

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 "The Theosophist" for February, Colonel Olcott tells many stories concerning Madame Blavatsky's miracles. Here is one, turning upon the receipt of a letter from Mr. Stainton Moses:—

I received one day a letter from a certain person who had done me a great wrong, and read it aloud to H. P. B. "We must have a copy of that," she exclaimed, and, taking a sheet of note-paper from me, held it daintily by one corner and actually peeled off a duplicate, paper and all, before my eyes! It was as though she had split the sheet between its two surfaces. Another example, perhaps even more interesting, is the following. Under date of December 22nd, 1887, Stainton Moses wrote her a five-paged letter of a rather controversial, or, at any rate, critical character. The paper was of square, full letter size, and bore the embossed heading "University College, London," and near the left-hand upper corner his monogram,—a W. and M. interlaced and crossed by the name "STAINTON" in small capitals. She said we must have a duplicate of this too, so I took from the desk five half-sheets of foreign letter paper of the same size as Oxon's and gave her them. She laid them against the five pages of his letter, and then placed the whole in a drawer of the desk just in front of me as I sat. We went on with our conversation for some time, until she said she thought the copy was made and I had better look and see if that were so. I opened the drawer, took out the papers, and found that one page of each of my five pieces had received from the page with which it was in contact the impression of that page. So nearly alike were the originals and copies that I thought them—as the reader recollects I did the copy of the Britten-Louis portrait—exact duplicates. I had been thinking so all these subsequent sixteen years, but since I hunted up the documents for description in this chapter, I see that this is not the case. The writings are almost duplicates, yet not quite so. They are rather like two original writings by the same hand. If H. P. B. had had time to prepare this surprise for me, the explanation of forgery would suffice to cover the case; but she had not; the whole thing occurred as described, and I submit that it has an unquestionable evidential value as to the problem of her possessing psychical powers. The time occupied by the whole phenomenon might have been five or ten minutes, and the papers lay the whole time in the drawer in front of my breast, so there was no trick of taking it out and substituting other sheets for the blank ones I had just then handed her.

Dr. George Wyld's book on "Theosophy, or Spiritual Dynamics and the Divine and Miraculous Man," has reached a second and enlarged edition. In a new preface the author plainly says that he has been specially moved to re-issue the book "because the term Theosophy is in the air," and because "there is and always has been a *Christian Theosophy* which must be in antagonism to that system of Hindoo Cosmogony and Magic vamped together by the late Madame Blavatsky." Some would think Dr. Wyld's book a little old-fashioned, but old fashions have a curious knack of turning up again, and we should not be surprised

if this specimen came again into vogue. It has a rather better chance of abiding than the Blavatsky boom.

Dr. Wyld's book is a very thoughtful vindication of Spiritualism, and its subjects have a wide range,—Man as a Spirit; The Divine and Miraculous Man; The Life of Jesus Christ; Miracles as not contrary to Nature; The Christian Saints; Mesmerism, Hypnotism and Faith Healing; Clairvoyance and its Revelation of the Autozoetic Soul; Anæsthetics and their Revelation of the Soul; Matter and its Spiritual Substances; Darwinism and Evolution; Re-incarnation; &c. Many of these are reprints or extensions of papers read before various societies, but, together, they form a rather strong cable which the Agnostics would find it difficult even to strain. The publishers of the book (with portrait of the author) are J. Elliott and Co., Temple-chambers, London.

Nikola Tesla, a famous Continental electrician, is hopefully continuing his beautiful, and possibly most important, experiments with a view to giving us light without filaments and even without wires. This, however impossible it may seem, is simply achieved, and the only question is, When can the discovery be made practically useful and commercially successful? In other words, when can it be made to pay? Tesla is a kind of theist and spiritualist in electricity. He is fond of saying that nature has flooded the Universe with a boundless ocean of energy, and that the greatest manifestation of this energy is Electricity, which is to the Universe what the soul is to the body. He is working at the development of an electrical or, rather, electrostatic field, in any given spot in which a vacuum lamp would glow. Such a lamp would be entirely isolated and portable—as much so as a box of matches or a candlestick: but, being brought within the electrostatic field, it would glow. Of course, if this could be done—that is to say, if the field in ordinary rooms could be cheaply created and maintained—electric lighting would be revolutionised. Possibly it might have very important bearings upon horticulture under glass. There are some of us who discern in it a solution of many occult things.

Sir James Crichton Browne's "Humanitarian" article on "Biology and Ethics" is decidedly timely. The pessimists have had it too much their own way. If they had it entirely their own way, we should soon have to say, with no merely formal meaning, "and there is no health in us." Nothing is easier than to paint an awful picture of the ever-present struggle for existence; but nothing can be more easily overdone. An enormous proportion of so-called misery is either not misery at all or is misery with curious compensations. The philosopher in his slippers imagines that the man in the gutter feels as he would. His reckoning is all wrong. Besides, he is only too apt to lose sight of the abounding uses of the struggle for existence.

Dr. Crichton Browne, for instance, reminds us that this struggle is really the real Creator of man. "It seems reason-

able to suppose that cerebral evolution, if still in progress, is going on at the present day most actively in these (sensory) centres (of the brain), for success in the struggle for existence, as now conducted, depends more on quickness of perception than on motor energy, more on sensational vivacity than on muscular activity." Then, referring to these "sensory centres," he says "it seems to be more than probable that the development of these is a measure of the sentiency of the animal or race." If so, it is literally true that the struggle for existence is, not the destruction, but the creation, of the race.

The conclusion is a most hopeful and consoling one: "Our work convinces us that man, to a large extent, controls his own destiny, and may, if he will, rise out of the prevailing pessimism, and climb to heights of sentiency not yet attained. Playing a man's part, we come to see that suffering is an accident and not the substance of life; that evil is a shadow, haunting certain portions of a pathway that is everywhere pervaded by a 'kindly light.' We come to perceive that it is a man's part to empale natural contingency within rational necessity and, step by step as he advances, to enlarge his interference with nature, and augment his ascendancy over her."

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

Mr. R. J. Lees has kindly promised to give an address to the members and friends of the Alliance at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, at 7 o'clock, on the evening of Monday next, March 5th. His subject will be "Spiritualism in relation to Human Progress."

AGNOSTICISM AND SPIRITUALISM.

If the following paragraph is to be taken as expressive of the real thought of an honest agnostic, we shall soon have to seriously consider wherein lies the difference between Agnosticism and Spiritualism. It is from the able pen of "Saladin," writing in his paper, the "Agnostic Journal":—

I confess to a profound sympathy with the dead. They are not dissevered from us. They have ascended to a Pisgah height from which they see what we cannot see; they have eaten of a Tree of knowledge by which they know what we cannot know; on the ladder of Evolution they have taken a step which we have not taken, but must take. And in extreme moments of our destiny they come down and are with us; their spirit is in our soul, even as their blood is in our veins. Who that is susceptible of the keener and more subtle of human yearnings has not experienced moments when the dead were with him: when he was about to ruin woman, and his mother intervened from the tomb; when he was about to wrong man, and his father spake from the grave? This world would be intolerable if, besides being the location of the commonplace living, it were not also the haunt of the sublimer dead; I have less ear for its sermons from the pulpit than for its voices from the dust.

THE MAHATMAS.

In an article in "Le Messenger" on Occultism, the writer expresses himself as follows: The Occultists tell us that spirits experience extreme repugnance to communicating with us. Our calling them up causes them to suffer, and they do not respond, according to some, unless they are constrained by means of formal incantation. The wisdom of this doctrine does not rise above the level of a sorcerer's manual. As for the Mahatmas, I am afraid those who believe themselves to have relations with them are really the sport of mystifying spirits who give themselves out as Mahatmas. Where is the Occultist who has gone to Thibet, and proved the existence of these men who have vanquished death?

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH recently formed a "Committee for the Systematic Investigation of Hypnotic Phenomena" under medical supervision. The committee is now meeting regularly at the Rooms of the Society, and invites the co-operation of those who may be able to render assistance by providing subjects for experiment, or by indicating profitable lines of inquiry. The committee may be addressed through its Hon. Secretary, G. A. Smith, 19, Buckingham-street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

AMONG THE ADEPTS.

A certain Dr. Hensoldt has been writing articles in the "Arena," purporting to be an account of his personal experiences in Occultism in the East, which, if not taken too seriously, are amusing reading. The January and February numbers of that magazine contain one of these articles, entitled "Among the Adepts of Serinagur."

Now, a child would have a very good right to cry out against us did we offend its sense of congruity by describing a Fairy as keeping a pawn-shop, or an Ogre as reading family prayers; not because the child had ever seen a Fairy or met an Ogre, and knew their characteristics by experience, but because it has a conventional Fairy or Ogre in its mind, who does not do these things. In like manner, we bigger children have a right to protest against any such portraiture of an "Adept" as that made by Dr. Hensoldt: for it is not a bit like "the real thing"—that is to say, an "Adept" such as he draws is a very poor creature compared with the grand being depicted by Bulwer Lytton, and described by Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophists, the splendid traits in whose character, and whose immense knowledge, have come to be associated in our minds with the name "Adept," as well as a power to work wonders.

Occultists must regard with mixed feelings the familiarities of writers who palm off on the unsuspecting public as matters of fact the products of their own more or less lively imaginations. That kind of thing no doubt shows the interest taken by the public in occult matters, which is satisfactory; but the utterly un-occult character of almost every one of these productions proves how ignorant the general public is about these things. It has, however, become tacitly accepted as a legitimate literary device in this field to present purely fictitious narratives with all the appearance of truthfulness and good faith; it would, therefore, be unjust to single out one writer of imaginary occult adventures, and make him a scapegoat for his class—especially when it is particularly difficult to say at what point, or with which writer, this kind of fanciful treatment ends, and real events are related. It is said that restaurant keepers in France sometimes engage Englishmen who speak French, as waiters, in order that they may talk French to their English customers, for these like to "speak the language," but understand it better when it is spoken as they speak it themselves. It is probably for a similar reason that magazine editors accept the "Occultism" which they generally insert; were they to engage a real Occultist to write for them, he would not be understood.

One naturally gives an author the benefit of one's credence at first, just as one does in the case of those delightful stories that end up with St. Jacob's Oil or Mother Seigel's Syrup, and Dr. Hensoldt's plausibility seems at first to justify confidence; but when our author complacently tells us that "the real adepts are often men remarkably deficient in philosophical or even general information" we are inclined to ask, "How do you know?" He himself tells us how he knows. "I have found among them individuals who would be deemed exceedingly ignorant if judged by our Western standard of education; men, for instance, who had not the haziest knowledge of geography, and to whom even the history of their own country was in great measure a sealed book." The history of India happens to be in a great measure a sealed book to everyone, for the Hindus never were historians. And "real adepts" are very shy birds indeed, and not easily encountered; and the above description applies partly to the fakir or street-corner yogi, and partly to the telapoin or Buddhist monk, of whom a traveller, such as Dr. Hensoldt professes to be, might meet many samples. A reader not quite ignorant of the customs of the Hindus, and of their ideas on occult subjects, is apt to get out of patience with Dr. Hensoldt at first, but the frown relaxes into a smile when he reads

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how the author used to grope his way through dark, damp caves, filled with bats, and how he found old books written in "Pali and Devanagari"; for no sane man would go groping about such caves in that land of snakes, scorpions, and centipedes; and although Pali is a language Devanagari happens to be only the name for the characters in which Sanscrit is written. What should we think of a gentleman who told us that he had visited a part of France where they spoke Roman Letter?

Dr. Hensoldt's story is that after spending two years with a celebrated Sanscrit scholar in the jungles of Ceylon, he travelled through the whole of India, part of Thibet, Bhotan, British Burmah, and Rangoon; and subsequently in Madagascar, South Africa, and the continent of America. All this had made him a Materialist, but he nevertheless longed to be initiated into the mysteries of Raj Yoga, which, as everyone knows, is the very antithesis of materialism, and is founded on conceptions of the Cosmos absolutely incompatible with materialism, conceptions which are, in fact, quite incomprehensible to any mind that finds the materialistic hypothesis satisfactory. But it is very evident that our author confounds "Hatha Yoga," which attempts to control the mind by bodily austerities and hardships, with Raj Yoga, which creates a control of mind by mental exercises and training; for he says:—

What I want to dwell upon is the fact that adeptship in the real esoteric science of India does not pre-suppose great learning or intellectual superiority on the part of the initiate. The years of probation, and the almost incredible hardships which are often inflicted on the neophyte before he is deemed worthy of reception into the "Brotherhood," are more intended to test his physical endurance and observe his trustworthiness than to increase his store of information.

Dr. Hensoldt obtains a letter of introduction to an "adept" called Coomra Sami, and after four months' travelling through the mountains, finds him in Kashmere, living in a ruined "pagoda" with four other "adepts" (even more off colour than himself) and two servants. Coomra Sami, after the manner of adepts in such cases, astonishes his guest by giving him particulars of his journey; and that ends the first of the two articles, which is chiefly devoted to philosophising of a not particularly original description, being apparently a mixture of Jacolliot and "T.P.S."

The second article on "The Adepts of Serinagur" opens rather more hopefully, for our author seems at first to have had a qualm of conscience that might betoken a change of heart. He says:—

Essayists rush into magazines or flood the daily press with articles on subjects of which they know next to nothing, merely because there happens to be a temporary "demand" for information of a certain character, and experience has taught them that almost any kind of flimsy sophistry will go down with the "swinish multitudes" and even pass for profound learning.

Our hopes are soon dashed, however, for Dr. Hensoldt again enters upon pages of mildly philosophical dissertation about Rameses, Buckle, the Romans, Gauls, Greeks, Troy, Ceylon, Alexandria, Lombard-street, Wall-street, and a miscellaneous collection of other personal and local odds and ends that remind the reader of "G.A.S.'s", well-known and wonderful leaders. His meditations are, however, happily interrupted by Coomra Sami, "whose patience was apparently exhausted." Coomra Sami then begins to perform the office of Guru to this new Chela by refusing him a pillow for his bed!—

"A man who must have a pillow to sleep on has but a very poor chance of rising beyond the level of the *bhayla*," said he (the author tells us in a footnote that *bhayla* means "cattle" and that "this was Coomra's favourite term for the generality of mankind") "you must try to do without one, my friend. It is of importance that during sleep your head be on a level with the rest of your body, and you lie on your back. Only in that position can the brain be brought to develop that which it mostly lacks, viz., a perception of nature's unseen forces."

"Then you identify the brain with the intellect," I replied, "and admit that what we call mind, soul, or spirit, is a product of matter. This is exactly my standpoint, and here we have a common starting ground."

"Mind a product of matter?" said the adept, with a contemptuous smile, as he fixed his keen glance on me—"is that really the outcome of your studies? I am sorry for a science which can lead its disciples to such comforting conclusions."

"Then in the name of Garaj, what better definition have you to offer?" I shouted, now thoroughly aroused and put on my mettle by the spirit of controversy.

If, as it is said, the next best thing to knowing how a thing ought to be done is knowing how it ought *not* to be done, the reader may learn much from Coomra Sami, for there is some reason to believe that this is *not* the way in which an Eastern Occultist either speaks or is spoken to. For six months did the author continue his studies of Yoga, and he tells us that "a hundred pages of the 'Arena' would not suffice to exhaust the wealth of material at my command," and that "many a strange truth, that has sunk deep into my heart, have I learned from his lips." Dr. Hensoldt gives a few samples of these truths, which, however true and however well expressed they may be, are singularly like the present products of Western thought. For instance:—

"Then what am I to do, Samadhi? Do you really mean to say that no record exists of the most valuable discoveries of the past? Of what advantage is the treasuring of works of poetry and moral precepts, if the greatest cosmic revelations are allowed to be buried in oblivion?"

"You do not know whereof you speak," said Coomra. "The wisdom you are in search of is not to be found in books. Young friend, there are things which it is altogether impossible to express in words. Could the *thorwa* (a species of mud-fish) understand the language of the heron? It crawls about at the bottom of its turbid pond, and knows nothing but water, mud, and worms. If anyone were to inform it of the existence of another and totally different world above this pond—a world of air and sunshine, of trees and flowers, a world inhabited by winged creatures with gorgeous plumage—would or could it form a conception of such? You can only explain an object in terms that refer to similar objects, and," he added, with peculiar emphasis, "the world behind the curtain is so utterly unlike the world revealed by our senses that the Masters could not describe it if they would."

"But there must be ways of getting at such information," I observed, "or else how could anyone ever hope to pierce the gloom? How did the Masters come by their knowledge?"

"The method is a very simple one; look into your own self, and if you do this rightly you will see everything, and will be under no obligation to ask further questions."

This is not bad for Coomra, but it implies that, "adept" though he be, he is not a "Master." The author details two "phenomena." One concerns an Arabian Nights kind of "enchanted rock," which Dr. Hensoldt puzzled over for months, but did not find out; the other we shall quote, as it is curiously suggestive of Western discovery as well as Western invention. It suggests the phosphoric light that Science tells us makes the creatures in the sunless depths of the ocean self-luminous, and it also recalls the civilised and simple process of turning on the electric light. Dr. Hensoldt had asked to see some books, and although Coomra said that only "duffers" cared for books, he led him in the dark to the "library":—

He released my hand and left me standing in the dark while I heard him walk some distance and open what afterwards proved to be a large chest. "Here," he said, approaching me again, "look at this fine carving and at these pictures; this is the kind of thing that interests the duffers most."

"I beg your pardon, Samadhi," I replied, "how can I see in this inky darkness? What a pity we did not bring a lantern with us."

"Oh, I forgot," said the adept, and suddenly, as if at the fiat of some unseen power, a flood of light surrounded me, and I found myself in a high-roofed apartment devoid of furniture, except an old chest and two sheepskins in the middle of the floor. The light was certainly not produced by any artificial

means; it was as bright as day and of that unearthly refulgence which, on more than one previous occasion, had startled me in certain feats of Yoga in Central India. The objects in this light cast no shadows, which clearly proves that its source cannot be an incandescent body like the sun, or any other radiating point. The nearest definition—although a poor one—which I can give of this light is that of a luminous fluid, which is suddenly precipitated over a limited space, and in which the objects seem to be immersed. On this occasion the light did not extend beyond the threshold of the apartment, where it did not merge by gradual transition into the darkness of the corridor, but seemed cut off by a sharp demarcation line. The same was the case with the windows, which were square holes cut in the wall; there was inky darkness and the drizzling rain without.

It is a pity that those who *really* know about these things will not speak out. Were Dr. Hensoldt to put forward his ideas as his own they would be very interesting, for he is a clever writer, and he *has* ideas to put forward; it is when he fathers his ideas upon those whom we usually credit with superior wisdom that an incongruity comes in, which tends to make the reader undervalue what he reads. With this reflection we take leave of Dr. Hensoldt.

"THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE."*

(Continued from p. 93.)

In Chapter IV, Mr. Fawcett criticises very ably the various forms of idealism. Although his own system is necessarily idealistic, he sees that "Subjective Idealism," which suspends Nature wholly in the consciousness of the individual, will not work, and he advances several reasons to show why it will not do so. Of course, on a monadological basis, all I know directly are determinations or states of my Subject; but my object-consciousness may, nevertheless, be indirectly or inferentially shown to point to activities of a spiritual, though not necessarily conscious, order. Perception, in fact, has an extra-experiential reference, through the explication primarily of my Subject, "the *metaconscious* evolver of our outer experience, and *involver* of that into our inner or mental experience" (mind proper).

Metaphysics is a subject which, for the ordinary reader, is as beset with thorny points as a rose bush, and the manner in which Mr. Fawcett plucks his rose from the midst of these thorns will, doubtless, be of extreme interest to those who have metaphysical minds; but the average reader of "LIGHT" will probably be more interested in the rose itself than in the thorns. The following is Mr. Fawcett's own summary of his world-system:—

The first stage is that of the *Metaconscious* as *prius*, as the abyssal black night whence individuals, and with them their consciousness, arise. This fathomless Cimmerian Power—this inexplicable spiritual spontaneity—is the font of all reality, and of it viewed thus as *prius*, the Atheist, if idealist, is interpreter. Not thought, or reason, not a conscious individual, but this Atheistic ground is the final postulate of philosophy. This *dépassé* or possibility passes into *évérgeia* or actuality, as conscious individuals, into the *éτελέχεια* or consummated perfection and actuality [to which *évérgeia* as a process conducts] as the complex of fully unfolded individuals. In the second stage this Power lives through myriads of almost numberless subjectivities [a-conscious, sub-conscious, conscious, self-conscious, &c.]. It grows thus with the growth of the nations, rejoices with their rejoicings, suffers with their sufferings. He who assists his kind, in art, in science, commerce, philosophy, morality, politics, economics, and the rest, ministers to that free complete development of individuals which is equally his own development. Our Universal History is a page of its diary, the stories of the nations constitute its words. Of this stage the Pantheist may stand as interpreter. The final stage is that in which the *Metaconscious* negates its lapse into discreteness and re-emerges as Deity *conscious* of itself as synthesis, as Unity in difference of all the [paligenetic] individuals whose journey through reality mediated it. This is the awful Deity whom Renan limns forth in the *Dialogues*, already touched on, and with such a being we may solace Theism for its losses. As an individualist in metaphysic, I suggest no final mergence of the individual, no Advaitic Vedantist or Buddhist theory that dismisses "selves" as illusory. *On the contrary, the individual Self is ever in last resort the only concrete, the only possible reality; and indissoluble ultimate,*

and end before which all else is superfluous. The Deity of Renan will be no individual, but a republic of individuals, a Being with myriads of eyes, every one of which is itself a Deity. Individualism is vindicated, the harmony of glorified individuals will constitute the Absolute that is yet to be. But note that, terrible and majestic as it will be, even this Deity cannot hope to claim omniscience. Despite its absorption of the world-process, its in-gathering of every truth and quiver of reality, an abyss must remain unplumbed. For behind it must ever loom the inexplicable black night of the *Metaconscious*, and into this no intuition, divine or other, can penetrate. Only so far as it becomes conscious is the *Metaconscious* transformed into light.

Beginning with the datum, "States of consciousness exist," followed by its corollary, that these states of consciousness exist in the Individual Subject, Mr. Fawcett builds a *Monadology* which differs from the *Monadologies* that have preceded his by being more logical and thorough-going, and to which he gives the name *par excellence* of "Absolutism." *Consciousness*—using that term in the most general sense—is the one real thing in the Universe. Matter, Spirit, Force, and the varying manifestations of these, are all reducible to states of consciousness in the Individual Subject, and the details of their manifestation belong to Science, and interest the *Metaphysician* in only a secondary degree. His metaphysic declares that look where we will in the actual or (as far as we can see) possible Universe, we find competing centres of consciousness or individuals, each of which strives to realise itself, now furthering, now hindering, the realisation of other monads in the process—in fact, a universal Darwinism. The obvious result of this position, considered apart from subsequent qualifications, is Pessimism—and the case for Pessimism could hardly be put in stronger form than it is by our author—but *Metaphysic* again steps in, and blows away the clouds by analysing the ultimate sources of pains and pleasures themselves, and by proving to an apparent certainty that consciousness itself is developing; and that, just as, if we look back, we find a time when the consciousness of what we know as pain and sorrow did not exist, so if we continue the curve in the direction it has gone, and is going, we find that we must, through the further development of consciousness, reach a state in which the struggle for existence, and its consequent pain and sorrow, will be outgrown—this is, in fact, merely a necessary incident in the self-realisation of the monads. This knowledge should enable us to "grin and bear" our present evils, intent only on lessening them for ourselves and others by aiding in the normal development of the monads. Our author, *à propos* of this, makes an analysis of pains and pleasures, and bases on it a novel theory of Ethics, too lengthy to discuss here.

As the Universe furnishes the human monads with much the same experiences, and the individual Subjects tend to interpret that experience in much the same way, it is natural that Mr. Fawcett's solution of the "Riddle" should resemble those of his predecessors while differing from them, especially as he professes only to add a stage to the scaffolding they have erected. The "black night of the *Metaconscious*" bears a likeness (though there are important differences) to Schelling's "Immemorial Being," and to Von Hartmann's "Unconscious." Again, the Deity that is the realised Universe, and beyond whom or which there lies the never-to-be-fathomed *Metaconscious*, is very like Brahmā, the Universe, the highest God of the Hindu philosophy, behind whom lies the "Great Breath," the eternal source of cyclic change and development, for ever beyond the consciousness of even Brahmā himself. But Western and not Eastern philosophy is put forward as the Hierophant, and Mr. Fawcett freely acknowledges his debt to Renan—whose suggested Deity he explicitly champions.

The idea of recurring periods of activity and repose, and the consequent theory of cyclic development, are mentioned almost casually by Mr. Fawcett, apparently as a detail included in the development of consciousness; and he seems to regard these things as falling rather within the province of Science than of *Metaphysics*, since they belong to the phenomenal. But development in or by cycles has a very fundamental bearing on metaphysics; for it implies that consciousness itself is developing in a spiral, which is for ever increasing in magnitude; whereas the Absolutism of Mr. Fawcett makes progress in the development of consciousness to consist in, as it were, a straight line from the *Metaconscious* to Deity. That which falls apart into "individual monads," according to the Eastern idea is not an undeveloped *Prius*, but a Universal Subject that has run its cyclic course, and begins the long round over again "on a

* "The Riddle of the Universe; Being an Attempt to determine the First Principles of Metaphysic, considered as an Inquiry into the Conditions and Import of Consciousness." By EDWARD DOUGLAS FAWCETT, 8vo, pp. 440. (London: Edward Arnold.)

means; it was as bright as day and of that unearthly refulgence which, on more than one previous occasion, had startled me in certain fasts of Yoga in Central India. The objects in this light cast no shadows, which clearly proves that its source cannot be an incandescent body like the sun, or any other radiating point. The nearest definition—although a poor one—which I can give of this light is that of a luminous fluid, which is suddenly precipitated over a limited space, and in which the objects seem to be immersed. On this occasion the light did not extend beyond the threshold of the apartment, where it did not merge by gradual transition into the darkness of the corridor, but seemed cut off by a sharp demarcation line. The same was the case with the windows, which were square holes cut in the wall; there was inky darkness and the drizzling rain without.

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"THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE."*

(Continued from p. 93.)

In Chapter IV. Mr. Fawcett criticises very ably the various forms of idealism. Although his own system is necessarily idealistic, he sees that "Subjective Idealism," which suspends Nature wholly in the consciousness of the individual, will not work, and he advances several reasons to show why it will not do so. Of course, on a monodological basis, all I know directly are determinations or states of my Subject; but my object-consciousness may, nevertheless, be indirectly or inferentially shown to point to activities of a spiritual, though not necessarily conscious, order. Perception, in fact, has an extra-experiential reference, through the explicitation primarily of my Subject, "the metaconscious *ensouler* of our outer experience, and *insouler* of that into our inner or mental experience" (mind proper).

Metaphysics is a subject which, for the ordinary reader, is as beset with thorny points as a rose bush, and the manner in which Mr. Fawcett plucks his rose from the midst of these thorns will, doubtless, be of extreme interest to those who have metaphysical minds; but the average reader of "LIGHT" will probably be more interested in the rose itself than in the thorns. The following is Mr. Fawcett's own summary of his world-system:—

The first stage is that of the Metaconscious as *primum*, as the abyssal black night whence individuals, and with them consciousness, arise. This fathomless Cimmerian Power—this inexplicable spiritual spontaneity—is the fount of all reality, and of it viewed thus as *primum*, the Atheist, if idealist, is interpreter. Not thought, or reason, not a conscious individual, but this Atheistic ground is the final postulate of philosophy. This *dyonaea* or possibility passes into *étheraea* or actuality, as conscious individuals, into the *épothéaea* or consummated perfection and actuality [to which *étheraea* as a process conducts] as the complex of fully unfolded individuals. In the second stage this Power lives through myriads of almost numberless subjectivities [a-conscious, sub-conscious, conscious, self-conscious, &c.]. It grows thus with the growth of the nations, rejoices with their rejoicings, suffers with their sufferings. He who assists his kind, in art, in science, commerce, philosophy, morality, politics, economics, and the rest, ministers to that free complete development of individuals which is equally his own development. Our Universal History is a page of its diary, the stories of the nations constitute its words. Of this stage the Pantheist may stand as interpreter. The final stage is that in which the Metaconscious negates its lapse into discreteness and re-emerges as Deity conscious of itself as synthesis, as Unity in difference of all the [palmygenetic] individuals whose journey through reality mediated it. This is the awful Deity whom Renan limns forth in the *Dialogues*, already touched on, and with such a being we may solace Theism for its losses. As an individualist in metaphysics, I suggest no final mergence of the individual, no Advaitic Vedantist or Buddhist theory that diminishes "selves" as illusory. On the contrary, the individual Self is ever in last resort the only concrete, the only possible reality; and indissoluble ultimate,

and end before which all else is superfluous. The Deity of Renan will be no individual, but a republic of individuals, a Being with myriads of eyes, every one of which is manifest Deity. Individualism is vindicated, the harmony of glorified individuals will constitute the Absolute that is yet to be. But note that, terrible and majestic as it will be, even this Deity cannot hope to claim omniscience. Despite its absorption of the world-process, its in-gathering of every thing and quiver of reality, an abyss must remain unplumbed. Behind it must ever loom the inexplicable black night of the Metaconscious, and into this no intuition, divine or other, can penetrate. Only so far as it becomes conscious is the Metaconscious transformed into light.

Beginning with the datum, "States of consciousness exist," followed by its corollary, that these states of consciousness exist in the Individual Subject, Mr. Fawcett builds a Metaphysics which differs from the Monadologies that have preceded his by being more logical and thorough-going, and to which he gives the name *par excellence* of "Absolutism." Consciousness—using that term in the most general sense—is the real thing in the Universe. Matter, Spirit, Force, and the varying manifestations of these, are all reducible to states of consciousness in the Individual Subject, and the details of their manifestation belong to Science, and interest the Metaphysician in only a secondary degree. His metaphysic declares that, where we will in the actual or (as far as we can see) possible Universe, we find competing centres of consciousness, individuals, each of which strives to realise itself, now functioning, now hindering, the realisation of other monads in the process—in fact, a universal Darwinism. The obvious result of this position, considered apart from subsequent qualifications, is Pessimism—and the case for Pessimism could hardly be put in stronger form than it is by our author—but Metaphysics again steps in, and blows away the clouds by analysing the ultimate sources of pains and pleasures themselves, and by proving to an apparent certainty that consciousness itself is developing, and that, just as, if we look back, we find a time when the consciousness of what we know as pain and sorrow did not exist, so if we continue the curve in the direction it has gone, and is going, we find that we must, through the further development of consciousness, reach a state in which the struggle for existence, and its consequent pain and sorrow, will be outgrown—this is, in fact, merely a necessary incident in the self-realisation of the monads. This knowledge should enable us to "grin and bear" our present evils, intent only on lessening them for ourselves and others by aiding in the normal development of the monads. Our author, *à propos* of this, makes an analysis of pains and pleasures, and bases on it a novel theory of Ethics, too lengthy to discuss here.

As the Universe furnishes the human monads with much the same experiences, and the individual Subjects tend to interpret that experience in much the same way, it is natural that Mr. Fawcett's solution of the "Riddle" should resemble those of his predecessors while differing from them, especially as he professes only to add a stage to the scaffolding they have erected. The "black night of the Metaconscious" bears a likeness (though there are important differences) to Schelling's "Immortal Being," and to Von Hartmann's "Unconscious." Again the Deity that is the realised Universe, and beyond whom which there lies the never-to-be-fathomed Metaconscious, is very like Brahmā, the Universe, the highest God of the Hindu philosophy, behind whom lies the "Great Breath," the eternal source of cyclic change and development, for ever beyond the consciousness of even Brahmā himself. But Western and not Eastern philosophy is put forward as the Hierophant, and Mr. Fawcett freely acknowledges his debt to Renan—whose suggested Deity he explicitly champions.

The idea of recurring periods of activity and repose, and the consequent theory of cyclic development, are mentioned almost casually by Mr. Fawcett, apparently as a detail included in the development of consciousness; and he seems to regard these things as falling rather within the province of Science than of Metaphysics, since they belong to the phenomenal. The development in or by cycles has a very fundamental bearing on metaphysics; for it implies that consciousness itself is developing in a spiral, which is for ever increasing in magnitude, whereas the Absolutism of Mr. Fawcett makes progress in the development of consciousness to consist in, as it were, a straight line from the Metaconscious to Deity. That which falls apart into "individual monads," according to the Eastern idea is not an undeveloped *Primum*, but a Universal Subject that has completed its cyclic course, and begins the long round over again.

* "The Riddle of the Universe; Being an Attempt to determine the First Principles of Metaphysics, considered as an Inquiry into the Conditions and Import of Consciousness." By EDWARD DOUGLAS FAWCETT. 8vo, pp. 593. (London: Edward Arnold.)

March 3, 1894.]

higher level." There is an appearance of finality in Mr. Fawcett's Absolutism which cannot be dismissed by any disclaimer of finality on the author's part, for finality is there—apparently. It is in order to avoid a deceptive finality that we have to supplement the axiom that "Water always finds its own level," by its opposite: "Water never finds its own level"; by a Hegelian combination of these two axioms we arrive at a true interpretation of our actual experience, that water is *always finding* its own level, but *never finds it*, for no sooner has it run down by gravity to the lower level than it feels itself to need, than it rises again through evaporation to a higher level which altered circumstances show it to be now appropriate for it. It is this continual movement that is life, and even the attainment of perfect being would result otherwise in stagnation and death.

A Sunday-school teacher, wishing to prompt a pupil to the conclusion that if he were a good boy he would go to Heaven, once asked "Little Tommy" what would happen to him at last if he kept on becoming good, and getting a still better boy, and she was rather horrified by Tommy's reply—that he supposed he would "bust." Still, the child merely applied the Eastern philosophical idea of the world-process—a never-ending development through self-sacrifice as distinguished from the Western idea of ultimate perfection and "rest in omniscience." This final "bursting" and shedding of itself in seeds of future developments seems to many deep thinkers to be the universal law of the Cosmos, occurring on every conceivable scale, and presumed by Eastern philosophy to occur on a scale that is beyond our powers of conception. Mr. Fawcett seems to make the development of consciousness by the realisation of experience the Ultimate, and however far away he may place that realisation the Monad continues to move in a straight line towards it. We are dealing here with that which lies on the borderland of human thought, and are in constant danger of toppling over into the unthinkable; but there are grades of unthinkableness, and the difficulty presented by a straight line that has no end, and yet can only be conceived as ending somewhere, is resolved by the mathematical expedient of considering that infinite straight line an infinite circle which, always seeking and never finding realisation, appears as a spiral. It is true that the Eastern way of regarding the Universe—as metaphysically a series of ever expanding spirals which, as we mentally follow them, disappear, still expanding, from our consciousness—leaves the "Riddle" unanswered; but it seems to show that the true answer is not contained in the necessarily finite space which occurs between a "beginning" and an "end," however unthinkably far away we place these; and that the full realisation of anything we can imagine as a grade of consciousness cannot be the Ultimate of the Universe.

Another point which will strike the student of Eastern systems is the relation of "prius" which the Metaconscious bears in Mr. Fawcett's Absolutism to the developing consciousness. The Buddhist objection to the God of the missionaries is that at best he is only a "First Cause," and that a First Cause is incompatible with their conception of an Eternal and Ceaselessly Acting Cause. The meaning of this is that there is no one single order in time for the Universe as a whole—no time when there was only a Metaconscious, and "Deity" did not exist—but that the very highest consciousness or God co-exists, and has always co-existed, with the primary atomic subjectivity just born from the disintegration of a God to commence its cycle of life again. Just as Mr. Fawcett conceives the lesser subjectivities of the a-conscious and sub-conscious monads (which compose the vehicle through which the human monad gains experience) to be "mirrored" in the human monad, so the Eastern, continuing the process, supposes the human monad to be mirrored in the Subject that has already transcended the human stage, and so on up to Brahmā himself, the synthesis of all consciousnesses.

The metaphysical importance of carrying on the process arises from the fact that it is the necessities and wishes, or wills, of these higher Subjects that give "laws" to the lower ones, or lay down for them the lines of development which they find in consequence to be those of "least resistance." It is the wills of these more developed Subjects that cause what we call "purpose" in the Universe, and every Monad, from the lowest to the highest, finds itself in consequence subjected to two forces which it must co-ordinate, or take the consequences—a *vis a tergo*, coming from the monads lower in the scale, and which are "mirrored" in it, or compose its vehicle of manifestation, and a *vis a fronte*, coming from the higher monads to which the human monads are in a relation similar to that in which the sub-human monads are to it. According to the Eastern idea

we are both pushed and pulled along the road to perfection; according to Mr. Fawcett's Absolutism, we seem at first sight to be only pushed. Mr. Fawcett, however, would probably reply that the "pushers" are our own metaconscious Monads, which, indeed, as he shows, react notably on the subordinate monads of the organism, and even on the empirically given content of the "inner" psychological order we call "mind" (cf. his explanation of freewill and other points). He would, doubtless, freely admit that our monads may be mirrored in a higher monad, which in a manner conditioned the lower. He allows at any rate for this situation, but probably not wishing to dogmatise without knowledge, after modern Theosophic fashion, he leaves the question an open one.

It may well be that a fuller presentation of his system (which, from stray hints he lets fall, the author leads us to hope for some day) will dispel the clouds that arise here and there in the reader's mind as he peruses this remarkable work, almost every sentence of which might be the subject of a chapter. Mr. Fawcett's theory of the survival of the paligenetic Individual Subject, retaining a full consciousness of its whole long experience, is of the greatest interest at present, when the old reasons for a belief in immortality are perceived by so many to be no reasons at all. His frank acceptance of the facts to which Modern Spiritualism bears witness cannot but predispose our readers in his favour; and indeed, Mr. Fawcett's conception of development, in what we have called "a straight line" with intensely individualist survival, seems to agree better with the opinions of most Spiritualists than the Eastern idea of development in a spiral, with continual absorption into a higher synthetic consciousness, and ever-recurring disintegration again into atomic centres of individual consciousness. It is true that Mr. Fawcett is a determined supporter of paligenesis as a universal necessity flowing from his Monadology; but there is a considerable section of Spiritualists that accepts the idea of re-incarnation, a much smaller thing, and one which it is very difficult either to support or to accept as an isolated phenomenon, but quite conceivable as an incidental instance of a general law, which all monads alike, down to that of the so-called "atom," obey. From what we have said we need hardly add that we recommend Mr. Fawcett's "Riddle" cordially to our readers. The two poems, which preface respectively the first and second parts, are very fine, being poetry and philosophy in one. Throughout, the style is as clear and strong as the nature of the subject-matter will allow—at times brilliant, and always forcible. The book is a valuable addition to philosophic thought, but whether it will be the epoch-making book which not a few of those who have read it venture to prophesy remains to be seen.

R. H.

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS.

At a meeting held in Marylebone on Sunday night, an address was delivered by Mr. Andrew Glendinning, on "The Phenomena of the Unseen." In referring to the subject of spirit photography, he drew attention to the lecture by Professor Meldola at St. George's Hall, in which the Professor is reported to have attempted an exposure of the method of producing spirit photographs. This method, according to the Professor, consisted in a person made up as a "ghost" being photographed with a very brief exposure, the sitter being photographed subsequently with the usual period of exposure. In this way a ghostly appearance was produced by trick. Mr. Glendinning characterised this as an old-fashioned and simple dodge for the amusement of children, and altogether unworthy the attention of serious men and women. The real point was this, that while the appearance presented by some spirit photographs might be imitated by fraud, real spirit photographs were produced in which fraud had not, and could not have, any place—such as were described in Mr. Glendinning's recent book, "The Veil Lifted"; such as the Rev. Mr. Haws had exhibited to his congregation; and such as were not long since taken by Mr. J. Traill Taylor under the strictest test conditions. To say that, because a spirit photograph could be fraudulently imitated, there was no such thing as spirit photography, was, therefore, as foolish as to say that because a bank-note could be imitated there was no such thing as a genuine bank-note. Mr. Glendinning claimed that Professor Meldola ought to have made himself acquainted to some extent with the subject of spirit photography, as the reports given of his remarks on it at St. George's Hall were evidence of his entire ignorance of the whole matter.

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Light:

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Communications intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, London, W.C. 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. B. Godfrey, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, London, W.C., and not to the Editor.

WHAT IS IT TO "DIE"?

Will it ever be possible to get rid of the damaged word "death"? For ages, Christendom has gone on professing its faith in Immortality; and, for ages, it has never ceased to mumble and moan about "death." Perhaps the explanation of the inconsistency is to be found in that queerest of all superstitions—the resurrection of the body. The genuine believer in that could never be a hearty believer in Immortality. An immortality indefinitely postponed, and turning upon the uprising of old bones or long separated particles of dust, is apt to be a gruesome business, always tending to no immortality at all.

The odd thing is that the old superstition not only lingers, but is intrusive and demonstrative. It is true that the gross belief in the resurrection of the body is fading, but how persistently we go on talking about our dead "sleeping in the grave," or "laid to rest"! And do we not keep, as a standing tombstone head-line, the foolish words, "HERE LIES"!—too frequently true in a sense not intended. No greater mercy could happen to us than the abolition of graves. That will shock many at first: but, if we think it out, it will end in sunshine. Graves hinder us and chain down our thoughts to earth. The prolonged tragic associations of burials; the abiding stone, like a huge door-plate to tell us who lives there; the going to the place to weep; the decoration of the soil—all tend to hide from us the truth. Ah, that the angel could meet us there, and gently chide us from the place with his heavenly message, "He is not here, but is risen!"

All Spiritualists ought to be cremationists. Nothing would more help to undermine and spirit away the old coarse superstitions and the persistent earth-clings. The body is but the vehicle, the instrument, the tool. When it has done its work, it should be dismissed with tender thanksgiving, into the free sweet air and sunlight, not put away to rot and to be cried over or to be surface-decorated, as though that putrefying thing were the real self.

The ancient Hebrews had a lovely phrase concerning it, whatever their faith may have been. They said of the dead, "He is gathered to his people," or "He is gathered to his fathers"—a phrase capable of wonderful expansion and illumination in the light of our blessed faith. And our own delightful English phrase, "He has gone home," heard more often in days gone by than now, is, beyond all telling, rich and deep and full. Is that not the very truth we need to guide us in answering the question, "What is it to die?" To die is to go to our people, to wend our way to the fathers, to go home. It is to march strongly forth, with emancipation, not loss. It is to find one's promotion in the world of causes; to have done with symbols and shadows, and come up with things themselves. It is to emerge from the workshop and go into the fresh and sunny streets or fields. Not that at first to many, perhaps, but that in reality, after the first surprise, or shame, or shock, or discipline shall cease.

Paul surely was right—"to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," in some higher transcendental sense. And that is borne witness to even by dread of death and its consequences. Hamlet was not far away from Paul, after all, when he said:—

To die—to sleep:
To sleep! perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For, in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.

Both Paul and Hamlet felt the tremendous reality of the overbrooding presence—the tremendous reality of the Unseen. And all the really great natures have felt it—God's own witnesses to the securest reality of all.

I cannot say, and I will not say,
My friend is dead. He is just away!
With a cheery smile and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there.
Think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of There as the love of Here.
Think of him still as the same, I say,
He is not dead . . . he is just away!

THE PRESS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

Among the most significant tokens of the extent to which in our day the world has lost religious faith and knowledge is the attitude of the literary press towards any relation of experiences of the kind called spiritual. Instead of seeing in these a proof of the substantial, as distinguished from the merely phenomenal, nature of existence, and welcoming such confessions as a valuable contribution to the knowledge of man's nature, constitution, and destiny, such confessions—even in quarters the reverse of professedly materialistic and Sadducee—at once, and as a matter of course, elicit the suggestion of imposture, or of insanity, as the most obvious explanation; simply through lack of the requisite faculty and knowledge on the part of the critics to enable them to distinguish between the pathological and the spiritual, the morbid and the divine; and this no matter how coherent and logical the results and the manner of their relation. Thus we find even our excellent contemporary, the "Literary World," prefacing a far from unsympathetic notice of Mr. Maitland's recent book in the following fashion: "It is a strangely interesting book for students of mental phenomena who are prepared to recognise honesty of purpose even in a fantastic garb. Whatever explanation pathology may have to give, this is a case in which the hypothesis of imposture is out of the question. Delusion, cousin-germane to disease, may be the final verdict, but only after capable diagnosis!"

This recalls to mind the article by Dr. Maudsley in the "Nineteenth Century" some fifteen years ago, in which he declared himself ready to have certified the lunacy of all the world's saints, seers, and prophets! Thus does a materialistic science, even while professing to believe in evolution, and admitting its total ignorance of the nature of the substance in which, and of the force by which, evolution occurs, presume to assign limits to evolution; and taking the rudimentary man for its standard, pronounces the developed man insane for evolving beyond such arbitrary limits! Truly a happy phrase was that of St. Paul, and as appropriate now as when it was uttered—"vain babblings of science falsely so called." When shall we have a science that makes truth its object, and not the establishment of an hypothesis; a science really based upon experience, and not one which, preferring its hypothesis to facts, rejects all facts which do not suit its hypothesis, and so makes, not experience, but non-experience, the basis of conclusion? Surely that is a time which it belongs to Spiritualism to realise.

MR. MORSE AND THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

On Monday evening, February 19th, Mr. J. J. Morse kindly attended a meeting at 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, in order to give the members and friends of the Alliance an opportunity of putting questions to his Control. There was a very large gathering on the occasion, and several written questions were handed up to the President. We give a summary of some of the replies:—

Asked if, a body being put into three coffins, lead, deal, and oak, the progress of the spirit would be retarded because of the slow disintegration of the body, Tien said: Assuming the spiritual body remained in contact with or encased in the material organisation at the time of burial, then probably the method of interment might retard the action and career of the spirit, but that is an assumption entirely beyond the case. When, to use the conventional phrase, the body is dead, that is to say, when the process of dissolution has been accomplished and complete separation has taken place between the spiritual body and the material organisation that it previously inhabited, there may be some slight connection between the ascended personality and the dead body, but not by any means sufficient to affect the position or retard the progress of the spirit; and a body might be buried in any number of coffins without any perceptible influence on the departed personality itself so long as previous separation has been accomplished. The instances where this is not the case are so rare as hardly to be worth notice in considering the question.

The President said that in that connection he called to mind an experience of the late Mr. Stainton Moses, in which, at one of his séances, a spirit came and gave her name and particulars of her death, and explained that she was enabled to come because Mr. Moses had on the previous day passed by the churchyard in which her body was buried. That turned out to be the case; and it would be interesting to know what connection between Mr. Stainton Moses and the departed spirit could exist which could bring her to his circle sixteen years after the interment of her body. The inference upon the surface, said Tien in reply, would of course be that there was some subtle connection between the two, but his opinion would be that after sixteen years the body would have disintegrated and whatever connection there could possibly have existed previously would assuredly have been dissipated. On the other hand, the fact remains that a great many departed spirits have a species of fascination for the place wherein their remains have been interred. As an example, when one dies who is dearly loved, the thoughts of those left behind are naturally absorbed in the contemplation of the dear one who has gone, and having no knowledge of Spiritualism or consciousness of any kind of real existence beyond, their interest becomes centred in the grave, which they adorn with beautiful stones and railings, marked, perhaps, with a cross, and decorated with flowers, and their thought being constantly directed to the spot, the inevitable result is that they create a centre of spiritual attraction, which, indeed, becomes a chain around the departed one, which, so to speak, holds and binds him to the material condition, and which generally may exist far longer than might be imagined. The lapse of years may weaken that bond, but will not entirely dissipate the magnetic or psychical connection. It is quite probable that in the case cited the spirit may have been attracted in consequence of intense and misdirected affection bestowed upon its material remains. Our good friend, Mr. Moses, was undoubtedly a sensitive of an order usually affected by the slightest psychical influence; and when he passed by the grave a link between him and the spirit was established, which enabled the latter to make herself known at the circle, and probably was the means of removing the attraction which bound her to earth.

Asked if it would be likely to injure a departed spirit to call it back to earth, the Control said: One might possibly be inclined to argue that the injury might be in the other direction, and that the return of the spirit might have more influence upon the mortal than any operation of the mortal might exert upon the person of the spirit. While of course it is impossible, and this we say advisedly, for you to hurt, in the ordinary sense in which that word is used, any spirit in the spiritual world, it is in a spiritual sense quite possible for you to inflict on it pain and discomfort. That point is well worthy of earnest consideration. The world at large indulges in the most insensate grief and lamentations at the departure

of its loved ones. How hapless is the case of the ordinary individual when the treasure is stolen away: God himself is arraigned, the justice of nature is denied, the beauty and glory of life seem to fall in dust and ashes. This grief not only affects the individuals expressing it, and those with whom they are associated, but in a psychical and spiritual sense it penetrates into and affects the spiritual world by means of those fine filaments or cords of sympathy that bind kindred souls together. It has a retarding influence, an influence that creates pain and sorrow. The surest way to retard the progress of the departed is to indulge in protracted grief concerning their departure. In that sense it is possible to hurt those who have passed from earth; and knowing this, as most experienced Spiritualists do, they will allow their reason to rule their judgment and not retard the progress of those who have gone before by the manifestation of insensate and unnecessary sorrow. We do not say one word against the natural grief that inevitably ensues when two who love are parted either in this world or by the greater parting of death, but between the angry, resentful grief that overlooks and forgets all the mercies of God, all the laws of life, all the revealments of spiritual knowledge, and that natural and temporary sorrow and pain that arise from the loss of a loved companion, there is a very wide difference indeed. The one is the orderly, sympathetic manifestation of the heart's love and the soul's sympathy, and the other is only the last remnant of a superstitious fear of death. You must curb this fear and let reason hold court in your minds, remembering that the departed are infinitely better in the other state, even in the worst of their conditions, than here, and that they have gone forward into another and always a higher plane of personal existence. They may not have reached the highest plane of that existence, but it is a higher plane, taking it altogether, than that which they have gone from, and therefore their departure should be a matter for congratulation rather than despair. Another point is this: the powers of love and hate are, it is well known, infinite in their operation as well as their extent. You have scarcely a conception of the amount of good or harm you can do by your affections or dislikes, and if your dislikes take the form of malignant, unrestrained hatred, concentrated and bitter in the extreme, against a particular person, you have no idea of the positive, actual, and literal evil which you may, consciously or unconsciously, wreak upon the life and character of that person. All the old tales of witchcraft, sorcery, and black magic had their rise in these misunderstood laws of life. They are perfectly natural laws, quite in accordance with the possibilities of the world in which you live, with nothing supernatural about them. Somebody dies, whom you hated whilst he was alive, and your malignity still pursues him, though dead, and does him real and positive injury; and so long will that effect be produced until he has satisfied you, or you have satisfied him, and until there has been a balance struck between you, and mutual forgiveness obtained as a result. On the other hand, equally true is it that if you love with all the self-effacement and sweetness and sympathy that the true in heart feel, and that make this life a sacrifice of love and the duties of this world a sacred trust, then your dear ones passing from this world to the next still attract from you that love which they received whilst here. If it is not extended for the selfish purpose of merely bringing those friends into *rapport* with you, then it is a blessing and a joy and a help to the loved ones in that life as it has been in this.

Replying to the question whether it is a duty incumbent upon us to inquire into the subject of Spiritualism, Tien said: Duty is an ugly word, much misunderstood, over which many tears have been shed, and much lamentation expended, for in the past duty has been construed into compelling others to do as they were wished to do, and failing in that they were set down as undutiful. No person has a duty in any direction that his conscience, or judgment, or experience forbid him to enter into. There is no compulsion in the sense of a kind of duty to inquire into Spiritualism. But it may be positively affirmed that it is incumbent on every person to listen courteously and respectfully to the serious statements of a man or woman with whom he may perhaps differ, and when such statements point to the possibility of communion with the other world it is the plain duty of any individual to listen, and then, in accordance with his own judgment and reason, to decide whether he shall take the matter up or not. We are in no sense advocates for cramming theories down people's throats, which is one of the phases of the lower forms of the intellectual and spiritual growth, and has

been the curse of the world in all ages of the past. Supposing a person rashly and intemperately scorns and refuses to look at the question in any shape at all, and is perfectly content with what is in his own mind and wants to know nothing more, then in heaven's name let him remain so. You are not responsible, and if he can see nothing beyond his immediate surroundings, then let him go his way; eternity is long enough to afford him ample opportunity to discover how narrow that way was. The question is, will you be at a disadvantage in the next world by neglecting to inform yourselves on the subject now? Lack of knowledge of course is always a disadvantage in a world where knowledge is one of the prime requisites, and knowledge is indeed requisite in the spiritual world. But in speaking of that state the word knowledge must be used in a somewhat different sense from that in which it is understood here. As a mere intellectual possession, knowledge does not necessarily imply that the individual is any better for it. It is when the conscience is associated with knowledge, when a sense of the responsibility of the possession of knowledge is awakened, that it begins to be of real value. If you were not sensible of the responsibility in regard to the knowledge you possessed, then that knowledge would be dead, so to speak, in your minds. Let us take a case. You have been brought up in an orthodox household, where religion and morality and culture have had a fair share of attention. You have gone your course with a certain set of ideas concerning what the next world and its people are like; and you fall asleep in the mystic slumber called death with the profound conviction that you will awake as an angel in Paradise. You will be greatly disappointed, and will begin to think you are not dead and fancy that something has gone wrong, that you are out of your mind or delirious. You look about you; those who come greet you with friendly looks and words; you cannot reconcile it at all with what you have been led to expect. These people have been dead, some of them numbers of years; they look very real, you look very real, the place you are in seems very real. All this is contrary to what you looked for. You are disturbed, you are amazed, and presently you are profoundly depressed, for the haunting fear may come to you that after all you are labouring under some dreadful delusion that has been cast upon you for your eternal undoing. We are not painting a fancy sketch, but simply drawing upon the experiences we have observed in the lives of some who have passed under these peculiar conditions, who have gone in under a certain series of delusions that have destroyed their happiness on first entering the spiritual life. They have gone in with a number of irrational ideas of what the future would be for them, and what would be the condition upon which they were entering. This is a disadvantage, is it not? and it is not surprising if you feel a trifle of resentment against the people who unwittingly misinformed you. This sets up a series of mental disturbances, regrets, and recriminations in your mind that cloud for a time your happiness and retard your progress, and therefore it is to many people decidedly a disadvantage to have no definite knowledge of what the next world really is. But now to take another case. You have outgrown all sectarian limitations; you have cast aside the trammels of creed and dogma; you are content to feel that God is, that truth is constantly revealed, and that happiness and virtue and goodness are among the things of this life to make the world sweet and bright by their presence; you are content to see God and truth wherever revealed, you are not concerned with this man's creed or that man's doctrine, you are wholly and solely concentrated on the doing of such good as comes to your hand, to which you give your heart and mind and soul; and you do not question what kind of world you are going to after this life, or what kind of person you will be, but are ready to thankfully and gratefully take whatsoever Divine providence gives to you after death, even as you have taken thankfully and gratefully all that Divine providence has given you before death. If you occupy such a position, you need have never a fear as to any disadvantage because you know nothing of Spiritualism when you enter the new world. You have lived a truly spiritual-minded life, spiritual things are discerned by the spiritual-minded, and when you become an enfranchised soul in the great world beyond you will find your peace as naturally and sweetly as ever you found it in this world and will be in perfect accord with the beauty and truth of the world in which you find yourself, and its revelations will be a source of such intense happiness and thankfulness that your gratitude to the Divine providence will be a hundredfold what it was here. All depends upon the

individual in this world, as to whether a knowledge of Spiritualism will be an advantage or disadvantage when he passes into the life beyond.

(To be concluded.)

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31ST, 1893.

In presenting our tenth annual report, we have the satisfaction of stating that the Alliance during the year 1893 continued to render important service to the Cause for the promotion of which it was established by our late president, Mr. W. Stainton Moses, in March, 1884. We had gratifying evidence that the work was fully appreciated by the members and friends who availed themselves of the advantages which it placed within their reach. Not the least of these were the cordial welcome extended to sympathising visitors from the country, and the friendly help cheerfully afforded to strangers who sought information and counsel on the questions with which we are mostly concerned, or who, Spiritualists already, being on temporary visits from abroad, naturally desired to exchange greetings with some of the like-minded in our own Metropolis.

Much good has also been effected by means of our very excellent Library of books on Spiritualism and allied subjects, in which both London and country members have evinced a growing interest. During the year the list of works upon our shelves has been extended by purchases, and by gifts from Mr. W. Paice (the late Editor of "LIGHT"), Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, Mr. R. J. Lees, Dr. W. Sharpe, and Mrs. Martin Smith. The most notable addition has come, however, in the form of a very handsome presentation from Mrs. Moses, of about 300 volumes, which had belonged to her son, Mr. Stainton Moses. The presentation was accompanied by a request, on the part of Mr. Stainton Moses' executors, that the books, which are in excellent condition, and many of them beautifully bound, should be placed in a special bookcase bearing a suitable inscription; and, needless to say, this request has been cheerfully complied with. The books include bound volumes of the "Spiritual Magazine," the "Spiritualist," the "Medium," "Human Nature," the "Psychological Review," the "Zoist," and a selection of standard works of interest to students and inquirers.

All the works in this, the Stainton Moses Library, are placed at the service of members in the rooms of the Alliance, but are not allowed to be taken away; but the books in the General Library may be borrowed, under certain specified conditions, by members resident either in London or in the country, books being forwarded by book post, when required, on payment of the cost of postage.

It may be appropriate here to make special reference to one particular book—Mr. Stainton Moses' "Spirit Teachings." This work, which has, perhaps, contributed more than any other to the diffusion and appreciation of Spiritualism, had been long out of print at the time of our friend's removal, and after much deliberation we concluded that we could give no more fitting testimony of our loving regard for the medium through whom these "Teachings" were received, than by republishing them in the form of a "Memorial Edition." Copies were offered to subscribers at a very low price, and the demand for them may be fairly said to have equalled our anticipations; but the venture was a costly one, entailing a considerable encroachment upon our reserve funds, and our friends will confer a great service on the Alliance by helping the sale of the copies which yet remain on hand.

The Assemblies in the Rooms of the Alliance, 2, Duke-street, Adelphi, have been well sustained. At these meetings full discussion is invited, and opportunity is thus given for a frank interchange of thought. The following Addresses were delivered during the year, and we desire to express our thanks to the friends who have kindly assisted in this important branch of our work:—

- January 31st.—MR. W. PAICE, M.A.: "The Spiritual Meaning of Matter."
 February 14th.—REV. G. W. ALLEN: "Thomas Lake Harris—His Philosophy of Life."
 " 23rd.—MR. T. SHOSTER: "The Principle of Authority in Religion."
 March 14th.—MR. W. T. STEAD: "Some Personal Experiences."

March 3, 1894.]

- March 28th.—MR. R. J. LEES: "The Difficulties and Dangers of Incipient Mediumship."
- May 2nd.—MISS ROWAN VINCENT: "Psychometry."
- October 23rd.—MR. J. J. MORSE: "Spiritualism—A Glance Ahead."
- November 6th.—MR. A. GLENDINNING: "Spirit Photography and other Psychic Phenomena."
- " 20th.—MR. J. M. FLEMING: "Spiritualism on the Continent."
- December 4th.—MR. J. F. COLLINGWOOD: "The Significance of a Rap."
- " 18th.—MR. W. PAICE, M.A.: "Some Higher Aspects of Spiritualism."

The Conversazioni at the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, have been largely attended. The musical portion of the programme has sustained the excellence of previous years. For this the thanks of the Council are due to the Misses Withall and many kind voluntary helpers, as also to Messrs. Brinsmead for their loan of a grand piano.

Mr. Godfrey, the Librarian, is in attendance at Duke-street every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the reception of visitors and to answer general inquiries. He will afford members access to the Reading Room, in which will be found most of the current periodical literature of Spiritualism published at home and abroad.

Our esteemed friend, Mr. J. F. Collingwood, has kindly accepted a seat on the Council, in the place of Mr. J. H. Mitchiner, whose resignation was accepted with regret.

Several members have left us during the year, but we have the satisfaction of being able to report that the loss has been more than compensated by fresh accessions. So far as we can ascertain, many of those who have resigned their membership were induced to do so because their other engagements or the distance of their residences rendered it difficult for them to derive any personal benefit from their continued connection with the Alliance. We venture, however, respectfully to suggest, for the consideration of any of our members who may be similarly situated, that the Alliance is doing a valuable work, and that we need all the assistance which our friends, whether in London or elsewhere, can afford to render us.

The accounts, as audited, will be found appended.

In concluding, the Council confidently appeal to the work of the last year, in all its various departments, as a title to the confidence of members and their continued and increased support.

Signed on behalf of the Council,
E. DAWSON ROGERS, *President*.
2, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
DECEMBER 31ST, 1892.

Dr.		£	s.	d.
1893.				
Dec. 31.	To Library Account	120	0	8
	„ Rent Account	55	5	0
	„ Soirée Account	23	8	4
	„ Petty Cash and Postage Account ...	6	11	3
	„ Printing Account	1	10	6
	„ Cost of Memorial Edition of "Spirit Teachings" beyond Subscriptions received	53	19	6
	„ Balance	86	12	0
		<u>£347</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>

Cr.		£	s.	d.
1893.				
Jan. 1.	By Balance	69	12	1
Dec. 31.	„ Subscriptions	153	10	0
	„ Dividends on Reserve Fund	23	4	2
	„ Donations	1	1	0
	„ Amount transferred from Reserve Fund	100	0	0
		<u>£347</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>

RESERVE FUND.

Dr.		£	s.	d.
	To Amount transferred to Income and Expenditure Account	100	0	0
	„ Present Amount	460	0	0
		<u>£560</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
		£	s.	d.
Cr.	By Amount on Jan. 1st, 1893	560	0	0
		<u>£560</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Dr.	1893.	LIABILITIES.	£	s.	d.
Dec. 31.	To Balance of Income and Expenditure Account as above		86	12	0
	„ Cash Subscriptions paid in advance		9	9	0
	„ Cash to the credit of the Trustees of "Light" Fund		24	11	9
	„ Reserve Fund		460	0	0
			<u>£580</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>

Cr.	1893.	ASSETS.	£	s.	d.
Dec. 31.	By INVESTMENTS—				
	New York Central Railway Debenture Bond		200	0	0
	Shares in John Moir and Son		175	0	0
	Cash at Banker's		205	12	9
			<u>£580</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>

I hereby certify that I have audited the above Statements of Account and have inspected the securities and find the same correct.

(Signed) THOMAS BLYTON, Accountant.

January 18th, 1894.

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF RE-INCARNATION.

IV.—ASTRAL LIFE-MODE TRANSMUTED TO SOUL LIFE-MODE: INDIVIDUALITY.

(Continued from p. 82.)

The recollections of earth life being reawakened, the entity in the soul plane must be able to commune with the same principle still incarnate in man, where sufficiently developed. As superiors control and interpenetrate inferiors, such entities would, through the astral principle in man, be able to cognise the surroundings of the latter. Acting from the soul principle, it would however, be able to cognise the whole of the Reality presented in those surroundings, while the man's perceptions would only be adjectival. This communion, it will be seen later, is probably a question of synchronous vibration of aura, or the luminous sphere, surrounding man. It is thus evident that revelation to man, in whom the soul principle is sufficiently unfolded, from entities in the soul planes of Being, is possible. All spiritual communion is not necessarily of astral character and source. But spiritual communion is limited by and to the principle of consciousness unfolded in the recipient, and as the soul principle is only embryonic in most men, spiritual communion is limited thereby to the astral principle.

When the functioning of consciousness is focussed in the soul principle, the Ego necessarily becomes aware of the whole of the experiences therein recorded. The mind being an external mode, is not aware of the content of this inner perception, which to it is transcendent. But the soul cannot cognise the Reality external to the mind till it has interpenetrated the latter, and shines through it.

Till the soul has interpenetrated the astral mind of man to its circumference, it is imprisoned, limited, conditioned, and is not brought into direct relation with man's surroundings. The perceptions of these have to be presented to the soul, by the mind. The soul is not in "immediacy" in man's experience, therefore, but only in mediate relation, through the mind, whose perceptions are adjectival only.

If the soul principle were sufficiently unfolded in man, for its radiation to interpenetrate his circumferential astral mind, and cognise to the circumference of his Being, it would come into "immediacy" in the experiences of his physical life, which would thus be directly related to the permanent principle, instead of only mediately, through the mind, as now. Man would then cognise "things in themselves," he would cognise the whole of the wealth of Reality present in his surroundings. He would cognise the whole of the experiences present in the life constituting his form; of its re-incarnations in all the kingdoms of Nature. He would then carry the recollections of the whole of the experiences of life with him, when indrawing to the soul-plane. He would, while here, be related to the soul-plane of the Universe, and could commune with the soular (solar) angels. He would thereby obtain intuitive insight, or subjective perception, into experiences other than his own. Thoughts would be presented to his perception from within, other than representations of his own past experiences—viz., revelations, or sharing in other accumulated experiences, exist-

ing in states of consciousness, with which the inner aspects of his Being are in permanent relation, unknown to the astral mind.

Granting the possibility of inner principles being unfolded, of perception functioning behind the sense-related mind, in inner aspects of the radiation which links that to its ground of Being, these limitations must cease to obtain in proportion to the recession; and expansion of the field of perception must be proportionate to the approach to at-one-ment.

The field of observation of the unit, when looking without—that is, in relation to the phenomenal world—is limited to the range of the senses. But the unit remains permanently inseparable from the Universal as its own ground of Being, and similar limitations do not apply when looking inwards.

Of this we have the first illustration in clairvoyance, or the unfolding of the astral mode of perception in man, which is accompanied by an expansion of the field with which the sensitives find themselves thus brought into relation. It is to be noted that in this mode of Being, sometimes called fourth dimensional, the circumscriptions entailed by the density or resistance of matter cease to limit perception to the same degree as in the sense mediated mode, and are replaced by a state of permeability, of interpenetrability, in which perception transcends the limitations entailed on the field of the senses. The limitations which accompany the resistance of matter recede in proportion as etherial states are reached, in the progressive unfoldment of their related modes of consciousness. The field of participation must expand in equal ratio, till a state of harmonious unification, of interblending, is reached. It is the experiences of manifold incarnations presented to cognition, by the life inherent in our forms, that probably constitutes “that experience which the soul knoweth of old and of former years, acquired during re-incarnations in many earth lives” of the Hermetic Gnosis and insight into which is stated to constitute intuition.

Some people have intuitive or clairvoyant perceptions, of what appear to them to be their own previous incarnations, and which to them are very real. This might perhaps be accounted for by the content inherent in some of the atoms of life we take into our personality-form, which atoms may be so strongly impregnated by the magnetism of the last personality in which they formed integral units, that they may reflect, and represent to our consciousness, pictures pertaining to the life of that previous personality. It might be quite possible, that a series of pictures of past personalities, with which the life atoms in our form had been connected, could be reflected through our personalities and read by the laws known in connection with psychometry. Some of the previous personalities, with which the life present in my own form must have been connected in the past, have thus been read and described to me, by occultists. It may also be possible that the pictures of life, in past periods of history, which appear to us in dreams, are thus presented to our consciousness by the life experience associated with the atoms in our own forms.

It must be further remembered that the state in which we now exist is the negative pole; the turning point in the circuit of individual becoming; the point where the centrifugal force which has impelled us outwards is replaced by the centripetal current which indraws. We are not now at the beginning of our existence as units. We have descended from the plane whence we were determined from the Universal life, as units, through the intermediary planes to the Nadir, and through which planes we have to reascend to the zenith. We have had temporary elemental existence in these intermediary modes. But our experiences of those states are obscured by the superposing of the vehicles relating us to the successive planes, in the course of ultimatum and descent. In the natural course of becoming we will only come into the awareness of these experiences, when we have reascended to the zenith of Being. But it may be possible that some individuals whose inner principles are more unfolded than in the majority, may have intuitive perception of some of their experiences pertaining to these inner modes of Being and may associate them with previous physical existences.

My next letter will deal with the mode of consciousness pertaining to life in its spirit-mode, or Identity.

QUESTOR VITÆ.

WHEN the hour of trouble comes to the mind or body, and the hour of death comes—which comes to high and low—oh, my leddy, then it is na what we have dune for ourself, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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.]

Information Wanted.

SIR,—A letter written by a relative of my own has come into my possession, giving a detailed account of a séance held in Lord Eglinton's rooms at the Clarendon Hotel. The medium (professional) was an American lady residing in Seymour-street, Portman-square. Her name is not given. The date of the séance was 1852. Can any of your older readers suggest the name of the medium?

Clouds, Salisbury.

PERCY WYNNDHAM.

February 26th, 1892.

“The Four Upward Stages.”

SIR,—Though a constant reader of “LIGHT” it is a long time since I have contributed my mite to its pages, but I am so impressed with the article headed “The Four Upward Stages,” in the issue of February 10th, that I should like to come out of my retirement to express my great admiration of its deep and sublime philosophy.

No ordinary mind has written that article, which must have been inspired; and I am the more struck by it as it is in such entire accord with a series of deep Spiritual lessons that I am now receiving direct (and which I hope in due time to give forth), showing that a high Spiritual power is in process of unfolding its sublimer teachings to those able and willing to receive them.

To me, the above article is a sign of that true Spiritual progression which is most cheering and encouraging to one who has long laboured in the Spiritual vineyard.

February 23rd, 1894.

“LILY.”

Frightened to Death by a Ghost.

SIR,—I send you the following clipping from the “Southern Times,” a Weymouth newspaper, of January 20th, headed “Frightened to Death by a Ghost” :—

Mr. E. Q. Louch, district coroner, held an inquest at Misterton, on Thursday, touching the death of Elizabeth Annie Bishop, seventeen years of age, and daughter of a carrier employed by the Somerset Trading Company, Crewkerne station. The girl had been in service at Lyme Regis. She spent a few days at home at Christmas, and was then in her usual health. She came home unexpectedly on Saturday last, and said she was not very well. On Sunday night, when in bed, she screamed, and said she was frightened. Dr. Worth, of Crewkerne, was summoned, and attended. He found the deceased perfectly sensible. She could not speak, but evidently understood what was said to her. She was making a noise half groaning and half screaming—through her teeth. When he told her to stop the noise she did so. She squeezed her eyelids closely together, but she relaxed them on his ordering her to do so. She was suffering from hysteria, but was not in a serious state. Death, however, occurred at half-past nine on Monday morning. Dr. Worth, in his evidence, said he was given to understand about a month ago the sailing ship *Olive Branch* was lost, the brother of the girl's master at Lyme Regis being the captain. Deceased heard a good deal about it, and on one occasion when she was left alone in the house she saw the shadow of a man on the blind. She took it to be the ghost of the captain of the *Olive Branch*. That frightened her so much that her master and mistress could not get her out of the room for a long time. Since then she had several times at night said she had seen the ghost of her cousin, who has been dead about two years. Those were delusions which would affect a girl in her state of health. She was practically bloodless. The mother of the girl said the deceased several times told her she had frequently seen her cousin standing by the bedside at night. Dr. Alford gave it as his opinion, having heard the history of the excitement from which the girl suffered, that she died in a fainting fit brought on by excessive fright—in short, that she died from syncope. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.

One feels, on reading the above, that if any person with the intelligence of the Editor had been present, the young girl's life might probably have been saved. The Editor of the “Southern Times” further shows us that he has an open mind; for in his number for February 3rd he tells us:—“Mr. A. J. Balfour, addressing the Society for Psychical Research, on Friday, said he thought the time had come when men of science should seriously turn their minds to the consideration of the phenomena which lie at the borderland between science and mysticism, and of the immense volume of evidence which has accumulated concerning them.”

Scientific physics and scientific psychics have, in the present day, got so dangerously near each other that the former is stumbling into the latter sorely against its will; and even the "Daily Telegraph," which has fought the battle against us so long, in a leading article of February 19th, writing on the wondrous subject of the phonograph, is driven by the force of circumstances to go a step further, and hesitatingly to admit:—"The touch of a vanished hand is said by some to be even now a not impossible privilege."

The poor girl in question had no cause of fear from such a source as that. The cause of her fear was, as she told her mother, "that she had frequently seen her cousin, who had been dead two years, standing by the bed at night." Such being the case, one can well imagine what a few words of rational comfort might have effected in curing her of her fear, and thus saving her life, if only by telling her that it is not through the wise and prudent, but through tender but brave sensitives like herself, that (through communion with ghosts in great diversity of method) Christendom has been fortified throughout the world of late years by an assured "certainty" of future life, instead of, as before, at best but by an assured "hope."

T. W.

"Do the Mahatmas Exist?"

SIR,—Mr. Gilbert Elliot's letter in your issue of February 17th no doubt expresses a feeling often entertained by people on the outskirts of the Theosophical movement—Why are we who are more closely concerned with the work of that movement so confident about the existence and attributes of those whom we call Mahatmas? Let me answer for myself.

To begin with, fifteen years ago I first heard from Madame Blavatsky a statement concerning great initiates of occult science who had attained to wonderfully exalted knowledge, spiritual insight, and power over natural forces of which modern science knew nothing. Madame Blavatsky claimed to have lived for a time amongst them; and to have learned some of their teachings. She proved that she possessed some abnormal faculties and powers. Growing much interested in the whole matter, I became acquainted with other persons also interested. Two of these especially, natives of India, earnest, spiritual-minded men, told me in course of time that they knew "the Masters" on the astral plane, *i.e.*, in that extra-physical state of consciousness of which millions of crass materialists know nothing, but of which a large number of mystic students know a great deal, so that the fact of astral consciousness may surely be taken for granted in addressing such readers as yours. For those to whom this assumption would not apply, explanations like that on which I have entered must begin at an earlier stage.

A third Indian acquaintance, after astral plane knowledge of the Masters, determined to reach them personally—in the physical body—or perish in the attempt. He pushed across the Tibet frontier and, guided by his astral perceptions, succeeded in his quest. He saw in the flesh those whom he and others had previously seen in vision, recognising them as such, and returning to tell of his success. Meanwhile I had been receiving a long series of letters reaching me, apparently from certain Mahatmas, under peculiar circumstances described in my books (mainly, but not exclusively, through the intermediation of Madame Blavatsky), and conveying a mass of teaching which in due time I was enabled to publish, and in which great numbers of people have found a better clue to the comprehension of their own nature and of the world around them than any previously known religion or philosophy afforded.

One all-important fact thus revealed was that the avenues of initiation were still open for people who were qualified to advance along them; that the "Masters," though in seclusion, were not inaccessible for persons in whom certain interior faculties were ripe for development. Many persons, including some Europeans whom I know, were inspired by this revelation to make the necessary exertions, and beginning with the opportunities afforded by the Theosophical Society, have learned to transfer their consciousness to the astral plane, to get about freely on that level of Nature, to obtain access to the Mahatmas, and to recognise, as also astral pupils, friends whom they know in the flesh. One such person, a European whose development has taken place since the formation of the Theosophical Society, first came into conscious relation with the Mahatmas while working for Theosophy in India in connection with the headquarters at Adyar, sharing his progress, so to speak, with

friends and pupils of Madame Blavatsky's. Another gained the same privileges here in Europe, scarcely knowing Madame Blavatsky, and wholly unconnected with the T. S. organisation in India. Within the last year or two other Europeans and one person of Eastern parentage, among my own circle of intimate friends, have in varying degrees acquired the faculty of consciousness on the astral plane, and of clairvoyance while in the ordinary state, so as to be able to hold converse, when permitted, with some of the Mahatmas, or to see them when they or some of their disciples have come astrally among us.

Thus you see I am dealing with eight witnesses of the truth, not including Madame Blavatsky. Let me call them by letters of the alphabet, to show more definitely how their testimony hangs together.

A. went in the flesh many years ago to Tibet. D. and E. have seen him with the Masters when themselves there in the astral.

B. is "dead" as regards the body in which I knew him. Being a regular chela, his post-mortem adventures do not follow the normal course. D. knew him when living, in India; and sees him still from time to time in an astral body with the Masters.

C. has died, I believe, since I knew him in India. He is rather out of the circle of connection of my own chela friends. I have not heard of him on the astral plane.

D. is advanced as a chela, and as much at home on the astral plane, and as fully reminiscent of all that happens to him there, as though the matters dealt with were yesterday's doings in the flesh. On the astral plane he constantly sees E., F., and H., all of whom know him and know one another on this plane of life, discuss what takes place when with the Masters, after returning to their normal condition, and are in all respects themselves completely in their mutual relations on the higher plane.

E.—Everything just said of D. applies also to E., if possible in fuller measure. Occultly E. is still further advanced. D. and E. knew one another on the astral plane before they were acquainted in physical life. E. knows others of the Masters besides those of whom Theosophic literature has treated, sees on the astral plane (as D. does also) both in and out of the body. Has friendly relations also with F., G., and H. on the other plane.

F. is not yet so far on, but knows the Masters on the astral plane; also sees D., E., and H. there constantly.

G. is but just beginning to exercise the faculty of astral consciousness, and need not be more minutely explained.

H. is in a position to be present frequently when astral meetings of chelas are held in the Masters' presence; recollects everything; will corroborate D., E., and F. in respect of conversations at which all were present.

Coupling all these facts with the fact that since Madame Blavatsky's death, and through purely European channels, I have exchanged letters, and am still in a position to do so, when necessary (though common-sense will show that under the circumstances described it cannot be often necessary for me to do so) with the same Master who wrote to me when I was at work on "Esoteric Buddhism," I should think that any of your readers who can trust the honesty of my assurances will recognise that I have tolerably sufficient grounds on which to reply in the affirmative to the well-worn old question, "Do the Mahatmas really exist?"

A. P. SINNETT.

P. S.—Further reflection as I look over what I have written shows me that I might have extended my list of witnesses, but as it stands it will probably meet the present inquiry.

A Correction.

SIR,—In the closing citation from the "Riddle of the Universe," in your able review of last week, occurs a misprint. "Was, then, selection of its organism by the astral monad arbitrary?" "Astral" here would be an absurd epithet, and should be replaced by "central"; a term all students of Leibnitz will understand.

X.Y.Z.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F.W.R.—Next week.

E.T.B.—Communication to hand. Thanks. Shall have attention.

BE sure of the foundation of your life. Know why you live as you do. Be ready to give a reason for it. Do not, in such a matter as life, build on opinion or custom, or what you guess is true. Make it a matter of certainty and science.—F. STARR KING.

SOCIETY WORK.

SPIRITUAL HALL, 86, HIGH-STREET, MARYLEBONE, W.—On Sunday evening, despite the threatening weather, a good audience assembled to hear the continuation of Mr. Glendinning's address on "The Phenomena of the Unseen." Next Sunday, at 7 p.m., Miss Florence Morse, "The Message of Spiritualism." We wish to give an encouraging welcome to Miss Morse on her first appearance on the public platform, and hope for a full hall.—L. H. R.

SOUTH LONDON SPIRITUALISTS' MISSION.—Mrs. Hardinge Britten will speak at the Surrey Masonic (large) Hall, on Sunday evening next. Subject, "The Religion of the Future." Miss Everitt will sing "The Holy City," and Mrs. Banks, Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar." Admission free. A limited number of reserved seat tickets at 2s. and 1s. to be obtained of Mr. W. E. Long, 8, Orchard-row, Camberwell New-road. Doors open at 6 p.m., commence 6.30.—CHARLES M. PAYNE, Hon. Sec.

33, DEVONSHIRE-ROAD, FOREST HILL.—On Sunday Mr. Dale gave an address on "God," which was followed by a general meeting for the election of officers, the following being chosen: President, Mr. Elphic; vice, Mr. Bertram; secretary, Mr. F. Vaughan; assistant-secretary, Miss Vincent; treasurer, Mr. Bliss. Sunday next, Mr. F. Vaughan on Bible Spiritualism. Thursday, at 8 p.m., séance, Mrs. Bliss; admission by ticket only, to be had of the secretary.—F. VAUGHAN, Sec., 7, Lyndhurst-grove, Camberwell, S.E.

14, ORCHARD-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.—On Sunday last we had a crowded meeting, several strangers being present. In the absence of Mrs. Spring, owing to sickness, Mrs. Mason's guides answered numerous questions upon spiritual gifts and mediumship, followed by very successful clairvoyant descriptions of spirit friends present; nearly all being recognised. Mr. J. H. Brooks kindly officiated at the organ, Sunday next at 7 p.m., Mr. McKenzie, Cranial Psychology. Tuesday, at 8 p.m., Séance, Mrs. Mason.—J.H.B., Hon. Sec.

THE STRATFORD SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS, WORKMAN'S HALL, WEST HAM LANE, STRATFORD, E.—Speakers for next Sunday, Messrs. Savage and Dennis. Mr. J. Veitch spoke on Sunday last upon Spirit Photography. He contended that the camera—by the evidence it has given of recording things unseen by either the naked eye or the telescope—proved the possibility of clairvoyance in preference to any other hypothesis that objectors to the reality of Spiritual phenomena may put forth. The lecture was well received, the scientific evidence given being much applauded.—J. RAINBOW.

CARDIFF.—On Sunday last we were privileged to listen once more to our gifted friend Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, of Manchester. The meetings were held at the Town Hall (by permission of the Mayor). In the morning "The New Bible, or Man—what, whence and whither?" was very ably treated. A graphic description was given of the warring of creeds, the persecutions and horrors and bloodshed which have resulted from the tyrannical enforcement by priestly bigots of false doctrines which formed no part of the teachings of the Nazarene, and much of which remains engrafted upon the orthodoxy of the day. All this is becoming more and more repellent to nineteenth-century intelligence, and we are asking for a New Bible—not a new book, not a mere *writing*, but some standard of absolute truth as to man's "what, whence and whither?" and *this* new bible is being traced out by the scientific research, the keener penetration of man's own powers into that realm too long deemed mysterious and impenetrable; and by the *knowledge*, afforded by the invincible facts and grand philosophy of Spiritualism, of man's own nature and possibilities. Although the weather was very stormy, a good audience was present, while in the evening the hall was full, and a most enjoyable and profitable meeting resulted. Mrs. Britten spoke upon seven subjects from the audience in a masterly manner which elicited frequent applause. On Monday evening, to a good audience, Mrs. Britten delivered a deeply interesting lecture, being an instructive historical review of Ancient Magic, Mediæval Witchcraft, and Modern Spiritualism, with explanations of the methods and main features of each. An interesting comparison was made between the much lauded wonders of Hindoo Magic (the actuality of their occurrence being accepted and substantiated by the speaker's personal observations) and the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism; and it was claimed that, mysterious and inexplicable as the former are to the uninitiated, to the intelligent student the phenomena of the latter are infinitely more varied in character, and of far deeper significance.—E.A.

IMMORTALITY.—I do not say that death ends all; neither do I say that man is immortal: I say that I do not know. To know is one thing, to believe is another, and to hope is another. I hope for all good, for all joy, for all of the children of men. All I can say about immortality is this: There was a time when I was not, after that I was, now I am; and it may be that it is no more wonderful that I should continue for ever now that I have a start than it was that I should begin. We love, and those we love die, and we cling to the hope, to the wish, that we may meet again. Love was the first to dream of immortality, and as long as we love we shall hope.—R. G. INGERSOLL.

SUSTENTATION FUND.

We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions, and hope that our friends will all give what they can, whether much or little. We respectfully suggest that their remittances should be sent without delay to the Treasurer, Mr. H. Withall, Gravel lane, Southwark, London, S.E. :—

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THE New South Wales Government "Gazette" of January 18th contains a list of the names and addresses of gentlemen whom His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to appoint to be magistrates of the Colony; amongst these we are pleased to see the name of Mr. James Barr Mellon (husband of Mrs. Mellon, the celebrated medium), late of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and now chief clerk, Water Conservation Department, Government Offices, Sydney. We offer Mr. Mellon our hearty congratulations and good wishes.

THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

2, DUKE-STREET ADELPHI, W.C.

This Society of Spiritualists, founded for the purpose, primarily, of uniting those who share a common faith, and then of giving information respecting that faith to those who seek for it, occupies Chambers at the above address. There will be found an extensive Library of works especially attractive to Spiritualists, the various Journals of Spiritualism published in this and other countries; and opportunities of converse with friends like-minded. The Alliance holds periodical meetings at which papers of interesting phases of the subject are read, and discussion is invited. Donations solicited.

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