

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT"—Goethe.

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

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

In another column there will be found a very suggestive letter signed "Quæstor Lucis." We are very glad to publish that letter, because it represents a feeling which is getting to be more and more prevalent among those with whom psychic realities are not rounded by the study of phenomena only. At the same time, one cannot help thinking that "Quæstor Lucis" is a little unfair. It is true that phenomena are still described in "LIGHT," but descriptions of what occurs in the séance-room do not form the staple of the paper. To get at the philosophy of the thing is, and has been, the object of "LIGHT" for a long time past. An article by Mr. Edward Maitland recently published in "LIGHT," as well as a letter by the same hand appearing in the present issue, should help to demonstrate how gladly the representative of, at any rate, one school of thought is welcomed. The difficulties in the way of the suggested symposium are, moreover, very great. The combination of the Society for Psychical Research with the Theosophical school of Mr. Maitland, for example, seems at present well nigh impossible. Metaphysics do not come into the methods of the former, unless it be the showing that metaphysics are only misunderstood physics. If "Quæstor Lucis" has read the prospectus announcing the forthcoming issue of "Borderland," he must have seen at once that Mr. Stead's recording can only refer to the phenomenal. That some basis of agreement will, nay must, be arrived at we do not doubt, but we submit that the combination proposed by "Quæstor Lucis" is not a happy illustration of how that basis of agreement is to be arrived at. And we are bound to say this in our own defence, that "LIGHT" is the most catholic of all the journals in England which have to do with Psychism. That we give the lectures of "Sapere Aude" side by side with letters from Mr. Edward Maitland surely is fair evidence of this. Still, we are grateful to our correspondent for his letter.

They have been interviewing some electricians in America, and this is what Mr. Graham Bell is reported to have said:—

"Scientists are now agreed that there is no theoretical reason why the well-known principles of light should not be applied in the same way that the principles of sound have been applied in the telephone, and thus allow us to see at a distance by electricity. Of course, while the principle is the same as that applied in the telephone, it will be very much more difficult to construct such an apparatus owing to the immensely greater rapidity with which the vibrations of light take place, as compared with the vibrations of sound. It is merely a question, however, of finding a diaphragm which will be sufficiently sensitive to receive those vibrations and produce the corresponding electrical variations."

After he had spoken of this idea for some time, Professor Bell stopped suddenly, and, with an amused twinkle in his eyes,

exclaimed: "But what is to prevent one from thinking at a distance by electricity?"

Having said this, the genial Professor threw himself back and laughed heartily at the amazement his words had awakened. Was he joking? Apparently not, for he proceeded seriously to discuss one of the most astounding conceptions that ever entered an inventor's mind. Imagine two persons, a thousand or ten thousand miles apart, placed in communication electrically in such a way that, without any spoken word, without sounding-board, key, or any bodily movement, the one receives instantly the thoughts of the other.

The fundamental premise of Professor Bell's scheme is that the human brain is a kind of electrical reservoir, and that thinking is an electrical disturbance. Assuming the correctness of this view, the possibilities of setting up in one brain a disturbance corresponding to what is going on in another would appear to depend mainly on the discovery of a suitable medium.

Again the limitations: why electricity? surely there may be more subtle forms of energy which find their presentations through the channel of electricity, just as electrical energy is translated into the mechanical force; and why need there be any end to the series?

There is a paper called "Science Siftings," and this print has the usual all-knowing question-answerer. One can frequently spend a few idle minutes in watching the performances of this kind of pseudo-scientific acrobat, who is always anonymous. Somebody had asked the editor this question: "Assuming the existence of disembodied spirits, what are the probabilities for or against their being photographed or otherwise rendered evident to the senses?" This is the answer:—

In order to be photographed a body ("spiritual" or otherwise) must throw off radiant energy; and radiant energy (light) can only be emitted from the surface of a body by virtue of either (1) inherent luminosity, or (2) reflection of the light from an extraneous source. If the first of these alternatives be chosen, the object capable of being photographed must be a source of energy; and if the second, it must possess *inertie*, or mass, the essential characteristic of common matter, for a massless object would be repelled with enormous rapidity by the faintest beam of light. If we deny to spirits this material quality of inertia, shall we allow them the capacity of acting as perpetual motion engines, or transformers of the energy latent in the ether into kinetic form? I am inclined to answer in the negative, for this reason: that there is no apparent cause why the degraded, senile beings who amuse themselves with table-rapping, chair-tilting, and beating tambourines should possess control over the resources of the universe so much more intimate than that which is enjoyed by man in his fairly reasonable (incorporated) state. My argument, which is equally against all spirit manifestations, could easily be put in a form more strictly independent of the conclusion, but I have stated the matter as shortly as possible.

One is glad to know what would happen to a "massless" object under any circumstances whatsoever, but that does not seem to help. Yet we are pleased to see that the answer recognises the real question at issue, namely, the ability of disembodied intelligences to transform the latent energy of the ether into kinetic form. The only objection to their being able to do this is that the writer sees no reason why

they should be able to do it; because there is no "apparent cause" for the possession of such a power. And this is his "argument"! The ingenious answerer does not see that if he allows to these "degraded, senile beings" the power of chair-tilting and beating tambourines, he admits that something which is not matter in the ordinary sense is able to influence matter of the usual kind, and that if they can do that they may quite as well be able sometimes to manipulate the potential energy of the ether and turn it into kinetic energy, and yet still be the "degraded, senile beings" they are. If you were to add an extra sense to a Hottentot's ordinary equipment, he would probably do things which might astonish the scientific mind, without leaving off being a Hottentot.

THEOSOPHY AND BUDDHISM.

The debate between Mrs. Besant and Mrs. Fredericka Macdonald which was announced in "LIGHT," took place at St. James's Hall on the evening of Friday, June 30th. The report as given in the "Daily Chronicle," which has generally been fair in these matters, seems to show that things were left pretty well where they were. We give the "Daily Chronicle" report for the benefit of such of our readers as may have missed seeing it. One cannot help wishing that more tangible proof of the existence of the Mahatmas had been given; there is still nothing but assertion. However, as a very distinguished Theosophist once told the writer that some of the Mahatmas live about the North Pole, we may hope for something from Nansen's expedition—

Mrs. Macdonald, who was received with cheers, said to avoid ambiguity she accepted Matthew Arnold's definition of superstition—viz., beliefs that are founded on assumption. By the modern spirit she understood the effort to found human life upon the facts, and to regulate it by the laws of human nature. So far as religion was concerned this modern purpose meant the endeavour to found the really higher life upon the spiritual faculties of man, the strengthening of reason and the moral law and the weakening of the authority of supernatural dogmas condemned by the conscience as opposed to the natural principles of morality and justice. In short, the effort of the modern spirit in religion was to liberate religion from superstition. The effort of Theosophy was, she maintained, the very opposite of this; its effort was to revive superstition, and to reinvest thought with dogmatic beliefs that under the influence of modern ideas had become discredited in the popular creed. Theosophy meant belief in miracles, the establishment of doctrines incredible to reason, and belief in the brotherhood, as the interpreter of a divine wisdom too high and too exalted for the ordinary minds of men to read unaided. The Theosophists did not talk of miracles; no, they called it occult phenomena—and they dignified the performers with the high sounding name of Mahatmas. No claim of Bible infallibility ever reached the height of infallibility which was claimed for these mysterious persons. Theosophy had its sacred scriptures, only unlike our own Bible. These scriptures were not contained in one volume, and instead of being open to the world they were hidden away in crypt libraries of the occult Brotherhood, situated in inaccessible districts. The most noteworthy of all these scriptures was the book of Zeus, and this they were told was written in a tongue unknown to modern Theosophists. As regarded the occult phenomena—because Theosophists did not agree that they were miracles—they had the psychological telegrams. Why was not this wonderful process revealed to the world? Great discoverers in the past had given their discoveries to the world, and had not based any of their work upon the supernatural. If they were willing to admit that the Mahatmas existed at all, and then that they did send psychological telegrams, it followed that they were extremely selfish persons, who kept to themselves the knowledge that they should impart to their fellow-men. If they believed this in the least about the Mahatmas, then they must form a very poor opinion of them for selfishly shutting up a valuable collection of books in hidden caverns, and for steadily shutting themselves out from the living and progressive men of their own day. Then she contended that Theosophy professed to speak in the name of Indian philosophy upon the

ground that Brahminism and Buddhism, the two great religions of India, came nearer the source of all religions than any other belief. As to Theosophy wearing the mask of Buddhism, she knew that a distinction was made by calling it *esoteric* Buddhism, and they would remember that when the position taken up by Madame Blavatsky on this point was attacked, she said it was true that it was Buddhism, but not Buddhism as generally understood—it was modern Buddhism with one "d." But Theosophy still continued to employ the terms, the quoted texts, and to expound, generally in an utterly wrong sense, the doctrine which belonged to Buddha with two "d"'s, and it did this with an utter indifference to the fact that every one of its special doctrines happened to have been marked out by Buddha as deserving special condemnation. Theosophy said: "That is very well from your point of view, but not ours. We know better; we know more about Buddha than you. Your sources of information are open to the world, but ours is only open to Theosophists." It was quite true, continued Mrs. Macdonald, that her sources of information were open to the world; they were simply the translations of the ancient scriptures and the commentaries upon them by Oriental scholars. These men were great scholars, and they gave the world the result of their great learning and toil, but Theosophists had no learning, neither did they toil, and their psychological telegrams they got out of sofa cushions.

Mrs. Besant, who was received with loud cheers, prefaced her reply with an apology to Mrs. Macdonald that once or twice she should have been hissed by one or two persons in the audience. Proceeding to answer some of Mrs. Macdonald's assertions, she said she was told that superstition was that which took assumptions for granted, while the modern spirit was that which demanded demonstration for that which it asserted. She did not quarrel with the first part of the definition, and of the second she said that the modern spirit in so far as it demonstrated was worthy of all honour, but where it took upon itself to deny without evidence, to contradict without knowledge, then instead of the real spirit, which based itself on demonstration, they had agnosticism in the mask of the modern spirit, showing that it was simply a form of modern materialism. It was claimed that Theosophy revived superstition, that it revived the tendency to accept assumption in lieu of facts, both of which assertions she emphatically denied. As to the charge that they professed belief in miracles, if there was one thing which Madame Blavatsky said more strongly than another it was that she denied the supernatural and denied belief in miracles. Madame Blavatsky's so-called psychological phenomena were not performed for the curious—not for any idle persons, but for the benefit of the pupils she was instructing in the principles of certain laws of nature. Having explained the law and the method of its working, she did as every scientist did—performed experiments for practical demonstration of the law. This was the extent of Madame Blavatsky's miracles. With regard to the Mahatmas, as to whom Mrs. Macdonald was inclined to make merry, they never claimed that they were beyond criticism. They stood as men mighty in knowledge ready and anxious to use it in the service of men. Before a person could even think of stepping on to the path which led to the spiritual triumph of a Mahatma he must get rid of the notion of separateness from other men. A Mahatma was a man who placed before himself the ideal of gaining knowledge in order that he might dedicate it to the service of humanity, and he first had to make his own life perfect. By constant struggle, by killing the brute within him, he at last vindicated the existence of the soul. He showed that the will was broader than the body; that mind was mightier than matter. These men lived for the service of others, and yet they were called selfish by a civilisation that made its luxury the scandal of the world. Selfish for what? Was it selfish to develop the soul? Many of the writers on the ancient scriptures, Mrs. Besant went on to say, were very faulty in their translations, Max Müller among the number, owing to their imperfect knowledge of Sanscrit. Even with her imperfect knowledge, she was able to find the grossest errors. For true translations they must go not to Western scholars, but the most learned men of the East. The Theosophists went to the Eastern scholars, Mrs. Macdonald to the Western scholars, and this accounted for many of the errors into which she had fallen, both with regard to Theosophy and Buddhism. Buddha, she declared, proclaimed many esoteric truths, and she could not help saying that it was a pity that Mrs. Macdonald had not made her study of Buddhism a little wider.

FOREIGN PAPERS.

"Le Rappel" reports another haunted house. Madame Boll, 38, Rue Duconedie, Paris, has been awakened nightly by sounds as if casks of sand were emptied on the floor of the room above her bed-chamber. Chairs were suddenly overturned in the latter apartment, and the glass in the picture frames was broken, with the exception of that covering a portrait of Béranger. Four copper buds on the pillars of an ornament flew up to the ceiling and fell back to the floor with some force. The occupant of the room cried for help, and one of her neighbours who came in saw a water-bottle and glass move from one table to another without visible aid, while shortly afterwards a linen chest was upset with a great racket.

An interesting story comes from Sweden. In the counting-house of Herr Fidler, a merchant in Gothenburg, a young woman is employed as correspondent. One day she wrote involuntarily the name "Sven Stromborg"—a name wholly unknown to her. Her employer is a Spiritualist, and at a séance held shortly after in his own house the medium was asked if she could throw any light on it. She is a Swede, but in answer the following was, curiously enough, written in English. "Stromborg wishes you to tell his family that he died in Wisconsin on March 15th. I am impressed that he speaks the truth. I believe he said that he lived in Jemland. Is there such a place? In any case he is dead, and his wife and children are in America." As Stromborg was thought to be present, some photographs were taken, and on one plate was found a man's head above that of the medium, and through the writing medium came the following: "That is the portrait of Stromborg, about whom I spoke to you. He did not die in Wisconsin, but in New Stockholm, not on the 13th, but on the 3rd of March. He formerly dwelt at Ström-Stoking, in Jemland. He went to America in 1886. He was married, and the father of three children, and died respected and lamented by everybody. He desires me to beg you not to take too much trouble on his account." The medium said, later, that he wished the photographs and intimation of his death to be sent to his relatives in Ström-Stoking. The pastor of this place was written to, and in reply he said he could find no such name on his register. Herr Fidler then wrote to the Emigration Commissioner, who reported that there was no such place in North America. Finally a letter was sent to Herr Olea, a personal friend of Fidler's, and in about six weeks the latter received the following particulars: "A farmer named Sven Stromborg, born at Ström-Soken, in Jemland, Sweden, died in the previous spring on the settlement of New Stockholm in the Assiniboyne district, leaving a widow and three children. The settlement was begun in 1886." The intimation of the death appeared in the "Manitoba Free Press" of July 9th, 1891, and on August 8th Herr Fidler received a letter from Oxel Stanberg, a friend of the deceased, reporting that Sven Stromborg died on March 31st. On September 8th the same gentleman had a communication from the Ström-Stoking clergyman explaining that he had discovered the real name of deceased to have been Sven Ersson, but that after his arrival in America he had for some unknown reason taken the name of Stromborg. The dates 3rd and 13th instead of 31st appear to have been errors of the medium. The date on which the young clerk wrote the name was April 3rd.

According to "Psychische Studien" another Gothenburg lady has been giving materialisation séances in Norway. She is called Mrs. E., and was on a visit to Christiania. The meetings were held in a large room in the presence of fifty persons. The room was lighted all the time by a gasolier in the centre, but the light was subdued by red paper gauze screens. The cabinet was in the middle of the room, the back being barricaded with furniture in such a way as to leave no possible means of getting either in or out in that direction. The medium sat outside of the cabinet during the whole séance, and with her face turned to the audience. Long, shadowy shapes came out of the cabinet, and with their hands touched the people nearest the sides. One of the spirits—a female form—recognised every one in the company, and shook them heartily by the hand. She suddenly vanished, and after a few minutes reappeared much more clearly defined than at first, and remained a long time carrying on a whispered conversation with the medium. Two children who sat in the circle—a boy of seven and a girl of five—were caressed by several of these spirits, one of whose white veils spread over the hands and feet of a Mr. Sjøsted. A Spanish girl materialised before the

cabinet and in front of the medium. Her figure developed methodically from a gaseous shape to a perfectly human-like body. When asked for a proof of her identity she gave an evasive answer. One of the spirits was quite six feet high and swung the drapery in which he—or she—was clad outside the cabinet entrance, so that anyone might examine it. Several small visitants were seen as well as the outline of a bearded man.

"Le Messager," of Liège, says that Spiritualism is spreading rapidly in Belgium, and that new developments are observed almost daily.

"La Meuse"—another Belgian paper—describes a few unpleasant manifestations which have occurred in Hainault province. Some spirits have been annoying a priest by tearing his bed curtains, shying the crockery about, and otherwise making themselves very disagreeable. They follow him to church and cause him discomfort while he is performing mass. Other two priests have testified to the facts of the phenomena, and, of course, the only explanation they give is that it is the work of the devil. It has not yet struck them, apparently, that it may be the other way about, and that the priest has himself been doing some devil's work of a mild kind on account of which good spirits may have been delegated to slightly raise the temperature of his surroundings, as a sort of warning to him. "La Meuse" adds that it is a splendid opportunity for testing the efficacy of priestly exorcism, &c., and suggests that the victim of these troubles is probably merely a medium.

"L'Etoile Belge" is very uncomfortable because M. Thibaut, a former President of the Chamber of Deputies, has made himself "ridiculous" by forming a circle in his own house in the Rue Marquis for purposes of research in the matter of Spiritualistic phenomena. From Greece we learn that the editor and proprietor of the weekly comic journal "Romios" has become a Spiritualist. It appears that he was a determined sceptic until he attended the séances of a young poet who dwells in Athens and is a remarkable medium. Lawyers, doctors, professors, diplomatists, journalists, littérateurs, all sorts and conditions of men, go to this young man's circle, and many of them are "converted" on the spot. The spirits at these séances reveal to the sitters their most secret thoughts and do many other things with which the readers of this journal are probably familiar. They have at last caught this Editor of the Greek Charivari, whose name is Souri, and from an important opponent he has become a warm defender. His paper, "Romios," is written in verse from beginning to end, and he now holds séances in his own house, where phenomena of a striking character are observed. Sometimes the table is raised from the floor and the sitters see under it a kind of phosphorescent light which gradually dies away. Nearly all the St. Petersburg papers have been referring to Spiritualism, and there is a considerable movement in favour of its investigation. Professor Lombroso's admissions have in particular excited attention, and there is a well written article in "The New Times" dealing with the question: "Why is so much said at present against spirit-appearances, and why should they be impossible?"

According to the "Annals of Spiritualism," published in Turin, the Queen of Italy is a Spiritualist and a fervent one. It is said that she has a book ready entitled "Thoughts on the Life beyond the Grave," and has arranged to have it issued after she has herself passed over. Why not publish it now?

From Germany we learn that spirit-photographs have been obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Minna Demmler. At the first attempt there was a kind of cloud on the plate to the right of the lady. At the second trial, a bright light to the left and a misty shape to the right. At the third an outstretched arm on the first plate; on the second a plainly framed female figure whom Mr. Demmler recognised as that of his niece. The spirits said that they impressed the plate before the photographs were taken. On this Mr. Holtz, by way of experiment, developed two plates without exposing them through the lens or to daylight in any way. On both he obtained a strangely formed light-image. The above is from the "Spiritualistisch Weekblad."

ALL sense of restraint, even if self-imposed, is useless; the desire to be pure must be spontaneous in order to be efficacious. —SCHOPENHAUER.

A WEALTHY conscious will is the indispensable condition of receiving truly great, noble, and pure aspirations. On the other hand, conscious will has no influence at the moment of conception, nay, a strained conscious seeking after it hinders the reception of the idea from the unconscious. —HARTMANN.

July 9, 1877

RECORDS OF PRIVATE SEANCES.

FROM NOTES TAKEN AT THE TIME OF EACH SITTING.

No. LXI.

FROM THE RECORDS OF MRS. S.

January 9th, 1877.—This evening Miss B. and Mr. P. sat with us. Scent was abundant. Catherine rapped and Magus manifested. After the control was established, Imperator, in answer to questions, said:—

“The spirit of Magus has been incarnated. Few mediums are sufficiently developed to be attuned to the action of all spirits. Entrancement is necessary in the earlier stages of development. Sometimes another spirit takes the place of the medium's, when his has been removed, or it may be lulled to rest, and not necessarily absent.

“The aspect of affairs has changed since we last met you, and great events have taken place. There has been a large access of knowledge in your world, and the philosophy of spirit-intercourse has been advanced. This has irritated the adversaries.

“Those who attempt to commune with the world of spirits incur grave responsibility, as we have often pointed out to you. We have sympathy and pity for the world, so hopelessly and entirely in error with regard to spiritual intercourse, and every attempt to enlighten that ignorance meets with ready help and encouragement from us. The time has come when a considerable amount of blessing will proceed from that which has hitherto been mixed with so much evil. The process of purification which is now going on is painful, but the results in the future will be pleasant. We see the end from the beginning, while ye only see present troubles. They are of no account. Your trials will pass away, and out of them will spring a glorious hereafter. Contend for the truth while you may. At best ye can do but little, but that little must be done.

“Amid the dust and din of battle, little can be seen of what is taking place on the battle-field. Some who fight may fall in the strife; it may be that some are wounded even now. Few may emerge from the battle, but be assured that those who are preserved shall plant the banner, round which they fight, on a higher eminence than it was before. While the conflict is being fought out the truth seems to be hidden amidst the din and strife, but when the fight is over the banner is carried forward, and it is found to be untarnished, and it is then planted in a secure place. It is in these days of darkness and discouragement that we seek to give strength and courage to those who need it. The conflict raging amongst you is but the reflex of the conflict that is going on with us. Rest assured that the truth will be triumphant. The time of conflict is the time of grace, a time of growth, and of spiritual progress.”

January 14th.—This evening Miss B., Mr. M., and Mr. P. sat with us in circle. At first we had the usual manifestations of raps, musical sounds, and abundant scent—brought, we were told, to harmonise the circle. Imperator then controlled, and in answer to a question said:—

“There are divers stages of progression through which a spirit must pass, and spirits may remain in the same state for a great length of time, and may pass through the next stage very rapidly. In each change, the spirit-body changes, and each is a process of refinement. There is absolutely no pain in the act of dying.”

A question was asked whether spirits in the spheres of contemplation have any form.

“We do not know, and are not allowed to know until we enter them. From thence spirits rarely return to the spheres of Purgation. The eternal law of spirit is growth and progress. Sometimes a return to earth would be a step backwards, and would militate against the law of progression. You may desire the return of a spirit, but such return might bring it again within the sphere of temptation. If a spirit has been liable during its earth-life to a particular temptation, that spirit is jealously guarded against conditions that would bring it into the sphere of that temptation again. You may in many cases drag a spirit back to earth by projection of will power, but it may be very inadvisable for him to return to you. Laws of progression are often violated by dragging back spirits to earth, your wills being more powerful than theirs, and so far you provide the way. You must not judge from any preconceived basis of the action of spirit in your world. We regard phenomenal Spiritualism as the plough that breaks up

the ground on which we hope afterwards to be able to till and now used.”

A remark was made: “The ploughers that plough are ploughing very badly.”

“We approve of what is being done and we recognize the necessity of the lower forms of spiritual physical phenomena. The ground must be broken up before the seed can be sown. Spirits are aiding and doing their best to counteract all evil effects. Although we deplore the necessity of phenomenal manifestations, yet we admit they are necessary to bring home the truth; but we desire growth, and to be continually repeating the same experiments is not conducive to spiritual growth and progress.

“The root of mediumship is in the spirit-body, and some peculiar condition of the body may allow latent mediumship to develop itself. The power of transcorporeal action may be obtained by all, but frequently at the expense of much that makes life valuable.

“The spirit during its earth-life may lose much of its training, and its growth may be checked altogether by giving way to evil. The education given during sleep as a rule is not remembered on waking.

“The truest progress of the spirit is attained by the faithful discharge of that work which is the duty of each to do. In so far as a spirit taints and distorts its actions by giving way to physical passions, it places a bar to its progress.

“There are higher faculties than intellect: intuition, perception, faith. A form of faith may come by will power. The growth of the spirit is much more spasmodic than that of the body. Your spirit is destined to progress, and you should regard it thus. Growth is natural, and the spirit should fight against every impediment. Your spirit evolves its own growth and is independent of external conditions. It is fed, guarded, and governed, by wise intelligences, and its growth is fostered.”

January 21st.—We sat this evening with Miss B. and Mr. P., in addition to the home circle. After the usual physical manifestations, Imperator controlled, and in answer to questions said:—

“Elementary spirits sometimes take the type of animals, and obsession is often the result of the influence of spirits lower even than elementaries, malignant spirits. Through them are produced the habits, actions, and desires of animals. They possess the depraved and sensual, and through them enjoy a kind of second-hand pleasure. They take the form of animals most congenial to themselves. You will not see them when you leave the body, any more than now, unless you wish it, for you make your own surroundings, and form your own lives, as we do on our plane of existence.

“We cannot come near you save under certain conditions; three or four hours ago we could not have reached you, as the necessary conditions would not have been present.

“The same spirit that animated Jesus the Christ is now operating amongst you; personally, He has not returned.

“Your ignorance of the forces that act upon the world is a marvel to us, and what you call natural causes are in their inception spiritual. Diseases, mental and physical, are often due to the influence of spirits. Your spirits are constantly free, and acting in defiance of known laws. Planetary spirits belong to the seventh sphere, and have gone beyond the reach of any influence from the world in which they were incarnated. They act through others, through many links.”

EVERYTHING that is really fundamental in a man, and therefore genuine, works as such unconsciously; in this respect like the power of nature. That which has passed through the domain of consciousness is thereby transformed into an idea or picture, and so if it comes to be uttered it is only an idea or picture which passes from one person to another. Accordingly any quality of mind or character that is genuine and lasting is originally unconscious, and it is only when unconsciously brought into play that it makes a profound impression. If any like quality is consciously exercised, it means that it has been worked up; it becomes intentional and therefore a matter of affectation, in other words, of deception. If a man does a thing unconsciously it costs him no trouble, but if he tries to do it by taking trouble, he fails. This applies to the origin of those fundamental ideas which form the pith and marrow of all genuine work. Only that which is innate and genuine will hold water; and every man who wants to achieve something, whether in practical life, in literature, or in art, must follow the rules without knowing them.—SCHOPENHAUER.

SUPERSENSUOUS DEVELOPMENTS.

In the "Psychical Review," the organ of the American Psychical Society, there is a very good paper by Ella Wilson Marchant on "Mysterious Music." In its broad outlines one cannot but feel that the following, which is taken from that paper, is at any rate somewhere near the truth:—

If, as it is claimed, our sensible contact with nature is through vibrations of matter, then it is to be presumed that only such vibrations as are at least somewhat in harmony with our physical constitutions are capable of registering themselves upon the sensorium of our beings in a recognisable manner. The interior, spiritual principle differentiates itself into all the varied phenomena of the universe through different methods of interpretation. Our special organs of sense are special interpreters of this principle; and it interprets itself into the different dialects of fragrance, colour, form, or music, according to the nature of its interpreter—the organ of transmission. It is the spirit that perceives, but it generally perceives through recognised channels, and those channels give character to the perceptions. The range of these perceptions greatly differs, even on our own (mortal) plane of life. There are colour-blind people, and people keenly susceptible to tints and tones of colour. There are people with very acute hearing, and people (not deaf) who are incapable of hearing some of the sounds of nature around us, which are perfectly cognisable to the average ear. And so on through all the list of the special senses. Vibrations increase as we pass from the grosser to the higher physical, and from the physical to the ethereal, until they pass beyond the cognition of the average mortal senses. As a familiar illustration, take a block of ice, which by applying heat and quickening its vibrations becomes less tangible in the form of water, and, by still further application of the same agency, becomes still less palpable as vapour, and finally invisible.

More and more as we learn of the laws and forces of nature, do they show forth the wonderful unity of this universe of ours; and more and more, as we understand the relations of the physical and the spiritual to each other, does it seem that the physical shades off into the spiritual. Would it be strange, then, if we should learn that there may be found a keynote to the whole diapason of nature's harmonies, and that a few sympathetic chords may form the basis of all the grand "music of the spheres" to which even the ears of archangels may be attuned? That keynote seems to have been found in the vibration theory.

It is possible, then, to translate one class of phenomena into another? It would seem so. For instance, instruments have been invented by which flashes of light have been made to produce musical sounds; and an intimate relationship has been shown to exist between light and sound. A notable artist, according to the New York "Sun," claims that colour is music, and music is colour; and he has arranged a chromatic scale accordingly. He bases his theory on the agreement or parallelism in the vibration of light waves and sound waves. Each colour has a corresponding note, only, of course, the colour is many rounds higher up on the spiral stairway of ascending velocities of wave vibrations. I believe it was Emma Hardinge Britten, a well-known English Spiritualist and medium, who declared that certain sounds produced in her consciousness the sensations or impressions of particular colours. May not the poet have written wiser than he knew (as poets so often do) when he gave to the world the expression, "the music of the spheres"? May there not be a blending of the chords of sound and light vibrations into one grand symphony of harmony and beauty, coming up from the different worlds of space to the perception of a being sufficiently unfolded to simultaneously translate, or transmute, one into the other, and thus drink in the combined essence of both? In this light I am inclined to question whether, in the higher or highest spiritual state, our at-present-organised senses may not become merged into one grand, all-comprehending vehicle and receiver—that of universal perception.

We may presume that all life is conscious on its own plane; but that plane may differ by thousands of gradations, from that of the blind earthworm, that spends its existence in rooting and wriggling under ground, to that of the highest archangel, who takes cognisance of the laws and relations of a vast universe, and helps to form and control the destinies of worlds

and systems of worlds. In the progress of evolution, it must be that the higher plane ever impinges upon the lower, else there would be no climbing up, no evolving of lower forms of consciousness into higher. So that if the spiritual world—the plane of life and consciousness just above and beyond us—impinges occasionally upon our lower-world consciousness, it is only following out the natural laws of evolution in doing so. When consciousness is developed so as to step forward and upward, into a higher grade of perception, then the range of cognition must be advanced, to accommodate the higher grade. Hence, dying visions of another world have been a very common occurrence throughout the ages of human history. Theologians have dwelt upon this fact as furnishing proof of another life, and whole books have been written upon death-bed scenes and dying visions. Music and singing, as well as the appearance of beautiful ethereal beings, are marked characteristics of these dying ecstasies, showing that consciousness is being born into a higher range of perception of the interior beauty and harmony of the Universe. Says Mrs. Hemans:—

Bring music! stir the brooding air
With an ethereal breath!
Bring sounds my struggling soul to bear
Up from the couch of death!

SYMPNEUMATIC INFLUENCE.

The late Laurence Oliphant gives the following account of the action of the "pneuma" on physical respiration, in a note to "Scientific Religion," published in 1888:—

On Friday, December 16th, 1887, the writer was asked to visit two poor persons living next door to each other, both of whom were seriously ill. The one case was that of a woman, about sixty years of age, who had been confined to her bed for ten days, quite unable to move, and suffering severely from acute pain at the base of the spine and in the loins. The other was that of a man, sixty-five years old, who had a sharp attack of bronchitis. Having applied the ordinary natural remedies in each case, the writer returned home. About 3 a.m. on the following morning he was awakened from sleep by a sensation of the respiratory motion which he had learnt to recognise distinctly as a sympneumatic descent. Opening himself to the voice of the pneuma, he became aware that he was to rise at once and visit the two patients. What was to be the object of his visit he did not know, but the command was clear, and he immediately followed it. On entering the woman's house, he found her in much the same state as on the previous day, and still unable to move through pain. He told her that he felt he had been divinely sent to assist her cure, and she must implicitly obey whatever he ordered her to do. He then passed his left hand gently down her back, at the same time taking her right hand in his. As soon as he touched the small of the back, he felt the strange vibrating motion affecting his whole system, and his inner consciousness became impressed with the conviction that he was to tell her to get up immediately and walk about. Accordingly he did so; and at once, to her own astonishment and that of the other persons present, she rose from the ground, on which she had been lying, and guided by his right hand, which still retained its hold of hers, she walked up and down the room several times without the slightest effort or sensation of pain. She declared herself feeling quite well, and expressed a desire to go to work. However, he advised her to keep quiet and warm, and not to be surprised if the pain returned in a measure again.

He then went to the house of the other patient, quite prepared to do the same for him if the indications of the pneuma directed him. No sooner, however, had he taken his hand than he felt all influx leave him, and he knew that this case was not one in which he was intended to act spiritually. He was therefore obliged to content himself with administering ordinary injunctions, and offering words of sympathy and encouragement.

The next day—Sunday, December 18th—he visited both patients. He found the woman lying on the ground as before, and she had had a slight, but only slight, return of her former pain. This time she rose without his assistance when he ordered her to do so; and after walking about the room for a little while she again felt relieved entirely.

The man was evidently much worse, and again the writer could feel no influx to aid him. The following day, Monday, the 19th, the woman was perfectly well and about her ordinary work and the man was dead.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
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Light:

EDITED BY "M. A. LOND."

SATURDAY, JULY 8th, 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.

THE LAW OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.*

II.

"It is not to be supposed that an All-wise Providence has placed within the human frame a separate entity, endowed with such wonderful powers as we have seen that it possesses, and hedged about by the limitations with which we know it to be environed, without so ordaining its relations with man's objective intelligence as to render it of practical value to the human race in its struggle with its physical environment." This piece of sentimentalism is gravely advanced by Mr. Hudson, in the fifth chapter of his book, as a link in the chain of reasoning that he appears to be forging. And because of this All-wise Providence and the fact that a "house divided against itself cannot stand," therefore in the "very nature of things" the objective mind has been invested with the controlling influence over the subjective mind, this subjective mind being itself a supposititious creation of Mr. Hudson's for the purpose of helping him in the development of his Working Hypothesis. "Why it is that the objective mind has been invested with the controlling influence, limited as are its resources and feeble as are its powers, is a question upon which it would be idle to speculate," and so Mr. Hudson accordingly does not speculate upon it. However, "We may rest assured that in this, as in all other laws of Nature, we shall find infinite wisdom."

It seems almost idle to continue the serious consideration of a book which has a certain scientific air about it after the introduction of such considerations as the foregoing. Given an All-wise Providence, and the infinite wisdom of the "laws of Nature," and one can prove anything. As another illustration of Mr. Hudson's method, take the following:—

If anyone doubts the wisdom of investing the objective mind with the controlling power in the dual organisation, let him visit a madhouse. There he will see all shades and degrees of subjective control. There he will see men whose objective minds have completely abdicated the throne, and whose subjective minds are in pursuit of one idea, controlled by one dominant impression, which subordinates all others. These are the monomaniacs—the victims of false suggestions. These suggestions may be given from without, in a thousand different ways which will be readily recognised by the student of insanity, or by auto-suggestion.

* "The Law of Psychic Phenomena: a Working Hypothesis for the Systematic Study of Hypnotism, Spiritism, &c." By THOMSON JAY HUDSON. (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

And mark this:—

Long and intense concentration of mind upon one subject, and inordinate egotism, will be readily recognised as striking illustrations of the power of auto-suggestion as a factor in monomania.

What "mind" is meant? The objective, apparently; and this is itself disorganised by disease of its organ, the brain; this objective mind, then, after all, is dependent for its proper action upon a completely material state of things—but is this sufficient? If it is, then it is difficult to separate this objective mind from the brain itself; and if otherwise, why should the brain lesion affect even the objective mind? Does a broken piano cause the skill of the pianist to be less? but that is exactly what Mr. Hudson says. As to inordinate egotism, one hardly understands how that comes in here at all. To call it the result of auto-suggestion means nothing. And has it ever been satisfactorily proved that the loss of balance of the objective mind is ever, from the physiological stand-point, the "effect" as distinguished from the "cause" of brain lesion?

Mr. Hudson, having once got into the full swing of his Working Hypothesis, finds no difficulty in providing illustrations. He quotes Macaulay quite rightly as showing the subjective element in all true poetry; no one would, we suppose, think of disputing the point. And he seems to approve of Macaulay's dictum when he says, "Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry, but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just, but the premises are false." Perhaps no one knew better than Macaulay the meaning of false premises, yet Mr. Hudson would hardly call him a madman. A little consideration will show that we are once more face to face with the usual dogmatic assertions of Materialism as to the reality of things. Nothing is real except what can be perceived by the ordinary senses—all other so-called "realities" are subjective and objectionable, or, as Macaulay would have said, the result of want of civilisation.

Mr. Hudson, moreover, is not above using the clap-trap method of the Sunday-school. He is speaking of the poems of Coleridge as illustrating the subjective in poetry. He naturally mentions "Kubla Khan; or, a Vision in a Dream," and proceeds in this way:—

It is, unfortunately, true that the subjective condition in his case was often brought about by artificial means; and it is expressly stated in a prefatory note to "Kubla Khan" that this fragment was written while under the influence of an anodyne. Its value as an illustration of the principle under consideration is none the less valuable, while the career of the gifted but unfortunate poet should serve as a warning against the practices in which he indulged.

Why is this last paragraph dragged in? and what is a "valuable value"? Is Mr. Hudson trying his favourite theory of suggestion in order to prejudice his readers in favour of his theories? The conclusions arrived at at the end of Chapter V., that in which the subjective nature of certain powers is dwelt upon, are these:—

To believe in the reality of subjective visions is to give the subjective mind control of the dual mental organisation; and to give the subjective mind such control is for Reason to abdicate her throne. The suggestions of the subjective mind then become the controlling power. The result, in its mildest form of manifestation, is a mind filled with the grossest superstitions—a mind which, like the untutored mind of the savage, "sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind." Its ultimate form of manifestation is insanity.

This is presumably all right from the Working Hypothesis point of view, but it adds nothing at all to our knowledge. To talk about "Reason abdicating her throne" may be rhetoric, but it is not science. Nor has Mr. Hudson defined "superstition." And unless we have very much misunderstood Mr. Hudson, the subjective mind cannot suggest, though it may receive suggestions. If so, how do the suggestions of the subjective mind become the controlling power?

July 8, 1893.]

"AZOTH."*

This book is an attempt by Mr. Waite to present to the modern English reader and thinker some account of the mysticism which was wrapped up in the old alchemy, and which is now coming to the fore once more. The object of the true alchemy is to attain perfection, which consists, as the author has it:—

In the Physical Order: In the realisation of the dream of beauty.

In the Moral Order: In the realisation of the dream of love.

In the Intellectual Order: In the realisation of the dream of poetry.

In the Spiritual Order: In the realisation of the dream of the mystics.

These four orders, however, being fundamentally only one order, the four dreams constitute but one reality. To attain to these realisations is the object of the mystics, and it is asserted about them that they claim for humanity the possession of a faculty or faculties which transcend those ordinarily recognised, such faculty or faculties being the means whereby progress towards perfection is to be attained:—

Dream, aspiration, and desire are the aspiration of no theology and of no formal religion; they are the leaping outward of what is best in man at his own best towards the possibilities which are outside experience; for us they are evidence and index of the splendour and scope of the possible which ever is developing into the actual, and the expectation of their fulfilment is grounded on facts in our ignorance which have been strangely misread by philosophers who insist on the strict limitation of our entire range of knowledge to the region of phenomena alone, and while positive in proclaiming their materialism, forbid us to hope that we shall ever become acquainted with the ultimate nature of the material world.

The scientific philosopher has overlooked the possibility of other methods than his own, methods which may carry knowledge beneath the surface in which his investigations are almost always carried on. Pure mysticism, on the other hand, understood in its proper sense, is unencumbered by any dogma.

It aims at the union of that which is highest in man with that which is supreme in the universe, and its methods are strictly experimental. But it claims to be in possession of an instrument which is unknown to modern science.

The mystic acknowledges:—

First of all the reality and imminence of consciousness, an immediate testimony to ourselves which transcends all need of proof; next the phenomenal nature of all normal knowledge, as admitted by every thinker; thirdly, the existence of an unseen world; and lastly, the existence of an absolute reality behind all appearances.

"Azoth" is divided into two parts. The first treats of the Outward Man, the other of the Inward Man. No perfect analysis of the book is, of course, attempted here; we can only give some idea of the contents by extracts. In Part I., that concerning the Outward Man, we find this "Testimony of Spiritual Tradition" as to a lost perfection of humanity:—

There is a testimony of all ages and nations to a lost knowledge and a lost perfection of humanity. This testimony is dual in its nature; it is interior and objective. There is the mythic cycle which is concerned with the spiritual condition of the primordial man, and there is the cycle which is concerned with the Garden of Paradise and of God. Now, the perfection of humanity is also dual—interior and objective—and the nature of the divine operation which it is our task to indicate is dual, and is described dually in this book of the divine light of Mysticism and of Azoth. The legends of the first interior, or primordial condition of antenatal and unmanifest perfection in which the essential man abode in the sphere of the timeless, will illustrate to us the nature of the interior absorption or rapture in which

evolved man will attain to the positive knowledge of God, to immediate correspondence with the Eternal Consciousness, to the immersion of individual in universal being. The pre-existing soul of man, as these legends tell us, was punished for prenatal transgression by union with matter in the body, whence we may conclude that the exaltation into perfection and glory of this vehicle will end the punishment, and the whole man will be swallowed up in light and immortality.

Before they were associated with the body, the souls of men, according to the Platonists, existed in God; they were emanations of the Great Soul, the fellows and members of the chief Deity, and even now, though enveloped by the body, they may participate in divine contemplation through the subjection of the passions, and through a life of interior absorption.

Mr. Waite also refers to the testimony of the Transcendental, and says that "the phenomena of mesmerism, esoteric clairvoyance, Magic, and even spiritism, are full of supreme significance as witnesses of the occult energies which exist in the soul of man." To develop these latent faculties is the work of Mysticism, and the body itself, it is said, may eventually become more glorious by this development.

The second part, that relating to the Inward man, is very elaborately treated, and Mr. Waite says in the last chapter:—

We have found that the law of evolution sets outwardly towards beauty as it does inwardly towards truth. We have shown forth the nature of our coming physical perfection; it is summed in the word Transfiguration. We have also delineated those interior processes which make for the light within; they are summed in the word Illumination.

These few words about a somewhat remarkable book are designed simply to call attention to that book. To treat of it properly would require the hand of one who had got somewhere near the perfection described in it as being attainable.

THE POSSIBLE IN THE ACTUAL WORLD.

The feeling of dissatisfaction with orthodox belief, scientific or otherwise, finds expression in all directions. The following, from the "Literary Digest," is illustrative of the fact. The paper is translated and condensed from the "Deutsche Revue" of Breslau for May:—

The old scholastic distinction between possible worlds and the real world was something more than a process of monkish hair-splitting, and has its recognised place in modern science. We find evidence of this in metamathematics, a department of research that can hardly be included in natural science, but whose function is to demonstrate that there may be other logical relations of magnitude than those falling within the realm of our experience, and that relations of magnitude foreign to our arithmetic and geometry are presentable in mathematical formulæ. Metamathematics show that mathematics is not an *a priori* science, but the supreme natural science, the science of a world of experience, as contrasted with an innumerable multitude of possible worlds.

But there is no occasion to go so deep to justify the distinction between the actual world and possible worlds. Take, for example, any scientific problem, say, the explanation of the phenomena on the surface of Mars. "*Nonne decem mundi sunt facti?*" the Lombardian astronomer may have exclaimed, when he enumerated all the hypotheses in respect of this problem which came under his observation. If we had only to select from among them, the question might have been promptly decided. But the "*ubi autem sunt novem?*" could not be uttered until the scientific consciousness had reached full satisfaction in the conviction that beyond these no other hypothesis is possible.

If we demanded of science only the simplest possible description of the phenomena, we might content ourselves with Schiaparelli's presentation of them, or of several hypotheses which served equally to explain the phenomena we might select that which appeared to us the simplest. But the correctness of the hypotheses can only be determined by fresh facts, not by greater simplicity of the mathematical formula. As long as the

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decisive fact eludes us, it is well to be acquainted with all the hypotheses set forward.

The form of causality necessary to bind the materials of science together originates in an anthropomorphism, but the most justifiable and rational anthropomorphism. As I associate my own act with the consequences which necessarily flow from it, so, too, I seek and recognise in the phenomena of nature the universal ruling subject which, to avoid all criticism, I will call not the creator, but the primal cause.

The establishment of the causal connection between phenomena is the province of science; the attempts to establish it are by means of hypotheses. In ever changing aspects they rise up from the circle of possible worlds, struggle for their existence, some to disappear quickly, some to dominate humanity for a time, and some to remain as permanent building stones in the temple which humanity raises to its God, the Eternal Cause.

Newton's hypothesis of a law of gravitation brought the scientific consciousness a fuller satisfaction than the several hypotheses which had preceded it, and although nowadays we may question its being strictly exact, since it does not fully explain the movement of the planet Mercury, it does not on that account lose its high degree of probability. But whether the mathematical formula asserts its simple perfection or is expanded with wider investigation, the causal perception will not content itself with a formula which demonstrates the dependence of masses of matter upon each other; it is driven to new hypotheses concerning the nature and mode of this dependence, and will halt only in the presence of the Great First Cause, the subject behind all causal action. The satisfaction of the craving for the recognition of causal connection is an instinct, and to this end hypotheses are necessary and justifiable.

UNCONSCIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

Our able contemporary "Lucifer" often contains articles which are true for all phases of thought, Theosophic or otherwise. A short but thoughtful paper on Unconscious Development in the issue for June is very valuable. It bears out very much the ideas contained in an article on Passivity which appeared in "Light" some weeks ago. The writer is Sarah Corbett. We hope "Lucifer" will pardon our making a longish quotation:—

Spiritual progress does not come to a man because he longs for it. The longing is merely discontent, and does not change the inner nature. Even a very superficial study of human nature shows that those who are most anxious to progress are the least likely to do so. "The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn thistle turn."

All this sounds very pessimistic. A hasty student would, perhaps, deduce from it that all effort is useless. This would be incorrect, but it would be better that he should think so for a time than that he should go on imagining that by taking thought he can add a cubit to his stature. In the former case he is like a traveller who has fallen into a well, and the very discomfort of the position will induce him to try to get out. In the latter he has simply taken a wrong road, and may continue to travel further and further out of his way. The effort to grow means the fostering of ambition, it means looking for reward, it means trying to measure the infinite with a two-foot rule.

There are certain things which a man may gain by direct seeking, but happiness and spiritual progress is not one of them. For spiritual progress does not come by following rules or methods, it comes of itself when the man is ready for it. It is not brought about by joining a school of occultism, by initiating others, by adopting any particular mode of life, but only "by following the rules without knowing them."

There is no receipt for it, and it is not gained by ascetic practices. Says the "Bhagavad Gîtâ":—

Those who practise severe self-mortification not enjoined in the Scriptures are full of hypocrisy and pride.

The real education of children does not take place through attending school or learning lessons; it depends on something which lies deeper than these things, and it often goes on more rapidly during leisure time than during school hours. For the methods pursued in schools cultivate almost of necessity the seeking for reward, the constant thought of self, the spirit of competition, whereas the best intellectual development takes

place when the thought of self is not present, when the child has forgotten his own existence, and is thinking only of the subject in hand, when in short there is no conscious effort. It may seem at first sight that conscious effort is higher than unconscious effort. But this is not really the case. Conscious effort develops the learned man, unconscious effort develops, in its higher forms the genius, in its more elementary forms the strong and original mind. That which is learned by unconscious effort is always assimilated, and becomes a part of the child's very nature, a motive force to develop intellect and mould character. That which is learned by conscious effort may be assimilated, but is more often only swallowed, and in that case is not conducive to mental health. What we call "overwork" is generally work on a wrong system. Worry, strain, and anxiety arise because the thought of self is too active. There is no anxiety when the mind is concentrated on the subject itself, but only when the child is thinking of his own success or non-success.

Now all this applies to the spiritual progress of students just as much as to the intellectual development of children. Anxiety, worry, strain, are all signs that the student has taken the wrong road; he is perhaps wanting to be at the head of the class, or at any rate to gain a prize or pass an examination. We have most of us been carefully taught at school to work with these objects in view. How many teachers are there who even think of trying to develop in their pupils an interest in the subject itself apart from personal success? And everyone knows the force of acquired habit. But for those who are trying to work for Theosophy there is a further consideration, which does not apply in ordinary intellectual work. Self-seeking in intellectual work does produce to a certain extent the result aimed at. A man can, if that is his object, use intellectual work as a fulcrum to raise himself above others, to satisfy ambition or love of gain. But in ethics, where there is self-seeking there can by the very nature of the case be no progress.

The difference is this: In intellectual progress the method which excludes the thought of self is the best; in moral or spiritual progress it is the only one possible. Conscious effort then towards moral or spiritual progress is of no use, the only kind of effort that is of use is unconscious effort. Now our traveller has fallen into the well, and we must leave him there a while to reflect. After all every man has to get into that well, and find some way or other of getting out. There is a way out which some have found, but they have to leave the useless part of themselves behind. Until they can do that, they have to remain in the well. A man cannot be helped out by another, he has to find the way out for himself. The means by which he gets out are part of that spiritual knowledge which cannot be expressed in words. Since the knowledge proceeds from the plane of the unconscious, it cannot be conveyed from one man to another, but can only be revealed to each man direct from the source of spiritual knowledge. Hence if he asks for a clue, the only answer is: "Seek for the Path."

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.]

Exoteric and Esoteric Catholicism.

STR.—As I understand "Y. Z.," the essential point of difference between us is as follows. We both hold that the real truth in Catholic doctrine is esoteric and spiritual. But whereas I hold that the Church does not know what that truth is, having lost the key to the meaning of the symbols in which it is veiled, and accordingly gives to the world only the "letter that kills"—kills, that is, both the truth itself and the ability to discern it—"Y. Z." holds that the Church does know what that truth is but intentionally withholds it from all but a few, thus depriving the many of the spirit which alone has and gives life. And he approves of this course on the grounds that the truth is too recondite to be "of the smallest practical use" save to an infinitesimal few, and that the letter is "so easy of comprehension." He actually pronounces the literal sense of Church dogma to be "so easy of comprehension," when it is so utterly incapable of being woven into an intelligible system, or rendered in the smallest degree assimilable by the mind, that the Church has found it necessary to shift the appeal on its behalf from the understanding to authority in order to procure its acceptance! Doing which, it demands of men the

double suicide, mental and moral, of sacrificing the intellect and divorcing profession from conviction, exactly after the fashion proposed in Cardinal Newman's "Grammar of Assent." And he would have the Church persist in this course even in face of the notorious fact that the great modern "Apostasy" from religion, and lapse into Agnosticism, Materialism, Atheism, and Pessimism has come precisely through the failure of the Church to explain its dogmas, and the righteous refusal of men to renounce their intelligence at the dictation of the priesthood. Surely that priesthood will have good cause to exclaim, "Save me from my friends!" when, like "Y.Z.," they plead that it has done wilfully that which I have charged it with doing ignorantly only.

If there is one proposition predicable of our age which stands forth conspicuous and inextinguishable above all others, it is the proposition that the world's supreme need is for a system of thought satisfactorily interpreting the nature of existence, and such that by his intelligent observance of it man realises his highest aspirations, intellectual, moral and spiritual. It is such a system of thought that, for me, is contained in Catholic dogma as a kernel in its shell. Therefore, I say, let that shell be cracked and its kernel be made available for food; let that dogma be interpreted and its true and divinely intended sense be applied to the world's salvation. But "Y.Z." while admitting the former part of my contention, dissents from the latter. He declines to let the world have the spiritual nourishment for the lack of which it is perishing. He insists that the Church shall still continue to give its children the "stones" of innutritious because indigestible dogmas for the "bread" of the divine word, and the "serpents" of the letter that kills for the "fish" of the living waters.

And why? Because to do so would be to give the world more knowledge than every individual is prepared to assimilate. His words are "too much knowledge to be of the smallest practical use to any living soul not to the manner born." What is this but the Procrustean rule of limiting all to the capacity of the smallest; instead of putting forth "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and affording everyone the opportunity of assimilating as much of it as he can? And what sort of a method of redeeming a "sinning, suffering humanity" is that which consists in paralysing its mind and dwarfing its soul by fastening it into a strait-jacket of beliefs wholly unrelated to its wants, mental or spiritual? But the truth is so hard, and idolatry is "so easy of comprehension"; therefore the idols shall not be utterly abolished, but shall continue to have free course and be glorified!

"Y.Z." quotes Scripture on his side. I will quote it on mine, commending to him the saying, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," and asking him to explain how it can do so if persistently withheld? But I fear the precedents are too many and strong which show that this is precisely what the priesthoods which call themselves Christian would not for a moment tolerate, seeing that the truth for which I also plead would make men free of them. Granted that the truth is—as "Y.Z." says—so deep that the "angels unceasingly desire to look into it," this is not to say that they want it for themselves alone, and when found would withhold it from mankind. If that is "Y.Z.'s" experience of angels, he has been unfortunate in his acquaintance in that quarter, and must have frequented only that "lower plane" which he so confidently assigns to me. Whereas my experience of them is directly the opposite. For it assures me that the "angels" are at this very time busily engaged, under the presidency of "that great prince Michael, who standeth for the children of God's people"—even those whose faith in God compels them to believe that the more they know of God's truth, the higher will be their estimation of God—in combining their forces and concentrating them on the earth, expressly in order to accomplish the fulfilment of the manifold prophecies which foretell the present time and the existing conditions of Church and world, as those appointed for the revelation of "that wicked one," the "man of sin," "mystery of iniquity," and "son of perdition," "who letteth and will let until he be taken out of the way," and "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God making himself to appear to be God," and "whom the Lord at his coming in the clouds of the heaven" of man's restored understanding of spiritual things, "shall consume with the spirit of his mouth," namely, a new Gospel of Interpretation, "and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," namely, the luminousness of the exposition thereof, the said "Wicked One" being no other than "that old

serpent" the controlling evil spirit of an ecclesiasticism which has assumed the guardianship of the sacred mysteries of religion only to betray them by materialising and falsifying them; and to that end has persistently and from the beginning corrupted the "Woman" Intuition, and suppressed the "Man" Intellect, thereby compassing and perpetuating the "Fall."

But—if the "angels" in whom I have learnt to confide are to be trusted—the end foretold by the seer is not far off. "Then shall the Woman be exalted, clothed with the Sun, and carried to the throne of God. And her sons shall make war with the dragon and have victory over him. Intuition, therefore, pure and a virgin, shall be the Mother and Redemptress of her fallen sons, whom she bore under bondage to her husband, the intellectual force."* For "Michael" represents the principle of equity, equilibrium, or balance between these two principles in man's mental system. Wherefore in that most ancient of Bibles, the Bible of the Zodiac, *Virgo* escapes *Scorpio* and ascends into the heaven of her proper supremacy through the interposition of *Libra*; the serpent still lying in wait for her heel in the event of her relapse.

But perhaps "Y.Z." will retort that these things belong to the "lower plane." Can he show us a higher? And has he not confounded the two conceptions, that of the "Motherhood of God" with that of "Motherhood in God"?

EDWARD MAITLAND.

SIR,—The letter of "Y.Z." in "LIGHT" of June 24th bears upon its surface a very deceptive appearance. He says: "As is well known to the initiates of the Catholic Church, there is an esoteric side to Christianity as well as an exoteric." This reads as if "Y.Z." would have us believe that there exists within the Roman Catholic Church an inner circle of initiates who hold the esoteric doctrines not given to the world. The onus of proving this, if such really be his meaning, lies with "Y.Z."; as the highest authority of that Church in England entirely denies the truth thereof.

Next "Y.Z." says: "The Blessed Virgin, of course, as the Catholic Church has ever held, represents the motherhood of God." The same authority also denies this. He says: "The notion of a feminine nature in God is simply Asiatic, and foreign to the teaching of the Catholic Church."

"Y.Z." concludes his letter as follows: "To a Catholic these things seem so natural as to require no explanation." I venture to think that the College of Cardinals would hardly agree with him. At any rate one of their number flatly contradicts the so-called facts of "Y.Z."

I hope "Y.Z." will clear this matter up, or refrain from misleading people as to facts. For either the Catholic Church of which he speaks is not that presided over by the Pope and his Cardinals; or his letter is simply a mass of misstated facts.

HENRY BURNBY.

A Plea for Advancing Thought.

SIR,—After an interval of ten years I have come back again to "LIGHT" as a reader, and that mainly in order to see what difference of position the experience accumulated during the intervening period has led to. I gave it up because I became wearied with the repetition of descriptions of séances, phenomena, communications through mediums, &c., such as every investigator of the occult witnesses for himself in his preliminary researches.

I confess that it is a disappointment to find that the position is still apparently pretty much the same as it was when I gave up reading the paper ten years ago.

The placing on record of psychical experiences is certainly a most useful function; but is there not a further "role" incumbent on the official organ of psychism? To go on registering phenomena without examining into the element of identity which relates such phenomena with the mind of the observer is surely as incomplete a mode of consideration as that of the man of the world, who goes through life satisfied that his surroundings are real in themselves, apart from any question of their relation to consciousness.

It appears to me that it will never be possible to lay down a permanent basis for Psychism upon which a system of synthetic deduction may be constructed, step by step, as long as investigations are confined to the external aspect of psychism only,

* "Clothed with the Sun," p. 19.

tion is, to the examination of manifestations external to ourselves. Could the examination be brought to bear on what it is in ourselves that induces these peculiar occurrences to us; what the element is which co-exists both in the phenomena and in ourselves, and forms the connecting link by which beings in another state of existence may manifest to us, an influence or impulsion—all that element of identity is contained also, our knowledge of Psychology can only be fragmentary and chaotic.

Must divergences ever be stronger than the love of attainment even among Theosophists and Occultists? Is not the thirst for truth sufficiently strong among us to outweigh considerations of personalities and to bring together representatives of the different schools interested in this field of research, imbued with the determination to lay down a foundation which may serve as a basis and guide for all students of Psychology?

Allow an outsider to suggest what an advantage to all students it would be if representatives of your own school of the Kabbalists, as represented by "Supreme Adept," whose able lectures you report so enthusiastically; of the Theosophists of the school of limitation, represented by Mr. Woodland; and of the Psychological Research Society; under the presidency of an unattached metaphysician, such for instance as "C.C.M." and with W. E. Stead as publishing secretary, could be brought together under the agreement to seek for a common basis in first principles, and to lay down such further formulae as they could unitedly agree upon.

Divergences would necessarily have to be allowed for, in proportion as the questions considered became relatively external, but differences must progressively disappear as basic principles are approached.

It may be supposed that such a symposium, if carried into effect, would lead to a formulation of broad basic principles on which the different schools agreed, accompanied by statements of their respective theories with regard to questions where divergence occurred. If such a discussion could be brought about, it would be of incalculable benefit, and all earnest truth-seekers would without doubt be grateful to you if you took the initial steps to carry it into effect. QUARTER LUCK.

The Practical Application of Theosophy.

SIR.—With your permission, I wish to reply to some of the objections brought against Mrs. Besant's article on the "Practical Application of Theosophy," which was reviewed in your issue of the 24th inst.

The first point of objection is as follows:—"The souls of those gone over seem to come back to their old haunts, and repeat vicariously the evil deeds which they still delight in. It does not follow, however, that they are re-incarnated. Souls of an undeveloped type are not necessarily the souls of human beings, though they may be so." Now, it is just upon this point that the Theosophical system appears, to my thinking, to be philosophically superior to that of the Spiritualists.

The last human Monad incarnated before the beginning of the fifth Root Race, and since that immensely distant period the human plane has been very distinctly defined; no Monad from a lower kingdom being permitted to function thereon until the expiration of the cycle governing the lower grades of evolution. Nature, according to Theosophy, is the manifestation of laws of inviolable order and sequence.

The vast hierarchies of souls inhabiting both the sensuous and supersensuous worlds are all confined to their respective planes or spheres, their evolution into other and higher realms of being depending strictly upon cyclic law. The time has not yet arrived for a fresh influx of monads, either from the elemental or the lower material kingdoms, into the human condition; therefore Theosophists affirm that the constant stream of Egos which are daily supplying the place of the outgoing current of human life are drawn from the vast, yet limited, number of souls who first incarnated in humanity at the beginning of the human cycle.

The various planes of nature interact, it is true, and a man may often succeed in getting into rapport with intelligences on planes other than that of his normal life; but the intercourse is necessarily temporary. It is only the trained adept who can be continuously a consciously double life; and while high spiritual entities may seem to descend to the human plane and function there as the guides and attendants of man, the human being so favoured is most probably placed, at times, en rapport with his guide's own appropriate plane, instead of vice versa. Therefore, though the planes of nature act and interact within certain limits, souls may not function continuously in any other

than their own appropriate sphere until the termination of a fixed cyclic period.

The second point of objection lies in the fact that large numbers of Egos are drawn into circumstances for which they are eminently unfitted. This is thought to be fatal to the truth of Re-incarnation.

It is just here that the Theosophical conception doctrine of Karma steps in and reconciles facts which, under any other hypothesis, are irreconcilable.

Unsuitable environment is the result of an effort made by Nature to adjust a disturbed balance. Souls, otherwise pure, themselves in conditions of equanimity and misery in order to learn that no isolation—even from the most degraded—is possible to those whose Karma is intricately interwoven with the great Karma.

As "Light on the Path" very beautifully expresses it:—"Before you can attain knowledge, you must have passed through all planes, foul and clean alike; therefore remember that the soiled garment you shrunk from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours to-morrow. And if you turn with horror from it, when it is flung upon your shoulders it will cling the more closely to you. A self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of nails."

Nature follows us as closely as our own shadow in order that she may correct our mistakes.

We are too ignorant to guide ourselves aright, so she has to be continually at our elbow with her stinging torch and hammer, cause and effect, or as Theosophists prefer to call it, Karma. And without Re-incarnation Karma has no scope for its action, since effects must follow causes on the plane upon which they are set up.

Unconditional Immortality.

SIR.—The thanks of your readers are due to Mr. Henly for opening up this important question. That the Rev. Edward White and others who, with him, cannot as yet see beyond the letter of Scripture which killeth, should contend that immortality is not inalienably inherent in man as an inheritance, but as a gift which may be imparted, withheld, or withdrawn, according to the will of the Supreme, is not surprising, because such literalists will not judge of their own selves as to what is right, and so base their faith on limited interpretations of isolated texts. Such people seem to be unaware of the pharisaic egotism of a hope which was shared in and naively expressed by Tom Paine, who said that he believed in an immortality for a few individuals of good common-sense, of which, said he, "I have a large share."

Yet it is true, as the former Editor of this paper contended, that while the phenomena of spirit manifestations prove continuity of conscious existence after bodily decease, they do not prove immortality, since such existence might cease at some indefinite period. But Mr. Moses never entertained the absurd idea of a Divine favoritism which, while bestowing the inestimable gift of eternal life on some or even many of His offspring, should regard others as unworthy of it. A firm rational faith in the Divine Fatherhood settles the question for ever. As the offspring of the Eternal, everyone, without exception, inherits immortality. The Divine nature conditioned in each is unconditional in all. For the Father of all to take away His own nature which constitutes sonship from any individual, or to make the continuous existence of that nature and being dependent on the good or ill conduct of the individual, whom, in order to the full realisation of Divine sonship, He has subjected to temptations of every kind, would be to commit Divine suicide because of His own failure.

How Mr. Henly can think "that this doctrine of conditional immortality covers the whole requirements of humanity, and at the same time fully justifies the ways of God to man," is a mystery to me. It does not cover the whole of my requirements, nor does it justify the ways of God to me—quite otherwise. Why should another son of the same parentage receive such inheritance, and I get not even the portion of a younger brother or prodigal son? I am well aware "That whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"; but after the reaping and the burning of the tares and chaff, the field, as well as the sower, still remains for the more profitable husbandry of its possessor who has learned wisdom through folly. I feel no more concern regarding the immortality or non-immortality of the soul, or psyche, than I do respecting the immortality of the body. God is Spirit, and the true being or Ego of man is the spirit.

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or pneuma, which for the Father of Spirits of all flesh to destroy would be to destroy Himself. It is not the *saving* but the *losing* of the soul that Christ taught as essential to salvation. "Whoever would save his soul (*psuche*) shall lose it: and whoever shall lose his soul for my sake shall find it." (Matt. xvi. 25.) The "*psuche*," the seat of animal impulses and affections, is as much a conditioned nature as is the body, and has to undergo changes and renewals tantamount to death and restoration. Even Christ "poured out his soul unto death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is a law of life, and if it implies extinction of being, all have become subject to the same fate.

Nothing can be definitely proved from texts of Scripture apart from rational consideration, for written revelation is a sword that turneth every way to keep the way of the tree of life, and not the least part of its usefulness is in its adaptability in the letter to every stage of growing consciousness, while its words become spirit and life to those who trust the ever-living interpreter in their own spirit.

I quite agree with Mr. Henly that individuality is a necessity of existence, and does not common experience teach that as individual sympathies and relations become widened and extended, individuality is not lessened but increased?

Personality, in which every perfected manhood will represent the race, will, while it transcends, include the fullest individual consciousness. The full-grown man would not recognise the infant or child he once was, as himself, but through the unbroken continuity of consciousness he can say of each state, That was I at such a time. So, while in that perfected state which each is destined to attain, there must be a vaster difference between it and the highest earthly attainment than between the states of infancy and manhood; so long as there is no break in continuity of consciousness each one will recognise his own special life in every stage of development as essential to his own perfection as well as to that of the whole body of humanity.

A short and easy method of answering advocates of imperfect ideas of human relationship and ultimate destiny, is to say that, as our faith is larger and more comprehensive, we cannot be expected to reject it for what is manifestly limited and exclusive. Truth is quite independent of our imperfect apprehensions of it. So all that is good and true is equally so for every one though not true to everyone, until he is prepared to enter into his inheritance.

In such comprehensive faith we do not "faintly trust the larger hope," but are confidently assured of the largest certainty.

The present life is the unripe stage of development in which the inmost divine life is "at-oneing" the outward conditioned nature to itself—"Making of the twain one new man, so making peace."

"And so, when bitter turneth sweet,
And every soul is blest,
Be sure for thee God's hand will mete
His unimagined rest."

J. W. F.

"As you would be done by."

SIR.—There is one element in the attitude of prominent opponents of Spiritualism which, I am sure, would be eliminated if they themselves were conscious of its existence; and that is what one cannot call less than an element of unconscious cruelty. They do not realise that they are speaking of those who, to us, are personal friends. Some months ago I mentioned, in writing to a well-known "Evangelical" opponent of Spiritualism, a spirit-friend who won my deepest affection in childhood, and whom I have had no reason to distrust since. The gentleman calmly wrote in reply that I have been for half-a-century beset by a demon, and that he begs me to pray to the Lord Jesus to rid me of him! Suppose I were to write to that gentleman's wife (in answer to a statement of his unvarying trustworthiness) and say that she has been, for several years, married to an emissary of Satan, and that I beseech her to sue for a divorce, everyone would know that I was not arguing, but simply indulging in insolence; in what respect do the cases differ?

The writer referred to by no means disputes the living existence of our spirit-friends; he has a theory that they are all "demons." Many of our opponents are in the position of not seeing any reason to believe in the actual existence of our friends. The coolness with which such persons often assert that our friends are "spooks," and have no living existence, is amazing.

We have all been reading Mrs. Besant's touching account of her baby's suffering, and her mother's affection. I know

nothing of either of these persons, except what Mrs. Besant tells; but I have seen people whom I loved suffer, in body and in mind, (persons in the flesh). Nothing I ever saw of that kind conveyed to me a more vivid sense of living agony than did a spirit who came to tell me of a mistake which he had made in his earth-life and which he wished me to repair. The cheerful and patronising calmness with which Theosophists (Madame Blavatsky and others) assert that our visitors are "spooks," and do not really feel, suggests the question: What would Mrs. Besant think of me if I asserted that her baby was a spook, and her mother's anxiety a got-up theatrical performance? I know quite as much about the matter as Theosophists know about my spirit-friends; *i.e.*, nothing at all. I only know that Mrs. Besant has described a deep and sorrowful experience which it behoves me to think of with tender reverence. Why are my friendships, and the pain which I say I have witnessed, to be more lightly treated?

When Theosophists, or Christians, or anyone else, tell us of serious experiences which they have gone through, we ought to listen with respect; but when these very same persons advance theories which can only be supported by summarily denying the equal validity of our experiences, and by calling our nearest and dearest friends, "spooks," "hallucinations," or "devils," we have a right to say that they have gone wrong somehow, and that we do not care to investigate any theory the propounders of which found their arguments on refusing to our friendships and affections that respect which they are claiming for their own.

MARY EVEREST BOOLE.

The Dauphin.

SIR.—Your quotation about the death of the alleged Dauphin in the Temple prison, in "LIGHT" for June 17th, is taken from a book called "Louis XVII.: Sa Vie, Son Agonie, Sa Mort," by M. A. de Beauchesne, the fourth edition of which work I have before me, which edition was published in 1867. The Dauphin was mediumistic as a child, and had a dream, some time before his father's death, prognosticating that death, which, on his recounting it to his mother, it almost drove her out of her wits. So it was politic, supposing a substitute for the Dauphin died in the Temple prison instead of the Dauphin himself, which many believe to have told the tale of clairvoyance and clairaudience described by M. de Beauchesne at the death of a boy in the Temple prison, on June 8th, 1795, who succumbed from "scrofula of long standing," as shown by the doctors at the autopsy; when the Dauphin was known not to have suffered from that disease even for a short time. Among the many who have given the testimony of their belief that a substitute died instead of the Dauphin are Louis Blanc, the historian, and Jules Favre, the famous lawyer, who signed for his nation the Treaty of Peace with Bismarck after the war of 1870.

As we know, clairvoyance and clairaudience often set in on the eve of death, and this might or might not have accrued to the scrofulous boy, whose mother might have been on his mind, or to the Dauphin himself.

For as the poet Rogers sang of a certain dying person:—

Those who watch by him see not, but he sees,
Sees and exults! Were ever dreams like these?
Those who watch by him hear not, but he hears;
And earth recedes, and heaven itself appears.

But, Dauphin or no Dauphin, the Duc de Normandie, the name he always bore while in England and France, is just as important a person to the Spiritists of the Continent and South America; that is, to people bred in the Greek and Roman Churches who call themselves by that term, as that fearless, thoughtful, discerning, triumphant child, little Katie Fox, is to the Spiritualists. For may it not be safely stated that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the two former Churches, when they assume Spiritism, turn Re-incarnationists, while ninety-nine out of every hundred Protestants, when they assume Spiritualism, remain Non-re-incarnationists?

Now, the Duc de Normandie was, by date, the first Spiritist in Europe of this century, and I do not doubt that he was the initiator of the belief adopted ten or more years after by Kardec; for their views are, so to speak, almost identical. The Duc de Normandie wrote and published a book in the year 1839, in French and English, called, in the latter tongue, "The Heavenly Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ," revealed to him as he supposed, by John the Baptist, or Elijah, and other great personages. This was succeeded by other books of a like sort. Being at that time a good Catholic, he thought it his duty as the rightful King of France, therefore the eldest son of the

Church, to acquaint the Pope with the revolutions that he had received, and to attempt to convert His Holiness to his views. But the Pope being inexorable and refusing to be dictated to, they unhappily fell out, and the Duke separated forthwith from what he believed to be the Church of his ancestors.

I need only give an epitome of his new faith to show its close analogy, to say the least, to the opinions afterwards adopted by Allan Kardec, long before Madame Blavatsky was heard of. I take from "La Légitimité," a weekly journal published at Bordeaux, and devoted to the cause of the descendants of the Duke. It is edited, and has been so for the last thirteen years, by a man of talent, the Abbé Dupuy. Of course, he is shocked at the Duke's opinions, but gives them in his paper, nevertheless. These opinions were drawn up by the Comte Gruau de la Barre, who lived with the Duke of Normandy during the whole of his residence in England, and was with him at his death. Here are these opinions of the Duke, as given in "La Légitimité" of December 12th, 1886, put shortly:—

"First, the Eternal is one God only, and not a God in three Persons. Secondly, all souls were created in Heaven before the foundation of the earth, and it is they who compose humanity by their habitation in the bodies born of men here below. Thirdly, all men are sons of God, like Jesus Christ, by the spirit and the soul, which constitute their immortal being: and sons of men by the mortal body, which comes back to earth; while their spiritual person continues its terrestrial career in other human bodies, until it has accomplished the will of God on this globe. Fourthly, Jesus Christ, made Lord of this world by the Eternal, His Celestial Father, is our elder brother of heaven, whence we are descended, and whither we shall return, according to the merit of our works, by remounting successively through all the heavens, which are the dwellings of our Heavenly Father, and through which we must pass, in order to arrive at the Heaven. Fifthly, we shall all be saved at a given period in eternity." T. W.

[We have omitted some portion of our correspondent's letter, in which he adduces evidence in favour of the so-called Duc de Normandie's claim to the Dauphinate. This seemed hardly within our purview.—ED. "LIGHT."]

Soul v. Spirit.

SIR,—In an article headed "A State of the Soul," in your issue of 10th ult., you use these words:—"For the 'Soul' seems generally to be a vague name for a vague and almost impossible entity."

It appears to me the terms "Soul" and "Spirit" do not convey to the ordinary lay mind sufficiently clear and distinct ideas, and I should be glad if you would find room in an early issue to give definitions of these terms from your point of view.

NEOPHYTE.

[Some of our correspondents will perhaps help in this.—ED. "LIGHT."]

Obsession and Possession.

SIR,—You state that my letter *re* Obsession and Possession is a "striking example of the way in which the Agnostic likes to disprove his right to that title." I do not see the manner in which that letter does disprove my right to the title of an Agnostic, as I rather think it goes to prove it, for Professor Huxley's definition of Agnosticism is: "It simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes what he has no scientific ground for professing to know or believe" and such is my position, for I have no evidence that justifies me in saying that the cause of obsession and possession is other than suggestion, hysteria, or our pent-up passions. If you have any fault to find with such a position I should be glad to hear your arguments.

I am quite aware that the derived meaning of the word Agnostic is "does not know," but it is not synonymous with the Latin ignore as it means one does not know because there is no reason for knowing.

In your remarks on one of my letters that was not printed you imply that I used expressions unnecessarily strong or that were not justifiable. I have re-read the letter in question, but cannot find any such language in it; but if you think that I have evinced any discourtesy, pray accept my apology. Also, in the postscript of my letter of 18th inst. I re-stated the substance of my previous letter, quoting only the portions that directly dealt with your comments, so the only interpretation that I can put on the sentence—"But that was not all, the language in which the letter was couched was not of the kind to which our

readers are accustomed"—is that your readers are in the habit of hearing only one side of the question, which is, perhaps, a pity.

If you do not think that the problem of Atheism interests your readers, why criticise it and make statements concerning it when you do not allow an Atheist to defend his views or criticise you in return?

CHARLES STRANGE.

[Our correspondent has a little misunderstood our meaning. His style in the unprinted letter was somewhat stronger than usual. There are some people who believe in God, which of course may be a weak thing to do, but the weaker brethren must not be offended. The problem of Atheism does not come within our range of subjects, except incidentally; so we decline to discuss it. May we not say that ironmongery and poetry are not of the same nature without raising a dispute about ironmongery?—ED. "LIGHT."]

SOCIETY WORK.

[Correspondents who send us notices of the work of the Societies with which they are associated will oblige by writing as distinctly as possible and by appending their signatures to their communications. Inattention to these requirements often compels us to reject their contributions. No notice received later than the first post on Tuesday is sure of admission.]

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN'S HALL, WEST HAM-LANE, STRATFORD, E.—Meetings each Sunday at 7 p.m. Fridays, inquirers' meeting at 7.30 p.m.; members at 8.30 p.m.; at 26, Keogh-road, Maryland Point. Speaker for Sunday, July 9th, Mr. J. A. Butcher.—J. RAINBOW, Hon. Sec.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' SOCIETY, 311, CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD, S. E.—Sunday, July 9th. Séance at 11.30, Lyceum at 3.0, Spirit circle at 7 p.m., and half-yearly meeting of members at 8.30. Wednesday, séance for inquirers at 8.30. The annual summer outing to Sevenoaks was held on Monday last, when a most enjoyable day was spent. The attendance was large and the weather delightful.—W. E. LONG.

MARYLEBONE SOCIETY, 86, HIGH-STREET, W.—Sunday, July 2nd. The annual meeting of above society under the presidency of Mr. T. Everitt. Financial statement read; officers for the ensuing year elected. Mrs. Treadwell, Miss Rowan Vincent, Messrs. Cooper and Hunt briefly addressed the meeting. The Committee desire to thank all friends who have in any way assisted us in the past year. 9th, at 11, meeting of friends; at 7, Mr. J. T. Morse will lecture, "Hells of the Hereafter."—C. HUNT.

PECKHAM RYE.—On Sunday last Mr. R. J. Lees took as his subject "Prophecy." Taking as his particular theme the "Comparison of Hebrew and Heathen Oracles," he gave numerous examples from both the Grecian and Jewish literatures as to the mode of communication, with their respective communicants. He strongly deprecated the habit of throwing odium on all other ancient religions except that which is the basis of Christianity, and showed, at least at their fount, the Hebrew in no way excelled in moral teaching, nor in their communications with their oracles, those of other ancient nations.—J. C.

THE SPIRITUALISTS' INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.—Information and assistance given to inquirers into Spiritualism. Literature on the subject and list of members will be sent on receipt of stamped envelope by any of the following International Committee:—America, Mrs. M. R. Palmer, 3101, North Broad-street, Philadelphia; Australia, Mr. J. Webster, 5, Peckville-street North, Melbourne; France, P. G. Leymarie, 1, Rue Chabanaux, Paris; Germany, E. Schlochau, 1, Monbijou-place, Berlin, N.; Holland, F. W. H. Van Straaten, Apeldoorn, Middelland, 682; India, Mr. T. Hatton, State Cotton Mills, Baroods; New Zealand, Mr. Graham, Huntley, Waikato; Sweden, B. Fortenson, Ade, Christiania; Russia, Etienne. Geispitz Grande, Belozerski, No. 7, Lod. G, St. Petersburg; England, J. Allen, Hon. Sec., 14, Berkley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park, Essex; or, W. C. Robson, French correspondent, 166, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne.—The Manor Park branch will hold the following meetings at 14, Berkley-terrace, White Post-lane, Manor Park:—The last Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m., reception for inquirers. Also each Friday, at 8 p.m. prompt, for Spiritualists only, the study of Spiritualism. And at 1, Winifred-road, Manor Park, the first Sunday in each month, at 7 p.m., reception for inquirers. Also each Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m., inquirers' meeting.—J. A.

MR. BEVAN HARRIS, Newcastle-on-Tyne, offers gratis to Spiritual workers *in or out-of-doors*, on receipt of a halfpenny stamp or addressed stamped wrapper, a blue printed bill, size 14in. by 18in., as under: "Spiritualism meets the difficulties, and strengthens the faith of the doubting, giving the best if not the only satisfactory evidence of immortality, or life after death. Its phenomena, being all based upon immutable principles of law and its revelations being founded upon facts, tend to place true religion on the basis of science and vitalise science with all that is true and practical in religion."