “for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life,” and beyond this no greater boon can be given to man than that of a pure and loving heart to read His works aright. Talk not of life as real and ideal too. It is all real; it is all ideal; and if we serve Him truly day by day, the ideal of to-day shall become the blessed reality of to-morrow, filling our hearts with joy and gladness. Oh! the depths of the riches of the mercy and power of God! How unspeakable are His ways, and His thoughts past finding out! And yet we *shall* find them out, and ever learn more and more of Him, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; for He is in us, and we in Him, and nothing in earth or Heaven shall ever separate us therefrom. Amen. Amen. Even so saith the Spirit.

[We say nothing about the merit or otherwise of the above. The fact that the writing of it was believed by Mr. Henly to be an act of inspiration is the point. It is of that kind of personal evidence which is of so much value to the individual, though of no value to others.—ED. “LIGHT.”]

#### Authority.

SIR,—You are quite right. The uncalled for remarks of Mr. Donaldson's letter goaded me into making harsh replies, which, though fully warranted, were totally untheosophical. In future I shall ignore your correspondent's personality and simply reply to questions on Theosophy that appear in your columns to the best of my ability, no matter by whom they are propounded.

The term Be-ness has long been used by Theosophists to connote absolute being. It is defined as “(a) Absolute abstract space, representing bare subjectivity; the one thing which no human mind can exclude from any conception, or conceive of by itself. (b) Absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness.” All students of the “Secret Doctrine” and other Theosophical works are perfectly familiar with this term. Any existence but the Absolute is phenomenal, and therefore is explainable.

As regards the doctrine of Re-incarnation, nothing but direct knowledge will satisfy an earnest truth-seeker. The testimony of others can never be quite conclusive. The Masters tell us that by leading a perfectly pure, unselfish life and submitting to a special course of training this direct knowledge can always be obtained, sooner or later. Friends, of whose veracity there is no reasonable doubt, assure me that in this way they have obtained a full knowledge of their previous earth-life. To them, therefore, “Re-incarnation” is a matter of belief, and their tes-

timony adds to the probabilities of the truth of the Masters' teaching; consequently I accept the doctrine as a working hypothesis and await its demonstration in my own consciousness. To act otherwise would put me in the position of a blind man who, while refusing to submit to a necessary operation, querulously questions the possibility of others seeing, because his own eyes are bereft of sight.

My position, then, is that of one who is waiting till circumstances will permit him to test practically what others assert positively.

Meantime Re-incarnation seems so reasonable and solves so many difficulties that I hold it as a matter of the greatest probability. Few Theosophists will go farther than this.

In all cases the teachers of occultism begin with a dogmatic assertion, and then instruct their pupils how to verify this assertion. Those who are wise in their own conceit reject the proffered means of acquiring knowledge and therefore never know. Others, who hear in a teachable spirit, find truth after truth demonstrated to them, till at last things, which at first seemed fantastic delusions, are found to be necessary parts of the Beautiful Order by which Be-ness manifests on our plane. When such things have occurred to a man over and over again, surely he is justified in believing that he is on the right track and he would be very foolish if he suffered himself to be turned aside by the senseless clamour of those whose experiences differ from his own.

The essential aim of Theosophy is knowledge in yourself, by yourself. Even the Masters' statements are of no authority that is binding on belief. They are simply definite declarations of the conclusions arrived at by very wise, pure, and experienced men. These declarations we are enjoined to test in every possible way, but at the same time we are told how the teachers arrived at their convictions. A Theosophist is perfectly free to reject the approved method, and to try any other that he may prefer, just as a child may refuse to grasp the finger which a father extends to guide its tottering footsteps. But, like a child, he must learn to go alone; the father cannot do its walking for his babe; neither can the teacher do the pupil's learning. If that pupil lacks intelligence or perseverance, so much the worse for him, but that is no fault either of the teaching or the teacher.

10, Bedford-place, Russell-square. ROBERT B. HOLT.

#### SOCIETY WORK.

16, MELROSE-TERRACE, SHEPHERD'S BUSH-ROAD.—A Spiritual meeting is held on Thursdays, at 3 p.m. prompt, Mr J. M. Dale presiding, in connection with the “Busy Bees.”

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN'S HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E.—Meetings each Sunday, at 7 p.m. Speaker for Sunday, May 28th, Mrs. Bliss. The annual meeting of members of the society will be held after the service.—J. RAINBOW, Hon. Sec.

311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S. E.—On Sunday, circle at 11.30 a.m.; Lyceum, at 3 p.m.; at 7 p.m., Mr. Butcher. Wednesday, circle for inquirers, at 8.30 p.m. Tea on the 28th; tickets, 9d. each. Tea at 5 o'clock prompt. Shall be glad of help towards the cost of our piano fund. We had Mrs. Bliss with us on Sunday last, and had a good address by one of her controls.—J. PERRY, Asst. Sec.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE.—On Sunday last, Mr. T. Everitt ably presided over a crowded meeting, which was addressed by our good friend, Mrs. Green, the well-known clairvoyant. The address was of a high order and the clairvoyant descriptions were very satisfactory. Miss Everitt, accompanied by Mr. Carlyle Petersilea, sang a beautiful solo very charmingly. Mrs. Green will be present again next Sunday evening.—C. HUNT.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—On Sunday last a good audience assembled to welcome Mr. W. Walker, whose guides delivered a very instructive discourse upon the important question, “Is Spiritualism Diabolical or Divine.” Sunday, at 7 p.m., open meeting. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason. 58, Tavistock-crescent, Westbourne Park, W., on Saturday, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Mason; investigators welcome.—I. H. B., Hon. Sec.

PECKHAM RYE.—On Sunday last Mr. R. J. Lees held his usual Sunday meeting, the subject of discourse being “Christ's Idea of the Authority of the Old Testament.” Mr. Lees took as the basis of his arguments several verses in the “Sermon on the Mount,” showing that so far from Christ upholding the infallibility of the writings, he amplifies them, and also abrogates several of the Mosaic teachings. Mr. Lees ably and eloquently urged his listeners to extract from the Scriptures the highest spirit that could be drawn from that source, and not to be bound down by the letter only. The meeting was a memorable one for the quiet interest displayed during the whole of the delivery of the address.—J. C.